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The Metaphors of Identity Among Adjunct Faculty

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The Metaphors of Identity Among Adjunct

by

Melissa E. Ryan

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

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Abstract

Adjunct faculty are an integral part of the higher education structure, allowing community college leadership to meet the instructional and financial needs on their campuses. Community colleges rely heavily on adjunct faculty to meet the changing needs of student enrollment at a low cost, with no long-term commitment to future employment. Research paying attention to the increased utilization of adjunct faculty in the community college setting has focused on topics including job satisfaction, student outcomes, and studies comparing part-time faculty and full-time faculty in advancement opportunities. This study was conducted to provide an opportunity for adjunct faculty members in the community college setting to provide insight into their identity. Using the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) to guide the interview process, this qualitative study of eight temporary part-time faculty in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Department at one Minnesota community college focused on the language used to describe identity. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the aspects contributing to the development of academic identity in adjunct faculty. By exploring language used during the interview, constructs of identity were identified and defined, providing an understanding of the components that represent the overall identity of the adjunct faculty member. These themes of identity were analyzed along with the details shared during the interview to establish construct linkages and linkage changes, which indicate how the various constructs of identity impact each other. Symbolic interactionism and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) served as the conceptual frameworks for this study. Results of this study revealed four themes of identity representing the adjunct faculty experience: work assignment, student success, love for learning and teaching, and colleague interactions. These themes are made up of 16 different constructs, or themes representing identity. The majority of constructs representing identity are positive constructs, reinforcing the love of teaching. The constructs of the unpredictable work schedule and varying income connected to the adjunct faculty role were reported as negative contributors participants indicated an overall positive response to the role. In addition to the themes of identity that surfaced through the ZMET, the desire to teach in their field and the goal to work with students were selected as the top two motivational factors for the decision to be an adjunct faculty member. This insight into the identity of the adjunct faculty member will be used to present suggestions for administrators who support them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Great Recession of 2007 continues to impact college and university faculty in the United States. Economic challenges have created an increasingly volatile environment for higher education. In response, colleges and universities are adapting to accommodate the demands of the economy, the community, and the job market while addressing major concerns like student completion rates, rising tuition costs, and the quality of education. One significant response to the reduction in budgets in higher education is the reliance on contingent faculty (part-time and adjunct) for teaching. Adjunct faculty now represent 77% of all instructors at community colleges (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014).

Community colleges fill an important role for a growing number of diverse students. The community college is an institution considered to be a gateway to postsecondary education for students who are typically low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented (AACC, 2012). The community college is known as an adaptive, flexible, and accessible institution that evolves with the changes connected to community demand, the economy, and its student needs. Approximately 46% of undergraduate students attend a community college, making the impact of these institutions and their reliance on contingent faculty important (Hoffman, 2014).

Contingent faculty includes individuals referred to as instructors, part-time, adjuncts, lecturers, short-term, and temporary (AAUP, 2016). The definition of adjunct faculty varies depending on the source. Wolfinger, Mason and Goulden (2009) described adjunct faculty as either (a) those teaching a course or two in addition to an outside job, or (b) those who teach as their main source of income. Gappa and Leslie (1993) captured the difficulty of defining adjunct faculty by creating four categories: (a) retired individuals, (b) experts teaching in addition to a professional position, (c) individuals seeking full-time instructor positions, and (d) individuals

who have another part-time position. For this study, adjunct faculty are defined as those teaching less than the full-time teaching load at a community college.

Community colleges in the United States rely on adjunct faculty to teach a large percentage of students with adjuncts teaching more community college students than full-time faculty (Edenfield, 2010). Adjuncts are hired to provide flexibility in scheduling and to cut costs, but they are often overlooked in faculty development opportunities (Jolley, Cross & Bryant, 2014). Adjunct faculty are hired to fulfill the core mission of the institution that relies on their labor, yet limited research has been published focusing on their professional experiences (Mech, 2017). When compared to tenure-track faculty, adjunct faculty report unfair working conditions, lack of job security, and minimal administrative support (Kezar & Sam, 2014). These challenging working conditions also keep adjunct faculty from being included in the culture of the institution (Kezar, 2013).

A dependence on contingent labor has impacted the identity of community college faculty. The role of the college professor has transitioned from being one with high status, benefits, and academic freedom to a position with low-pay, low-status, and limited attention for development (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017). Increasing financial pressures and the demand for flexibility have forced higher education institutions to operate like businesses with the goal of cutting costs to maintain operation as the main decision driver (Frye, 2018). This shift in focus has led to an increasing use of contingent workers in the labor market (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017). However, there has been little significant research exploring how changes in hiring practices have impacted the identity of adjunct faculty.

Despite that, adjunct faculty members have represented the fastest growing group of teaching professionals in higher education for the past several decades, and that growth is

expected to continue (Dailey-Hebert, Mandernach, Donnelly-Sallee, & Norris, 2014).

Understanding the experience of adjunct faculty has proven to be challenging. One definite theme is that adjunct faculty love to teach (Bolitzer, 2019; Pons et al., 2017). Outside of passion for teaching, research to understand the current experiences of adjunct instructors has captured mixed reactions and is often critical. Criticisms of adjunct faculty have focused mostly on quality of education provided to students, limited availability for student contact outside of class, and low commitment to the organization (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018). Adjunct faculty have responded to these criticisms by citing professional challenges such as poor working conditions, last-minute scheduling of classes, and a lack of respect from colleagues and administration (Datray, Saxon & Martirosyan, 2014; Wyles, 1998). Adjunct faculty members have described themselves as “Freeway Flyers,” “disposable,” and “strangers in their own land” (Brennan & Magness, 2018a; Jolley et al., 2014).

How does the utilization of adjunct faculty impact student learning outcomes? There are conflicting studies connecting adjunct faculty to student performance. Institutions that schedule higher ratios of adjunct faculty when compared to institutions with higher ratios of full-time faculty tend to have lower graduation rates (Jacoby, 2006). Jeager and Eagan (2009) studied the impact of adjunct faculty on student drop-out rates, and found that students are negatively impacted by exposure to adjunct instructors in the community college setting. They determined that administrators need to offer more development opportunities for adjunct faculty and recommended improving working conditions that they had identified as influential when aiming to improve student outcomes (Jeager & Eagan, 2011). Most studies comparing full-time and part-time faculty experiences are focused on those teaching in 4-year institutions. A study by Bettinger and Long (2010) indicated that when comparing full-time and part-time faculty in the

4-year institution setting, there is a slight positive correlation between part-time faculty and student enrollment in future courses. The limited research focusing on part-time or adjunct faculty in the community college setting was one motivational element for this study

Adjuncts now play a critical role in higher education, and it is time to take a pulse on the adjunct faculty identity. Research by Finkelstein, Conley, and Schuster (2017) explored the “increasingly heterogeneous” careers in academia and how it is “vital” to develop an approach to understand the changes (p. 46). However, there is limited research focusing on the professional experiences and the formation of identity in adjunct faculty population (Jolley et al., 2014). Most studies on adjunct faculty focus on institutional areas, primarily student engagement and student success (Pons et al., 2017). The increased reliance on and need for adjunct faculty, combined with concerns regarding the quality of education provided by adjuncts, has increased the need to understand the identity of the adjunct faculty member.

This study provides an opportunity for administrators to learn more about their faculty and how the significant growth in the adjunct faculty population in the community college has influenced the institution (Jolley et al., 2014; Thirolf, 2012). Additionally, according to Spaniel and Scott (2013), “Because a majority of community college students receive instruction from adjunct faculty, it is important to understand how adjuncts interact with and perceive their relationships to their institutions and students” (p.1). Thus, this study also provided an opportunity for adjunct faculty to share their current impressions and experiences that have created their professional identities.

Hiring new faculty is an expensive and time-consuming process. Because the education industry employs the highest proportion of contingent workers, it demands the attention of research to understand the impact this has on faculty, administration, and students. Investing in

research specifically to understand and support this population is needed and recommended as an option to support adjunct faculty. This research could be used to improve the employment process for hiring adjunct faculty, including recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining quality adjunct faculty. Research on identity will also be valuable for identifying recommendations for administrators in the area of professional development for adjunct faculty, which ultimately supports faculty retention and student success.

Background of the Problem

Changes including an economic recession and a surge of enrolled college students has resulted in the highest use of adjunct faculty in history (Wallin, 2004), and consequently, the use of adjunct or part-time faculty has become a long-term practice (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). This has resulted in changes in the adjunct faculty experience. An adjunct position was once considered a position of expertise to enhance the student experience, but now it is often viewed simply as a way to fill gaps of the community college schedule (Wallin, 2004). Despite the strong dependence on adjunct faculty, community colleges have failed to fully understand, embrace, and develop this group (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018).

Considering the mixed results in research representing the experience of adjunct faculty and the number of students served by adjunct faculty, it is important to expand the research specific to the experiences of adjunct faculty member. Exploring the academic identity of adjunct faculty is a way to get to know them. Administrators can use this information to provide an atmosphere of professional development that is focused on the mission of the institution while considering the needs of the adjunct faculty. Faculty members reporting high job satisfaction are more likely to be motivated and more innovative in their teaching, which is beneficial to student learning outcomes (Truell, Price, & Joyner, 1988).

One way to research and understand the adjunct faculty member is by focusing on the narrative of the teaching experience as told by the individual. The individual narrative represents a professional identity, which is an integral aspect of being an effective teacher (Alsup, 2006; Thirolf, 2013). Research focusing on identity is critical for providing support for adjunct faculty members for supporting the overall institutional goal of positive student outcomes (Thirolf, 2013). Learning more about the adjunct faculty identity will also allow administrators to support adjuncts, thus working toward the goal of providing quality education to their students.

Academic identity is a form of professional identity that captures the perceptions of how individuals fit into the education field as well as an emphasis on values, morals, and experience (Billot & King, 2015). The formation of academic identity is often the result of a combination of individual, environmental, and social factors, which either support or marginalize adjunct faculty members (Masri, 2018). Identity plays a role in determining direction, career growth, and professional exposure. Learning more about academic identity in adjunct faculty is an opportunity to expand knowledge that will assist faculty and administrators in the areas of goal development, exploring motivation, personal satisfaction, and job placement (Day, 2007; Hong, 2010).

Learning more about academic identity is also a way for administrators to understand the needs of the adjunct faculty, including needs connected to the physical work environment (Volkman & Anderson, 1998). Faculty who are provided with support and are satisfied in their teaching role are more likely to stay, helping to reduce costs connected to hiring and training (Nedd, 2006; Syptak, Marsland, & Ulmer, 1999). Considering the identity development process, and perceptions of the academic field from the adjunct faculty perspective, will assist higher education institutions in creating development opportunities and career growth that support both

success of the faculty member as well as the staffing needs of the institution (Clegg, 2008; Graham, 2012).

Faculty as a group, including all classifications, is considered “the heart of the higher education enterprise” (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2017, p. 43). With 75% of students in the community college setting being taught by adjunct faculty, the need to understand this majority group has not been addressed by the current research. By extension, because adjunct faculty teach the majority of community college students, the impact they have on college students merits more attention (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). Faculty teaching and student outcomes are connected, creating a need for including research on adjunct faculty when studying student outcomes (Shulman, 2004).

Adjunct faculty are an important part of the community college experience, representing a variety of backgrounds and work experiences to assist with an often diverse student population (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Levin, 2007). Research focusing on the role of the adjunct faculty member is needed to assist institutions in managing financial, staffing, and quality demands, and to assist individuals in maximizing the benefits of the adjunct experience. Studying the academic identity of adjunct faculty will provide administrators in the community college setting insight on how to invest in the development of their most valuable workforce resource and to support the goals of providing quality education through flexible scheduling to students.

Statement of the Problem

The use of adjunct faculty has dramatically increased without proper institutional support, resulting in dissatisfied adjunct faculty members and negative student outcomes. The increased reliance on adjunct faculty has resulted in a shift where part-time faculty are the majority at most

community colleges. Community colleges are expected to educate a diverse population of students with a limited budget, which has contributed to the increased reliance on adjunct faculty. Despite representing the majority, adjunct faculty are often left out of planning and training opportunities, and they often lack in administrative support, which typically focuses on the needs of full-time faculty (Halcrow & Olson, 2008). This increased dependence on adjunct faculty members has produced a need for additional support and professional development opportunities. Awareness of academic identity in adjunct faculty members is also important for faculty development opportunities and connections to job satisfaction (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014).

With the many changes in the higher education landscape, including shifts in the economy and job market, there has been a demand for faculty to adapt to this changing environment and its fluctuations for demand in professional positions (Billot, 2010). Due to the increased use of contingent labor in higher education, adjunct faculty are experiencing challenges typically faced by temporary or short-term workers. Low pay, limited integration into the institution, a schedule planned to prevent access to employee benefits, and lack of professional development opportunities are typical of the adjunct faculty experience, resulting in questions of faculty satisfaction and teaching quality (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). These changes are influential in the formation of an academic identity. As the academic identities are shaped through these changes, there is a need for research focusing on the impact of change on the adjunct faculty member, the institution, and the student experience. Administrators stand to gain great benefits from taking the time to learn about their adjunct faculty members. Understanding the needs of adjunct faculty and their frustrations can assist administrators in the areas of

improving working conditions connected to job satisfaction, ultimately reducing employee turnover (Caruth & Caruth, 2013).

Due to the role adjunct faculty provide in supporting the mission of the community colleges, there is a need for research to explore, understand, and support this growing group of academics. Research focusing on the adjunct faculty experience can bring value to both the institution and the individual faculty member (Masri, 2018). Academic institutions, of all types, cannot afford to continually hire, train, and develop new faculty to accommodate the fluctuating demands of students and the economy (Wallin, 2004). Investing in the current adjunct faculty population is a unique opportunity to allow this group a voice and input on the needs for future development, while saving money on labor costs.

Elements of the adjunct faculty experience, including job satisfaction and the presence of administrative support, are reflected in student outcomes and retention. Faculty members that receive support from administration and experience job satisfaction are more loyal to students and the institution (Anderson, 2002). Understanding the identity of current adjunct instructors is an important starting point for institutions to recognize the needs and areas for improvement when working with this group. Understanding academic identity will assist administrators in planning quality support for adjuncts, in supporting the need for adjunct faculty members to share their input, and in supporting the goal of producing positive student outcomes.

The increased reliance on adjunct faculty members and the pressure for institutions to increase student retention has resulted in a need to understand the adjunct faculty population. Community colleges can benefit from the opportunity to learn more about their faculty in areas of staffing, retention, faculty development, and student outcomes.

The need for adjunct faculty in higher education is projected long-term (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). Thirolf (2012) stated the need for research focusing on faculty identity formation by labeling it a “top priority” (p. 269). Research exploring the identity of adjunct faculty indicates that adjunct faculty find enjoyment in their teaching and conversations with students but are dissatisfied by interactions with their colleagues or peers (Thirolf, 2012). These outcomes indicate a lack of professional development and support of relationships between full-time and part-time faculty. Considering the increasing reliance on contingent labor, interactions between permanent and temporary workers are becoming more likely. Gossett (2001) identified the need to consider the long-term impact of the use of contingent labor and the challenges it poses for communication between temporary and permanent workers.

Teaching is the most powerful influence on student outcomes (Thirolf, 2012). As such, community colleges are paying attention to institutional effectiveness in introductory courses due to the potential impact these course have on student direction and retention. The quality of instruction provided in the introductory courses can impact interest in enrolling in future courses within the same discipline, direction of education path, and overall intention to remain with the institution (Wu, 2019). As noted, adjunct faculty tend to teach introductory general education courses, and because the reliance of adjunct faculty is projected to be long-term, research to understand this majority group is needed. However, there are limited studies focusing on academic identity in the population of adjunct faculty members who are teaching introductory and general education courses in the community college setting.

This study explored the identities of adjunct faculty teaching for the community college by focusing on the language representing interactions and environmental factors of the workplace. Specifically, this analysis focused on exploring the current state of adjunct faculty

academic identity. Research exploring identity in the academic sector has been growing in recent years, along with the use of adjunct faculty in community college settings, yet there is limited published information focusing on the formation and expression of academic identity in adjunct faculty. Despite the increase in adjunct faculty teaching in higher education in the past 30 years, academic research has mostly focused on full-time, or tenured faculty. Much remains unknown about the professional identity and identity development of the adjunct faculty population (Masri, 2018). This study focused on exploring academic identity in adjunct faculty members who teach introductory general education courses in the community college setting. This study addressed the statement of the problem by contributing research focused on the adjunct faculty experience and how it impacts identity. This research will be used to present professional development recommendations to administrators that address the current needs of adjunct faculty.

Description and Scope of the Research

This study focuses on the topic of academic identity by focusing on the metaphors used by adjunct faculty members in the community college setting. One focus area of this research was the connection between language and self-identification. The language with which we describe our professional roles and experiences directly reflects how we self-identify. By focusing on metaphor, or themes expressed in language, insight can be gained in order to set future goals and personal development areas. Research by Clouse, Goodin, Aniello, McDowell, and McDowell (2013) explored the importance of metaphors when creating images and perceptions of leadership skills. Since metaphors can capture individual perceptions of experiences and environment, bringing these observations into our awareness can help to provide understanding of individual traits that contribute to concepts in the workplace, including

leadership and academic identity. While the research connecting metaphor, communication, and leadership has been active for decades, research applying metaphor to understanding academic identity is fairly recent, with most studies conducted since 2015 (Billot & King, 2015; Erickson & Pinnegar, 2017; Karabay, 2016).

This study used a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of adjunct faculty members teaching introductory general education courses. The recruitment of participants was done via e-mail, using a current contact list of faculty members teaching at a local community college. From this pool, eight adjunct faculty members agreed to be interviewed. Prior to the interview, participants were instructed to provide 10-12 photos capturing images that represent their identity as a faculty member. These photos were the focus of the interview process, along with a structured methodology, requiring one to two hours of time from each participant. Using symbolic interactionism and Conceptual Metaphor Theory as a guide, interviews were transcribed and analyzed for themes in communication that connect to patterns in academic identity.

This study explored academic identity through the use of metaphor, which provides an opportunity to explore language and to identify the subtle yet influential details portrayed and expressed through conversation. Clegg (2008) wrote that the different ways academic professionals understand and respond to their environment has a direct influence on their academic identity. While research on academic identity has focused on both the student and the faculty experience (Kamarraju & Dial, 2014), this paper focuses on the population of adjunct faculty, specifically those classified as temporary part-time, and the language they used to describe their experiences as adjunct faculty members. Academic identity development was explored by focusing on metaphorical themes used by adjunct faculty members when describing

their teaching roles. Collecting these themes in language provided insight into the current academic identity of the adjunct faculty member, overall satisfaction in the role, and recommendations for how administrators can support this group.

Theoretical Framework

This study used symbolic interactionism and conceptual metaphor theory as the theoretical framework to explore the identity construction and negotiation of adjunct faculty through the use of symbols displayed through their social interactions. Symbolic interaction theory seeks to understand identities through a communication system based on meanings and symbols formed through interactions with others (Askan, Kisac, Aydin, & Demirbuken, 2009; Blumer, 1969; Burbank & Martins, 2010). Social interactions experienced by adjunct faculty members include those with students, administration, staff, fellow adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, and community members. Symbolic interactionism captures how identity is created through the social interactions that occur with other people (Burbank & Martins, 2010). Through the lens of this framework, individuals determine how to act based on their interpretation of their surroundings (Blumer, 1969). Since society is always changing, individuals are able to interpret and define situations differently from each other (Stets & Burke, 2003). Meaning is created through these social interactions as individuals develop identity (Askan, et al., 2009). From the meanings created, symbols are also created to demonstrate shared beliefs of large groups in society (Burbank & Martins, 2010). These symbols are exchanged between individuals and expressed through language (Askan et al., 2009).

The meanings that are created from the surrounding environment are individual, but some interpretations are more likely to surface than others. In 1980, Stryker developed an approach to symbolic interactionism that proposed how symbols contribute to the creation of different roles.

The different roles connect to an individual are influenced by the positions they occupy and by the labels others have assigned to them (Stryker, 1980). Within this approach, people can hold multiple roles and can therefore have multiple identities.

Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) considers metaphor to be a cognitive tool that can be used to understand and make sense of the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). From the CMT perspective, metaphor is more than a phrase in language, and it serves as a tool for understanding experiences and concepts. The concept that is the focus of understanding is known as the target, and it is often difficult to define on its own; the concept used to describe the target, known as the source, is more concrete and easier to understand (Landau, 2018). Sources or metaphors of experience come from a variety of influences including environmental conditions, interactions with others, and cultural influences (Landau, 2018). This study focused on the language used to describe identity. Because identity creation is an individual process, the use of symbolic interactionism can capture the unique and individual elements of identity development. According to CMT, by exploring the themes in language, concepts of identity will surface.

Research Questions

1. What metaphorical themes represent the current identity of adjunct faculty in the community college?
2. Do these themes of identity capture a positive or negative reaction to the current experience of faculty in the community college setting?
3. How can administrators provide support for adjunct faculty in the community college setting based on themes of identity?

Purpose of the Study

This study explores metaphor use by adjunct faculty members and identifies how the language represents academic identity. While research in the area of identity is broad and well-documented in the areas of leadership, management, and sales, studies and research connected to the field of academic identity, specifically adjunct faculty, are limited and in-demand. While limited, the available information and research connected to academic identity have proven helpful in faculty development areas of job satisfaction, goal-setting, motivation in faculty, and measurement of productivity (Heslinga, 2013; Lieff, Baker, Mori, Egan-Lee, Chin, & Reeves, 2012; Komarraju & Dial, 2014; Skorobohacz, Billot, Murray, & Khong, 2016).

In addition to professional benefits, research on academic identity indicates its value in the areas of faculty well-being and productivity in personal roles (Billot & King, 2015; Clouse et al., 2013; Lieff et al., 2012). Research on academic identity is also important for exploring the behavior of faculty members in the classroom (Flores & Day, 2006). Despite the benefits highlighted in the existing research, the growth in the field of academic identity is limited and demands additional study to provide a voice for adjunct faculty.

Assumptions of the Study

The following statements are assumed when planning interviews with adjunct faculty:

1. Participating faculty members share honest experiences. It is assumed the participating members are volunteering their time and input for the benefit of research and development.
2. Participating faculty members bring a variety of perspectives to their role. It is assumed that each participating faculty member has unique experiences and personality traits which frame their experiences.

3. Faculty members are an important group in the structure of higher education. It is assumed that adjunct faculty members will continue to be employed and integral to the community college setting.

Literature states a need for faculty members to understand their academic identity (Billot & King, 2015; Clegg, 2008; Winter, 2009). It is assumed that research focusing directly on adjunct faculty members is welcome and necessary in order to understand themes and needs connected to academic identity.

Delimitations / Positioning Yourself

Adjunct instructors provide flexibility to institutions by accepting last minute teaching assignments. Community colleges benefit from the availability of adjunct faculty to teach introductory general education courses because these instructors are inexpensive, willing to teach at the last minute, and are willing to teach a large number of students (Levin, 2007). This study focused specifically on faculty members who had a minimum of three years of experience teaching introductory general education courses (list to be identified) and were employed in the same community college setting. Participants teaching solely upper-level or non-introductory courses were not interviewed. Adjunct faculty members teaching solely at private, for-profit, or four-year institutions, or those with less than three years teaching experience were also excluded from this study. Interviews were conducted in-person and recorded for transcription and analysis.

Definition of Terms

Academic identity: Professional identity connected to individuals in the field of academia.

Adjunct faculty/Part-time faculty: Faculty member hired without a long-term contract; often hired on a term-to-term basis.

Community college: An institution offering a variety of programs including: six-month vocational diplomas, one-year vocational, two-year vocational, technical, and pre-professional certificates, two-year programs offering general education and liberal education courses to earn an AA degree.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT): Theory viewing metaphor as a cognitive tool for understanding one concept in terms of another.

Contingent faculty: Term capturing full-time and part-time nontenure track faculty positions.

Identity: How a person sees himself or herself and is seen by the community. The formation of identity is an active and fluid process influenced by social interactions, experiences, and personal values.

Metaphor: Figure of speech referring to one thing by mentioning another; a representative symbol of something else; a theme surfacing through language.

Conclusion and Summary

Part-time or adjunct faculty comprise 77% of all faculty teaching community college students (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014). Community colleges rely on part-time faculty as a central piece of their structure (Levin, 2007). The focus on decreasing the cost of higher education has resulted in increasing numbers of part-time faculty used to meet the needs of students, and creating a system that relies on the use of temporary labor. The use of adjunct faculty is likely to increase (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014). By identifying and exploring academic identity, adjunct faculty members and administrators can work together to create professional growth opportunities and strategies to support the goals of the institution and to

provide professional development for adjunct faculty. Additionally, adjunct faculty will have the opportunity to voice their current needs.

This qualitative study explored the language used specifically by adjunct faculty members to describe their professional experiences. The theoretical framework used for this study was a combination of identity theory focusing on symbolic interactionism and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). By identifying and categorizing the metaphors participants used within the interview process, themes of academic identity development were identified and explored.

Chapter Two presents a review of literature, and provides a history of the community college, and the role of adjunct faculty in higher education. An overview is provided to explore the experience of the adjunct faculty member and the perspective of administration. Chapter Two also introduces the topic of academic identity, the importance of language, and the value of studying metaphors when describing the adjunct teaching experience. Chapter 3 describes the methodology known as the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). Chapter 3 also addresses the role of the researcher, Institutional Review Board (IRB), human subjects approval, participants, data collection methods, research design and analysis, and the project timeline. Chapter 4 captures the overview of the research and the results of the study. Chapter 4 focuses on the specific themes that emerged from the research. The summary of the results and the emergent themes are explored. Chapter 5 provides a discussion on the outcomes of the study. The discussion includes connecting the study to higher education and discussing the application of the applied theoretical frameworks. Implications and ideas for applying lessons from the research are discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Demands from accreditors, students, and the community are challenging educational institutions in the areas of budgeting, affordability, staffing, and training. Budgetary challenges are resulting in more institutions relying on temporary, part-time, and adjunct faculty to provide instruction to students. Universities in the United States have shifted toward using a large workforce of adjunct faculty members to meet classroom demands, allowing institutions to offer lower pay, fewer benefits, and less job security than offered to full-time faculty members (Brennan & Magness, 2018a).

The financial benefits of hiring adjunct faculty also include the ability to keep undergraduate courses at a reasonable size, and the flexibility to add or cancel courses depending on enrollment (Anderson, 2002). These changes have resulted in a system that relies on low-wage labor and a class of adjunct faculty in need of more development and guidance. More research is needed to represent the teaching experiences and the development of adjunct faculty's academic identity, which impacts important areas of motivation, commitment, and student outcomes (Day, 2007).

The population for this study is adjunct faculty members at a community college. *Adjunct*, *part-time*, and *contingent* are terms connected to faculty members who are hired without a long-term contract, and often on a term-by-term assignment. For the purpose of this study, the terms adjunct and part-time will be used interchangeably. The American Association of Community Colleges (2015) defines the adjunct faculty member as one teaching nine or fewer credits on a per-term basis, with no benefits. Despite being adjunct, contingent, or part-time, many are teaching a load of multiple courses, pieced together, to create a full-time teaching

schedule (Kezar & Sam, 2010). Adjuncts are usually employed without insurance and retirement planning benefits even when teaching a full load (Meixner, Kruck & Madden, 2010). A small number of adjunct faculty members report exceeding the schedule of a full-time faculty member (Brennan & Magness, 2018b). Some institutions impose limits on teaching loads, forcing adjunct faculty members who want to teach full time loads to rely on more than one institution for employment.

