ADJUNCT FACULTY: PERCEPTIONS OF MOTIVATION AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHING ADULT LEARNERS

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Abstract

Adjunct faculty members have become predominant within North American colleges and universities as the individuals tasked with teaching non-traditional learners. The post-secondary education industry has seen the adjunct population more than double between the years 1967 and 2000 ("Trend," 2000; Wilson, 1998). The institutions have utilized these individuals for a variety of reasons, but the two most significant benefits are that they afford the institutions the ability to be flexible as enrollments fluctuate and, as part-time employees, they provide an economic benefit to the institutions. Although there has been a significant increase in the population, there remains very little empirical data regarding the adjunct faculty population. This study explored and attempted to understand the lived experiences of adjunct faculty who teach non-traditional learners through the lens of the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation utilizing a qualitative methodology. Findings of this study include the emergence of two superordinate themes including motivations and challenges and eight subthemes. The subthemes were students, environment, intrinsic value, goals, cost, information sharing, staying connected and technology. The results of this study are relevant to several stakeholders within the post-secondary education community including adjunct faculty, administrators, human resource departments and non-traditional learners. In particular, post-secondary education administrators might use this study’s findings to better understand the motivations and challenges that adjunct faculty face, human resource departments can use the information to develop better hiring and onboarding practices, and non-traditional learners could use this information to advocate for high quality, well trained adjunct faculty members.

Keywords: adjunct faculty, non-traditional learners, expectancy-theory of motivation, motivation, post-secondary education
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: The Research Problem ................................................................. 5
  Problem of Practice ......................................................................................... 5
  Significance .................................................................................................. 5
  Research Questions and Goals .................................................................... 7
  Position Statement ....................................................................................... 9
  Organization of This Document ................................................................. 9

Chapter 2: The Conceptual Framework and Literature Review ...................... 11
  The Framework .......................................................................................... 11
    Figure 1: Expectancy-value model of achievement motivation ............... 13
  Literature Review ....................................................................................... 17
    Adjunct faculty and the institution ......................................................... 20
    Demographics ......................................................................................... 21
    Utilization of adjunct faculty members ................................................ 22
    Experiences and job satisfaction ........................................................... 23
  Motivation, Challenges and Assimilation of Adjunct Faculty .................... 25
    Challenges in hiring adjunct faculty ....................................................... 27
    Effects of hiring adjunct faculty ............................................................ 31
  Non-traditional Learners and Adjunct Faculty .......................................... 34
  Challenges to faculty ................................................................................ 36
  Andragogy .................................................................................................. 37
  Conclusion ................................................................................................ 39

Chapter 3: Method and Research Design ....................................................... 41
  Methodology .............................................................................................. 42
    General Strategy of Inquiry .................................................................... 42
    Approach ................................................................................................... 44
    Participants ............................................................................................... 45
    Participant Profiles .................................................................................. 46
    Site ............................................................................................................ 49
    Data collection ........................................................................................ 49
    Data analysis ........................................................................................... 53
    Validity and credibility .......................................................................... 55
  Protection of Human Subjects .................................................................... 56
  Conclusion ................................................................................................ 56

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis .................................................................. 57
  Motivation .................................................................................................... 58
    The students .............................................................................................. 59
    The environment ....................................................................................... 62
    Intrinsic value .......................................................................................... 64
    Goals ......................................................................................................... 66
    Information Sharing .................................................................................. 67
Challenges .............................................................................................................................70
  Staying connected .............................................................................................................71
  Technology ........................................................................................................................72
  Costs ..................................................................................................................................75
Conclusion .............................................................................................................................77

Chapter 5: Discussion of Research Findings ........................................................................80
  Motivation ............................................................................................................................83
    The students .....................................................................................................................83
    The environment ..............................................................................................................84
  Valence ................................................................................................................................85
    Intrinsic value ..................................................................................................................85
    Goals ................................................................................................................................86
    Cost ..................................................................................................................................86
  Expectancy ..........................................................................................................................87
    Information sharing .........................................................................................................87
    Staying connected ..........................................................................................................88
    Technology .....................................................................................................................89
Limitations of the Findings ...................................................................................................90
  Intellectual Goals ................................................................................................................91
  Implications for Practice ....................................................................................................91
  Implications for Future Research .......................................................................................94
Conclusion .............................................................................................................................96

References .............................................................................................................................98

Appendix A  Table displaying superordinate and subthemes from the analysis 107
Appendix B  Figure 2: Expectancy-Value model as applied in this study 109
Appendix C  Lakeland College Institutional Review Board approval 110
Appendix D  Northeastern University Institutional Review Board approval 111
Appendix E  Participant Recruitment email 112
Appendix F  Unsigned participant consent document 114
Appendix G  Primary interview questions 117
Chapter One: The Research Problem

Problem of Practice

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Specifically, the study sought to understand the motivational factors that adjunct faculty members experience in fulfillment of their responsibilities as educators of non-traditional learners. For the purposes of this study, lived experiences were expressed as first-hand accounts and impressions of living as an adjunct faculty member of a private not-for-profit institution located in the Midwest.

Given the steady rise in both the number of adjunct faculty members in degree-granting institutions, as well as the increase within the population of non-traditional learners, it is important that such experiences be recorded and understood to ensure that any challenges to the motivations of other adjunct faculty members may be identified and addressed. It is important to give particular attention to the lived experiences and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members because these experiences and motivations directly contribute to their performance as educators, and thus, to the performance and achievements of their non-traditional learners.

Furthermore, there is very little academic literature regarding the lived experiences and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Therefore, representing them in academic endeavors and academic literature enriches the discourse not just in this particular field of interest but also in related fields of interest such as education, teacher motivation, non-traditional teaching styles, and even part-time work and management.

Significance
The increase in utilization of adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners combined with the lack of empirical research giving them a voice has led to the population being seen as a commodity and economic resource to post-secondary institutions rather than an important contributor to the academic success of non-traditional learners (Ehrenberg, 2002; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Jacoby, 2001; Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Tyree, Grunder, & O’Connell, 2000). Over the past thirty years the number and usage of adjunct faculty has dramatically increased yet little empirical research has been conducted exploring the adjunct faculty members’ lived experiences or motivational factors within the non-traditional learner classroom from the adjunct’s perspective. In 1967, 20% of all faculty in the U.S. were employed part-time (Wilson, 1998). In the year 2000, 43% of all faculty positions were part-time or temporary equating to over 425,000 individuals working as adjunct professors ("Trend," 2000).

Lyons (2007) reported that approximately 600,000 part-time faculty members are regularly employed in North American colleges and universities. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) indicates that there has been a change in the nature of employment among faculty, which has resulted in a predominately contingent faculty (Curtis & Jacobe, 2006). Feldman and Turnley (2001) acknowledge that the use of adjunct faculty will continue to increase in the years ahead. This continued increase can be attributed to several factors. For instance, new for-profit universities rely mostly on adjunct faculty members. Also, there has been an increase in the creation of non-tenure track positions. Additionally, colleges and universities try to remain flexible as enrollments ebb and flow (Feldman & Turnley, 2001).

There has been considerable journalistic commentary provided by full-time faculty, university administration, and adjunct faculty as well as a few national satisfaction surveys, such
as the U.S. Department of Education surveys, pertaining to adjunct faculty (Bunn, 2012; Domino, 2012; Pearman, 2001; Tyree, Grunder, & O'Connell, 2000; Washington, 2012). There remains a glaring lack of empirical qualitative data gathered directly from adjunct faculty pertaining to their lived experiences and motivational factors tasked with educating non-traditional learners.

**Research Questions and Goals**

This study was conducted to expand the understanding of the first-hand accounts, impressions and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members tasked with educating non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. This research was completed through engagement in collaborative, action, or “empowerment” research with practitioners or research participants (Cousins & Earl, 1995; Fetterman, Kaftarian, & Wandersman, 1996; McIntyre, 2008; Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2001; Whyte, 1991). The use of qualitative research in particular contexts make it especially suitable for collaborations with practitioners (Patton, 1990; Reason, 1994). The use of qualitative research in this study was essential for giving voice to a group of adjunct faculty members. By utilizing qualitative methodology, adjunct faculty members at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest were given the opportunity to express their impressions and provide first-hand accounts of their experiences working with non-traditional learners and impressions of how their roles impact the lives of others.

This study provides empirical data representing the lived experiences and motivations of adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. The primary research question of this study was *What are the lived experiences of adjunct faculty who educate non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest?*
The sub questions of this study were (a) What motivates adjunct faculty to educate non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest? (b) What challenges to their motivation do adjunct faculty face when teaching non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest?

Through the findings and publication of this study, the researcher documented the lived experiences of adjunct faculty who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. The researcher identified motivational factors that influence adjunct faculty members to continue to engage in educating non-traditional learners and uncovered how they make meaning of those experiences.

Intellectual goals can derive meaning for participants, help to understand the context within which the participants act, identify unanticipated phenomena and influences, understand the process by which events and actions take place, and develop causal explanations (Maxwell, 2005). The intellectual goal of this research was to derive meaning of the adjunct faculty members’ lived experiences as they educate non-traditional learners, adding further depth and dimension to the field of study. This research informs future research on the topics of adjunct faculty, non-traditional learners and motivation theory.

The primary goal of this research was one of practice, seeking to provide empirical information to college and university administrators demonstrating a value beyond the economic benefit of using adjunct faculty in non-traditional learner classrooms. In doing so, it was the researcher’s goal to generate change surrounding the negative stigma that surrounds adjunct faculty. This was accomplished by identifying motivational factors and the lived experiences of adjunct faculty who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Finally, this study sought to fulfill a personal curiosity surrounding the topic of adjunct faculty motivation to educate non-
traditional learners due to the researcher’s own experiences as a college administrator and adjunct faculty member.

**Position Statement**

The researcher has been working in post-secondary education administration for the past 15 years in roles of progressively higher levels of responsibility. The researcher’s current role is director of a regional center at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. Her role was taken into consideration when conducting the study. Over the past five years, the researcher has also been an adjunct faculty member within the evening, weekend and online program teaching business and management courses in the online and classroom based formats. This study is pertinent to the researcher’s job as the director of a regional center at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest due to the professional relationships and responsibilities she has for supporting and providing a comfortable, effective and productive environment for the adjunct faculty who teach at her location. As an adjunct faculty member, the researcher found this study of personal interest and hoped to determine if there is a similarity between her lived experiences and those of others who teach for the institution.

It is relevant to note that adjunct faculty members who teach at the regional center where the researcher is the director were not able to participate in the study. The researcher acknowledged that her position could create a bias with those participants.

**Organization of this Document**

The remainder of this document includes three sections: theoretical framework, literature review, and research design. The following section presents the theoretical framework that informed the investigation. The research was grounded in the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation. Thus it explains people’s choice of achievement tasks, persistence with
those tasks, vigor in carrying them out, and performance (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The research focused on the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation as the framework and as such required an understanding about how the theory has been studied and utilized in prior research. The third section of this document contains the literature review, placing this research in a broader context. The literature review section contains three streams of literature. These include adjunct faculty and the institution; motivation, challenges and assimilation of adjunct faculty; and non-traditional learners and adjunct faculty.

Following the literature review is a section dedicated to the use of qualitative research methodology. This study used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), specifically the ideological case-study approach. IPA was developed and described by Smith et al. (1995; 1997; 1999). IPA has been used to develop in-depth descriptions of human experience among adjunct faculty who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. After explaining the data collection and analysis procedures, the methodology section provides detail about how the validity and credibility of the study was maintained. The final component of the methodology section includes a description of how the researcher has considered the ethical implications for the study participants.
This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Specifically, the study sought to understand the motivational factors that seven adjunct faculty members experience in fulfillment of their responsibilities as educators of non-traditional learners.

The problem of practice addressed in this study focused on the motivational factors and lived experiences of adjunct faculty tasked with educating non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. As such, it is appropriate that the research was grounded in theory relevant to motivation and achievement.

The expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation was used as the theoretical framework for this study. The expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation was chosen for this study as it incorporates the cognitive aspects of an individual’s motivation for pursuing a task or goal. The researcher propositioned that adjunct faculty were motivated to educate non-traditional learners for reasons other than financial gain and as such it was necessary that the theoretical framework integrated a cognitive aspect for the research.

The Framework

Theorists in the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation attempt to explain people’s choice of achievement tasks, persistence with those tasks, vigor in carrying them out and performance (Atkinson, 1964; Eccles et al., 1998; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). According to Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, Lens, and De Witte (2010), the expectancy-value theory was first introduced by Vroom in 1964. It is a model that takes into consideration the cognitive aspects of an individual’s motivation for choosing a particular goal.
It considers both the individual’s expectations regarding achieving the given goal, and the valence (positivity or negativity) which he or she attaches to the particular goal.

According to Van den Broeck et al. (2010), it is important to understand the valences or “values” taken into consideration in the expectancy-value theory. According to the researchers, these valences that individuals attach to a particular goal arise from the personal values that the individual possesses. In turn, these values are the products of that person’s particular set of contexts, experiences, and culture (Eccles et al., 1983).

The theorists who have developed this framework include Atkinson, 1957; Eccles et al., 1983; Eccles and Wigfield, 1995; Wigfield and Eccles, 1992. Theorists in the expectancy-value tradition believe that individuals’ choices, persistence and performance can be explained by their beliefs about how well they will do on the activity and the extent to which they value the activity (Atkinson, 1957; Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield and Eccles, 1992). If an activity like teaching others is important to an individual (value), and he or she believes they can competently perform this activity (expectancy), then they are more inclined (motivated) to seek out and engage in teaching than if they did not feel it was important and if they did not feel they would do well at it. Vroom (1964) defined each force on behavior as the product of likelihood that an outcome will be achieved and the valance of the outcome, the latter being determined by its instrumentality in bringing about other outcomes. Markus & Nurius (1986) added to the research by posing the possible selves theory, which suggests that motivation to achieve is influenced by how people think about their potential and their future.

Atkinson (1964) proposed the first formal model of achievement motivation based on expectancies and values. Eccles et al. (1983) proposed a model of achievement performance and
choice, and studied it in the mathematics achievement domain. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) refined the expectancy-value model of achievement motivation see Figure 1 below.

*Figure 1: Expectancy-value model of achievement motivation*

This model incorporated the work of other motivational theorists including Bandura, 1997, Covington, 1992; Crandall, 1969; and Weiner, 1985 to integrate considerations of social and psychological influences on choice and persistence rather than cognitive perceptions alone. Within this model both the positive and negative costs of engaging in activities are taken into consideration when determining the relative value of tasks and the probability of success (Eccles, Lord, Roeser, and Barber, 1997).

This framework has been applied and found to be useful in a variety of fields of interest and application. There is a long history of psychological theory and research related to human
motivation which falls outside the scope of this study (see Eccles et al., 1998 for a comprehensive review of motivation theories). Prior investigations of the expectancy-value theory have been conducted with adults suffering from schizophrenia and with children and adolescent participants with respect to their academic achievement (Bechtold, 2001; Choi, Fiszdon, and Medalia, 2010; Eccles and Wigfield, 1995; 2002; Kao, 2000; Kerpelman, Shoffner, and Ross-Griffin, 2002; Markus and Nurius, 1986; Wigfield and Eccles, 2000; 2002).

In a study by Choi, Fiszdon, and Medalia (2010), the researchers used the expectancy-value theory to attempt to help individuals with schizophrenia cope with their psychological disorder, and to create lasting learning effects. The researchers theorized that if their participants understood the value of learning goals and the possible effects which learning outcomes would have on improving the means by which they cope with and manage schizophrenia, then perhaps the participants would exert more effort in achieving the learning outcomes. They also theorized that the amount of perceived self-competency that their participants had would positively and significantly correlate with how successful and long-lasting the effects of the learning tasks would be for the participants.

The study conducted by Choi et al. (2010), revealed that an interrelationship between motivation, expectancy, and value was supported by both the data and the analyses. First, the researchers found that the expectation of the participants, that they would be able to complete a learning task, was the most significant determinant of success and duration of the effects of the tasks. Even if the participants showed little interest in the learning task or did not understand how the task could improve their situation, the mere belief that they could accomplish the task evoked greater motivation and persistence in achieving the task and already yielded significantly beneficial results. Second, the researchers found that expectancy was significantly and positively
correlated to the value placed on the learning task. When participants believed they could accomplish a task successfully, they gave it more importance and it became more valuable to them.

