BECOMING THE NEW NORMAL THE SECOND TIME AROUND: THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF SECOND-CAREER CONTINGENT FACULTY ON THEIR ADAPTABILITY TO TEACHING IN THE ACADEME

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Abstract

There is a new normal in higher educational institutions in the United States. The majority of instructors teaching college students are contingent faculty. This Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study explored the perceptions and experiences of the career adaptability to teaching in the academe of six second-career contingent faculty at four-year public universities in the Northeast. The findings of the study showed that these accomplished professionals turned educators possessed the career adapt-abilities to successfully adapt to teaching in the academe. A metaphor of an Experienced Tour Guide was used to illustrate how the participants exhibited curiosity, concern, control, confidence and made significant contributions to their university, departments, and students. Participants did not exhibit a fifth career-adaptability of cooperation/commitment. Instead, they experienced a culture of competition that was exacerbated by a lack of time, resulting in roadblocks to their career adaptability. In addition, they noted several unexpected breakdowns in the higher education system that inhibited their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe such as a lack of support, recognition, status, power, and job security. Since the practice of using contingent faculty is commonplace and will continue, this study offered recommendations for both universities and department chairs to create a more inclusive, supportive culture for contingent faculty. Implications for practice include the development and implementation of leadership training programs for department chairs, adopting a new perspective and discourse on contingent faculty, implementing inclusive policies and practices, and providing opportunities for support, recognition, power, status, and job security for these accomplished professionals who now call themselves educators.

Key words: Second-career, contingent faculty, career adaptability, career adapt-abilities, four-year public university, adjuncts
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Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

There is a new normal in higher education in the United States. Full-time, tenure-track faculty members are no longer the majority of instructors teaching college students today. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2011), of the 1.45 million instructors in higher education in the United States, more than 750,000 or 52 percent are part-time time instructors. Some colleges and universities call them adjuncts, others visiting lecturers or part-time faculty, and still others call them contingent or contract faculty. Regardless of the term used by a higher education institution, they are part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track faculty that teach no more than nine credit hours (3 courses) in a day or evening division. Today contingent faculty comprise the majority of instructors in higher education in the United States (Eagan, Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015). As a result, they allow higher educational institutions to fulfill their missions (Kezar & Sam, 2010). Colleges and universities could not educate students, operate, or remain financially viable without them (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Lyons, 2007; Wallin, 2004; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). They are the “new normal” in higher education (Kesser & Sam, 2010, p. xii) and they pose a number of challenges that higher education institutions must address.

Research Problem

Existing literature suggested that the increasing use of contingent faculty in higher education was commonplace (Backhaus, 2009; Cox & Leatherman, 2000; Fagan-Wilen, Springer, Ambrosino, & White, 2006; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Jacoby, 2006; Lyons, 2007; Maldonado & Riman, 2009; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004; West, 2010; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006) and this practice will continue (Bedford, 2009; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Feldman &
Turnley, 2004; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Zeigler & Reiff, 2006). As a result, contingent faculty were largely responsible for educating today’s youth and adult learners even though they were often not targeted for professional development (Backhaus, 2009; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Maldonado & Riman, 2009; Morton, 2012; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Contingent faculty, however, were not a homogeneous group. Indeed, they were a varied, heterogeneous group (Bedford, 2009; Bedford & Miller, 2013; Bettinger & Long, 2010; Kezar & Sam, 2010; Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003). This research targeted a very specific subgroup of contingent faculty – those that chose teaching in the academe as a second career. Second-career contingent faculty were similar to LaRocco and Brun’s (2006) full-time, tenure-track second-career academics or full-time, tenure-track faculty at four-year colleges or universities who were “practicing professionals” in a related field with a minimum of three years of experience before their switch to academia. Similarly, second-career contingent faculty were defined as prior practicing professionals with a minimum of three years of experience in a field in which they teach who switched careers to academia to become part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track contingent faculty. Some universities called them professional adjuncts (Bedford, 2009), others full-time, part-timers (Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003), and yet others distinguished this group further based on their scholarly engagement (Cruz & Sholder, 2013). Regardless, these second-career contingent faculty were regarded as “competent, part-time professors who have significant expertise in their discipline” (Bedford, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, this study explored the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty who changed careers on their adaptability to teaching in the academe.
Justification for the Research Problem