Changes in the field of higher education have been evident in the areas of student enrollment, government funding, curriculum, assessment, and staffing (Abbas & McLean, 2001). One of the results of these changes is an increase in the number of adjunct faculty members teaching courses at the community college level. Adjunct faculty is the now fastest growing group in higher education (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014). Despite this dynamic environment, there has been limited change in the areas of sense of belonging, identity, and the working environment of the adjunct faculty member (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018).

Institutions need to consider the experience of the adjunct faculty member in order to provide an atmosphere that supports the goals of the community college setting (Pearch & Marutz, 2005; Thirolf, 2017). Being able to understand faculty identity can help to develop and attract quality adjunct faculty members and to reduce faculty turnover, which is considered to be a “barrier to quality education” (Pearch & Marutz, 2005, p. 32). Hiring and turnover connected to adjunct faculty has changed as a result of the history of the community college.

Community College and the Administrative Perspective

History. The community college history is an evolving story, built in response to the needs of the economy and community. Changes in the field of higher education, economy, immigration, and the job market were responsible for the creation and evolution of the

community college. Community colleges filled a gap between the high school experience and a four-year degree and have since provided educational opportunities to a more diverse group of people in a larger geographical area than previously possible (ETS, 2000).

The history of the community college was shaped by many chapters of change: (a) community boosterism, (b) the rise of the research university, (c) the Progressive Era, (d) the development of universal secondary education, (e) the professionalization of teacher education, (f) the vocational educational movement, (g) open access to higher education, and (h) the increase of adult, community and continuing education (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). Community colleges were built and funded by members of the community without legal guidance or authority. These colleges were often influenced by a religious affiliation or by a specific purpose (Mellow & Heelan, 2015).

Originally known as junior colleges or as two-year colleges, the community college system reflected an extension of the German high school system that focused on providing general education courses with the goal of preparing students to transfer to a four-year college or for providing an option for technical programs (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). Joliet Junior College was the first established institution of this type, and it provided general education courses to students starting in 1901 (ETS, 2000). Expansion of junior colleges continued through the early 1920s, with both state operated and privately operated junior colleges surfacing through the United States, eventually enrolling approximately 70,000 students by 1930 (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). The years of the Great Depression presented many changes in the economy, including a significant reduction of artisan shops, which further pushed for a new approach for educating technical and industrial workers (Mellow & Heelan, 2015).

Enrollments in higher education continued to grow as a result of World War II and the GI Bill. The junior college became known as the community college in response to the support and influence of the surrounding communities (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). A network of public community colleges was created as a result of a national effort to provide education to a diverse group of students at a low-cost. The mission of the community college continued to show adaptability and accessibility. Community education and adult education programs were an extension of these institutions, often housing programs that served the community's needs (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). The educational needs of the community continued to grow as the baby boomers pursued higher education options; in the 1960's, there were 457 community colleges in operation (Mellow & Heelan, 2015).

Baby boomers entered their college years during the 1960s, which resulted in a rapid increase in enrollments in existing community colleges and the need to build new community colleges (Kasper, 2002). The baby boomer population, encouragement from parents for children to pursue higher education, and students seeking to avoid the draft for the Vietnam War all helped community college enrollments to increase from 1 million students in 1965 to over 2.2 million by 1970 (Kasper, 2002). The growth of the community college doubled again between 1970 and 1980, expanding to over 4.3 million students enrolled in community colleges (Kasper, 2002). Community colleges focused on developing relationships with high schools to promote vocational and technical two-year programs (Vaughan, 1985). The late 1980s marked a point in history when over 50 percent of college freshmen were attending a community college (Beach, 2011). Non-traditional students and students attending college for the first time found community college to be a good starting point (Beach, 2011). The community college was now considered to be a valuable and legitimate piece of higher education (Boggs, 2011).

Known as “The Decade of the Community College” the 1990s was another time of growth and change (Beach, 2011). The American Association of Junior Colleges changed their name to American Association of Community Colleges in 1992 (Boggs, 2011). By 1992, the percentage of students enrolled in a community college was 48 percent, double the enrollment captured in 1965 (The enrollment growth captured during this period of 1965-1999 went from one million students to 5.3, million, an increase of 413%. This growth is substantial when compared to the enrollment numbers for students enrolled in 4-year institutions, which started at 2.9 million, ending at 6 million, an increase of 104% (Kasper, 2002). Community colleges also gained students who were fleeing from failing and/or closing for-profit two-year institutions (Gilpin, Saunders, & Soddard, 2015). To accommodate for this surge in growth, community colleges worked hard to expand their online course offerings and to adapt to the demand for flexibility in education (Beach, 2011)

The current rate of growth experienced by community colleges has been a direct response to an increasing number of immigrants, the downturn in the economy, and an expanding job market. Support for the growth of community colleges has been evident in community responses as well as the demand from colleges and universities (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). Specifically, the field of higher education demanded a low-cost education option for growing white collar positions as well as technical positions for students in a variety of rural and urban areas (Drury, 2003). The community college was tasked with the goal of developing and training a workforce of “semi-professionals” to help guide the changing employment and educational needs (Mellow & Heelan, 2015). Today, the economy and job market continue to create demands that are being met specifically by the community college system (O’Banion, 2019).

The community college thrives during times of economic challenge and high unemployment rates. The Great Recession of 2007-2009 created a major demand for community college education, resulting in a dramatic increase of enrollment (AACC, 2017). During this time, adjunct faculty were hired rapidly and often taught more than a part-time schedule. Since the Great Recession, enrollment in higher education has declined at a steady pace, with students over the age of 40 being the most likely to drop out (AACC, 2017). Enrollments are expected to decline as the economy improves.

The growing reliance on and respect for community colleges has resulted in Oregon and Tennessee developing programs to provide a two-year education at no cost (Boggs, 2011). President Barack Obama proposed a plan for states to contribute to funding for free community college in 2015 (Boggs, 2011). This plan did not proceed, but discussions on plans to provide free education at the community college continue in many states. The increase of state and local free tuition programs, more support from employers, the affordability, and the dual enrollment programs offered through the community college will help mitigate the decline in enrollments (AACC, 2017).

Dr. George R. Boggs, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges (2012) said, “The image of the community college has improved over the years to the point where today, we’re very visible. Community colleges are now recognized as institutions offering opportunities to those who may not otherwise have the option to higher education” (p. 3). The history of the community college illustrates the mission of the institution and how it aims to meet the changing demands of the community. Adjunct faculty have served as an integral part of this growing demand for this sector of higher education. The increased use of adjunct faculty during the Great Recession was expected to decrease along with student enrollments and to

return to the reliance on full-time faculty (Kezar & Maxey, 2012). Instead, institutions found financial savings in the practice of hiring adjunct faculty and have continued the practice of hiring adjunct faculty. This has allowed institutions to meet the salary increases of established full-time faculty and to expand administrative staff, but it has come at the cost of the adjunct faculty member.

Community colleges have reported a decline in the number of instructional staff per student, contributing to the concerns connected to student outcomes and the adjunct faculty experience. The continued practice to rely on adjunct faculty has been accepted due to the financial savings and flexibility provided. The result is a group of adjunct faculty teaching the majority of the students while receiving the least amount of training, development, and support. This reliance on adjunct faculty creates a variety of important outcomes and experiences to be considered by community college administrators, including student needs, student outcomes, adjunct hiring, faculty development, and professional support. Adjunct faculty tend to teach introductory courses, often resulting in a lack of faculty support and mentorship for students during a critical early stage of the student experience (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017).

Administrative Perspective and Challenges

Administrators in higher education hold a responsibility to manage the needs of students and faculty (Hutto, 2017). It is the responsibility of administrators to manage and prepare for a variety of needs in many areas including the needs of students and faculty. Each of these areas has a connection to adjunct faculty and can be improved with more knowledge about who these instructors are and what they need from administration.

Student needs. Students are the reason faculty members and community colleges exist. Community colleges have been responding to the changing needs of students as part of their

educational mission throughout history. By providing open-access educational opportunities to a diverse population, community colleges serve the needs of a multiplicity of students: first-generation learners, students wanting to earn general electives and transfer to a four-year institution, students needing remedial education, lifelong learners, and many others. Community colleges have created a variety of credential and degree options for students while also providing flexibility (O'Banion, 2019).

The growth of the community college is impressive, from serving fewer than 10,000 students in 1920 to providing education for over 4,000,000 students by 1980 (Brint & Karabel, 1991). At the turn of the twentieth century, community college enrollment was nearly 6,000,000 students, and 96% of students in higher education had attended a public community college (Ratcliff, 2020). This expansion in enrollment resulted in the rapid growth of adjunct faculty being scheduled; in 2011 adjunct scheduling surpassed full-time faculty members for the first time (Jolley et al., 2014). Community colleges have relied on adjunct faculty throughout their history, but in recent years this trend has grown exponentially, doubling in numbers between 2006 and 2009 (American Federation of Teachers, 2010). The growing need to rely on adjunct faculty has resulted in more attention given to how students learn and persist when taught by this group.

Student outcomes. One important indicator of success for higher education institutions is the ability to retain students. Research connecting adjunct faculty and the student experience has captured both positive and negative effects, with an overall tone of concern, resulting in the need for more research (Jolley et al., 2014). Studies comparing adjunct faculty and full-time faculty originated by focusing on student evaluations from the classroom (Hellman, 1998). This approach of relying solely on student evaluation results has been deeply criticized, citing

students as unskilled evaluators and stating that student evaluations are to be informative, not used for hiring purposes (Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Uttl & Smibert, 2017). The fear of not being hired or not being scheduled to teach due to the results of student evaluations has created a response from some faculty that focuses on trying to influence student input on student evaluations. Concerns regarding grade inflation by adjuncts have been confirmed, indicating that adjunct faculty inflate grades as a result of pressure to earn positive student evaluations (Sonner, 2010). Tactics such as grade inflation and the opportunity to repeatedly revise and improve assignments have been responses to the use of student evaluations and the potential threat they pose to adjunct faculty scheduling when used for that purpose (McCall, 2011).

Adjunct faculty are considered valuable to the institution for bringing real-world experiences into the classroom (Leslie & Gappa, 1995). Bettinger and Long's (2004) research captures how the use of adjunct faculty is beneficial to motivate students in professional, technical, and science disciplines, but not in students studying humanities. Despite their knowledge and professional expertise, research captures how part-time faculty are less accessible to students outside of class, creating possible obstacles for students (Benjamin, 2002).

Studies have also captured a negative correlation between adjunct faculty and student retention (Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011). Research on the effect of adjunct faculty on student dropout rates has produced concerns, connecting heavy use of adjunct faculty to higher dropout rates (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005). Tinto (2012) noted how the interactions between students and faculty during the first two years of education are significant to student retention. With a growing number of adjunct faculty teaching first-year students, the opportunities for interactions in the classroom have decreased. However, when comparing full-time and part-time faculty, Ronco and Cahill (2004) found that the type of instructor had little impact on student

retention. Despite the growth student enrollment, student retention rates have not increased (Lederman, 2009; NCES, 2011).

Critics of the increased dependence on adjunct faculty have raised concern in the areas of educational background, teaching quality, professional training, and institutional loyalty. Adjunct faculty members bring a variety of differences to the institution, including lower number of Ph.D.'s than the typical full-time faculty member. The level of education in adjunct faculty may negatively impact the educational quality that students receive (Leslie, 1997), and the use of adjunct faculty has been linked to a decline in the quality of education (Palmer, 1998). Adjunct faculty are likely to use traditional teaching methods rather than pursuing new ways to learn or teach (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). A recent study indicated that students taking courses taught by adjunct faculty were retained (finished with a grade of C or higher) at a higher rate than when taught by full-time faculty members (Hutto, 2017). In contrast, Figlio, Schapiro, and Soter (2015) found that students who struggle academically were positively impacted and performed better when taking courses taught by adjunct faculty.

Faculty interactions in the classroom are important for students when deciding whether or not to continue investing in education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Several studies found that the increased reliance on adjunct faculty resulted in decreasing graduation rates (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011). Brewster (2000) indicated how adjunct faculty often work for more than one institution, reducing their institutional loyalty, and also negatively impacting the quality of instruction, relationships with colleagues, and interactions with students. Interaction and relationship-building opportunities between adjunct faculty members and students can be limited by the temporary employment contracts offered, as well as difficulty balancing courses at different institutions (Pannapacker, 2000). Tinto (1975) noted faculty

interaction as an important factor on the student's decision to remain enrolled or to withdraw. Administrators have many factors to consider when connecting adjunct faculty and students.

Hiring adjunct faculty. Challenges in budgetary issues in higher education indicate that the use of adjunct faculty will continue. For administrators to invest in the adjunct faculty member, understanding the current needs of the adjunct and the student are necessary. The needs of the student have evolved throughout history, with the community college adapting and changing to meet them. Student demand has influenced course offerings as well as instructor selection and assignments. The adjunct faculty member spends 91% of their time dedicated to teaching, compared to 60% for full-time faculty (Schmidt, 2005). Managing hiring and staffing for adjunct faculty members presents a variety of timely challenges. Administrators encounter the challenges of finding consistent and qualified individuals and finding the time needed for training and developing new hires. These challenges are amplified by the mobile nature of the adjunct instructor, where being employed by more than one institution is common (Kezar & Sam, 2010). Still, administrators recognize the various benefits of hiring adjunct faculty. In addition to the financial value adjunct faculty provide when compared to full-time faculty, this group provides valuable work experience and professional expertise to students (Wallin, 2004).

The rapid increase of hiring adjunct faculty has resulted in critical feedback indicating concern when looking at long-term working conditions in higher education. Gappa (1984) noted how community colleges have a strong financial motivation to hire a majority of adjuncts. In order to meet student needs, community colleges rely heavily on adjunct faculty (Wallin, 2004). Adjunct instructors have been referred to as "saviors" by administrators completing the teaching schedule (Eliason, 1980, p. 1). The reliance on adjunct faculty has resulted in the perception of a teaching role that is similar to migrant labor: cheap, temporary, and mobile (Mysyk, 2001).

For adjunct faculty to be included in development opportunities, they must first be considered a valuable resource. According to Greive and Worden (2000), “The way in which an institution selects, orients, and cultivates a different but significant long-term relationship with its adjunct faculty is a key determinant of the quality that will be brought to the institution” (p. 47).

Faculty development. The combined professional and financial value provided by hiring adjunct faculty, along with the growing demand for the hiring of adjunct faculty has created a need to invest in faculty development and resources. Wallin (2004) stated, “It is in the best interest of community colleges to cultivate and support the large number of adjuncts who are so essential to the operation of the institution and the teaching of students” (p. 373).

The requirements to be hired as an adjunct faculty member typically includes work experience and an earned degree in an area of focus, often overlooking any training (or lack) in teaching. Many adjunct faculty enter the higher education world with experience in their field, but they do not know how to teach; instead, they rely on the institution for guidance and training. Many colleges hire adjunct faculty with the focus of filling a course need, missing the orientation component and failing to expose faculty to the institutional mission (Kezar & Maxey, 2012). When working with adjunct faculty, administrators spend most of their time focusing on the schedule and availability of adjuncts when teacher development should be the focus (Clark, Moore, Johnston, & Openshaw, 2011).

The need for professional development activities to help build teaching skills and student/teacher relationships exist, yet adjunct faculty have low expectations for opportunities to participate in these areas (Anft, 2018). When comparing full-time faculty and adjunct faculty, Schuetz (2002) found that adjunct faculty have less teaching experience, are less likely to use

innovative teaching methods, and are less likely than their full-time colleagues to refer students to services on campus.

Part-time faculty need professional development opportunities to support them in areas of managing courses, working with technology, and accessing campus resources (Kezar, 2013). Support provided by administration or the faculty chair has an influence on faculty satisfaction and can be demonstrated in a variety of ways (Seipel & Larson, 2018). Adjunct faculty often note in-class observations as the standard tool for administrators to measure performance (Anft, 2018). Harper College, a public two-year institution located in the Chicago area, employs adjunct faculty to teach over half of the courses offered (Anft, 2018). Harper College has created a system to support the development of adjunct faculty, offering four options for evaluation every two years, with three out of four adjuncts selecting an evaluation different than the traditional in-class observation (Anft, 2018). Adjunct faculty are invested in teaching and appreciate efforts to address their professional development needs.

Time invested into the understanding and development of adjunct faculty members can result in improvement in the areas of job satisfaction, quality of teaching, positive student outcomes, and loyalty, bringing benefits to students, faculty and administration. The quality of the teaching experience is an important outcome connected to acknowledging and understanding academic identity (Abbas & McLean, 2001). Hiring, training, and retaining faculty members is an expensive process, one that has personal and individual needs. In order to make this process more individualized and effective, student outcomes are influenced by the instructor, making it critical for adjunct faculty members and administrators to be aware of academic identity. This awareness on academic identity plays a role in the development of quality adjunct faculty in higher education by understanding their needs and experiences.

Providing support. Despite the challenges of hiring adjunct faculty, it benefits the institution to support and develop this group that now teaches the majority of students (Luna, 2018). Considering the rapid changes and growth experienced in the adjunct faculty group, there are instructors unsure of their identity within the institution. Understanding the academic identity of adjunct faculty members can help administrators to integrate personal and professional insight about the roles and needs of the individual in the workplace. Institutions have an opportunity to support and mentor adjunct faculty (Luna, 2018). Research indicates administrators have high expectations for teaching from adjunct faculty yet these expectations are not supported financially, socially, or technically by the institution (Jolley et al., 2014; Kezar & Maxey, 2012; Morphey, Ward, & Wolf-Wendel, 2018).

Adjunct faculty have many of the same teaching practices as full-time faculty, but lack in institutional support (Meizner, Kruck, & Madden, 2010). Studies focused on the importance of institutional support for adjuncts compared the perceptions of community college administrators and adjunct faculty members and found that adjunct faculty have a need for more institutional support and opportunities for inclusion (Hinkel, 2007; Reid, 1996). Efforts including professional development opportunities and teambuilding or community building opportunities are typically absent from the adjunct faculty experience.

Recommendations to provide professional development to adjunct faculty include: (a) workshops, (b) developmental training, and (c) funding for travel (Jolley, et al., 2014). Peer observation models, as offered at Harper College, provide opportunities for adjunct faculty to learn from their peers, and to contribute to the community of the institution (Anft, 2018). The University of Oregon serves as another example of institutional support for adjunct faculty. It offers a faculty union to represent all classifications of faculty positions (Bramhall, 2014). These

examples of support are the exception, with most institutions overlooking the needs of adjunct faculty while focusing on full-time instructors as the priority (Kezar & Maxey, 2015).

Kezar and Maxey (2012) found that student success was difficult to achieve when students do not have access to their faculty members outside of the classroom. The majority of the time spent between adjuncts and students is in the classroom. At many institutions, adjuncts are not required to offer office hours or meet students outside of class (Hutto, 2017). Still, many adjunct faculty will invest time to meet with students, regardless of the requirements of the institution, and it is typical for adjunct instructors to struggle to find a designated physical space for meeting with students. When adjunct faculty struggle to find office space and computer access, it creates another obstacle in the areas of engagement and development (Hutto, 2017).

Collegial relationships between full-time faculty and adjunct faculty are an area noted for development and attention (Garcia, McNaughton, & Nehls, 2018). By supporting the development of relationships within the faculty group as a whole, institutions demonstrate support for the individual faculty member. The expectations for professional development established by administrators have strong influence on the participation levels of adjunct faculty. Research exploring the role of adjunct faculty compared to tenure-track faculty indicated that these groups are treated differently by administration in areas of support and professional development opportunities (Hutto, 2017).

Ideas for institutions to provide faculty support for adjunct faculty can be simple and require little demand from the budget. Pons et al., (2017) recommended recognition programs for faculty, inclusion programs to integrate adjunct faculty into meetings and governing opportunities, student mentorship opportunities, and peer course evaluations as a sample of ideas for support. Mentoring adjunct faculty has additional benefits that include increased confidence

in teaching and loyalty to the institution (Watson, 2012). In addition to support in the areas of development, access to resources including a school e-mail address and dedicated office space are ways for administrators to accommodate adjuncts (Meizner, Kruck, & Madden, 2010).

Professional identity is built from important details that reflect values, experiences, and influence of the workplace environment. The identity of adjunct faculty and how they understand teaching has a direct impact on the experiences of students (Bulloug, 2015). People connect to different environmental cues, adopt different habits, and use specific language at work, all of which contribute to the development of professional identity. People tend to adapt to their surroundings and to their leaders, while also developing their own specific persona in the working environment of higher education. Identity differs depending on the setting and can shift with job promotions, changes in the workplace, and through career development. Insight provided on identity can be valuable for the individual, colleagues, students, and management when working to build a team, prepare effective teaching schedules, or to support professional growth through resources. Topics like belonging, career satisfaction, and career development are all directly connected to identity. Given this, the focus of this study will be academic identity in adjunct faculty.

Adjunct Faculty

Changes in student demographics, especially in the community college setting, have demanded a wide range of part-time faculty to meet demands in different fields of study (Levin, 2007). Adjunct faculty are a valuable part of the community college, bringing diversity, professional experience, and a love for teaching (Wallin, 2004). Kuchera and Miller (1988) noted how adjunct faculty are considered to be experts in their field by administrators, offering a scholar-practitioner view. This group is an integral link between the community and the college

(Wallin, 2004). Because of their varied experiences, adjunct faculty members tend to bring a diverse background, resulting in differing views on how to manage and how to connect to the department (Collins, Glover, Myers, & Watson, 2016). Research covering the perspectives of the adjunct faculty member experiences is limited and is needed to help build professional development and management styles which will help to understand the unique needs of this population (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014; Jolley et al., 2014).

Adjunct faculty are typically less expensive and have more flexible schedules than full-time faculty (Abbas & McLean, 2001; Kuchera & Miller, 1988; Levin, 2007). Adjunct faculty are scheduled on a term to term basis and are typically paid on a fee per class system (Brennan & Magness, 2018b). Those adjunct faculty members relying on teaching as their sole source of income operate with limited job security, and often continue to accept last-minute or short-term course assignments, hoping to be invited to teach in the upcoming term (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018).

Despite being the majority, adjunct faculty do not have priority in scheduling. With full-time faculty receiving priority, adjunct faculty are assigned to fill in the remaining scheduling needs. The unpredictable teaching schedule results in an unpredictable income. Some adjuncts meet their income needs by teaching for multiple institutions. There is great economic stress connected to being an adjunct faculty member, with limited priority in the scheduling process (Goldstene, 2015). Gappa (2008) noted that adjunct faculty do not have access to advancement opportunities and often hope for course assignments in order to continue teaching in the upcoming term.

Greive and Worden (2000) explored the possibilities for adjunct faculty exploitation due to inequities in pay, respect, benefits, and power within the institution. A report by The Coalition

of the Academic Workforce (CAW) found the average pay for a three-credit course to be \$2,700 (\$900 per credit), indicating a poverty-level wage (Hananel, 2013). Adjunct faculty were once considered to be valuable resources for flexibility and professional experience but now are experiencing less respect and consideration from administration and the community (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017). The shift to relying on adjuncts for the bulk of teaching has created concerns about adjuncts being marginalized and forced to stay at low-income wages, with limited support, and limited advancement opportunities (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017). The result of these changes is a temporary workforce. Temporary employment has become increasingly common in higher education (Waaiker, Belder, Sonneveld, van Bochove, & van der Weijden, 2017).

The adjunct faculty member frequently replaces empty full-time faculty positions (Abbas & McLean, 2001). Hiring adjunct members is very economical, providing institutions the option to hire up to two dozen faculty members for the cost of one full-time faculty member (Stephens & Wright, 1999). Some adjunct faculty resonate with the challenges of being in a temporary workforce, yet some find it liberating and inspiring, citing time for other interests as a benefit. Temporary employment is viewed positively by some adjuncts and seen as way to develop skills and build a career without the boundaries of a traditional position (Marler, Barringer, & Milkovich, 2002). Adjunct faculty members enter the teaching profession with a variety of intentions and expectations. These expectations, combined with reality, are negotiated throughout the experience of the faculty member, resulting in their identity.

Due to the increased and projected future of the reliance on adjunct faculty positions, understanding academic identity will bring both social and financial value to administrators and faculty members; knowledge about identity will help to indicate the needs of the faculty member, as well as demonstrate an empowering investment in the role of the adjunct faculty member.

These investments can help to support the adjunct faculty member and save the institution financial costs by retaining faculty members.

Types of adjuncts. Gappa and Leslie (1993) created four categories of adjunct instructors to capture different ways to classify the role:

- Specialists, experts or professionals, are adjuncts who typically hold another job, and teach to share their knowledge.
- Freelancers are adjuncts who work in more than one institution.
- Career Enders are professionals approaching retirement and planning to maintain a professional connection through teaching.
- Aspiring academics are adjuncts beginning their teaching career or using teaching as an option to supplement income.

In another model, Wolfinger et al. (2009) considered adjunct faculty to be in one of two categories: (a) individuals with an outside job teaching one or two classes; and (b) adjunct faculty who create a full schedule and a primary income from this form of teaching. When classifying the adjunct faculty population into categories of adjuncts, some are supplementing their income while earning another degree, some are interested in sharing their expertise, many are semi-retired, and some depend solely on teaching as an adjunct as a means to survive (Brennan & Magness, 2018b). There are a variety of motivational factors that result in the decision to be an adjunct professor. The one common theme in the review of literature indicates that adjunct faculty members love to teach (Pearch & Marutz, 2005; Thirolf, 2017).

Reasons for being an adjunct. A survey by the American Federation of Teachers indicates that most adjunct faculty are motivated by their desire to teach (AFT Higher Education, 2010). There are many options for those who love to teach, so why choose to be an adjunct

faculty member? People have different goals when choosing to be an adjunct faculty member; some aim for flexibility, some are piecing a full load of teaching together, and some are filling time during retirement (Wallin, 2010). While some choose the route of an adjunct faculty member with the goal of becoming a full-time faculty member, many prefer to teach part-time to benefit from flexibility (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). Fifty percent of part-time faculty members studied in the 2010 AFT survey stated a preference for part-time teaching, while 47 percent indicated a desire to gain a full-time teaching position (AFT Higher Education, 2010). Adjunct faculty under age 50 were slightly more interested in a full-time teaching position than those over age 50 (AFT Higher Education, 2010). Outside of the love for teaching, adjuncts have a variety of reasons for choosing to do this work, including the desire to work in their field of training and teaching for personal satisfaction (Pons et al., 2017). In a case study focusing on motivation for teaching, Pons et al. found adjunct faculty over the age of 50 were more likely than instructors under than age of 50 to report being motivated to teach in their field of study (78%), work with students (76%), and work for personal satisfaction (68%).

Faculty pay is rarely mentioned as a motivation for teaching; in fact, individuals are typically willing to work for less than equitable wages for the opportunity to teach a college level course (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011). Intrinsic motivational factors including respect, prestige, autonomy, and flexibility are often a part of the decision to teach (Pons et al., 2017). While faculty pay is not a typical motivational factor to become a teacher, instructors do interpret salary as an indication of the value the institution places on their services (Pons et al., 2017). Due to low pay, adjunct faculty members depending on adjunct teaching as their income are often combining appointments from more than one institution (Angulo, 2018; Luna, 2018). This experience of teaching for more than one institution results in questions of loyalty and challenges

of administrators to provide resources. Faculty working for more than one institution have less time available for students, and are less available for professional development opportunities offered within the institution. Adjunct faculty are more likely to change jobs resulting in turnover and absenteeism in the workplace (McNaughtan, García, & Nehls, 2017).

