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# The Professionalization and Socialization of Adjunct Instructors in a Southern California Community College

Nancy Ramirez

Claremont Graduate University

2019

**APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATIONCOMMITTEE**

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Nancy Ramirez as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

The Professionalization and Socialization of Adjunct Instructors in a Southern California Community College

by

Nancy Ramirez

Claremont Graduate University: 2019

This study investigated the professionalization and socialization of adjunct faculty into the culture of a community college campus in Southern California. Because adjunct faculty are the majority faculty at most colleges, it is vital to orient and support them for maximum effectiveness. A review of literature revealed that well-socialized employees are more committed to organizational well-being; however, few studies examine community college English Department part-time faculty in this light. This qualitative case study does so, using the model of organizational socialization (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996) as its framework, and focusing on this research question: How are part-time English Department faculty socialized into the culture of a public community college? Bridge Community College (BCC) is the pseudonym for the site of this study, and data were collected through analyzing results of in-depth personal interviews with 15 adjunct faculty participants. Results revealed a lack of purposeful, thorough hiring processes and lack of well-planned orientation programs. Although opportunities for professional development were available for participants, these did not specifically address professional needs and conflicted with teacher work schedules. Overall, while adjunct faculty felt supported by administration and other leaders, they expressed a need for robust orientation, more mentoring, more interactions with full-time faculty, and more input in decision-making affecting their work

lives. Implications and recommendations for practice include improving hiring and orientation processes; making professional development more accessible and relevant; developing a formal mentoring program where full-time faculty and veteran part-timers can mentor new adjunct faculty; addressing and integrating issues important to faculty of color.

Keywords: adjunct college faculty, teacher orientation, mentoring, part-time instructors

# Dedication

I dedicate this study to my parents, who guided me to where am I today. They taught me to pursue my dreams with hard work and commitment.

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I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Deborah Carter, who has provided me with extensive personal and professional guidance and taught me a great deal about conducting meaningful research. Without her guidance, wisdom, and persistent support this dissertation would have not been possible. I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Linda Perkins and Dr. DeLacy Ganley, who generously provided me encouragement and thoughtful feedback, always aimed at moving me forward.

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# Chapter 1:

# Introduction

## Introduction to the Study

This study explores the socialization and professionalization of adjunct faculty at one community college in Southern California. It aims to examine the existing programs and practices used with part-time, non-tenure-track English Department faculty to help them adjust and incorporate into the academic and collegial culture of a public community college. To gain an all-inclusive and balanced understanding of the socialization process, this study incorporates the perceptions of 15 adjunct faculty members. This chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the need for the study, the significance of the study, the conceptual framework, the research questions, assumptions, delimitations, definition of terms, and a chapter summary.

## Background to the Study

The increasing number of faculty who are employed in contingent positions, whether full or part time, represents probably the single most significant development in higher education in the last two decades. The most recent comprehensive figures from the Department of Education show that in fall 2001, 44.5% of all faculty were in part-time positions, nearly all without tenure, and an additional 19.2% of faculty were in full-time, non-tenure-track positions (Curtis, 2005). Together, these categories amount to nearly two-thirds of all faculty, and all signs indicate that their numbers are still growing. According to AAU (2015), 70% of the academic labor force is contingent, or part-time, faculty. Because of this growing population of part-time faculty in both four-year and two-year institutions, administrators cannot afford to ignore the issues related to and the needs of part-time faculty.

The use of adjunct faculty is not a new issue in all of higher education, but it has been particularly pronounced in community colleges. According to Gappa (1984), since the 1920's, community colleges have relied on adjunct faculty, and "since World War II, the use of part-time faculty has been vastly extended, for various reasons" (Gappa, 1984, p. 3). According to AAU (2018), Associate Degree granting community colleges employed at least 70% of adjunct faculty in 2016. One reason for the rise of adjuncts was that adjuncts were needed to teach evening courses or other professional courses in specialized fields because there were not enough available and qualified people for full-time college positions (Gowin, 1961). Interestingly, though, the use of adjunct faculty was supposed to be a temporary solution (Adamany, 1997).

In the 1960s and 1970s, community colleges experienced a surge in enrollment. This influx of students over the years placed a strain on the existing faculty. Community colleges needed to find ways to accommodate the increased number of students by hiring more faculty. Compared to four-year institutions, community colleges were more limited in their options to accommodate these students, as they have had to maintain lower tuition and greater flexibility in hiring and scheduling (Brewster, 2000; Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Hiring part-time faculty instead of full-time faculty was one significant way to cut costs (Anderson, 2002; Gappa, 1984).

Part-time faculty have long been a part of higher education, particularly within the community college sector, where they grew in numbers beginning in the 1970s. Part-time faculty have experienced the most significant rate of growth over the last 40 years. This new workforce increased by 422.1% between 1970 and 2003, compared to an increase of only 70.7% among all full-time faculty, both tenure track and non-tenure-track (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Community colleges appear to utilize the greatest proportion of part-time, non-tenure-track faculty within higher education (AFT, 2009; Eagan, 2007; Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Overall, part-

time faculty in community colleges increased from 65.6% in 1997 to 68.7% in 2007. Recently, the percentage of part-time faculty at some colleges has been calculated to be as high as 70% to 80% (AFT, 2003; National Education Association Research Center, 2007). The sheer rise in numbers of adjuncts shows that their use in educational institutions has become widespread and integral in community colleges. Unfortunately, due to the recent trend, part-time faculty now represent a significant proportion of the academic workforce, and they have become the "new faculty majority" in most higher education institutions in order to meet the demands of developmental students (Kezar, 2012).

Due to budget cuts, standardization, and the push to increase transfer rates to four-year institutions, colleges had to start offering more evening and weekend courses, and the increased number of courses created a need for part-time faculty. The current rhetoric and attempts in higher education are to increase an over-reliance on non-tenure track part-time faculty to teach most introductory courses (Bergmann, 2011; Kezar & Maxey, 2012). Hiring adjunct faculty has seemingly become a permanent strategy for institutions, a strategy that has made this group a significant part of the professoriate (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

**Statement of the Problem**

Although part-time faculty continue to dominate the instructional workforce of community colleges and primarily teach introductory courses, the bread and butter of institutions, relatively little is known about how this group is being professionalized and assisted. Many studies have popularized stereotypes and assumptions about part-time community college faculty, portraying them as "freeway flyers," "adjuncts," "contingent faculty," and using other demoralizing terms. Other studies have focused on depicting the plight of part-time, non-tenure-track faculty, such as poor working conditions, lack of job security,

relatively low pay, and high instructor turnover. These poor working conditions have had a negative impact on student retention, transfer from two-year to four-year institutions and graduation or completion rates. That is regardless of how skilled or committed adjuncts are.

Adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, and contingent faculty are terms referring to instructors hired on a contingent (term-by-term) basis. Some authors use these terms interchangeably, while others make distinctions between these terms. A college may limit the number of courses an adjunct can teach, but they often teach at multiple colleges, leading to teaching a full load. Therefore, this part-time status means they are ineligible for benefits and are paid much less than full-time faculty per course (Bergmann, 2011). According to Baron-Nixon (2007), part-time refers to faculty who occupy a faculty line on a part-time basis and who may, therefore, receive proportionate benefits, while adjunct refers to individuals who are paid out of general operating funds and do not receive any benefits. Some adjunct faculty are part-time instructors who have established careers outside of teaching; they have an adjunct contract, which is term-by-term, with no benefits and less than .5 FTE. Umbach (2007) defines contingent workers as those who do not have a contract for long- term employment and pairs the two terms: adjunct and part-time. In this study, the terms will be used interchangeably.

The increased numbers of individuals who are off the tenure track in U.S higher education institutions, who primarily are hired to teach undergraduate introductory courses, has not gone unnoticed (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Kezar, 2012; Kezar & Sam, 2010a). Their pivotal role in student learning outcomes should lead researchers to examining how part-time faculty enter, adapt, acquire skills, and learn their role as primary remedial educators: in essence, how part-time faculty are socialized in academic institutions and exposed to the organizational culture that relate to basic skills instruction.

Among the different types of higher education institutions, community colleges utilize more part-time faculty, educate more undergraduates in basic skill courses, and have the most academically diverse student bodies. The sheer number of classes assigned to adjunct professors makes a powerful argument that responsible colleges and universities should invest in their teaching lives. If good teaching that produces evidence of student learning is to be anything other than random, instructional policies must deliberately support the development of all instructors (Lyons 2007). Many institutions do provide resources and training for their full-time faculty, but, unfortunately, many programs ignore the adjunct instructors, hence creating a large gap in educational quality (Grubb & Associates, 1999). Lyons (2007) adds that a key to the future success of higher education institutions lies in their ability to change part-time teaching into a rewarding, collegial experience where part-timers feel supported and properly socialized.

Adjunct faculty are expected to be fully prepared to teach. Many receive a short orientation from their department chair, while others receive no orientation. On campuses, like community colleges, which utilize adjunct faculty extensively, underestimating the support needs of adjunct faculty could make it difficult to maintain a highly qualified adjunct workforce, resulting in a diminished educational experiences for students. How community college part-time faculty learn sophisticated pedagogical skills and cultural understandings of their institutions may be critical to student learning and retention of students.

**Purpose of the Study**

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the socialization experiences of part-time faculty teaching at community colleges. This research seeks to inform policy and practice in the academic workplace by exploring how educational organizations communicate expectations and values and how part-time faculty at community colleges learn what is expected of them. The

study seeks to understand how part-time faculty "learn the ropes" during formal and informal socialization during the early (entry and first year) and continued phases of their employment. The selection of public community colleges for this study was purposeful. Community colleges educate the largest number of under-prepared undergraduates while employing high percentages of part-time faculty. This study attempts to heed Kezar's and Maxey's (2016) counsel of "thoughtfully responding" to a new workforce and finding ways to assist them to do what they were hired to do rather than simply ignoring their existence or leaving their success to chance. Therefore, the research questions for this study will examine how community college part-time (i.e. adjuncts) non-tenure-track faculty learn what is expected of them in their complex roles within academic organizations.

**Need for the Study**

By now, the existing body of research has established the predicament that many part-time community college instructors face and the poor or lack of socialization encountered as they enter a new academic institution. As Adrianna Kezar and Daniel Maxie in the book *Envisioning the Faculty for the 21st Century: Moving to a Mission-Oriented and Learner-Centered Model* (2016), point out, most academic institutions agree that "adjunctification of higher education" is unsustainable. However, there's no apparent sense of urgency by administrators to address the problem, as academe continues to "react" –rather than thoughtfully "respond" –to the changing makeup of the faculty and the factors driving it (Kezar & Maxie, 2016).

In addressing the issues revolving around part-time community college instructors, it is not condoning the recent minimization of the full-time faculty role, to a predominantly part-time workforce. Shining light on the academic lives of part-time faculty in how they are professionalized and socialized helps to move away from the predominant narratives of

marginalization and victimization of adjuncts. There is a disproportionate emphasis on either the plight of adjuncts or on the negative academic outcomes of hiring adjuncts. It is time to move away from a deficit model and begin moving towards improvement and action that lead to effective teamwork and collegiality. Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995) state that because part-time faculty play such an influential role in instruction, the quality of their teaching and the opportunities they have for professional development should be key concerns for academic leaders. However, given the variety of logistical and economic roadblocks associated with adjunct faculty development programs, most institutions struggle with reaching out and supporting their adjuncts. Lyons (2007) adds that because most adjunct faculty have weak ties to the institution, some educators argue that the benefits of such programs are inconsequential. However, part-timers need equal opportunities of socialization to grow and develop as professionals.

Much of the scholarship conducted on the use of adjunct faculty on college campuses reveal important findings. Some studies have focused on the utilization of adjunct faculty (Pearch & Marutz, 2005), their job satisfaction and their motivations for teaching (Pons, 2015). However, a thorough review of the literature revealed that only a limited number of studies have focused on the socialization opportunities available to adjuncts and on their sense of connection to the institution. Recently, the lack of adjunct socialization has elicited well-researched studies. McCoy (2006) also explored the socialization experiences of instructors, but he looked only at African American male faculty at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in predominately White institutions (PWIs). Using Rosch and Reich's Enculturation Model and Critical Race Theory as the theoretical frameworks and using a mixed methodology, the study

revealed that there were a number of differences in the socialization experiences of African American male faculty at HBCUs and PWIs.

Specifically looking at community colleges, Haiduk-Pollack (2015) analyzed the socialization patterns of adjunct faculty members at a local community college in Southern California. The study's purpose was to help community college leaders learn about the adjunct faculty's perceptions of the socialization process on their campus. This qualitative study included the voices of adjuncts teaching in various disciplines. The study prompted the institution to make progressive positive changes to address this issue on their campus and to better support the adjunct faculty. A second study conducted by Shannon (2007), investigated the socialization of adjunct faculty into the academic culture of a community college campus—North Campus of Miami Dade College. In this study, the various voices of deans, campus presidents, department chairs, and adjuncts were included to study the organizational programs and activities in place for the socialization of adjunct faculty. After using an extensive qualitative case study method, the study revealed that although there were structured and consistent professional development programs, these conflicted with the schedules of adjunct faculty. Adjuncts revealed a need for more mentoring, more interactions with full-time faculty, and more input in departmental decision making processes. These studies either focus on four-year institutions or take an all-encompassing view on the experiences of adjuncts. The current study, however, expands on Shannon's and Haiduk-Pollack's investigation by using a qualitative design to do an in-depth examination of the socialization of adjunct faculty. Similar to Shannon's study, it will include the views of community college adjuncts. However, the current study explores not only adjuncts' experiences with the college's socialization programs and practices, but fills the gap in Shannon's study by examining a specific discipline and department. In keeping with Kezar's and

Sam's monograph (2010b), they proposed a need for more specialized research to guide us toward better solutions. First, there is limited knowledge of the exact differences of part-time faculty by motivation, department, discipline, and institutional type. Secondly, there is a need for context-based studies and solutions. Hence heeding the advice of Kezar and Sam, this study aims to focus on one campus, one department, and one of type of faculty (adjuncts), which is conducive for an in-depth, context-based case study.

**Significance of the Study**

Therefore, the study of community college part-time faculty is important for the following reasons, as listed below:

First, given that part-time faculty is the new faculty majority, little research and understanding exist on how they are assisted and socialized during their initial entry into learning the institution's culture and values. As Kezar and Sam (2010c) point out,

> We can no longer continue to operate according to the *perceived* status quo, pretending that tenured faculty are the mainline faculty of the academy. This reality has come to pass in the last twenty years, and campus leaders, faculty, staff, students, policymakers, and the general public should realize that we need more intentional planning and analysis of this new workforce. (3)

Second, although part-time faculty are the new majority, many campuses, both two-year and four-year campuses across the country, have done little to change their policies and practices to acknowledge, professionalize, and socialize this group of faculty. Because many campuses lack a general awareness of the large growth of numbers and the experiences of contingent faculty, it comes with no surprise that part-time faculty at community colleges lack a voice and proper representation. They also lack knowledge of institutional norms and teaching

expectations, which can have a negative impact on student outcomes (Benjamin, 2003; Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Third, part-time faculty teach the majority of students in higher education; thus, they are key to creating the teaching and learning environment necessary for all students, but particularly for at-risk students enrolled in introductory courses. There is a move statewide affecting community colleges' course offerings. Various initiatives, such as Assembly Bill 705 (AB705), and academic and fiscal changes, such as Guided Pathways and new funding formulas, is forcing colleges towards having not only appropriate resources for students but also to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and Math within one year (Henson & Hern, 2018). Guided Pathways project is an institution-wide approach to provide students with clear, educationally coherent program maps that include specific course sequences, progress milestones, and program learning outcomes (CCCCC, 2016). Moving forward, enrollment no longer takes precedence, but course retention and completion will be paramount to getting state and federal funding. Therefore, having well-prepared part-time instructors play a vital role in student retention. If student success is important, then the proper professionalization and socialization of part-time faculty—rather than their marginalization—are more important than ever.

Fourth, community colleges offer a full-range of introductory and basic skills courses, classes that are disproportionally taught by part-time faculty. Due to their part-time status, part-time faculty may be involved only in classroom instruction and not connected to the campus resources and full-time faculty; consequently, they become less able to inform and educate students regarding resources and opportunities that the institution makes available to improve student success and retention (Umbach, 2007; Kezar & Sam, 2009). Much is at stake where part-

time faculty are responsible for a disproportionate number of lower level Humanities and Social Science courses (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005).

Fifth, the current literature on part-time faculty consists primarily of demographic composition and characteristics as well as employment conditions (i.e. teaching load and satisfaction) of part-time faculty primarily at four-year institutions (Rhoades, 1996, 1998; Sullivan, 2004), but there is scant research on the socialization practices of community college basic skills part-time faculty.

The study will inform practice and policy by emphasizing the need for administrators and community college districts to plan deliberately for adjunct faculty development and inclusion in the everyday life of the institution, as well as to examine whether the current practices are effective or need to be reexamined. Understanding their organization's culture is essential for administrators if they are going to assist the transition of new adjuncts into the culture of the organization. As the literature shows, adjunct faculty are here to stay, so it is important that administrators in higher education have programs and activities in place that help to integrate them into the academic culture (Gappa & Leslie, 1997). The study will also inform policy by revealing the employee socialization processes that are currently in effect on many community colleges.

**Research Question**

The primary question that guides this research is: How are part-time English Department faculty socialized into the culture of a public community college?

Subsidiary questions include the following:

1. How do English Department adjunct faculty members at this community college perceive and learn their organization's values and expectations within their institution and department for participating as a faculty member?
2. What organizational resources, support, and processes are provided to adjunct English faculty members to help them acclimate to their respective campus cultures, norms, and established practices?
3. What helpful socialization strategies would adjuncts provide to assist with the professionalization process at this institution moving forward?

**Delimitations of the Study**

The scope of the study is restricted to the degree that only adjunct faculty from one community college campus and district in Southern California will participate in the study; therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other institutions or to other campuses, including those within other community college districts in Southern California. However, the findings may have significance to many college campus administrators who see the value in adjunct faculty socialization as imperative and wish to facilitate that process.

**Definition of Terms**

**Tenure** is a status awarded to faculty members who have successfully completed a probationary period (up to 4 years) at a community college. Tenure offers a guarantee of job security, which cannot be overturned except for specified legally proven reasons.

**Adjuncts, or adjunct instructors** refer to part-time faculty, who are not on the tenure track, and have no guarantees of work beyond the contracted period. Labor laws describe such employees as "at will," which by design allows the employer to discontinue employment without obligation. In community colleges, most part-time faculty have hourly contracts and few one-

year contracts. In four-year institutions, part-time faculty could have yearly teaching contracts but not be on the tenure-track. For the purpose of this study, community college non-tenure-track, part-time faculty is the focus. “Part-time faculty” or “adjuncts” will be the terms used throughout this study.

**Anticipatory socialization** includes recruitment, communications (written and verbal), interview(s), visits, and contract negotiations prior to hiring. Anticipatory socialization can also occur during graduate studies where students are socialized into the discipline’s culture by witnessing the behaviors and practices of professors.

**Organizational socialization** is the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role. It is the process by which one is taught and learns "the ropes" of a particular organizational role (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Organization socialization occurs in two phases: initial entry and role continuance.

**Initial entry** is the first phase of organization socialization. It involves interaction with faculty and administrators during the job interview process and the early phase of employment (Johnson & Harvey, 2002; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

**Role continuance** is the second phase of organization socialization. It begins once the individual is positioned within the department and throughout employment (Johnson & Harvey, 2002; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

**Socialization** is “a lifelong process through which individuals learn their culture, develop human potential, and become functioning members of society” (Lindsey, 1994, p. 48). Austin (2002) defined socialization as “a process through which an individual becomes part of a group, organization, or community” (p. 94).

## Chapter Summary

Adjunct faculty, or part-time instructors, both at two-year and four-year educational institutions nationally, comprise about half the professoriate, making them essential to the operation of academic programs. This research will investigate the professionalization and socialization practices of community colleges in relation to part-time faculty.

Chapter 2 presents the literature supporting the hiring trends of adjunct faculty, the overreliance on adjuncts, demographics of adjunct faculty and their concerns and challenges, the socialization of part-time faculty as well as challenges to the universities and colleges, and address how this research speaks to the gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3 details and explains the rationale behind using Tierney's and Besimon's (1996) socialization theory in studying community college adjunct faculty. Chapter 3 addresses the various aspects of the methodology used in the study. In Chapters 4 and 5, results of the research will be discussed, as well as recommendations and conclusions.

# Chapter 2:

# Literature Review

## Introduction

The decline of tenured faculty did not occur overnight; it can be observed over a forty-year period. If US higher education (i.e. both four-year and two-year institutions) is to retain its global advantage in instructional and research innovation over the next decade, it will need to commit itself to professionalize and socialize the part-time academic labor force that can in turn commit to academic excellence. The voices of non-tenure-track faculty members are as central to higher education today as the voices of their tenure-track and tenured colleagues. The incredible efforts undertaken each day by part-time faculty members to deliver the best possible instruction with what few resources may be at their disposal at the time is certainly praiseworthy. However, research shows that whether a faculty member is appointed on a part- or full-time basis affects nearly all aspects of work, including instruction, research, involvement in departmental governance, extracurricular activities, and perceptions of administrators or their institution (AAUP, 2016).

The research presented in this chapter should not be taken as a critique of the work of part-time faculty nor that of undermining the value of full-time professors. Rather, the aims are as follows: (1) to explain the reasons behind the increase of part-time faculty in community colleges, (2) provide a discussion as to why reliance on unassisted part-time faculty is not a viable long-term solution for higher education, and (3) to outline alternatives to better assist community college part-time faculty fulfill their roles.

This chapter is outlined in the following manner:

- an overview of the hiring patterns/trends of part-time non-tenure track faculty members;
- a summary of the various typologies used to describe part-time faculty;
- an outline exposing the demographic and employment profile of community college part-time faculty;
- an overview of the impact that part-time faculty have on student success;
- a description of the existing socialization practices in community colleges; and
- a final discussion on the existing research on socialization, which leads to the theoretical framework and research questions.