These findings by Choi et al. (2010) were echoed in a study by Nagengast, Trautwein, Kelava, and Ludtke (2013). According to the researchers, the expectancy-value theory has always emphasized a synergistic relationship between the two factors of expectancy and value. This emphasis means that when an individual expects to be able to perform a task successfully, he or she also values the task relative to other tasks. This understanding is applicable even within individual studies. In their study, the researchers varied expectancies and values for homework tasks among 511 secondary school students (Nagengast et al., 2013). The researchers found that when the expectancies and values for certain tasks are manipulated over time, the correlations between expectancy and value remained relatively stable.

Eccles et al. (1983) conducted three longitudinal studies which utilized this framework. These studies included (a) an examination of how gender differences impact achievement beliefs and values about mathematics and English (Eccles, Wigfield, and Blumenfeld, 1993; Eccles et al., 1989, (b) a study of how the transition from elementary to junior high school influences children’s beliefs and values about different academic subjects, sports, and social activities, and (c) a 10 year study of how children’s achievement beliefs and values change through the elementary and secondary school years. Wigfield (1994) considered Eccles et al.’s (1983) model in his discussion of how achievement goals are conceptualized in the model and conceived by other motivation researchers.
The existing research provided the theoretical groundwork in the development of a sound research project that linked the adjunct faculty member’s motivational factors for teaching and his or her lived experiences, expectancies and valences within the expectancy-value theory. According to the expectancy-value theory, motivation is controlled by both expectancies and values. This means that an individual is more likely to choose a particular goal, exert more effort in achieving it, and persist in its achievement if the person (a) believes that he or she can actually achieve the goal, and (b) values the given goal (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). According to scholars, this relationship between expectancy and value is often synergistic. It was the hypothesis of the researcher that adjunct faculty are motivated to teach non-traditional learners due to their lived experiences in and out of the classroom.

Through the lens of the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation, seven adjunct faculty were interviewed with the proposition that they have some expectation of their abilities to be successful and they place value on their role as educators tasked with educating non-traditional learners and as such are motivated to take on such a role. The researcher used the attributes of the expectancy-value theory to develop interview questions broad enough to allow the interviewee freedom to answer, but focused enough to derive in-depth and meaningful answers. The researcher developed interview questions linked to ability, task difficulty, academic and professional preparation, intrinsic value, utility value, attainment value and costs.

The expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the psyche of the participants to gain a deep level of understanding about the topic of adjunct faculty motivation. The use of the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation allowed this research to demonstrate how expectancies and values influence a range of achievement-related behaviors. The use of the framework provided strength to the study as it
offered a perspective and depth to the topic of adjunct faculty motivation for educating non-traditional learners that had not been gained through prior quantitative research studies. The theory framed the research as interplay between the lived experiences of seven adjunct faculty and the motivation factors that influence their decision to teach non-traditional learners. The strategic use of the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation allowed the researcher to explore the cognitive aspects of the individual’s motivation for choosing a particular goal or task. In this research, this manifested itself in the person pursuing and persisting in the role of adjunct faculty member.

According to the researchers, the values that individuals attach to a goal arise from personal values which are the products of the persons set of contexts, experiences, and culture (Eccles et al., 1983). Therefore, through an examination of the lived experiences of adjunct faculty, the researcher discovered the value that seven individuals place on the task of pursuing a career as an adjunct faculty member. In applying Vroom’s model and ascertaining expectancies and valences the research identified the individuals’ motivation for choosing a goal (Vroom, 1964).

**Literature Review**

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of seven adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Specifically, the study sought to understand the motivational factors that adjunct faculty members experience in fulfillment of their responsibilities as educators of non-traditional learners. Given the steady rise in both the number of adjunct faculty members in degree-granting institutions, as well as the healthy increase of the population of non-traditional learners, it was important that such experiences are recorded and understood to ensure that any challenges to the motivations of other adjunct faculty
members may be identified and addressed. It is important to give particular attention to the lived experiences and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members because these experiences and motivations directly contribute to their performance as educators, and thus, to the performance and achievements of their non-traditional students. Furthermore, there is very little academic literature regarding the lived experiences and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Therefore, representing them in academic endeavors and academic literature enriches the discourse not just in this particular field of interest but also in related fields of interest such as education, teacher motivation, non-traditional teaching styles, and even part-time work and management.

There is a unique bond between the adjunct faculty member and the non-traditional learner. This bond has developed as more institutions serve non-traditional populations through alternative course delivery options such as evening, weekend and online courses for which the institutions hire adjunct faculty to teach. At a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest, the majority of the student population is non-traditional learners who are served by the evening, weekend and online program. Within this program, the majority of the faculty members are classified as adjunct. There is a different classroom dynamic and different expectation of the adjunct faculty members because they are teaching non-traditional learners. It was necessary to establish the connection in this study between adjunct faculty members and non-traditional learners to fully investigate the motivation of the population.

The literature review focused on three streams of literature. The literature streams include the institution and adjunct faculty; motivation, challenges and assimilation of adjunct faculty; and non-traditional learners and adjunct faculty. The first stream contains a discussion of adjunct faculty members including a definition, demographics, a discussion of the steady rise
in usage, and a discussion of their experiences and job satisfaction. The second stream focuses on motivation and the challenges to motivation including assimilation and sense of belonging as well as the effects of utilizing adjunct faculty. This stream is presented in a debate about the motivational opportunities and challenges that adjunct faculty encounter. These opportunities and challenges include the desire to teach, inclusion in the academic environment, insecurity of the job, low pay, and isolation of the position. The final stream of literature presented discusses non-traditional learners. This stream identifies demographic information, motivation for continuing their education, barriers they face in continuing their education, challenges non-traditional learners pose to faculty, and a brief discussion of andragogy.

Studies have established that the population of adjunct faculty members has been growing, and that an increasing number of institutions have become reliant on adjunct faculty members to provide quality education. While adjunct faculty members bring practical expertise to the classroom, hiring them has its limitations and challenges, both to the institution, and to the adjunct faculty members themselves. Along with this increase among adjunct faculty members, studies have also emphasized an increase in the population of non-traditional learners who have a unique set of needs that must be addressed by post-secondary institutions. Hence, the motivations of adjunct faculty members when providing instruction for non-traditional learners are important factors for consideration, when attempting to understand the experiences, challenges, and merits of adjunct faculty teaching non-traditional learners.

The next section of the literature review provides definitions and demographic information of adjunct faculty, the key components of the relationship between the adjunct faculty and the institutions, and a survey of prior research conducted on job satisfaction of adjunct faculty. Following that section is a review of the literature as it pertains to the
motivation, challenges and effects of hiring adjunct faculty and the final section is a discussion of non-traditional learners and the bond that they have with adjunct faculty.

**Adjunct faculty and the institution.** Adjunct faculty members are those educators at degree-granting institutions who are not employed full-time by the institutions (Heriot, Simpson, & Stephenson, 2012; Tipple, 2010). Often they are practitioners first, whose careers focus on the application of the field or discipline in which they provide instruction. Adjunct faculty work part-time, and they usually do not have the same workload and extra responsibilities as the regular faculty. According to Heriot et al. (2012), adjunct faculty members usually teach from one to six classes in a given academic year.

According to Heriot et al. (2012), the number of adjunct faculty members has increased in recent years. Their study pointed to adjunct faculty members comprising only roughly 22% in the 1970s. In the 1990s, however, the number grew to around 46%. As of the latest count by the National Center for Education Statistics (2008), 48% of faculty members in post-secondary-level institutions are now composed of adjunct faculty members. Therefore, it is safe to point out that adjunct faculty members are somewhat common in post-secondary education.

While many adjunct faculty members are practitioners in their fields, this is not always the case. According to Purcell (2007), people find themselves teaching as adjunct faculty members for different reasons. Sometimes it is their own career choice, and sometimes it is the choice of the college or university that employs them. Purcell (2007) pointed out that many adjunct faculty members actually aspire to become full-time faculty members in their respective colleges and universities. Furthermore, there is an immense diversity among those who hope to become full-time faculty members.
Concerns surrounding adjunct positions also surfaced within the research such as the uncertainty surrounding the issuance of teaching contracts from term-to-term. Some individuals are lucky enough to have year-long contracts for teaching, while others teach on a course-to-course hiring system. Compensation varies greatly by institution. According to Purcell (2007), some adjunct faculty members receive salaries equal to the lowest salary grade of full-time faculty members, while others receive less than a fourth of this amount.

According to the American Federation of Teachers (2010), adjunct faculty members have different goals for becoming members of an institution’s faculty. Half of all the adjunct faculty whom the federation surveyed reported that they were quite content teaching part-time, and in fact preferred it to teaching full-time. On the other hand, 47% of all the individuals whom they interviewed reported that they much preferred to be teaching full-time as tenured professors. Interestingly, the desire to work full-time seemed stronger among respondents under the age of 50. According to the federation, 60% of adjunct faculty members under the age of 50 much preferred to work full-time. They also stated that almost half, or 46%, of all the respondents had previously sought full-time teaching tenures in educational institutions.

**Demographics.** The American Federation of Teachers (2010) reports in their national survey that adjunct faculty members were split relatively evenly between the sexes, with 52% being male and 48% being female. The division of adjunct faculty employment by institution type reported that 41% taught at two-year institutions, 33% taught at four-year public educational institutions and 26% taught at private educational institutions. It seems then that public institutions are more inclined to employ adjunct faculty members when compared to private institutions.
A significant majority of adjunct teachers are Caucasian. In fact, only 9% of adjunct faculty members are African American, Latino, or Asian (American Federation of Teachers, 2010), while 84% are of Caucasian ethnicity. Among different age brackets, however, the demographics seem relatively split. Of all adjunct faculty members, 33% are aged 18 to 44, while 31% are aged 45 to 54, and 36% are over the age of 55 (American Federation of Teachers, 2010).

Utilization of adjunct faculty members. The National Center for Education Statistics (2008) conducted a survey in 2008 that revealed that 48% of the faculty of degree-granting institutions consists of adjunct faculty members. Tipple (2010) attempted to understand why almost half of all faculty members are classified as adjunct. According to the researcher, adjunct faculty members are usually practitioners of the field or discipline in which they lecture, providing students with real-world perspectives and critical expertise regarding the subject matter. They are able to give students examples of real-life scenarios and situations, and can direct the flow of discussion and instruction toward the achievement of knowledge, which will be pertinent to the students once they become practitioners in their fields.

The unfortunate drawback of this situation is that these practitioners usually do not have the time to become full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty often maintain practices outside of the educational institution, resulting in a lack of time required to perform their duties and responsibilities and attend professional development workshops that regular faculty members experience. Most often, adjunct faculty members, in cognizance of their limitations, opt to hold their classes on the weekends or during evening hours (Tipple, 2010).

Tipple (2010) also mentioned that the number of adjunct faculty members is on the rise partially because of the contemporaneous increase in online students. According to the
researcher, the rise in the number of students choosing to receive instruction for post-secondary education online has increasingly become a key factor in the decisions of individuals to become adjunct faculty members. It is likely that given the constraints on their schedules, practitioners find it easier and less challenging to instruct online students, thus minimizing the need to become full-time faculty members.

In a study on business and entrepreneurship programs, Heriot et al. (2012) identified yet another factor that might be linked to the increase in adjunct faculty. According to their study, the demand for entrepreneurship studies has increased significantly since the 2000s. This means that more and more students have been enrolling in certain courses, and the number of qualified full-time faculty members to fulfill their educational needs has not kept pace with the number of students. Hence, it is necessary for institutions to hire adjunct faculty to ease the demand for educators.

Heriot et al. (2012) pointed out another practical reason why colleges and universities have been enthusiastic to hire adjunct faculty members is because they are more cost-effective. Regular faculty members are paid much more than their adjunct faculty counterparts and require benefits such as insurance, paid leave and retirement funds. Hence, the hiring of adjunct faculty members has been a financially effective way to solve the financial problems and constraints at academic institutions.

**Experiences and job satisfaction.** According to the American Federation of Teachers (2010), job satisfaction was relatively high among individuals who work as adjunct faculty members. In general, the federation found that a majority, or 62%, of the interviewed participants from different parts of the United States claimed to be mainly satisfied with their employment as adjunct faculty members. However, when this data was analyzed and juxtaposed
with other replies from the respondents, various factors and results were discovered. For example, job satisfaction varied greatly between those respondents who sought full-time teaching posts and those respondents who preferred to remain adjunct faculty members. Among those who chose to be adjunct faculty members, 75% claimed to be satisfied with their jobs. On the other hand, less than half, or 49% of the individuals seeking full-time tenure could claim that they were satisfied with their posts and employment as adjunct faculty members.

With the goal of ascertaining the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members within a particular academic institution, Conway (2010) conducted a phenomenological study regarding their performance and the dispensation of their duties. According to the results of the researcher’s study, adjunct faculty members are helped immensely in their roles as educators when given the proper measures that remind them of their capacities and skills. In fact, the researcher greatly recommended using a Teacher Work Sample, which is a document written by the adjunct faculty member outlining their skills and competencies, and his or her teaching behaviors. Such documents allow the adjunct faculty member to better contemplate the teaching process, and give him or her the proper insights on different skills needed for instruction, such as lecturing, preparing aids, and developing tests.

The literature presented regarding the demographic data and the utilization of adjunct faculty provided an idea of who the individuals are that are willing to share their experience and knowledge with non-traditional learners. The information presented regarding the utilization of adjunct faculty offers the opportunity to understand why institutions have gravitated away from full-time academics and are utilizing an increased population of adjunct faculty members. The significant increase in the utilization of adjunct faculty from 22% in the 1970s to 48% in 2008
Motivation, Challenges, and Assimilation of Adjunct Faculty

In a national survey of adjunct faculty members, the American Federation of Teachers (2010) identified the most compelling reasons that motivate members of the adjunct faculty in different post-secondary institutions. 57% of the respondents stated that they were motivated to teach because of a love for teaching itself. These individuals emphasized that they were adjunct faculty members not for any financial gain, but simply because they wanted to teach and found it enjoyable and rewarding despite their working conditions, which a majority of the respondents deemed to be inadequate. This desire to teach, however, seems to be linked to the age of the participants. As the participants grew older, above the age of 50, they were more likely to state that they enjoyed teaching. On the other hand, fewer participants under the age of 50 identified the same intrinsic motivations for becoming adjunct faculty members.

The American Federation of Teachers (2010) also seems to have uncovered a temporal element in the motivations of adjunct faculty members. According to their findings, only one in every four adjunct faculty members has held his or her post for less than five years. Furthermore, a majority of their respondents expected to keep working in the academic institutions that employed them as adjunct faculty members for the next five years or so. This seems to indicate that another motivation for adjunct faculty members is their membership in the academic institution, and their desire to maintain the status quo of their participation therein.

According to Tipple (2010), studies have shown that being adjunct faculty members exposes individuals to certain extrinsic factors that demotivate them. For example, adjunct faculty members often have a sense of insecurity with their standing in the academic institutions.
for which they work. They complain of feeling isolated and alone. Furthermore, they often feel as though academic institutions perceive and treat them as second-class citizens in comparison to full-time or regular faculty members. It certainly does not help that the payment and benefits received by members of the adjunct faculty are significantly less than the salaries received by their full-time counterparts. All these factors, according to Tipple (2010), help to decrease the motivation of individuals who choose to become part-time or adjunct faculty members.

These factors were echoed in a study conducted by Dolan (2011). Using a grounded theory approach, the researcher attempted to understand whether or not adjunct faculty members felt that their motivation for teaching, as well as their job satisfaction and institutional affiliations, would improve if they were to have more face-to-face interactions with their peers and superiors in the academic institution. The results showed three primary concerns among the adjunct faculty that they felt adversely affected their motivation: First, they felt that there was an inadequate depth in the communication they received from their peers and superiors. According to them, it apparently did not matter whether the communication occurred in person or virtually, what mattered more was the depth and the meaningfulness of the conversation. Second, the adjunct faculty members felt that they were not valued in the academic institutions. They felt that the universities for which they worked did not perceive them to be valuable sources of information and knowledge for the students. Finally, they decried the lack of opportunities for professional growth and for the development of their teaching skills and abilities.

Dolan (2011) stressed that it was important for academic institutions to respond to the motivational needs of adjunct faculty members. According to the researcher, it has been well-established that the motivation of faculty members directly affects their performance. In turn,
their performance affects the performance and retention of students in their respective courses and institutions.