The reasons adjunct faculty teach is important to consider as it influences their experience. Some of the motivational factors, such as the opportunity to connect with students, contribute positively to identity development; other factors, such as being offered a last-minute teaching position with limited support, contribute negatively. An instructor wanting to add one class to his or her schedule for additional income will have very different expectations from the instructor who continues to teach with the hopes of being considered for a possible full-time faculty position in the future. Adjunct faculty motivated to teach in a full-time position will face more frustration in a system that supports and relies on part-time employment.

How did you get started? Regardless of intentions or goals for advancement, faculty who start their teaching career in a part-time, temporary, or full-time non-tenure positions are likely to stay in that classification. The majority of faculty entering teaching in a part-time or contingent role will remain in that category throughout their teaching career (Finkelstein et al., 2017). As full-time positions become replaced with part-time faculty, the opportunity to move up to a position offering benefits becomes less likely with time. Years of experience with the same institution does not equate job security. Forty-one percent of adjuncts report being employed at the same institution for 11 years or longer (American Federation of Teachers, 2010). The decline of full-time, tenure-track positions has taken place in all institutions but public research/doctorial universities (Rhoades & Frye, 2015). With only 25 percent of new faculty members entering a

teaching role as a full-time, tenure track appointment, the use of adjunct has been set to be a long-term employment plan in higher education.

Who are you? The university and college faculty demographics reflect growth in women and people of color in higher education. The proportion of women teaching at the college level increased 109.7 percent between 1993 and 2013 (Finkelstein et al., 2017). Women have entered higher education primarily in the part-time and non-tenure track positions, 2.5 times higher than men (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). Women currently represent 62 percent of all adjunct faculty positions (Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012), which in part reflects the increasing number of women earning doctorate degrees (National Science Foundation, 2011). Faculty of color and underrepresented minorities represent 12.7 percent of non-tenure track faculty (Finkelstein et al., 2017). Growth in women faculty, foreign-born faculty, and underrepresented minorities has shifted the demographics of adjunct faculty. Of these groups, foreign-born faculty are the group most likely to gain full-time faculty positions (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016, p. 8).

What do we call you? The rise in demand of adjunct faculty has created many questions of identity, including what label to use to correctly capture the adjunct role (part-time, contingent, contract) and how professionals feel about the titles (Block, 2016). Faculty teaching part-time are assigned various titles depending on the institution (Lyons, 2007). Adjunct faculty were once known as “freeway flyers” with reference to the transient and auxiliary nature of their role (Jolley et al., 2014). While some academic professionals wear the title of adjunct with pride, others consider their role to be “less than” simply due to the adjunct status (Baker, 2016). Part-time teaching experience has been considered a blemish on the resume or C.V. in some environments, but it is a regular way of operating in the community college environment (Wyles,

1998). Erdman (2011) postulated that common terms representing part-time or adjunct faculty are holding adjunct faculty back from opportunities and hints at marginalization.

There is a hierarchy in the field of higher education ranking community college faculty below the other teaching roles on levels of perceived importance and prestige attached to teaching (Weisman & Marr, 2002). Classification of roles and titles can create challenges in identity as well as within the community of the institution. Some professionals insist on using one title over another, with the intent of appearing more professional; many adjunct faculty members have only a preference for more consistency in the terminology, wanting to have a definite title (Baker, 2016). Adjunct faculty members teaching at various institutions using various terms can find role and identity discovery to be confusing (Baker, 2016).

Faculty socialization. As a result of the changing demographics and reliance on adjuncts, faculty members are no longer socialized to their roles in traditional ways. The use of technology and online resources has reduced the opportunity for personal interaction (Finkelstein et al., 2017). Personal interaction with and attention from administration and peers is necessary for adjunct faculty to feel included and invested in their role. Being included in discussions and planning regarding course assignments, textbook selection, and learning goals for the institution are opportunities typically provided to full-time faculty, resulting in the adjunct faculty members being left out (Kezar, 2018)

Union representation. The organizing of faculty unions has increased steadily since the Great Recession. The major driving force of the increase of unions is adjunct faculty aiming to gain equality and access to benefits in a system built for full-time positions. Between 2013 and 2015, there were 55 new employee bargaining units, most of them representing part-time faculty (Herbert, 2016).

The growth of unions focusing specifically on providing coverage for adjunct faculty has captured the largest union growth in recent years (Herbert, 2016). Faculty unions focusing on adjunct faculty have been created with the goals of addressing pay inequity, to offer a voice for adjunct faculty, and to increase respect within the institution. Berry (2005) indicated that adjunct faculty feel respected when provided stable employment, including adequate notice when being offered work assignments. In addition, unions are helping adjunct faculty to be aware of their professional rights and responsibilities, as well as how being aware of their role in the institution (Kezar & Maxey 2012). The increase in faculty unions representing adjuncts represents the drive by adjunct faculty to leverage change that will represent and support this labor group (Rhoades, 2017). Adjunct faculty are working to negotiate rights and equality through organizing faculty unions, creating a more professional presence in the higher education environment.

Identity

Most of the academic professionals in higher education during the 1900s were considered members of a respected educational community and seen to have fairly stable identities (Castells, 1997). Teaching assignments were consistent, teaching positions were highly-respected, and part-time faculty were only used to fill in gaps not covered by the full-time faculty members who held the majority of positions. Over the past few decades, there has been a shift in the teaching populations in higher education institutions. In 1970, full-time faculty at degree-granting institutions held the majority of positions, or 78% of teaching positions; by 2009, full-time faculty positions had dropped to 51% (NCES, 2005, 2011, 2016). In contrast, part-time or adjunct faculty went from holding 22% of teaching positions in 1970 to 49% in 2007 (NCES, 2005, 2011, 2016).

This increased use and increased number of adjunct faculty, termed *adjunct faculty dependence* has shifted the role of the faculty member, along with the needs of higher education institutions, resulting in a need for more focus on being aware of identity and the needs of adjunct faculty (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014). Adjunct faculty have been identified as being in a unique position due to the variety of different types of motivations that exist, and a group that needs identity theory to gain understanding (Kuchera & Miller, 1988 p. 242). Research focusing on professional identity in teachers has grown in interest as a way to understand teaching (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011).

The concept of identity has been defined in many ways. Fields such as psychology, leadership, and sociology have explored the root of identity development by studying how different settings and career choices shape identity. Identity is a dynamic construct that is continually formed and reformed (Lieff et al., 2012; Luehmann, 2007; Monrouxe, 2010). Identity captures how a people see themselves and aim to be seen by others (Lieff et al., 2012). Identity also encompasses how an individual is perceived by the community (Gee, 2001).

Professional identity is a fairly recent focal point of research with very limited work done in higher education (Clarke, Hyde, & Drennan, 2013). The level of interest to study and understand professional identity in faculty has increased as important connections between identity and topics including motivation, self-esteem, workplace performance, and job satisfaction have been established (Day, 2007; Hong, 2010).

When looking at professional identity, the focus is placed on how individuals see themselves, interpret their interactions with others, wish to be perceived, and are recognized within the specific industry. Lasky (2005) defines professional identity as “how teachers define themselves to themselves and others” (p. 902). Identifying the different details that capture how

we see ourselves from this angle is quite challenging, yet many different researchers have tried (Clarke et al., 2013; Kuchera & Miller, 1988; Lea & Stierer, 2011; Madikizela-Madiya & Le Roux, 2017). Defining professional identity often involves self-reflection and storytelling (Masri, 2018; Badley, 2016). Teachers integrate their personal and professional selves into stories when exploring and expressing their identities (Kelchtermans, 2005). Literal terms and metaphorical phrases are both used when a person is communicating their identity to others. Metaphors used by faculty members bring insight to how individuals are aligned with or challenged by leadership and the environment (Billot & King, 2015). Metaphor was the focus of this study; the goal was to identify the terms that represent the identity of the adjunct faculty members.

Metaphors are often considered figures of speech (Landau, 2018). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) asserted that while metaphors structure the understanding of our experiences and shape our perceptions and actions, they are entrenched and difficult to identify. Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) introduced a new way to study metaphors, using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Conceptual metaphor theory sees the metaphor as a cognitive tool used by people to make sense of the world by understanding one concept in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphors structure how an individual thinks about the world and reflects the individual experience.

Different industries, and particular positions, have their own unique viewpoints on how to identify and claim part of a professional community. For example, information technology professionals have a professional identity that is connected to technology and their experiences within their network. Health care professionals connect to the different identity elements that demonstrate membership in the medical industry. The academy is known as a social setting where interactions take place, resulting in the formation, changing, and enacting of identity (Pifer

& Baker, 2013). Academic identity is connected to professionals in the field of education and captures how they see and perceive their role, as well as how they believe they are seen and viewed by others in the profession or the academy.

Blommaert (2001) explained identity to be a concept that individuals are able to construct through their surroundings, experiences, and resources. Identity is concerned with different areas including audience, situation, purpose, and power. The concept of identity develops experiences from the past and the future. Wenger (1998) explained this process as a learning trajectory that “incorporates the past and the future in the very process of negotiating the present” (Wenger, 1998, p. 74). These beliefs about our identity and established models of thinking often exist unrecognized and in the unconscious mind.

Academic identity development. Developing academic identity is an ongoing process (van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, & Beishuizen, 2017). Identity is built through education and experience, along with interactions and factors in the working environment. Identity development is constantly happening without awareness or effort. Academic professionals are usually unaware of how their identity is being built, yet the process is constant and fluid (Knight & Trowler, 2001). Research focusing on identity formation in academia focuses on how individuals recognize their competencies, understand their values, and build self-esteem based on these values (Eccles, Wigfield, Flanagan, Miller, Reuman & Yee, 1989). Interactions including classroom teaching, conversations with colleagues, long-term experiences, and relationships both on and off campus all result in the creation of identity (Pifer & Baker, 2016).

Academic identity is not stable but is continually changing and complex (Clarke et al., 2013; Clegg, 2008; Leibowitz, Ndebele, & Winberg, 2014). Becoming an academic is

considered a process of thinking and feeling (Fitzmaurice, 2013). For adjunct faculty, academic identity is being formed and composed through many different stages of experience and is always facing the possibility of change (Leibowitz et al., 2014). From being hired, to teaching, training, and building connections with colleagues, there are influences on the creation of academic identity that is different for adjunct faculty (Badley, 2016). Subgroups of identity are also formed, depending on the activity, participation, and community. For example, an adjunct faculty member may have subgroups of identity including: psychology instructor, new-faculty mentor, and organizer of the psychology club, with each contributing to the overall identity of the individual.

Adjunct faculty members often juggle various workload assignments, at different institutions, creating role conflict and challenges in identity creation. Kuchera and Miller (1988) identify a strong relationship between role and identity. The various demands of each of these roles has been reported to create challenges in role management (Ford, Harding, & Learmonth, 2010). Adjunct faculty members who feel unsupported by their administration or academic community have stated that it negatively impacts their impressions of their level of professionalism and confidence (Abbas & McLean, 2001). Academic identity can reflect tension and stress when the higher education system is driven by market forces instead of the values of education (Sutton, 2015). Academics face increasing pressures to alter their ways of behaving and thinking as the managerial culture evolves (Hinings, 2005). Because of the demands from political and economic influences, academic identity is an ongoing process of building and rebuilding, depending on the role (Taylor, 1989).

Academic identity is both an inward and an outward journey (Schulze, 2015). Interaction with the community and colleagues are contributors to the outward journey, while exploring

values, self-esteem, and goals are part of the inward journey (Schulze, 2015). Academic identity also has strong connections to values, showing where a person is committed and what he or she supports in their work (Taylor, 1989). Values are connected to academic identity as they connect to all areas of academic and university experience (Winter & O'Donohue, 2012). Identity is shaped through a history of experiences and through living and working conditions (Taylor, 1989). There are psychological processes connected to creating academic identity including connectedness, commitment, and a sense of appreciation (van Lankveld et al., 2017). Influences such as the work environment for adjunct faculty, support provided by administration, the ability to adapt to change, fitting in, and the opportunity to have a voice are powerful when creating academic identity in adjunct faculty.

Fitzmaurice (2013) identified a need for research focusing on identity development of professionals new to the field of higher education. When new academic professionals begin their work in higher education, they are faced with questions on identity, goals, purpose, and values (Fitzmaurice, 2013). By filling roles in teaching, research, or service, or all of these roles, adjuncts are expected to adjust to the higher education setting and develop their identity. The importance of understanding the identity of faculty and representing the faculty experience is critical (Pifer & Baker, 2016) and valuable in the areas of strategic planning, recruiting and training new faculty, and faculty support.

Working environment. Awareness of academic identity and approaches to the environment can help illuminate the connections between the faculty members and the students as well as the connections between faculty members and the community of the educational institution. Learning more about academic identity is also a way for administrators to understand the needs of the adjunct faculty, including needs connected to the physical work environment

(Volkman & Anderson, 1998). Faculty who are provided with support and are satisfied in their teaching role are more likely to stay, helping to reduce costs connected to hiring and training (Nedd, 2006; Syptak et al., 1999). Considering the identity development process, and perceptions of the academic field from the adjunct faculty perspective, will assist higher education institutions in creating development opportunities and career growth that support both success of the faculty member as well as the staffing needs of the institution (Clegg, 2008; Graham, 2012).

Madikizela-Madiya and Le Roux (2017) identified that the research on academic identity often focused on the details of what academics do and how they do it but overlooked the important detail of where. Location, environment, and physical space are important. The overall culture of change has also been connected to academic identity, indicating that the perceived environment or culture, is a powerful influence on academic identity (Henkel, 2005). Exploring the responses of adjunct faculty members in this study brings more awareness of environmental factors, whether physical (office space, furniture, lighting) or cultural (acceptance, rapid change, office politics) and their importance in the formation of academic identity.

The role of the adjunct faculty member is one that changes frequently, along with the changing field of higher education (Billot & King, 2015). Perceptions of the surrounding working environment have been captured in higher education research by Churchman (2006), Clegg (2008), and Henkel (2005), indicating that the influences of the teaching environment impact the development of academic identity. Understanding and adapting to the work environment is a regular experience for the adjunct faculty member, resulting in an evolution of academic identity. The changing identity of the adjunct faculty member is a reflection of the work being done, and a reflection of the institution (Graham, 2012).

Working environments, including the atmosphere and culture of the institution, have been connected to self-esteem and identity (Badley, 2016). Academic work and the academic role require certain personal qualities, character traits, or dispositions, but also role conformity in terms of conduct and appearance (Paul, 2016). This matters because constant turnover in the adjunct faculty population can result in burnout and dissatisfaction for remaining active faculty (Betts & Sikorski, 2008). However, when individuals find that their teaching environment is a match for their academic identity, they find more meaning in their work and are more likely to stay with the institution (Oyserman & Destin, 2010).

Near the end of the 20th century, questions began to surface about the concept of identity as a result of changes in the field of higher education, and disconnection in social institutions (Hinkel, 2007). With some adjunct faculty working at more than one institution, additional challenges surface in the area of creating identity (Kuchera & Miller, 1988). Institutions take different approaches to integrating and including adjunct faculty when planning trainings and developmental opportunities (Spaniel & Scott, 2013). The variety of approaches used by administrations when supporting adjunct faculty adds another layer of influence on the development of academic identity.

There are a variety of experiences and perspectives that create the identity of the adjunct faculty member. Position-fit is an important consideration when exploring how identity is created in the adjunct faculty member. Those who choose to be in a part-time position are more likely to be satisfied in their teaching role than those desiring full-time employment (Kramer, Gloeckner, & Jacoby, 2014). Some faculty members fully appreciate and thrive on the flexibility and are willing to accept the changes connected to their adjunct faculty position. Students working on graduate education and those phasing to retirement are examples of individuals

choosing the path of an adjunct faculty member, with no expectations of full-time faculty (Brennan & Magness, 2018b). There are those who find the unpredictable and inconsistent working conditions to be unacceptable, specifically those relying on their teaching as their primary source of income (Pons et al., 2017). Some adjunct faculty members are happy to do office work from their home office, while others feel excluded by not having a designated office space on campus. Each of these variables impact the development of identity in the adjunct role. The elements contributing to the development of identity in adjunct faculty capture themes that range from proudly practicing their passion for teaching (Pons et al., 2017) to the experience of feeling invisible (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Abbas and McLean (2001) captured the discontentment of adjunct faculty members who compared their role in teaching to that of a factory line worker, where less thinking and less personal identity is connected to the teaching experience. Brennan and Magness (2018a) noted that adjunct faculty have been compared to sweatshop workers and are often considered mistreated. Collins, Glover, Myers, and Watson (2016) identified a concern by adjunct faculty members that academic freedom could be threatened by the use of automated processes, and less support by management. The threat of automated systems, focus on budgets and retention, and less autonomy provided to adjunct faculty members has resulted in the teaching experience being less directed by personal values and experience, and more closely resembling a machine (Goldstene, 2015).

Administrative support. While adjunct faculty often report feeling supported by administration and appreciate the opportunity to teach, communication, scheduling, and training are consistent concerns reported from adjunct faculty members (Betts & Sikorski, 2008; Datray et al., 2014). Despite providing over 70% of the instruction in higher education, adjunct faculty

are not given the scheduling priority that full-time faculty receive (Jolley et al., 2014). Adjunct faculty report facing regular challenges including the need to plan for last-minute scheduling, having limited or no course preparation time, and earning an unreliable income (Wallin, 2010).

One model, created to address the need for adjunct faculty to be considered “valuable organizational players” (Roueche, Rouche, & Milliron, 1996, p. 34), is the Part-Time Faculty Integration Model. Research on the part-time faculty integration model has revealed how adjunct faculty do not feel connected to the institution or part of the culture and that administrators lack support and resources to encourage this participation (Roueche et al., 1996). Elements such as communication, socialization, and integration were identified by Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1996) as important when introducing adjunct faculty into the institutional culture.

Institutions are fighting demands in budgets and would benefit by looking at adjunct faculty members as an investment for both the institution and the goal of providing quality teaching (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). Clegg (2008) maintained that more emphasis is being placed on understanding academic identity due to the amount of change that has taken place in the higher education field. Having more awareness of academic identity can help both the adjunct faculty member and administration to bring a more rewarding and successful experience to the institution by contributing to areas including faculty development planning, course evaluations, and community building. Support for adjunct faculty from the institution not only helps adjunct faculty, but will also help to provide an environment that supports students (Thirolf, 2013), while hiring and training a strong department of faculty, both part-time and full-time, can bring value to the overall institution (Betts & Sikorski, 2008).

Demand for change. Change can be difficult and have a powerful influence on identity. While studying change in the academic setting is not new, research indicates a need for focusing

specifically on how change impacts the identity of adjunct faculty (Flores & Day, 2006; Taylor, Tisdell, & Gusic, 2007). Academic identity is the lens by which a professional in the education field views his or her role. Individuals have control over the creation of their identities (Clegg, 2008). Elements connected to academic identity include how faculty members manage their classroom, leadership styles in the classroom and in educational settings, as well as how an individual is perceived by other educators. Exploring academic identity provides the opportunity to explore why adjunct faculty often resist change.

Adjunct faculty members are often resistant to changes in the organization of higher education, including trends of pressure to perform with strong course evaluation scores, and the pressure to manage more students in the classroom (Goldstene, 2015). With fluctuation and consistent changes in the field of higher education, studies indicate that adjuncts have collective concerns regarding their role and the expectations placed on them as part-time employees. The field of higher education has experienced an increased focus on performance metrics, efficiency, enrollment numbers, and profit, impacting academic identity and the quality of academic work produced (Winter, 2009). Considering the changes that have taken place, despite resistance, and the increased focus on performance data, adjunct faculty are under more pressure than ever to receive satisfactory or positive remarks from students on teaching or course evaluations.

Sense of belonging. Community and connection are important components in academic identity. Academic identity creation is a process that involves many different communities such as: faculty, student, and administration (Malcolm & Zukas, 2009). Academic identity is connected to community membership, the discipline being taught, and the institution (Hinkel, 2007; Ross, Sinclair, Knox, Bayne, & Macleod, 2014). Each role connected to the topic of academic identity can be explored deeper through the evaluation of language. Because of the

complex layers that accompany different roles, academic identity can be difficult to define (Madikizela-Madiya & Le Roux, 2017). When individuals do not find their academic identity to be compatible with the culture of their institution, they are more likely to depart (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). Adjunct faculty members express feelings of isolation more than feelings of frustration in reaction to having a lack of support to successfully do their job (Goldstene, 2015).

Vulnerability. Considering the reported lack of training, professional development, support and respect connected to being an adjunct faculty member, this path appears to be courageous. Driven by the passion for teaching and helping others, adjunct faculty have many opportunities to take risks and make decisions, but they are also monitoring how these risks may impact their opportunities for advancement. Research focusing on academic identity development indicates how being an adjunct faculty member can result in a reaction of vulnerability. Lasky (2005) explored how the fluctuating nature of professional development requires risk taking behavior and the potential to be embarrassed or to lose trust within the institution. The decisions for adjunct faculty to take risks and adhere to their values and morals can result in vulnerability when faculty are not supported (Masri, 2018). Vulnerability is a result of feeling powerless or without control in situations that provoke fear or anxiety (Masri, 2018). A common reaction to fear and anxiety is to become closed-off, to isolate, or to regain control in a way that may not honor values. Reactions focusing on regaining control or running from situations where vulnerability is present can have dramatic results in student outcomes as these behaviors get in the way of student learning outcomes and building trust within the organization (Kelchtermans, 2005).

Voice. Knowledge about academic identity is connected to the management of student learning and valuable for professional growth (Hinkel, 2007). Studies have found that adjunct

faculty members consistently express feeling unheard at faculty meetings and under-valued when input is requested from the team (Abbas & McLean, 2001; Kuchera & Miller, 1988). Adjunct faculty report commonly feeling left-out of faculty planning discussions and departmental meetings, resulting in a feeling of low-status (Abbas & McLean, 2001).

Changes including the use of technology, challenging budgets, changes in management approaches, and limited scheduling opportunities, are examples of how developments in the field of higher education have challenged academic identity and how individuals may need to change along with the field (Collins et al., 2016). With the limited training that is typically offered for adjunct faculty starting in their teaching role, adjunct faculty are left to find their own path and navigate through the expectations of the institution and students. These experiences can create responses that result in concerns with job satisfaction and instructor motivation.

Teaching is a profession of caring (Fitzmaurice, 2013). Professionals in caring roles often see their work as an expression of their morals and have important values that help in the creation of their identity (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012). Autonomy has strong connections to academic identity, with adjunct faculty expressing a desire to have control over their teaching plans (Henkel, 2005). Concerns connected to having limited time, and excessive workloads have resulted in feelings of less autonomy and individuality (Madikizela-Madiya & Le Roux, 2017). Lack of time often squelches creativity and threatens the individual contributions that once added individuality to the teaching experience. Academic professionals have found blogs, social media, and faculty web pages to be creative and innovative ways to present and develop their academic identities (Luzón, 2018). Creative outlets such as academic writing or academic blogging can also help to create academic identity, while providing an opportunity for self-expression (Kirkup, 2010; Lea & Stierer, 2011).

Academic identity is a fluid concept that reflects experiences, environments, culture, and role expectations. In a time of financial pressures, high levels of competition for teaching positions, and the changing demographics of the students in the community college setting, the value of understanding and acknowledging academic identity is an important piece to address the needs and influences of the adjunct faculty member. One way to capture identity is to hear the narrative from the adjunct faculty member and to explore the language used.

Metaphors

Academic identity is expressed through the use of language that can be studied using a variety of approaches (Koning & Waistell, 2012). Metaphors captured in narratives of faculty members provide an opportunity to express academic identity (Billot & King, 2015). By exploring academic identity through a narrative approach, the individual identity development process can be examined, bringing more understanding to the importance of the role of the adjunct faculty member. This study focused on metaphor usage to understand the academic identity of adjunct faculty members in the community college setting. The findings of this study will assist both administrators and adjunct faculty in the endeavor of finding the most value in the adjunct faculty role.

The definition of metaphor varies depending on the approach and use of the term (Wolff & Gentner, 2011). Metaphors represent themes and bring deep meanings to the surface in conversation (Fuda & Badham, 2011). For the purpose of this study, metaphor refers to a term used in language to capture emerging common themes in conversation. One way to explore the role of the adjunct faculty member is by studying the words they use when describing their individual experiences. Bredeson (1987) identified metaphor research as an important tool for analyzing schools and the people who work within them. Metaphor has been effectively used to

identify important components of identity in business leaders, demonstrating strong transferable use to leaders and academic professionals the field of higher education (Koning & Waistell, 2012).

Experience in the role of an adjunct can include teaching, research, service, and administrative duties (Clegg, 2008; Fitzmaurice, 2013). The way a person speaks about him or herself has an impact on how he or she are perceived but also on how he or she perceives his or her own identity. Zaltman (2003) explained how metaphors allow individuals to group experiences together and to use the five senses to learn about our surroundings, making it easier to organize and understand our experiences.

The use of metaphors connects to both the left and the right hemispheres of the brain, making one of the quickest links between how we speak about something versus how we visualize it (Sanders & Sanders, 1984). Metaphors are often used to communicate an idea or an impression of something, specifically when the concept is difficult to communicate or to explore. Metaphors are considered a new way of seeing something and an opportunity to make connections between things we know and the unknown (Argyropoulou & Hatira, 2014). Metaphors often serve the purpose of explaining or describing a concept and are a tool that can help bring out information from individual conversations. Metaphors are used in research because they are active in different levels of understanding (Argyropoulou & Hatira, 2014). Identity often includes changes in meaning; language is a way to express what these changes mean and how they impact identity (Koning & Waistell, 2012).

Aristotle provided the first systematic definition of metaphor in Western thought, stating in *The Poetics*: “Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else: the transference being either from genus to species or species to genus or from species to species, or

on the ground of analogy” (as cited in Barnouw, 1989, p. 7). He described metaphor as “a borrowed term, a word substituted for another word, or a form of analogy that could be used to intensify the persuasive effect of an argument” (as cited in Hutchins, 1952, p. 342). The concept of a figure of speech is an active use of metaphor, and one that has been traditionally connected to Aristotle’s definition (Clouse et al., 2013). This traditional use of metaphor was widely accepted until a new perspective was offered by English poets in the early 19th Century (Clouse, et al., 2013) stating that metaphor is a basic element of communication and a way of expressing thoughts.

Foundational research was conducted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) when metaphors were used to express language, thought, and action in order to reveal different categories of thought. Following this definition of metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) asserted that metaphors can be useful even if the usage is different than the primary use of the term. For example, “the student union provides support for the student body” can refer to support being assistance as well as support in the sense of bearing weight and housing equipment or student tools. Bredeson (1987) supported the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) stating that metaphors capture thoughts, feelings and actions that help in the understanding of a connection between two different things. While different definitions of metaphor exist, Lakoff & Johnson (1980) looked for the metaphor to be different than the typical use, focusing on themes in language that are used to understand the world.

Metaphors and academic identity. The language used by adjunct faculty is important in describing their experiences. This section will address the combination use of metaphors in language and how this is connected to the formation of academic identity. Billot and King (2015) focused on the descriptions of academic identity using metaphor, finding value in the use of

stories from academic life to explore how faculty members do or do not align with the expectations from their full-time peers and university leadership.