Overall, this literature review aims to provide a complete picture of the life, work schedules, and socialization practices of community college part-time faculty.

**Nationwide Hiring Trends for Adjunct Faculty**

The growth of individuals who are off the tenure track in U.S higher education institutions has not gone unnoticed (Kezar & Sam, 2010c). Forty years ago, adjunct faculty, were mostly part-time and located in the community colleges, hired to supplement the educational experience by bringing in particular expertise (Kezar, 2012). Later, four-year institutions followed suit and also saw the advantages of bringing business leaders and retired lawyers, just to mention a few, to provide practical experience and knowledge within professional fields. However, the economic conditions of the 1980s that hampered state budgets, especially educational, combined with enrollment increases in higher education and left financially challenged educational institutions searching for ways to meet students' needs (Austin, 2002; Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). These budget shortfalls contributed to the hiring of adjunct faculty within academic fields, such as English or mathematics, which

increased. Baldwin and Chronister (2001) noted that, “time-term appointment faculty is in part a response to the uncertainty generated by fluctuating government financial support for higher education” (p. 17). The expansion of higher education systems increased the need for remedial education, which increased the need for hiring part-time faculty to teach in these areas, primarily at two-year institutions. (Kezar, 2012). Additionally, with the overproduction of doctoral graduates, many fields found it cost-efficient to hire these graduates as both part-time and full-time non-tenured track faculty instead of offering them tenured positions, thus exempting institutions from certain long-term monetary obligations.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the fundamental changes to employer-employee relationships taking place in corporate America also changed the fundamental way of doing business in higher education. Corporate America “privileged efficiency and flexibility over employee stability and institutional loyalty,” which pushed colleges and universities to adopt similar strategies and cut personnel costs through expanding the use of adjunct faculty (Angulo, 2018, pg. 10). The cost-cutting and personnel-reducing management trends in the corporate world of these decades helped rationalize the expanding use of adjuncts and non-tenured track faculty.

An AFT report (2009) looks at the data collected through the IPEDS survey over the decade between 1997 and 2007 and calls attention to the pace of change among college faculty. According to the IPEDS data, over the span of 10 years the proportion of non-tenure track faculty among the professoriate increased greatly, contrasted by a decrease in the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty. In 1970, part-time faculty represented only 22% of all faculty employed in U.S. institutions (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). By 1985 that percentage increased to 36.5%, and by 2003 and well into more recent years, such as 2015, about 47% of all faculty

members were part-time (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002a, 2002b; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

In all of higher education, the number of part-time faculty has steadily risen over the years, but particularly so in the community college sector. Research on community college part-time faculty also shows the large increase and dependence on part-time instructional faculty (McFarland, 1997; Price & Baar, 2000; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). In 1962, part-time faculty members constituted 38 % of community college faculty; by 1974, they were 50%; by 1998, they were 65%, and by 2003, they were 67% (Palmer, 1999; Berger, Kirshstein, & Rowe, 2001). According to the data in Figure 1 and 2, gathered and adopted from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), associate-degree granting community colleges employed close to 70% of adjunct faculty in 2016.

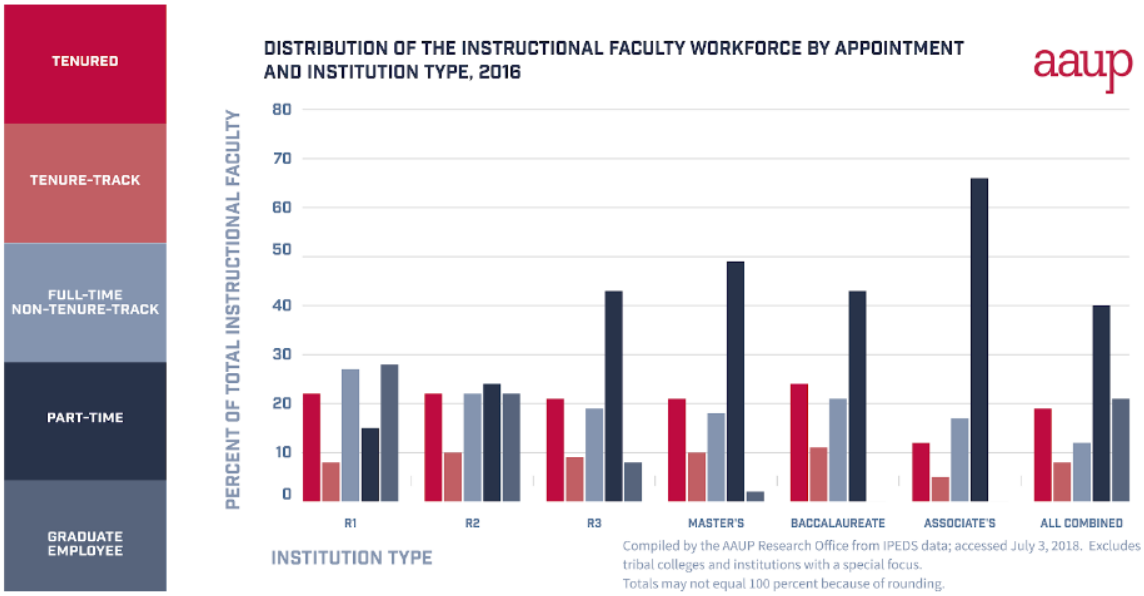


*Figure 1*

*Figure 1.* Distribution of the instructional faculty workforce by appointment and institution type, 2016. Adapted from "Data Snapshot: Contingent Faculty in US Higher Ed," *American Association of University Professors* (AAUP) (2018).

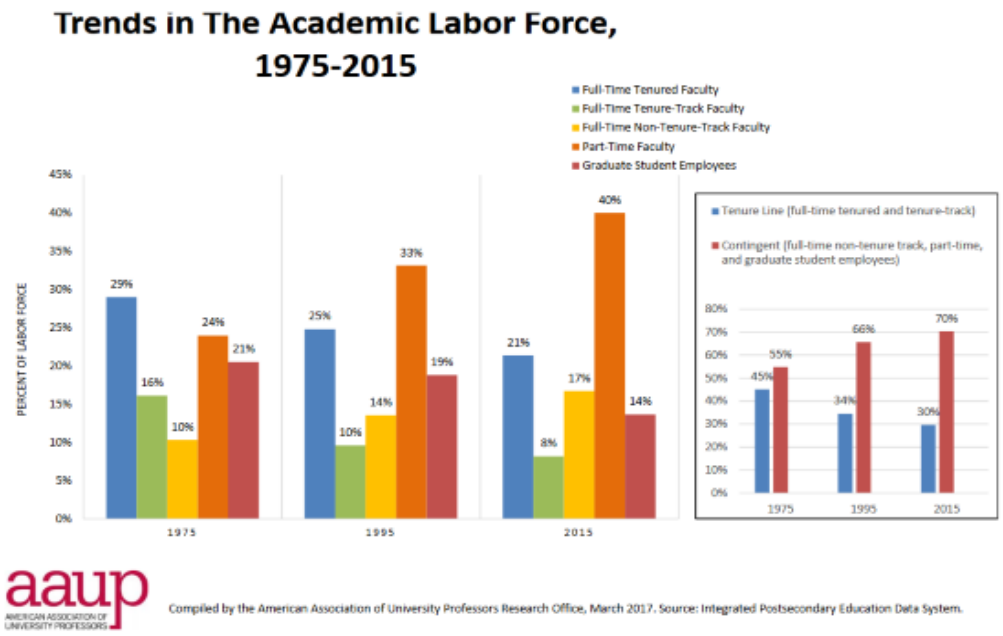


*Figure 2.* Trends in the academic labor force, 1975-2015. Adapted from "Data Snapshot: Contingent Faculty in US Higher Ed," *American Association of University Professors* (AAUP) (2018).

During the 1990s, universities and community colleges continued seeing a decline in state funds. Consequently, there was an increase in not only tuitions but in hiring part-time faculty in four-year institutions, or in one-year probationary non-tenure track faculty, seen more in community colleges. Mirroring the American corporate workplace, academic institutions felt that hiring part-time faculty was more cost effective, especially considering the reductions or eliminations in benefit packages (Kezar, 2012). Bergmann (2011) described the academic climate we see today in many four and two-year institutions:

> We are a bifurcated profession-split between the tenure-track and adjuncts-which at the session we began to call the "first class" and "steerage faculty." We may all be on the same ship, but the experience is very different on different parts of the boat; and although we're trained no to admit it, it's a lot more fun in first class" (p. 37).

Other reasons for increased hiring of part-time faculty in community colleges is they provide staffing and curricular flexibility, such as closing or opening additional classes on short notice (Lankard, 1993). Kezar and Gehrke (2016) reported on concerns from college administrators regarding increased hiring of part-time faculty but acknowledge external pressures to do so. However, the primary reason for relying on part-time faculty is the cost savings to the institutions. Part-time faculty are paid on a course-by-course basis, and very few receive benefits, such as sick leave and medical insurance (Townsend & Twombly, 2007b). Back in 1997, as a response to the increase of adjunct faculty, Bergmann stated:

> This is an era of down-sizing and out-sourcing. Part-time faculty are the out-source—no administrators who expect to keep their jobs are going to buy a full-time assistant professor for some $50,000-odd a year in salary and expenses, when they can get part-time labor, equally proficient, for one to two thousand dollars a course ($12,000 a year at most)…our $12,000 person may very well teach as well as or better than the $50,000 person, and is much easier to keep track of, assess, control, and eliminate when no longer needed (p. 37).

As Bergmann argues, it is obviously significantly less expensive to hire part-time than full-time faculty. In 2003, college part-time faculty members reported making under $10,000 while full-time faculty reported making anywhere from $55,000 to $70,000, according to the NCES data from 2003 (U.S Department of Education, 2005). Using SNSOPF:04 data, the AAUP looked at per-course pay rates for part-time faculty using percentile distributions, and they found that only 10% of part-time faculty are paid $3,000 or more per course, while 25% are paid $1,397 or less per course. Clearly, the financial gains by hiring part-time faculty outweigh other reasons. The status of adjuncts—“on demand” from semester to semester—is a fundamental departure from the golden era when more than 75% of faculty nationally held full-time positions (Angulo, 2018). It is important to note the demographic profile of this new workforce and the terminology used to describe them in all institutions.

**Demographic Profile of Part-Time Faculty**

In discussing the demographic profile of part-time faculty, terms used to describe this new workforce at two and four-year institutions include contingent, lecturer, instructor, adjunct, and more. Most of these terms reflect a particular element of focus (lecturer), amount of teaching (part-time), their status on campus (adjunct), or the precarious nature of their work contract (contingent) (Kezar & Sam, 2010c). There is a lack of consensus as to which term to use; some faculty find the term "adjunct" offensive while others do not mind. The term non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) is also used to describe the entire population of faculty not on the tenure-track; however, one major difference exists. Among non-tenure-track faculty, there are those assigned a part-time or full-time teaching assignment, with the former commonly seen at two-year colleges and the latter more common at four-year institutions (Kezar & Sam, 2010c). For the purpose of this study, the terms "part-time faculty" or "adjuncts" will be used interchangeably when referring to community college non-tenure-track, part-time faculty.

Among the most distinguished authorities on the issue of part-time faculty are Judith Gappa and David Leslie (1993), who interviewed nearly 500 administrators, faculty, and part-time staff from 18 institutions. They studied data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) and professional unions regarding the status of part-time faculty. In *The Invisible Faculty*, Gappa and Leslie (1993) described part-time faculty as a diverse workforce. NSOPF:93 data, supporting Gappa and Leslie's conclusion, provided further information on these similarities and differences between full- and part-time instructional faculty and staff. It is important to differentiate faculty who teach by choice from faculty who teach part-time out of necessity (NCES, 2004).

Therefore, many researchers developed a classification system to categorize the diverse part-time faculty. The classification systems ranged from a six-category model (Tuckman, Caldwell, & Vogler, 1978), to a four-category typology (Gappa & Leslie, 1993), to a three-category classification system (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). From these classification systems, three main categories of part-time instructional faculty emerge:

- those aspiring a full-time teaching position,
- those uninterested in a full-time teaching position due to personal matters/preferences, and
- those retired and only teaching for personal gratification.

The teaching motives and the classification model exposed by Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) point to the existing complex variations within part-time faculty pools.

The demographic characteristics of faculty teaching at the community college is important to notice because it sheds light on the equitable hiring practices of an institution. In describing community college faculty, it is necessary to look at race/ethnicity, gender, teaching assignments, teaching motives, and attitudes towards adjunct work.

The majority of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty at community colleges are White females. Only about 7% of full-time faculty are African Americans and about 6% Hispanics, according to the NSOPF:04 data (Cataldi, Fahimi, & Bradburn, 2005). Both the 1998 U.S. Department of Education data and the 2005 IPEDS Staff Survey further show that minority faculty indeed are the minority in community colleges (Keller, 2006; Manzo, 2000). Given the high percentage of minority students attending public two-year institutions (Horn, Neville, & Griffith, 2006), it is surprising that the percentage of full-time minority faculty is not higher, particularly in colleges located in urban areas. In regards to gender, women comprise a higher

percentage who teach at the community colleges. Some data sources estimate anywhere between 49% to 52% of full-time instructors are White women (Cataldi, Fahimi, & Bradburn, 2005; Keller, 2006).

Women are another minority group in academia, who are being short-changed by academic institutions. Women are more likely than men to be placed part-time. According to the most recent comprehensive figures from the U.S. Department of Education, 49% of all women faculty were part-time in fall 2001, compared with 41% of men. The uneven gender and ethnicity distribution among part-time faculty is corroborated by other studies. About 50% of part-time faculty members in two-year colleges in 2003 were female. During that same year, the percentage of faculty of color (16%) was lower than among full-time faculty (20%) (Cataldi, Fahimi, & Bradburn, 2005).

The use of part-time faculty is not equally distributed among disciplines, just as they are not equally distributed by gender. The Humanities and Social Sciences account for high numbers of part-time instructors. Scott Jaschik (2008) found that in the Humanities, 60% of the courses are taught by adjuncts, while in the natural/physical sciences it was 57%. Curtis's report (2005), shows that there is a clear income disparity along segments of the professoriate because those in contingent positions and women are being left behind. Although community colleges can increase the percentage of minority faculty through the hiring of part-time faculty, it has not happened (Townsend & Twombly, 2007a).

Clark (1997) suggested that in order to understand faculty work, it may be required to disaggregate into the "small worlds" of the individual disciplines in order to really understand the work environment, conditions, and expectations of all faculty. Further narrowing of research studies enables one to examine the intersectionality of gender, race, and employability when

studying community college faculty. Kezar and Maxey (2012) recommend to "collect not just numbers, but information about the experiences of non-tenure track faculty and to disaggregate data for more accurate reporting and analysis (p. 59).

In terms of their teaching assignments, full-time college instructors primarily teach credit academic/transfer courses while part-timers teach basic skills courses that might or might not be credit based. Full-time faculty, when given a choice, prefer not to teach developmental classes because some instructors don't believe in developmental education and feel that developmental instruction hurts the reputation of community colleges as institutions of higher education (Kozeracki & Brooks, 2006; Sheldon, 2002). As Perin (2002) mentions, "Academic instructors…view developmental teaching as a low status assignment and even a punishment" (p. 35). Consequently, part-time faculty are frequently assigned to teach introductory classes. As Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995) point out, "part-time faculty are being asked more often than are full-time faculty to meet one of the greatest community college challenges—instructing the at-risk student" (p. 35). As it can be seen, colleges are hiring the least prepared, the least helped and socialized to teach the most-at-risk population—basic skills students.

One study explored the level of satisfaction of part-time faculty teaching at the 13 community colleges in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) (Kramer, A.L., Gloeckner, G. W., & Jacoby, D., 2014). They found that 94% of participants reported part-time teaching for the 2008 academic year. 53% percent of participants admitted that their part-time teaching was their primary employment. 49% of the respondents reported they would have preferred a full-time faculty position at their college.

The AFT report (2010) found the attitudes of adjunct faculty over part-time employment varied. Given the choice between a part-time or full-time teaching position, 50% prefer teaching

part-time, while 47% prefer a full-time position. Those who prefer full-time are younger and have less seniority than those who prefer a part-time position. Faculty under age 50 prefer full-time over part-time (60 % to 37%), while those age 50 and above prefer part-time over full-time (62% to 35%). The AFT report (2010) concluded, even if some part-timers do not wish to have a full-time job, most likely they will continue to work for the institution. Therefore, it would not be a waste of time nor resources to properly professionalize and socialize adjunct faculty into their respective departments and institutions. For this study, however, I plan to focus on analyzing part-time instructional faculty who aspire to obtain a full-time teaching position in English Departments.

**Work Environment and Satisfaction for Part-Time Faculty**

There is plenty of research on the job satisfaction of adjunct faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1997; Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1996). Five main areas of job dissatisfaction have been discussed in the literature: the hiring process, working conditions, treatment, salaries, and employment benefits.

**Hiring process.** From the start, part-time faculty are at a great disadvantage. Instead of a systematic process of hiring, their entrance into the academic environment, most often, occurs with a word-of-mouth hiring process (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Too often, in community colleges, a department chair is left to identify a candidate through personal contacts and simply placing a phone call to teach a course or fill a position (Kezar, 2012). This overlooks affirmative action or any systematic hiring process. Often, teaching contracts, if used, are frequently signed within days of the beginning of the semester. Ambiguity arises out of unclear expectations and insufficient guidelines. Adjunct faculty are sometimes told weeks or days before a class begins that they will teach a certain course or that they will not be needed to teach a course they had

been initially assigned and in many cases had already prepared materials. It is common practice for adjuncts to be “bumped” so that a full-time faculty can make a full course load after one or more of his or her classes has been cancelled (Gappa & Leslie, 1997). Therefore, part-time faculty roles are ambiguous and precarious, and the delivery of instruction can suffer as a result (Monroe & Denman, 1991).

**Working conditions and treatment.**

Adjuncts are dissatisfied about the inappropriate office space provided by many campuses. The lack of a proper office space affects their ability to plan for classes and to meet with students. Some studies have reported that several adjuncts are forced to meet with students in hallways and lounges or to share an office with several other adjuncts, hence lacking a private and quiet space (Crannell, 1998). Part-time faculty continue to rally to have access to campus resources such as office space, computers, textbooks, and other teaching aids (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Too often, part-time faculty are at times expected to have a home office with all the materials and supplies needed, such as paper, printer, fax, photocopier, computer, etc. (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Kezar, 2012). As Kezar (2012) points out, “This expectation puts an undue burden on a group of faculty that is already paid less than their colleagues” (p. 10).

In addition to unsuitable office space and support services for adjunct faculty, many are assigned random courses held in unpopular locations or during times full-time faculty would rather not teach. Valadez & Anthony (2001) utilized the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:93) to examine satisfaction and commitment of part-time faculty at the community college level. Among the study's findings were that part-time faculty in two-year

colleges were less satisfied with autonomy than their four-year college counterparts because of their lack of freedom to decide courses to teach, course content, and course schedule.

**Salaries and benefits.** The distribution of the teaching load also serves to characterize the population of part-time faculty. On average, part-time faculty teach 1.6 undergraduate courses per semester and 86% of those surveyed principally teach undergraduates (NCES, 2002a). Not surprisingly, there are substantial differences in compensation between full- and part-time faculty at both four and two-year institutions (AAUP, 2005, 2009). Therefore, many part-time faculty may have to teach at more than one institution to patch together a living, which may make them less available to students (AFT, 2010; Angulo, 2018).

Adjunct instruction is a part-time position; therefore, there is concern for access to benefits. In a study by Feldman and Turnley (2001) they found strong response in regards to benefits and compensation:

> The absence of an attractive benefits package exacerbates these individuals' feelings about their low compensation in general and their anxieties about their financial security in particular. Furthermore, while many academics are dissatisfied with their compensation, adjunct faculty members are also concerned about the pay inequities between themselves and permanent college employees. (p. 8).

Specific data on income of part-time instructional faculty and staff is also available from the U.S. Department of Education (2001). The report from the 1999 NSOPF stated that "part-time instructional faculty and staff earned substantially less income than their full-time counterparts ($46,000 vs. $69,000). Average basic salary from their institution was about $12,000 for part-time instructional faculty and staff compared to $57,000 for those working full time" (p. 5). Therefore, adjuncts rally for basic health insurance and retirement assistance, and many times, to no avail. However, lately, certain unions in particular college districts have

lobbied for health benefits, resources, and pay increase. Unfortunately, this is not the norm in all community college districts.

**Impact of Part-Time Faculty on Student Success**

Part-time faculty are often assigned to teach courses that are critical to undergraduate student success. They tend to teach large, introductory or basic skills courses for first and second-year students, who are considered at some campuses at risk for retention (Kanter, Gamson, & London, 1997). Instructional effectiveness within general education and introductory courses is critical to student success because these courses give access to upper division or transferable courses and eventually toward degree completion. The unsupported use of part-time faculty in these general education and introductory courses, however, may be harming student achievement (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005).

One of the often overlooked aspects of shifting instruction to part-time faculty is the impact that it has on student learning outcomes, which only recently have been explored in this context. A few studies have revealed a relationship between retention between first-year students and part-time faculty (Bettinger & Long, 2005; Harrington & Schibik, 2004; Rossol-Allison, P. M., & Alleman Beyers, N. J., 2011). This latter study (Rossol-Allison et al, 2011) examined the impact of faculty status on both short-term and long-term retention and student success, utilizing two datasets at a public, two-year college in the Midwest. This study includes student transfer and individual level data to better understand student learning success. Results suggest that faculty status (i.e. full-time vs. part-time instructors) does not impact student learning outcomes. Instead, the study found that student intent is the best predictor of success and retention and should be considered in future intervention programs.