**Challenges in hiring adjunct faculty.** In their study, Forbes, Hickey, and White (2010) pointed out that when disciplines need more practitioners, they need to encourage more individuals to focus their academic careers in that given discipline. However, in order to encourage more individuals to engage in that field of study, there must be an ample supply of educators. When there are not enough full-time educators, then adjunct faculty members are hired to compensate for the lack of workforce among the institution’s faculty. However, the role and the concerns of the institution regarding the adjunct faculty do not end with hiring. Retention is usually of great importance to institutions because it minimizes the costs and the effort needed to look for and hire new members. Hence, if institutions were to better retain their adjunct faculty members, then it is in their best interest to promote programs and regulations that increase the job satisfaction of these individuals.

Because adjunct faculty members have different concerns and motivations to become educators compared to regular faculty members, Green, Alejandro, and Brown (2009) identified certain important concerns that must be addressed by the academic institution once they are hired. According to the researchers, upon entry into the academic institution, adjunct faculty members should be given an orientation, which would increase their affinity to and sense of belonging in the academic institution. This would help to prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness.

After this, the academic institution would be wise to provide adjunct faculty members with opportunities to develop their skills and abilities as educators (Green et al., 2009). Adjunct faculty careers are not built around education. Therefore the faculty may not have the skills and
foundations necessary for successful instruction and classroom management. Thus, giving them opportunities to develop skills, would ensure that the students are receiving instruction that leads to academic success. In a study by Forbes et al. (2010), the researchers found that adjunct faculty members attested to being very interested in workshops regarding instructional design and test question development. Furthermore, such opportunities for skill development would also help adjunct faculty members to interact with other faculty members, and to establish ties with the institution. Such interactions would help lessen any feelings of loneliness or isolation to which they are usually vulnerable to because of their position (Tipple, 2010).

Green et al. (2009) also recommended that adjunct faculty members be incorporated into mentoring programs in order to improve their teaching skills and to provide them with guidance from more senior members of the faculty. Such programs would help them develop a healthy academic harmony within the educational institution. Furthermore, it would help them assimilate into the community of educators to which they belong.

Assimilation emerged as an important concept concerning adjunct faculty members. Studies have established that when educators are able to identify with their positions and as part of the educational institution that employs them, their performance and effectiveness soars (Thirolf, 2012). According to Thirolf (2012), despite this phenomenon being well-established, and despite the fact that around 70% of faculty members in community colleges are adjunct faculty members, very little is known regarding how adjunct faculty members develop their identities as educators. In her study, Thirolf (2012) used positioning theory and discourse analysis to understand how adjunct faculty members construct their identities as educators. According to the data and analyses gleaned from the study, adjunct faculty members often experience opposing forces in the development of their identities. Whereas their interactions
with their students contribute positively to the development of their identities as educators, their interactions with their peers are inadequate. In fact, the study showed that the interactions of adjunct faculty members with their peers often resulted in negative effects for their identities as educators.

When adjunct faculty members are hired, an educational institution must also consider existing full-time faculty members. Studies have shown that with increased dependence on adjunct faculty members, the roles of regular faculty members have changed (Pankin & Weiss, 2011). According to Pankin and Weiss (2011), for example, with greater numbers of adjunct faculty members entering institution systems, full-time faculty members have been relegated to fulfilling tasks foreign to the traditional responsibilities of lecturing or facilitating classes. More and more, full-time faculty members are expected to fulfill non-instructional responsibilities. These have included student advisement, curricular development and program coordination. The additional strain placed on full-time faculty may result in the more traditional aspects of their jobs suffering. Furthermore, they may feel a sense of alienation towards the academic institution.

Apart from this, full-time faculty members may also resent the hiring of adjunct faculty members because they view the latter as threats to their salary and compensation. According to Pankin and Weiss (2011), it often happens that when more adjunct faculty members are welcomed to an educational institution, there are fewer funds available for the tenured regular faculty members. These faculty members, having devoted years to the institution, and having power within the institution, may feel threatened and develop resentment against the adjunct faculty members. The full-time faculty members may begin to actively alienate and isolate
adjunct faculty members, and the work and effectiveness of adjunct faculty members may suffer significantly.

Adjunct faculty members also attested to feeling concerned about several factors of their work which were peculiar to them as part-time faculty. For example, according to the American Federation of Teachers (2010), there was a general concern among adjunct faculty members regarding the benefits that they received from their employment and the consequences of these in their lives. 57% of participants indicated dissatisfaction with the size of their salaries. According to the survey respondents, the compensation they earned from teaching on a part-time basis barely covered their living expenses. Second, less than a third of all participants, or 28%, reported that they failed to receive any form of health insurance or health benefits from their employers. Third, only 39% confirmed that they received retirement benefits.

Such conditions have prompted calls for unionization in different studies and pieces of literature (Purcell, 2007). According to the American Federation of Teachers (2010), adjunct faculty members who belonged to unions were more handsomely paid for their services compared to their non-unionized counterparts. Furthermore, they were more likely to receive health and retirement benefits because of the efforts of their unions.

Another challenge faced by adjunct faculty members is job security. June (2012) also referenced a lack of job security, which seems to be common among many adjunct faculty members. Because many adjunct faculty members feel that they are dispensable to the academic institution and that the institution does not value their retention, they are tentative and cautious about their words within the classroom. Their fear of losing their jobs prevents them from exercising full academic freedom and challenging their students the way they see fit in order for the students to learn more effectively and become academically successful. According to the
American Federation of Teachers (2010), 41% of the surveyed respondents reported feeling that their job security was inadequate. However, an analysis of this figure revealed that this group included different significant populations. For example, adjunct faculty for the social sciences and humanities outnumbered teachers from other disciplines. Also, adjunct faculty members in public institutions were more likely to fear a lack of job security, compared to adjunct faculty employed by private educational institutions.

Despite the various difficulties experienced by adjunct faculty members, the increase in their population has begun to yield some beneficial results with respect to their working conditions (June, 2012). According to June (2012), with the increasing number of adjunct faculty members, the groups have become more visible in their respective educational institutions. Such visibility affords them the capacity to assert their needs to the administration and to the faculty hierarchy. For example, when adjunct faculty members become more organized and visible, they are able to assert their desires to be represented in the upper echelons of the institutional hierarchy. They are also able to insist on the proper recognition of adjunct faculty members when they contribute substantially to the institution.

In spite of the fact that in many institutions, full-time faculty members are composed of smaller numbers compared to the adjunct faculty members, the former still comprise most, if not all of the administration. Hence, in most post-secondary institutions, full-time faculty members still occupy the offices of power. This tension between the growing and increasingly vocal groups of adjunct faculty members and their full-time tenured counterparts sometimes hinders any negotiations between the two groups regarding the needs of adjunct faculty members.

**Effects of hiring adjunct faculty.** According to June (2012), when the educational institution does not meet the needs of adjunct faculty members, their job performance suffers.
Specifically, if they do not acquire the necessary professional development through training and workshops to build the skills to become better educators, the quality of instruction that they offer is severely compromised. This is reflected in the academic performance of the students who are under their tutelage.

Even when adjunct faculty members’ needs are fulfilled, sometimes simply the fact that they do not work full-time within the academic institution is detrimental to their success. According to Pankin and Weiss (2011), adjunct faculty members are transient employees in an institution. As such, whatever changes, methods, or teaching which they impart on their students will not be institutionalized and cannot hope to have any continuity. Furthermore, there is greater opportunity for a disconnect to occur between what they teach students and what the students have previously learned. Such scenarios negatively affect the performance of students, and thus, the effectiveness of the adjunct faculty member.

A study by Thyer, Myers, and Nugent (2011) attempted to compare the effectiveness of adjunct faculty members to that of their full-time counterparts. The researchers did not focus on whether or not the needs of adjunct faculty members were met versus the needs of full-time faculty members; they merely wanted to draw out data regarding the perceptions of students on the topic of the effectiveness of adjunct faculty members.

For their study, the researchers gathered evaluations made by students over a span of three years in an academic institution of higher learning. The researchers collected the evaluations of students for 294 classes in social work, of which 181 were taught by full-time faculty members, 63 were taught by adjunct faculty members while 50 were taught by doctoral students. The researchers found that there were no significant differences between the effectiveness of the educators as viewed by the students. Therefore, it could be surmised that
despite the difference in contexts and experiences of adjunct faculty members, they still manage to perform at par with their full-time counterparts, at least from the perspective of the students whom they are tasked to educate.

Adjunct faculty members, given all the barriers set in their paths by the academic institutions, sometimes also cause detrimental effects not just to the students, but to the unity of the institution itself. According to Merriman (2010), adjunct faculty members are usually isolated from the full-time faculty members, and usually do not feel as though they are part of the academic community of the institution that employs them. This is problematic for all because it weakens the organizational health of the institution. In her study, Merriman (2010) explained that among adjunct faculty members, the organizational sense of belonging is usually significantly lessened when compared to the sense of belonging of their full-time regular faculty counterparts.

According to Pankin and Weiss (2011), because adjunct faculty members usually have a lesser sense of belonging to the academic institution, they usually care less about its future when compared to the full-time faculty. On the other hand, because they do not see themselves working permanently for their respective college or university, adjunct faculty members can sometimes be less inhibited in their actions, which might jeopardize the institution for which they work.

Such sentiments were echoed in a study by Ballantyne, Berret, and Harst (2010). The researchers theorized that hiring more and more adjunct faculty members in Franciscan institutions would severely jeopardize the Franciscan identity of these places of instruction.

Ballantyne et al. (2010) found that it was important for even adjunct faculty members to understand and recognize the goals, missions, branding, and identity of a Franciscan institution.
In order to achieve this recognition, it was important that adjunct faculty members be made to feel included within the institution’s communities and cultures. However, the researchers found significant challenges to this. Specifically, they identified a disconnect between how the administration felt about including adjunct faculty members within the communities of the institution, and how the full-time faculty members felt about including adjunct faculty members within the institution community. Such a disconnect and lack of unity would undermine any efforts to make adjunct faculty members feel welcomed or included within an institution’s community. This, in turn, would lead to a lessened sense of belonging, and greater threats to the institutional identity.

Adjunct faculty members face numerous challenges to their motivation and sense of belonging within post-secondary education. These challenges include job insecurity, lack of institutional support, inequities in pay, and potential direct hostility from full-time faculty. Not only do these challenges threaten the institution but they may also have negative effects on the students and retention rates. As such, the studies noted within this literature encourage the reader to give thought and credence to the concerns that confront adjunct faculty.

**Non-traditional Learners and Adjunct Faculty**

Non-traditional learners are sometimes also called adult learners (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011). According to Kenner and Weinerman (2011), non-traditional learners are those students entering college at a later age than the traditional student. While the traditional age bracket of entry into college is between 18 to 20 years of age, non-traditional learners usually enter college to seek post-secondary education at the ages of 25 to 50. This delay in the commencement of post-secondary education among non-traditional learners may be caused by a broad scope of factors. The broad categories of why people may postpone post-secondary education include, but
are not limited to, those who wish to make a career change, those who are returning to the workforce, and those who put off education for a variety of other reasons. Many individuals have been affected by the economic recession of 2008, causing them to lose their jobs. This loss in employment may result in a need to engage in further development through additional coursework in order to rejoin the workforce, to enter into a different field of work, or to acquire a better position than was previously available to them when they had basic entry-level skills. Another reason for postponement of post-secondary education by non-traditional learners is current world events such as war. Many individuals have delayed their pursuit of post-secondary education, choosing instead to serve in the military. However, with the return of veterans, there is also an influx of individuals seeking to reorganize their lives through education, and to fulfill plans that they may have put on hold prior to their tours of duty. The final example worth noting is that non-traditional learners may simply be adults who, for one reason or another, have just recently completed their general educational development (GED) coursework.

By no means is the categorization of non-traditional learners a discrete one. More often than not, being “non-traditional” lies in a spectrum, with students falling somewhere between being traditional and being non-traditional. According to Kenner and Weinerman (2011), several factors may distinguish individuals who are non-traditional learners. First, non-traditional individuals often are financially independent compared to more traditional students who depend fully or partially on their parents in order to fund their post-secondary education. Older, non-traditional learners often have saved up enough money from their careers, or are currently employed, thus granting them financial independence. Second, in relation to this, non-traditional learners are often employed full-time and thus have no time to participate in the regular academic load of traditional learners. Third, non-traditional learners often times study part-time,
during the evenings or during weekends with partial academic loads that prolong the number of semesters that they spend to earn their degrees. Furthermore, given the constraints on the time and schedules of non-traditional learners, they are rarely engaged in the same activities as traditional learners. Whereas traditional learners are usually kept busy by their extra-curricular activities, non-traditional learners usually have barely any time for activities outside of their work and their academic responsibilities. Finally, non-traditional learners may also have families. The past few years have seen an increase in the number of individuals with families commencing their post-secondary academic careers. This situation means that non-traditional learners are usually not found on campus, as compared to regular students who are often housed on campus. Non-traditional learners typically have their own homes and means to support themselves, being part of, or having been part of the labor force.

According to Kenner and Weinerman (2011), many non-traditional learners are familiar with the idea of post-secondary education. In fact, a significant portion of non-traditional learners previously attended a semester or two of college, but chose to discontinue their education. Therefore, in attempting to understand the needs and experiences of non-traditional learners, researchers must be careful not to assume that the primary focus of educators should be to orient them to the college experience or to transition them from the workplace to academic pursuits.

**Challenges to faculty.** Because of the specific context of non-traditional learners, Kenner and Weinerman (2011) prescribed certain attitudes that their educators should have in order to instruct them successfully. First, Kenner and Weinerman (2011) described an awareness of the contexts of non-traditional learners. Specifically, they mentioned that non-traditional learners are usually very confident in the skills they have acquired prior to beginning their post-
secondary education. These skills are usually hard-won and well-earned, and students have every right to be proud of them. However, while they may help non-traditional learners in their jobs or in their everyday lives, these skills may not be the best tools to use in the pursuit of academic goals.

Second, Kenner and Weinerman (2011) argued that because non-traditional learners usually voluntarily return to or enter post-secondary education because of specific goals, it is important that the concepts and information they receive are framed in the proper light. By this, the researchers meant that it is important for educators to always relate concepts and topics to the specific goals that non-traditional learners have. It is important that they understand the value of the concepts to their practical goals; otherwise, they may not pay it much attention.

Third, Kenner and Weinerman (2011) extolled the value of competition and repetition with respect to learning techniques. According to the researchers, the longer the time between secondary and post-secondary education, the more deeply ingrained learning strategies acquired in the real-world will become. Again, the problem arises when these learning strategies are not well-suited to achieving academic goals. Hence, it is important for adjunct faculty to introduce learning techniques that directly compete with the learners’ preexisting strategies, and to repeat these techniques every so often until it is habitual to the learner during academic tasks.

Andragogy. According to Kenner and Weinerman (2011), non-traditional learners require a different form of pedagogy when compared to traditional learners. The term andragogy refers to instructional methods and processes that cater specifically to the needs of adult, non-traditional students. Such methods take into consideration four characteristics of non-traditional learners: First, non-traditional learners value their own self-determination. This means that they can be expected to be acutely aware of their own actions, and have enough discipline to govern
themselves in the pursuit of academic goals. Their independence, confidence, and self-discipline also manifests in a distaste for arbitrarily imposed information. They will often question why certain things are taught, and why they are taught in a particular manner.

Second, because they are older and most likely have had many life experiences, it is quite likely that non-traditional learners will have a well-settled self-concept. They are self-assured because of all their lived experiences from which they draw their own self-identity. This serves to increase their confidence and their self-determination.

Third, it is well established that most non-traditional learners commence or return to post-secondary education of their own volition and by their own means. Hence, they are usually invested in learning and in participating to achieve their academic goals. Non-traditional learners, in general, are more ready to learn when compared to traditional students.

Fourth, in their desire to achieve their goals and in their readiness to learn, non-traditional learners are generally task-oriented. This means that their motivations are usually internal. They are internally motivated to complete tasks to achieve their academic goals.

The literature presented here demonstrates that non-traditional learners seek out opportunities for post-secondary education for a variety of reasons and bring with them a unique set of experiences, values and challenges. This growing population of students values the expertise and real-world knowledge that adjunct faculty share within the classroom. The sharing of examples and experience allows the non-traditional learner to understand theory presented in the textbook by associating it with real-world context. Non-traditional learners bring to the classroom expectations that encourage faculty to challenge the learners and provide an opportunity for open dialogue rather than a standard lecture format.
Additionally, non-traditional learners must balance their personal and professional lives by participation in evening, weekend and online programs. This balance can often be accommodated through the participation in evening, weekend and online programs. The growth in non-traditional learners is one reason why colleges and universities seek out adjunct faculty members who can be flexible with their teaching schedules, provide the expertise that non-traditional learners expect, and welcome a more conversational dialogue within the classroom.