Leaders in higher education can be influential in the development of identity (Billot & King, 2015). Examples of metaphors connected to the identity of leaders include: fire (to represent ambition), snowball (to represent accountability), mask (to represent authenticity), and movie (to represent self-reflection). These examples illustrate how metaphors offer a way to make traits easier to understand and to remember (Fuda & Badham, 2011). Research capturing metaphors connected to educators include: life as a journey, the value of lifelong learning, the benefit of mentoring others and connecting to role models (Heslinga, 2013). In addition to cognitive processing help, metaphors assist with the deep expression of thoughts (Fuda & Badham, 2011).

Because of the need for academic professionals to absorb and process information in teaching and learning situations, research focusing on academic identity is gaining momentum. There is a need for more research that focuses on the changing nature of academic work and the need for professionals to adapt to a volatile environment (Collins et al., 2016). Lucky and Rubin (2017) identified pressure for academic professionals to research, teach, and be active in service within the community. Additionally, adjunct faculty members have identified pressures faced in deciding how to participate in the educational community and in determining which organizations to join, in an effort to present an acceptable academic identity (Badley, 2016).

Some aspects of identity are implicit, or hidden from conscious awareness (Baron & Banaji, 2006). Implicit identities tend to be shaped by emotional experiences and established earlier in life, which makes them more accurate predictors of long-term behavioral patterns (Baron & Banaji, 2006). Being aware of these implicit identity components can help individuals

understand areas that are more available for professional development. Identity is constructed through interactions within communities, where individuals follow the rules, yet each has its own individual language choices (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015). By exploring the choice of language used by adjunct faculty members, insight about different elements of identity can be identified.

Explicit identities are those that are in the individuals' awareness and are shaped by cultural norms (Baron & Banaji, 2006). Understanding how communication is delivered and received between peers, Clegg (2008) asserted that academics perceive and react to their academic environments differently and this reaction has a significant impact on academic identity. By exploring both explicit and implicit identity components, an overview of academic identity can be captured.

Since the academic setting is constantly shifting and changing, identity awareness is also changing and being reshaped. There is a need for administrators to recognize the identity of the institution as well as the faculty identities in order to create an environment of support and cohesion (Churchman & King, 2009). This study focused on the metaphorical themes that surfaced when adjunct faculty members described their role in the community college setting. This research will contribute to the field of higher education by assisting adjunct faculty members in their professional journeys through language exploration and by providing research to help both faculty and administrators understand the needs that surface through these conversations.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is a combination of identity theory from the symbolic interactionist perspective and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). It used a qualitative approach and a research design devoted to understanding language focused on adjunct

faculty members. This language contributes to the identity traits professionals adopt and display in overall academic identity. The study focused on the metaphorical expressions used and themes that surfaced when adjunct faculty members were recounting and describing their professional experiences. By focusing on metaphor, this study explored communication examples from the participants' personal frames of reference. The central phenomenon explored was academic identity through metaphor, which can ultimately direct an individual's teaching style and communication style.

This study utilized interviews to examine the language used when discussing teaching experiences. The use of CMT in research is often connected to research on conceptual change (Amin, 2015). Considering the effectiveness of metaphor as a tool to understanding a changing concept, and the constantly changing dynamics of identity, CMT provided a strong framework for identifying and mapping the themes of language connected to identity. A metaphorical analysis was applied to the data obtained in this study. The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) guided this study, allowing for questions to be asked and answered during the interview process in order to gain insight into the experiences and perspectives that create academic identity and influence the teaching experience.

The concepts of identity and self are rooted in psychology through the work of William James (1890), who is widely considered the father of American Psychology. James (1890) developed a theory noting the difference between the "me" self (the material, social and spiritual self) and the "I" self (what is known as ego). James (1890) noted how there are as many different versions of selves in identity as there are those around to recognize them. An extension of this idea that identity is influenced by others was also captured by Charles Horton Cooley (1902). Cooley's (1902) theory connected the importance of relationships with others to identity. The

“looking-glass self” represents how people see themselves through the responses that others have to them (Cooley, 1902, p. 152).

George Herbert Mead (1934) contributed to the development of identity theory by writing *Mind, Self, and Society*, in which he captured the importance of both self and society when creating identity. This perspective of identity formation reflects how the self is both individual and social (Stets & Burke, 2003). This reflection of society is represented in a complex concept known as the self. Identities are basically many parts of the self as a whole.

Identities are also known to be a reflection of the different positions or roles a person holds in society (Stryker, 1980). The self as an adjunct faculty member is an identity as well as a self as a mother, a self as a friend, or a self as a community member. The various selves of identity capture the different roles played by society (Stets & Burke, 2003). Identity theory from the symbolic interactionist perspective focuses on meaning and defines identity as the meaning of being who a person is (Burke & Stets, 2009). The symbolic interactionist approach supports the idea that identities and roles are dynamic and shaped by interactions with others.

Summary

The community college serves as an important part of the higher education system (Levin, 2007). Known for being adaptable and responsive to the needs of a diverse and ever-changing community when planning educational programs, the community college provides open-access education to almost half of the undergraduate students in the United States (Homeland Security, 2012). The demand for adjunct faculty in the community college setting continues to grow, providing a need and opportunity to invest in current adjunct faculty members.

There are many costs connected to recruiting a new faculty member: Hiring, training, and integrating an individual into the institutional culture takes time and financial resources. Institutions, adjunct faculty, and students could all benefit from administrators focusing on retaining and training current adjunct faculty. The cost of faculty turnover impacts morale in the workplace, as well as productivity, creating more challenges in the long run. One way to invest in the training and development of adjunct faculty is to spend time learning more about the academic identity of each faculty member, with the goal of finding the best fit and development opportunities based on the individual's needs. The continually changing environment of higher education creates opportunities for academic professionals to identify or reshape their identities (Taylor, 1989). Having a clear understanding or awareness of academic identity helps to create a more motivated and engaged faculty experience (Matsushima & Ozaki, 2015; Schulze, 2015).

Chapter 3: Methodology

To explore the language used by adjunct faculty members when describe their identities, I conducted a predominantly qualitative study using a two-question survey and an interview following the steps of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). Following the interviewing and coding steps of the ZMET, I analyzed the language used by participants to understand the identity of the adjunct faculty member. Exploring this language allowed me to identify the prominent themes, represented in this study as constructs. The constructs are represented in the aggregated map construct identify traits or experiences that are present and a part of the academic identity of adjunct faculty, or how a faculty member sees him or herself in the community college setting.

Research Perspective

This study used a qualitative research approach focused on storytelling to understand the identity of adjunct faculty in the community college setting. Narrative qualitative research is a type of inquiry that allows the researcher to identify human experiences based on the descriptions of the participants (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research, specifically storytelling, can help provide a narrative and demonstrate elements of identity (Badley, 2016).

Research Design

Findings for this study were gathered through two methods: a two-question survey and the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). The two-question survey provided participant input on their motivation for teaching and classification of their role. The steps of the ZMET were used to guide the interviews. The ZMET is a patented research method focusing on metaphors, or how humans interpret new experiences using pre-existing mental models.

ZMET was developed by Professor Gerald Zaltman of the Harvard Business School and has been used mostly in the areas of marketing and consumer relations (Coulter, Zaltman, & Coulter, 2001). This research design focuses on responses that people have to images. The ZMET procedure takes a look at the hidden thoughts held by individuals, through the use of exploring all five senses (Zaltman, & Colter, 1995). By discussing photos taken by the participants, themes (metaphors) in language are identified and analyzed.

The ZMET is an image driven interview protocol rooted in the idea that people need assistance to speak in depth regarding their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs toward a particular topic. The ZMET functions on the notion that deep metaphors and basic cognitive frameworks impact how individuals interpret and respond to their environments. This method can be used to understand deep-seated psychological factors that underlie behavior. This method is an effective instrument for exploring individual experiences and deep meanings. The technique can aid companies in getting to know the attitudes and preferences of customers when it comes to brands, products, life experiences, and consumption (Khoo-Lattimore & Prideaux, 2013). Research using the ZMET has captured powerful input from chief executive officers indicating the power of metaphor to describe leadership traits (Fuda & Badham, 2011). The ZMET client list is impressive, including AT & T, Coca-Cola, DuPont, Eastman Kodak, General Motors, Polaroid, and Reebok (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The ZMET has an established record as a tool for academic inquiry; facilitating more than 2,500 participants to speak at great depth on a plethora of organizational issues (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Examples of academic research that drew on the ZMET used Khoo-Lattimore, Thyne, and Robertson's (2009) analysis of homebuyer's purchasing behaviors, Siergieig and Eason's (2009) study of gender difference regarding intimate advertising (Siergieig

& Eason, 2009), the construction of users' experiences with the Internet (Annamma, Sherry, Venkatesh, & Deschenes, 2009), customer adoption of 3G mobile banking services (Lee, McGoldrick, Keeling, & Doherty, 2003), and a study of brand images (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995).

Cognitive sciences acknowledge that human beings think in images, not in words even when people focus on thinking verbally (Amit, Wakslak, & Trope, 2013). With the goal of understanding the images connected to experience, more researchers are using qualitative methods instead of quantitative. Research done qualitatively can be like storytelling. The development of identities takes a lifetime as we go through experiences and learn what we think of ourselves and what others think of us (Badley, 2016). Pelias (2014) cautioned that qualitative researchers are storytellers and shouldn't lose sight of that by focusing too much on theory. Storytelling helps us to form identities, offers new ways of being, and helps to make sense of our lives and experiences (Pelias, 2014).

As an interview protocol, the ZMET facilitates understanding for individuals to speak more deeply and in greater detail regarding the constructs or ideas under study. While ZMET has been used mostly in the development of products and consumer research, Zaltman did give academics permission to use the ZMET for research (Zaltman, 1997). The benefits of the ZMET in academic studies include the opportunity to capture knowledge and unconscious impressions from participants (Khoo-Lattimore & Prideaux, 2013). In this study, the connection between the unconscious and the conscious minds provided a unique way to uncover themes connected to identity as revealed by the participants in the study. The responses generated through the steps of the ZMET provided an opportunity for the adjunct faculty to tell a story, and as Badley (2016) noted, stories written by our experiences matter as they represent our experience and our identity.

Since identity is such an individual topic, choosing a research method that results in the participants providing most of the data is very fitting.

While studies connecting the ZMET to exploring identity have not been published, this method is appropriate and effective for researching how people make sense of their lives as they gather and arrange information around them, resulting in identity. Participant responses gained through narrative inquiry face criticism for embellishment or for trying to please the interviewer (Gabriel, 1999). However, the use of the photographs captured and submitted by participants for the ZMET provides the opportunity to focus on their thoughts and feelings. The ZMET offers researchers the opportunity to bridge the gap between the conscious and the unconscious when seeking to address issues (Khoo-Lattimore, Thyne, & Robertson, 2009). In terms of what the ZMET offered for capturing the experiences of the adjunct faculty member, it helped uncover the important elements of academic identity that help adjunct faculty members and administrators identify important experiences, influences from environmental culture, and values that contribute to the development of academic identity. The ZMET is a technique that offered participants a way to express their underlying thoughts and feelings by using verbal and visual information. By using the ZMET method, responses were captured from participants regarding their perceptions of their identity as an adjunct faculty member teaching in the community college setting.

Research Questions

The research questions included the following:

1. What metaphorical themes represent the current identity of adjunct faculty in the community college setting?
2. Do these themes of identity capture a positive or negative reaction to the current experience of adjunct faculty in the community college setting?

3. How can administrators provide support for adjunct faculty in the community college setting based on themes of identity?

Selection of Sample

The selection process for participation in this study was a convenience sample. A community college in the State of Minnesota was selected for the study due to location, access, and interest in the local community. Participants were selected from a convenience sample of temporary part-time faculty currently teaching at the selected institution. A recruitment message was sent on my behalf by the Dean of Faculty, inviting participation from temporary part-time faculty currently teaching. Participants were recruited through a volunteer process in response to an e-mail invitation including details of the research study. Participants were required to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in the higher education environment. Participants were assigned to introductory general education courses. I received 11 messages from adjunct faculty interested in the study, resulting in eight participants who committed to the study and completed the interview. The sample of participants consisted of five women and three men.

Data Collection Methods

In order to prepare for the interview, participants were asked to take pictures and submit them to me prior to the scheduled meeting. Following the direction of the ZMET, each participant was assigned the task of providing ten to twelve photographs or images that capture examples of “anything representing their identity as an adjunct faculty member.” No additional criteria was stated for taking the photos. Participants were then directed to upload these images as digital files to a designated and secure drop e-mail address. I accessed these pictures and printed physical copies. I brought the printed photos, along with note pads, paper, and pens, to the interview session. A laptop was also included in the interview and used for recording audio.

At the beginning of the interview, consent forms were reviewed and signed by participants (see Appendices A, B, C). The interview was recorded after the consent forms were signed.

Participants were asked to complete a two-question survey (see Appendix D) addressing the following two questions:

1. Motivation for teaching (choose top three of eight categories)
 - Teaching in my career field/profession
 - Opportunity to work with students
 - Personal satisfaction
 - Additional income
 - Goal of becoming a full-time faculty member
 - Professional development
 - Being part of this community college
 - Other
2. Select the category that best fits your teaching experience:
 - Specialists, experts or professionals, are adjuncts who typically hold another job, and teach to share their knowledge
 - Freelancers are adjuncts who work in more than one institution
 - Adjunct by choice are those who want to teach part-time or with a varying schedule; appreciate flexibility
 - Career Enders are professionals approaching retirement and planning to maintain a professional connection through teaching

- Aspiring academics are adjuncts beginning their teaching career or using teaching as an option to supplement income

After completing the two-question survey, the survey and consent forms were placed in a folder and the focus as then placed on the photographs or images provided by the participants. Interviews were conducted using the steps of the ZMET (Appendix E). Participants identified their experiences through the use of story-telling, sensory memory recall, and conversation with the interviewer. The following steps of the ZMET were completed by the interviewer to gain insight regarding the faculty experiences (Catchings-Castello, 2000):

1. Storytelling: Participants were asked to describe the content of each image submitted for the interview.
2. Missed images: Participants were asked to describe the pictures they wanted to capture, but for whatever reason, were unable to do so. Ideas were written on post it notes and placed in the pile of the images.
3. Sorting task: Participants were instructed to place all of the images in piles according to self-chosen themes.
4. Triad task: Participants were presented with three images and asked to identify one that does not fit.
5. Expand the frame: I selected a random image and presented it to the participant. He or she was asked to mentally expand the image's frame, using his or her imagination to describe what would be happening just beyond the image's borders. The interviewer captured the themes on notes.
6. Sensory imaging: All images were put aside, and participants were asked to describe the experience of teaching using input from their each of their senses.

7. Vignette: During the interview, I took notes of potential themes central to academic identity. I presented each theme to the participant for final determination as to whether the theme should be included in the final steps of the interview process. I then presented the remaining themes to the participants and instructed them to create a 60-second movie capturing their experience as a faculty member.
8. Construct map: In this last step, I went through each of the remaining themes on each note and informed the participant to take them one by one and create a cause and effect map. The participant was asked to place their themes into an arrangement reflecting their role as a faculty member. Participants were asked to sketch a construct map indicating which themes impact each other and in what ways. Participants walked through the story of the construct map by telling the story of how the constructs connect. This was the final step of the interview. At this point I stopped the recording and thanked the participants for participating and spending time with me. The final step of the data collection process, creating the aggregated construct map, was completed after the interview.

Interviews took place in scheduled face-to-face meetings, allowing for conversation with participants. Arrangements to meet interviewees face to face were made based on scheduling and convenience for the participants. Interviews took between one and two hours. Interviews were held in an uninterrupted and reserved space including office space and public meeting areas. Data was collected in the form of notes on notepads and a concept map was drawn as a result of the interviews. Interviews were recorded for review as well as for coding reference.

Analysis

After the interviews, I reviewed the responses to the two-question survey. The information gathered from participants was tallied and the results are displayed in Tables B and C. The information gained from this survey was used to provide simple descriptive statistics, and a brief history of the participant teaching experience.

The results of this study were captured using a narrative qualitative approach to understand and describe the identity of adjunct faculty members in the community college setting. The ZMET is a data collection technique that uses a streamlined approach to analyze data where the researcher examines the data and comes up with themes (Zaltman, 2003).

Data was captured on notes, in a construct map, and also coded for interpretation and analysis. In addition to these data collection methods, interviews were recorded for reference and review. According to Daniels and Spiker (1989), “Metaphorical analysis begins by recording the talk of individuals in interviews and discussions” (p. 125). Creswell (1998) later stated, “The researcher first finds statements (in the interviews) about how individuals experienced the topic, lists out these significant statements (horizontalization of the data) and treats each statement as having equal worth and works to develop a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements” (p. 147). For the purpose of this study, the participants’ individual interviews with the researcher was the actual data collection process. The mapping approach allows both common themes and inferences to be explored (Wolff & Gentner, 2011).

The aggregated map is a tool used to capture the themes mentioned most frequently by participants during the ZMET interviews. The aggregated construct map, “diagrammatically portrays the relationships among the elicited constructs” (Khoo-Lattimore & Prideaux, 2013, p. 1042). This step required me to review and analyze the individual construct maps in order to

determine which constructs would be included in the aggregated concept map. This critical step brought all of the themes from the interview into one area to demonstrate how they are connected. First, this step required me to list all constructs (i.e., stand-alone ideas, beliefs, feelings, objects faculty members connect to their identity, etc.), from each individual concept map. I did this by creating a spreadsheet with a tab for each participant where the constructs were inventoried. Next, I went through the construct inventory for each participant, identifying the frequency of each construct and determining which will be included in the aggregated map. When aggregating individual construct maps, only themes mentioned by a third or more of participants should be included in the analysis (Khoo-Lattimore & Prideaux, 2013). For this study, themes mentioned by three or more participants were included in the analysis for construct linkages.

Khoo-Lattimore and Prideaux (2013) commented that “a completed census map usually consists of approximately 25-30 constructs and represents 85% of the constructs expressed by any one participant” (p. 1042). A total of 176 constructs were considered and tallied when going through the individual construct maps. Removing those constructs mentioned by less than three participants resulted in 16 constructs to be included in the aggregated construct map.

In addition to capturing the constructs, or themes of language, the aggregated concept map also displays the construct linkages shared by participants. A construct linkage is identified when a participant connects one construct with another (Khoo-Lattimore & Prideaux, 2013). Construct linkages were also listed and inventoried on a spreadsheet, to determine which linkages will be included in the aggregated map. In order for a construct linkage to be included in the aggregated concept map, the linkage must be mentioned by one-quarter of the participants (Christensen & Olson, 2002; Khoo-Lattimore & Prideaux, 2013). For this study, construct

linkages mentioned by two or more participants were included in the aggregated concept map. The aggregated concept map provides a visual representation of the construct pairs. The aggregated construct map shows how these constructs connect to each other to create linkages, and also chains, to tell a story of identity. The constructs, links and linkage chains are described in detail in Chapter 4.

After the interviews were conducted and the aggregated construct map was completed to represent the responses of participants, I reviewed the recording of each interview in search of descriptive metaphorical expressions. In accordance with Lakoff and Johnson (1980) who contend that researchers should look for systematicity of metaphors or their patterns of usage, metaphorical patterns were derived from direct interview quotations and paraphrasing of common ideas that emerged from the data. After the final metaphorical phrases were determined, the data was sorted into themes of academic identity. The metaphorical statements were then sorted into more specific meaning units for later analysis that determined how the theme of academic identity is generally experienced (positive, negative, or neutral).

More specific concepts were further derived through analytic reduction as potential categorical themes were explored. During the reduction phase, I identified possible concept categories to explore in reference to the data, through the utilization of imagination, varying frames of reference, and approaching the phenomenon from diverse perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions. The aim was to determine “the how” that best spoke to conditions that illuminated “the what” of the experience being described (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). To further explain how this is accomplished consider the following:

Metaphor analysis produces a description of the system of metaphors used by members to conceptualize their situation. Descriptions are presented in the member’s own

language. Because of this, implications of their world are retained independent of the subjective inferences of the researcher. . . by isolating the predominant metaphors and their entailments, the current reality and conceptions can be described in varying degrees of detail. (Koch & Deetz, 1981, p. 13).

Metaphorical analysis was followed as I focused on describing, evaluating, and understanding the interviewees' metaphors as vital research data (Burgchardt, 1995). A discussion of the implications involved with the use of particular metaphors around academic identity was executed to discover how particular metaphors might function for both the speaker and the receiver (Ivie, 2009). The analysis emphasized how metaphors can help to clarify what was being communicated (Morgan, 1997). Finally, the analysis of the data determined the overall essence of identity aligned with how individuals generally experience the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). When looking at professional identity, the focus is placed on how individuals see themselves, interpret their interactions with others, wish to be perceived, and are recognized within the specific industry.

Once the interviews were conducted and recorded, the data collected from the interviews was sorted around themes connected to academic identity. A metaphoric analysis of the data was initiated to determine similarities and differences among participant responses regarding their personal teaching. The results of the study communicate the themes identified by participants as constructs. Constructs, like concepts, are themes that represent our thoughts, values, norms and attitudes. The ZMET interview uses several steps to bring the prominent metaphors and constructs to the surface to explore identity. To analyze the responses, I clustered the data around metaphor categories, based on the participants' own words. The results are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6, which contain both key statements and meaning units around each of the metaphorical

themes. I analyzed the data using open coding and axial coding to find themes within the data I discussed my analysis process, construct list, and aggregated construct map with an experienced ZMET researcher to gain direction and input on my analysis.

Human Subject Approval – Institutional Review Board (IRB) Statement

An Institutional Review application was submitted to St. Cloud State University's Institutional Review Board, and IRB Approval was granted prior to conducting this research. The purpose of the IRB approval was to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects in research activities being conducted under its authority. All participants are referred to using pseudonyms, in all recordings, notes, and interviews to maintain confidentiality.

Summary

The increased reliance on part-time faculty has resulted in confusion and challenges impacting students, administration, and colleagues. Higher education institutions have paid limited attention to contingent faculty resulting in difficult working conditions. The identity creation of the adjunct faculty member is an individual experience is impacted by a variety of influences. Experiences including poverty-level wages, limited representation in faculty meetings, lack of office space, and feeling unrecognized contribute to the overall experience and identity of the adjunct faculty member. Regardless of the challenges experienced in the adjunct faculty role, the love of teaching and desire to teach is what most adjunct faculty members have in common (Pons et al., 2017).

The purpose of this study was to explore how faculty members perceive themselves in the role of an adjunct faculty member. This study sought input from faculty members about their teaching environment and experiences. Faculty members used the ZMET steps and additional questions to explore the photos they provided as part of the interview; from these explorations,

themes of metaphors were identified and applied to understand the creation of academic identity. These metaphors provided descriptions and perceptions that demonstrate themes in academic identity. By exploring the language used by adjunct faculty to describe their experiences and daily activities, valuable information was gathered about the topic of identity.

How we speak about our environment, our experiences, and our role as a faculty member reflects how we view our own identity as an academic professional. These details help to explain and present our persona to other professionals in the educational setting and to students. By exploring these surfacing themes that create academic identity, more insight will be gained to assist in the areas of career satisfaction, motivation, and personal development. Studying the identity of adjunct faculty at the community college brings value in the areas of identifying needs in organizational support and identifying the professional development or management strategies to best fit the institutional and faculty needs. These efforts to inquire, identify, and implement vital details connected to academic identity can bring benefits to the field of higher education. Adjunct faculty were chosen for this study because they are the largest group providing education to the community college population and the group that has the most contact with students. Considering the powerful growth demonstrated by adjunct faculty in the field of higher education, investing in faculty development and creating strategies to create positive identity development is an important and strong strategy for success.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The research focusing on adjunct faculty identity is limited and inconsistent when exploring topics such as job satisfaction and quality of instruction. Community colleges have become increasingly dependent on adjunct faculty to teach courses. Despite research indicating that students receive better instruction from full-time faculty (Benjamin, 2003; Rouche, Rouche, & Milliron, 1996; Schmidt, 2008; Ochoa, 2011), the practice of hiring adjunct faculty has shown consistent growth over the past 45 years (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). Concurrently, research focusing on adjunct faculty identity and development has not kept pace with the increased reliance and demands community colleges are placing on them. The existing research does indicate that much is misunderstood and unknown about the specific details that contribute to understanding adjunct faculty (Kuchera & Miller, 1998; Erickson, Young, & Pinnegar, 2011; Levin & Hernandez, 2014; Thirolf, 2013). It is a goal of mine to add to the existing research adding to the support and understanding of adjunct faculty by giving participants a unique opportunity to express their identity. Learning more about the identity of adjunct faculty will be helpful to administrators when providing resources for supporting adjunct faculty in doing what they are hired for and what they love to do: teach.

This study purported to approach the research participants from a different perspective to gain new insights into the identities of adjunct faculty. Instead of relying on the traditional research methods of surveys and case studies, photographs or images were collected from the participants and then analyzed using the steps of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). This method encouraged participants to express their experiences through examples connected to the five senses and through storytelling examples. This study also aimed to explore

and understand the components that contribute to the identity of the adjunct faculty members by focusing on the specific language used by the participants.

Chapter 2 captured an overview of the wide range of topics that contribute to the identity of the adjunct faculty member. The variety of influential factors captured by the research illuminates the challenge of understanding what the identity of adjunct faculty members are. Factors such as the motivation or reasons for teaching, the interactions with students, peers, and administration, and environmental work factors are all possible contributors to adjunct faculty identities. Through a review of the literature focused on adjunct faculty, I learned how identity development is complex and involves intrinsic as well as extrinsic elements.

In addition to exploring internal and external influences on the identity of the adjunct faculty member, Chapter 2 also explored research focusing on the quality of instruction provided by adjunct faculty and how it compares to full-time faculty (Bettinger & Long, 2010; Mueller, Mandernach, & Sanderson, 2013; Nica, 2018; Xu, 2019). Chapter 3 described the methodology and research design used to conduct the study, along with the recruitment process. An overview of the two-question survey and the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) methodology was provided. Chapter 4 reports the results from the survey and the themes that emerged from the ZMET. In the final chapter, Chapter 5, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the research questions, implications for practice, and the identification of areas for future research.

Methodology Summary

Findings for this study were gathered through two methods. First, a two-question survey was used to identify motivational factors for teaching and how participants view their role. Second, interviews were conducted using the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET).

The ZMET is a technique that is used to study consumer behavior. This method was chosen because it provides a more comprehensive view than traditional data gathering methods into thoughts and feelings connected to behavior to better establish an understanding of a particular subject. By eliciting thoughts and feelings regarding a product or a subject, the ZMET provides an opportunity for participants to share detailed input reflective of storytelling (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Lai, 2014). Adjunct faculty teaching introductory general education courses were invited to participate in the research study through an invitation sent out on my behalf by the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Interested faculty were directed to contact me via e-mail to address questions and to commit to participate in the study. After agreeing to participate in the study, participants were asked to create 10-12 photographs that represented “anything representing their identity as an adjunct faculty member.” These were sent to me and printed for use in the interview using the steps of the ZMET. I then met with the participants individually for a face-to-face interview.

After greeting the participant, I provided him or her with an overview of the study, answered any additional questions, and reviewed the consent form. Then I asked for a signature to confirm informed consent and voluntary participation. Finally, with participant permission, I began to record our conversation using an audio application on a laptop.

Part 1 – survey. I presented the two-question survey (see Appendix D) to participants on a piece of paper. Participants used a pen to mark their responses to the survey questions. The first survey question offered four categories (created by Gappa and Leslie (1993)), and asked participants to select the category that best fit their teaching experience. During the completion of this survey, three participants stated that the categories presented did not capture their teaching experience. These participants were offered the opportunity to create an additional

category that would better capture their teaching experience. As a result, two additional categories were created: (a) Adjunct by choice: those who want to teach, have a varying schedule; appreciate flexibility yet desire full-time work, and (b) Adjunct by default: those in the adjunct teaching position as a result of various teaching assignments. The added categories were then included as options for subsequent participants completing the study. After the survey was completed, the focus of the interview turned to the photographs previously submitted by the participant being interviewed.