However, other studies have shown the negative impact in student outcomes when overusing part-time faculty. For example, Harrington and Schibik (2004) found that students who took a high proportion of courses with part-time faculty had a poor retention level when moving to the second semester. Some claim that part-time faculty negatively affect student learning because they hold lesser degrees and fail to apply the diverse instructional practices that full-time faculty use. Benjamin (2003) found that part-time faculty were often inaccessible to students and used instructional methods that were less interesting than those used by full-time faculty. Similarly, Ehrenberg and Zhang's (2005) national study at 4-year institutions showed a strong negative correlation between the use of part-time faculty and student graduation rate.

The negative impact of part-time faculty is also seen in the community colleges (Burgess & Samuels, 1999; Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009; Umbach, 2007). Jacoby (2006) extended the research on the effects of part-time faculty on graduation rates to the community colleges, and confirmed that increases in the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty have a significant negative impact on graduation rates in that sector as well. Eagan & Jaeger (2009) and Jaeger & Eagan (2009) found that increasing exposure to part-time faculty in the community college sector negatively affected the likelihood of students to transfer to four-year institutions. These studies revealed the negative effects of the use of part-time faculty on student success.

To further measure the impact of community college part-time faculty on students' learning, research has looked at the quality of instruction. There are highly varied, mixed, and inconclusive results regarding student outcomes and part-time faculty. Some studies have found no difference in the teaching of part- and full-time instructors as this regards to their student achievement. Grubbs (1999), for example, argues that there is not much of a difference in

instructional style, with both full- and part-time teachers relying on traditional pedagogy, such as the lecture model. Other researchers have discovered lower academic achievement among students taught by part-time faculty (Digranes & Digranes, 1995; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006; Umbach, 2008), due to factors they identified, such as part-timers being less innovative in their teaching; having outdated, weaker syllabi and lesson planning; decreased contact with students and their academic needs; lack of skills with technology; and using more outdated instructional strategies, such as lectures instead of active learning. One study found that part-timers use less rigorous grading systems, perhaps out of fear for their job security (McArthur, 1999).

It is important to note a common denominator in these studies is the use of "traditional pedagogy," such as lecturing and discussion, by part-time faculty. This does not mean, however, that these styles of teaching are not efficient, but these styles work primarily for well-prepared, high achieving students, and not so well for all at-risk students (Jenkins & Weiss, 2011; Wells, 2011; Grubb, 2010), which represent the bulk of part-time faculty's student loads.

There is a move statewide affecting community colleges' course offerings. Various initiatives, such as Assembly Bill 705 (AB705), Guided Pathways, and new funding formulas, is forcing colleges towards having not only appropriate resources for students but community colleges are now required to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and Math (Henson & Hern, 2018). Co-founder and executive director of the California Acceleration Project (CAP), Dr. Katie Hern makes the case that high attrition rates are structurally guaranteed in long developmental sequences and that open-access accelerated courses are a promising way to increase completion rates in college-level English and Math (Hern, 2012; Hern & Brezina, 2016). Consequently, a new law in the

state of California—Assembly Bill 705—requires community colleges to allow almost all students to enroll directly in transferable, college-level English composition, with concurrent support for those who need it (Henson & Hern, 2018). Guided Pathways provide students with clear, educationally coherent program maps that include specific course sequences, progress milestones, and program learning outcomes (CCCCC, 2016). Moving forward, enrollment is no longer the only factor that takes precedence, but course retention and completion will be paramount to getting state and federal funding. Therefore, having well-prepared part-time instructors play a vital role in student retention. If student success is important, and particularly meeting the completion demands imposed by AB705 and Guided Pathways, then proper socialization and professionalization of part-time faculty—rather than their marginalization—are more important than ever.

## Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization has been examined from several different perspectives (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and is one of the most significant issues confronting adjunct faculty. Organizational socialization is “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (p. 211). Further, socialization is the actions individuals take to learn new tasks and the actions the organization takes to teach individuals the important lessons of the organization. Socialization requires new entrants to engage with certain aspects already in place when they enter the organization, these employees gain knowledge about the norms, values, and customs of the group and how they should communicate with other employees.

In short, organizational socialization can be summarized as the processes used by organizations to familiarize and shape individuals (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The socialization process is continuous and lifelong. Tierney and Rhoads (1994) added that socialization efforts are the responsibility of both the individual and the organization, through a reciprocal learning process, whereas acculturation remains the responsibility of the individual alone. According to Schein (1985), socialization has been shown to have a tremendous effect on the productivity of part-time employees within an organization.

Understanding the socialization process is important because it is one of the "primary ways in which organizational culture is transmitted and maintained" (Louis, 1980, p. 151). In order for individuals to become socialized into an organization, it is necessary for them to understand the culture of that organization. When employees are new to an organization, understanding the culture provides them with a guide for how things work and for how they should react to the work setting. A strong culture facilitates the process of socialization. Therefore, when discussing the socialization of individuals, it is also important to discuss organizational culture as socialization practices are influenced by the culture of the organization.

**Socialization in Higher Education**

There is a body of research on four-year full-time faculty socialization. However, this body of research primarily focuses on four major areas, as follows:

- faculty expectations (Austin, 2002; Olsen & Crawford, 1998)
- ambiguity of institutional norms and culture (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996)
- effects of socialization in faculty's psychological development and behavior (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981; Boice, 1992); and

- the ongoing process of socialization that occurs implicitly and explicitly (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Olsen & Crawford, 1998; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

Kezar & Sam's (2004) research synthesized and analyzed common theories used to study and understand non-tenure-track faculty in higher education, focusing primarily on four-year institutions. The second part of their research revolved around discussing the ideological, practical, and empirical tensions among full-time and non-tenure-track faculty. Kezar and Sam's study (2010d) did shed light into the areas that need further investigation, one being providing a voice for non-tenure-track faculty by studying their experiences while keeping in mind institutional culture and structure.

How faculty learn to be faculty depends on the different cultural forces: the national culture, the culture of the profession, the disciplinary culture, the institutional culture, and individual cultural differences (Clark, 1987). And socialization is the vehicle for the transmission of culture. Although part-time faculty are hired to cover the ever-growing freshman and developmental sections, and fill openings in course coverage, the part-time faculty are paid exclusively for in-classroom time, which sacrifices socialization (due to time limitations on-campus) and thus hinders a complete understanding of the values, expectations, and pressures within the academic culture. Though not a study of part-time faculty socialization, Judith Gappa and David Leslie's 1993 study found that institutional expectations of part-time faculty were vague and that institutional policies were not communicated to them. Loneliness, intellectual isolation, and lack of collegial support have been reported in studies of both new full-time and new part-time faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

There are many general theories of socialization. Socialization, as a theoretical concept, began in 1957 as a response towards the recovery of a post-war America when sociologist

Robert Merton conceptualized it as the process whereby individuals acquire knowledge, values, and norms that exist in a social system (Merton, 1957). Merton's conceptualization focused on prior acculturation and assimilation. However, an ongoing process creates change throughout socialization. Building upon Merton's socialization theory, a new array of sociological literature on organizational socialization emerged (e.g. Van Maanen, 1976; Schein, 1985). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) introduced a theoretical model of socialization by which people "learn the ropes" of a particular organizational role through different implicit and explicit ways.

Building upon Van Maanen and Schein's work, Tierney and Bensimon (1993, 1996) applied the theoretical model of socialization to faculty in higher education. They examined four-year full-time faculty socialization and found that new full-time faculty experience high levels of ambiguity. At the end of their study, they attempt to develop culturally-based solutions for improving faculty socialization. This research establishes that socialization of new faculty is of "fundamental importance" (Tierney, 1997, p. 1). It is "a ritualized process that involves the transmission of the organizational culture" (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, p. 36). The cultural process of faculty socialization is a continuous process that takes place throughout the faculty member's career. Tierney and Bensimon suggest the acquisition of culture by new faculty is necessary if academia is to establish more inclusive communities that give individuals the freedom to challenge organizational ideas.

Tierney (1997) suggests that socialization is bidirectional—meaning that it "involves a give-and-take" (p. 6). Upon joining a department or college, the new faculty member brings personal experiences, values, and ideas to the organization. These experiences, values, and ideas or predispositions influence the new faculty member's socialization experience. At the same time the culture, norms, and values of the organization are being influenced by the new faculty

member, resulting in the give-and-take of the socialization process. A unitary socialization process is one where new faculty assimilate to the organization (Tierney, 1997). In other words, the new faculty member is expected to assimilate to the cultural norms of the department. When the socialization process is perceived as unitary (linear), there are obvious "winners and losers, misfits and fully incorporated members" (Tierney, p. 6). How the socialization process is defined in academic institutions is important. For example, if senior faculty and departmental administrators view it as bidirectional, then they will gain a better understanding of the unique and varied socialization experiences of a diverse group of full-time and adjunct faculty members. (In the section titled "Theoretical Framework" later in this chapter, Tierney's model (1997) is discussed in depth.)

Echoing Tierney's suggestions, Austin, A. E. (2002) utilizes data from a four-year qualitative, longitudinal study to examine the graduate school experience of a group of individuals preparing to be faculty members. In the article, Austin raises questions about the appropriateness of a graduate program's preparation for the changing workplace. Austin argues that the socialization process in graduate school must change substantially for new faculty members to work effectively in the ever changing world of higher education. This article examines doctoral education as socialization for the professoriate. It addresses the question of whether or not the graduate school preparation process is adequate and appropriate given the academic workplace these scholars will enter. Overall, the study concludes by highlighting the importance of properly socializing graduate students. This conclusion is similarly applied to new faculty, and I am arguing that socializing entering community college part-time faculty is imperative to ensure they learn the college's mission, values, and policies as well as the best teaching practices to help satisfy the specific needs of community college students.

**Faculty Socialization in Community Colleges**

The bulk of the socialization research pertains to full-time faculty at four-year institutions. That is not to say that the findings are not helpful and informative. However, the student demographics and the teaching responsibilities assigned to full-time and part-time faculty are quite different at a community college when compared to four-year institutions. Up until the late 1960s, it was common for a community college teachers to have experience teaching in high schools or elementary schools (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Articles written in the 1940s in the *Junior College Journal* reflect that a high percentage of newly hired faculty had some sort of teaching experience (Garrison, 1941; Koos, 1948). In a study of junior college faculty members, Koos (1948) concluded that that majority of faculty had backgrounds of high school teaching experience. As Townsend & Twombly (2007b) state: "[T]he trend [seen in the early 40s to 60s] for junior college teachers coming from high school was deemed appropriate until a more appropriate source could be determined or found" (p. 65).

However, in the last half of the 20th century and now in the 21st century, the trend of hiring community college faculty directly coming from secondary schools has dropped dramatically. By the 1950s and 1960s, those with high school teaching backgrounds dropped to 44% (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The NSOPF:93 data reported that only 15% of full-time community college faculty members had worked in secondary schools immediately before assuming their college position (Gahn & Twombly, 2001). In lieu of hiring former high school teachers, community colleges maximized all sources of talent to serve a wide-ranging mission and student body. Community colleges turned their attention to hire recent graduates from Master's programs, doctoral students, or professionals who wanted and could teach part-time. It is safe to assume that today a large pool of newly part-time hires come directly from a graduate

or Master's program. They come with little or no substantial teaching experience, unless they had the exceptional opportunity to work as Teaching Assistants (TA) in their graduate program. Therefore, looking at how part-time faculty get socialized and taught the academic and teaching expectations of community colleges is imperative, given that a large portion of new adjuncts come with little to no community college teaching experience.

The socialization of two-year community college full-time faculty (let alone of part-time faculty) has not been given too much attention. The pioneers in this area of research who have paid attention to this group of faculty members have focused on the benefits and frustrations of female community college faculty members (Townsend &Twombly, 2007a; Townsend, 1998; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Twombly, 2007). Perna (2003), following the examination of female faculty, noticed the lack of equitable employment and promotion experiences for female faculty when compared to male faculty, which speaks to the poor socialization or poor information given to community college female faculty.

Recently, few studies have indirectly looked into the socialization of adjuncts in community colleges, primarily looking at the orientation and mentor component. Phillips, K. D., & Campbell, D. F. (2005) took to surveying 257 participants (both adjuncts and full-time community college instructors) in Florida Community Colleges. The survey asked respondents their opinions on what goals they felt the institution held as important, and what programs they perceived were available to them. The instructors were from mathematics and communication departments. The findings were that full-time and part-time instructors were similar in terms of what they perceive as the goals of the institutions; however, the part-time faculty appear to not have the same information available to them to make certain decisions, like whether particular goal are in fact goals within their institution. Also, they didn't have access to the same

professional development activities as the full-time faculty. The study recommends that is imperative to include both full-time and part-time faculty in the professional development programs that are offered. Participation in such programs will help adjuncts to walk away with new ideas on how to improve their teaching, provide vital information institutional and departmental changes, and socialize themselves with full-time faculty. Although this article does not specifically look into the socialization process of adjuncts, per say, it does unveil the little socialization occurring on campuses. As such, the study calls for institutions to invest time, effort, money, in socializing their adjuncts at community colleges.

**Orientation and Mentoring**

The nature of the professoriate at community colleges differs greatly among institutions, depending on the type of programs offered as well as the college's locale, teaching expectations, and policies. Adjuncts at community colleges are expected to be first and foremost effective teachers while serendipitously pick up on the policies and the nuances of every campus they teach. The question then becomes whether community colleges provide the means to help their adjuncts meet those expectations. What are the qualifications for initial hire? How are adjuncts evaluated? What provisions are made for adjuncts to meet with their students or learn about the institutions in which they teach? Are adjuncts given opportunities for professional development? Are adjuncts part of a faculty union? The answers to each of these questions can be addressed through intentional orientations and mentorship.

Shannon (2007) investigated the socialization of adjunct faculty into the academic culture of a community college campus. The North Campus of Miami Dade College was the site for the study, as it is a campus with a long history of utilizing adjunct faculty members and one that has a clearly-stated mission of adjunct faculty socialization. A qualitative case study method was

used, and data collection included interviews and the review and analysis of institutional documents. The participants included 11 adjunct faculty members, 4 department chairpersons, the campus president, and the college training and development coordinator. The study revealed that there were structured and consistent professional development programs, but these conflicted with the schedules of adjunct faculty. Overall, adjunct faculty found support from the leadership; however, they revealed a need for more mentoring, more interactions with full-time faculty, and more input in decision-making concerning textbooks and curricula.

More recently, Haiduk-Pollack (2015) conducted a case study at a local community college in southern California because leaders at this community college discovered that adjunct faculty members felt disconnected from the school and were not properly socialized to the culture of the school. After interviewing 12 adjunct faculty, it was determined the need for a 3-day professional development workshop pertaining to mentoring. Implementing a professional development mentoring program for adjunct faculty members proved fruitful because it helped adjuncts feel more connected with the college. Also, adjunct faculty members were provided with a mentor with whom they can collaborate, share knowledge, ask questions, and learn about the culture of the college. The results from these last two studies could facilitate positive social change by helping community colleges assist adjunct faculty with their socialization processes, which includes proper orientation and mentorship.

**Professional Development**

The socialization of community college instructors has also been addressed by looking at the existing professional development programs in the institutions. John Murray (1999) sees professional development as a pseudo socializing step/effort on behalf of the community colleges

to compensate for the lack of a proper socializing step in most undergraduate or graduate programs. As a result, Townsend & Twombly (2007b) conclude:

> In-service training or professional development has become the common way to prepare instructors as teachers. In other words, once they are hired, faculty members receive training in teaching rather than being expected to have gone through a professional preparation program before employment at the institution" (p. 59).

Therefore, Murray (1999) suggests that effective faculty development programs should have several components, such as institutional support and a goal-directed program to really assist incoming faculty. Burnstad (1994) equally argued that effective faculty development programs should be comprehensive and supported by administration, adequately funded, evaluated periodically. In studying the professional development programs nationally, Murray conducted several studies (1999b, 2001), and found that most community colleges offer some type of professional or faculty development. Most of the programs focus on providing full-time faculty, and part-time faculty, financial support for attending professional conferences, professional workshops, release time to work on projects, resource centers, and tuition assistance.

These are great opportunities to socialize faculty; however, attendance to conferences and workshops, completing courses, or visiting a resource center is not enforced. At some campuses, faculty are not held accountable to inform themselves of new pedagogical or theoretical information that pertains to their subject area or field, participate in learning communities, or share best teaching practices. By not making participation mandatory in professional development sessions, most of the socialization is left to chance or to a few kind-hearted full-time faculty to teach the ropes to new graduates and newly-hired adjunct faculty.

The socialization practices in the community colleges is not systematically embedded within the institutional culture, thus not being taken seriously. As a result, Murray (2001)

concludes that many faculty development programs is anything more than a "randomly grouped collection of activities lacking intentional coordination with the mission of the college or the needs of faculty" (p. 497), but particularly the needs of the newly hired part-time faculty.

Most studies of faculty development do not distinguish between programs for full-time and part-time faculty. Grant and Keim's research (2002) showed that few colleges have a socializing step in place for part-time faculty. And even a smaller percentage of colleges actually address part-timers in their purpose statements for faculty development. Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995) did find exemplary colleges that directly address part-time faculty in their professional development programs, and one of those colleges was the College of the Canyons in California. The authors found that this college had a three-stage associate program for adjuncts where they got paid to attend workshops and to work with full-time faculty in addressing classroom concerns/issues. According to the authors, socializing the part-time faculty benefited the institution in the short and long term.

Haiduk-Pollack's (2015) study at a local community college in southern California discovered that adjunct faculty members felt disconnected from the school and were not properly socialized to the culture of the school. Therefore, the purpose of the case study was to help leaders learn adjunct faculty's perceptions of the socialization process. After interviewing 12 adjunct faculty, six major themes were identified as follows: working conditions, voice and perception of adjuncts, mentoring, budget, lack of involvement in campus activities, and the desire to become a fulltime faculty member. A 3-day professional development workshop pertaining to mentoring was identified as the project outcome. Implementing a professional development mentoring program for adjunct faculty members proved fruitful because it helped adjuncts feel more connected with the college. Also, adjunct faculty members were provided

with a mentor with whom they can collaborate, share knowledge, ask questions, and learn about the culture of the college.

The clear and integrative socialization of part-time faculty at these two local southern California community colleges, however, is not a common practice in most community colleges. Better socialization could lead to committed adjunct faculty members who are more satisfied, informed, and engaged. When adjunct faculty feel part of the college, this engagement could result in improved understanding of the curriculum, more organizational commitment, and greater faculty dedication to the college's mission and the state's initiatives of AB705 and Guided Pathways; therefore, it imperative to know where, how, and when are part-time faculty learning the ropes and information necessary to keep up to date with best teaching practices and how to navigate the community college system.

**Socialization Barriers for Adjunct Faculty**

There are, however, too many barriers to community college part-time faculty socialization and few studies looking at this issue. Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron (1995), drawing from a national survey of community colleges, documents trends in the employment and integration of part-time faculty in American community colleges. As a result of such survey, Roueche (1996) makes a call for proper and formal socialization of part-time faculty efforts to take place in order to make a difference (p. 36). Equally concerned about the marginalization of part-time faculty, Finucane & Algren (1997) studied the socialization of part-time faculty and highlighted their plight regarding course preparation. Later, Johnson and Harvey (2002) conducted a study of part-time faculty and found that high course load, multiple campus locations, limited time on campus, and separate shifts constrain opportunities for socialization. This lack of involvement may further distance them from the organization and their colleagues.

Some may argue that professional and faculty development programs at community colleges are there to help socialize faculty**.** Accounts, however, explain that part-time faculty have low attendance at professional development activities held during the semester (Smallwood, 2002; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Part-time faculty work in academic settings that offer little direction or supervision. Unlike their full-time colleagues, however, part-time faculty have few occasions to learn norms and expectations formally and informally. Part-time faculty, of course, spend fewer hours in their work roles than full-time faculty, but time is not the only limitation on part-time faculty socialization.

The teaching schedule serves as a significant obstacle to their effective socialization. Off-hour teaching (nights and weekends), participating in online distance education, and working at multiple campus locations create important barriers that separate part-time faculty from their institutional locations. Limited communication and collaboration between part-time faculty and their full-time counterparts, moreover, not only hinders socialization but also negatively affects part-time faculty members' organizational commitment and performance (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Pearce, 1993).

With good reason, Gappa and Leslie (1993) describe part-time faculty as the “invisible faculty” in higher education who lack knowledge of institutional norms and teaching expectations to meet the demands of at-risk students. Baldwin and Chronister’s (2001) in-depth study of contingent faculty found little systematic orientation, socialization, and evaluation schemes in place. For many institutions, “the status quo is to continue with policies and practices as though the majority of faculty are on the tenure-line” (Kezar & Sam, 2012, p. 30). Kezar and Sam (2012) rightly conclude:

> Change needs to occur for institutional policies and practices to align with the new faculty majority, because ignoring the issue is unsustainable; long-

> term inaction would lead to negative impacts on the professoriate, the institution, and the students (p. 30).

Galvanizing or jolting administrators and full-time faculty towards action can occur through raised awareness and dissemination of information on the less-than-favorable working conditions and lack of proper socialization of part-time faculty. This will break invisibility of non-tenured-track part-time faculty and begin creating changes.

These studies clearly show that socialization of adjuncts cannot be left to chance. As the research shows, adjuncts desire and benefit from socialization into the culture of an institution and department. Although these studies do a fine job in looking into the socialization of adjuncts in community colleges, they do not focus their analysis on specific departments or types of adjuncts. Kezar's and Sam's (2010e) monograph calls for "context-based solutions for creating change." In the monograph, they address, albeit briefly, the importance of creating intentional and systematic socialization (or inclusion) process, which it is the goal of this dissertation.

Although a hallmark of professionals is that they socialize new members to the expectations and standards of the institution, it is not a consistent practice used to include part-time faculty at two-year institutions in an intentional socialization and professionalization. In an attempt of being inclusive of all institutions, Kezar and Sam (2010e) provide one community college example in where they recognize that adjuncts at community colleges differ from non-tenure-track faculty at four-year institutions. However, their lack of socialization and their treatment are similar to those teaching at four-year institutions.