Research showed that the trend of universities hiring contingent faculty to teach their students was here to stay (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Kezar and Sam (2010) noted that the most common appointments made by colleges and universities in the United States were contingent or non-tenure-track faculty and suggested that it was important to know more about this new majority and the impact they had on the academe. After all, they were the “key to creating the teaching and learning environment” in universities and colleges nationwide (Kezar & Sam, 2010, p. 3). Kezar (2013b) argued that more local and contextualized studies were needed to understand contingent faculty especially research that focused on a single institution as this research will do. Therefore, it would be important for universities, administrators, deans, department chairs, and current and potential contingent faculty members to understand more about them. Some researchers suggested that “more intentional planning and analysis of this new workforce” was needed (Kezar & Sam, 2010, p. 3). This research will seek to fill this gap and add to existing limited knowledge on this new majority by taking an in-depth look at a specific subgroup: contingent faculty members who switched careers and chosen teaching in higher education as their second career. “Only by examining and disaggregating non-tenure-track [or contingent] faculty can we truly understand their satisfaction, experience, and potentially their impact on higher education” (Kezar & Sam, 2010, p. 11).

Several researchers suggested that second-career faculty were a growing trend (Bedford, 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013, Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003) and that more and more faculty were not taking the traditional path to the academe because of the challenges in the marketplace faced by higher education institutions (Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Simendinger, Pula, Kraft, & Jasperso,
2000; Webb, 2009). Cruz and Sholder (2013) suggested that “more and more faculty are coming to academia from a foundation as a successful professional” and it was becoming more common to switch to academia mid-career (p. 1). Therefore, it was important to learn more about how second-career contingent faculty understand, perceive, and experience their transition to the academe. This study will provide clues about a growing segment of contingent faculty that help educational institutions achieve their mission. It will also suggest strategies to foster the benefits of and meet the challenges posed by second-career contingent faculty members thereby maximizing their contributions to the university and student learning. This information might impact the institution’s hiring, recruitment practices, policies for contingent faculty, and provide professional development and support for this population that might help recruit and retain them.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

While the second-career phenomenon was not a new one especially in the applied fields (e.g., health, education, business, and law) (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012; Crane, O’Hern, & Lawler, 2009; Smith & Boyd, 2012; & Watson, 2008), there was a paucity of research on the transition to the academe for second-career contingent faculty, even though contingent faculty were the “new normal” in higher education. Much of the second-career faculty literature focused on full-time, tenure-track faculty (e.g., Barrett & Brown, 2014; Conboy, 2013; Crane et al., 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Shaker, 2013; Wisneski, 2013) or teacher preparation and education programs for elementary and secondary education teachers (e.g., Castro & Bauml, 2009; Chambers, 2002; Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Korthagen, 2008; Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Vermunt, 2010; Tigchelaar, Vermunt, & Brouwer, 2012). Limited second-career research focused on both full- and part-time non-tenure-track faculty together (see Smith & Boyd, 2012). Since the literature and research specifically on second-career contingent faculty was scarce, this
study will seek to fill this gap by attempting to understand how second-career contingent faculty perceive and experience their transition into a new career in the academe. This insight might help higher education institutions understand the motivations, goals, and experiences of a segment of the new instructional majority, ultimately helping them fulfill their missions. It also provided a glimpse of the challenges and benefits of second-career contingent faculty, many of which might be addressed by universities and colleges through faculty development and hiring practices.

**Significance of the Research Problem**

The perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty had a significant impact on multiple levels – institutional and national and global levels. This section will address each of these levels.

**Institutional Level of Significance**

In higher education institutions across the United States, 80 percent of all decisions were made in departments (Gmelch, 2015). In fact, department chairs were given the authority to make decisions for their departments (Wash & Bloomdahl, 2015). As a result, department chairs played a pivotal role in their institutions (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2015a; Evans & Chun, 2015; Gmelch, 2015; Lumpkin, 2004; Montez, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 2002). Among other duties, chairs were largely responsible for department culture (Lumpkin, 2004), providing support for teaching and scholarship (Berdrow, 2010), advancing their discipline (Gmelch, 2015), assigning courses to full-time and contingent faculty (Berdrow, 2015), and advocating for faculty (mainly full-timers) and their departments with administration (Wash & Bloomdahl, 2015). Chairs were also responsible for their departments’ hiring practices (Berdrow, 2010), including hiring contingent faculty each semester. As a result, department chairs played an important role in the recruitment, hiring, and development of contingent faculty including second-career contingent
faculty, yet these academic leaders often do not address the needs and development of these contingent faculty.