Part 2 – ZMET. The steps of the ZMET were used to guide the use of photographs in the interview (see Appendix E). The ZMET is a methodology that supports the development of storytelling, resulting in rich details and examples. To accomplish this, I focused on one photograph at a time and started by asking the participant to select an image to talk about. I then asked the participant to describe the content in the photo. This was the beginning of the storytelling that unfolded during the interview.

Following the direction of the ZMET and using the photographs to guide participants, I took notes on individual note pads to capture important concepts mentioned by each participant, which resulted in dozens of notes for each participant. Each photograph was viewed while participants were asked to tell the story of the photograph and to describe the perimeter of the photo or what was not shown in the image. The photographs were also used in sorting tasks and a triad task to gain more insight and to encourage additional conversation with the goal of capturing the important concepts on sticky notes.

Once the steps focusing on the photographs were complete, the sensory imaging task was done next. This step encouraged participants to explore their identity as an adjunct faculty member through examples connected to their five senses. Participants were asked to provide

responses to the prompts for each sense (Being an adjunct faculty member tastes like ____; Being an adjunct faculty doesn't taste like ____). The descriptions connecting the adjunct faculty experience to sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste were captured and included in the growing pile of notes to be included for the remaining steps. At this point during the interview, each participant was instructed to sort through my pile of notes to determine which of the notes should go into a "keep" pile (because it seemed important to the experience of the adjunct faculty member), and which notes could be discarded. The notes that were kept for discussion were then used to create a vignette, where the participant placed the notes on the table to tell a story. Once this story was created and discussed, the participant was asked to draw a construct map, indicating how the themes captured on the notes were connected. This construct map was the final product of the individual participant interview.

Participants

The participants of this study were adjunct faculty at a mid-sized urban community college in Minnesota. The convenience sample of liberal arts adjunct faculty received a recruitment message via e-mail, sent on my behalf, by the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The recruitment message yielded responses from 11 potential participants, eight of whom committed to the interview and followed through to complete the study.

The eight participating members represented a variety of academic disciplines, professional backgrounds, and levels of teaching experience. The following disciplines were represented: Math, Physical Science, Music, Ethics, Psychology, English and Communications. Three years of teaching experience in introductory courses was required to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted in person, ranged from one hour to two hours in length, and were audio recorded for review. To protect privacy and anonymity, results from participants

were captured using pseudonyms and only limited demographic information was included. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to be used in Tables 1-3. Table 1 shows the participant details including: (a) the participant pseudonym, (b) the total number of years of teaching experience, and (c) the highest level of degree earned.

Table 1

Participant Details

Participant	Years of Teaching	Highest Degree Earned
Fran	20	Master's
Alex	9	Doctorate
Dustin	5	Master's
Vera	25	Doctorate
Lance	16	Master's
Grace	16	Master's
Jessica	7	Master's
Maria	11	Master's

Fran had planned to be in the business field, yet ended up teaching and fell in love with the student interaction. Fran loves learning as well as teaching. Fran stated that the community college is her priority, but she does teach an additional course or two each year, to supplement her income. Fran has built her teaching career as an adjunct faculty member. Fran is starting to think about retirement, but she has at least ten years until those decisions need to be made.

Alex entered higher education after a career as a business owner. His experience includes administrative and teaching experience primarily in for-profit institutions. Alex is currently teaching in the community college setting with the goal of acquiring a full-time position in

teaching or administration. As a middle-aged professional, Alex is interested in acquiring a position where he can “settle in.”

Dustin teaches a full schedule between three different higher education institutions and utilizes three different office spaces. Dustin originally had the goal of searching and moving for a tenure-track teaching position. This goal was revised once Dustin’s partner gained full-time employment.

Vera teaches solely for the community college and is very active in the community. When starting her career, Vera expected to acquire a full-time tenure-track position at a four-year institution using her doctorate degree to advance. Vera is not where she thought she would be, but she is thriving in her current environment. Vera is conflicted about the stability of her position. Vera has had consistent employment as an adjunct faculty member, but she recognizes her position could be offered to someone else at any time.

Lance has over ten years teaching experience with various institutions, but he has focused on one community college for the last six years. Lance had aspired to be teaching in a full-time position by this stage of his career. Lance is active in the community and is writing for personal interest and publication. Lance keeps his academic writing and publications separate from his teaching role, stating his work community “doesn’t want to know.”

Grace is a licensed professional and has been teaching in a variety of adjunct roles for over ten years. Grace enjoys the flexibility of the adjunct schedule and is confident the opportunities will continue for her as she approaches retirement in less than five years.

Jessica has been teaching at the community college for over seven years. As a young professional, Jessica entered the adjunct teaching role determined to advance into a full-time teaching position. Jessica is interested in the consistency of the full-time schedule, yet she

appreciates the breaks between terms for family travel. Jessica has adopted the practice of having a mobile office until she is offered a full-time position. Jessica works as a tutor in the summer months to bring in additional income when her teaching load is light.

Maria has been teaching for 11 years, and five have been at the community college. Maria is very impressed with her pay at the community college, yet she is frustrated in her varied schedule. In order to fill the gaps in income, specifically in the summer, Maria works as an educator at a summer camp.

Results

Interviews with eight participants provided robust information on the adjunct faculty experience and examples of how participants view their identity. Identity was discussed by participants as being connected to students, colleagues, and a variety of environmental factors. The results are captured in two parts: (a) Part 1: Two-question survey, and (b) Part 2: The responses to the steps of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). The results of this study are presented through written discussion and in the use of tables to display the responses of participants.

Part 1: Two-question survey. Participants were presented with a two-item survey (see Appendix D) to capture what motivates them to teach and how they classify their teaching based on specific categories. The two-item survey asked the participants to (a) identify their top three motivational factors for teaching, and (b) select the category that best describes their teaching. Participant responses to the two-question survey administered are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Survey Question 1: Motivation for teaching. This survey question provided seven choices to choose from that reflected different motivations for teaching. Each participant was asked to select the three that best fit their own motivations for teaching. As illustrated in Table 2,

the top two choices selected were (a) teaching in my career field/profession, and (b) the opportunity to work with students. Six of the eight participants were motivated to teach because of the opportunity to be teaching in their profession. Seventy-five percent of participants also selected the desire to work with students as a powerful motivational factor for being in adjunct faculty role. Four of the eight participants indicated a goal of becoming a full-time faculty member as a motivational factor for teaching.

Table 2

Responses to Survey Question 1 – Motivation for Teaching

Category	Participant								Total
	Fran	Alex	Justin	Vera	Lance	Grace	Jessica	Maria	
Teaching in my career field / profession	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	6
Opportunity to work with students	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	6
Personal Satisfaction	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Additional Income	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	4
Goal of becoming a full-time faculty member	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	4
Professional Development	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Being part of this community college	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Note: Participants were instructed to choose three.

Survey Question 2: Select category that best fits your teaching. The second survey question provided four categories for participants to choose from, asking for participants to select

one that best fits their teaching role. Responses from participants captured a variety of descriptions, making it difficult to find one title for the role of the adjunct faculty member (see Table 3). None of the participants described themselves as experts or specialists. The category of “freelancers” received the most responses with three participants choosing this description. The remaining responses were distributed between career-enders, aspiring academics, purposely choosing to be an adjunct faculty member, or becoming adjunct by default. The desire to become full-time faculty was mentioned in conversation by 50% of participants as a motivational factor for teaching. The opportunity to earn additional income was important and selected by 50% of participants as a motivational factor for teaching.

Table 3

Responses to Survey Question 2 – Select Category that Best Fits Their Teaching Experience

Category	Participant								Total
	Fran	Alex	Dustin	Vera	Lance	Grace	Jessica	Maria	
Specialists, experts, professionals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Freelancers	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	3
Career enders	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Aspiring academics	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Adjunct by choice	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Adjunct by default	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2

Part 2: Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). The interviews with participants provided an opportunity to share thoughts, feelings, and examples of identity through the steps of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). I conducted the data analysis process, with the direction of a faculty member who has experience and has published

research using the ZMET methodology. A thorough and redundant review of the recorded interviews and the individual construct maps was conducted by to identify constructs and single linkages; these were used to create the aggregated construct map. Following the direction of the ZMET, constructs mentioned by one-fourth or more of participants and single linkages reported by one-third or more of participants were included in the analysis (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995). After the constructs of the study were reviewed and tallied, a list of 16 constructs and 18 single linkages were identified for inclusion in the aggregated construct map.

Constructs

The stand-alone ideas, beliefs, feelings, and objects faculty members connected to their identity are known as constructs. The notes from the participants with interviews yielded nearly one hundred different examples of constructs connected to identity. Determining which constructs would be included in the results of the study was a tedious and detail-oriented task. For a construct to be included in the analysis, at least one quarter of the participants needed to mention it (Zaltman, 1997); in the case of this study, that required a construct be mentioned by a minimum of two participants. After thorough review of responses captured during the interviews, a list of 16 constructs were identified as being a theme of identity. Once the constructs were identified, definitions were compared to determine consistency in terminology. Individual constructs were defined by participants during the interview. When the definitions matched, the construct was included to be considered as a linkage. The individual constructs that emerged from the interviews are listed and defined in Table 4.

Table 4

Concept Glossary of Emergent Concepts Provided by Participants

Constructs	Definition
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Administrative support	Internal support provided from Dean of Faculty and administrative assistant
Anxiety at home	Stress with spouse or partner connected to work
Committee work	Opportunity to participate in department related activities
Family	Spouse and kids; support system
Feel included	I belong
Friends	Colleagues laugh together and share ideas
Learn new ways	Continuing to learn new ways to teach
Love to teach	Motivated by the desire to teach and work with students
Mobile office	Carrying teaching essentials from place to place
Protected / have voice	Support for adjunct faculty to voice input and share their opinions
Share ideas	Compare strategies and share information to help students
Stress	Individual tension or anxiety related to work
Student success	A student passing the class or graduating
Union	Organized representation
Unpredictable schedule	Work assignments are not guaranteed or predictable
Varied income	Pay changes from term to term

Mapping the constructs. The final product of the ZMET is an aggregated concept map (see Figure 1). The aggregated construct map is constructed from a frequency count of the concepts and linkages identified on each individual construct map. The final aggregated construct map provides a visual display of the 16 individual constructs and 18 construct linkages. Constructs identified on the individual concept maps completed by the participants were verified

through the repetitive review of audio recordings. Figure 1 represents the construct linkages captured from the ZMET interview analysis. The aggregated construct map captures four themes noted by color: (a) work assignment (red), (b) student success (light blue), (c) love for teaching and learning (green), and (d) colleague interactions (dark blue). These themes were determined by grouping the constructs into categories of similarity.

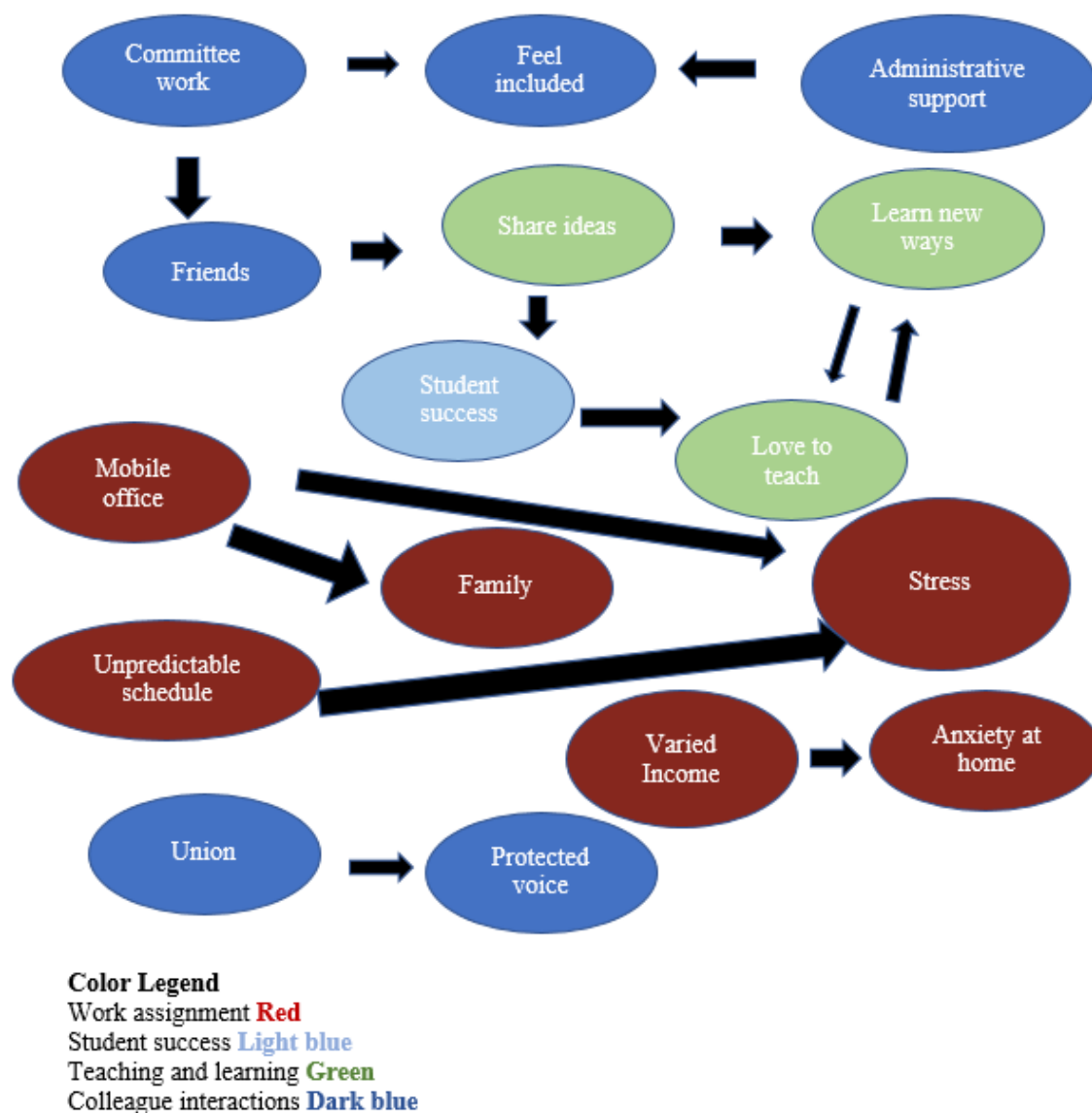


Figure 1. Aggregated Construct Map

The construction of the aggregated construct map resulted in themes displayed by using single linkages and linkage chains. The ZMET requires that at least one-third of participants need to mention a construct in order for it to be included in an aggregated construct map, and one-fourth of participants need to mention a construct linkage (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995). For this study, three of the participants needed to mention a construct in order for it to be included. In order for a construct linkage to be included, two participants needed to identify the relationship. The aggregated construct map displays the construct linkages, how they connect to display linkage chains, and emerging themes captured by the participants.

Construct linkages. Once the constructs were identified and defined, the next step was to explore how the constructs connect to each other, which is demonstrated through linkages. These linkages are represented by one-way arrows in the aggregate construct map (see Figure 1). The arrows indicate a relationship of association when participants mentioned one concept leading to or resulting in another. For example, *unpredictable schedule* → *anxiety at home* demonstrates that the construct of *unpredictable schedule* (work assignments are not guaranteed) leads to *anxiety at home* (stress with spouse/partner connected to work).

Chen (2006) referred to these connections as “theme paths” (p. 210). These theme paths can be conceptualized as narratives that represent the identity of the adjunct faculty members in the community college setting. Construction of the aggregate construct map resulted in two types of theme paths: single linkages and linkage chains. Single linkages represent stand-alone narratives consisting of two constructs and one linkage. For example *Unpredictable schedule* → *Varied income*. This linkage reflected the participant statement that the unpredictable schedule of the adjunct instructor results in changes in income. Linkage chains represent the connection between three or more constructs, demonstrating how the construct linkages can tell a story. For

example: *Unpredictable schedule* → *Varied income* → *Anxiety at home*. This linkage reflected the participant statement that the unpredictable schedule of the adjunct instructor results in changes in income, which can impact the anxiety at home.

Constructs and definitions were compared with the goal of finding construct linkages. In order to be considered a construct linkage, the relationship needed to be identified by one-third of the participants (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995). The data analysis process resulted in the identification of 16 constructs and 18 single linkages. The 18 single linkages are captured and defined in Table 5, which displays three items: (a) the linkage, (b) frequency (how many participants reported the linkage), and (c) description of the linkage.

Table 5

Adjunct Faculty Aggregated Construct Map – Single Linkages

Linkage	Frequency	Description
Unpredictable schedule → Family	4	Having an unpredictable teaching schedule impacts the family or support system of the adjunct faculty member
Unpredictable schedule → Stress	3	Having an unpredictable teaching schedule leads to stress
Unpredictable schedule → Varied income	3	Having an unpredictable teaching schedule leads to a quarterly change in income
Administrative support → Feel included	2	Knowing the dean of faculty and the administrative assistant is there to address concerns and organize the department leads to a sense of belonging in adjunct faculty
Committee work → Feel included	2	Participating in the department leads to a sense of belonging in adjunct faculty

Committee work → Make friends	2	Participating in the department leads to making friends in the workplace
Friends → Share ideas	2	Making friends in the workplace leads to sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans)
Learn new ways → Love to teach	2	The desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the love of teaching
Learn new ways → Share ideas	2	The desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans)
Learn new ways → Student success	2	The desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree
Love to teach → Learn new ways	2	The love of teaching leads to the desire to learn new ways of teaching
Love to teach → Student success	2	The love of teaching leads to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree
Mobile office → Family	2	Choosing to carry essential teaching supplies leads to meeting the needs of the family or support system of the adjunct faculty member
Mobile office → Stress	2	Choosing to carry essential teaching supplies leads to stress
Share ideas → Learn new ways	2	The sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans) leads to the desire to learn new ways of teaching
Share ideas → Student success	2	The sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans) leads to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree
Union → Protected / voice	2	Organized representation provided to adjunct faculty by the union leads to

		adjunct faculty feeling protected and able to share input
Varied income → Anxiety at home	2	The quarterly changing of income for adjunct faculty leads to stress in the home related to work

The 18 single linkages. Constructs are the main themes that surfaced and were defined by the participants, i.e. *friends*. A single linkage is a connection between one construct and another, i.e. *friends* → *share ideas*. The connection between the construct of friends and the construct of share ideas is displayed by an arrow indicating that making friends in the workplace can result in the practice of sharing ideas. These linkages were captured by participants in the individual construct map developed as part of the interview. These linkages, which demonstrate a relationship between two constructs, are a very important step in the ZMET for telling the story of the participants. Not all single linkages represented on the individual construct maps were represented the aggregated construct map. The linkages identified by at least one-third of the participants were included in the aggregated construct map, resulting in a total of 18 single linkages. Each of these linkages emerged through examples and descriptions from the participants.

Construct Linkage 1: Unpredictable schedule → *Family*. This linkage demonstrates that having an unpredictable teaching schedule impacts the family or support system of the adjunct faculty member. The fact that having an unpredictable work schedule impacts family life was the most commonly shared construct linkage with fifty percent of participants noting this linkage. Last minute scheduling invitations or cancellations can have a great impact on the family schedule and family income. The unpredictable schedule creates an inability to make long-term family plans. Participants mentioned the stress connected to being offered a class at

the last minute. Having limited notice about a teaching assignment comes with last minute course prep and reduced family time, often during the break period when income is not being generated.

Alex shared that “when I work at home on break weeks, there is discontent at home.” Vera mentioned “my unpredictable schedule can impact the time I have to spend with family during breaks.” Jessica stated that breaks between terms are appreciated and considered “designated family time.” Jessica indicated that she uses breaks to enjoy travel with her family, but “the unpredictable schedule means that I sometimes receive an offer to teach a course with limited notice, resulting in me doing course prep during a family trip. I would rather accept the opportunity to teach and provide income for my family, so I fit the prep work into my break. Sometimes I receive notice that a class has been cancelled during term break, which is not good news to receive when traveling with family.”

The impact of the unpredictable schedule was connected to family by Maria when discussing schedule planning. “My partner and I share household responsibilities including driving to daycare and meal planning. The inability to plan our family schedule is one of the challenges of a varied or unpredictable schedule.” The fact that teaching opportunities can be offered last minute has an impact on adjunct faculty members and their immediate family members. Despite knowing it would impact their family time, Vera, Jessica, and Maria all noted a willingness to have increased teaching opportunities, even at the last minute.

Construct Linkage 2: Unpredictable schedule → Stress. This linkage demonstrates that having an unpredictable teaching schedule leads to stress. The changing schedule of the adjunct faculty member is an accepted yet stressful part of identity. The flexibility and changing schedule connected to being an adjunct faculty member can sometimes be beneficial and

sometimes be difficult. The changes in schedule typically result in stress, as indicated by four participants. Alex noted how the unpredictable work schedule motivates him to regularly check for teaching positions at other institutions. Despite stating that “I’m making the best money in my higher education career,” Alex noted that the uncertainty of the schedule and his future is “stressful and distracting.” Dustin described an “unspoken difference between full-time faculty and part-time faculty being the comfort of knowing you will be teaching next term.” Despite over five years of regular scheduling as an adjunct instructor, Dustin stated that the unpredictable schedule connected to the classification of being part-time is stressful and creates limits in his commitment to the institution. “I do the bare minimum that my contract pays me to do.”

Maria and Jessica both connected the unpredictable schedule of an adjunct faculty member to stress by sharing how scheduling through the community college is “just enough” to keep them committed to the institution, yet their schedule limits their ability to seek other employment. Jessica mentioned the long-term goal of teaching more courses and eventually earning more income, but stated that this plan of adding teaching requires patience and stress with “no promises.”

Construct Linkage 3: Unpredictable schedule → Varied income. This linkage demonstrates that having an unpredictable teaching schedule leads to a quarterly change in income. The fact that teaching schedules are unpredictable and can change at the last minute means that income varies. Budget planning is challenging when income varies. There are times when a last minute offer to teach a course results in a higher course load and therefore better pay, and times when a course is cancelled and income is reduced. The challenge of not knowing what income will be earned after the next quarter is a challenge that was mentioned by three of the eight participants. Alex mentioned how “summer is lean” and often times budget planning is

needed to make it through that time. Faculty in full-time positions have the opportunity to have their pay distributed equally throughout the twelve month period, where adjunct faculty do not have this benefit. Displaying a picture of a complex and detailed calendar, Alex shared how his income is a “rollercoaster of payroll checks, making family and budget planning difficult.” Jessica and Maria both noted their practice of earning more income during the summer by finding other jobs (tutoring and youth camps, respectively).

Construct Linkage 4: Varied income → Anxiety at home. This linkage demonstrates that the quarterly changing of income for adjunct faculty leads to stress in the home related to work. The pay for teaching in the adjunct faculty role typically varies from term to term, due to the varying course load. This change in income creates stress in relationships at home. The inconsistency of income was mentioned as a challenge for three of the participants, with two participants stating varied income as a motivator to continue to look for additional employment or teaching opportunities with consistent pay, resulting in the possible departure of the adjunct faculty role or the community college setting. Family budgeting and planning were also stated as challenges related to having varied income. While each of the participants shared having appreciation for their work as adjunct faculty members, Alex and Vera specifically mentioned how variable income is an obstacle that they have to accept in their role of adjunct faculty member. Vera shared how varying income is a “sore subject” with her spouse and that changes in income make her nervous about budgeting conversations at home. The most frequently reported linkages in the construct map portrays the adjunct teaching experience as one with a struggle of an unpredictable schedule and varying income.

Construct Linkage 5: Mobile office → Stress. This linkage demonstrates that choosing to carry essential teaching supplies leads to stress. All participants had a dedicated workspace at the

community college. Three participants had offices with a door and five were assigned a cubicle in a shared office space. Discussions with participants indicated that office space is “nice” and even “unexpected” but, many still chose to carry their supplies with them rather than settle in to their office space. Alex noted, “I don’t move in because I don’t know how long I will be there.” The uncertainty of the upcoming schedule results in stress that has been identified as being connected to family and varied income. Stress is also connected as an outcome from the choice to have a mobile office. The stress created by the uncertainty of this position has also prevented Alex from becoming “too comfortable” in the designated office space provided to him. Jessica discussed the decision to carry her teaching supplies in a backpack from class to class and how this decision was “stressful yet sensible.” Jessica shared how students are more likely to approach her after class, making it easy to address questions when carrying all of the course files. While the practice of carrying files and being able to meet with students spontaneously is beneficial, Jessica noted how having this mobile office can seem unprofessional. She said, “Appearing unorganized and digging for the right files on the spot can be stressful, but I always find what I need in my backpack.”

Construct Linkage 6: Mobile office → Family. This linkage demonstrates that choosing to carry essential teaching supplies leads to meeting the needs of the family or support system of the adjunct faculty member. The choice to carry most teaching supplies rather than using the office space provided was one that was made out of convenience and flexibility provided to family. The ability to be flexible, and to remain “on the go” in both teaching and family life was important and mentioned by two participants as a construct linkage. Lance mentioned having a mobile office as being helpful for family flexibility. “I am the primary manager of the family schedule, so I run to a lot of appointments.” By carrying work with him, Lance mentioned being

able to stay on task when there is down time. Jessica shared how the choice to carry teaching supplies from classroom to home was not easy, but helped with the flexibility of the family schedule. “Carrying my teaching files with me allows me to transition between school and home more efficiently, resulting in more family time.”

Construct Linkage 7: Union → Protected / Voice. This linkage demonstrates that organized representation provided to adjunct faculty by the union leads to adjunct faculty feeling protected and welcome to share input. The presence of the organized faculty union was mentioned by two participants as a benefit that offers a sense of security and “being heard.” While the benefit of union representation was mentioned by two participants, each had their own impression. Alex mentioned that “I love the fact that the union protects me and gives me good wages; I hate the fact that protection is needed.” The union was also described as a “weird concept” by Alex, who has created a career in higher education being employed by for-profit institutions prior to working in the state community college setting. Vera, who has been teaching in the community college setting for almost twenty years, shared more positive and welcoming commentary on the union representation for adjunct faculty members. The presence of union representation was noted by Vera to be “appreciated” and “comforting.” She said, “It is reassuring that there is someone to go to with concerns, and I know my concerns will be heard.” Vera also mentioned how “being able to walk over to the union office and talk with someone is helpful, and reduces concerns in the workplace.” While several other participants commented on union representation for adjunct faculty, only two mentioned the linkage between representation and having a voice. Alex indicated that union representation feels both negative and positive, while Vera considered union representation to be a positive aspect in the identity of the adjunct faculty member.

Construct Linkage 8: Administrative support → Feel included. This linkage demonstrates that having the support of the Dean of Faculty and the administrative leads to a sense of belonging in adjunct faculty. The majority of participants (6) mentioned the value of having quality administrative support. The Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences and department administrative assistant were both mentioned and praised throughout the interview process as being welcoming, thoughtful, and organized. It was clear through the interviews that the support provided by the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the administrative assistant was genuine and influential on the positive impression that each faculty member expressed regarding their role. Two participants specifically mentioned the direct linkage between administrative support and the sense of feeling included in the workplace. Efforts from leadership to move adjunct instructors into designated office spaces was recognized by Dustin as “appreciated and a sign of being welcomed.” Lance and Grace mentioned how small gestures such as having names on cubicles, mailboxes, and a wall of instructor photos all help adjunct faculty feel included as part of the department. Other efforts by administration were perceived as impersonal. Lance mentioned the presence of a cubicle wall located within the Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences that is filled with printed teaching schedules. He said, “The administrative team here is great and they do what they can do make you feel important, yet look at this wall of schedules; it is so impersonal, but my name is up there.” Conversations with the participant pool captured an overall positive experience when working with administrative staff in the department.