Conclusion

The literature surrounding adjunct faculty continues to emerge as adjunct faculty members comprise an ever growing population of educators throughout North America. This phenomenon is not limited to one type of institution such as community colleges. There is a steady rise in the number of adjunct faculty members employed by different institutions of higher learning (Tipple, 2010). These adjunct faculty members bring with them a particular set of concerns and challenges, as well as real-world experiences and expertise from the disciplines that they teach, from which their students may learn various important lessons (June, 2012).

However, due to their part-time status, adjunct faculty members experience feelings of isolation from the rest of the teaching staff, and are not given as much attention or compensation as their peers. Although the findings on this have been mixed and inconclusive, these challenges and concerns sometimes serve to minimize the effectiveness of the teaching offered by adjunct faculty members.

With the steady rise of adjunct faculty members, there is also a steady rise in the number of non-traditional learners. These individuals venture into or recommence their post-secondary education after a long hiatus from academic endeavors. Given their unusual contexts, they
present a peculiar set of challenges to the faculty who instruct and guide them throughout their academic careers (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011).

There is a unique bond between the non-traditional learner and the adjunct faculty member. This bond has developed as more institutions serve their non-traditional learner populations through alternative course delivery options such as evening, weekend and online courses for which the institution hires adjunct faculty to teach. When serving a non-traditional learner population, there are different classroom dynamics and different expectations of the adjunct faculty members because of the expectations and knowledge that the learner brings to the classroom.

To better understand the adjunct faculty population and offset the challenges experienced by adjunct faculty members because of the contingent nature of their posts, it is important to understand their motivations and how these motivations develop. This study aimed to add to the literature by examining the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members at a private, not-for-profit institution.
Chapter Three: Method and Research Design

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of seven adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Specifically, the study sought to understand the motivational factors that adjunct faculty members experience in fulfillment of their responsibilities as educators of non-traditional learners. There has been a steady rise in both the number of adjunct faculty members in degree-granting institutions, and an increase of the population of non-traditional learners. It is important that such experiences are recorded and studied to ensure that any challenges to the motivations of future adjunct faculty may be identified and addressed. It is important to give particular attention to the first-hand accounts and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members because these lived experiences and motivations directly contribute to their performance as educators, and thus, to the performance and achievements of their non-traditional students.

Furthermore, there is very little academic literature regarding the lived experiences and motivations of adjunct faculty members tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Therefore, representing them in academic endeavors and literature enriches the discourse, not just in this particular field of interest but also in related fields such as education, teacher motivation, non-traditional teaching styles, and even part-time work and management.

The primary research question of this study was What are the lived experiences of adjunct faculty who educate non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest? The sub questions of this study were (a) What motivates adjunct faculty to educate non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest? (b) What challenges to their motivation do adjunct faculty face when teaching non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest?
The researcher envisioned that the final outcome of the study would, through the voice of the adjunct faculty members, provide details of the lived experiences of adjunct faculty, suggesting a new perspective to college and university administrators and full-time faculty. The researcher documented these lived experiences in a context that may start a dialogue around the country regarding how adjunct faculty are represented and treated within post-secondary institutions.

**Methodology**

**General Strategy of Inquiry.** The general strategy of inquiry that matched the intellectual goals and the central research question of this study was qualitative research. This was determined to be the best choice due to the exploration of why adjunct faculty members choose to engage in teaching non-traditional learners. Due to the nature and level of understanding the research sought to gain upon completion of the study, quantitative methodology was deemed inappropriate because the researcher was not attempting to determine relationships between variables but rather uncover salient themes that described the experiences of the participants.

The application of the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation was another contributing influence for choosing a qualitative inquiry approach. The framework called for an unveiling of the cognitive aspects of an adjunct faculty member’s motivation for teaching through first-hand accounts and impressions. As such, it was necessary to engage in qualitative research to ensure that the findings and analysis achieved the depth and understanding necessary to uncover the cognitive aspects (Creswell, 2009). The use of qualitative inquiry was fundamental to ascertaining firsthand accounts, language and metaphors the adjunct faculty use to describe their experiences at a private, not-for-profit institution.
Qualitative research is rooted in the exploration of issues, understanding of phenomena and endeavors to answer questions. At the most basic level, “Qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values” (Nkwi, Nyamongo, & Ryan, 2001, p. 1). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) indicate that qualitative research focuses on interpretation of phenomena in their natural setting to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to the settings. This is captured through information collection about personal experiences, introspection, life story, interviews, observation, interactions and visual text. Patton (2002) provided the most appropriate definition of qualitative research as it pertained to this study when he defined qualitative research as attempting to understand the unique interactions of a particular situation. In this study the objective was to understand the interactions, motivations and why adjunct faculty members choose to teach non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest.

The use of qualitative methods allows for research to provide deep understanding of a specific organization or event, unlike a surface description of a large sample or population such as a quantitative method may produce (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). This method of research allows a researcher to answer the logic of human behaviors and experiences. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009, p. 13).

There were four major approaches considered when designing this research study. The approaches include ethnography, phenomenology, field research and grounded theory. Ethnography is derived primarily in anthropology and is focused on studying an entire culture.
Field research is a broad approach to qualitative research which centers on participant observation and the subsequent coding and analyzing of the researcher’s extensive field notes. Grounded theory is a complex iterative process that is interested in developing a theory about phenomena which is grounded or rooted in observation. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that focuses on people’s subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. After gaining an advanced understanding of the above mentioned approaches, the researcher determined that phenomenology was the appropriate choice for this study.

Phenomenological research allowed the researcher to answer the overarching research question concerning the lived experiences of adjunct faculty when educating non-traditional learners. Within phenomenological research, there are several philosophical approaches that include hermeneutical and transcendental phenomenology which address how the researcher gathers, codes and interprets the empirical data. For the purpose of this study, the researcher determined that Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was the best choice.

**Approach.** Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was the method used to conduct the research and analysis of this study. The study aimed to document the perceptions and views of a specific group, in this case seven adjunct faculty, which is a common focal point of IPA studies (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

According to Smith and Osborn (2008), IPA is aimed at an exploration of how participants make sense of their personal and social world through a detailed examination of their personal experiences and perceptions. IPA is a dynamic process where the researcher takes an active role in an attempt to get an insider’s perspective. Through this process the participants are trying to make sense of their world and the researcher is attempting to make sense of their experiences and accounts (Smith and Osborn, 2008). IPA is consistent with phenomenological
origins as it is concerned with what something is like from the perspective of the participants (Smith and Osborn, 2008).

IPA has a theoretical commitment to the person as a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being and assumes a chain of connection between people’s talk and their thinking and emotional state (Smith and Osborn, 2008). Due to the goals of this study and the theoretical framework which was used to discover the cognitive aspects of adjunct faculty members’ motivation and persistence in teaching non-traditional learners it was the most appropriate approach to the study.

This study utilized semi-structured interviews to collect personally salient accounts filled with richness and depth. Open-ended interview questions were appropriate for this study as they allowed the participants to provide detailed accounts of their perceptions and experiences. The depth and richness of information would not have otherwise been captured if the researcher chose a quantitative approach.

Participants. Weiss (1994) indicates that there are two categories of respondents: experts in an area and privileged witnesses to an event; and these people, taken together, display what happens within a population affected by a situation or event. The seven participants in this study fit into the category of field of experts, as defined by Weiss, and as such were chosen to be a panel of informants (1994). The seven participants in the study were selected for their willingness to grant the researcher access to the perspective of adjunct faculty members’ lived experiences at a private, not-for-profit institution, therefore representing a perspective of a population (Smith et al., 2009).

The participants in this study included seven adjunct faculty members who currently teach in the evening, weekend and online (EWO) program at a private, not-for-profit institution
in the Midwest. The EWO program of the institution specifically educates non-traditional learners. Smith et al. (2009) indicated that small sample sizes are acceptable due to the idiographic approach of IPA and that a sampling between three and six participants is reasonable for a student project.

The sampling was theoretically consistent with the quality paradigm and specifically with IPA’s guidelines (Smith et al., 2009). The study met these criteria by sampling participants who shared the common experience of being adjunct faculty at the same private, not-for-profit Midwestern institution all with more than one year of teaching experience. The participants ranged in age from 32 to 60 with one male and six female individuals.

The sample generated rich information regarding the lived experiences of adjunct faculty. This study and the participants provided significant and valuable information about the experiences of adjunct faculty members within the institution because of their direct involvement both personally and professionally.

**Participant Profiles.** Seven qualified adjunct faculty members were selected for participation in this study. For the purposes of this study, *qualified* was defined as adjunct faculty who had taught undergraduate and/or graduate classes for the institution within the EWO program for a minimum of one year and do not teach for the regional center for which the researcher is the director. It was important that they had taught for the institution for a minimum of one year to ensure that participants had the opportunity to reflect on their past and present experiences. It is the researcher’s belief that adjunct faculty members with less than one year experience may be learning the systems of the institution, the classroom dynamics, and the technology, and therefore may not be able to reflect as extensively as more seasoned educators. It was also relevant to disqualify adjunct faculty members who teach at the regional center where
the researcher is the director as the researcher acknowledged that her position could create a bias with those participants.

Matt was the one male participant in this study. He is in his early 30’s. Matt has earned a bachelor’s degree in Engineering and a master’s degree in Counseling. He currently works as an instructional technologist for a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. Prior to working in post-secondary education, he pursued a career as an engineer. He teaches classes in the Master of Arts in Counseling program.

Alice was a female in her early 50’s. Alice earned a bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Psychology and a master’s degree in Business Administration. She currently works part-time as an office manager of a private sector business. Prior to working in her current position, she worked in local government and was an entrepreneur. She teaches classes at the undergraduate and graduate level in business and management.

Cindy was a female in her 40’s. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Psychology, a master’s degree in Applied Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Literacy. She also holds a State of Wisconsin teaching license. Prior to her current position, she worked in K-12 as a teacher and administrator. She currently works as a full-time faculty member at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in education.

Diane was a female in her early 60’s. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Healthcare Administration, a master’s degree in Health Services administration and a doctorate degree in Healthcare Administration/Human Services. Prior to her current positions, she held positions at large Midwest hospitals and clinics. She is currently teaching full-time as an adjunct faculty member at three different institutions. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in healthcare administration and research.
Elizabeth was a female in her late 50’s. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Special Education and a master’s degree in Education. She is currently retired, but previously worked for a local school district first as a teacher and then as a district-wide semi-administrator. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in education.

Fiona was a female in her late 50’s. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Healthcare and a master’s degree in Counseling. Prior to her current position, she worked in administration at other post-secondary institutions. She currently works in an administrative position with a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. She teaches courses in the Master of Arts in Counseling program.

Gail was a female in her late 50’s. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Business and Marketing and a Master’s degree in Business Administration. She is currently retired from a position in human resources with a large insurance company. She is currently active as a member of her town board. She teaches graduate courses in project management.

The seven participants provided a diverse group of educators with a variety of backgrounds which contributed depth and dimension to the study. The diversity of participants also provided the capability to place the study in a broader context than if all of the participants taught in the same academic discipline or derived from the same academic and professional background.

Participants for this study were recruited through a recruitment email (Appendix E) sent out to all qualified adjunct faculty at the institution. The focus of this study was adjunct faculty at the researcher’s institution because the researcher had discerned that there was a need to better understand the needs, motivations and challenges of this population. The researcher’s intention was to study this population, identify areas for improvement, develop an action plan to address
the needs of current and future adjunct faculty and present the plan to the Vice President of EWO. It was the goal to uncover the motivations and challenges to adjunct faculty to be able to provide better support, onboarding and professional development opportunities in the future and begin the change process locally. Participation in the study was completely voluntary and did not impact current or future teaching assignments with the college. Each participant was required to read, understand and sign an informed consent document (Appendix F).

**Site.** The institution has seven regional centers throughout the Midwest. The interviews were conducted at the regional center located in a major metropolitan city as this location proved closest to the majority of the participants. The researcher traveled to the regional center to conduct the interviews. This regional center was the facility where the participants teach which allowed for the participants to be familiar and comfortable in the setting as well as safe (Smith et al., 2009). The interviews occurred in a private office accommodating a quiet, uninterrupted space for the interviews to be conducted (Smith et al., 2009).

**Data Collection.** The researcher was the only interviewer for this study. Prior to the initial contact with potential participants, the research institution’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted permission to conduct this study. Approval was also granted by Northeastern University’s IRB to conduct the study. The approval documents are included and can be viewed in Appendix C and D.

IPA requires the collection of rich data, allowing the participants to tell their stories in a free and reflective dialog, and to express their ideas and concerns with significant depth (Smith et al., 2009). To accommodate the collection of data, this study utilized a three step approach with the seven participants. This process enabled participants to provide a firsthand account of
their experiences within the context of being an adjunct faculty member at a private, not-for-profit institution.

Step one was to contact the participants through an introductory email. The email introduced the purpose of the research and provided details of the interview protocol. The email can be reviewed in Appendix E. The email was sent to 350 prospective participants. This group was attained through the institution’s database via a query which resulted in an instructor qualification report. The report yielded 445 adjunct faculty members who teach within the EWO program. The researcher then removed ninety individuals as they teach for the regional campus where she is the director. The first seven people to respond were the selected participants. The researcher then contacted the regional campus to ensure availability of a quiet space to conduct the interviews. Upon confirmation of availability, the researcher scheduled the interviews with the participants.

Step two occurred through face-to-face, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The interviews lasted anywhere from forty to sixty-two minutes. The use of a semi-structured interview created more of a conversation with a purpose (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher had constructed a schedule for the semi-structured interviews. The schedule set a loose agenda for the interview, allowing the interview to be fluid (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher had prepared nine open-ended questions which were posed to the participants. The questions were informed by the theoretical framework. Within the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation, there are three components within the theory: expectancy, valence and motivation. Found within each of these components are specific attributes. To evaluate expectancy, it is necessary to consider ability, task difficulty, and preparation. When assessing value, researchers consider intrinsic value, utility value, attainment value and cost. As such, the interview
questions were constructed to loosely address the theoretical framework. The interview questions remained open and conversational to encourage conversation and depth. The interview questions are available for review in Appendix G.

At the interview, the participants were presented with a written informed consent form which documented details of the project. The informed consent can be reviewed in Appendix F. The participants were given the opportunity to review the document while the researcher was providing a verbal overview. They were then asked if they had any questions and to sign the document indicating whether they approved the researcher to use direct quotes in the final document.

The interviews were audio recorded through digital software on a laptop and on a smartphone to ensure there was a backup in case of technical difficulties. The researcher utilized these two devices because they are password protected. The audio recordings were erased from the smartphone as soon as the researcher confirmed that the interviews were captured by the laptop.

The audio recordings were uploaded to REV Transcription Service within 6 hours of the interview. The transcription service emailed Microsoft Word documents back to the researcher which contained verbatim transcripts of the interviews. The researcher reviewed the transcripts while listening to the audio recordings three times to ensure accuracy prior to beginning the data analysis. The audio recordings and transcripts were stored according to the requirements of data protection legislation (Smith et al., 2009). Upon completion of the study all audio recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

The third step was conducted through email and occurred after data analysis and when the emergent themes were compiled. The researcher emailed each participant their individual
transcripts as well as Table 1 (Appendix A). The researcher asked the participants to review the emergent superordinate themes and subthemes as well as their transcripts to determine if the analysis accurately depicted their experiences, views and perspectives. The researcher also asked that they review the transcripts for accuracy and report any inaccuracies, concerns or oversights to the researcher.

Six of the seven participants responded within 24 hours and indicated that they agreed with the analysis and that their transcripts were accurate. The seventh participant responded within 48 hours and made minor corrections to the transcript which did not impact the analysis or emergent themes. This is also known as member checking.