Benton and Li (2015) argued that department chairs needed to find ways to increase contingent faculty’s job satisfaction and promote an inclusive environment within the department to ensure that contingent faculty felt that they belonged. Since many contingent faculty felt isolated, alienated, or invisible (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Gappa, 2000; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; West, 2010) or like second class citizens (Gappa, 2000; Gappa & Leslie, 1993), this study might provide ways department chairs could reach out to second-career contingent faculty and integrate them into the department. This would show the respect these contingent faculty members desire as fellow educators. In turn, this might increase contingent faculty’s job satisfaction, which could positively impact student learning and outcomes. It might also result in the retention of these instructors, which would save department chairs and their institutions time and money because new contingent faculty would not need to be hired, orientated and trained.

Researchers found that highly rated chairs developed contingent faculty’s goals and priorities, were concerned about the needs of contingent faculty, showed appreciation to contingent faculty for their hard work, and fostered the development of full-time and contingent faculty (Benton & Li, 2015). They suggested that department chairs needed to promote contingent faculty’s professional development to ensure students received a quality education. In addition, they suggested that professional development advanced the careers and goals of contingent faculty, in particular second-career faculty, if the professional development was specifically designed for them. One way to ensure this was to get to know contingent faculty personally in order to determine their goals and needs (Benton & Li, 2015). This study might provide clues into the desires, goals, and professional development needs of second-career
contingent faculty, which could help department chairs and university policy makers develop targeted professional development to meet their specific needs ensuring a successful transition to teaching in the academe, thereby reducing turnover, improving effectiveness, and increasing program success. Additionally, it might provide information that will help chairs avoid potential problems with contingent faculty.

Hecht (2014) found chairs faced four potential problems areas with contingent faculty: 1) issues surrounding curricula; 2) fostering an effective team of faculty in the department; 3) addressing individual faculty concerns; and 4) conflict created when contingent faculty question college or university policies. In terms of the curricula, students did not know if their instructor was a contingent faculty member or a full-time faculty member. “The instructor is the instructor . . . [and] what is taught and how it is taught, therefore, reflect on the department and its reputation” (Hecht, 2014, p. 6). Hecht (2014) suggested that chairs should mitigate this by holding a contingent faculty orientation where department and institutional practices were discussed. Chairs also should discuss with contingent faculty the evaluation and rehiring practices in their departments. While institutions typically allowed chairs to hire contingent faculty as needed as a result of enrollment increases or financial reasons, the lack of commitment on the part of the institution and the department chair negatively impacted the integration of contingent faculty into the department and the institution (Hecht, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, department chairs that were ineffective could breed disenfranchisement and a lack of trust (Berdrow, 2010). Instead of assuming a one-size-fits all approach to professional development, this study might provide insight from the second-career contingent faculty members themselves on their inclusion and professional development needs, which department chairs and university
policy makers (deans, provost, and president) might use to provide targeted professional development and other programs that meets their unique needs as educators.

Considering more and more second-career contingent faculty were entering the academe (Bedford, 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Fogg, 2002; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003), this study will help university policy makers develop training procedures for chairs to make them more effective leaders of both full-time and contingent faculty. It also could provide ideas for department chairs and policy makers about effective recruiting and hiring practices to attract this growing group of instructional faculty as well as develop institutional or departmental policies that will positively impact them. Furthermore, this study will provide much needed in-depth insights directly from the second-career contingent faculty themselves, giving voice to faculty that department chairs and institutional policy makers did not frequently hear previously. While the job descriptions of department chairs and university policy makers varied from institution to institution, the information garnered from this study might positively impact their effectiveness regardless of the institution, resulting in national and potentially global significance.

**National Level of Significance**

While there were 80,000 chairs in nearly 6,000 higher education institutions in the United States (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2015a), one in five turn over annually (Gmelch, 2015). To further compound the issue, the job descriptions of department chairs vary from institution to institution (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2015a) and department chairs typically received limited if any training (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2015a; Gmelch, 2015; Wash & Bloomdahl, 2015). In a longitudinal study, researchers found that 96 percent of chairs received no training or education for this important role (Cipriano and Riccardi, 2015b). While the majority of department chairs claimed
they served in this role to make a difference or shape the direction of their department, 39 percent noted that no one else in their department would take on the role (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2015a). Yet, these are the individuals across the nation that are hiring contingent faculty, including second-career contingent faculty, to teach our students. By providing insight into this population so important to department, program, and university success, this study might help department chairs and policymakers in higher institutions across the country better understand this population and address their unique needs. This insight could prove critical to colleges and universities especially in light of the fact that higher education accrediting organizations had paid more and more attention to the way in which universities and colleges hired and treated all types of non-tenure-track faculty (Shaker, 2013).