The conclusions and suggestions for further research about adjuncts were nicely outlined towards the end of Kezar's and Sam's (2010c) monograph. First, there is limited knowledge of the exact differences of part-time faculty by motivation, department, discipline, and institutional type. Secondly, there is a need for context-based studies and changes. Very little is known about

community college adjuncts and their experience within different disciplines and departments. Thirdly, there is a need for further research looking at the professionalization and socialization for non-tenure-track faculty, primarily community college adjuncts. These three suggestions proposed by Kezar and Sam are the ones my dissertation intends to touch upon by utilizing Tierney's and Bensimon's faculty socialization framework.

## Theoretical Framework

My study is based on the early work of Tierney and Rhoads (1993) and Tierney and Bensimon (1996) about faculty socialization. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) conducted more than 300 interviews with faculty at twelve colleges and universities during a twenty-four month period. Their mission was to change today's academic culture for the sake of assistant professors—especially for women faculty and faculty of color—by refining and restructuring the promotion and tenure process (p. 129). They noticed that the interviews captured the faculty member's initiation into the culture of various department across the country, in both public and private institutions. They analyzed the transcribed interviews into three parts: initiation, anticipatory socialization, and organizational socialization. However, the last category is discussed in terms of formal and informal socialization. The common narrative among most faculty members were that they had little to no formal socialization once they were hired. Most of them were left to learn and navigate the system on their own, feeling pretty lonely as to what was really expected for teaching, research, and service. The authors end with calling attention to finding strategic responses to replace the haphazard activities that seem to be the norm in many departments. This study can be replicated when studying community college part-time faculty.

Tierney's and Bensimon's theoretical framework examines faculty socialization through faculty culture; the theory looks at how (a) organizations communicate values, norms, and

expectations to the newcomer; (b) the newcomers interpret their new organization in their own way, continuously adapting; and (c) the organization is changed as a result of the entry of new people into the culture. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) define socialization as a two-stage process: anticipatory socialization and organization socialization.

**Anticipatory Socialization**

The first phase of the socialization process involves anticipatory learning by the potential recruit. Anticipatory socialization is defined as "the process by which persons choose occupations and are recruited to them, gradually assuming the values of the group to which they aspire and measuring the ideal for congruence with reality" (Clark & Corcoran, 1986, p. 23). During this phase non-members learn the attitudes, actions, and values of the profession to which they aspire to join (Corcoran & Clark, 1984; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). For prospective faculty, the anticipatory socialization phase usually occurs at the departmental level of the institution in which they receive their graduate training. Corcoran and Clark concluded, "The department inducts graduate students into the discipline, transmitting skills and knowledge and shaping their values and attitudes regarding the pursuit of knowledge and the faculty role" (p. 141).

**Organizational Socialization**

Within organizational socialization, there is an initial entry and role continuance. Initial entry occurs between the job interview and the hiring, and organizational socialization, which includes an initial phase (prior to and immediately following entry into the institution). Role continuance phase occurs throughout employment. Role continuance is further broken down into discrete activities. These discreet activities are the following: collective vs. individual; formal vs.

informal; random vs. sequential; fixed vs. variable; serial vs. disjunctive; and investiture vs. disvestiture (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

In this study, I will focus on the second stage, organizational socialization, which is comprised of two subcategories: initial entry and role continuance. Under role continuance, I focus on collective vs. individual and formal vs. informal socialization. Even though Tierney's and Bensimon's theory (1996) was used to study the socialization of doctoral students interested in becoming professors at four-year institutions, their framework can also be useful in understanding the experiences of newly hired community college adjuncts.

The second stage, organizational socialization, is central to an adjunct's experience and in gaining access to information (both formally and informally) about a community college's values and expectations. Organizational members can give or withhold information from newcomers which can encourage or discourage them to respond predictably to a given situation (Jones, 1986). Newcomers, such as part-time faculty, whose pre-entry conceptions of the organization may conflict with the actual behaviors and norms of their institutions, often seek and need vital information about and from the institution, information that could be acquired during organizational socialization. Clear socialization pathways help to foster the development of pedagogical skills and knowledge of organizational culture in part-time faculty. Tierney's and Bensimon's socialization model will help to examine how community colleges as organizations communicate expectations and values during the initial entry period and how part-time faculty at community colleges learn what is expected of them as they continue to teach for an institution.

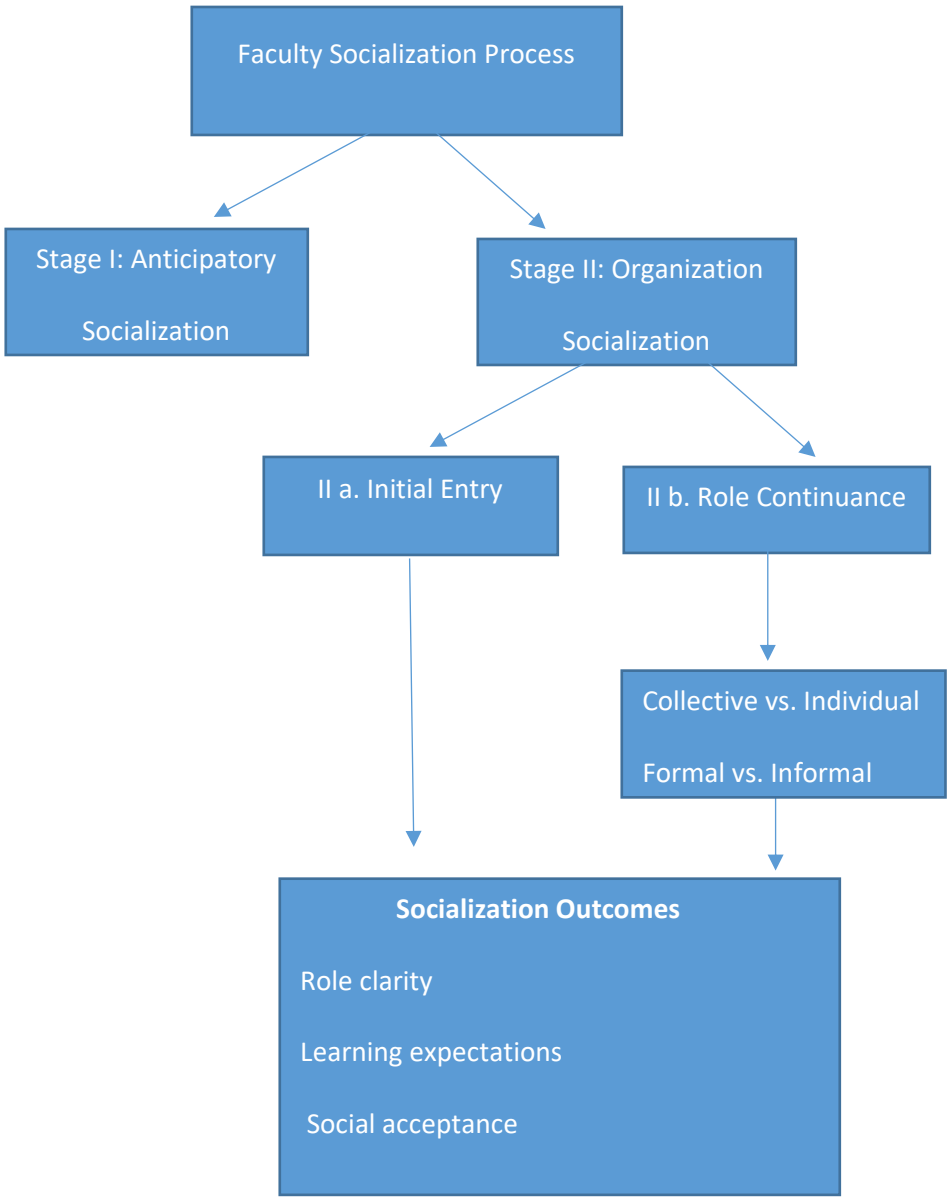


*Figure 3:* Organizational Socialization Framework. This is an interpretation of Tierney's & Bensimon's (1996) Organizational Socialization framework.

## Research Question

The primary question that guides this research is: How are part-time English Department faculty socialized into the culture of a public community college?

Subsidiary questions include the following:

1. How do English Department adjunct faculty members at this community college perceive and learn their organization's values and expectations within their institution and department for participating as a faculty member?
2. What organizational resources, support, and processes are provided to adjunct English Department faculty members to help them acclimate to their respective campus cultures, norms, and established practices?
3. What helpful socialization strategies would adjuncts provide to assist with the professionalization process at this institution moving forward?

## Chapter Summary

As the literature showed, part-time/adjunct faculty represent almost 70% of the instructional workforce in U.S. public colleges and universities. The literature also presented the precarious nature of adjuncting, such as the lack of job stability, health benefits, proper resources, professional support, and social inclusion (Baron-Nixon, 2007; Fountain, 2005; Inside Higher Ed, 2008). Part-time faculty are the new majority and functionally contribute to the sustainability of community colleges; hence, the challenge for colleges is to embrace these faculty and integrate them into the department and institution (Baron-Nixon, 2007).

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the study. It includes the research questions, participants, context, as well as the design and details of the research design. Specifics of the data collection and data analysis will also be included in Chapter 3.

# Chapter 3:

# Methodology

## Introduction

This study will investigate the existing programs and practices aimed at the socialization of adjunct faculty members teaching in the English into the culture of a public community college campus—Bridge Community College—from the perspective of fifteen adjunct faculty members themselves. The literature review presented in chapter 2 provides the framework for this study. This chapter, therefore, delineates the way in which the study was executed.

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## Research Design

The design for this study is qualitative with a case study approach that examined the professionalization of community college part-time faculty teaching in the English department.

The study uses a qualitative approach to address the research questions to allow the participants to explain and describe their experiences. Part-time faculty narratives provide important insider information on the understandings of socialization and its practices. These first-hand narratives would be difficult to capture in a survey.

Creswell (2013) argues that qualitative research "begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 44). According to Creswell, to study a problem, qualitative researchers use an "emerging qualitative approach to inquiry and collect data in a natural setting, sensitive to the people and places under the study" (p. 44). Hence, qualitative inquiry searches for a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1994). Therefore, one of the best ways to understand the work world of adjunct faculty members is to draw information directly from them, since they are the ones living the experience. To obtain these viewpoints and to understand their causes, I established trust and rapport with adjunct faculty to more effectively portray the nuances and the meaning of each participant's life from his or her own point of view.

**Case Study Method**

Various approaches to qualitative research exist, such as basic, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. I selected the case study approach for the current study to capture how adjunct faculty are socialized into the culture of a public community college campus. Creswell (2013) defines case study research as a "qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, [that] reports a case description and case themes" (p. 97). In

order to provide an in-depth analysis, the researcher gathers, examines, and uses various sources of information, such observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports. The unit of analysis in the case study, according to Creswell (2013), might be multiple cases (a multi-site study) or a single case (a within-site study).

There are five defining features in case studies that Creswell (2013) delineates in chapter five of his book. First, the case study research begins with the identification of a specific case that is a bounded system, bounded by time and place. Second, the researcher needs to identify the intent of conducting the case study. It is an intrinsic case (a case that has an unusual interest in and of itself) or an instrumental case (case study that has a case or different cases to better understand a specific issue, problem, or concern). Third, the researcher uses extensive, multiple sources of information in data collection to provide a detailed, in-depth understanding of the issue. Fourth, in the data analysis stage, the researcher selects how to approach the data analysis, presents a thick description of the case, and identifies themes uncovered in studying the case. Finally, case studies often end with conclusions or assertions formed by the researcher about the overall meaning derived from the cases while making meaningful connections to the current literature.

Therefore, the case study method is appropriate for this study because it calls for the study of a bounded instrumental case study. I aimed to study one campus within a community college district in southern California, and to study one academic department, the English Department, within the selected college campus. This case study will not be an intrinsic case study because the use of adjuncts is a widespread phenomenon in most, if not all, higher education campuses. The analysis of a single social unit will lend itself to gathering detailed descriptions to examine the participants' socialization and professionalization experiences.

**Site Selection**

Kezar's and Sam's monograph (2010b) proposed a need for more specialized research to guide us toward better solutions. First, there is limited knowledge of the exact differences of part-time faculty by motivation, department, discipline, and institutional type. Second, there is a need for context-based studies and solutions. There are 113 community colleges in California comprising 72 community college districts. There are 20 community college districts in Southern California alone, from which the one in this current study—Sunnyville Community College District—was selected. A major reason is that it is a large community college district. The extensiveness of this district increases the trustworthiness of this study because it offers multiple cases, and different educational, socioeconomic status, and community contexts, which make the findings generalizable to other community college districts in California and across the country.

Sunnyville Community College District (SVCCD) offers educational opportunities to students in several cities and communities. They service both non-affluent and affluent communities throughout southern California. SVCCD educates almost four times as many Latino students and nearly five times as many African-American students as all of the University of California campuses combined. Around 80% of SVCCD students are from underserved populations. Given these statistics, according to the SVCCD Employee Headcount (2014), part-time hourly, non-tenure track faculty seem the new majority, at around 50% when compared to full-time tenure track faculty, which is approximately 15%. Given that SVCCD is a large community college district with a strong curriculum of basic skills courses, and with such a large pool of part-time hourly instructors, it made sense to select this district for this study.

Within SVCCD, this study specifically focuses on Bridge Community College (BCC), a pseudonym for the targeted site, for three main reasons. The first reason is that BCC is a well-established community college since the early 1900s. A total of 14 communities comprise its primary service area. BCC enrolls more than 30,000 students every semester and offers career- and transfer-oriented courses and programs that range from Administration of Justice and Nursing to Chicana/o Studies and Chemistry. In the 2016 Fall Semester, BCC employed approximately 20% full-time and 48% part-time instructional faculty, as cited in the website, http://datamart.cccco.edu. The English Department at BCC, specifically, has around 40 full-time instructors and 80 adjunct faculty members. Overall, the faculty at BCC are fully committed to student success.

The second reason I chose BCC as the study site is that BCC's educational attainment has improved in the last five to eight years. Because of the California Community Colleges' Task Force on Student Success (Senate Bill 1456), the adoption of two state initiatives—AB705 and Guided Pathways—and the use of a new funding formula, the campus is currently engaged in updating their facilities. In addition, BCC has instituted an increased emphasis on student-centered education and support services that promote student success, hence increasing transfer rates and the numbers of degrees and certificates awarded. As such, in the last 5 years, there has been an estimated 15-20% increase in the number of degrees awarded and the number of transfers to a UC or CSU institution.

A third reason for my selection of BCC for this current study is that it is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) that serves a large population of international students, minority groups, and Generation 1.5 students. About 60% of its credit-pursuing students are of Hispanic/Latino background, and about 20% are Asian/Pacific Islander students. All other

groups account for less than 10% of the student body. Most students at BCC need to take developmental and transferable English courses in order to graduate and receive an Associate's Degree (AA) and/or to transfer to a four-year university. Because of AB705, the college and the English department are currently redesigning their curriculum and removing the mandatory requirement of placing students in developmental courses. Notably, within the next academic year, BCC, along with all the other community colleges, will undergo extensive changes impacting students, faculty, and staff.

The fourth reason for the selection of BCC for this study is that this district has a faculty collective bargaining union and agent for full-time and adjunct faculty who work in the SVCCD. The union has represented the district's faculty since the beginning of collective bargaining in California's community colleges in 1977. Over the years, the union has successfully bargained for better adjunct benefits, pay, seniority, and other resources (Kezar & DePaola, 2018). Dougherty, Rhoades, and Smith (2014) explain the importance of part-time faculty organizing themselves to pursue effective strategies for improving the working conditions of contingent faculty, thereby defending and enhancing the quality of education and the learning conditions of their students.

**Academic Department Selection**

Because English courses play a vital role at community colleges by expanding students' intellectual horizons and by increasing their capacity to read, write, and think analytically, this study focuses on the English Department at BCC. This department is one of the largest and most highly-impacted departments at Bridge Community College. At the time of this study, most, if not all, community college students are now required to take at least one to two English courses, if not more, in order to graduate and transfer to a four-year university. However, offering

developmental education will no longer be required moving into the next academic year because students will self-report and self-assess into a transferable composition course.

Another reason for choosing the English Department is that both community colleges and four-year institutions have high percentages of part-time faculty in composition and humanities courses as well as math and science courses. According to a report by the National Education Association (NEA, 2007), the highest increases in part-time faculty occurred in the humanities, social sciences, and agriculture. In each respective discipline, humanities grew 13.2% to 46.2%, the social sciences saw a 15.4% increase to 37.4%, and agriculture and home economics increased by 12.2% to 30.2%. Engineering experienced the least amount of growth in part-time faculty between 1987 and 2003, increasing only by 1.1% to make up 19.6% of the faculty. Overall, faculty in composition, humanities, and math and science are most likely to work part-time with more than half the faculty assigned to part-time positions. In the English Department, most adjunct faculty are assigned to teach introductory or basic skills courses.

English Departments are the entrance points for all community college students. English courses are not only mandatory but also considered “gatekeeper” courses; the bulk of newly and seasoned adjuncts are assigned to teach these courses. Given the new state initiatives, it makes sense to look at the impact that AB705 will have on the course offerings, adjunct hiring, and adjunct socialization and professionalization within the English Department. The focus of this study is thus only on adjuncts teaching in the English Department at a well-established community college serving a large immigrant population, minority group, and Generation 1.5 students, most of whom need to take developmental and transferable English courses in order to graduate and receive an associate’s degree and/or transfer to a four-year university.

Many of the studies which examine the socialization of part-timers have completed qualitative and quantitative research that examines all adjuncts teaching credit and non-credit courses in various departments. No known study, prior to this current one, has researched one academic department in-depth, one department that is highly impacted, in-demand, and whose curriculum is a mandatory requirement for all students. Focusing on one campus, one department, and one of type of faculty (adjuncts) is conducive for an in-depth, context-based case study.

**Population Sample**

My population sample for this study is 15 part-time, non–tenure-track community college faculty teaching English courses at the pseudonymous Bridge Community College (BCC). Data saturation determined the final number of participants. (Refer to Appendix C for an overview of the participants.) It must be emphasized that this group of 15 interviewees comprises a small statistical sample. However, the overall proportional spread is surprisingly consistent with larger measures—some of which are discussed below. Echoing more comprehensive investigations, these numbers support reasonable, realistic, and meaningful conclusions about the kind of people populating the adjunct ranks as well as their preferences and patterns of employment. The distribution provides a high level of confidence that this study's qualitative data are a reliable index to the experiences and attitudes of part-time community college teachers as a whole.

**Selection criteria.** I chose the faculty participants using purposeful random sampling and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2013). This type of sampling is appropriate for this investigation, which involved interviews of part-time faculty who very specifically (a) aspired to be a full-time community college faculty; (b) had been newly hired as an adjunct, having taught under two years but no more than ten years; (c) had served as adjunct instructors at the college level in the

last one to three years in at least two different community colleges; and (d) taught in the English Department.

**Recruitment methods.** I obtained listings of part-time faculty from the department chair and/or department secretary and contacted part-time faculty via email. I emailed an Informational Letter that explicitly stated the purpose and significance of the study, disclosure of my positionality, the participants' rights to anonymity, and details of how the interview would be conducted. Snowball sampling was used as well by asking each participant to suggest someone else who might be appropriate for the study and be willing to participate in it (Creswell, 2013). Snowball sampling was particularly useful in getting access to the hourly part-time, non-tenure-track population, who might not have received the Informational Letter or the invitation to participate. Since the majority of part-time instructors teach at multiple locations, they might not check their campus email accounts or mailboxes regularly, and instead use their personal email accounts. Therefore, having participants notify other adjuncts in their departments was a good recruiting strategy.

**Education level and years of experience.** All the respondents had Master's Degrees—the minimum requirement for teaching at most community colleges—though, occasionally, when teachers are particularly skilled in their field, this prerequisite is waived. The years of experience for the group showed itself as an upside-down bell curve, weighted chiefly (and equally) at either end of the spectrum. Five of the respondents had two years or fewer of experience; five had three to four years; and five had eight or more years. Selecting participants with a varied amount of teaching experience was imperative to provide a comprehensive narrative and view of the different socialization experiences of seasoned instructors versus newly hired adjuncts. (See Appendix C.)

**Gender of population sample.** The study sample includes six men and nine women. I compared this gender distribution to the nationwide data on all part-time English faculty in higher education institutions as well as in community colleges statewide. This study's sample consists of 8.4% more women than the representation of women adjuncts in English Departments nationally, as reported in a 2009 study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The nationwide NCES measure *all adjuncts* as only 51.6% female. In California, according to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office data mart for Fall 2017, 52% of adjuncts are female and 47% are male, just a small difference from the national data. This aligns with the study's finding that there are generally more women represented in part-time teaching employment.

**Race or ethnicity of population sample.** The ethnic distribution of the interviewees was as follows: 8 Hispanic/Latino, 4 White, 1 Middle Eastern, and 2 East Asian. (See Table 1.) According to the 2010 census, Los Angeles basin, the area in which this study's sample teaches, is 48.6% Hispanic/Latino, 28.5% White, and 11.6% Asian—a very close approximation of this study's sample. Among other major ethnic groups, African Americans are 9% of the Los Angeles basin's population, but no African Americans were participants in the current study. The outlier statistic was the lone Middle Eastern participant.

**Age and job aspirations.** Adjunct teaching appeals strongly to recent Master's Degree recipients seeking tenure-track positions. The demographics of this study regarding age and career aspiration include an age-spread with a few minor spikes and a distinct bulge toward the youthful end of the spectrum. This statistical line resembles an irregular wave rather than a traditional bell curve distribution. Regarding age, 3 participants were in their late 20s, 5 in their 30s, 3 in their 40s, and 4 in their 50s and 60s.