Member checking is often used in qualitative research to enhance the validity and credibility of the study. This process of member checking posed both opportunities and challenges. Member checking allowed the participants to correct errors and to challenge interpretations that they perceived as wrong. It also gave the participants the chance to clarify their thoughts or actions, and provided the opportunity to assess the adequacy of the data and preliminary results. Member checking can be challenging to the researcher as well as the participants, who may disagree with the researcher’s interpretations and withdraw their involvement with the study. Additional considerations were that there may be differing interpretations of the research due to the researcher and participants being stakeholders in the process. Views may differ about what is construed as a fair account, and participants may not accurately remember or may later deny the information that they initially presented. Although these opportunities and challenges existed, this researcher utilized member checking as part of building the validity and credibility of the study as the benefits outweighed the risks.
**Data Analysis.** The data analysis occurred between steps two and three of the research process. The data analysis arose out of paying analytic attention to participants’ attempts to make sense out of their lived experiences as adjunct faculty (Smith et al., 2009). The data collected in this study was analyzed through the use of the process as depicted by Smith et al. (2009) and as described below:

1. **Reading and re-reading** – The transcripts were read three times while listening to the audio recordings. The first time through, both the reading and listening of the interview was used to ensure the word-for-word accuracy of the transcription. By repeating the process three times, the researcher relived the interview, recorded notes and recollections about the interview and allowed the participant and the participants’ firsthand accounts of the experience to become the focus of the analysis (Smith et al., 2009).

2. **Initial noting** – The researcher used noting to allow an examination of the semantic content and language used to document anything of interest within the transcript (Smith et al., 2009). This permitted the researcher to identify specific ways the participant spoke, and how they think about their role as an adjunct faculty member of non-traditional learners (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher used descriptive comments that focused on the context of what the participant had said, linguistic comments that focused on the specific language the participant had used, and conceptual comments that focused on engagement at a conceptual level throughout this process (Smith et al., 2009).

3. **Developing emergent themes** – During this phase of analysis the researcher broke down the interviews into meaning units and noted them in the margin of the transcript (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher reduced the details from the interview through
mapping the interrelationships, connections and patterns between the exploratory notes (Smith et al., 2009). The emergent themes that were revealed are a collaboration of the participant’s words and the researcher’s interpretation, which reflect a combined effort between the description and interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

4. Searching for connections across emergent themes – During this phase of the analysis, the researcher developed a way of drawing together the themes and developed a structure that showcased the most important and interesting parts of the participant’s account (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher began by ordering the themes chronologically and developing clusters of related themes through the use of abstraction. Abstraction is a way to identify patterns between themes and placing items that are similar together to develop a superordinate theme (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, during this phase, the researcher developed a graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes (Smith et al., 2009).

5. Moving to the next case – This study comprised seven cases. The process noted above was repeated throughout each subsequent case. The researcher treated each interview as an independent case (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher bracketed the ideas from prior cases while working on the next to allow for new themes and ideas to emerge (Smith et al., 2009).

6. Looking for patterns across cases – A thorough analysis of all of the graphical representations was manually examined to determine the connections and illuminating information between cases and the most prominent themes (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher then presented a graphic which captures the most important superordinate and subthemes that emerged from the study (see Appendix A).
**Validity and Credibility.** Lucy Yardley (2000) posed four principles for assessing qualitative research and these were used to ensure, with a high degree of certainty, that the study is both valid and credible. The four principles include sensitivity to context, commitment to rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance (Smith et al., 2009).

Sensitivity to context was displayed throughout the study through awareness of the environment where the study was conducted and sympathy to the information obtained from the participants (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher demonstrated a contextual sensitivity through an appreciation of the interview process and interactional nature of data collection (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher further demonstrated sensitivity to context through gaining an in depth understanding of the accounts of the participants and what information could be gathered from those accounts (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, the researcher incorporated verbatim extracts from the transcripts in the final write-up to ensure that the participant’s voice is present in the project so the reader may check interpretations (Smith et al., 2009).

The researcher demonstrated commitment and rigor through attentiveness to the participant during data collection and care in which the analysis was carried out (Smith et al., 2009). The above occurred by ensuring that the interviews were thorough, the interview questions were valuable and directly relate to the research question, and that the analysis of the data was carried out with care (Smith et al., 2009).

To ensure transparency and coherence, the researcher wrote up the stages of the research process in the final document including how the participants were selected, how the interview schedule was constructed and how the interviews were conducted, and what steps were used to analyze the data (Smith et al., 2009, p. 182).
Impact and importance was addressed through the final write-up, providing the readers with interesting and important data regarding the lived experiences of adjunct faculty (Smith et al., 2009).

Protection of Human Subjects

Participation in this study was optional and was not forced upon those who felt uncomfortable. The researcher had completed training on the protection of human subjects and the ethical principles of research prior to gaining IRB approval from the institution. Recruitment of participants occurred through an email providing the opportunity for those who were not interested to delete the email and remain anonymous. An informed consent form was presented to, verbally explained to the participants, and completed by each participant prior to engaging in the study. All participants signed the form agreeing to their participation in the study and allowing the results of the study to be published by the researcher.

The participants’ identities were protected throughout the study as they were each assigned pseudonyms. They were assured anonymity by the removal of any identifying characteristics including name, location at which they teach, and classes they have taught.

Conclusion

The use of qualitative methodology in studying motivation is not as common of a strategy of inquiry as quantitative methods. However, the choice of qualitative research for this study provides the opportunity to delve much deeper into the subject matter and provide depth beyond that of a simple list of what motivates adjunct faculty to teach. This project provided rich, substantive empirical data on a subject that has traditionally been studied at a very high level culminating with very little change.
Chapter Four – Findings and Analysis

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of seven adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Specifically, the study sought to understand the motivational factors that adjunct faculty members experience in fulfillment of their responsibilities as educators of non-traditional learners. The study was conducted with seven participants who teach for a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. The seven participants in this study each provided detailed accounts of their experiences.

An analysis of the transcripts yielded two superordinate themes and eight subthemes. These themes captured how the participants made sense of and attached meaning to the concept of adjunct faculty motivation. An exploration of the superordinate themes and their constituent subthemes formed the basis of this chapter, with each theme illustrated by concentrated summaries and rich, thick descriptions of the participants’ perceptions and understandings. Verbatim quotations have been obtained from the transcripts and strategically included for emphasis and clarification. The superordinate themes and their subthemes are 1) Motivation, including (a) the students, (b) the environment, (c) intrinsic value, (d) goals, (e) information sharing. 2) Challenges, including (a) staying connected, (b) technology, (c) cost.

In reflecting on the study, the researcher uncovered consistent connections that were prevalent throughout the participants’ explanations of their lived experiences. The dedication, passion and enthusiasm that each person expressed in his or her description became clear as each participant discussed his or her role as an adjunct faculty member. The positive outlook that each participant shared was surprising to the researcher as a great deal of the literature pertaining to adjunct faculty reflects a negative tone. However, in this study, the positive tone and
emotions that the study participants shared when talking about their students demonstrated the commitment of the adjunct faculty members to their students.

The participants discussed the amount of outside time and resources they commit to ensuring that they are prepared and bringing value-added resources to the classroom. They also relayed how their experience as non-traditional learners affords them empathy and understanding toward their students. The overall impression that the researcher took from each interview was the deep sense of duty, allegiance and commitment to their students.

Motivation

In understanding the term *motivation* and what it represents, it is necessary to recognize that motivation is a process that initiates, guides and maintains goal orientated behavior. It is what causes people to act. Within motivation there are two different types of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic.

Extrinsic motivations refer to engaging in an activity because the outcome provides an external reward. Examples of extrinsic motivation may include earning a paycheck, earning a promotion or gaining experience to further a career.

Intrinsic motivation is the desire to engage in a task because it provides personal satisfaction. When considering intrinsic motivation, all external incentives are removed and only internal desires drive the person to engage in the activity. Examples of intrinsic motivation are engaging in an activity because it is enjoyable or the individual feels a sense of accomplishment.

All seven adjunct faculty members articulated the view that they are motivated by both internal and external influences. There was enough convergence to allow the researcher to identify five subthemes that fall within the categories of internal and external influences. These represent the components that create motivation. The external influences are the students and the
educational environment. The internal influences that contribute to their motivation are intrinsic value, the experience they gain while reaching goals, and the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with others. The subthemes allow for a deeper understanding of what motivates adjunct faculty who teach non-traditional learners.

The students. All seven participants identified the students as the primary motivational force contributing to his or her decision to teach. This subtheme emerged through discussions related to what things motivate them about being adjunct faculty members of non-traditional learners and what influenced their decision to become adjunct faculty members with the institution represented in this study versus another institution. This discussion of the students provided the researcher with a united statement that the students are the most important motivational attribute for all seven participants.

The participants displayed a possessiveness of their students through use of the terms “my students” versus “the students.” The participants discussed their experiences with non-traditional students and how the experiences motivate them. The participants used the terms “high expectations,” “engaged,” “driven,” and “value” to describe characteristics of the non-traditional learner. They went further and described their students’ desire to engage in the learning environment and the value they place on their education as higher than that of traditional students. Participants attributed this to the fact that often non-traditional students are paying for their own education.

The adjunct faculty felt that because pursuit of post-secondary education takes the students away from their families, the non-traditional learners had higher expectations for their education. This included higher expectations of classroom experiences and of the adjunct faculty members tasked with teaching them.
Matt reflected on his response when asked about his motivation. He hesitated before beginning, but as he was talking, the researcher observed that he began to relax. Matt leaned further back in his chair and his shoulders dropped slightly.

The simple thing with non-traditional students, they can hold you at a pretty high standard … you really have to make sure that you are on top of your game … you’ve got to get to your Blackboard and update it, and if your lecture wasn’t that great and you came to class looking a little bit disorganized, (non-traditional) students are going to point it out.

The researcher asked the participants if, when they were pursuing their education, they had been non-traditional students. The united response was “yes,” that each of them had been a non-traditional learner at some point within their academic career. As a result of their experience juggling work, family, and education, they indicated that they have a greater understanding and appreciation for what their students are experiencing. Alice shared her experience as a non-traditional student and how it impacts her as an adjunct faculty.

I understand what it’s like to have to return as a student to an academic environment after being working. Usually non-traditional students have children, families, full-time jobs, those kinds of things, lots of obligations, so I understand it from that point of view.

She went on to say that “My experience as a student helps me as an adjunct instructor.” Through Diane’s response, she built on Alice’s answer by providing an example of how her own experiences as a non-traditional student allow her to be more effective to her students.

I would have to say that what most helped me to be effective is what I learned from faculty that I had when I was a student, and what not to do. An example of that would be faculty that you clearly knew were not prepared or hadn’t spent any time preparing for
the course because they would show up at 6:05 and say, “Okay, we’re going to take chapter six, seven, and eight today. Your group is going to go through chapter six, and then in twenty minutes you’re going to tell us what six was about.” High school students could do that, and I don’t think that is good value for a student’s money.

The unique understanding of being non-traditional students during their academic career allows the participants to connect with their students, demonstrate empathy when students are struggling to balance school, work, and life, and support their non-traditional students in a way most felt they would not otherwise be able to. The discussions supported their feelings that non-traditional learners have higher expectations of their educational experience and therefore of their adjunct faculty members. Fiona articulated these feelings by saying,

I think I have a very good understanding of a non-traditional student coming into the field because the students do balance many things; family, job, going to school…they are being pulled in taking care of their parents, taking care of their children, working a full-time job, and I understand that. I understand that there are priorities and school is one of the priorities for the student’s coming back. As an adult, I know I made the decision to come back on my own. Nobody was forcing me, and I see the same thing in the students that I deal with when I am teaching. They want to be there. I want to be there teaching. Nobody forces us to be in that room.

The students are the primary motivational influence of why the adjunct faculty members within this study choose to engage in teaching non-traditional learners. They admire the devotion, dedication, and sacrifice that non-traditional learners endure to pursue post-secondary education. The results of this study show that the unique relationship and bond that the adjunct faculty members share with non-traditional learners resulted from their experience as non-
traditional learners themselves. The ability to relate to the students provided an awareness, compassion and understanding by the adjunct faculty members which may not have manifested itself by others who have not been non-traditional learners.

**The environment.** The educational environment was mentioned by four respondents as a factor that contributes to their motivation. The discussion of the environment included discussing the institutions’ mission, philosophy, and history; the staff at the regional center where they teach; the freedom they have as educators; and the gratification they feel in being part of an educational environment.

Alice described her connection with the environment with gestures and mannerisms that exhibited enthusiasm and excitement, which was at odds with her prior posture: closed off with arms and legs crossed.

I absolutely love learning. I love the environment in which I work. I love the fact that I am, every single time I’m at my job, I’m in an educational environment. I know that I am doing something positive. That motivates me.

Cindy discussed her experience with the institution as very permissive and conveyed that this was a positive occurrence. This was divergent from other respondents. This may contribute to the professional background of this participant, as she is a full-time instructor as well as an adjunct faculty member.

I do have to say what I do like is it’s very hands-off; it’s very autonomous. I love that about teaching at the institution; that I’m given the material, I’m given the syllabus and I’m told, “here are the parameters.” Within those parameters you do what you need to do and use your teaching style to convey whatever information there is.
This response surprised the researcher because this autonomous approach was divergent from that of other respondents. This response also differed from her response to the challenges she faces about being an adjunct faculty member. Given this divergence, the researcher revisited this comment with the participant to discover that her response represented the fact that within her class, she is not directed to teach in a certain way. This clarification provided a depth of insight into the academic freedom that the institution allows its adjunct faculty members. Fiona summarized the overall feeling of the participants when she stated, “once I started understanding what education was all about and what education can do … how education can help a person grow and mature, I wanted to be part of that environment.”

The discussion of the environment in which the participants teach stimulated a positive response when studying its impact on motivation. The participants conveyed the message that being a part of the educational environment is important to them. This theme was represented even when struggles with the disconnection from the main campus and other adjunct and full-time faculty members were mentioned, as noted by Elizabeth’s statement “I think I try real hard to stay connected to the people here, but it is an effort on my part because of being part-time, you can be kind of anonymous.” The participants appreciate the environment and the people within the institution.

The environment is a substantial contributing factor to adjunct faculty motivation. The sense of belonging to an educational environment provided the study participants with a sense of gratification. They expressed that a sense of belonging contributes to their success however more often they feel a sense of isolation and disconnect from the institution and other faculty members. The sense of isolation and disconnect from others doesn’t deter them from being
successful in the classroom, but they felt there was more they could contribute to the institution if given the opportunity to immerse themselves in it.

Environment contributes to employee motivation. People who work in friendly, supportive, and caring environments feel empowered and encouraged to grow in their roles. The adjunct faculty members within this study mentioned that the environment in which they work provides them with the autonomy to find innovative ways to teach their students which is motivating to them. By finding ways in which the institution could encourage collaboration among full-time faculty, adjunct faculty and administrators the participants felt the environment would improve as would their sense of belonging to the institution creating more significance to their role.

**Intrinsic value.** Intrinsic value can be described as the enjoyment one gains from doing the task. Intrinsic value emerged through each discussion that occurred, most specifically when the participants were asked to explain why they decided to become adjunct faculty members of non-traditional learners. The participants used terms such as “self-satisfaction,” “gratification,” “love for the job,” and “confidence” when describing the value they gain from teaching. This translated into utility value. Gail indicated that she teaches to “give back” and to “teach people what I’ve learned throughout my lifetime.”

The passion and enjoyment that the participants feel for their position was evident through their voice inflection, mannerisms, and body language as they described the joy, self-worth and satisfaction they gain from their role as adjunct faculty members. Alice provided insight into the intrinsic value she reaps.

It’s important for them (the students), but it also is important for me … for my own self-esteem and gratification, there’s nothing like walking out of the classroom knowing that I
just taught somebody something that they’re going to use tomorrow at work to make their lives better. It makes me feel great.

All but one participant indicated that they do not teach for the money. They indicated that it is a relatively low stipend compared to the amount of time and effort that goes into the position. Fiona deliberated for a moment before providing her answer. She went on to how when she began teaching it was to supplement her income but as each term passed, she gained confidence in her skill, knowledge and ability, and realized just how much she had to share with her students. This response did not surprise the researcher as teaching part-time is one way to supplement an income. However, it was intriguing to the researcher to review this participant’s responses. Through the review of the transcripts, the progression of how the value of the task changed from external motivation (supplemental income) to intrinsic motivation and satisfaction became evident. Fiona established this when she stated,

Honestly, when you work for a nonprofit the pay scale is usually on the lower side.

Teaching gave me a little bit extra financial income, but once I got into the classroom and I started building the confidence that yes, I can do this and I have something to give to the students the job became more valuable than the pay.