**Positionality**

As a second-career contingent faculty member at both a 4-year, public university and 2-year community college in the Northeast for the past three to five years, I experienced the benefits and challenges of transitioning to a career of teaching in the academy. As a result, I possessed an inside perspective on the topic. Therefore, I needed to be open to and focused on how other second-career contingent faculty perceived and experienced their career transition to teaching in the academe without allowing my professional background bias my findings or interfere.

**Personal Background**

Personally, I felt strongly about education and the educators who instruct our children, adults, and future leaders. As far as I was concerned, next to parenting, teaching was one of the most important jobs anyone could hold in life. It was clearly my passion. In some ways it was ironic since I grew up in a Portuguese immigrant family whose members were not highly
educated. In fact, I was the first person in my immediate family to graduate from college. I believed in the power of education to unlock someone’s potential and provide the key to a career instead of a job and a living wage. I believed that educators had the opportunity to positively impact and inspire students of all ages. Educators had an immense responsibility and we should hold them to the highest standards but also provide them with the tools, support, resources, and policies that will ensure their success. These strong beliefs were the main reasons that after 23 years as a nonprofit leader and executive, I changed careers to teach in the academe. I wanted to make a difference in my community but chose to do so through educating students at the collegiate level. I started out at as a contingent faculty member of a local community college teaching one to two courses a semester while working full-time and then decided to transition to be a contingent faculty member in 2012. I thoroughly enjoyed it and would not want to work in any other profession. As difficult as it was sometimes, it was far more rewarding.

**Professional Background**

My professional experience as a second-career contingent faculty member affected my positionality and needed to be brought to the forefront. I was well aware of the important role part-time faculty play in teaching our students, yet they were often left to figure it all out on their own. At least, I was. When I first started teaching I transitioned to academia with a wealth of practical experience and knowledge, and a number of instances where theoretical knowledge could be practically applied. I was not given any formal orientation to the college/university or the department, nor did I receive assistance with syllabi development, classroom exercises, or assessments. It was sink or swim and I was determined to swim. It was a frightening experience because I wanted to be a good teacher, but I had a lot learn. I found that being a professor, while quite different from working in the nonprofit world, was really quite the same – you must always
continue to learn, grow, and get better. I took this love of learning and ran with it. I read a lot – books and journals on the subject matter I would teach and on pedagogy in general. I asked a lot of questions. I was told I could have my office hours via Skype but instead I scheduled hours in the department. The contingent faculty members shared an office with two desks and there were additional computers available to us in the conference room. By parking myself in the department, I met and got to know several of the full-time faculty and the ever-important administrative assistant as well as other part-time, contingent faculty. As a result, I was able to ask a lot of questions of seasoned contingent and full-time faculty and learned from their experiences and unique way of running a classroom. I looked at other faculty’s syllabi and discussed classroom policies and assignments, rubrics and assessments, and underperforming students. I learned how to make appropriate accommodations for individuals with a documented disability and discovered new and better ways of optimizing the learning environment in all my classes. I learned a little about the politics of the department and the university, although I felt I had a lot to learn in this arena. I began to realize that there was a hierarchy within my department that was important to be cognizant of and I began to see differences between the approaches of tenured, tenure-track, and contingent faculty members. I discovered that I was not the only second-career contingent faculty in the department or at the university after talking with colleagues and serving on a committee that focuses on the university’s part-time faculty. I was interested to learn about their experiences with transitioning to the academe. Were they the same as my experiences? How were they different? I had no idea if my perspective was unique or commonplace but I wanted to figure it out. I wanted to learn through their stories and share the transition process through their eyes. Therefore, I will focus on the distinct voices of the faculty that participate in this study in order to bring their perceptions and experiences into the light.
Research Question

There was one overarching research question this phenomenological study will attempt to address: What were the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty on their adaptability to teaching in the academe?