When I asked participants about their aspiration to attain a full-time teaching job in the English Department, the population sample's answers varied. In total, 5 women and 3 men, a total of 8 participants, said their priority was to obtain a full-time teaching position. Some of those participants happened to be under 40 years old and were faculty of color. Conversely, 4 women and 3 men, a total of 7 participants, said they did not aspire to a full-time position. However, some of the participants in the latter category had aspired to be a full-time instructor at one point in their careers. Several of them had applied for such jobs many times in the past, to no avail, and had given up. Others decided not to pursue a full-time job because they either already had a full-time job elsewhere, or simply enjoyed the freedoms of adjuncting.

These demographic traits buttress the report that adjunct teaching is the single source of income for a majority of part-time instructors (Thirolf & Woods, 2017). In this study, this was the case for 80% of the sample. This means that 12 participants were restricted by adjunct wages, and only 3 participants held full-time employment outside of the college. Nonetheless, it should be surprising that no greater percentage of older people or even retirees populate my sample, for adjuncting is often taken up by retirees with graduate degrees who enjoy jobs with limited commitments (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Overall, understanding the perspectives of adjuncts will help to:

- understand the educational goals of the departments and institutions;
- see what type of professional relationship exists between the college and the faculty; and
- unveil what types of professional and instructional support services the college provides faculty to ensure student success.

Interviewing newly hired and experienced part-time instructors in one department will provide an alternative perspective and narrative of an adjunct's experience.

## Data Collection

The main data source for this qualitative study came from detailed, semi-structured interviews with the selected participants.

### Pilot Study

I field-tested the research instruments (email invitation to participate, email and phone follow-up, interview protocol, and interview questions) by conducting a pilot interview with 3 adjunct faculty who teach in nearby college campuses. Each part-time instructor was given a preliminary questionnaire seeking background and personal information. Then, a 45-60 minute audio recorded interview was scheduled. I transcribed and analyzed the interviews, revised the research instruments according to the piloted results, analysis, and feedback. The interviews generated during this preliminary stage were used to refine the interview questions and to test the validity and reliability of the measurement tool.

### Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative interview that is defined by a pre-set question guide. It aims to provide in-depth findings through informal discussions with participants (Collis & Hussey, 2003). This interview method was chosen over unstructured or structured interviews, because this study aims to answer the research questions by asking specific questions, but not so much (unstructured) that it generates unnecessary data, and not so little (structured) that it misses any unanticipated information.

The interview questions were designed to gather information on the organizational socialization, or lack thereof, that part-time English Department faculty experienced before and

during their initial years of employment. I derived the questions mainly from the literature review. The semi-structured approach allowed and facilitated my probing of interviewees' responses. Answer probing is particularly useful in responses wherein more explanation is needed in order to fully understand the answers.

I developed the interview questions in alignment with the theoretical model. The interview questionnaire instrument was adopted from Tierney and Bensimon's (1996) qualitative research, but I adapted the questionnaire in this study to ensure that it reflected more closely the population of participants' teaching assignment at the college level. (See Appendix A.) The questionnaire adaptation thus insured that it included factors consistent to previous research findings as well as it addressed gaps in the literature.

Initially, I emailed participants a preliminary questionnaire asking about background and personal information. (See Appendix B.) Then, I interviewed participants directly, asking them about their initial and ongoing socialization in the department and institution. Specifically, I inquired about their collective vs. individual socialization, formal vs. informal socialization, and access to campus resources. For example, to probe on how they learned the organization's culture, expectations, and values, I asked the following question: "How did you learn what the college expects of you as a part-time faculty member?" My questions during the interview were grouped into four categories. (Refer to Appendix A.) The interviews took approximately 45-60 minutes each, with follow-up interviews conducted with a few of the participants when deemed necessary.

I subsequently arranged interviews for those who met the sampling criteria. The interviews took place over a four-month time period, with the times and locations chosen by participants. I conducted the majority of interviews in on-campus spaces. To create a

comfortable and trusting environment, I began each interview with an informal discussion with participants about the purpose of the study. With the participants' consent, interviews were audio recorded. The interview questions were asked in a systematic order; however, the participants were encouraged to explore any topic they wish in greater depth. The interviewees determined the rhythm of the interview. I listened intently for answers to questions not yet posed. Flexibility was maintained in these semi-structured interviews, in order to elicit as much information as possible. I also provided a light breakfast or lunch to most faculty for their participation. The interviews were sent to get transcribed by a professional transcribing service.

## Data Analysis

I hand-coded the interview transcriptions and organized the codes thematically. According to Creswell (2013), data analysis should be:

> both inductive and deductive and establish patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change (p. 44).

As I analyzed the data, I intended to ground my findings, themes or assertions in current literature findings and my theoretical framework. Through coding, the data were examined in a detailed line-by-line analysis necessary to generate initial categories and to suggest relationships among categories. Next, I noted differences and similarities and examined these by asking questions and making comparisons. I added additional codes as the analyses proceeded. In *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Saldana (2016) states, "There are methods for synthesizing the collective, not to arrive at a reduced answer but to move toward c*onsolidated meaning.* That meaning may take the symbolic form of a category, theme, or concept" (p. 10). Keeping in line with Saldana's recommendations, similar incidents and concepts that established patterns were grouped. Such patterns allowed coded data to be collapsed into broader themes.

Key quotations that illustrated themes, categories, or subcategories from the interviews were saved and used to move toward a "consolidated meaning."

After thoroughly analyzing and coding the transcribed interviews, I reviewed, refined, and reflected on the findings. The process was recorded in analytic memos and a journal to prompt my deeper reflection. This provided an audit trail to "aid transparency when later seeking to show how [I] arrived at my conclusions" (Bazeley, 2013, p. 15). However, alternative explanations for findings of the research and design are provided in the findings of Chapter 4.

## Trustworthiness

I also included validation strategies in this qualitative study as an attempt to assess the accuracy of findings. To increase and ensure validation and credibility of the study, a detailed, thick description of the data and an analysis of the data grounded in a conceptual framework (Creswell, 2013) were created. Rich, thick description allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability, since readers would be able to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred "because of shared characteristics" (Creswell, 2013, p. 252).

**Member checking.** Member checking was another validation strategy I used to establish credibility. Creswell (2013) recommends to take "data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants, so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account" (p. 252). Therefore, I shared preliminary analyses consisting of description and themes with a small group of participants, and took copious notes of their feedback. I also shared any research/personal biases in the study in order to further ensure credibility.

**Peer reviews.** I included not only member-checking, but also peer debriefing by at least two colleagues who are familiar with the content of the study and who have had professional

experiences with community college adjuncts. The biases of the researcher should be considered when ensuring the quality of the inferences completed in the analysis of the data. One of the challenges that qualitative researchers must confront is acknowledging their biases and not allowing personal interest to skew the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The review of the literature on the socialization experiences of English Department part-time faculty indeed biased me. I had an expectation that the interviews would provide numerous examples of struggles during the socialization process for those participants entering the community college. Also, as a full-time English instructor, who was once a struggling community college adjunct, I expected to identify with many of the issues discussed by the participants. Taking the time to journal about my own preconceived ideas and opinions allowed me to maintain an open mind and present the findings in a manner that best articulated the experiences of this study's participants.

**Positionality of the author.**

In analyzing and presenting the data, it is important for researchers to engage in reflexivity. Reflexivity occurs when the "writer is conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to a qualitative research study. And one characteristic of reflexivity is making one's position explicit" (Creswell, 2013, p. 216). I engaged in reflexivity and disclosed my own biases, privileged work status, and my concerns about the impact on the writing on the participants.

This study can potentially raise issues of power and risk to the researcher, the participants, and the site. Studying the professionalization of part-time faculty as a full-time faculty introduces a power imbalance between the participants and me. The participants might feel that their jobs might be jeopardized if they report unfavorable information, or they might be afraid that the information disclosed might negatively influence their chances to get hired in the

future. To mollify their fears and build rapport with my participants, I disclosed my own educational background and teaching experience, highlighting to them that I, too, had been a part-time instructor and that, therefore, I empathized with their experiences. I also reminded them that there are measures in place to ensure confidentiality and anonymity for both faculty and institution.

As a way to be mindful and respectful of the voices and experiences of my study's participants, I used memo writing that captured my thinking process about what I was doing and why, confronting and challenging my own assumptions, and recognizing the extent to which my thoughts, actions, and decisions might shape my research and what I perceived (Saldana, 2016). I reflected on how I was accurately reporting their experiences. For example, I needed to be aware if I was unconsciously silencing the participants in my discussion because I was writing too objectively or scientifically. To avoid misrepresenting the experiences of the participants, I used member checking and peer debriefing as explained in the data analysis section.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

I applied and received full Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before any steps were taken to initiate contact with the college and participants. In order to protect the subjects, I fully disclosed the nature of the study, the requirements, and any known or potential risks. During the three stages of the research process—data collection, data cleaning, and dissemination of research results—I ensured confidentiality and anonymity for faculty and institution. To ensure that faculty felt safe to disclose information, they signed a consent form that:

- gave them the right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time;
- stated the protection of confidentiality of the respondents; and

- outlined known or potential risks and expected benefits (Creswell, 2013).

In the study, I asked the participants to select a pseudonym to further protect their identity. In collecting and transcribing the interviews, all data were assigned an alphanumeric code for each participant. Electronic data were saved in password-protected files. The electronic versions of the transcripts were de-identified through the use of pseudonyms, which replaced participant names and institution names. When reporting the research results, any data set containing personal or contextual information that identified respondents was removed from the final report.

## Limitations of the Study

A potential limitation existed in that the interviews were administered by soliciting voluntary participants. This invited the bias of self-selection and self-reporting, which raises the possibility of response bias. Response bias means that if the non-respondents had responded, their response would substantially change the results (Creswell, 2013). Research biasness or subjectivity is a second plausible limitation of this study. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Therefore, the readers need to be aware of biases that can affect the final analysis and reporting. A third limitation is the time constraints of this study. Throughout the study, several changes occurred, such as new hiring standards, diversity in the hiring pool of adjuncts, and curriculum and course changes due to new state initiaves (i.e AB705). These changes most likely impacts the current student and faculty demographics at BCC since the data was gathered for this study. The fourth limitation is that the scope of the study was limited to the degree that only adjunct faculty from one department and from one community college campus and district participated in the study; this study does not include the voices of administrators, campus professional development coordinators, or campus president.

Therefore, given that this study is a case study, the results and experiences from the participants may not be as generalizable to other community college adjuncts, departments, and campuses in other parts of the country.

# Chapter 4:

# Findings and Analysis

The primary objective of this qualitative research was to investigate the socialization experiences of part-time English Department instructors who worked at various schools in Southern California, but primarily in the Los Angeles Basin, as well as online, but who all taught at Bridge Community College (BCC). As noted in Chapter 3, I interviewed 15 adjunct English Department faculty over four months, from March to June 2018.

Adjuncts in the BCC English Department were queried about the ways in which their employing institutions supported and professionalized them. I also explored what resources and practices adjunct faculty thought would assist them to better integrate into their community college cultures. The interview transcripts were reviewed, coded, and analyzed for themes as explained in Chapter 3. Further analysis of the categories led to the emergence of four themes, discussed and analyzed below.

## Thematic Presentation

As discussed in Chapter 3, this study's interview questions were inspired by scholastic literature on the topic of "organizational socialization and professionalization of adjunct faculty." A theoretical framework for faculty socialization (Tierney and Bensimon, 1996) served as a guide for categorizing the interviewee's responses. This study recounts the personal responses of interviewees (the adjuncts) to a group of fluid and multivalent experiences they encountered over extended periods of time. This chapter contains the five themes, supported by selection of quotes that are representative of the interviewees' overall comments on the topics. The themes of the findings are as follows:

1. Teaching Motivations and Responsibilities

2. Initial Organizational Socialization
3. Ongoing Socialization
4. Organizational Professionalization
5. Racial Socialization

The fifth theme emerged unexpectedly in the data analysis. This unforeseen theme pertained to distinct perceptions and feelings expressed by some participants of color in the study. Although not counted as one of the main themes, this finding deserves discussion and is included here as a fifth theme, labeled Racial Socialization.

## Theme 1: Teaching Motivations and Responsibilities

Since adjuncts usually work with no benefit package while earning as little as a fourth of what full-timers earn for a similar class schedule, evidence that adjuncts are given poor material compensation is not hard to find (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Wallin, 2004). Despite this, pay discrepancies are a serious issue to adjunct faculty and worthy of study. In only two cases did interviewees mention that their salary (such as it is) motivated them to persist in their line of work. The mercenary sentiment in part-time college teaching is nearly non-existent. Across the board, participants in my sample reported doing their work because they love their subject area, love the student-teacher relationship, and love serving the wider world through their college community.

Interview participant Felix Gomez highlighted the benefit of bringing insight to others in his adjunct teaching, when he said: “When the light [goes on in the students], where you’re getting a certain understanding and you feel like you’ve enlightened your students—or even if your students have enlightened you—that’s a drive to teach.”

Snow Lotus also echoed this sentiment, saying that being an adjunct faculty member offers her an opportunity to contribute to and affect students' lives, making her work “meaningful and satisfying.”

Mia’s description of the general allure of community college involves the student-teacher relationships and interactions. She stated the following:

> [At] university, I had 300 people in my classes. I felt like I was lost in the bunch. When I decided to teach, I thought, “I want to be in a class where I know every student, not calling out 300 names for roll call.”

Her testimony is an on-the-ground complement to the commentary of Levin (2001): “Two-year colleges are, by design, responsive to community needs, particularly local student demographics and regional adaptations to a globalizing economy.” Mia’s words orient her towards an aspect of community colleges that lends itself to building meaningful connections with students.

For Paola, her work fulfills obligations to her community, and society as a whole, which intersect with the community college, but are not bounded by it. As a first generation student from a working class, Latinx background, she finds great joy serving a population of students who share a similar background.

As can be seen by these experiences, adjuncts are invested in students’ success; they are individuals who work hard to meet campus goals while trying to pursue intellectual interests to enhance the academic community. The social structure (just as it stands) helps to anchor the motivations behind teaching. It helps to acclimate adjuncts to their work because it meets their particular individual needs and that of their communities.

**Teaching Responsibilities**

As the data show, most of the adjuncts in the sample basically hold a full-time teaching schedule—13 participants carry three or more classes per term, which is usually considered a full-time assignment at the college level. The remainder (2 participants) taught 2 classes per term. Seven of the participants worked at 2 or fewer schools, but 8 worked at 3 or more. This fact is given heft when we recognize that at least 50% of the interviewees work at more than 2 schools, and the group, collectively, worked at 18 schools altogether.

Most of the time, community college adjuncts teach entry-level classes. In my sample, fully 100% did. Seven taught remedial or developmental classes; 8 taught introductory courses, and not one participant taught advanced coursework. Gappa & Leslie (1993) found this reality was definitive for the nation as a whole. Similarly, in the sample referenced by Thirolf & Woods (2017), 56% of the adjuncts taught "College Level" coursework, 22% taught a mix of "College Level" and Developmental coursework, and the remaining 22% taught strictly developmental courses. According to the Center for Community College Student Engagement (2014), 16% of part- time faculty report teaching solely developmental education courses; only 5% of full-time faculty report the same. In short, compared to part-time faculty at other institution types, part-time faculty at community colleges are more likely to teach the types of students who ultimately require the most support.

As we can see from the above statistical information (and by way of echoing Thirolf), we recognize that the greater burden of this student support effort falls on adjunct professors. My interviews reveal that part-timers are thoroughly prepared for this challenge attitudinally. In no interview did a subject express a lack of passion for helping students attain their academic goals. However, the situation leaves open the question as to whether adjuncts are sufficiently trained

and supported for these responsibilities, and whether administrations, in their obligation to socialize adjuncts properly for their roles through professional development, adequate pay, and consultation, are doing their part.

## Theme 2: Initial Organizational Socialization

To begin addressing my first subsidiary research questions: "How do English Department adjunct faculty members at this community college perceive and learn their organization's values and expectations within their institution and department for participating as a faculty member?" I turned to looking at the initial socialization experiences of the participants when they were hired at BCC, mainly the job interview and job orientation experiences. Keeping in mind Tierney's and Bensimon's socialization model (1996), it is essential to recognize that newcomers, such as part-time faculty, often seek and need vital information about their institution, information that should be imparted immediately through the vetting, hiring, and orientation processes.

### Vetting and Hiring Process

When looking at adjunct socialization from the perspective of the hiring process, I found a degree of variance. At one extreme, we hear of Sean's interview led by a department chair where a committee asked numerous questions, and at the other extreme, we hear of Natalie's quick interview via email that resulted in an instant online hire. Natalie reported that after a simple email exchange, she was offered a class to teach. Another interviewee, Teresita, described a similarly abbreviated hiring process, as follows:

> I was literally hired within a week of classes starting. I was basically called up and they said, "Hey, are you still available? Are you still interested? Come on down, we have a job if you fit the requirements." And so my very first teaching class, I literally had less than 72 hours to write my very first syllabus.

Sam provided a parallel story describing that his initial meeting with the chair was informal and easy, so much so that he felt confident in receiving a teaching assignment by the end of the conversation. The meeting seemed a mere formality, rather than a formal comprehensive interview.

Many interviewees reported fulsome hiring experiences at other community colleges, but, more commonly, the hiring processes were brief, rushed and lacked any meaningful process whatsoever at BCC. Such reports are consistent with the literature on two-year college hiring (Thirolf, 2012).

Clear socialization pathways—as highlighted in the theory and literature—help to foster the development of pedagogical skills and knowledge of organizational culture. To give school administrations their due, the short and rushed hiring procedures are partly driven by a need to quickly plug gaps due to last-minute faculty losses and unplanned-for crushes of enrollees (Phelan, 2016). Because these realities are as perennial as the grass at two-year schools, it is reasonable to expect that administrations should have long ago instituted adequate hiring protocols to accommodate such "emergencies." The hiring process demands comprehensiveness. A rushed hiring disrespects the fraternity of teachers whose ranks adjuncts join. It also shows inadequate concern for the entry-level pupils that adjuncts are enjoined to teach.

For many practical and helpful reasons, adjuncts need to be vetted carefully before being hired to teach. Schools need to maintain institutional competency levels. While few people lacking a degree would claim to have one if they did not, a rushed, same-day hiring cannot secure an institution against such fraud. Also, new hires need to feel that the gamut they've run in winning a job grants it meaning. From the perspective of socialization, well-wrought hiring

processes convey to candidates that the given school is worthy of an adjunct's full capacity to plant roots—whatever their capacity for root-planting may be.

Administratively, it is sound and wise to instill confidence in the larger community that the teachers hired to teach their students were properly vetted beforehand. As discussed earlier, one can generally assume that applicants who are distinguished by the attainment of master's degrees exercise a minimum level of competence, self-discipline, and ambition to succeed at teaching while also having the wherewithal to contribute teaching and administrative innovations as well as establish robust social connections in their work environment. But a clear effort on the part of the administration to hire teachers who demonstrate in substantial vetting that they embody these traits is vital.

On the other hand, many community colleges are doing the right thing in vetting their potential adjuncts. Some participants in this study shared stories of vigorous hiring procedures; however, at BCC, these robust vetting and hiring practices were lacking. My interviewees reported that—at a minimum—they were required to show that they could properly correct a student paper.

Sean referenced the pervasiveness of this process:

> There was a pre-interview process that was not so much an interview as a written test, which was essentially a sample student paper that I was supposed to grade. I was encouraged to mark places where I thought the student needed improvement. I've gone through other interviews at other institutions [unfortunately not at BCC] where I was asked to write a short statement about my teaching goals and my teaching background, but mostly I've been asked to do that kind of critiquing of sample student papers and to make a note to the student about what they're doing right in the paper and how they can improve.

An admirable uptick from this is contained in another participant, Edward. He reported that one institution, not BCC, required a teaching demonstration in front of a committee.

In the range of hiring processes reported to me in the interviews, a mock teaching demonstration was one element of the interview gold standard at other community colleges. Such exercises showcase the social skills of an adjunct in the classroom, and, if a committee is involved in the hiring process, this creates a natural bond between the new hire and his or her interviewers—increasing a number of socialization factors present in the initial hiring experience and further imparting a sense of responsibility toward the new hire by his or her initial group of observers. To meet professional standards and to serve the social well-being of an applicant, such evaluative procedures should be the community college norm—regardless of the immediacy of teaching needs.

**Orientation Process**

Orientation provides an immediate opportunity to launch the interconnection in a new direction. Sadly, reports on BCC's orientations are equally bleak. Accessing Sam's experience again, he forthrightly states that he never had an orientation.

Edward describes the extent of his orientation this way:

> I may have received written material, but it was maybe just one xeroxed page with: "Here are some important extensions for contacts on campus." The room number for the English Department. The telephone number for the English Department. The number to call if you are sick and not able to teach a class. The academic affairs location.

At BCC, the interviewees commonly failed to receive a proper orientation. As the participants reported, their experience at BCC consisted of a short email exchange or conversation with the secretary about syllabus expectations, drop/add dates, and grade submissions. Some received handouts on basic instructor services, such as the contact information for the office of Academic Affairs.

Because there was a lack of proper orientation, Teresita described a situation where a threat was centered on her by a student, and she felt unprepared and unsupported:

> It was just basically unprovoked behavior, and so the police were called, and the student was brought in. The student is going to be on academic probation for two years, and there's a restraining order, where he cannot take any classes that I am teaching for five years.[I felt] absolutely not supported by anybody…there was no moral support, nothing from my department chair, and I said, "You know, it's one thing to hand out a little folder for employee assistance, but you know, we just need to know that you guys are working on our behalf." I had to involve the union, the grievance counselor for the school, to put pressure on the Title 9 coordinator to hurry up and finish her report.

This example illustrates how administration failed to give her vital information on how to deal with problems that arise in the classroom, what protocols to follow, and who to contact in case of emergencies. Her instinct was to call the union that gave her instructions as to what process to follow. It was unfortunate that the department chair or dean did not come to her assistance as she had hoped. Teresita's experience highlights the importance of taking the orientation process seriously and to provide adjuncts with vital information during their initial entry rather than rushing these initial steps. Further, orientation procedures need to address the specific socialization needs of adjuncts. The initial encounter with an adjunct needs to be a strong first step toward integrating part-time faculty into the school's social network, its procedures, and its norms through a robust and meaningful orientation.