The above referenced responses were the most blatant examples of intrinsic value. Through reviewing the transcripts the researcher noted the value that the participants gain from their role as adjunct faculty. They expressed this through discussions of their level of personal achievement, the positive impact they have on others, the joy they yield from being part of the students’ personal journeys and helping students become successful, and the positive feelings they have as they learn from their students. The sentiment and fervor which they used when describing these experiences and feelings became evident as they talked.
Goals. The professional goals of three out of seven participants are that they want to become full-time faculty members. Through their positions as adjunct faculty, they feel they are gaining proficiency in teaching methods, classroom management techniques, and curriculum design and assessment experience. The researcher acknowledges that this experience is necessary when making the transition from public or private sector business careers into the full-time academic environment. The researcher learned that of the three participants, all were seeking outside professional development opportunities to gain additional experience and credentials. These participants are taking doctoral classes and certificate courses, and seeking out teaching related seminars. Alice explained,

I continue to take classes to better myself as a teacher. Those are not reimbursed by the institution. It’s just something that I feel I need to do because I am not getting any other training any other way. In order to continue to grow as an adjunct instructor, I’m taking classes on the side myself. In the end, hopefully, it will make me a better teacher and will land me a full-time teaching job.

This sentiment continued among the participants who are interested in obtaining a full-time teaching job in post-secondary education. All the participants desired to improve their methods; skills and knowledge about teaching was a convergent subject in all of the participants.

The participants within this study have a variety of goals for their experience as adjunct faculty. Matt articulated that “professionally, I am finishing my doctorate degree next year, and I would like to teach full-time.” The participants are progressing toward their goals by gaining teaching experience and improving their teaching methods through their roles as adjunct faculty members. The researcher found the participants responses consistent with their passion for teaching.
Information sharing. Information sharing emerged as a subordinate theme. Academic preparation and professional preparation are the key elements that contributed to information sharing. Through academic and professional preparation, participants felt they had information and experience worthy of sharing with their students.

Academic preparation was presented through the discussion of their educational background and their perception of how academic experiences impact them as adjunct instructors. The participants provided explanations of their academic backgrounds. All participants have earned master’s degrees in the academic disciplines in which they teach. Five out of seven of the participants have some doctoral studies or have already achieved terminal degrees.

The discussion of the how their academic preparation impacts their teaching provided insight into important aspects of their academic backgrounds. The information they shared included how the curriculum they studied impacts the level of knowledge and credibility they bring to their classroom. One unexpected aspect of this discussion was that all participants discussed how their experiences as non-traditional learners have significant impact on how they teach. Diane’s description is an effective synopsis of the responses.

I think it adds credibility, quite honestly because I’ve lived it: the common phrase “been there, done that.” I have the experiences that they’re currently experiencing and I have often shared that with them. I get it. Everything you’re thinking, feeling, experiencing, I get it.

Gail was more specific in discussing how her professors enhance her role as an instructor. Gail stated “My academic experience enhanced my ability to educate people by the professors I had before. I think they were excellent examples of how to administer education.”
Gail went on to include the impact of her experience.

I’ve always wanted to be able to give back and to teach people what I’ve learned throughout my lifetime. I think that many times, what we learn in our lifetime, if we can share that with other people on a professional and educational basis, I think that really gives other people the advantage of what you’ve learned. I think that’s important.

The information obtained through the discussion of academic preparation and the impact it has on them as adjunct faculty yielded an unexpected result about how much depth being a non-traditional learner added to their teaching capabilities. The knowledge of the students’ experience, expectations and learning needs allows adjunct faculty members to share information in either the classroom or online environment in a way that is relevant to the students.

Professional preparation was introduced in a discussion about professional background and how they perceived that their professional experience impacts them as adjunct faculty members. All of the participants had worked outside of post-secondary education in the past or currently work outside of post-secondary education. Three of the participants currently work full-time in post-secondary education, specifically for the institution. Out of the remaining four participants, three are retired from prior positions and one works part-time in the private sector.

The prevalent subject that arose from the discussion of the participants’ professional experience was how important their professional experience is to their success as adjunct faculty. All of the participants commented on how they draw upon their professional experience to illuminate theory and ideas being studied in the course. They use their knowledge and expertise in the real world to bring forth examples, provide additional resources or relate to their students in general. Gail provided an example.
The books do a great job of explaining what they need to know but (non-traditional) students also learn through their visual and audio experiences, and when you put it all together and you give them a practical application, they really start to understand what you’re talking about. It makes a big difference.

Elizabeth’s response to the discussion gave insight into the importance and relevance of their professional experience. Elizabeth said, “Well, it’s huge, and I wouldn’t be doing this if I didn’t have the work experience because I can speak from true experience.” Alice connects her professional experience to the curriculum she teaches with her response.

When I am teaching certain subject matter, like, let’s say, management, I am teaching it from a textbook and what the curriculum is asking us to put forth to the students, but I can also relate it to real-life experience. I find that being able to relate certain topics with stories, cultural experiences and different work experiences that the students can really identify with that.

Information sharing presented itself as a significant motivator to all seven adjunct faculty members. Not only did they describe how it helps them develop rapport with their non-traditional students, but also how it provides them with a sense that they are positively impacting someone else’s life.

The researcher found a commonality between the responses of the participants. Their academic preparation as non-traditional learners had a significant impact on their desire to become adjunct faculty members and share the information and knowledge they have acquired. The participants’ professional preparation provided confidence and credibility to their position as adjunct faculty. The unity between professional and academic experiences provides motivation to continue the act of information sharing. The impression that the researcher gained was that
the participants gain as much, personally, from sharing information with their students as the students gain from the information. There is a level of gratification present when sharing information with others.

Motivation refers to internal and external forces that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue an action. The participants in this study offered several factors which influence their motivation. The factors include the students, the environment, intrinsic value, goals and information sharing. The sense that the researcher gained from the participants was that the students and information sharing were the most prominent contributing factors to their motivation. The researcher found that the participants ranked the other factors in order of importance as intrinsic value, the environment and goals. Each of these factors contributes to the motivation, persistence, passion and dedication that the participants bring to their role as adjunct faculty members within the institution.

**Challenges**

This research sought to understand the motivation and challenges adjunct faculty face when tasked with teaching non-traditional learners. The motivational factors have been presented above. As the researcher inquired into the factors that motivate adjunct faculty, the challenges to that motivation emerged as a superordinate theme.

Challenges, for the purpose of this research are defined as obstacles that stand in the way of adjunct faculty members performing their responsibilities to the institution and students in the most effective and efficient way possible. The significant challenges that the participants articulated in this study were staying connected, technology and cost.

People face challenges within their professional environment every day; however the challenges that adjunct faculty members face are unique due to the contingent, part-time nature
of the position. The challenges that adjunct faculty face in performing the job may potentially impact the institution and the students they are tasked with teaching.

**Staying connected.** The participants’ responses revealed similar experiences as they described their overall experience as adjunct faculty including the disconnection between the main campus, the full-time faculty and other adjunct faculty who teach at the regional centers. The experiences described by the participants included limited and nonexistent interaction with full-time faculty, resulting in feelings of isolation. When asked about the challenges that she faced, Cindy identified it as “the disconnect.” The researcher asked for further clarification of what the disconnect meant, and she went on to explain,

The disconnect is that I don’t get to meet with the full-time faculty. I don’t get to draw on their expertise. Even though I know they are there, we’re at completely different points. I’m in the evening, they are in daytime. We never see each other. I could go on the website and see their faces, but that doesn’t mean I want to approach them. I don’t know who they are. I really don’t know if they are decent to work with.

Cindy stated that she only had that one faculty introduction workshop, “but it is lecture-based and there’s really no time to get to know anybody; no time to really get to know who our resources are.”

Not only was there a sense of disconnect from the full-time faculty but also with other adjunct faculty teaching either the same courses or within the same department. The participants showed a genuine interest in connecting with faculty, as demonstrated through a comment made by Elizabeth.
I think I try real hard to stay connected to the people here, but it’s an effort on my part, because just being part-time, you can be really kind of anonymous, which is, I think, kind of sad.

Elizabeth went on to add, “but I am interested in connecting with the education department … I’ve just been trying to make that effort, but it isn’t structured for us.”

This sentiment established that adjunct faculty members have a desire to be incorporated into the educational environment in a more formal and significant way to establish ties and bonds within the institution and academic departments.

Staying connected to the institution, full-time faculty, other adjunct faculty and center staff emerged as a major challenge to adjunct faculty within this study. The desire to be connected to others teaching within the same academic discipline was prevalent in throughout the participants answers. They placed great value on these associations. The disconnection they experience created a sense of isolation among the participants, the institution and other adjunct faculty.

Technology. Another issue that challenged the participants was technology; specifically, their ability to keep current with the technology and the lack of training and support regarding the technology. This was true for six out of seven of the participants. The one participant who did not see technology as a concern works full-time in a technology related position.

Technology emerged as being at odds with the participants’ experiences and core desires to work with students as adjunct faculty members. The respondents understood the need for technology and acknowledged the flexibility that it provides to the students; however from their experience and perspective it added significant work and time to their schedules, limited their interaction with students who choose to take courses completely online, and added to their
frustration level when the technology did not work. This information was demonstrated through Elizabeth’s response when asked about online classes.

I try and get to know my students really well; I prefer the on-ground class, face-to-face classes. I think as a teacher I am trying to model in-depth knowledge in my learners, and I think it’s hard to do that in a computer based class.

This was compounded when the participants felt they had inadequate training and support for the use of the technology. Alice summarized the feelings expressed by the group through her description of the frustration she feels when trying new technology. Alice said, “It’s extremely frustrating when I know the technology’s there, and I don’t know how to use it, and I can’t get anybody to spend quality time with me to help me learn it.”

The participants described levels of frustration in working with and trying to understand new technology. They voiced concerns that they don’t have the chance to really “get to know” their students and their students don’t get to know them. They also indicated that for older non-traditional students, it can sometimes be difficult to learn and deal with online environments.

Alice revealed insight which the researcher found interesting. When reviewing the transcript, the researcher noticed that Alice had been a non-traditional learner and that she displayed a deep passion for teaching. She also displayed a conflicting relationship with technology.

I find that students that are returning and are older have a harder time dealing with online environments. They find that the traditional classroom, which is familiar to them, is more advantageous. They find it difficult to deal with the technology that sometimes does or does not work. I think that non-traditional students need to have that sense of community and need to feel like they are part of the college because they’re making a
lifestyle change, and I think that they need to feel that the decision they’ve made in their education is the correct one.

One main concern was the amount of additional time and mental energy was consumed by online and BlendEd courses. Two of the participants mentioned that when they are teaching online or BlendEd courses that it consumes their entire week; they are either working on the course or it is constantly on their minds. Matt was specific in identifying how it is necessary to sign into Blackboard, the online learning management system, and read discussion posts every day, sometimes several times a day. He also communicated the level of mental energy he expends on online courses when he said that “even when I am not online, I am constantly thinking that I should be. It is like a huge weight constantly on your shoulders.” Two other participants acknowledged that they are much more effective in the classroom than in the online environment due to their ability to connect and communicate with the students on a personal level.

Technology surfaced as a much larger challenge than the researcher expected. The unique factor about the institution is that it offer most courses in a format called BlendEd. Each week the students can decide whether to participate in the course by attending the class in-person for three hours and fifteen minutes or participating online for the week. Each of the participants had been contracted at some point to teach in the BlendEd format.

The participants described varying levels of frustration with the introduction of new technology and lack of training and support. They voiced concerns that the students find it difficult to utilize the technology and be successful in their course work. The participants also mentioned the additional time and mental commitment it takes to teach a course that meets online is a challenge. Although the time commitment of teaching a class utilizing technology did
not surprise the researcher, the view that there continues to be such difficulty on the part of the adjunct faculty to connect with the students given the advances in technology such as webcams, meeting software and collaboration software was revealing. In an era when technology is readily available to most people, the researcher sometimes forgets that not everyone is comfortable with it. Overall, the technological aspect of their responsibilities as adjunct faculty members appears to be a burden to the faculty member.

**Costs.** Cost was the final challenge that surfaced. Participants commonly referred to the concept of time as they talked about the costs of being adjunct faculty. Every participant indicated that the time commitment to the position is the most costly to them, both personally and professionally. The sacrifices associated with time included time spent away from their families, the time allocated to preparing for class, grading assignments, and doing outside research and professional development.

Regarding the experiences inside and outside of the classroom, they described similar activities surrounding their week leading up to the class. This included a large amount of preparation and grading, encompassing anywhere from four to sixteen hours a week, depending on the classes they are teaching and if they have taught them before, to ensure that they were prepared for the next class. Cindy shared,

If I’m teaching a three hour graduate course, I’m putting in 10 hours or so (a week) into that course. Usually the rule of thumb is for every one credit hour, the students are putting in two to three hours of work. I think as adjuncts, we are too because, one, we want to keep our positions, [and] two; we love what we do.

The most consistent activity reported was that each participant spent substantial time researching and reading outside materials to bring to the classroom. This is significant, as it
demonstrates that adjunct faculty are not simply delivering the information from the textbook, but rather seeking out additional resources that correspond to the topic for the week giving students relevant and timely real world examples.

Six of the seven participants noted that there are costs associated with the time, especially as it impacts their families. Cindy said, “There is always that cost to my family, but my kids like that I’m a college teacher. That’s not a big deal, my husband is fine with it as well.” Elizabeth added “there’s a lot of time. My husband would say way too much, but I think when you’re doing something because you love it, it isn’t like, Oh, now I have to put in more legwork time.”

The participants exhibited a level of acceptance that their role as adjunct faculty members takes them away from their family. They articulated that the value they gain from educating the students and being a component of their success outweighed the cost of the time away from their families.

Other relevant sacrifices associated with pursuing an adjunct faculty position included the cost of technology including hardware, software and an internet connection. Two participants also mentioned the cost of additional course materials such as textbooks, articles or copies.

Costs emerged as a challenge to adjunct faculty. The costs that emerged were the cost of reference material, the cost of remaining current with technology, and the cost of time. The participants provided detailed descriptions of the time commitment it takes to be an adjunct faculty member and the costs to their families. Overall however, the participants indicated that the satisfaction and value that they get from teaching outweighs the costs associated with the job.

This study revealed three primary challenges that the participants face in their positions as adjunct faculty members. These challenges ranked in order, as deemed by the researcher based on the comments of the participants, are staying connected, technology and cost.
All the participants indicated that staying connected to colleagues and administration is difficult due to the contingent, part-time nature of the positions. They articulated that there is value in feeling a sense of belonging to the institution and felt that they would be more effective in their role as adjunct faculty if they had that connection.

Technology emerged as a second challenge which the researcher interpreted as the need for more training and support on the part of the institution. This challenge could be overcome through a better support system and more technological support staff dedicated to adjunct faculty.

Finally, cost emerged as the third challenge to being an adjunct faculty member within the institution. Although mentioned, financial expense did not emerge as the primary cost, but rather the expenditure of time was the cost that most participants identified. The expenditure of time produced two facets, the amount of time spent on preparation, follow-up and grading for the class and the amount of time that the participant spends away from their families. Although the cost of time was significant ranging anywhere from four to sixteen hours a week, the participants indicated that they felt the time was well spent and that their families understood their commitment and supported them.

Challenges can become a barrier to effectiveness and efficiency when they become insurmountable. They can demotivate employees if they feel that the challenges are insurmountable. When challenges are discovered and addressed through studies such as this, they can serve as learning opportunities for the institution and administrators. However, the participants in this study are passionate and motivated to educate and support non-traditional learners through their academic journey.

Conclusion
This chapter analyzed the findings from seven semi-structured interviews with adjunct faculty members. The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members who are tasked with educating non-traditional learners. The study sought to understand what motivates adjunct faculty to teach non-traditional learners, and what challenges to their motivation adjunct faculty face when educating non-traditional learners. The study provided participants the opportunity to present detailed accounts of their lived experiences as adjunct faculty members.

The analysis revealed two superordinate themes and eight subthemes that depicted how adjunct faculty members’ lived experiences inside and outside of the classroom impact their motivation for teaching. This investigation revealed that adjunct faculty members are motivated to teach for intrinsic and extrinsic reasons.

The researcher found that the personal satisfaction and intrinsic value that the participants expressed through their narrative explanations exposed a level of personal commitment and passion for making a difference in the lives of others despite the sacrifices. This provided the researcher with a deeper understanding of what motivates adjunct faculty to pursue positions that provide little security and financial gain. The researcher assumed that some adjunct faculty members may pursue these positions for financial gain or to supplement their full-time income. The researcher expected that the research would show that several participants engaged in the position for that reason, but was encouraged to find that the participants engaged in the task for reasons beyond monetary gain.