Theoretical Framework

This study explored the construct of career adaptability. Career adaptability was one component of Career Construction Theory. Savickas and Porfelli (2012) defined career adaptability as the “individual’s resources [strengths or capacities] for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, and traumas in their occupational roles that, to some degree large or small, alter their social integration” (p. 662). Five dimensions called adapt-abilities comprised the hierarchical construct of career adaptability. These adapt-abilities included curiosity, control, confidence, concern, and cooperation/commitment. The first four were consistently identified in career adaptability literature and a fifth dimension of cooperation was added and later replaced with commitment (Savickas et al., 2009). These dimensions were operationalized in the Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory although McMahon, Watson, & Brimrose (2012) noted that only the four dimension of curiosity, concern, control, and confidence were “consistently identified” in the literature (p. 762). The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale provided a quantitative assessment of career adaptability (McMahon, Watson, & Bimrose, 2012), however several researchers studied career adaptability qualitatively (Ebberwein, Krieshok, Ulven, & Prosser, 2004; Hartung & Borges, 2005; & McMahon et al., 2012).

McMahon, Watson, & Bimrose (2012) found that the construct of career adaptability could be assessed using qualitative (through stories) as well as quantitative methods. Ebberwein, Krieshok, Ulven, & Prosser (2004) argued that using qualitative research to study the construct
of career adaptability would allow for the focus to be on the interaction of the individual and the environment as well as the interaction between the researcher and participants. Savickas et al. (2009) suggested that in the 21st Century “careers [should be seen] as individual scripts”, which lent credence to the use of qualitative methods (p. 240). McMahon et al. (2012) suggested the qualitative descriptors shown in Table 1 should be evaluated for their “their utility and promise in future research” (p. 767).

Table 1

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale subscales; qualitative descriptors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Career Adapt-Abilities Scale items</th>
<th>Qualitative descriptors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Willingness to explore and discover one’s environment and options</td>
<td>Exploring my surroundings</td>
<td>Investigative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Looking for opportunities to grow as a person</td>
<td>Self-reflective</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Imagining what my future will be like</td>
<td>Future focused/orientated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigating options before making a choice</td>
<td>Explorative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observing different ways of doing things</td>
<td>Observant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Personal responsibility for decisions and actions that affect career</td>
<td>Making decisions by myself</td>
<td>Independent/autonomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking before I act</td>
<td>Contemplative/pre-emptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taking responsibility for my actions</td>
<td>Accountable/trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being persistent and patient</td>
<td>Persistent/patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sticking up for my beliefs</td>
<td>Self-principled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Self-confidence; belief in one’s abilities; self-efficacy</td>
<td>Performing tasks efficiently</td>
<td>Efficient/productive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from my mistakes</td>
<td>Self-perceptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being dependable – doing what I say I will do</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling pride in a job well done</td>
<td>Proud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having self-confidence</td>
<td>Self-confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>Concern for future and how choices will influence it</td>
<td>Planning important things before I start</td>
<td>Planful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking about what my future will be like</td>
<td>Forward-thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Realizing that today’s choices shape my future</td>
<td>Connects present and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expecting the future to be good</td>
<td>Optimistic/hopeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing for the future</td>
<td>Prepared/ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation/</td>
<td>Ability to work with and get along with others</td>
<td>Becoming less self-centered</td>
<td>Inter-relational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Acting friendly</td>
<td>Collegial/friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Getting along with all kinds of people</td>
<td>Interpersonally skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperating with others on group projects</td>
<td>Accommodating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Playing my part on a team</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brown, Bimrose, Barnes, & Hughes (2012) noted that a desire for a new challenge or substantial and meaningful personal development drove career change. McMahon et al. (2012) suggested that researchers should explore three levels of career adapt-abilities in the narratives of study participants when studying individuals’ career adaptability: “external (objective reporting of a transition), internal (elaboration of feelings and reactions), or reflexive (seeking meaning through interpretation and conceptualization)” (p. 763). They suggested that career adaptabilities were present not only during the initial career transition but throughout career development creating a wider application of the construct. In contrast, individuals who lacked career adaptabilities present the specific behaviors listed in Table 2, which negatively affected their ability to successfully adapt to career changes.