Construct Linkage 9: Committee work → Feel included. This linkage demonstrates that participating in the department leads to a sense of belonging in adjunct faculty. Committee work was mentioned in a few examples for adjunct faculty to gain experience in higher education as well as to build relationships with colleagues. The opportunities to participate in committee work

was mentioned by two participants as resulting in feeling included or welcomed by others in the workplace. Dustin mentioned the intentional decision to participate in committee work within the institution. “In order to build connections and to have my face recognized, I serve on committees.” In an effort to feel like “less of an outsider” Dustin shared that he had to make an effort to be recognized as a faculty member. “TPT (temporary part-time) faculty have learned who I am from my committee activity.” Despite that, Dustin mentioned how feeling included by full-time faculty members was not a goal, as that was unrealistic and not typical in the adjunct experience. He said, “There is still a disconnect between TPT and full-time faculty.” Dustin also stated that he has limits on how much committee work he commits to based on his teaching schedule. The more work he has been assigned as a faculty member, the more committed he is to activities outside of teaching.

The interest that Vera had in participating in committee work was generated by her interest in giving back to the community and institution. “By connecting myself and my students to the community, I create a home for myself wherever I go.” Vera mentioned the importance of feeling like she belongs in the workplace and in her community. For Vera, this sense of belonging is a positive result of her committee participation.

Construct Linkage 10: Committee work → Make friends. This linkage demonstrates that participating in the department leads to making friends in the workplace. Adjunct faculty members have the opportunity to participate in a variety of committees and on campus events. Committee work was mentioned by two participants as a direct way to connect with colleagues, find common ground, and eventually establish friendships. “I go to functions like committee work and meetings to be seen,” said Dustin. Visibility and appearing active were mentioned by Dustin as a way of making an effort to be remembered when it is time for course scheduling.

Dustin and Vera have decided to participate in committee work for different reasons. Dustin was motivated by the exposure that participation would bring to his career, whereas Vera was motivated by the opportunity to provide service as a way of giving back. Both motivations resulted in the opportunity to make friends in the workplace. While neither participant mentioned the goal of building friendships outside of the workplace, both Dustin and Vera shared how having friends in the workplace is important to them.

Construct Linkage 11: Friends → Share ideas. This linkage demonstrates that making friends in the workplace leads to sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans, etc.). Once colleagues become friends, an exchange of ideas for helping student is a result. Two participants indicated the benefits of becoming friends with colleagues, indicating that the sharing of ideas helps them to assist students with new ideas, while also reinforcing a love for teaching. Fran shared an example of providing pairs of dice for another colleague as a resource for a learning exercise in the classroom. “By connecting with others we open our minds and our resources for sharing and this helps us to teach.” Grace mentioned how she makes it a point to make friends in the workplace, a task that is made easier by using the names posted by each adjunct faculty workspace. “I find their nameplate and I introduce myself and offer help to my colleagues, you never know when a question will come up, and that one introduction can help to break the ice. One introduction can lead to network of sharing jokes, questions and ideas”

Construct Linkage 12: Share ideas → Student success. This linkage demonstrates that the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans, etc.) leads to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree. The desire to help students is a drive for adjunct faculty to explore different resources. Participants discussed the benefit of having colleagues to share ideas and to create new strategies for teaching. Two participants identified the construct linkage between

sharing ideas and aiming for student success. Fran mentioned the value of sharing ideas with colleagues in order to support each other and to help students. “When I learn something new about how to teach a lesson, I share it with my colleagues.” Vera shared the same intentions as Fran when learning new information. Vera said, “I have been helped by my colleagues to develop my teaching, so I return the favor and share ideas that will help others.” The goal of helping students succeed is a team effort, according to Fran and Vera. Both mentioned that students will benefit in the long run from faculty sharing ideas in the workplace.

Construct Linkage 13: Share ideas → Learn new ways. This linkage demonstrates that the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans, etc.) leads to the desire to learn new ways of teaching. The exchange of ideas that takes place between adjunct faculty was mentioned by two participants as a direct way to learn new ways to teach. By sharing ideas with colleagues, adjunct faculty contribute to their own development of teaching skills and the skill development of others. This community of learning was mentioned as a construct linkage that goes in both directions. Participants who mentioned this linkage stated that by sharing ideas with each other adjunct faculty, they continued to learn new ways to teach or to help students. Specifically, Fran shared that “learning new ways to teach a lesson is exciting, and I want to share with my colleagues, so they can help their students.”

Construct Linkage 14: Learn new ways → Share ideas. This linkage demonstrates that the desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans, etc.). The desire to learn new ways to teach leads to the sharing of ideas with colleagues. Fran said that “finding a new way to teach a concept inspires me to share that with my work friends! Sometimes we get so excited about finding a new way to get the attention of our students, so we share it.” Examples connected to technology and daily motivational tips were

discussed as ideas that were new ways of teaching and shared between colleagues. Finding a new app for solving math problems was shared as a specific example of an opportunity to share a new way of learning. Fran mentioned a daily practice of beginning class with a riddle. Fran believes that this technique promotes student engagement and gets students thinking in new ways. The use of this daily riddle is an example that was shared between colleagues as a way to engage students.

Construct Linkage 15: Learn new ways → Student success. This linkage demonstrates that the desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree. Conversations with adjunct faculty indicated that teachers have a natural desire to learn. Adjunct faculty indicated an awareness that students have changed over the years, and their needs in the classroom have also changed. These changes have pushed faculty to continue to seek new strategies to enhance their teaching. Fran shared an example used to starting each class with a riddle. Using the riddle is done with the intention of engaging the students. “You find ways to make them to want to come to class. I tell students that if come to class, they will likely pass the class.” The practice of including the riddle was helpful to build confidence and positively reinforce attendance, resulting in student success. Participants indicated an awareness that in order to continue to help students, faculty must continue to learn and continue to challenge themselves. This active engagement and learning atmosphere inspires students to continue to attend class and to want to succeed. This desire to succeed was also mentioned by Alex who shared, “I’m always looking for ways to be better and to help my students do better.”

Construct Linkage 16: Learn new ways → Love to teach. This linkage demonstrates that the desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the love of teaching. The desire to learn new

ways of thinking was identified as linking to the love of teaching. The relationship of these constructs indicate that the love for teaching held by adjunct faculty drives them to learn new ways to teach students. In addition, learning new ways to teach students reinforces and strengthens the adjunct faculty member's love for teaching. To demonstrate how learning new ways is connected to the love to teach, Fran mentioned that "learning new ways to teach a lesson keeps teaching fun. Students learn and are engaged when we have fun." Another example from Fran explored how the love of teaching can come from students teaching her new things. She said, "Students teach me new ways to teach and that makes me love my job." Dustin shared the excitement that comes from learning new ways to teach a lesson. "My teaching is something that I continue to improve. By continuing my own professional development and learning through reading and writing, I feed my love of teaching."

Construct Linkage 17: Love to teach → Learn new ways. This linkage demonstrates that the love of teaching leads to the desire to learn new ways of teaching. Participants shared the love for teaching and for helping students. This love to teach leads to the desire to learn new ways to teach. Learning new ways can be a new technology, presenting a new formula to solve a math problem, or showing a colleague how to use a media player. These examples shared by participants demonstrate an open minded approach welcoming new ways to feed fuel to their love of teaching.

Construct Linkage 18: Love to teach → Student success. This linkage demonstrates that the love of teaching leads to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree. The love to teach is one of the most consistent traits found in the literature capturing research on adjunct faculty (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). Not surprisingly, participants of this study echoed the research by sharing that they are drawn to teaching because it is a passion, or a calling. This

motivation to teach is demonstrated in a variety of ways, including an extension of making learning fun for students.

Fran supported this linkage by sharing that “students are the bread and butter of the institution.... We are here because of our students and the goal to help them succeed. By making learning fun, we get students engaged and they want to attend class.” Mentioning a combination of a desire to learn and the use of a sense of humor, Fran shared how “making learning fun is a way I show students I care.” Vera discussed how her love for her field of study and teaching are the motivational factors for bringing in performers, interactive exercises, and opportunities for student participation. The enthusiasm shared by Vera was evident in examples of connecting community events and student learning. “We have a vibrant community here and students learn about themselves when they experience this community.” A passion for learning and a positive outlook about helping students was shared by adjunct faculty participating in the study.

Linkage chains. A linkage chain refers to a complex theme path built by multiple constructs and linkages. Linkage chains differ from single linkages by drawing upon many of the same constructs. This is similar to how a story can start differently yet end up at similar conclusions, despite the different characters and perspectives. Linkage chains can contain mini-narratives that start with different constructs but connect to central ideas. Linkage chains begin at constructs and lead into other constructors. For example, *Committee work* is a starter construct as it connects with the construct *Friends*, which in turn connects with the construct *Share ideas*, which is connected to *Student success*.

Using the ZMET, linkage chains were displayed on the aggregated construct map, indicating how one construct can lead to several others. Data analysis indicated that the identity of the adjunct faculty member in the community college setting is comprised of a variety of

constructs. The overview of the constructs, definitions, and linkages provided a foundation for understanding the different elements of the identity of the adjunct faculty member. This variety is represented by connections or paths constituted by multiple constructs, known as linkage chains. The linkage chains each tell a story of emerging themes in identity of the adjunct faculty member. Table 6 lists the linkage chains identified in the aggregated construct map and provides a description for each chain.

Table 6

Adjunct Faculty Aggregated Construct Map – Linkage Chains

Linkage Chain	Description
Friends → Share ideas → Student success	Making friends in the workplace leads to sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree
Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach	Making friends in the workplace leads to sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree, which can reinforce the love of teaching
Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach → Learn new ways	Making friends in the workplace leads to sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree, which can reinforce the love of teaching, which can reinforce the desire to learn new ways of teaching
Friends → Share ideas → Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach	Making friends in the workplace leads to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can reinforce the desire to learn new ways of teaching, which can lead to the student successfully completing the

	assignment/course/degree, which can reinforce the love of teaching
Committee work → Friends → Share ideas	Participating in the department leads to making friends in the work place, which can lead to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans)
Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach	Participating in the department leads to making friends in the workplace, which can lead to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree, which can reinforce the love of teaching
Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach → Learn new ways	Participating in the department leads to making friends in the workplace, which can lead to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree, which can lead to the desire to learn new ways of teaching
Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach	Participating in the department leads to making friends in the workplace, which can lead to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can lead to the desire to learn new ways of teaching, which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree, which can reinforce the love of teaching
Unpredictable schedule → Varied income → Anxiety at home	Having an unpredictable teaching schedule leads to a quarterly change in income, which can lead to stress at home that is related to work
Learn new ways → Love to teach → Student success	The desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the love of teaching, which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree
Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach	The desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the student successfully completing the

assignment/course/degree, which can reinforce the love of teaching

Learn new ways → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach

The desire to learn new ways of teaching leads to the sharing of teaching ideas (events, lesson plans), which can lead to the student successfully completing the assignment/course/degree, which can reinforce the love of teaching.

Understanding the dialogue and the meaning behind each of the single linkages is an important step in the process of telling the story of the adjunct faculty member. These single linkages provide a view into the elements that connect and make linkage chains, resulting in the development of a story with many layers and possible outcomes. By exploring the linkage chains, a story developed demonstrating how the constructs are connected. When single linkages connect to one another, the result is a linkage chain. For example, *combining friends* → *share ideas*, connected to *share ideas* → *student success*, results in the following linkage chain: *friends* → *share ideas* → *student success*. Each linkage chain group is discussed in detail, in no particular order, grouped together by the starter word of the chain.

Linkage chain group 1. This group of linkage chains have the starter concept *friends*, which was defined by participants as the laughing together with peers or sharing ideas. This linkage chain demonstrates the different ways that connecting with peers and building relationships can be represented in identity through the connections to sharing ideas, student success, the love to teach, and the desire to learn new ways of teaching. The following linkage chains are the result of making friends:

- Friends → Share ideas → Student success
- Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach

- Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach → Learn new ways
- Friends → Share ideas → Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach

Friends → Share ideas → Student success. Building friendships in the work place can result in the opportunity to share ideas, which can lead to increased student success.

Conversations with participants yielded examples of how making friends in the workplace created the opportunity to share new tips, resources, and invitations for events, which resulted in an environment that would support student success. While student success is mentioned as a construct on the concept map, Fran and Vera mentioned appreciating knowing that they had others to help them teach students.

Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach. In addition to the opportunity to build a support network by making friends, sharing ideas, and supporting students, the love of teaching is reinforced by these rewards. Having the love of teaching reinforced can also inspire the faculty member to continue to have a desire to learn new ways of teaching. Fran shared that “when I get an idea from a colleague and that idea helps me teach a student, that makes me want to learn and share ideas with others.” The sharing of ideas between colleagues also serves as an education, providing an opportunity for adjunct faculty to teach each other and to inspire learning new ways to teach.

Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach → Learn new ways. When adjunct faculty members become friends, it can lead to sharing ideas, which can lead to student success, which can lead to the love of teaching, which can result in learning new ways. The motivation found from reinforcing the love for teaching results in the desire to learn new ways of teaching. Examples of friends sharing ideas that support student success and reinforce the love of teaching while learning new ways of teaching were mentioned by Vera as “one of the best parts

of being in a teaching community.” Fran shared that she is “learning every day from my students and my peers. I love to find a new way to teach.”

Friends → Share ideas → Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach. When adjunct faculty members make friends in the workplace, it can lead to the practice of sharing ideas, which can result in learning new ways of teaching, which can result in student success, reinforcing the love of teaching.

Linkage chain group 1 shows the value of building friendships in the workplace. Meeting others in the workplace and developing friendships where ideas can be shared can result in extrinsic rewards including student success and intrinsic rewards such as the reinforcement of the love for teaching and the motivation to continue learning. Friendships in the workplace can be inspirational and supportive aspects of identity of the adjunct faculty member. This linkage displays how being surrounded by those who have similar goals can help a person stay motivated and inspired.

Linkage chain group 2. This group of linkage chains have the starter construct of *committee work*, which was defined as an opportunity to participate in department initiatives. This group of linkage chains demonstrates the different connections that can surface as a result of participating in departmental initiatives including committee work. The participation by adjunct faculty in committee work or department events was identified as an opportunity to make friends, which results in the opportunity to share ideas. The following linkage chains are the result of committee work:

- Committee work → Friends → Share ideas
- Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach

- Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach → Learn new ways
- Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach

Committee work → Friends → Share ideas. The opportunity to participate in department committees or activities leads to the creation of friendships in the workplace. These working relationships between adjunct faculty members can lead to the opportunity to share ideas. This was noted to be particularly valuable to Fran who stated that she is proud of the collaboration that she has with colleagues as they “make her a better teacher.”

Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach.

Participation in department activities can lead to colleagues getting to know one another, which results in the opportunity to share ideas, which helps to promote student success, which reinforces the love to teach.

Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach → Learn new ways. Participation in department activities can lead to colleagues getting to know one another. Friendships in the workplace create an opportunity to share ideas, which can help to provide strategies to support student success, which reinforces the love to teach and results in the desire to continue to learn new ways of teaching.

Committee work → Friends → Share ideas → Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach. Participation in department activities can lead to colleagues getting to know one another. Colleagues who get to know one another are more likely to share stories and experiences that can help them to learn new ways of teaching, which can reinforce their love of teaching.

Linkage chain group 2 is an extension of linkage chain group 1. While linkage chain group 1 focused on the development of friendships, group 2 demonstrates how these friendships are developed through committee work or department activities. Despite the participants' indication that opportunities to meet other faculty members are rare, they still found the connections to be meaningful and worthwhile.

Linkage chain group 3. This linkage chain has the starter construct of *unpredictable schedule*. The varying work schedule of the adjunct faculty was cited by half of the participants as a challenge that results in a quarterly change of income. This unpredictable change in schedule and income can impact the home environment, creating tension and stress at home that is connected to work as an adjunct faculty member. This narrative was demonstrated by participants in connection to arguments between spouses, budget management, and planning family responsibilities, including child care. One single linkage chain emerged in the research as the result of an unpredictable schedule:

- Unpredictable schedule → Varied income → Anxiety at home

Unpredictable schedule → Varied income → Anxiety at home. The unpredictable schedule can lead to varied income, which can lead to anxiety at home. The last-minute scheduling and lack of commitment for future semesters creates stress at home when adjuncts and their partners are planning the budget, the schedule, and child care needs. Faculty pay was not mentioned by participants as a negative aspect of being an adjunct; however, the varying income is a challenge. Having a course added or removed from the adjunct schedule can result in a drastic change of income, resulting in anxiety at home from the need to adjust the family schedule and budget.

Linkage chain group 4. These linkage chains have the starter construct of *learn new ways*, which was defined as an interest in learning new ways to teach or learn. This set of linkage chains demonstrates how adjunct faculty are naturally interested in learning new ways of teaching. This innate desire to learn is an intrinsic trait that connects to the love of teaching, the ability to help others through sharing ideas, and the promotion of student success. This group includes the following linkage chains:

- Learn new ways → Love to teach → Student success
- Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach
- Learn new ways → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach

Learn new ways → Love to teach → Student success. The desire to learn new ways to teach leads to the love of teaching, which reinforces the focus on student success. Jessica explained how she uses YouTube and the Internet to search new ways of teaching a concept. “I love to teach something that is difficult to grasp, and to see the student understand. That motivates me to learn different ways of teaching.”

Learn new ways → Student success → Love to teach. The desire to learn new ways to teach leads to student success, which reinforces the love to teach. With Jessica’s efforts to learn different ways to teach a specific concept, she reported how seeing a student get excited about learning makes her very happy about her decision to teach. “Seeing my students understand and gain confidence because I took the time to find a video to show them, well it makes me feel like I’m in the right place.”

Learn new ways → Share ideas → Student success → Love to teach. The desire to learn new ways to teach leads to the opportunity to share ideas, which reinforces the love of teaching. Fran discussed how excited she is to share a new concept or teaching approach with her peers. “It

is exciting for us to be able to help students together. We all need motivating and support sometimes, students and faculty. By sharing new ideas, it reinforces my love for teaching.”

The linkage chains focusing on the themes of identity of adjunct faculty map tell the stories of a group that love to teach, learn new ways to teach, share ideas, and cheer for student success. In addition, this group does well when given the opportunity to meet others and share ideas, reinforcing the love of learning and teaching. Despite the challenges surrounding the unpredictable schedule of the adjunct faculty member, the themes captured in this study have an overall positive tone.

Positive or Negative

The 16 constructs, single construct linkages, and four groups of linkage chain themes all represent important themes in the identity of the adjunct faculty member. Each of these constructs comes with a variety of possible connections to other constructs, as well an overall impression of whether or not the identity construct is positive (adds to the teaching experience) or negative (takes away from the teaching experience). Each of the reported constructs has been reviewed and designated as positive or negative, indicating if the construct is a positive contributor or negative aspect of identity. As represented in Table 7, four of sixteen construct relationships were considered negative, ten indicated a positive contribution to identity, and one had mixed responses (both positive and negative).

Table 7

*Construct Relationships and Overall Contributor to Identity*³¹

Single Linkage	Relationship	
	Positive (+)	Negative (-)
Unpredictable schedule → Family		(-)

Unpredictable schedule → Stress		(-)
Unpredictable schedule → Varied income		(-)
Administrative support → Feel included	(+)	
Committee work → Feel included	(+)	
Committee work → Make friends	(+)	
Friends → Share ideas	(+)	
Learn new ways → Love to teach	(+)	
Learn new ways → Share ideas	(+)	
Learn new ways → Student success	(+)	
Love to teach → Learn new ways	(+)	
Love to teach → Student success	(+)	
Mobile office → Family	(+)	
Mobile office → Stress		(-)
Share ideas → Learn new ways	(+)	
Share ideas → Student success	(+)	
Union → Protected / voice	(+)	(-)
Varied income → Anxiety at home	(+)	

The process of analyzing the language used by adjunct faculty to describe their identity resulted in a list of constructs, a set of construct links, and a collection of linkage chains to tell the story of identity. These constructs are foundational pieces that are used to explain the complex topic of identity and how it is developed. By exploring the different areas of work assignment, teaching, learning, and colleague interactions, I had conversations with the participants that yielded detail about the metaphors used as they tried to describe their identity. Would the descriptions from the participants vary as much as the responses reported in previous research?

Descriptive Metaphors of Adjunct Faculty

The steps of the ZMET were effective in helping participants to discuss their experiences as adjunct faculty members in the community college setting with colorful depth and detail. Steps such as the process of using the five senses to describe experiences and the direction to create a construct map both provided more detail on the identity of adjunct faculty than the traditional qualitative methods. At best, the adjunct faculty experience is described to be considered “delicious” and at worst, “dry, like a roast beef on rye with no mayo.” Conversations regarding the five senses and stories connected to the images presented by participants resulted in metaphors describing the adjunct faculty experience as a journey, as a rollercoaster, and as the game Jenga. When discussing the different experiences of their day, adjunct faculty identity resembles that of a coach, an entertainer, or the conductor of an orchestra. When describing the experiences of teaching, learning, and collaboration, the metaphors of a mirror and a recipe were used powerfully to describe the process.

It’s the journey, not the destination: Metaphors of journey. Participants shared how the adjunct role was not necessarily the role they had envisioned when aiming to teach at the college level. Being an adjunct faculty member can be viewed as a step in the direction of a full-time teaching position, a chosen place to be, or a consolation prize when unable to acquire a full-time opportunity. Vera and Lance both shared stories about their current state as an adjunct faculty member and a reflection on the journey.

Flower. Vera shared a picture of a flower as part of the interview (see Figure 2). Her description was: “I thought this was super interesting because these are super tall flowers, these are cosmos. And it was growing really tall but then it feel over, so right here it’s bent, and then it decided it was going to the light anyway to bend and come back to the light. This is like adjunct

life, sometimes you fall over, you gotta make it work. If you look for your opportunity, you will blossom still; it's ok. It might not be the traditional path, but it's an opportunity to keep growing, keep teaching, keep learning. Maybe it represents my original thoughts and career plans: get your degrees, full time job, tenure, done. But that's not my path, and my path is still beautiful."



Figure 2. Metaphors of Journey: Flowers. This image of a flower with a bent stem represents the career path of an adjunct faculty in how it finds ways to thrive despite not being in a traditional position.

Belgium. Lance shared a photograph of his family to discuss in the interview (this photo is not included in the study for privacy purposes). Pointing to his wife and kids, Lance said, "This is why I do it; this is why I chose this life right now." Lance then told a story about an essay he once read as part of an orientation during a camp counselor training. This essay was about how life is like traveling to Belgium. Most people want life to be like traveling to Paris. He went on to share how Belgium is great, but not likely to be included in a European vacation. People want to see Rome, Paris, maybe London. The point was, there was an adjustment that was necessary to understand that there are wonderful rewards in Belgium. The tourist in Belgium is not missing out, but gaining their own rewards. While his teaching career may not look like the

vacation he once envisioned, he stated, “I am very happy to be in ‘Belgium’ by choice, to provide flexibility and time for my family.”

Metaphors of game and play. Participants shared how the unpredictable and unstable components of scheduling and income are the most challenging aspects of being an adjunct faculty member. The constant change and unpredictable nature of the teaching schedule result in many adjunct faculty choosing to be mobile rather than investing time to establish their designated office space or work area. These unstable and unpredictable aspects of the adjunct faculty identity are represented by a rollercoaster and the game Jenga.

Rollercoaster. Conversations with Alex, Vera, Gloria and Lance revealed how the adjunct faculty identity is like a rollercoaster. Gloria described the adjunct experience as “a wild ride,” with many ups and downs and unpredictable changes. Participants focused on images that represented fluctuating income from unpredictable schedules (see Figure 3), complicated payroll calendars from unpredictable schedules (see Figure 4), and a tendency to resist unpacking or moving into designated office spaces due to unpredictable schedules (see Figure 5).

Alex noted that an unpredictable schedule has him constantly checking online to see what his schedule is for the upcoming term (see Figure 3).

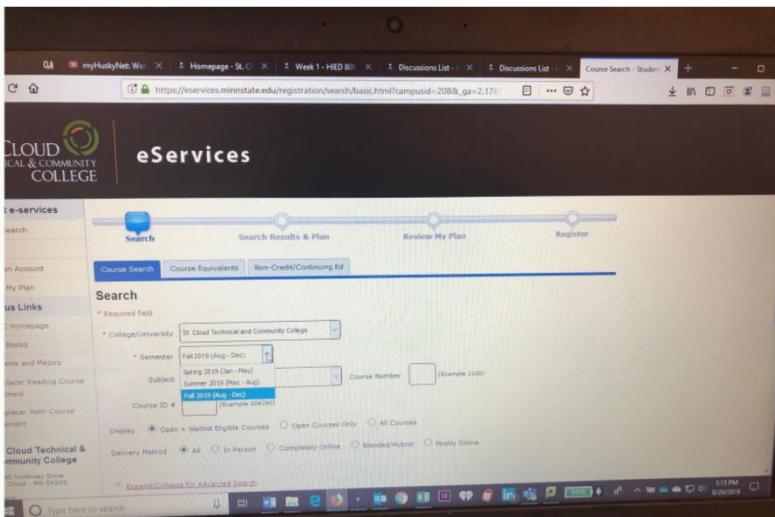


Figure 3. Metaphors of Journey: Online Course Assignment/Schedule. This image of an online course represents the continuous checking by some adjunct faculty to see what their schedule is for the upcoming term. The uncertainty and unpredictability of the schedule has a direct impact on an adjunct faculty's income.

Alex also noted that the uncertainty and unpredictability of the schedule has a direct impact on his income. The rollercoaster of the schedule creates a payroll rollercoaster, requiring a specific calendar (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Metaphors of Journey: Payroll Calendar. Adjunct faculty require specific calendars to keep track of their payroll dates due to unpredictable schedules.

Alex and Jessica both discussed their decision to carry their teaching necessities with them rather than setting up their designated office space (see Figure 5). Alex shared that “I have been mobile since 2008. If I get a full-time position, I will unpack and decorate my office.”



Figure 5. Metaphors of Journey: Briefcase. Due to the unpredictability of their teaching schedules, some participants noted a preference for carrying their supplies in a briefcase instead of moving into designated office space.

The discussion of the fluctuation in work schedule, income, and designated office spaces indicated a ride similar to that of a rollercoaster that goes up and down. Adjunct faculty have chosen to go on the ride and are often familiar with the upcoming ups and downs, yet the unpredictable next move makes the ride both exciting and uncomfortable.

Jenga. Gloria and Vera discussed the balancing act of being an adjunct, and how the stability can be deceiving. Gloria said “It looks solid, but it could come crashing down with one little change.” Gloria shared how adjunct life is not only unstable, but possibly even “dangerous; think about how those pieces could fall.” Vera also expressed how adjunct identity is like Jenga (see Figure 6). “This is sometimes how I feel adjunct life is; we are trying to put together a puzzle, and sometimes it feels really solid. Like I’m pretty sure I will have an assignment in the spring. However, if a job search is opened up, I would never have a chance. Sometimes, I’m juggling teaching additional lessons or courses to add income. It doesn’t feel steady. I hear that a

lot from my adjunct colleagues. It is insecure, and frustrating. I might have four classes, I might have three, we don't know.”