The motivational factors revealed in this study enriched the researcher’s understanding of the depth and passion that adjunct faculty have for their students and their positions. It was the researcher’s perception when beginning this study that a few adjunct faculty may pursue this
profession for the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience. This study allowed the researcher a deeper understanding of the commitment, passion and dedication that the participants bring to their roles.

Prior to the conclusion of this study, the researcher understood that adjunct faculty faced challenges. It was the researcher’s perception that the major challenge that adjunct faculty face was the contingent nature of the position. However this perception was proven inaccurate as six of seven participants displayed little anxiety of receiving renewed contracts. The major challenge that the study revealed was being able to stay connected to colleagues and administration. Although the researcher perceived that as a challenge, the study revealed this to be the significant challenge faced by adjunct faculty. Through this discovery, the researcher more deeply understands the need for adjunct faculty learning communities, mentoring programs and onboarding programs designed to incorporate these employees into the institution.

This chapter summarized the narrative report of how seven adjunct faculty members at a private, not-for-profit institution make sense of their lived experiences. The following chapter will include a summary of the significant findings, the correlation to the theoretical frameworks and extant literature, and implication for future practice.
Chapter Five – Discussion of Research Findings

This interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was aimed at deeply understanding the motivation of seven adjunct faculty members at a private, not-for-profit institution who educate non-traditional learners. Given the steady rise in both the number of adjunct faculty members in degree-granting institutions, as well as the increase within the population of non-traditional learners, it is important that such experiences be recorded and understood to ensure that any challenges to the motivations of other adjunct faculty members may be identified and addressed. It is important to give particular attention to the lived experiences and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members because these experiences and motivations directly contribute to their performance as educators, and thus, to the performance and achievements of their students.

Furthermore, there is very little academic literature regarding the lived experiences and motivational factors of adjunct faculty members tasked with educating non-traditional learners. Therefore, representing them in academic endeavors and academic literature enriches the discourse not just in this particular field of interest but also in related fields of interest such as education, teacher motivation, non-traditional teaching styles, and even part-time work and management.

The central research question used to guide the research was “What are the lived experiences of adjunct faculty who educate non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest?” This research question was accompanied by two sub-questions used to narrow the focus of the interviews to motivation. The sub-questions included (a) What motivates adjunct faculty to educate non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution
in the Midwest?, and (b) What challenges to their motivation do adjunct faculty members face when educating non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest?

The two superordinate themes that emerged from the study were motivation and challenges. Within these superordinate themes, eight subthemes emerged which supported the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation framework applied to this study.

Using Vroom’s (1964) model of expectancy-value theory, considerations of the cognitive aspects of an individual’s motivation for choosing a particular goal with regard to the individual’s expectations of his or her success and the valence (value) he or she places on reaching that goal were applied.

As this study developed, the researcher was able to use the framework as a lens to understand the participants’ discussion of their experiences as adjunct faculty members with a private, not-for-profit institution. These results were categorized as general motivation, expectancy and valence.

What follows is a discussion of the superordinate themes and subthemes placing them directly within the literature and the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation. As such the subthemes are placed within general motivation, valence, and expectancy, as depicted in

*Figure 2: Expectancy-Value Model as Applied in this Study.*
This research supports and contributes to the academic literature on adjunct faculty members’ motivation. The expectancy-value model applied in this study suggests that the relationship between expectancy and value contributes to overall motivation. The following sections discuss in detail the components of the model. First, is a discussion of how the students and the environment directly contribute to adjunct faculty motivation for engaging in teaching non-traditional learners. The second section describes how valence is presented as a component of the expectancy-value theory as well as how intrinsic value, goals and cost contribute to the value that adjunct faculty place on the activity of teaching as an adjunct faculty member. The third section consists of a discussion of the components of expectancy which includes information sharing, staying connected and technology.
Within this chapter is a discussion of the limitations of the study including but not limited to the number of participants. The final section discusses the goals, implications for future research and implications for practice.

**Motivation**

People find themselves motivated to pursue adjunct teaching positions for a variety of reasons. These reasons may include lack of tenure-track opportunities, passion for teaching, supplemental income, and using the opportunity to gain teaching experience (Purcell, 2007). These reasons held true as the study participants described the reasons that they arrived in their current roles. Of the seven participants, one participant started teaching for financial gain, and three had retired from full-time positions and had a passion for teaching while the final two participants indicated that they aspire to be full-time faculty and as such are using their adjunct faculty positions to gain teaching experience. All of the participants identified that they have a passion for education and dedication to the non-traditional students they are tasked with teaching.

Using the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation, the researcher has taken into consideration the cognitive aspects of the participants’ motivation in educating non-traditional learners at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest. The researcher has considered both the expectancies and valences that the participants attach to the task.

The researcher identified two super-ordinate themes directly expressed by participants as their motivation to continue teaching. These two super-ordinate themes are, a regard for the students and a need to be part of an educational environment. The themes allow for a deeper understanding of what motivates adjunct faculty who educate non-traditional learners.
The students. This study supports Thirolf’s (2010) research results, which indicated that interactions with students contribute positively to the adjunct faculty members’ educator identity. The participants reported how they identified with non-traditional learners as they faced many of the same challenges in balancing the responsibilities of work, academic life and family. They reported that their ability to identify with their students informs their identity as adjunct faculty and has significant influence on their teaching style.

This study supports Kenner and Weinerman’s (2011) study providing information about the non-traditional learner. This information indicates that they are typically financially independent and funding their own education. They are often employed either full- or part-time and study part-time, and often they have families meaning they have to work studying into their already complicated schedules. All seven participants discussed the fact that they too had been non-traditional learners, and as such understand the challenges their students face. This level of understanding and connection with their students intensified their motivation to provide the best possible education.

This study supported Kenner and Weinerman’s (2011) assessment that non-traditional learners bring confidence and skill with them, resulting in higher expectations of their learning environments. This too was discussed by the participants as a motivational factor. The participants shared that higher expectations placed on them by non-traditional learners encourages them to be more organized, to expand upon their own knowledge and resources, and to be the best they can be in the classroom and in the online environment.

The environment. This study is at odds with Merriman (2010) as well as Pankin and Weiss’s (2011) studies, which indicate that adjunct faculty members have a lesser sense of belonging and as a result they care less about the future of the institution. This study provided
several examples showing that adjunct faculty members feel a disconnection from other faculty members and the administration, but that they feel a deep connection with the philosophy and mission of the institution. Several participants indicated that they are motivated to continue with the institution because being a part of an educational environment is motivational to them. One participant said that she loved being part of the educational environment and discussed how that compensates for any challenges she faces as an adjunct faculty member.

Ballantyne et al.’s (2010) study indicated that the stronger the connection with the institution, the less risk there is to the institutional identity. This was a unique contributing factor of this study, as only two of the participants did not have another connection to the institution. Four of seven participants are alumni of the institution and three currently work for the institution full-time. Based on the evidence, this study does not reveal if these other relationships create a connection with the institution, or if their positions as adjunct faculty members are adequate to create and maintain that connection.

Valence

Valence, which means “value,” refers to the value a person places on a given outcome or reward (Eccles et al., 1983). This is a product of the person’s particular set of contexts, experiences and cultures (Eccles et al., 1983). Valence, within the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation, considers the intrinsic value, utility value, attainment value, and cost of pursuing an activity. Through this research, participants identified intrinsic value, goals, and costs as contributing to their motivation for teaching non-traditional learners.

Intrinsic value. Intrinsic value is defined as the enjoyment one gains from doing a task (Eccles et al., 1983). This study aligns with the national study conducted by the American Federation of Teachers (2010) that says adjunct faculty members are motivated to teach for the
love of teaching and that they find it enjoyable and rewarding. All seven participants responded that they obtain intrinsic value from their positions as adjunct faculty members of non-traditional learners. They feel they are doing something important, have a positive impact on others, are helping students become successful, and that they enjoy seeing the journeys of the students.

The researcher interpreted their comments along with the enthusiasm they demonstrated as they were sharing these accounts as enjoyment of the task. The theme of intrinsic value became apparent in every account that was shared. Each question that was asked prompted a discussion in which the subject of intrinsic value emerged.

**Goals.** Purcell’s (2007) assessment says that many adjunct faculty members aspire to become full-time faculty. This was supported by three of the study participants whose professional goal is to obtain positions as full-time faculty. The researcher noted that of the other four participants, one currently holds a full-time faculty position, one is a full-time adjunct faculty member teaching at several institutions, and the other three participants are retired from full-time careers. Through their own admission they are happy teaching one or two courses a term as a way to help others and keep their knowledge and skills current.

**Cost.** This study deviated from the findings by Purcell (2007) and the American Federation of Teachers (2010) indicating that compensation and benefits are motivational factors for adjunct faculty members. Although it was mentioned briefly by the participants, the compensation did not impact their willingness or motivation to continue in their role. Participants went as far as to verbally disagree with this research by making statements such as “At a certain age, money is something I don’t even look at. It goes in the bank and I don’t even look at it.” This stance regarding compensation was echoed by five out of seven participants.
June (2012) reference a lack of job security as a cost for adjunct faculty. Only one participant made reference to the insecurity of the position as a challenge. June indicated that fear of losing their jobs may hinder them from exerting full academic freedom. However, this study differed from June’s study, as the participants discussed how the positive and negative feedback from the students helps them to improve their teaching methods.

The researcher noted the willingness and openness that each participant shared regarding the positive and negative feedback they receive and how they value it. Gail provided a recent example of how she had recently been telling her students that she wanted them to be open with both positive and negative feedback. She told her students that the institution makes sure to give her the feedback she needs and that it is serious about the support it provides to the adjunct faculty to improve when necessary. The researcher interpreted this, as well as the participant’s body language, as having little fear that negative feedback will prohibit her from future teaching contracts. This was also interpreted as a lack of trepidation in challenging the students or in feeling she cannot exert full academic freedom in the classroom.

**Expectancy**

Expectancy is the belief that more effort results in higher performance (Eccles et al., 1983). Within the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation, researchers consider ability, task difficulty, academic preparation, and professional preparation as components of expectancy (Eccles et al., 1983). This research supported those aspects as contributing factors to their motivation for teaching non-traditional learners.

**Information sharing.** Information sharing emerged as one key factor that motivates the participants. They displayed a passion for sharing their personal, academic and professional experiences with the students. This substantiated Tipple’s (2010) study explaining that adjunct
faculty members are usually practitioners in their field and are able to provide the students with real-world examples of scenarios and situations. The results of this study also support Kenner and Weinerman’s (2011) findings that discussed the necessity of educators to relate concepts and topics to real-world experience and the goals of the learner. Not only is it essential to the student’s success as established by Kenner and Weinerman (2011), but also essential to the adjunct faculty member in order to provide meaning to the topic being studied and credibility to their role as an educator.

Diane stated that her academic and professional background adds credibility to her role as an educator. She went on to say that sharing examples from her experience with students validates the theories the students are reading about in their textbooks. This was a common thread throughout the participants’ discussions regarding how their academic and professional experiences impact their role as adjunct faculty members.

The participants displayed passion for information sharing that was conveyed to the researcher through the inflection of the participants’ voices. As they discussed how they are able to share their experiences with the students and the extent in which those experiences positively impact the students’ ability to learn a concept or theory they conveyed significance and emphasis on the importance of this activity.

**Staying connected.** In any environment, staying connected can be a challenge for those who are employed part-time. This becomes an almost insurmountable barrier for adjunct faculty. They report to the institution just prior to their class start time, leave when the class lets out, and are not assigned a specific area on campus to hold office hours or work on their classes.

This study aligns with Tipple’s (2010) assessment that adjunct faculty have feelings of isolation. The results of this study also supports Dolan’s (2011) research that there is inadequate
communication among their peers and superiors, which adds to the disconnection and isolation felt by adjunct faculty members. Elizabeth stated that the professional development sessions at the beginning of each term are nice, but that they are lecture based and leave little room for adjunct faculty to communicate with others within their discipline.

Green, Alejandro, and Brown (2009) said that adjunct faculty members need development programs to prevent feelings of isolation and to build skills and abilities as educators. This was supported within this study through the dialogue about the additional professional and educational opportunities that Matt and Alice seek out. Cindy also mentioned it as an area of improvement when she said that there was only one faculty orientation when she started. This study went on to support Forbes et al.’s (2010) findings indicating that adjunct faculty members are interested in opportunities for skill development and interaction with other faculty members. Participants made reference to the idea that having either a mentor program or departmental luncheons would help to bridge the disconnection they feel with colleagues, full-time faculty and administration.

Technology. This study conflicted with Tipple’s (2010) research that indicated that practitioners find it easier to teach online. All participants acknowledged the challenges and time commitment it takes to teach online. The challenges that participants discussed included the difficulty of staying current with the technology and that often the students understand the technology better than they do. They also revealed that they struggle to feel comfortable with the technology.

It was noted that strides have been made by the institution to support the use of technology and provide training. However, there is still a significant gap in their technological knowledge. This gap contributes to feelings of inadequacy in the online teaching and learning
environment. The researcher found this concerning considering that the majority of the classes taught through the evening, weekend and online program are in a BlendEd format where the students choose to participate either by coming to class or participating online. As such, the researcher interpreted this as a cause for concern and an area of further research that the institution needs to support.

The researcher suggests that the institution conduct additional research to establish a baseline of technological competence with their adjunct faculty members. Using this information, the institution can develop training and provide resources to those who feel the need for additional training. This can also be an opportunity for other institutions to open communications with their adjunct faculty regarding the use of technology and their additional training needs regarding the use of technology.

Limitations of the Findings

Limitations for this study exist and need to be addressed. One limitation of this study is that adjunct faculty members from other institutions were not included. This narrowed the scope of the results to a limited population and limited experiences of adjunct faculty. The results of this study would have applied to a wider audience if the researcher had included participants from other institutions of approximately the same size and type. However, it is the researcher’s opinion that these study results are a microcosm of the broader adjunct faculty environment. It is recommended by the researcher that this study be replicated at similar institutions throughout North America.

The second limitation of this study is that only adjunct faculty within the evening, weekend and online (EWO) program were included. This is something that readers may criticize, as there are adjunct faculty members within academic departments throughout the
institution. The researcher chose to focus on EWO adjunct faculty as these faculty members are tasked with teaching a majority of non-traditional learners, whereas adjunct faculty within other departments have a greater mix of traditional and non-traditional learners in their classes. As a result, as the researcher expands and replicates this study, she will attempt to include all adjunct faculty members. The voices of all adjunct faculty members need to be heard on this matter.

**Intellectual Goals**

The researcher set a primary goal for this research, which was one of practice, seeking to provide empirical information to college/university administrators demonstrating a value beyond the economic benefit of using adjunct faculty in non-traditional learner classrooms. In conducting this study, it was the researcher’s goal to generate change surrounding the negative stigma that adjunct faculty have been given by identifying their motivation for and their lived experiences in educating non-traditional learners. A secondary goal of this research was to add to the very limited empirical literature surrounding adjunct faculty who teach non-traditional learners. The researcher believes that the above mentioned goals were met.

The researcher analyzed the responses of the interview participants to understand how they experienced teaching non-traditional learners and what motivated them to do so. The researcher captured the language and metaphors used by the participants to describe their experiences providing a rich, thick description of the participants’ lived experiences as adjunct faculty members teaching non-traditional leaners.

**Implications for Practice**

The results of this study are relevant to several stakeholders within the post-secondary education community. In particular, post-secondary education administrators might use this study’s interpretative findings to better understand the motivations and challenges that adjunct
faculty face within the classroom and within the institution. The interpretative findings from this study could also be used to aid in the development of adjunct faculty learning communities where the needs of adjunct faculty are on the forefront and are supported by all members of the institution. The researcher recommends that the institution hire an Associate Dean of Adjunct Faculty to be a champion for adjunct faculty members. This position would have three primary initiatives. The initiatives would include: coordinating with administrators and full-time faculty to hire, orient, train, supervise, and discipline adjunct instructors; promote the professional development of adjunct faculty through the successful administration of learning communities and other programming that focuses on teaching skills and curricular competency; and to provide support for and promote evidence-based and best practices for effective use of technology to facilitate learning in all settings.