Table 2
Lack of Career Adaptability Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Adaptability Resources</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Behaviors exhibited when an individual lacks this resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Willingness to explore and discover one’s environment and options</td>
<td>Being naïve about world of work, and inaccurate images of the self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Personal responsibility for decisions and actions that affect career</td>
<td>Indecisiveness, confusion, procrastination, or perfectionism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Self-confidence; belief in one’s abilities; self-efficacy</td>
<td>Career inhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>Concern for future and how choices will influence it</td>
<td>Career indifference, planlessness, pessimism about future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation/ Commitment</td>
<td>Ability to work with and get along with others</td>
<td>Inability to work with and get along with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Maggiori et al. (2013) suggested that in today’s ever-changing workplace, adapt-abilities were needed to tackle and meet demands of a job and new careers. Adapt-abilities were described as follows: individuals that successfully adapted to a new career were *concerned* about a new career but were also optimistic and hopeful; were prepared for a new career and, therefore,
took control; explored possible careers and, as a result, exhibited curiosity; had the confidence to make a switch and pursued a new career and overcame obstacles (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and were committed to success in the new career, sought new possibilities and experimented even in uncertain conditions (Savickas et al., 2009). Researchers found that these adapt-abilities predict professional and general (e.g., one’s overall health and satisfaction with life) well-being (Brown, Bimrose, Barnes, & Hughes, 2012; Maggiori et al., 2013; Rossier et al., 2012) and this was seen in the narrative of the stories of individuals.

Qualitative studies found that career adaptability showed itself differently from one individual to the next as well as within participants’ stories (McMahon et al., 2012). Research suggested that individuals that were willing and able to exhibit behaviors appropriate for the changed conditions or career (adaptive and adaptability, respectively) exhibited higher levels of adaptation (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In other words, was an individual ready to adapt and did the individual possess the resources and wherewithal to adapt? If individuals possessed career adapt-abilities, this was exhibited in a good career fit as shown through the individuals’ development, satisfaction, and success in their new endeavor (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Low levels of career adapt-abilities were found in individuals who were more anxious and uncertain about their career choices and commitments (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). This limited the desire to learn, an important predictor of adaptability.

Several researchers found that the inclination and interest in learning and developing adapt-abilities was a predictor of career adaptability (Brown et al., 2012; Creed, Fallon, & Hood, 2009; Cronshaw & Jethmalani, 2005; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; O’Connell, McNeely, & Hall, 2008). Brown et al. (2012) noted that work that is challenging is one of the best ways to develop career adaptabilities and that these adapt-abilities affected “work engagement, job
satisfaction, career anxiety, successful job transitions, work-stress” (p. 438). They noted that adaptable individuals recognized that the knowledge they obtained and mastered is transferable to other careers and understand the importance of that learning through interacting with others. Furthermore, they suggested that “the development of career adapt-abilities has to be self-directed . . . dependent upon individual actions” (Brown et al., 2012, p. 759). Engaging in self-reflexive behavior or being able to look at existing skills and situation and determine ways it might be enriched, improved, or expanded upon was key to successful career transitions (Brown et al., 2012). They also suggested that individuals who know “where they had been, where they were, and where they might be going . . . “ and “were in charge of their own stories “ exhibited adaptability (Brown et al., 2012, p. 759). Lastly, they found that career adapt-abilities enable the successful transition to a new career for individuals who change careers mid-career. Zacher, Ambiel, & Noronha (2015) suggested that career adaptability affected individuals’ perceptions of their options concerning alternative careers. In addition, they suggested that individuals “with high career adaptability were more open to potential career changes, possessed more psychosocial resources that facilitated career changes, and were less worried about the social and materialistic implications of career changes than… [individuals] with low career adaptability” (p. 170). Therefore, individuals with high career adaptability were more willing to take more risks with career changes (Zacher, Ambiel, & Noronha, 2015). By understanding the characteristics of career adapt-abilities, the research question posed in this study could be adequately addressed.

Considering that this research sought to understand and explore the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty on their adaptability to teaching in the academe, career adaptability was determined to be the most appropriate theoretical framework to use for this study. There was ample evidence that career adaptability could be studied qualitatively,
which supported the qualitative methodology (IPA) suggested for this study. This study sought to fill existing gaps in the literature on second-career contingent faculty by obtaining the stories of these understudied individuals in order to providing a deeper insight into their career motives, concerns, challenges, skills, and competencies.