Figure 6. Metaphors of Game and Play: Jenga Game. The unpredictability of being an adjunct faculty is like a game of Jenga for some participants. Sometimes it feels really solid, and sometimes it feels unstable.

Role metaphors.

Coach. Stories from participants indicated that being an adjunct faculty member is very similar to being a coach (see Figure 7). Fran and Jessica shared how being an adjunct faculty member requires the ability to motivate students to even want to come to class. By creating daily goals and rewards, students are motivated and their attendance habits are reinforced. Creating these important daily regimens takes dedication, planning, and energy. In addition to the motivation to get students engaged, additional energy is needed to continue to cheer for students as they succeed, and to help them to identify their goals.



Figure 7. Role Metaphor: Coach. Some participants pointed out how being an adjunct faculty is like being a coach in that the faculty are working to motivate, engage, and reward students to help them succeed in the class.

Entertainer. Fran shared how she focuses on bringing humor and smiling into the classroom. “If they want to come to class they will learn more, so I try to make it fun.” By using daily riddles and engaging team assignments, Fran shared how she views her role to be similar to an entertainer, with the goal of making learning fun, and building the confidence in students so they are able to ask questions when needed (see Figure 8). “So many of my students come into my class scared. By laughing, we break down barriers and they are more comfortable asking me questions.”

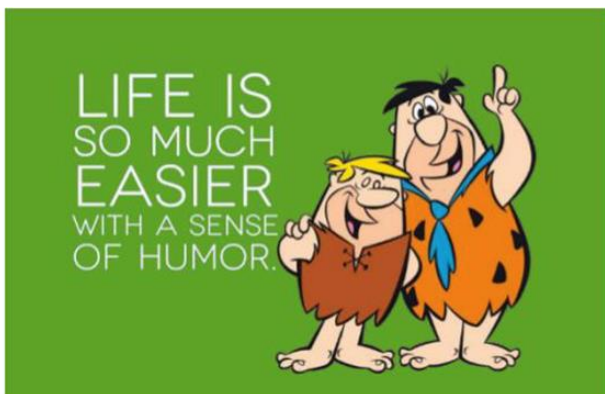


Figure 8. Role Metaphors: Entertainer. Some participants see their role as one of entertainer who makes learning engaging and fun for the students.

Conductor. Vera shared her comments about how sheet music and recipes are examples of how learning is broken down into steps. She explained that learning is like a recipe, and we just need to follow the steps. Using a different metaphor for teaching, Vera explained how teaching is like conducting an orchestra (see Figure 9). “Each student has talents and knowledge. My goal is show each person that they have knowledge to bring to the group, and then to bring them together as a class, like a conductor with an orchestra.”



Figure 9. Role Metaphors: Conductor. Some participants view their role in the classroom as something akin to a conductor that shows students how each of them contributes to something bigger than themselves, like players in an orchestra.

Summary

The identity of the adjunct faculty member is a complex combination of factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic. While adjunct faculty face legitimate concerns, such as last minute scheduling and varying quarterly income, the results of this study has captured an overall positive response to the current utilization of adjunct faculty in the community college setting. The love for teaching is the overall main motivator for adjunct faculty. The love for teaching is how participants often get started and is what keeps them going. Participants shared how the love

for teaching is something they feel and that this motivation is reinforced by sharing knowledge with others. The experience of gaining and sharing knowledge with others, specifically students and colleagues, placed the adjunct faculty member in a position to fulfill a personal need of teaching others. The themes of building relationships with other faculty and sharing ideas were reported as a prominent linkage chain, indicating the importance of social interaction in the identity of the adjunct faculty member. To that end, adjunct faculty members would benefit from additional opportunities to participate in committee work, which would allow more community building and encouraging the sharing of ideas. Recommendations for more interactions surfaced as themes in the research as well as a request from participants in the form of a suggestion. In addition to suggestions, there were challenges that surfaced, shared in the form of concern and complaint.

Themes connected to scheduling and income represent the most prominent negative themes reported by participants. Adjunct faculty are scheduled after full-time faculty and schedules are based upon fluctuating student enrollments, which results in a varied teaching schedule with limited stability. The scheduling of teaching assignments varies each term, which creates stress for the faculty member and the supporting family members. In addition, the change in teaching schedule results in changes in income, which creates stress within the family connected to budget planning and distribution of family roles and responsibilities. The participants identified the need for greater stability in scheduling and income as a main issue needing attention from administrators.

Each of the participants interviewed were initially hired as adjunct faculty and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to discuss their experience as part of this research study. Participants also expressed the desire to remain anonymous from a fear of appearing ungrateful

by sharing their experiences by participating in the study. Participants made it clear that they were appreciative for the opportunity to continue to teach. While the majority of participants from this study expressed interest in more permanent employment and a more reliable schedule, overall, the love for teaching has helped adjunct faculty to remain in their role. The opportunity to teach is one that adjunct faculty do not take for granted, yet most yearn for more.

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the results, which captured the themes of identity presented in the aggregated construct map and explored the overall impression of the adjunct faculty experience by participants. These results were used as the foundation to prepare recommendations for administrators providing support. Chapter 5 will provide a full discussion on the results of the study including detailed examples of identity constructs shared by participants, a discussion of the overall tone of the adjunct faculty identity, and implications for future research, practice, and recommendations. Recommendations for administrators and higher education leadership in providing support to adjunct faculty in the community college setting will be made based on four emergent themes of identity: work assignment, student success, teaching and learning, and colleague interactions.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

Researching the complex topic of identity requires the ability to dig through many layers and details about an individual and their experiences. Through this qualitative study I explored the layers that contribute to the identity development of adjunct faculty members in the community college setting. I used the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), a photo elicitation method known for its success in identifying underlying thoughts by focusing on the language used by the individual. By using ZMET to identify and explore themes of identity, this study provided an opportunity for adjunct faculty to share their experiences and for administrators to get to know their adjunct faculty better. The ZMET allowed participants to express their experiences with examples using their five senses, resulting in rich and descriptive insight on the identity of adjunct faculty.

The increased dependence on adjunct faculty has created a “new normal” in higher education (Ginder & Kelly-Reid, 2013) and a need to better understand this majority group, as they are likely here to stay. Existing research on adjunct faculty has focused on job satisfaction, academic quality, and the comparison to full-time faculty members, with limited focus on the study of the identity of the adjunct faculty member. The identity of an individual is comprised of individual, social, and professional experiences. In the world of the adjunct faculty member, the social and professional experiences involve students, colleagues, administrators, and the adjunct faculty member’s existing support system. In addition to the social interactions, identity is shaped by environmental factors including working conditions and compensation.

I conducted this study with the goal of identifying themes that represent the identity of the adjunct faculty member in the community college setting. For many decades, adjunct faculty

members have represented the fastest growing group of teaching professionals in higher education, and that growth is expected to continue (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014). Considering the important role adjunct faculty provide in supporting the mission of the community colleges, there is a need for research to explore, understand, and support this growing group of academics.

Recruitment for the study began in August 2019 and was done with the support of the Faculty Chair of the department of Liberal Arts and Sciences at an urban community college in Minnesota. The recruitment message (see Appendix A) was distributed by the department Faculty Chair via e-mail to 42 temporary part-time faculty in the Liberal Arts and Sciences department. Interested faculty members contacted me via e-mail to express interest and ask questions. Eleven faculty members responded with questions or partial interest, and eight committed to the study. Interviews were conducted in face to face meetings that lasted between one and two hours.

Participants in the study represented an age range of 35-58; all participants mentioned a spouse or partner, were white, non-Hispanic and English speaking. The academic background of the participants included six professionals with Master's degrees and two participants with doctorate degrees. The average number of years of teaching was 13 years, and all participants had more than the minimum of three years of teaching experience.

Conducting research focusing on the adjunct faculty experience can bring value to both the institution and to the individual faculty member (Masri, 2018). This chapter includes an overview of the emergent themes of identity that surfaced in the study with the goal of offering insight on the role of adjunct faculty. Recommendations are provided to administrators and leadership overseeing adjunct faculty in the community college setting and in higher education. This chapter also includes recommendations for future research opportunities. All

recommendations covered in this chapter are based on the themes that emerged from the research: working assignment, student success, love for learning and teaching, and colleague interactions.

Summary of the Results

This study provided insight and understanding on the majority group teaching community college students. Understanding the adjunct faculty identity is important for the field of higher education to continue to create and maintain a quality educational experience. Literature focusing on the role of the adjunct faculty member experience is conflicting in the areas of satisfaction, student success, working conditions, and support from administration (Bettinger & Long, 2004; Hose & Ford, 2014; Hutto, 2017). This study provided an opportunity to explore what experiences contribute to identity, whether or not these experiences are positive or negative, and to consider how the community of adjunct faculty can be supported by administrators in higher education.

The information for this study was gathered through a two-question survey and interviews following the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). This combination of tools was helpful for exploring the identity of the adjunct faculty member by providing specific constructs connected to identity development as well creating an overall impression of the adjunct experience. To begin, participants were asked to complete a two-question survey (see Appendix D) addressing their motivation for teaching and how they categorize their teaching role.

Two-question survey. A review of the responses to the two-question survey provided insight on the reasons adjunct faculty choose teaching, which primarily were (a) the desire to teach, (b) the ability to teach in their assigned profession, and (c) the opportunity to work with

students. Participant responses from the two-question survey revealed the love of teaching as the most powerful reason for teaching. All participants indicated that they desired or would prefer full-time teaching status. Participants noted that they considered their roles to be captured by a variety of terms: career ender, an aspiring academic, intentionally adjunct, and adjunct by default. This variety reflects the literature focusing on the complex titles and categories capturing the role of adjunct faculty (Pons et al., 2017).

Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET). This study was conducted with me using the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) to guide interviews with participants. During the interview, participants focused on photographs or images they had chosen themselves, to describe their identity as an adjunct faculty member. The conversations in these interviews allowed themes to surface that represent identity. Through the analysis of data, these themes emerged as constructs, single linkages, and linkage chains. These constructs, single linkages, and linkage chains are the story-telling components of the aggregated construct map. Sixteen constructs emerged as the foundation for the results (see Table 4). The 16 constructs are represented in the aggregated construct map (see Table 5) and represent 18 single linkages.

Discussion of Results

The stories told by the participants of this study represent the variety found in research focusing on adjunct faculty identity. From the review of literature, I have learned that the increased use of adjunct faculty and existing working conditions for faculty has resulted in negative reactions, which impact student outcomes (Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). The results of this study differ from the literature by capturing an overall positive response to the experience of being an adjunct faculty despite having a negative view on unpredictable schedules and varying income. This study captured how adjunct faculty

members have to balance positive student experiences and their love for teaching with the negative challenges of an unpredictable schedule and uncertain future. Despite this balancing act, participants in this study indicated an overall positive reaction to the experience of being an adjunct faculty member and indicated gratitude for the opportunity. This is important to note considering the most frequently cited construct linkage was *unpredictable schedule* → *stress*. Results of this study provide an example of how the identity of the adjunct faculty member is mostly positive, despite significant ongoing challenges.

The love for teaching expressed by the participants is strong and it overpowers the negative aspects that contribute to identity. The constructs identified as negative contributors to the adjunct faculty identity included: (a) unpredictable schedule, (b) varying income, and (c) stress. The instability of the teaching schedule and the varying of income in the role of the adjunct faculty member creates stress that trickles into family life. While teaching schedule and income are important topics, the number of constructs identified as positive in the adjunct faculty experience significantly outweighed the negative constructs connected to scheduling and varying income. Ten construct linkages (62.5%) were identified as being viewed positively, five viewed as negative (31.25%), and one construct, union protection, was considered both positive and negative (7.25%).

The overall positive reaction to the adjunct faculty experience is the result of a wide range of themes. These themes are represented by construct linkages and capture important topics including committee work, sharing ideas, continued education, supporting student success, administrative support, and the experience of fitting in. These construct linkages were connected on the construct map and demonstrated as linkage chains. The linkage chains show how one construct can lead to another, for example, *Friends* → *Share ideas* → *Learn new ways* → *Student*

success → *Love to teach*. By exploring the constructs identified and connecting them to others, the themes of identity surfaced, telling the stories of the adjunct faculty members. This story of identity was viewed through the lens of social interaction theory and indicated the importance of interactions in the creation of identity.

In addition to social interaction theory, this study used the conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) as a theoretical framework. Concepts representing identity were identified and discussed, resulting in the opportunity to better understand the identity of adjunct faculty. Four themes emerged → the main concepts representing adjunct faculty identity: (a) work assignment, (b) student success, (c) love for teaching and learning, and (d) colleague interactions. The variety of themes connected to identity captured in the literature review were also found in the emerging themes of this study.

Emerging Themes

Work assignment. The findings of this study were reflective of the literature that captures how topics such as course assignments, office space, and course pay are instrumental in the identity of adjunct faculty. Madikizela-Madiya and Le Roux (2017) identified that research on identity needs to focus on what adjuncts do and how they do it, as well as the important detail of where. Location, environment, and physical space are important. The participants of this study were overall positive and satisfied with their working environment, with the exception of the unpredictable work schedule. The theme of working assignment was a prominent theme with an overall negative response from adjunct faculty. This theme represented the aspects of identity that are connected to work schedule, compensation, and stress related to these topics at home. Participants shared how the unpredictable schedule of the adjunct faculty member creates stress in the home environment and in the workplace. The inability to plan ahead creates challenges in

family decisions including budget planning and making plans for child care planning. The varying schedule of the adjunct faculty results in the choice for many to have a mobile office, often leaving designated adjunct faculty office spaces empty.

Love for teaching and learning. Adjunct faculty love to teach and love to learn. This positive theme was prominent in the literature (Bolitzer, 2019; Pons et al., 2017) and in the results of this study. The desire to teach is one that runs deep in adjunct faculty, resulting in gratitude for the opportunity to teach. This desire to teach and to learn was connected to important topics such as student success and continuous education. The love of teaching was a motivational factor for beginning the role of teaching, and this love is connected to various other constructs of identity including student success, sharing new ideas, and the desire to learn new ways of teaching.

Student success. Student success surfaced as a positive theme representing the identity of the adjunct faculty member. All participants indicated the desire to help students as their main goal for being in the teaching field. The desire to help students learn motivates adjunct faculty to continue to learn themselves, to share their knowledge with colleagues, and reinforces the love of teaching. Participants noted their inner drive to teach, yet always came back to the end goal: helping the students move forward with their goals. Participants of this study took many different steps to be sure students reach success. This was a refreshing outcome considering the concern stated in the research indicating that adjunct faculty use traditional teaching methods and fail to learn new ways of teaching (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). These demonstrated efforts by the adjunct faculty to learn new information and new ways of teaching are important for student success and are also great opportunities to connect with peers in the workplace.

Colleague interactions. After a review of the literature on adjunct faculty, this researcher

understood the interactions between adjunct faculty members and students to be the most influential on identity and the connection with peers to be lacking (Spaniel & Scott, 2013; Thirolf, 2012). Research supports that participating in engaging activities with others at work is directly connected to identity development in faculty (Stryker, 1980). Consequently, the lack of positive connection between adjunct faculty and their peers results in a lack of identity development (Thirolf, 2012). As expected, this study found that colleague interaction is an important theme of identity in the work of the adjunct faculty member. This theme was a positive theme, resulting in linkage chains demonstrating the benefits of social interaction in the workplace. The longest linkage chain on the construct map, *Committee work* → *Friends* → *Share ideas* → *Learn new ways* → *Student success* → *Love to teach* captured how the love of teaching and the focus on student success become even more powerful when given the opportunity to share teaching strategies with colleagues. The opportunities to build friendships, connect with colleagues through committee work, and interact with the administrative staff (dean of faculty and administrative assistant) result in a variety of positive reactions such as a sense of belonging, supporting student success, and reinforcing love for teaching.

A noteworthy topic. The amount received for compensation was discussed in the interviews but did not surface as a construct. Since five of the eight participants discussed the amount they received as compensation for their work as an adjunct faculty member, it is noteworthy to mention these comments. Conversations connected to the amount of faculty pay received for teaching had a positive tone and did not reflect the research focused on adjuncts being exploited (Brennan & Magness, 2018a).

Faculty pay. Concerns about compensation and low faculty pay for adjuncts are common themes that emerged from the review of the literature (Brennan & Magness, 2018b; Schulman &

Schulman, 2019). From reviewing the literature, I learned that faculty pay is a top complaint about being a faculty member. In this study, conversations focusing on pay were minimal and overall positive. Two participants discussed faculty pay as an item of conversation. These two participants indicated appreciation for the rate of pay they receive for teaching in the community college setting, stating it was “fair” and “the best pay in my higher education career.”

Compensation due to varying teaching schedules was mentioned as part of the reality of the adjunct experience but was not connected to feeling included at the institution or as a reason to seek other opportunities. Kezar and Sam (2014) provided findings that support the results of this study, indicating that compensation is not as important as feeling part of the group or working conditions. Participants discussing pay during this study were grateful and pleased with the pay they were earning for their work. Participants mentioned their appreciation for the amount of pay received as an adjunct and shared how this pay is helpful when paying for ways to invest in their education, including conference registration, journal subscriptions, and tuition for coursework. Faculty are investing in their own professional development, family time, and relationships with colleagues to continue to learn and grow, so they can continue to pursue teaching. Changes in the economy and demand for adjunct faculty may have shifted the adjunct faculty focus from faculty pay to focus on being included and recognized. The only concern mentioned in conversations connected to pay was the potential of reduction in pay as a result of a reduced schedule.

Work schedule. Despite their temporary part-time status, participants of this study had been scheduled regularly and consistently enough that it was not a primary concern. Dustin mentioned that “being scheduled next semester is an unspoken assumption.” Each of the participants in this study indicated being scheduled each term over the past year, but with varying course loads and course assignments, resulting in the need for additional prep work.

The Research Questions

This study was conducted to answer three research questions. Research Question 1: What metaphorical themes represent the current identity of adjunct faculty in the community college? Research Question 2: Do these themes of identity capture a positive or negative reaction to the current identity of faculty in the community college setting? Research Question 3: How can administrators provide support for adjunct faculty in the community college setting based on themes of identity? Two data sources were analyzed for this study including ZMET interviews and a completed two-question survey. The information gained from the interviews and the survey questions resulted in answers and input to each of the research questions.

Research Question 1: What metaphorical themes represent the current identity of adjunct faculty in the community college? The identity of the adjunct faculty member is represented by four main themes: (a) working assignment, (b) student success, (c) love for teaching and learning, and (d) colleague interactions. Each theme is built from a variety of constructs identified from the interviews and is explored in the following descriptions.

Emergent theme 1: Work assignment: Teaching schedules, income and office space.

The results of this study indicate that the adjunct faculty role has its rewards and challenges. The theme of the work assignment represented a variety of construct linkages connecting to the topics of teaching schedules, varied income, and office space to stress, family, and anxiety at home. Individuals considering the path of teaching in an adjunct role should be prepared for unpredictable teaching schedules that vary each term as well as varying income. The unpredictable schedule of the adjunct faculty member and how it impacts family life was the most prominent construct linkage of this study. This construct was considered a negative aspect of identity as it brings challenges to both work and home settings.

The unpredictable schedule results in varied income. This construct linkage was considered negative due to the challenges it created the adjunct faculty member and supporting family members in the areas of budget planning, vacation scheduling, and managing family schedules. The unpredictable income of the adjunct faculty was also connected to the desire for frequent job searching activities. The inability to rely on a consistent teaching schedule and income has created a habit of searching for more stable opportunities or the opportunity to supplement the teaching income as needed.

While varying schedules and income can be stressful and bring tension into family life and schedules, the opportunity to teach and to gain experience in higher education outweighed the challenges. Most adjunct faculty are willing to work through the challenges of varying schedules and income because of their strong desire to teach. The flexibility provided by the adjunct faculty role was mentioned as valuable despite the stress that comes with the quarterly changes.

The participants in this study expressed appreciation for the designated office space provided by the community college, despite rarely utilizing or moving into the space. Kezar (2013) indicated that offices provide adjunct faculty a space for engaging in professional conversations or meetings, leading to a sense of belonging in the institution. Two of the participants indicated that they had settled into their provided workspace, including office décor and the addition of personal items. Two participants shared how the office space is useful for meeting with students or colleagues, but the time and attention needed to decorate was not a priority. Lance indicated that teaching creates a mess in his workspace at home, resulting in the need to prioritize, noting how the office environment is often pushed aside. He said, “Organizing an office space on campus is not a priority, I focus on what matters, which is addressing student

concerns right now.” The remaining four participants indicated that despite having a designated office space, choosing to carry teaching materials was preferred over settling in the office space.

The flexibility provided by using a mobile office approach was connected to the need for flexibility in the family setting and outweighed the stress it creates. In addition to having flexibility and mobility, the decision not to settle into an office space was made by Alex and Lance as a result of past experiences. Alex shared the experience of losing a long-term position in higher education in the for-profit education sector, which resulted in being apprehensive to feel secure in a part-time position. Alex shared that he doesn’t “want to get too comfortable.” Lance reported being moved three times in a three year period, which resulted in his decision to carry the essentials for teaching and to store the other materials at home. “I’ve come in and found my office space had changed and my things had been moved.” Regardless of the décor choices and the different uses for the office, participants indicated that having dedicated space was appreciated and recognized as a way of being welcomed into the culture of the department. Dustin said that “it felt like administration was saying we can’t promise a position, but we have a space for you.”

The story told by the aggregated construct map indicates that there are many environmental influences on the development of identity. The identity of the adjunct faculty member is similar to being a coach, a conductor, and an entertainer. The adjunct faculty member is one who is dedicated to learning and teaching despite the unpredictable schedule, office space concerns, and varying income.

Emergent theme 2: Love for learning and teaching. The results of this study confirm what previous research has stated: The one shared element in adjunct faculty is their love of teaching. This passion runs deep and is often connected to the passion for their field of study.

The desire to teach and to learn are represented by a circular set of constructs on the aggregated construct map demonstrating how learning and teaching are closely related. As indicated by Table 2, six of the eight participants noted that the motivation for teaching in the first place was the desire to teach or work in their field of study. There are a variety of reasons why participants are in the role of an adjunct faculty member, but most started in the role because of the desire to teach. This passion can provide a powerful and inspirational area for personal growth, making adjunct teaching a great choice for those who have limited teaching experience and want to learn, as well as those who want to remain in their role despite years of part-time assignments. The enthusiasm to teach and to help students was shared by the participants of this study and offers a positive outlook on the choice to be in an adjunct role.

Emergent theme 3: Student success. The goal of student success is a frontrunner for the attention of the adjunct faculty member. Participants discussed the connection between their desire to learn and the desire to help students to succeed. Individual examples of how to help students included referral to resources, decorating classrooms with welcoming and inclusive décor, and making the effort made to build relationships with colleagues in order to continue to build skills and resources. The intrinsic drive to help students is a motivator that is connected to a cycle of learning and teaching. Adjunct faculty love to help students succeed. Students succeeding or failing is a reflection on the faculty member. When describing what motivates them to continue learning, participants mentioned either their love for teaching or the love for learning.

Emergent theme 4: Colleague interactions. The desire to teach and to learn is connected to the construct of making friends. Participants noted how sharing resources was enjoyable once they had a friend in the workplace. Opportunities such as department meetings and committee

work were mentioned as catalysts for friendships between adjunct faculty members. Vera stated that having a friend in the workplace to share ideas and collaborate with was “inspiring” and “helps to share the load.” Considering the high utilization of adjunct faculty and the wide range of students being taught by this group, adjunct faculty present a strong core in the structure of the community college. Conversations with participants indicated that there is a lot of sharing going on behind the scenes of the classroom. By sharing resources, teaching lessons, and strategies for student success, collegial relationships are strengthened and reinforced. Vera also discussed her work to connect with faculty in other departments to collaborate for events with the goal of relationship building for students and faculty members.

One way for adjunct faculty to meet and to build relationships is through the connections and support provided by the union. The presence of the union was mentioned in 50% of the interviews with a common reaction: The presence of the union is comforting in the sense that there is protection, yet being represented by a union is foreign and an adjustment. Alex shared that he liked “the protection provided by the union yet I hate that I need protection.” Alex came from a for-profit background, so while the presence of the union was new to him, the benefits were clear. “Communication and protection from the union give the adjunct faculty a say in important matters like benefits and compensation.” Vera shared that “having a union office in the building makes it very encouraging to reach out when you need support or information.”

Research Question 2: Do these themes of identity capture a positive or negative reaction to the current experience of adjunct faculty in the community college setting?

Review of the constructs and construct links represented in the aggregated construct map indicates that adjunct faculty have an overall positive response to the adjunct faculty experience and negative reactions to course scheduling and the connections to stress and family. The

unpredictable teaching schedule results in varying income, stress within the family, and the inability to make long-term plans. The schedule of the adjunct faculty member changes from semester to semester. These periods of adjustment connected to unpredictable scheduling are considered negative and one of the areas needing attention as a result this study. Despite this powerful obstacle in the role of the adjunct faculty member, those who are teaching are there because they love to teach and they have a positive outlook on learning. This overall positive outlook is captured in Table 7 which shows 11 of the 16 construct linkages categorized as positive.

Despite the challenges that surface from a varying schedule and income, as a whole, adjunct faculty members in the community college setting want to be teaching. These professionals have an overall positive impression of their work and a desire to help their students and their colleagues and to continue to nourish their own self growth. Responses to the research questions addressed by this study have been represented by the construct linkages and information gained through the interviews. The metaphorical themes of working assignment, student success, love for learning and teaching, and colleague interactions were captured in the aggregated concept map.

When comparing the construct linkages captured on the aggregated concept map (see Figure 1) with the reasons participants are motivated to teach (see Table 2), there are relationships that surface. The areas captured on the aggregated construct map with the most activity are connected to the area of student success. This focus on student success is also represented in the responses captured in Table 2. The top two selections for motivational factors for adjunct teaching were the opportunity to teach students and the opportunity to teach in his or her specialized field of study. The positive experiences connected to the identity of an adjunct

faculty member are represented by topics of student success, constant learning, sharing ideas, making friends, feeling included by administration, participating in committee work, and the support from union representation. The construct linkages captured in the aggregated construct map that yielded a negative response from participants included instructor scheduling, varying income due to scheduling changes, stress at home due to scheduling, and the varied income.

Overall, adjunct faculty are inspired and motivated by their love of gaining knowledge and teaching. The benefits of connecting to students, building relationships with colleagues, and growing as a professional in higher education were all considered positive. These positive components outweighed the negative aspects of unpredictable schedules, varying income, and stress. Conversations with participants indicated an awareness that full-time faculty have better opportunities for course pay, course schedules, and voicing their opinions than do adjunct faculty. Regardless of these impressions, the overall response to the adjunct teaching experience was shown to be positive and appreciated.

Research Question 3: How can administrators provide support for adjunct faculty in the community college setting based on themes of identity? This study has provided insight on the identity of adjunct faculty that will help administrators to provide better support. It is important that administrators invest in and support their adjunct faculty (Wallin, 2004). Administrators have valuable resources in their pool of adjunct faculty. Investing in improvements for adjunct faculty is a way to reinforce the university mission (Shulman, 2019). Analysis of the single linkages and linkage chains presented in the aggregated construct map suggests that the following themes are most prominent in the identity of the adjunct faculty member in the community college setting: (a) working assignment; (b) student success; (c) love for learning and teaching; and (d) colleague interactions.