Participants were interviewed at length to discover whether or not departmental and institutional values, norms, and policies were communicated explicitly when they were initially hired. Alexis' response was characteristic:

> Honestly, I can't even really say that I know by heart the specific values that the department holds. If I were to think of, how would I even find those? Maybe going to their website, but honestly, I don't think I've ever been presented with

> these even during orientation. They don't really go over campus or individual department values.

Snow Lotus' response was similar. She could not remember receiving the values, mission statement, or policies in writing. Nor were these things overtly communicated to Jane, who similar to Snow Lotus, frankly stated not receiving any type of information about the college. Both participants took the initiative to look online for any information they could find about BCC.

These examples illustrate that during the initial entry, the participants did not explicitly receive the mission, values, and norms of the institution nor the department. Instead, it was left to participants to look at the website and figure it out. Although BCC's mission and values are posted on the website, the participants noted that it was very difficult to find because the website is not user-friendly and it was not updated. Just because the mission statement is posted on a website, however, doesn't free administrations from the responsibility of reinforcing these with their part-time instructors.

The private, non-academic sectors embrace this responsibility with gusto. Perhaps because "customer service" has become such a singular value in contemporary commerce, educating new hires about company values and imparting broadly-impactful mission statements to workers is now commonplace--even for small-scale operations but is seemingly less common in community colleges, such as BCC. It's also possible that, because community colleges can depend upon the internalized value-structure of their instructors, these colleges have not widely adopted the practice of uniformly imparting a mission and value set to newly hired adjunct faculty. When adjuncts feel kinship with their colleagues through an overtly stated and uniformly-understood mission protocol, it is helpful to their work. As will be seen later in this dissertation, one of the recommendations of this study is that community colleges sharpen their

routines for communicating their mission and values to adjuncts in the hiring and orientation process.

As the literature demonstrates (Korte, 2007; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), organizational socialization at the initial entry is where newcomers receive crucial information. Orientation programs provide procedural information and perhaps the more abstract vision and mission of the organization. Although this information is important, the ongoing socialization proves to be of greater assistance for new adjunct hires. Moreland et al (2001) found that providing information that helps the new hire understand the unwritten rules (norms) of the workgroup(s) helps the individual better form high-quality relationships in the organization and to acquire beneficial values and norms.

**Theme 3: Ongoing Socialization Process**

After the hiring process, true social integration begins. It is facilitated by formal processes, but it is also just a process of time. According to Tierney and Bensimon (1996), socialization outcomes lead to role clarity, learning expectations, and social acceptance. For adjuncts, contractual obligations to participate in socialization opportunities are usually more the exception than the rule. Hence, “organizational socialization after the hiring process” is conditioned by certain parameters, as follows: (a) the amount and quality of socialization opportunities offered by an institution, or lack thereof; (b) the attitude of openness amidst a school’s full-time faculty and administration to adjunct participation, or lack thereof; (c) the openness and initiative expressed by the adjuncts themselves to participate in the opportunities their schools provide, or lack thereof.

Aside from planned events, ongoing socialization takes shape on quads, in stairwells, and hallways. It evolves through chance encounters and formal one-on-one dates. Loitering in

lounge spaces, taking part in committees, engaging with union work, seeking out faculty and administrators for assistance, attending workshops and participating in campus-wide events provided some of the many opportunities for my interviewees to connect with their immediate community of students, faculty, and staff.

As noted by Tierney's and Bensimon's (1996) socialization outcomes, there is greater access to the wealth of knowledge and assistance provided by casual or formal opportunities to learn from colleagues, reflexive knowledge of communal norm, and comfort with the institutional environment. This in turn likely leads to job retention and its attendant benefits to students, including confidence in the execution of more teacher tasks because instructors are clear about the pedagogical expectations placed upon them. Institutions accelerate this process not just through invitations to participate in formal opportunities, but by informal ones and by the tone they set before making such invitations, including the social mood they foster on the campus in general (Thirolf & Woods, 2018; Kezar & Sam, 2010b).

**Institutional Climate**

The experiences the participants had with BCC's institutional climate, varied. Edward spoke positively about institutional openness, or the ability and willingness of faculty to interact with one another on a personal level:

> I think, especially, at BCC, there's a lot of interaction between full-time and part-time professors. I never have really felt like I've been marginalized in any way….I've always been really impressed with the email communications, and now with social media, I've been Facebook friends with a lot of my fellow instructors, and I've kept up with them that way.

On the other hand, another participant, Teresita, had mixed results in her experiences with personal faculty interactions on campus. She alternately encountered warmth, coldness, and perhaps the professional pressures of full-time faculty, describing her interactions thus: "Some of

them are really helpful and really friendly towards me, but I feel like a lot of the full-time faculty, maybe because there are so many, they don't really talk to you."

Snow Lotus described a meaningful spontaneous social development that was followed by a profound example of institutional closedness:

> A bunch of adjuncts were in the faculty lounge exchanging information about our work, the assignments, the students, and just having a really big, long, deep conversation about what we do. We thought, "We should do this once a week—exchange ideas and share our challenges." A week after, we got an email that said adjuncts are not allowed to have their own meetings because whatever issues and questions they have, they should go to the chair. Adjuncts treated as the unruly stepchild that need monitoring and told what do by full-timers. I'm like, "Wow, that's shocking. It's shocking!"

There are highs and lows in the geography of institutional climate, and Snow Lotus' report is concerning. She describes an interaction that makes a painful impression and is counterproductive to ongoing socialization.

This section draws our attention toward another question faculty have in their social setting: "How free do they feel to express *their own social preferences and values* in their setting and in the work they do?" Merely giving information on procedural and structural characteristics of organizations does not suffice. If new adjunct hires feel a freedom to express the valuable insights that often come in bunches for new hires, it can be of tremendous benefit to the campus and department. Of course, it is important for newly hired adjuncts to learn the norms and expectations of the new workplace; but we must look to the importance of an egalitarian social exchange among members of any group. Benefits can "accrue to newcomers and organizations from the careful and thoughtful recognition and consideration of each other's perspectives" (Korte, 2007, pg. 10).

Tierney's and Bensimon's (1996) theoretical framework on organizational socialization calls for a bidirectional scheme of socialization rather than a unidirectional one. They state the following:

> "Individuals should be encouraged to influence and change the organization, just as the organizational mores may influence and change them. The culture of an organization has the potential to be changed in a number of different ways if the participants within it are allowed to express their diversity" (pg. 37).

Community colleges would do well to accommodate newcomers' frame of reference during the first phases of socialization in order to both facilitate successful socialization experiences and to source new hires for their innovative ideas.

Subsidiary research shows that institutions do not readily engage in bidirectional socialization. By defaulting to unidirectional models, institutions and their departments miss out on the positive and strong influences of interactions among new hires, colleagues, and administrators. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) state, "From a cultural perspective, comprehension of the ongoing processes of socialization is necessary if we wish to develop more inclusive communities that give individuals the freedom to challenge ideas" (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, pg. 37). If institutions, such as BCC, want their adjuncts to "opt in" and willingly participate in departmental and campus committees, meetings, and other social functions, then it's important for them to put a concerted effort in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment where adjuncts feel welcomed and valued.

**Individual Responses to Inclusion and Institutional Climate**

Like many teachers, adjuncts' main social tie is to their students: they spend the most time with them, and struggle through innumerable problems in their company. However, students aren't peers. Deeper relationships with students are constrained by role responsibilities. However, adjunct teachers share a responsibility and a mission with their peers. Peers test one

another in variety of ways in these links, and the way these relationships unfold greatly affect instructors' workplace happiness.

It is mainly from relationships with fellow staff members that adjuncts are helped to assess their college's values and expectations. In institutions and social settings of every kind, values and norms are commonly communicated by the "feel" of the place and in the ways people choose their words, modulate their voice, gesture with their body, or set their face—especially in settings where certain levels of decorum are the norm. Jane described a positive experience of this:

> As an adjunct, it's just a sense you get when you see the department emails and the kind of environment you find yourself in when you walk through the door. Everyone is eager to help you understand that from the beginning.

A positive open institutional climate can most definitely encourage adjuncts to socialize outside of the classroom and campus with colleagues. When participants were asked about off-campus socialization opportunities, such as social mixers, events, or any other social functions, mixed responses surfaced. The responses varied from, "I didn't know I could attend," as stated by Daniel, to: "Yes. I recommend 100% for adjuncts to attend and socialize with full-time colleagues," stated by Mia.

Some participants were keenly aware of their lack of participation and expressed a conscious decision to separate themselves from their English Department and the college. My interview responses indicate that despite their love for teaching, the adjunct's life-situation or personality is often one for whom freedom from too much social or executive obligation in their professional lives is a preference. This is the case either because they have fuller professional, avocational, or emotional obligations elsewhere; however, one reason that surfaced frequently among many of the participants was campus politics and the unwelcoming climate. For example,

Jennifer and Jane, both expressed a dispositional inclination against greater involvement, saying that they purposely stay out of a lot of things due to campus and departmental climate.

In Fidel's justification for dodging meetings or other socializing events, he describes how his personal identity entails a certain social distance from his surroundings, as follows: "I keep my identity. I grow my hair long. I'm not, like, this clean-cut type of professor. I'm a creative type, and I don't adhere to [the campus standards]." These accounts point to the fact that many adjuncts consciously chose not to participate in the various types of institutional, departmental, and social events due the unwelcoming institutional climate that manifests in complicated ways.

The freedom to be personally, socially involved with others—or not to be—has both advantages and disadvantages. A clear advantage to an adjunct's socialization is that he or she can foster relationships with other colleagues, exchange best practices, and feel a sense of belonging in their campus culture (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). On the other hand, a clear advantage to an adjunct's *lack* of involvement—and one that is much in the news these days—is the potential to remain outside the bubble of groupthink and domineering political positions that trouble many schools. This allows fresh perspectives and differing ways of being, which can be the main transformative tonic of a student's college experience. Participant Lisa alluded to this when she said, "I think if people are too molded to the values of a place, then that's when biases start coming in."

Overall, the comments expressed by the participants was that institutional climates can serve as barriers to successful socialization. However, when there was a positive institutional climate, such as having an encounter in the hallway or parking structure with either welcoming full-time or part-time colleagues, the experience was usually a positive one. They walked away with new information or understanding of a

new policy. Many of the participants repeated the importance of making time to foster relationships outside of the classroom with colleagues, of course given that the other party is receptive and the institutional climate inviting.

## Theme 4: Organizational Professionalization

Reports on professionalization opportunities, such as in the form of mentoring, evaluations, and professional development, by adjuncts in this study varied. Keeping in mind Tierney's and Bensimon's (1996) socialization framework, a strong mentoring program, meaningful performance evaluations, and professional development curricula that are both robust and diverse, strengthen the second part of the organizational socialization: role continuance. This section looks at how participants answered the question: "What organizational resources, support, and processes are provided to adjunct English Department faculty members to help them acclimate to their respective campus cultures, norms, and established practices?"

### Professional Development

Professional development can be seen as social and academic investment in the part-time faculty workforce. A community college's most valued commodity is education itself. Its values are tested by the appropriateness, imaginativeness, and extent of its efforts to educate its own staff. As far as addressing one of this dissertation's guiding concerns—how adjuncts come to learn what is expected of them as faculty members—professional development is one of the most prominent means.

This study understands professional development trainings, mentoring processes, and evaluation procedures as professionalization strategies, which also taps into socialization, that community colleges deploy once hiring is done. This section addresses the processes included, such as trainings on school policy, preparedness, and resources for special needs; professional

development workshops, evaluation processes, and mentor programs. These tools (a) extend key teaching and instructional resources to adjuncts; (b) integrate adjuncts into their schools; and (c) impart institutional imperatives.

It is worth noting that a number of adjuncts reported a responsibility to fulfill mandated hours for professional development. It is assumed that this requirement was to be fulfilled within a set period of time. Adjuncts reported losing pay for not fulfilling the obligation to take advantage of these opportunities. It seems they were advanced pay for a specified number of professional development hours per year or term. These flew under the doctrinaire flag of "professional development hours," or "flex hours."

Edward reported on his experience this way:

> Well, there are resources provided for all faculty, such as access to the opening day event, which actually is a chance to do professional development hours, and this is another policy that I learned years ago, about how many professional development hours I'm required to complete and certainly the penalty for not using it could be a deduction from my paycheck.

Edward's experience highlights two predominant attitudes regarding professional development. One is that professional development is required and not completing it leads to financial consequences; therefore, the approach to professional development is one of extrinsic value and fear of repercussions. The second, although not explicitly stated, is that the approach is a pragmatic one, as an assigned "task" rather than seeing it as a professional growth opportunity. Although the extrinsic push is there, it would be invaluable if the campus also factors the importance of tapping into an adjunct's intrinsic need to pursue professional growth.

Teresita sketched the broad range of possibilities open to her at another college since BCC did not offer professional development opportunities, highlighting personal initiative:

> I take it upon myself to attend personal development courses wherever I'm teaching, because every school I teach at has some form of professional development. [I have

> gone] to conferences, on my own. At one school in particular, they have a really good Center for Effective Teaching, and great courses offered at reasonable times during the day. So I can attend those to hone my technical skills, as well as active learning skills and even recently achieving a certificate in "Hybrid Teaching."

As with every corner of the staff hierarchy, adjuncts have their own "special needs." Ideally, adjuncts will be offered trainings tailored to their unique challenges and concerns. In Teresita's example, she had to seek professional development opportunities at other colleges given that BCC lacked professional development workshops tailored to her needs. As we have seen, colleges would do well to tailor their professional development to respect the needs of their adjuncts. These and other specific dynamics of adjuncts' preferences, stresses and professional needs are demands that, from my reports, are not being met.

Many of the participants reported extensive professional development at other schools but not so much at BCC; a good measure of the professional development workshops trainings were mandated (and some adjuncts were paid to attend); however, most of the participants expressed that professional development closely tailored to adjunct needs was lacking. We might imagine adjunct-tailored professional development to address strategies for networking at their schools, strategies for streamlining instruction, and tax strategies for those working at numerous organizations, just to mention a few. Only Snow Lotus was able to give a pointed example of bespoke professional development for adjuncts: a workshop on how to apply for unemployment. As Jacobs (1998) states, colleges need to "invest in [adjuncts' unique] capabilities, instead of treating them like replaceable parts."

One of the most crucial aspects of professional growth that must constantly be uppermost is this: Practices and programs that are good for full-time, tenured professors are likewise good for part-time, adjunct instructors. Quality teaching is a premium upon which all educational

success is grounded. The drive for highest-quality instructional practice, or the so-called "best practices," must include all tiers of the instructional hierarchy.

## Mentoring

Mentoring is a time-tested strategy for many fields. Education is one of those fields where mentor programs are considered a work in progress and under development. Regardless of the particular faculty member's teaching specialization or cultural background, all adjunct faculty members can benefit from working with one or several mentors throughout the first year(s) of working at a new campus given that each campus has its own values, norms, mission, and priorities. However, institutions face challenges regarding mentor program implementation due to budget cuts, faculty workload, and increased demand on time and resources (Kezar & Kezar, 2003). The majority of established mentor programs in California, such as one based at a community college district in the city of Los Angeles, were aimed at future faculty without prior paid teaching experience in a higher education setting (Project Match, 2017). Although Project Match is a commendable mentoring program, it, unfortunately, excludes adjunct faculty members from participating. Without a strong mentoring program, it is difficult for adjuncts to know the policy, procedures, and climate of the institution as well as get timely and practical teaching advice/support.

**Formal vs. informal.** Mentoring comes in different forms, such as formal and informal mentoring. Tierney's and Bensimon's (1996) organizational socialization model calls for the importance of looking at both formal and informal mentorship. Formal mentorship can range from an assigned full-time faculty mentor, the department chair, or a formal New Faculty program. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) stress the importance of equally paying attention to the informal mentoring that occurs much more frequently and harder to capture, such as in the

hallways, mail room, faculty lounge, or outside of campus. Meeting with a faculty member to discuss best practices, campus/department politics, or student support services is an example of informal, individual mentoring that becomes invaluable to new hires and to adjuncts. Colleges should keep in mind this observation: “All institutions and departments have histories. History should not be used to fossilize an institution, but rather to explain how it came to be what it is today” (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, pg. 58).

When the subject of mentoring came up, the participants had more to say about the lack of it than they did about what took place. Natalie, who taught in at least three schools, had no encounters at all with mentorship in her work: “No opportunities for mentoring. I wish there were. Not a lot of campuses offer that mentorship; [Unnamed College B] had an opportunity to, but it was unpaid, so I really couldn't afford [it].”

However, there were some participants who experienced positive mentorship, whether it was formal or informal. In thinking about her mentoring experiences, participant Jennifer reported a supportive atmosphere for mentoring processes at BCC:

> I did [get mentoring]. I found it very useful. I still had a lot of questions. Thankfully, I had quite a few other mentors, I guess, they were very willing to answer questions. I am really appreciative of that, because I had many questions.

Sean spoke about the value of formal mentoring when he noted the following:

> I was very lucky that I had mentors at this particular college that I'd worked with before. I could imagine adjuncts who don't have that, feeling a little lost. Some [full-time faculty] have the intention of, “We're going to guide you. You have so much responsibility. You're not just a part-timer here. You're much more. You are a part of the culture.” That's a keyword. I like that word a lot. “You are ingrained in this culture.”

Alexis spoke of informal mentoring from full-time faculty and fellow adjuncts. This is what she said:

> [The faculty member and I] talked about which classes we're teaching, the types of challenges we have with our students. She's shared her syllabus with me. It was other part-timers who say, "I'm just teaching this class for the first-time. How do you do this assignment? Can I see your assignment?"

Snow Lotus gave voice to the now-familiar adjunct theme of difficulty in scheduling institutional opportunities for mentorship, with her following comment: "Almost every other semester, they mentioned you can shadow a full-timer. It's a schedule [commitment that] doesn't work. The opportunity is there, but it's just the time constraint."

**Evaluations**

Similar to mentoring, performance evaluations by supervisors are also of paramount importance to provide adjuncts timely and valuable feedback on their skills, answer questions, provide encouragement, and support. Evaluations usually take place the first semester and every three years thereafter. The evaluation consists of either the department chair or co-chair conducting a classroom evaluation followed by a student evaluations. Then, the evaluator privately meets and shares class observation notes/report as well as student comments. The adjunct faculty receives a satisfactory or unsatisfactory mark. After the evaluation is completed, there is really no more feedback and support provided to the adjunct. The participants that I interviewed had been evaluated at least once, with the exception of one participant. The perception was that they were supposed to be evaluated every 3 years, but that was not happening on a regular basis. Again, Natalie admitted to having no encounters at all with evaluations in her work: "I haven't had any formal evaluations. Hopefully that's coming. I know some schools review you at some point. But I don't think BCC has informed me about that."

Sean spoke at length about getting responses from both faculty and students. He stated that it knocked his ego around a bit, and he described evaluations thus: "The evaluations weren't

all positive. I'll never forget one time, I carry this with me still, and students said, ‘average teaching style,’ which stung me so bad.”

The administration’s involvement was “high-touch,” with a department chair visiting Sean’s class to give frank feedback that Sean valued. This adjunct’s experience speaks to the higher impact of mentoring and evaluation that department chairs provide. His adjunct status partly determined how he took in his chair’s critique, as Sean’s following comment shows:

> I got valuable feedback from that chair. He seemed to care about my growth as an educator. He was honest. […] It wasn't all praise, but he did have a lot of praise in the evaluation, which I took as encouraging. It's nerve-wracking, especially for an adjunct, when you're evaluated, probably at every level--but especially as an adjunct. You're temporary.

Edward gave an articulate description of a rich process with both online and in-person elements, shaped by familiarity with his peers. He stated: “In the past, the feedback has been provided by department chairs and co-chairs, and that's where I get most of my feedback.”

The role of mentors, whether done formally or informally, is to transmit professional and cultural information that will help adjuncts better understand the institution, department, and navigate the system. The role of evaluations is to provide timely and continuous feedback to faculty, reinforce departmental values, and promote professional growth. The goal is for departments and institutions to self-assess the current evaluation practices to ensure that quality learning opportunities are available for adjuncts (Langen, 2011). Tierney and Bensimon (1996) nicely summarize the importance of mentoring:

> The point, then, is not simply that mentoring is needed, but that we need to consider how the role is assumed so that new faculty are not mentored hierarchically, but instead are allowed to develop their own voices and academic identities” (pg. 59).

**Professional Voluntary Contributions Beyond the Classroom**

The depth and frequency to which adjuncts offer contributions to their institutions above and beyond classroom responsibilities is noticeable when they engage in scholarly research, literary publications, conference presentations, committee participation, and advising campus-wide student clubs. Such professional voluntary contributions point to numerous socialization indicators:

(a) It suggests whether the adjunct so integrated into the institution that they see its health and growth as an expression of their own health and growth;

(b) It suggests whether the adjunct perceives the institution as so intrinsically valuable as to warrant their voluntarism;

(c) It suggests whether the school's social profile is emotionally warm, open, and/or validational to the adjunct, such that he or she responds readily to opportunities or invitations for extracurricular activity, or that they are drawn to initiate such activities themselves.

If adjunct instructors perceive the institution as so intrinsically valuable as to warrant their voluntarism, they are also likely to feel the setting is worthy of their ambition. As Daniel reflected: "I think BCC is doing its best when it comes to facilitating for adjuncts and students. I wouldn't want to be as invested as I'm willing to be if it wasn't for the core values of this school." His experience highlights how adjuncts are overridingly guided by affective rather than materialistic factors when seeking employment: i.e., they would not likely work hard to advance themselves in a given institution because of salary needs alone.