**Chapter Two: Review of the Literature**

Since contingent faculty were and will continue to be valuable resources for higher education institutions (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006), more needed to be learned about this new faculty majority who were teaching our students and future leaders. In order to address this research problem, a literature review was conducted that investigates who these contingent faculty members were, what motivated them to teach, and what their needs, benefits, and disadvantages were, and how they were integrated into the academe and became more satisfied. Additionally, a specific subgroup of contingent faculty will be explored – second-career contingent faculty in order to learn more about who they were, why they switched careers to teaching in the academe, the benefits and challenges they presented, and how they adapted to the transition into the academe. This was not a simple task because researchers suggested that contingent faculty were a heterogeneous group (Bedford, 2009; Bedford & Miller, 2013; Bettinger & Long, 2010; Kezar & Sam, 2010; Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003). They were not all equal or the same. While there was abundant literature on full-time tenure-track faculty, there was limited literature and research on contingent faculty, especially in four-year institutions, and a paucity of research on second-career contingent faculty. This research sought to fill this gap in order to add to the knowledge base on this particular subset of contingent faculty in four-year institutions. First, the literature review looked at contingent faculty in general.
Types of Contingent Faculty

Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) seminal work on contingent faculty provided insight into the type of contingent faculty that teach in our universities. It created a taxonomy for this group of professionals who today make up the new normal in higher education. Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) seminal work found four main types of contingent faculty teach in higher education:

1. **Career Enders** were retired, semi-retired, or bridging the gap to retirement by teaching.

2. **Specialists, Experts, or Professionals** worked in full-time careers and were typically not interested in obtaining a full-time faculty position. Instead, they taught to share their extensive practical experience and knowledge with students.

3. **Aspiring Academics** were contingent faculty who wanted to obtain a full-time teaching position. Many of these part-timers taught at more than one institution cobbling together two or more part-time salaries into a living wage.

4. **Freelancers** also wanted to share their professional experience and knowledge with students but purposely chose to work part-time.

Over the past 22 years, dozens of researchers used this typology when studying contingent faculty. Wallin (2004) noted that it was important that administrators who hire contingent faculty understand the reason these instructors decided to teach in order to help them feel valued and an integral part of the college community. While Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) typology was a sound starting point, it begged the questions - Where did second-career contingent faculty fit in this typology? Did they fit in at all? Is it possible that a fifth category of contingent faculty specifically targeting this growing segment of contingent faculty was warranted? Regardless of where second-career contingent faculty belonged in this typology,
considering the type of contingent faculty was important when hiring, evaluating, and planning meaningful professional development programs for these faculty members and meeting their needs, desires, and goals in order to maximize their contributions to the academe.

**Advantages of Contingent Faculty**

Since colleges and universities were and will continue to be dependent on contingent faculty members for their very survival (Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Lyons, 2007; Wallin, 2004; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006), they brought a number of important advantages to these institutions. Some researchers viewed contingent faculty as hard-working, dedicated, and well-qualified (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Gappa & Leslie, 1993). In fact, Morton (2012) suggested that contingent faculty were not inferior to their full-time, tenure-track and tenured counterparts. The most documented advantage of hiring contingent faculty was financial considerations such as adapting to decreased state funding or budget constraints and cost savings (Benjamin, 2002; Bettinger & Long, 2010; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Clark, Moore, Johnston, & Openshaw, 2011; Danley-Scott & Tompsett-Makin, 2013; Dolan, Hall, Karlsson, & Martinak, 2013; Eagan et al., 2015; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006; Forbes et al., 2010; Geiger, 2005; Green, 2007; Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Langen, 2011; Lyons, 2007; Modarelli, 2006; Morton, 2012; Noble, 2000; Papp, 2002; Ruiz, 2007; Sorcinelli, 2007; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004; Thyer, Myers, & Nugent, 2011; Umbach, 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Other advantages of contingent faculty included: filling a void caused by a lack of full-time faculty in certain disciplines (Backhaus, 2009; Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006) and providing flexible staffing options, which allowed departments to quickly and easily adjust to enrollment and market fluctuations (Backhaus, 2009; Bergom & Waltman, 2009; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Eagan et al., 2015; Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006; Forbes et al., 2010; Green, 2007; Halcrow & Olson,
2008; Langen, 2011; Modarelli, 2006; Papp, 2002; Ruiz, 2007; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004; Umbach, 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006) without any legal, long-term obligation to retain their services (Dolan et al., 2013) rendering these professors expendable (Ruiz, 2007). Additionally, contingent faculty were often hired for the special expertise they bring to the classroom as a result of practical experience, which strengthens programs and course offerings (Bergom & Waltman, 2009; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Eagan et al., 2015; Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006; Forbes et al., 2010; Geiger, 2005; Green, 2007; Langen, 2011; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004). In fact, Bettinger and Long (2010) found that students who take a class taught by contingent faculty were more likely to take subsequent classes and even major in that subject. This finding showed that student interest was not diminished by taking courses taught by contingent faculty. They also found that due to their considerable professional experience, contingent faculty were particularly effective in fostering student interest and subsequent enrollment in classes that were germane to a specific discipline. Bergom and Waltman (2009) noted that contingent faculty valued working with students and considered it a highpoint of their job.