These themes of identity are a strong foundation for understanding the experience of the adjunct faculty member. By understanding these themes of identity, administrators have more knowledge and information to support adjunct faculty. Awareness of these themes provides valuable information for university administrators and leadership to assess the needs of their faculty, to create ideas for supporting them, and to integrate them into the community college setting. Ideas for administrators providing support to adjunct faculty include creating plans that focus on providing more stability in instructor scheduling, providing support for adjuncts to pursue opportunities of learning and professional development, and promoting opportunities for colleagues to build relationships within the institution.

Working assignment. The one theme of identity that is both most prominent and most negative is connected to the unpredictable nature of the teaching schedule. The unknown schedule for adjunct faculty creates stress, reinforces the habit to search for jobs, impacts the schedule of income, and creates tension at home. Administrators and higher education leadership can make a powerful impact on the identity of adjunct faculty members by reviewing and revising the course scheduling system. Communication and efforts to explain and to improve in the scheduling process would be meaningful to adjunct faculty members, and would possibly reduce stress. Jessica's examples about the impact of the unpredictable work schedule were focused mostly on frustration. "The system doesn't make sense. If my schedule as a last minute adjunct seems to be the same from term to term, why does the official notice of the schedule have to be last minute?"

In addition to the scheduling, participants mentioned the language used in the communications connected to the role of being an adjunct faculty member. The title of

“temporary part-time” was described by participants as “the lowest you can be titled” and “see how that looks? I’m not just part-time; I’m temporary.” Four of the participants had been in the temporary role for over a decade, reinforcing the decision by administration to keep the processes with adjunct faculty static. One participant focused on the words “no promise” which is language used in the communication regarding upcoming teaching assignments. Participants described this language as being “bleak” and “about as demotivating as it can get.”

Colleague interactions. The outcomes of peer interaction surfaced as being connected to important identity themes including: (a) student success, (b) learn new ways, (c) share ideas, and (d) union representation. Department related events such as committee work and meetings were cited as the main opportunities to meet colleagues. Administrators in higher education can assist in building colleague interactions and peer connections by providing and prioritizing more professional development opportunities or team-building activities for adjunct faculty.

The limited research focusing on the identity formation in adjunct faculty members captures a strong and positive connection when working with students, but a disconnect in identity development when looking at peer interaction (Thirolf, 2012). Considering that teacher and faculty identity development is an integral part of the process of becoming a teacher (Alsup, 2006), administrators and leaders need to attend to the needs and the identity development of their adjunct faculty. College administrators have been encouraged to support their faculty by providing development opportunities that are related to helping develop teaching skills and promote positive interactions between full-time and part-time faculty (Thirolf, 2012). To provide direct suggestions supporting this call to action, I have created the following recommendations for administrators supervising adjunct faculty, and adjunct faculty themselves to support ownership in the process of identity development.

Recommendations for Administrators Overseeing Adjunct Faculty

Recommendation 1: Designate. See the adjunct faculty – Give each faculty member a name and a face.

Action: Consider a different title for part-time/temporary/contingent/adjunct faculty. Provide name, photo and contact information for each scheduled faculty member. Include adjunct faculty in the university directory. Encourage and model the practice of wearing a name tag or photo ID on a lanyard.

Goal: Teambuilding, promoting recognition and relationship building efforts.

Recommendation 2: Communicate. Schedule time to discuss the teaching schedule expectations and logistics.

Action: Create a communication schedule that connects leadership and adjunct faculty to discuss scheduling needs, expectations, and steps. Seek input from adjunct faculty for events, training, and department activities.

Goal: Communication between administrators and faculty regarding schedule demands, processes and planning to address and reduce questions, and promote discussion to support adjunct faculty.

Recommendation 3: Participate. Promote community building and provide opportunities for colleagues to meet.

Action: Provide professional development opportunities for adjunct participation.

Goal: Teambuilding – education – committee involvement

Recommendation 4: Advocate. Recognize the efforts of adjunct faculty and celebrate the accomplishments.

Action: Ask adjuncts about what they are doing in the areas of professional growth. Ask about job promotions, pursuing degrees, writing, presenting, conference participation, publishing, and community involvement. Consider a newsletter, or social media sites to feature professional development projects, publications, and degree advancement by faculty. Be proud of your faculty, the diversity of their accomplishments, and recognize the work they are doing to improve themselves and the institution.

Goal: Creating an inclusive and supportive community for all faculty members.

Recommendations for Adjunct Faculty

Recommendation 1: Designate. Promote the use of names and recognition of faces by wearing ID.

Action: Consistently wear a name tag or photo ID on a lanyard.

Goal: Teambuilding, promoting recognition and relationship building efforts.

Recommendation 2: Communicate. Honor scheduled meetings with leadership to discuss direction of position and scheduling details.

Action: Meet with leadership to address concerns and understand the community.

Goal: To create and support a community that encourages discussion and sharing of experiences.

Recommendation 3: Participate. Provide service to your institution and field of study by actively participating in committees or activities.

Action: Engage in activities including professional development, committee work, and other opportunities offered by the institution and the community.

Goal: Reinforcing the love of teaching and learning and creating community.

Recommendation 4: Advocate. Be proud of what you are doing to continue to teach and to learn. Share your accomplishments and promote your own growth!

Action: Proudly share your accomplishments with your supervisor. Keep leadership informed of your educational goals, if you are earning an additional degree or conducting research. Promote your work including publications, conference participation, presentations, and community activity.

Goal: To create and support an inclusive community of educational professionals.

Concluding Observations

Participants indicated an interest in more training and communication in the hiring and initial training process. Alex talked about a time when he was hired to teach a class one week prior to the class start date, with no training or direction. The hiring and training stage of onboarding is a valuable time to build the foundation of community.

Adjunct faculty are resourceful and like to share their resources. While research focusing on peer exchange engagement is limited for adjunct faculty (Bolitzer, 2017), this study found that the opportunity to share information and to help others is motivating and rewarding. Participants indicated a desire to build and share their knowledge, especially when they establish friendships in the workplace. Friendships were most likely to be established through activities such as committee work, faculty meetings, and professional development activities. Since adjunct faculty members are more likely to attend events and professional development opportunities when there is compensation provided (Brewster, 2000), thus a stipend or a pay structure involving participation is recommended.

The encouragement and support of these developmental activities will help adjunct faculty to build bridges between disciplines and allow faculty to expand their relationships.

These bridges provide pathways for faculty to get resources to each other and to students. Adjunct faculty are often overlooked or not invited to participate in department activities including commencement, dinners, and department parties (Scott & Danley-Scott, 2015). Efforts to include adjunct faculty in development opportunities are important to supporting the goals of the institution and to the identity of the faculty member. This expansion of relationships is beneficial for a sense of belonging within the adjunct faculty community as well as for student success.

Conversations with participants in this study indicated that adjunct faculty are working on many projects behind the scenes of their teaching role without the knowledge or support of their institution. Participants provided examples that included: (a) seeking grant-funding for technology to add to the classroom, with the end goal of boosting enrollment, (b) planning community events with the goal of involving students, and (c) publishing and presenting research at national and international conferences. Tapping into the valuable resources of experiences, education, research, publications, and community activities of the adjunct faculty population will help to support the adjunct faculty, promote learning, and support the overall goals of providing an education to students. Conversations in this study uncovered examples of how adjunct faculty are active in their own learning, and how this learning can benefit the institution, with more conversation, planning, and direction.

Administrators are encouraged to connect with their adjunct faculty and to engage in conversation about their professional development projects and personal interests. One participant in this study shared how he had presented at an international conference and had several publications from the past two years of projects but that his institution was unaware of these successes. He said, “Not only does no one know about this work, it provides no value to

the institution.” By indicating interest and possibly providing financial support, the cycle of learning and teaching will be nurtured by administrators and will help the adjunct faculty grow personally and further help students. It is recommended that administrators consider how the opportunities for training, participation, and development are relevant to the individual faculty members. Providing recognition for the work done outside of the classroom (research, presentation, publication, etc.) is a way that administrators can support adjunct faculty members.

Adjunct faculty appreciate having a voice. Asking for input and offering ways for adjunct faculty to participate, vote, or share feedback will help to build trust. Participants in this study indicated appreciation for the opportunity to share their experiences and for others to be interested in the adjunct faculty experience. The representation of the union was connected to the construct of having a voice and indicated the importance for the input of adjunct faculty to be considered.

The small details matter. Participants indicated how items like nameplates for cubicles, names included in course schedules (rather than STAFF), mailboxes, and signage are all important for adjunct faculty to feel included. There are various titles connected to adjunct faculty that are interpreted as disposable and unimportant (Levin, 2007). The title of “temporary part-time” is one that needs review and revision. Administrators should consider a title that captures a more positive and professional impression of the adjunct faculty role.

It is worth noting that the faculty dean and administrative assistant at the institution of focus in this study were showered with compliments on organization, communication, welcoming environment, and overall inclusion. With the changes in higher education and the closing of many institutions, professionals have experienced change and may resist settling in, requiring time and the building of trust. Administrators overseeing adjunct faculty must

recognize the investment already made in their adjunct faculty and focus on how to build a dedicated team by utilizing the amazing resources they have on their team.

Summary Statement

Adjunct faculty are an integral part of the higher education system, serving the majority of community college students in the United States. The need for understanding the identity of this group is driven by lack of qualitative research focused on this group and the important role adjunct faculty play in student success. This study provides an overview of the themes of identity representing adjunct faculty and recommendations for how administrators can support them based on these themes.

Implications for future research. Existing studies focusing on the voice and experiences of adjunct faculty are limited. Three participants in this study expressed sincere appreciation for the opportunity to have someone listen and allow them to share their experience, indicating that they are rarely asked for their perspective and vantage point. Future research focusing on the identity of adjunct faculty members is needed in the areas of peer integration, department participation, and working assignment.

Peer integration. Any research providing a glimpse into the role, identity, or experience of the adjunct faculty member can help to bring in more understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for adjunct faculty as they navigate through the changes in the field of higher education and as administrators aim to support them. A mixed method study using qualitative measures would provide an opportunity to offer more insight on constructs or insights that were not captured by this study.

Department participation. Since the support and leadership of administrators has surfaced as a theme in this study, exploring administrators' perceptions of adjunct faculty would

be valuable. Contributing to the understanding of adjunct faculty can help administrators to provide opportunities for professional development and growth and can help to build relationships and bring awareness to the need to develop this relationship.

Working assignment. The identity of the adjunct faculty member is influenced by environmental factors including work schedule, income, technology resource, and office space. Future research focusing on the environmental influences on identity would be beneficial for long-term planning by institutions in the areas of scheduling, assigning office space, and providing administrative support.

Implications for practice and recommendations. The utilization of adjunct faculty shows no signs of decreasing. With the expected increase of part-time faculty and the reduction of full-time faculty members, administrators in higher education to be more intentional understanding the adjunct faculty role and experience. This can begin with getting to know the adjunct faculty. The results of this study capture themes of identity that are helpful for recommendations of practice in the areas of peer integration, department participation, and working assignment. Each of these recommendations can begin with conversation and communication, with the end goal being to build individual working relationships and to strengthen the faculty as a whole.

Peer integration. First, administrators need to take time to understand their adjunct faculty. In order for administrators to provide support and integration, first it is necessary for the identity of adjunct faculty to be understood. By getting to know the adjunct faculty, administrators can make decisions about connecting faculty that are meaningful and beneficial to identity development. They can begin by asking questions of adjunct faculty. Do they want to

work full-time if given the opportunity? Are they motivated by recognition or money? Do they have interests or experiences that would help to enhance and support the mission of the institution? These questions and efforts to get to know the faculty will be helpful when planning and providing professional development opportunities.

Department participation. The participants of this study and their students benefitted from building friendships in the workplace. The opportunities for adjunct faculty members to meet their peers are limited and tend to take place at union meetings, in the office, and while participating in committee work. Administrators hold positions that can help build and maintain these important connections in the workplace. Providing opportunities and encouraging attendance with compensation or recognition would benefit the adjunct faculty group.

Working assignment. In order for adjunct faculty to be supported in their role and identity development as a faculty member, administrators must provide institutional support. The areas of support demanding attention from this study include attention to class scheduling, office space, and the display of adjunct faculty photos. It is recommended that administrators have active communication with adjunct faculty to discuss the course assignment plans. In addition, consideration for office space and how names and/or photos of adjunct faculty are displayed are details that can result in faculty feeling supported.

Understanding the adjunct faculty role will help higher education by continuing to integrate them into the overall landscape of education. With full-time faculty members historically receiving the focus of the research, the respect of colleagues, and opportunities to provide input on faculty development, adjunct faculty have largely been left behind. With the increasing number of adjunct faculty being utilized in the community college setting investing

the time and resources into understanding this group will result in increased community, better working conditions, and a more supportive environment for faculty and students.

Relationship of results to theory. This study used symbolic interactionism and conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) as the theoretical frameworks to explore the identity construction and negotiation of adjunct faculty through the use of symbols displayed through their social interactions. The combination of theoretical frameworks assisted in data analysis from the interviews and aimed to understand the factors that contribute to the identity of the adjunct faculty member in the community college setting.

Symbolic interaction theory seeks to understand identities through a communication system based on meanings and symbols formed through interactions with others (Askan et al., 2009; Blumer, 1969; Burbank & Martins, 2010). Through the use of the ZMET protocol, it was apparent and confirmed that adjunct faculty members create their identity through a variety of interactions. Social interactions reported by adjunct faculty members included those with students, administration, staff, fellow adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, community members, family members, and union representatives. This study relied on symbolic interactionism to capture how identity is created through the social interactions that occur with other people (Burbank & Martins, 2010). Through the lens of this framework, individuals interpreted their surroundings and use that information to determine how to act (Blumer, 1969). This was clear when Dustin mentioned “I participate in committees in order to learn how to conduct myself in higher education. I learn from others.”

Since society is always changing, individuals are able to interpret and define each situation in their own way (Stets & Burke, 2003). Meaning is created through these social interactions as individuals develop identity (Askan, et al., 2009). Fran shared the desire to build

relationships with colleagues in order to build a network of support and resources. Fran discussed how “students are changing” and how she has to “work hard to change my teaching to meet their needs.” From the meanings created, symbols are also created to demonstrate shared beliefs of large groups in society (Burbank & Martins, 2010). These symbols are exchanged between individuals and expressed through language (Askan et al., 2009).

The meanings that are created from the surrounding environment are individual, but there are some interpretations more likely to surface than others. Stryker (1980) developed an approach to symbolic interactionism and proposed that symbols contribute to the creation of different roles. The different roles connected to an individual are influenced by the positions they occupy and labels others have assigned to them (Stryker, 1980). People hold multiple roles and therefore have multiple identities. Symbolic interactionism served as a strong framework for this research study. The interactions with colleagues, students, and the community are important components in the identity development of adjunct faculty.

Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) considers metaphor to be a cognitive tool that can be used to understand and make sense of the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). From the CMT perspective, metaphor is more than a phrase in language that can also serve as a tool for understanding experiences and concepts. The concept that is the focus of understanding is known as the target but is often difficult to define on its own; the concept used to describe the target, known as the source, is more concrete and easier to understand (Landau, 2018). Sources or metaphors of experience come from a variety of influences including environmental conditions, interactions with others, and cultural influences (Landau, 2018).

This study focused on the language participants used to describe identity and the constructs that were used. By connecting the different constructs used by participants, themes of

identity were captured and noted on the aggregated construct map. The use of symbolic interactionism captured the unique and individual elements of identity development. Participants noted how interactions with students, colleagues, administration, family, and the community were influential in their identity. By exploring the themes in language, concepts of identity surfaced. These concepts were captured as constructs on the aggregated construct map. The result is that identity in adjunct faculty is one of competing constructs including: scheduling, colleagues, the desire to learn, income, family, stress, and the drive to help students succeed.

I have defined identity as a dynamic process, one that changes and is shaped by interactions with others. This research reflects how powerful the interactions with others are in shaping identity. The adjunct faculty identity development is a process that continues to change, and is strongly influenced by the interactions with students, peers, administrators, and the community. It was the goal of this research to talk with adjunct faculty and to explore the language used to describe their identity. The conversations that took place were powerful demonstrations of the complexity of identity development.

Limitations. The participant pool for this study was small ($N=42$) resulting in a small sample size ($n=8$). Input from a more diverse sample of adjunct faculty capturing a variety in age, gender, institutional type or size, and cultural diversity may provide different results than reported in this study. All eight participants were White, non-Hispanic and English speaking, which reflected no racial diversity. By conducting a study focusing on social justice or inclusion, and exploring a diverse participant pool, information could be gathered capturing the experience of different racial groups in the college setting.

The representation of disciplines covered were limited to the liberal arts department, capturing input from those teaching biology, music, math, English, ethics, psychology, and

history. Expanding the scope of disciplines to include other areas, such as business or engineering, would help to evaluate the potential of the field of study on the adjunct experience. Data from this study were self-reported by the participants and done with the assumption that participants were sharing honest experiences. It is possible the participants may have tailored their responses to fit the title of the research study.

Summary and Conclusion

Students and administrators increasingly rely on adjunct faculty to support the core mission of the community college. Despite the majority presence, there are limited qualitative studies focusing on the adjunct faculty experience in the community college setting. The need for these studies exists because of the need to understand the adjunct experience. Adjunct faculty are responsible for teaching the majority of students in higher education, leaving a great responsibility on their shoulders. Studies focusing on providing a voice to adjunct faculty can be valuable for providing insight on the experience that can assist administrators who support their work.

This study was conducted to explore identity in adjunct faculty with the goal of understanding the overall adjunct faculty experience and present suggestions for administrators working with this population. The results of this study indicate that adjunct faculty thrive when building relationships with others in the institution, and students also benefit. The desire that adjunct faculty have expressed to connect to others in the workplace and to work collaboratively is a great opportunity for administrators to take action and integrate faculty into the heart of the institution rather than keeping them on the fringes. The results of this study indicate that adjunct faculty are positive and resourceful members of the academy, and they respond well to the

opportunity to be recognized and supported. Three research questions were used to guide this qualitative study:

1. What metaphorical themes represent the current identity of adjunct faculty in the community college?
2. Do these themes of identity capture a positive or negative reaction to the current experience of adjunct faculty in the community college setting?
3. How can administrators provide support for adjunct faculty in the community college setting based on themes of identity?

This current study has produced results that are important to community college policy, practice, and theory. This study explored topics identified in the literature connected to adjunct faculty identity in the community college. Topics such as relationships with colleagues, instructor scheduling, instructor pay, office space, and the opportunity to teach students were included in the emergent themes that deserve more attention from administrators and can help to support this majority faculty group.

The love of teaching, passion for learning, and desire to help students is what appears to motivate adjunct faculty members to teach and to continue to teach. Adjunct faculty tend to have jobs without long-term security, limited opportunities for advancement, and minimal invitations to participate in development opportunities (Hose & Ford, 2014). While the participants of this study made it clear they were appreciative for the work they have, they shared an overall interest in having more stability, more integration into the community, and more attention to the small details. Comparing the adjunct teaching experience to the game Jenga, Vera stated how the experience “is like a puzzle that appears stable, yet could fall apart at any moment.” The lack of stability is connected to last minute scheduling and the unknown schedule of the upcoming term.

Participants indicated that each term they hope to be scheduled again the next. Gloria described this unstable part of the adjunct faculty role as “unsafe” making the adjunct faculty role that she loves feel “dangerous.”

Not only does this lack of stability create stress for the adjunct faculty member, it may also impact the level commitment the faculty member is willing to make to students and administration. The faculty adjunct experience could be improved by providing them more communication, more attention to the topics of scheduling and stability, more opportunities to participate, and expanded opportunities to get to know each other. The good news is, adjunct faculty are typically happy to be teaching; they just want a bit more attention to detail and to be considered in the interactions of the department.

The use of the ZMET for this study offered a unique view into the identity of the faculty member. Focusing on themes of language from the participants allowed this researcher to gain insight on what themes represent the identity of adjunct faculty members. Overall, adjunct faculty members have an identity that is shaped by their love for teaching and learning, the connections built with others, and the working conditions by which they are surrounded. As a collective group, adjunct faculty members have an overall positive outlook on their identity in the community college setting, yet there are details that could be improved by attentive administrators. One participant captured the overall adjunct experience well by comparing it to buttered noodles, a simple yet comforting dish. “It fills you up, it might stick with you, you like it, but it could be so much better.”

This study has provided an opportunity to see the experience of the adjunct faculty member and how it represents identity. Looking at the adjunct faculty experience as buttered noodles, a typically comforting dish, allows administrators and educational peers to see how

adjunct faculty have value and are important, yet could be improved with a bit of attention, tweaking, and seasoning. Results from this study can be used by faculty members and administrators to work together with the goal of seasoning an already good dish and creating an award-winning entrée that cannot go unnoticed.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Message

Dear _____

My name is Melissa Ryan and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program at St. Cloud State University. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study focusing on the identity of adjunct faculty members in the community college setting. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are a temporary part-time instructor teaching a general education course. I obtained your contact information from Melissa Lindsey, Dean of Faculty.

If you participate in this study you will be requested to provide 12 photographs to capture your identity as an adjunct faculty member. You will also participate in an interview focusing on these photographs and additional questions regarding the adjunct teaching experience. Interviews will take 1-2 hours. Interviews will be recorded for analysis. All information will remain confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. Please consider participating in a research study focusing on temporary part-time instructors. This is an opportunity to help a colleague and to contribute to research in higher education.

Please reply with your interest and contact information. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Ryan, Doctoral Candidate
Meryan1@stcloudstate.edu
(612) 382-6005

Appendix B

Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Title: The Language of Adjunct Faculty: Exploring Academic Identity
Primary Investigator: Melissa Ryan, Doctoral Candidate
Telephone: (612) 382-6005

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are invited to participate in a research study about academic identity. This dissertation research study is being conducted by Melissa Ryan (researcher) from the Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education at St. Cloud State University. The purpose of this study is to investigate the language of adjunct faculty and how it represents academic identity.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to submit pictures to represent your academic identity. You will be asked to participate in an interview for 1-2 hours to explore the photographs.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

Understanding the experiences of adjunct faculty will be beneficial to administrators, faculty, and students in the areas of development and retention. Since adjunct faculty members are the fastest growing group of educators, learning more about their experiences and offering a voice is valuable for the field of higher education.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

The research study will include interviews of 16 adjunct faculty members teaching in the same community college setting.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE STUDY

During the study you will be asked review an informed consent document. This document outlines all the steps, benefits, and risks associated with the study. Once an agreement has been made to participate in the study, the consent must be signed and submitted to the researcher. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to submit 10-12 photos capturing your academic identity in the community college setting. You will be asked to participate in an in-person interview. The interview will last approximately 2 hours and will focus upon the pictures submitted, as well as an interview protocol of eight steps. You are free to decline to answer a particular question if you choose. Once the researcher transcribes the interview, you will have the opportunity to read and edit your interview transcript. The edited transcript will be

considered the primary data source for the study.

Appendix B (Continued)

HOW WILL THE RISKS OF THE STUDY BE MINIMIZED / CONFIDENTIALITY

Identity of participants will remain confidential. Data collected will remain confidential. The records associated with this study will be kept confidential. In any report about this study that may be published, or any presentation, you will be identified by a pseudonym. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of securely archiving the data on a computer that is password protected. Paper documents will be locked in the researcher's home office. Names will not be used in the written documentation.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

If you have questions about this research study, you may contact Melissa Ryan by phone at 612-382-6005 or by e-mail: meryan1@stcloudstate.edu. You may also contact, Dr. Jennifer Jones, Faculty Advisor, by e-mail: bjones@stcloudstate.edu. Results of the study can be requested from the researcher or the St. Cloud State University Repository.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, you have read the information provided above, and you have consent to participate.

Signature

Date

Appendix C

Release Form for Use of Photograph/Video/Audio Recording

The Metaphors of Identity Among Adjunct Faculty

Melissa Ryan
Meryan1@stcloudstate.edu
Dr. Jennifer Jones
jbjones@stcloudstate.edu

Please Print:

Participant Name

Legal Representative if Applicable

This form asks for your consent to use media for and from this study. We would like you to indicate how we can use your media. On the next page is a list of media types that we will use. Please initial where you consent for that type of use of your media. Legal representative initials will provide consent when needed.

Regardless of your answers on the next page, you will not be penalized.

We will not use your media in any way you have not initialed.

Questions regarding this form should be directed to the researchers. Additional answers can be found by contacting the IRB Administrator or an IRB Committee Member. Current membership is available at: <https://www.stcloudstate.edu/irb/members.aspx>

A copy of this form will be provided for your records.

Appendix C (Continued)

Photograph	
Consent Granted	Type of Release
	Used by research team to record and analyze data
	Shown to other participants
	Published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal, conference)
	Shown in a classroom to students

Video with audio	
Consent Granted	Type of Release
	Used by research team to record and analyze data
	Published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal, conference)
	Played in a classroom to students

Transcription of audio	
Consent Granted	Type of Release
	Used by research team to record and analyze data
	Read by/to other participants
	Published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal, conference)
	Presented in a classroom to students

Appendix C (Continued)

I have read the above carefully and give my consent only for those items in which I initialed.

Participant Signature (if 18 years of age or older)

Date

Participant Name (Printed)

WHEN CONSENT IS NEEDED FROM A LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE, COMPLETE THIS SECTION. UP TO TWO LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE MAY SIGN.

Legal Representative Signature

Date

Legal Representative Name (Printed)

Second Legal Representative Signature

Date

Second Legal Representative Name (Printed)

Appendix D

Two Question Survey

Survey Question 1: Identify your motivation for teaching (choose top three)

Teaching in my career field/profession

Opportunity to work with students

Personal Satisfaction

Additional Income

Goal of becoming a full-time faculty member

Professional Development

Being part of this community college

Other

Survey Question 2: Select one category that best fits your teaching role:

- Specialists, experts or professionals: adjuncts who typically hold another job, and teach to share their knowledge.
- Freelancers: adjuncts who work in more than one institution.
- Career Enders: professionals approaching retirement and planning to maintain a professional connection through teaching.
- Aspiring academics: adjuncts beginning their teaching career or using teaching as an option to supplement income.

Appendix E

Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) Steps

1. **Storytelling:** Participants were asked to describe the content of each image submitted for the interview.
2. **Missed images:** Participants were asked to describe the pictures they wanted to capture, but for whatever reason, were unable to do so. Ideas were written on post-it notes and placed in the pile of the images.
3. **Sorting task:** Participants were instructed to place all of the images in piles according to self-chosen themes.
4. **Triad task:** Participants were presented with three images and asked to identify one that does not fit.
5. **Expand the frame:** An image was chosen at random by the interviewer and presented to the participant. He or she was asked to mentally expand the image's frame, using his or her imagination to describe what would be happening just beyond the image's borders. The interviewer captured the themes on notes.
6. **Sensory imaging:** All images were put aside, and participants were asked to describe the experience of teaching using input from each of the five senses.
7. **Vignette:** During the interview, the interviewer took notes of potential themes central to academic identity. The interviewer presented each theme to the participant for final determination as to whether the theme should be included in the final steps of the interview process. The interviewer then presented the remaining themes to the participants and instructed them to create a 60-second movie capturing their experience as a faculty member.

Appendix E (Continued)

8. Construct map: In this last step, the interviewer went through each of the remaining themes on each note and informed the participant to take them one by one and create a cause and effect map. The participant was asked to place their themes into an arrangement reflecting their role as a faculty member. Participants were asked to sketch a concept map indicating which themes impact each other and in what ways.