The adjuncts' place of employment, BCC, was generally open to professional voluntary work. There was a good amount and quality of additional professional opportunities offered by

BCC. This study's sample did not describe significant problems with being sufficiently integrated. Generally, "the schools' social profile was sufficiently warm, open and/or validational," as one participant described it. However, about half of the study's participants did not "express openness and initiative to participate in the opportunities their schools provide."

Despite that, about half of the interviewees reported involvement in school investments beyond their teaching obligations. These included submitting papers at conferences, representing the adjunct polity at union meetings, holding office in a school's academic senate, attending department meetings, being part of a writing club, and/or earning a teaching certificate. As discussed in the previous theme, adjuncts are commonly members of the "creative class" and have a clear potential to make innovative contributions to the commonwealth of a school. At the same time, their stated need for autonomy, their tight schedules, and their joy in limited social investments continue to act as ceilings to expanded involvement.

All of these factors were given witness when the subjects spoke about their contributions to the school society beyond the responsibilities of the classroom. Sam reflected this enthusiasm for opportunities of socialization and growth outside of the classroom in his statement:

> I continue to attend department meetings. I'm now working with [full-time] faculty. I work in a First-Year Experience program. I have reached out. I've asked teachers in the department questions regarding programs. I've also, in the department meetings, tried to take a more inclusive approach. At first, I was very in the background. I didn't feel like I could speak. Now, I'm very assertive.

Teresita reported presenting a paper at a conference, titled "Teaching in the Trenches," and Mia spoke of attending the California Teaching English as a Second Language Conference. As part of a strategy to distinguish himself in pursuit of a full-time teaching job, Sam spoke of planning to create an "animation writing class" for his students (but eventually decided to abandon it).

Committees were a major topic. Numerous interviewees reported participating on them, being invited to do so, or saying that they were a challenging fit for their schedules. Among the most actively involved, Mia threw light on institutional opportunities, institutional attitude, and adjunct initiative when she said, "All of the department meetings… are so helpful." She described a positive social atmosphere, saying, "I never felt like, 'Oh, because I'm an adjunct, I'm not allowed to talk,' or anything like that…because the department is so open with each other, it was easier for me to ask questions."

Jennifer made reference to the schedule challenges of taking part in committee activities, when she stated the following: *"*I think especially when it comes to committees, we're short on time. Even though a lot of us would like to participate. I think sometimes it's hard to fit it into the schedule.*"* Sam concurred, saying: "Other energies are often not given out by the adjunct because they don't have the time or the energy." Nonetheless, his own participation was vigorous.

Teresita spoke of her school's committee representation process as being not only closed to adjuncts, but unfair in its representational structure, speaking to the binary of institutional opportunity:

> As far as curriculum and governance, I don't really think that adjuncts are typically invited to do that. I know that we can have a person who represents the adjuncts, and one person might speak for us as a whole. But, you know, you have one person who represents over 50 adjuncts and the decisions that they're making. I don't think that's enough. I think there should be a broader [discussion]. I think in a campus that has over 20 adjuncts there should be a committee of adjuncts to support the adjuncts. And we don't have that at BCC.

Sean provided a useful summation for understanding this theme, by reflecting on numerous factors—speaking of institutional structure and attitude, as well as adjunct time constraints and initiative—when he commented:

> I drive from one city to another, very far. I live in the middle but it's still hard to commit. I've committed to one. I've gone to all those department meetings. I think they're very open even at this level.

The ways in which part-time faculty might be invited to contribute, and the ways in which they might imagine contributing are, of course, endless, as in the responses of the participants. Adjunct instructors' possibilities for other contributions is enriched when their social ties to an institution and the opportunities offered by their institutions are both rich. Individual-to-institution engagement can be said to happen more consistently and to unfold over a longer period of time for adjuncts' colleagues who teach full-time. Their feeling of investment and ownership usually exceeds that of adjuncts. Adjuncts generally interact with their institutions on less-regular schedules than full-timers (Jaggars & Stacey, 2014). These sketchy schedules decrease the likelihood of chance encounters with administrators and fellow faculty (adjuncts linger less at their institutions' high-traffic 9-5 hours). Similarly, adjuncts commonly work for shorter or more irregular terms of employment; hence, they have less occasion to simply fall into, or spontaneously initiate, additional professional initiatives. Mindful of this sketch of how social dynamics can affect faculty participation in activities beyond teaching, we're wise to consider ways of encouraging and creating professional opportunities for adjuncts.

## Theme 5: Racial Socialization

The initial research design of this study did not include this topic, but it surfaced meaningfully in the interviews, so this theme is presented here in transparent recognition of it as a noteworthy aspect of socialization. An analysis and comparison of the participants' demographics, primarily race and ethnicity, revealed an interesting finding: the two main perspectives or reactions to assistance for adjunct instructors fell into two main categories. One was participants who basically believed that, "We feel marginalized"; and the other group felt,

"We Don't Need Handling." The participants in the former group identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group, such as Latinx and Asian, and they mostly felt excluded when compared to their White counterparts. All the White participants, who happened to fall into the second group, felt generally supported and felt that they belonged in BCC's culture. Despite this, the second group nevertheless voiced their opinions about certain unfair policies in place and their distaste for what they seemingly saw as departmental politics. As Sam described this situation: "It's an extraordinarily fucked system. Most of it is bullshit!"

A close examination of these two separate groups—"We Feel Marginalized" versus "We Don't Need Handling"— reveals a noteworthy finding based upon the comments of the participants in each group. For both groups, the interview process, onboarding, and orientation were too unstructured, inefficiently structured, or non-existent, and the former group expressed that the values and norms of BCC and the department were unclear. This group expressed a feeling of disconnection; the beginning of their adjunct teaching career was a trial and error experience. The second group expressed that, although they didn't get an orientation, it was fine to them. They were nonetheless able to navigate the system and find the necessary information when it was needed. They attributed their success to being savvy and to their self-initiative. The perceptions of the two groups regarding why they felt as they did was an unexpected finding, considering how their different views paralleled their ethnically different backgrounds.

In essence, the White participants, or those who took initiative, primarily felt that the ongoing socialization at BCC, though clearly lacking in thoroughness and uniformity in application, was fine as it was. In fact, the lack of formal socialization processes did not pose a detriment to those in the "We Don't Need Handling" group, but rather represented something

that they felt was not needed anyway. Being able to be effective without such a formal structure in place seemed to be a plus for these participants.

Another result of sub-par socialization and professionalization, according to participants in both of these groups, involved relief at not having many other obligations that would arise from structured training processes. Some of the participants, including respondents from both groups, often celebrated their being able to avoid extra social and vocational obligations. This ultimate lack of resistance to their limited exposure to systematic integration into college faculty life revealed this positive result: relief at avoiding extra job-related obligations. The social conditions of engaging in adjunct instruction are advantageous and appropriate for people of a certain temperament or at least the participants have learned to use the system to their advantage. In the case of Snow Lotus, she said, “My participation is limited at BCC. As adjuncts we know we live on the fringe; therefore, it is hard to be loyal to the institution or its administration.”

This comment resonated with many of the other ethnic minority participants who essentially said that they instead professed their loyalty primarily to faculty unions or campuses/departments that exerted a visible effort to welcome and invite adjuncts. Others, like White participant Lisa, suggested adjunct instructors are at ease with the social dynamics of their role and do not need much more support or socialization to enjoy their jobs. She stated: “I think there is that misperception that we need to sort of be handled, and we're fine.”

The comments the participants in these two different groups made regarding mentorship and evaluations also varied. The White participants by far said they had positive experiences with mentorship and evaluations. For example, Lisa recounted this: “I was mentored by several colleagues. No problem there. Good connection with colleagues.” Other participants, Sam and

Edward, echoed Lisa's comments. For the ethnic minority faculty, their experiences ranged from positive, to moderate, to nonexistent.

Interestingly, though, both groups across the board expressed the need for a better *formal* mentoring system at BCC. Because the sample size of White participants in this study is relatively small, no generalizations can be made whether race and ethnicity play a role in having a positive experience in mentorships and performance evaluations. However, as one of the White participants suggested, it really boils down to adjunct instructors being savvy and proactive, since the campus and department will provide support when requested. Although this perspective on supportiveness does have merit, it is equally important to recognize that new adjuncts should not be expected to orient themselves by figuring out what questions to ask or how to navigate the system. Very few adjunct instructors feel, as the participants in this study expressed through their body language, confident enough to ask questions or initiate relationships with full-time faculty or administrators.

Typically, the first years of being hired to teach are characterized by high levels of stress, with many demands and mixed messages regarding expectations (Austin, 2003; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). This makes the transition into the academy and college department stressful given to the lack of clarity in expectations or feedback and inadequate preparation about what faculty status entails. For faculty of color in particular, additional support is needed to address these issues as well as other issues of racism, tokenism, and hostile campus environments. Support efforts for faculty of color have been found in meaningful mentorship relationships and it leads to helping them to better learn how to navigate institutions as faculty. Peer groups and connections with other faculty of color via professional networks on- and off-campus has also helped to foster a sense of belonging and agency (Cole, McGowan & Zerquera, 2017).

The fact that ethnic minority faculty in this study uniformly felt marginalized when compared to their White counterparts highlights that different groups experience socialization differently. It speaks to the institutional climate and its assumptions that all faculty have access to proper socialization and adequate resources. The distinct experiences led to several speculations at best: (a) White participants had more teaching experience and learned to navigate the system better; (b) White participants felt more at ease being proactive in seeking necessary/valuable information; (c) White participants had more cultural, skill, and social capital at their disposal due to their White privilege and class; and (d) White participants, because of their extensive teaching experience, grew resilient and were able to focus on the positive aspects of teaching as a coping mechanism to circumvent the inherent unpleasantries of being left mostly on their own. Regardless of how this is interpreted, this is an interesting finding that merits its own research, perhaps using critical race theory.

Overall, institutions should not assume that *all* adjuncts experience socialization in the same manner. For example, colleges can find ways to connect adjuncts of ethnic minority backgrounds with one another so as to create an emotional support network where there are shared social and cultural experiences. Having such a network can assist with formal and informal mentoring; it can make ethnic minority adjuncts feel less invisible, isolated, or lonely. Networking of this nature can also bestow important, symbolic gestures of recognition, respect, and acceptance. The narratives in this study additionally provide academic deans and department chairs with insight into how new adjunct faculty of color experience institutional culture, spaces, and norms. It is notable that findings in this study demonstrated how informal support had a more prominent impact than did formal structures (e.g., assigned faculty members as mentors, and orientations).

## Summary

The socialization experience of adjunct faculty is not uniform. As this study shows, there are reported accounts of adjuncts finding full integration into the communal life of their colleges: they participate energetically in campus-wide gatherings of various kinds, are richly involved in professional development opportunities, and sometimes even exercise meaningful influence in faculty-guided decision-making bodies alongside their tenure-track peers. This offers an ideal picture; however, this dissertation, like other evidential presentations on the topic, points to the other side of adjunct life, too. For more than half of the participants in this study, the social support they received from their employing institutions underserved them, diminishing their feelings that their needs for professional esteem, fair wages, healthcare, and full social integration were met as readily as for their tenure-track peers. However, a key to the future success of higher education institutions lies in their ability to change part-time teaching into a rewarding, collegial experience (Lyons, 2007). There is every reason to believe that improved working conditions will enhance the overall productivity of the institution (Charfauros & Tierney, 1999).

The initial hiring process, new hire orientation, mentoring, and performance evaluations, however, are areas where administrations can directly influence socialization and professionalization processes and promote the inherent value of professional growth. Besides professional growth, these areas often offer bonding exercises between attendees and the home institution's organizational approaches. Professional development aims to improve employee skill levels, and it usually does so by shaping those skills to properly execute a tailored institutional mission while foregrounding bonding exercises among participants and providing practical teaching resources.

It is well-known that higher education has embraced the role of social uplifter, largely by making responsiveness to individual needs a flagship feature of their campus environments. Indeed, colleges now are roundly criticized for over-stoking students' expectations that they'll be catered to, rather than challenged (Bloom, 1987; Corbett, 2011; Holmes, 2017); however, in the case of their adjunct instructor populations, colleges must improve. Colleges pride themselves in investing time, energy, and money in hiring, socializing, and professionalizing full-time faculty; but those same efforts and investment are lacking for part-time faculty. In the end, both groups equally service community college students. To provide an equitable education experience for all students, it behooves community colleges to revisit their socialization processes and procedures to better address the needs and inclusion of ethnic minority adjunct instructors and faculty of color.

Next, Chapter 5, the final chapter of this study, presents an overall interpretation of the findings, including contradictory results. Chapter 5 also discusses the implications for Research, Policy, and Practice and provides recommendations for future research.

# Chapter 5:

# Conclusion

## Introduction

The primary objective of this qualitative case study was to investigate the socialization and professionalization experiences of part-time instructors of English at a community college in Southern California through in-depth personal interviews and analyses of interview transcripts. The 15 adjunct teachers in the pseudonymous Bridge Community College (BCC) English Department were selected via purposive sampling and snowball sampling, and were interviewed about the ways in which their employing institutions supported, socialized, and professionalized them, including what resources and practices adjunct faculty thought would assist them to integrate effectively into their community college culture. This chapter includes a discussion of major findings related to the literature on the socialization and professionalization of adjuncts in community colleges. The chapter concludes with a discussion of areas for future research, and implications for policy and practice.

This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research question: How are part-time English Department faculty socialized into the culture of a public community college? There were also three subsidiary questions, as follows:

1. How do English adjunct faculty members at this community college perceive and learn their organization's values and expectations within their institution and department for participating as a faculty member?
2. What organizational resources, support, and processes are provided to adjunct English Department faculty members to help them acclimate to their respective campus cultures, norms, and established practices?

3. What helpful socialization strategies would adjuncts provide to assist with the professionalization process at this institution moving forward?

**Interpretation of the Findings**

This research seeks to inform policy and practice in colleges by exploring their socialization and professionalization practices, and how they communicate their norms, values and professional expectations to contingent faculty. I seek to show how part-time faculty "learn the ropes" through formal and informal socialization experiences both at entry and in later phases of their employment. This study was grounded and informed by Kezar's and Maxey's (2016) advice on "thoughtfully responding" to new workers in higher education. McNaughtan, Garcia, and Nehls (2018) found that the largest growth of adjuncts has been in public institutions, such as community colleges. Given that this trend is unlikely to subside, it is critical for institutions and large departments, like English, to better understand the socialization experiences of their adjuncts to find ways of buttressing the existing support.

In the review of the socialization literature, Korte (2007) points out two reasons (among others) that socialization is important: one, because socialization is the primary mechanism for the organization to transfer and maintain its culture; and two, because socialization is a critical mechanism through which employees learn about the social and political norms of the organization. There is little debate that socialization is important, but much of the work on socialization focuses narrowly on a traditional view of learning: the perspective of the newcomer. Socialization has typically been defined as the process through which individuals learn the values, attitudes, norms, knowledge, and behaviors to be accepted into a particular organizational culture, in this case, academia (Merton, 1957; Tierney, 1997; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). However, this definition assumes it is the

responsibility of the individual to learn to fit in. Yet the insiders in workgroups and organizations, such as administrators, department chairs, staff, and full-time faculty, overlook or underestimate the importance of their roles in the socialization process (Korte, 2007).

The socialization and professionalization experience of adjunct faculty is not uniform, as seen in this study. Some adjuncts felt they were fully-integrated into the communal life of the college while others felt as outsiders and undervalued. While their career specialties, path, and teaching experiences varied, each of the 15 participants interviewed shared socialization and professionalization experiences that help to address the subsidiary research questions that will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

**Learning Organizational Values and Expectations**

To answer the first subsidiary research question—"How do English Department adjunct faculty members at this community college perceive and learn their organization's values and expectations within their institution and department for participating as a faculty member?"—it was imperative to look at the initial entry into part-time teaching: the job interview and job orientation process.

**Hiring practices.** This study found that there is a problem with the initial socialization (i.e., lack of real interview process and orientation). A clear finding is that the initial socialization is crucial to inculcate institutions' values, mission, and culture. This phase sets the tone and foundation for adjuncts and promotes a positive welcoming environment. Most (if not all) participants in the study said that their initial experience at BCC (this might not be the case for other institutions in which they served as adjuncts) entailed a rushed, informal interview. Recruiting and hiring practices need to be as consistent and serious for part-time faculty as they are for full-time faculty to ensure high quality instruction and continuity of standards given that

both groups are asked to perform the same teaching tasks. Many of the participants laughed at the rushed nature of the interview process at BCC, particularly when they compared their previous interview experiences with other colleges. At BCC, some were literally hired over the phone, via an email, or after 10-15 minutes of conversation with the department chairperson.

Research on best practices for interviewing and retaining part-time faculty (Pearch & Marutz, 2005; Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1996), suggest incorporating portfolios from adjuncts, including samples of course requirements, former students' work if they've taught before, and letters of recommendation. Besides requiring a portfolio, asking for a teaching demonstration by the candidates would be extremely helpful to gauge the level of preparation the candidates have. Having an established rigorous interview process will send a positive message to adjuncts about the values and expectations of the college and department, thus helping to create a committed pool of adjuncts.

**Orientations.** In terms of participating in group or individual orientations, all the participants in unison said there was no formal orientation at BCC. What constituted an "orientation" was really talking informally to the secretary. They received initial paper work (campus map, payroll) and few received an Adjunct Survival Guide and a sample syllabus along with required textbooks. The information received by the department chair or secretaries (mostly secretaries) was basic information. This area needs to be addressed immediately by department chairs engaging in meaningful interviews and orientations when hiring adjuncts. In short, the participants agreed that there was no effort done by the department nor institution to explicitly share their values and expectations. The participants eventually learned the values and expectations by taking personal initiative to look them up at BCC's website, asking colleagues/staff, or they learned them by chance over time through trial and error.

Orientation strategies have been consistently linked with benefits for new employees and the organization. Acevedo & Yancey (2011) note the following: "New employee orientation (NEO) programs have been shown to socialize newcomers and increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) upon completion. These types of programs are perhaps the most influential piece of an employee's development" (p.349). By providing new adjuncts with a proper orientation, institutions and departments ensure that adjuncts know how they fit into the mission and vision of the institution, which steadily improves retention and engagement in the long run.

BCC has an established a New Faculty one-year orientation program primarily geared towards new full-time faculty. Although adjuncts are welcomed to attend the workshops conducted once a month (but this is only of late), the topics addressed at these workshops do not always apply to adjuncts, and the length of the program itself poses a logistical problem for many of the adjuncts. Therefore, it would behoove the institution to develop an orientation that is shorter in time to accommodate the schedules of adjuncts, include relevant workshop topics for adjuncts, provide a financial incentive, or provide a certificate of completion that can be used for evaluation purposes. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) recommend that the initial entry into an institution should be welcoming and one in which interviewees gain a sense of the norms and values of the institution. The best way of accomplishing this mission is during a robust interview and orientation process.

**Organizational Resources, Support, and Processes**

To answer the second subsidiary research question—"What organizational resources, support, and processes are provided to adjunct English Department faculty members to help them acclimate to their respective campus cultures, norms, and established practices?"—it was

beneficial to look at the continuous organizational socialization (both formal and informal) that occurs thereafter.

**Formal and informal socialization.** This research suggests that much of the learning of the social norms in a community college setting by newcomers takes place informally. The interviews showed that the primary influence on learning the established resources and processes in place was the adjuncts' interactions and relationships with other seasoned adjuncts, staff, and full-time instructors. It is the quality of these interactions and relationships that either strengthened or thwarted the acquisition of knowledge and access to proper campus resources.

Based on the participants' comments, planned and ongoing socialization opportunities did exist in the form of attending and participating in department monthly meetings when their schedules permitted. Most of the participants felt comfortable enough to attend a department meeting but only after having taught several semesters. Some participants did express that there had been opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions in social events, but they did not always feel comfortable attending them or such events were not of high priority, at least. One of the participants, however, did say she did not feel comfortable attending social functions or department meetings because there was a lack of a warm welcoming. In general, the participants in this study agreed that, although they are not excluded or prohibited from attending meetings and social functions, they are certainly not strongly encouraged to do so by the department chair or by the institutional climate. Therefore, the attitude the participants took was to focus on teaching their classes and leaving campus right away. In order to learn about the resources, new initiatives, and support services, it is important for adjuncts to be informed and be kept in the loop.

Although the participants accepted how business is conducted at BCC, they did note that they were not allowed to participate in departmental decision-making matters (except represented by their adjunct representative), vote in committees, or participate in governance. Some expressed a sense of relief while others felt marginalized. This finding does not reflect the advice proposed by Friedlander (1980), who argued that when adjunct faculty are included in the decision-making process, professional development, and social activities, these opportunities contribute to their integration into the culture of the institution.

Participants expressed that the campus and the English Department at BCC provided a collegial environment, but not so much a nurturing one. Because of such an environment, many took the self-initiative to reach out to *some* full-timers and socialize with them in the hallways or outside of campus at times. For those who did, they found it helpful. This is not to say that some of the participants did not take note of moments when they felt unwelcomed or "as a second thought" by administrators and/or their full-time peers. Although these moments were jarring, uncomfortable, and disappointing, the participants felt strong enough to ignore unwelcoming comments, feelings, or policies. This reminded them as to why they don't involve themselves in the campus politics and that their only purpose is to teach community college students. These findings of feeling marginalized are consistent with the literature findings (Roueche et al., 1996). It is disheartening to see many adjuncts feeling neglected and unsupported by their tenure-track, full-time colleagues, although part-time instructors appear to be permanent fixtures in higher education and are expected to assimilate into the culture of the institution.

**Mentoring process.** Both the literature and the results of this study suggests there is a real opportunity to intentionally reach out to adjunct faculty in ways that engage them in activities that can improve their teaching experience at BCC. Through mentoring and meaningful

evaluations, adjuncts can get valuable information on their teaching performance. Mentoring needs to be offered to adjunct faculty to assist them in making a positive difference in their teaching performance. Now, more than ever, this is important given the passage of AB705 and Guided Pathways. Lyons (2007) adds that a key to the future success of higher education institutions lies in their ability to change part-time teaching into a rewarding, collegial learning experience.