The findings of this study can similarly be utilized by human resource departments to develop better hiring policies and procedures for adjunct faculty including the development of adjunct faculty onboarding process. Finding individuals who are interested in teaching non-traditional learners and who have the credentials and skills to fill the needs of the institution can be a challenge. As such, providing a solid foundation of information, support and training at the beginning of their employment could enhance their overall perception of the institution, provide support to new employees and create the sense of institutional belonging.

This study highlighted the need to ensure that as new adjunct faculty members are hired into the institution, they have a sense of belongingness and security within the institutional community. The researcher recommends that the aforementioned new position is tasked with developing and overseeing an onboarding and mentoring program for adjunct faculty members.
This program would be tasked with fostering and establishing mentor relationships with adjunct faculty members and full-time faculty members within the same discipline.

This thesis should inspire administrators to consider the needs and challenges of the adjunct faculty they hire and how they can motivate them. Administrators could use the information contained in this thesis to develop adjunct faculty orientation programs and ongoing training programs to address the needs and challenges of their staff.

Administrators including the President, Academic Dean, Associate Deans, and Directors within the organization should show support and sponsorship for the creation of orientation training programs. The show of support and advocacy for the program from the institutional leaders could create a sense of importance throughout the campus.

The development of a supportive environment in which to teach could result in opportunities for administrators and adjunct faculty members to hold an open dialogue to create a cooperative environment. Adjunct faculty members should feel comfortable and confident in articulating their needs and motivations to administrators. Open communication is key to adjunct faculty feeling inspired to teach the students knowing that the institution has tasked them with educating the majority of the student population.

Non-traditional learners could also benefit from the results of this study, as they are the population who have the most contact and interactions with and are affected the most deeply by the adjunct faculty members tasked with educating them. All learners benefit from the well-being, support, motivation and quality of the individuals who serve them. As a result, non-traditional learners should be concerned with the institutional support of adjunct faculty.

This study could stimulate non-traditional learners to take a more active role in encouraging institutions to support the adjunct faculty members. Non-traditional students bring
high expectations to their educational experience. The researcher suggests several methods that would allow non-traditional learners to take a more active role in engaging with the adjunct faculty members.

First, the non-traditional learners should be encouraged by the institution to provide candid feedback regarding adjunct faculty performance. Second, the institution should provide an opportunity for the learners and adjunct faculty members to interact outside the classroom, and finally the institution should encourage an open dialog between non-traditional learners and administrators to provide feedback to the institution about their perceptions of adjunct faculty struggles and successes.

**Implications for Future Research**

This study discovered and identified themes that can be considered in later studies. The information from this study may be useful in future quantitative studies that focus on the depth of motivation of adjunct faculty based on the level of support they receive.

The researcher found a glaring lack of literature that focused on the time that adjunct faculty commits to their classes and feels that this area needs further research. It appears that adjunct faculty members are putting in as many hours outside of the classroom as the students, based on participants’ statements that they commit between four to sixteen hours each week to prepare for one course. A study conducted about the time commitment devoted to preparing for and teaching a course as an adjunct faculty member may be significant to people considering pursuing that role. In addition, it may provide useful information to college administrators who determine compensation and benefits for adjunct faculty positions. At the very least, a study regarding the time that adjunct faculty members devote to preparation, research and
communication with students could show the dedication and commitment that they bring to the position.

An area of further research that the institution studied within this report needs to support is that of the technological challenges and gap which exists with the adjunct faculty members. The researcher suggests that the institution conduct additional research to establish a baseline of technological competence with their adjunct faculty members. Using this information, the institution can develop training and provide resources to those who feel the need for additional training. This can also be an opportunity for other institutions to open communications with their adjunct faculty regarding the use of technology and their additional training needs regarding the use of technology.

Overall, the researcher found very little empirical research surrounding adjunct faculty who educate non-traditional learners. It is the researcher’s opinion that this study and the results are a microcosm of the broader adjunct faculty environment. It is recommended by the researcher that this study be replicated at similar institutions throughout North America.

The researcher also believes that with the identification of the themes presented within this study there is an opportunity to conduct further qualitative research surrounding non-traditional learners. This future research could include a replication of the IPA design to investigate how non-traditional students are motivated and the challenges they face while pursuing post-secondary education. This proposed study would provide an opportunity to build support communities and resources for the non-traditional learners which could result in increased enrollment and retention rates for the institution.
Conclusion

The researcher believes that the findings of this study are significant because they contribute new knowledge to the body of literature surrounding adjunct faculty who educate non-traditional learners. The significance of this study is based on the fact that the findings describe the lived experiences, specifically the motivations and challenges that adjunct faculty who educate non-traditional learners face. This study provides a firsthand account into those lived experiences.

There has been little empirical qualitative research into the lived experiences of adjunct faculty motivation, and especially of those who educate non-traditional learners. This research describes the participants’ experiences and reflects upon the need for greater institutional support of this population. As a result, this study contributes to the qualitative research on adjunct faculty and how they understand their motivation and challenges.

This document demonstrates how this research project responds to the problem of practice, fills in a gap in the research, and provides an alternative perspective for adjunct faculty. The problems that adjunct faculty face concerning the work they do will not be solved, even at the local level, by this research. Instead, this project aims to highlight the problem at the local level by providing an unprecedented voice to adjunct faculty at a private, not-for-profit institution in the Midwest that has adjunct faculty members teaching the majority of its students. The information collected from this study will be used to create change, beginning at the local level and then expanded to the greater North American post-secondary education industry.

The use of expectancy value theory of achievement motivation as the framework and IPA as the research methodology allowed the research to delve deeply into the motivation and challenges that adjunct faculty face with administration, the classroom, and the non-traditional
students they are tasked with educating. The results of this study are only the first step in creating change for adjunct faculty.

The researcher, in this final chapter, has identified potential further research through the replication of the study at other institutions to develop adjunct faculty professional learning communities and support programs. A similar study can be conducted, through a replication of the methodology, with non-traditional learners for the development of institutional and academic support programs.

The prevalence of the utilization of adjunct faculty is not a passing trend within post-secondary education. As such, it is necessary for institutions to support adjunct faculty that have otherwise struggled to find their place within the institution. These individuals seek to help others and instill the knowledge and experience they have acquired through their academic and professional experience with others seeking to enter their field of expertise.
References


Achievement and achievement motivation (pp. 75-146). San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman.


http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00273171.2013.775060
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_248.asp


Appendix A

Table 1

*Superordinate and subthemes from the analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Motivation – Speaks to sub-question 1 | 1.1 The students  
  - Their dedication  
  - Their passion for learning  
  - Their commitment to their goal  
  - The sacrifice they make to attend  
  - They value they place on their education  
  - The students purpose for being there  
  - The students enjoyment of the class |
|                      | 1.2 The environment  
  - Being a part of an educational environment  
  - Being a part of the institution, it’s mission and philosophy  
  - Learning new technology  
  - Learning new teaching methods |
|                      | 1.3 Intrinsic value  
  - Personal achievement  
  - Doing something positive  
  - Positive impact on others  
  - Helping students become successful  
  - Seeing the journey of students  
  - Learning something from their students |
|                      | 1.4 Goals  
  - Continued teaching as an adjunct faculty member  
  - Moving into a full-time teaching position |
|                      | 1.5 Information Sharing  
  - Sharing professional experiences  
  - Sharing academic knowledge |
| 2. Challenges – Speaks to sub-question 2 | 2.1 Staying Connected  
  - The organization  
  - Full-time faculty |
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.2 Technology</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Online students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other adjunct member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.3 Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staying current and update</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling comfortable with it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providing adequate learning environment to online students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time commitments – prep time, grading, researching outside sources, additional training,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time away from their family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Out of pocket expenses for additional reference materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expenses for technology – Hardware, software, internet connection</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Figure 2: Expectancy-Value Model as Applied in this Study

**Expectancy**
- Task difficulty (2.1, 2.2)
- Academic preparation (1.5)
- Professional preparation (1.5)

**Value**
- Intrinsic value (1.3)
- Utility value (1.4)
- Cost (2.3)

**Motivation**
- to engage in teaching (1.1, 1.2)
Appendix C
Lakeland College IRB Approval

LAKELAND COLLEGE
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
RESEARCH APPLICATION DECISION

Proposal ID Number: 0017
Research Proposal: Adjunct Instructors at Not-For-Profit Institutions: Their lived experiences and motivations for working with non-traditional students
Research Investigators: Jennifer Williamson, M.A. (Advisor: Ronald Brown, Ph.D.)
Received: 10/04/2013
Reviewed: 10/14/2013
IRB Reviewers: Kathleen Rath Marr, Ph.D.; Wayne Homstad Ph.D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ Approved</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Request for Clarifications/Modification</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Denied</td>
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</table>

Rationale for the Decision:

As one of the more straightforward proposals seen recently by this committee, neither reviewer found any areas of concern. The proposed research poses minimal risk and appears well designed.

Dr. Christopher D. Moore, Chair, Institutional Review Board 10/14/13

Dr. Kathleen Rath Marr, Member, Institutional Review Board 10/14/13

Dr. Wayne Homstad, Member, Institutional Review Board 10/14/13
Appendix D
Northeastern University IRB Approval

NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION

Date: October 24, 2013
IRB #: CP813-10 02

Principal Investigator(s):
Ronald Brown
Jennifer Williamson

Department:
Doctor of Education Program
College of Professional Studies

Address:
20 Belvidere
Northeastern University

Title of Project:
Adjunct Instructors at a Not-For-Profit Institution: What Are Their Lived Experiences and Motivations in Working with Non-Traditional Students?

Participating Sites:
School Site Permission Letter - forthcoming

DHHS Review Category:
Expedited #6, #7

Informed Consents:
One (1) signed consent form

Monitoring Interval:
12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2014

Investigator's Responsibilities:
1. The Informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when recruiting participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must be reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month prior to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Human Subject Research Protection
190 Renaissance Park
560 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

573-7579
978-496-8920
northeastern.edu/hsrp

Northeastern University FWA #4630
Appendix E
Participant Recruitment Email

Dear name of potential participant,

My name is Jennifer Williamson and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University working toward my doctor of education. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study about adjunct faculty member motivation for teaching non-traditional learners. I am affiliated with Lakeland College as the director of the Madison Center.

The title of my project is titled Adjunct Faculty at a Not-For-Profit Institution: What are their lived experiences and motivations in working with non-traditional students? The purpose of my project is to document the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members who teach for Lakeland College’s Evening, Weekend and Online program through the lens of motivation and challenges to motivation. Through your unique perspective, it is the hope of the researcher to give a voice to adjunct faculty members.

I invite you to participate in this research process as you are an ideal candidate for this research. This email explains the research and requirements of you participation. I welcome any questions you have at any time.

If you would like to participate, the next step will be a 60-90 minute, open-ended, one-to-one interview which will occur at the Lakeland College center closest to you. You will be asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the interview. I anticipate that between six and ten questions you will be asked to comment on. I will record the interviews and the audio recordings will then be transcribed. My goals for the interviews are to explore, in detail, what your lived experiences are, your motivations to teach at Lakeland College and what challenges to your motivation you face. It is my goal to conduct these interviews during the Fall 2013.

The final step will happen through the use of Skype or email. You will be given the opportunity to review the themes that have emerged from the research as well as your transcripts to determine if the analysis accurately depicts your experience, views and perspectives.

There are a few points that I would like to explain:

- You will receive a $10 gift card to the coffee house of your choice.
- I do not foresee participation in the project posing any risks for you.
- I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of your participation, given the number of people who fit within the potential sample size. However, I will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity. Each participant will be identified with a pseudonym and will not be identified by name in any publication.
- The purpose of the research is not to evaluate your performance but to draw lessons from your experiences.
- All audiotapes of interviews will be destroyed following analysis defense of the dissertation.
• There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers may help to give adjunct faculty an unprecedented voice.

• Your participation in the research project is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question and may withdraw at any time. Your decision to participate or not will have no effect on your standing at the college.

• I will offer you the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview for accuracy.

• You will have the opportunity through follow-up to review the results of the analysis and affirm or refute that the summary reflects your views, feelings and experiences.

If you agree to participate please email me back at williamson.je@husky.neu.edu with confirmation. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about participating in this research. You may contact me at: williamson.je@husky.neu.edu or 608-477-0245. You can also contact Dr. Ronald Brown, Principal Investigator at ron.brown1@neu.edu or 617-435-8166. If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Williamson
Appendix F
Unsigned Participant Consent Document – Northeastern University

Northeastern University,
College of Professional Studies

Name of Investigator(s):
Dr. Ronald Brown, principal investigator
Jennifer Williamson, student researcher

Title of Project: Adjunct Faculty at a Not-For-Profit Institution: What are their lived experiences and motivations in working with non-traditional students?

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you don’t want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to affirm this statement and give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
We are asking you to be in this study because as an adjunct faculty member at Lakeland College for more than one year, you have unique insight into the experiences that adjunct faculty members face regarding their motivation to teach non-traditional learners.

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this project is to document the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members who teach for Lakeland College’s Evening, Weekend and Online program through the lens of motivation and challenges to motivation.

What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in two separate sessions a 60-90 minute, open-ended, one-to-one interview, which will occur at the Lakeland College center closest to you. You will be asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the interview. I anticipate that there will be between six and ten questions that you will be asked to comment on. I will record the interview and the audio recordings will then be transcribed.

The final step will take place through the use of Skype or email. You will be given the opportunity to review the themes that have emerged from the research, as well as your transcripts, to determine if the analysis accurately depicts your experience, views and perspectives.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
You will be interviewed at the Lakeland College center nearest your location. The face-to-face interview will take between 60-90 minutes. The review of the themes and transcripts may take up to one hour.

**Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?**

I do not foresee participation in the project posing any risks for you. Although, I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of your participation, given the number of people who fit within the potential sample size, I will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity. Each participant will be identified with a pseudonym and will not be identified by name in any publication.

**Will I benefit by being in this research?**

There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. There is no compensation offered for participation.

**Who will see the information about me?**

Your part in the study will be confidential. Only the researchers of this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being in this project. You will be given a pseudonym in any reports or publications.

Recordings of the interview will be transcribed by a third party transcription company that has confidentiality processes. Only the researchers have access to the recordings.

In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in the study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as Northeastern University Institutional Review Board to see this information.

**If I do not want to take part in the study, what choices do I have?**

You have the option to choose not to participate.

**What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?**

No special arrangements will be made for compensation or for payment solely because of you participation in this research.

**Can I stop my participation in this study?**

Your participation in the research project is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question and may withdraw at any time. Your decision to participate or not will have no effect on your standing at the college.

**Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?**

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about participating in this research. You may contact me at: williamson.je@husky.neu.edu or 608-477-0245. You can also contact Dr. Ronald Brown, Principal Investigator at ron.brown1@neu.edu or 617-435-8166.
Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Will I be paid for my participation?

No

Will it cost me anything to participate?

No

By signing below, you understand and consent to the researcher audio recording the research sessions. Please either agree or refuse, by checking one of the boxes in the next sentence, as to whether or not the researcher may use direct quotes in her paper.

Please check on of the following: I agree ___ I disagree___ that Jennifer Williamson may quote me in her paper.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand a copy of this form will be made available to me for the relevant information and phone numbers. I realize that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

_____________________________________              ________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part     Date

_____________________________________
Printed name of person above

_____________________________________
Signature of person who explained the study to participant above and obtained consent     Date

_____________________________________
Printed name of person above

APPROVED
NU IRB# 13-002
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Lakeland College Institutional Review Board. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Dr. Christopher Moore, Lakeland College, P.O. Box 359, Sheboygan, WI 53081; Phone: 920-565-1367; E-mail (moorec@lakeland.edu).
Appendix G
Primary Interview Questions

Introduction to Interview

Interviewer Background – my name is Jennifer Williamson and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University. My dissertation research centers on the adjunct faculty members within Lakeland College. I am also the Director for Lakeland College’s Madison center.

Questions:

• Can you please provide some background information about your educational attainment, academic teaching and professional background?
• Can you tell me why you decided to become an adjunct faculty member?
• What impacted your decision to become an adjunct faculty member with Lakeland College versus another institution?
• Please tell me about your experience as an adjunct faculty member?
• What was the position like when you started? What has changed?
• What are your personal and professional goals?
• How do you measure your level of achievement as an adjunct instructor?
• Is there anything else that you would like to tell me that I have not asked about but you feel is important for me to know?
• Additional questions may be appropriate to clarify or expand on themes developed in the research.