As seen by the participants' comments, a formal mentoring program was nonexistent at BCC although in other campuses it did exist. Informal mentoring was more common, and the participants noted that those moments occurred by speaking with the secretaries, fellow adjuncts, a *few* full-time faculty, and/or by attending social events and committees. The majority of the adjunct faculty participants commented on the limited opportunities for mentoring and personal interactions with full-time faculty. They perceived the limited interactions with full-time faculty as one of the barriers to their socialization into the departmental culture and to their full integration as members of the departmental community.

Although these mentoring opportunities were limited, the participants acknowledged that they would be willing to participate if more formal opportunities for mentoring existed. However, when informal mentoring occurred, the participants expressed a sense of gratitude, finding it extremely beneficial. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) mention that the "kinds of advice often needed require multiple mentors" (pg. 55). The adjuncts in this sample acquired their knowledge, resources, and information from multiple mentors. Although this seems a perfectly fine alternative, Tierney and Bensimon (1996) argue that it is troubling to know that the "burden of seeking sound advice falls on the individual who needs it" (pg. 55). Although adjuncts are capable of seeking the information they need, it is not necessarily fair or appropriate for the

institutions and departments to only rely on adjuncts' adeptness. As it is, adjuncts are already taxed with commuting to and teaching at multiple campuses without proper compensation, support, and resources at times. Therefore, to ameliorate their stress and to better support adjuncts, institutions could provide at least one mentor per department or create a feasible system where adjuncts can readily acquire the mentoring they need.

**Performance evaluation process.** Besides mentoring, performance evaluations of the teacher are also a way to provide constructive feedback and build rapport with adjuncts. Conducting evaluations is standard practice because the value lies in the beneficial and practical comments adjuncts can receive from an evaluator. The evaluation process serves as a barometer for adjuncts in terms of their professional growth as seen by peers and students. Performance evaluation is a process in place to socialize and professionalize adjuncts; evaluations promote professional development/growth by emphasizing the development and evaluation of skills rather than the dissemination of information.

When asked about the evaluation process, the responses from the participants in this study varied from having a positive experience to a satisfactory one or being left with wanting more feedback. At least 5 out of the 15 participants walked away feeling satisfied with the evaluation process; they received encouraging feedback from both the evaluator and students. The rest of the participants either felt it was just a satisfactory process or that it was lacking substance. Satisfactory in that the evaluation served its utilitarian purpose—fulfilling the department's evaluation requirement but it lacked substantive feedback. One of the participants said that she preferred to read students' comments because they were more useful in helping her see the areas that needed improvement. She found the evaluator's feedback basic and rushed plus the evaluator was only basing the evaluation on 15 to 20 minutes of classroom observation.

Faculty evaluation should be used to support faculty development, growth, and self-improvement. Unfortunately, as seen in some of the comments made by the participants in this study, evaluations are used solely for summative purposes rather than formative purposes (Pearch & Marutz, 2005).

**Professional development.** During the interviews, the 15 adjunct faculty painted and described their socialization into the culture of BCC as both normal yet colorless. Specifically, they described the training and development opportunities the campus offers as helpful as they expressed their willingness and openness to participate. They agreed that there was always room for them to improve as instructors, and most viewed opportunities for training and development as valuable, provided they were available to attend. In fact, availability for the workshops and the social activities on campus were described by the adjunct faculty as very challenging. Overall, while they viewed these opportunities as beneficial, many could not benefit from them because they conflicted with the times during which they could be available on campus to participate. Several of the adjunct faculty members had full-time employment elsewhere or were commuting to and teaching in different institutions that made it virtually impossible to attend the few professional development offerings at BCC.

The data gathered from the study revealed that, on the one hand, professional development offerings existed, although not regularly, on the BCC campus for all faculty. This finding was an indication of the importance the campus placed on the faculty's ability to perform their job and to comprehend the goals, values, and mission of the campus through these professional development offerings. But on the other hand, this study also found that although there were some professional development opportunities offered to all faculty by BCC, there was

not a consistent effort at providing trainings and professional development programs that would contribute to adjunct faculty professionalization, in particular.

This finding supports what the literature shows that many institutions do provide a wealth of training and resources for full-time faculty, but, these schools often ignore the fulsome needs of their adjunct instructors, creating a gap in educational equity (Grubb & Associates, 1999). However, research shows that adjunct faculty members who attend professional development opportunities, who meet regularly with other faculty and department chairs, who attend trainings, and who are welcomed and made to feel more a part of the campus community seem to be more effective teachers (Morphew, Ward, & Wold-Wendel, 2018; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). As discussed in Chapter 2, Tierney's and Bensimon's theoretical frameworks, under role continuance, calls for institutions to provide organizational resources, support, and processes to assist in the ongoing faculty's socialization. Some of the organizational resources and processes suggested by Morphew, Ward, and Wold-Wendel (2018) were formal and informal mentoring, constructive evaluations, and professional development.

Socialization is a long-term process, described as a learning process that may last beyond the first year and lasting the length of one's career (Korte, 2007; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). That is why promoting, encouraging, and creating opportunities for ongoing socialization are crucial for community colleges and departments. Socialization does not take place in a vacuum. It's a three-prong endeavor: the individual's experience, the organization's effort, and an interactive/collaborative approach where there is mutual influence of the individual and the organization (Korte, 2007).

Interestingly enough, although the literature (Kezar & Sam, 2010a; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) for at least three decades has called for and argued that

meaningful and intentional socialization practices are necessary for the long-term stabilization of higher education, particularly at the community college level, many colleges are still struggling with this issue. In fact, according to Tierney and Bensimon (1996), the existing culture of the organization has a strong effect on the socialization and integration of the members of the organization. It is imperative for administrators to heed the counsel and invest time and resources to better providing an initial and ongoing socialization for adjuncts.

The culture of the institution influences the extent to which faculty are socialized into becoming an integral part of the institution. Understanding the socialization process is important because it is "one of the primary ways in which organizational culture is transmitted and maintained" (Louis, 1980, p. 151). In fact, effective socialization into the culture of the institution can produce employees who identify with and embrace the values and the norms that exist in the organization. When institutions adopt a "positive, fair, and investment-oriented stance toward part-time faculty" (Gappa & Leslie, 1997, p. 289), they only strengthen themselves. Moreover, because typically adjunct faculty are not short-term labor, the need for adjunct faculty to learn the norms, values, and practices of the institution is essential so that they can fully participate as organization members.

## Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

Previous research studies that have been conducted on the use of adjunct faculty on college campuses have focused on the utilization of adjunct faculty, the impact of adjuncts on student success, and their job satisfaction. However, only a limited number of studies have focused on the socialization and professionalization opportunities available to adjunct faculty in community colleges and their sense of connection to the institution and the academic department in which they teach.

This study has provided information about how adjunct faculty in the English Department of a public community college—the pseudonymous BCC—are socialized into the culture of their college campus, and what organizational programs and activities are in place for their socialization and professionalization. In addition, the adjunct faculty's perceptions about how they are socialized into the school's culture, and about the resources and processes in place by the institution and department, have been examined. The findings of this study provide useful information to administrators in higher education to help them better understand adjunct faculty's concerns relating to their socialization and professionalization experiences. Further, this study highlights the need for administrators to plan more strategically for adjunct faculty development and inclusion in the everyday life of the institution. Finally, the findings from this study may encourage administrators on the BCC campus, and other institutions of higher education, to examine their current policies and practices aimed at the socialization and professionalization of adjunct faculty. Finally, these findings are likewise instructive for community leaders, college trustees, legislators, and other decision-makers whose policies and actions impact the educational systems of our society.

Based on the findings of the study, some of the implications and recommendations for practice and policy are as follows:

**Interview Process**

Establishing a consistent and meaningful interview process is vital. The findings in this study revealed that there was no consistency across the board when it came to hiring. Hiring was done at a whim, based on filling immediate vacancies, and/or based on having a good connection with chair. For that reason, it is essential that the hiring of part-time faculty be done with rigor akin to that found in the hiring of full-time faculty. As the comments of the participants showed,

processes for hiring part-time faculty vary across districts, colleges, and even divisions and departments. Some colleges have set practices when it comes to hiring part-time faculty, including set interview questions, while others are more casual in their approach. Some colleges require a teaching demonstration, for example, while others do not. Therefore, it is a good idea to have consistent hiring policies whenever possible, and for department chairs to use this opportunity to share the college's mission, values, and expectations, while listening to the adjunct's values, expectations, and teaching philosophy. Having a meaningful exchange of ideas will certainly help to determine if the college and/or department is a good fit.

**Orientations**

Offering and scheduling a comprehensive orientation process for all adjuncts, not only at the institutional level, but also at the departmental level, is paramount to the socialization of adjuncts. Given that adjuncts are the new majority, campus and departmental processes need to be in place to ensure that all new hires are introduced to the role, focus, values, and mission of the institution and department. As one of the participants suggested, a mandatory orientation every year, such as in the Fall, where guidelines and other useful information and resources are shared with adjuncts would definitely be useful. Orientations could include presentations from the Dean of Students, registrar, financial aid, admissions, disability services, counseling services, and student health services. In addition, it could include the deans and department chairs who could answer questions regarding academics. Equipping adjunct faculty with necessary information on the institution's and department's values, mission, logistics, and academics would improve their teaching, help with the adjunct's socialization, and increase a sense of commitment.

**Mentoring Program**

One of the findings in this study was that particularly relatively new adjuncts felt that they have not truly found a place at the college. Mentoring new faculty is an essential part of the experience of retaining new hires at a college. However, as it may be one of the most important means by which to retain new hires, it is imperative that colleges and departments do what they can to provide adjunct faculty with guidance and assistance in navigating a new college system, and to make them comfortable with the college and their students. Having an established formal mentoring program would provide an opportunity for adjuncts to learn and discuss the college's and department's culture, allow them to express concerns or frustrations, and provide valuable information, protocol to follow in case of emergencies, and resources to meet the needs of different population of students. Informal mentoring would also increase the chances to meet and share their teaching experiences with senior adjunct faculty and full-time colleagues. Assigning a mentor or two to each adjunct faculty member would give them someone to whom they could go with their questions. A mentor would keep them up-to-date with changes in the department as well as answering their specific questions. Having formal and informal, group and individual mentoring provide the new and seasoned adjunct faculty with a sense of community and may be the first line of defense against losing a new faculty member.

**Ongoing Professional Development**

Organizing and offering training specifically for adjunct faculty would be of great assistance, as expressed by the participants in this study. BCC offers workshops on everything from the basics of teaching to more advanced topics. These workshops are already offered to all faculty. Possibly, they could be offered in the evenings, weekends, online, or at times when adjunct faculty who work full-time could attend. Adjunct faculty said they wanted training on

discipline-specific topics as well as on the basics of teaching, pedagogies, curriculum, and teaching methods. The literature also indicates training on basics are needed. A study of adjunct faculty at a Florida college (Lyons, 1996) found that part-time instructors require, primarily given the passage of AB705 and Guided Pathways, adequate training in fundamental teaching and classroom management skills and both initial and ongoing professional development. Implementing some of the suggestions from this model may help to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment for the entire college/university community.

The goal is to help adjunct faculty members feel more connected. Investing in their future could benefit not only adjunct faculty members, but the college and the students as well. When faculty members feel more connected, they possess higher commitment levels to the college where they teach and there is less job turnover (Morphew, Ward, & Wolf-Wendel, 2017). If adjunct faculty members participate in the professional development opportunities, they could learn teaching and classroom management practices, best practices to meet the demands of students, how to appropriately response to different types of emergencies, protocol to follow in case of emergencies, and all of this information could be taken back to the classroom. The college benefits by retaining adjunct faculty members and creating class cohesiveness. Moreover, a strong professional development program may lead faculty members to possess a stronger organizational commitment, which could help with accreditation and student learning outcomes.

**Contract Provisions and Accreditation Standards**

Collective bargaining agreements can enhance the work lives of contingent faculty. Contract articles covering faculty responsibilities and salary can ensure that all adjunct faculty work is counted as hours worked, including office hours, committee work, professional

development time, and other responsibilities beyond the classroom. They can ensure that completed preparation is counted, even when a class is cancelled prior to, or in the early weeks, of a term. Unions can utilize their wellspring of collective power and the current initiatives, AB705 and Guided Pathways, to advocate towards better working conditions and campus cultures that is more intentional about supporting learning and success (Kezar & DePaola, 2018).

Revisiting accreditation standards would certainly provide leverage to adjunct's rights. Accreditation agencies should require stronger standards regarding the employment of part-time faculty. For example, accreditation agencies can ask colleges and universities to provide ongoing faculty development, comprehensive evaluations, financial incentives, meaningful hiring and orientations for all contingent faculty.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study has implications for future research in community colleges and other higher education institutions. Following are some specific recommendations for additional research based on the findings from the present study.

1. Findings from the study indicated that mentoring needs to be supported by campus administration and is desired by adjunct faculty in this study although no formal mentoring program is currently in place. The availability of adjunct faculty is a major issue in planning any programs aimed at their socialization. Therefore, more research should be conducted to examine the effectiveness of online mentoring and other alternative to face-to-face mentoring aimed at matching adjunct faculty with full-time faculty or other experienced adjuncts.
2. This study has provided information about how adjunct faculty are socialized into the

culture of a public community college campus. A similar research study should be conducted with looking at successful orientation programs at other community colleges that includes the voices of adjuncts in different disciplines and that of administrators. The interviews would be to determine their thoughts on what programs and practices they found effective. This information should assist administrators when planning future socialization programs for new adjunct faculty members.

3. The findings of this study also revealed that the socialization literature surrounding adjunct socialization is not nuanced enough. A surprising finding that came out of this study is how the intersectionality of race, gender, and social class might have an impact on the socialization of adjuncts. Cole, McGowan, and Zerquera (2017) argue that there is room to further discuss the specifics about "how those values and norms are transmitted and how and how those values and norms are experienced by disempowered agents," such as part-time faculty of color, in the academy. I recommend that future research be conducted to look into what extent race and gender impact the socialization experiences of adjuncts. Using longitudinal data and critical race theory in conjunction with socialization theory can provide a lens and understanding of how adjuncts negotiate their class/gender when employed at different institutions.
4. Given the many state and campus-driven initiatives affecting community colleges and the teaching lives of faculty, I recommend that future research be conducted to examine how new state initiatives, such as AB705, the new funding formula, and

Guided Pathways, impact the type of socialization and professionalization provided by campuses as well as the hiring process of adjuncts.

5. Since the participants in this study mentioned loyalties to unions rather than being loyal toward the institution itself and/or its leaders, perhaps the topic of union membership for adjunct instructors can be studied. Does belonging to a union early in one's adjunct career help solidify the feeling of acculturation, especially when other socialization and professionalization measures sporadically instituted by the colleges themselves fail, as this present study showed? Union membership, especially if it involves active interactions with veteran and tenured community college faculty, can help form bonds and integrate adjunct teachers into the professional academic culture, all leading to a better work environment and greater job satisfaction overall.

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# Appendix A:

## Interview Protocol

Organizational Socialization (Phase 1: Initial Entry)

1. What is the primary reason you work as an adjunct at this institution? What were you goals in becoming an instructor?
2. Describe your hiring, interview, and orientation experience.
    a. Have you participated in a formal orientation program? If yes, please describe your experience. Was it a single or group orientation? Were you provided any written material? Was it useful?

Phase II of Organizational Socialization: Role Continuance

3. What did you know about institutional and departmental policies and values when you first got hired?
    a. How has your knowledge of policies and values changed since? Would you describe some of the policies and practices relating to the development and retention of adjuncts?
    b. How do you continue to learn what the college expects of you as an adjunct?
4. Describe any activities/programs/resources that the institution and department offers all faculty. What professional development opportunities offered that are specifically geared towards adjuncts faculty by the institution or department do you know about and participated in?
    a. Do you feel more committed to the department as a result of participating in these programs/activities?

5. What type of resources provided by the department and/or institution are available in dealing with classroom dynamics (i.e. Gender, LGBTQ students, classroom disruptions, natural disasters or emergencies, DSPS students, race/racism, immigration).
6. What type of feedback about your teaching did you get and from whom?
    a. How do you respond to student and chair evaluations?
7. Have there been any opportunities for mentoring by full-time faculty? If yes, have you availed yourself of them? If not, why not?
8. What opportunities have you had to serve on college committees, participate in decisions about textbook selection, or in decisions involving the curriculum? Governance?
9. Please discuss your relationship with other adjuncts and full-time faculty at this college. Have there been opportunities for you to participate in any campus social gatherings or social functions? How was your experience, if you did attend one?
10. Describe how the college or department actively solicits the views of adjunct faculty members. How has the college or department addressed the recommendations/concerns of adjuncts?
11. Overall, do you feel that you have you mastered the required tasks of your job as adjunct faculty member? Why or why not? Do you feel you are part of the culture at this college?

<u>Recommendations: Moving Forward</u>

12. What departmental characteristics assisted in your development? What did you find helpful and would recommend administrators to implement to make adjuncts feel more integrated into the local community college?

Optional Follow-up Questions:

1. Tell me a story about a conflict you experience(d)

2. Tell me a story about how people interact here.
3. Tell me about the type of resources you do or don't have access to, such as computer lab, photocopying machine, an office/office space, etc..? How does this make you feel? Why?
4. If you were in charge, what would the socialization of adjuncts entail?

## Appendix B:

## Preliminary Background Questionnaire

Pseudo Name:

**1. How many years total have you been working as a part-time adjunct?**

a. 8 or more

b. 8 to 5

c. 4 to 3

d. 2 to 1

e. Fewer than 1

**2. What is the highest degree you have attained?**

a. Bachelor's

b. Master's

c. Ph.D. or Ed.D.

d. Other terminal degree (e.g. M.B.A., J.D.)

e. Other (Please describe)_____

**3. What is your age?**

a. 20-29

b. 30-39

c. 40-49

d. 50-59

e. 60 or more

f. Prefer not to say

**4. What is your gender?**

a. Female

b. Male

c. Other:_____

**5. What is your ethnicity/origin? (REVISE QUESTION)**

a. Hispanic, Latino

b. Black, African American

c. American Indian or Alaskan Native

d. Asian

e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

f. White

g. Some other race or origin:

**6. How many classes did you teach at ELAC as a part-time adjunct during the 2015-16 academic year? Adjunct: A faculty member who is assigned to teach on a course-by-course contingency basis (Pearch & Marutz, 2005).**

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3 or more

d. 11 to 15

e. 16 or more

f. None

**7. During the fiscal year, did you teach at more than one institution? Across all institutions, how many classes did you teach?**

a. 2 or fewer

b. 3 or more

c. 6 or more

**8. How many online classes did you teach at any institution during the 2015-16 academic year?**

a. 0

b. 1

c. 2

d. 3

e. 4

f. 5 or more

**9. Which type of classes did you teach most often (please check only one)?**

a. Introductory classes (English 101, 102, 103)

b. Advanced courses (English Literature courses and humanities)

c. Remedial courses (English 19, 21, 28)

d. Other (please describe) _____

**10. Did you have a full-time job separate from your part-time adjunct teaching during the 2015-16 academic year? Did you work in addition besides teaching? If so how many hours**

a. Yes; _____hrs/week

b. No

## Appendix C:

## Participant Information

| *Name* | *Years at College* | *Gender* | *Race* | *Age* | *Courses Taught* | *# of Institutions* | *# of Classes* | *Held FT* Job* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Sean* | 2 to 1 | Male | Hispanic, Latino | Mid-30s | Introductory | 2 or fewer | 2 | No |
| *Paola* | 2 to 1 | Female | Hispanic, Latino | Late-20s | Introductory | 3 or more | 3 or more | No |
| *Edward Stanton* | 8 or more | Male | White | Mid-50's | Introductory | 6 or more | 3 or more | No |
| *Mia* | 2 to 1 | Female | Middle-Eastern | Late-20s | Introductory/Remedial | 2 or fewer | 3 or more | No |
| *Jennifer Avila* | 4 to 3 | Female | Hispanic, Latino | Early-30s | Remedial/Developmental | 2 or fewer | 3 or more | Yes |
| *Lisa* | 8 or more | Female | White | Early-50s | Introductory | 6 or more | 3 or more | No |
| *Sam* | 8 or more | Male | White | Early-60s | Introductory | 2 or fewer | 2 | No |
| *Teresita* | 8 or more | Female | Hispanic, Latino | Early-50s | Introductory | 6 or more | 3 or more | Yes |
| *Fernando Magallanes* | 4 to 3 | Male | Hispanic, Latino | Mid-40s | Remedial/Developmental | 6 or more | 3 or more | No |
| *Daniel* | 4 to 3 | Male | Hispanic, Latino | Early-30s | Remedial/Developmental | 2 or fewer | 3 or more | No |
| *Snow Lotus* | 8 or more | Female | Asian | Early-40s | Introductory | 6 or more | 3 or more | No |
| *Natalie* | 2 to 1 | Female | White | Early-30s | Introductory/Remedial | 2 or fewer | 3 or more | No |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Alexis* | 4 to 3 | Female | Asian | Early-30s | Introductory/Remedial | 3 or more | 3 or more | No |
| | | | | | | | | |
| *Jane Doe* | 2 to 1 | Female | Hispanic, Latino | Late 20s | Remedial/Developmental | 2 or fewer | 3 or more | Yes |
| | | | | | | | | |
| *Fidel Gomez* | 8 to5 | Male | Hispanic, Latino | Early-40s | Introductory | 3 or more | 3 or more | No |

**Note: All participant names are pseudonyms. Introductory courses are defined as freshman composition. Remedial/Developmental courses are basic skills courses below freshman composition.**

***FT refers to Full-time work outside of institution.**

Table 1

*Sample Demographics*

| Variables | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| Race | | | |
| Latino | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Asian | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| White | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Experience | | | |
| 1-2 years | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 3-8 years | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 8 & more | 2 | 3 | 5 |

*Note*: Participants self-selected their gender, race, and years of teaching experience at BCC.