While critics claimed that contingent faculty hurt the academe, “there is no evidence to suggest that adjunct [contingent] faculty are substandard instructors” (Caruth & Caruth, 2013, p. 4). In fact, Thyer, Myers, & Nugent (2011) found no significant difference between the student evaluations of contingent and full-time faculty. Contingent faculty often taught a heavier course load than their full-time counterparts (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Halcrow & Olson, 2008). They typically taught the lower level introductory courses that many full-time faculty members abhorred (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Green, 2007; Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Lyons, 2007; Modarelli, 2006) and they were not expected to conduct research (Halcrow & Olson, 2008). Contrary to the popular misconception that contingent faculty were transient, contingent faculty
typically worked for the same institution for several years with the average length being seven years (Kesar & Sam, 2010). As a result, contingent faculty enhanced the diversity of the instructional staff at a given institution (Geiger, 2005; Green, 2007; Nutting, 2003; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004). Lastly, Bergom and Waltman (2009) suggested that contingent faculty wanted five things: 1) to focus on teaching; 2) flexibility; 3) job security; 4) professional growth opportunities and professional development; and 5) respect and belongingness. While researchers exalted the benefits of hiring and utilizing contingent faculty in higher education, there were a number of disadvantages that were highlighted in the literature.

**Disadvantages of Contingent Faculty**

Even though colleges and universities were dependent on contingent faculty members to fulfill their missions (Dolan et al., 2013), contingent faculty presented numerous distinct disadvantages for these institutions. One disadvantage was the bifurcated system in higher education of the tenured or tenure-track faculty versus the contingent faculty. This resulted in feelings of “second-class” citizenship by contingent faculty (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Clark et al., 2011; Dolan et al., 2013; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004) and, ultimately, disillusionment and disenfranchisement of contingent faculty as the “have nots” (Halcrow & Olson, 2008, p. 6). Maxey and Kezar (2015) found that there is “an awareness of how the current faculty model, policies, and practices are opposed to . . . [faculty’s] commitments and concerns for the quality of student learning and the health of the academic profession” (p. 586).

Another disadvantage of hiring and utilizing contingent faculty in higher education was the cost of continually hiring and orienting new contingent faculty because of turnover rates and the transient nature of contingent faculty (Bettinger & Long, 2010; Forbes et al., 2010; Lyons,
2007). After all, many contingent faculty worked a full-time job above and beyond their teaching position or taught at more than one institution (Modarelli, 2006) and these other responsibilities often precluded them from continuing to teach part-time at a particular institution.

Unlike full-time faculty, colleges and universities typically did not use as stringent and cumbersome a hiring process for contingent faculty (Lyons, 2007; Maldonado & Riman, 2009), which some suggested brings into question their qualifications and quality. New contingent faculty, in particular, had very little to no pedagogical training and little experience with teaching, curriculum development, syllabi preparation, grading, or classroom management techniques (Burton, Bamberry, & Harris-Boundry, 2005; Lyons, 2007; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Therefore, researchers expressed concerns about the quality of contingent faculty’s teaching instruction (Backhaus, 2009; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006; Forbes et al., 2010; Lyons, 2007; Maxey and Kezar, 2015; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). These critics were concerned that students did not receive consistent, high quality instruction from contingent faculty as they did from full-time faculty members. According to Umbach (2007), contingent faculty interacted less frequently with students, did not use collaborative techniques as often, spent less time with class preparation, and had lower expectations of the academic performance of their students than their full-time counterparts. Unfortunately, universities offered few, if any, incentives for contingent faculty to develop and foster relationships with students or to become active with their institution (Halcrow and Olson, 2008). Even so, no significant difference was found between teaching quality of full-time faculty members and contingent faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Green, 2007). However, research found that grade inflation was an issue with contingent faculty (Forbes et al. 2010; Sonner, 2000; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004). Contingent faculty gave students
higher grades than full-time faculty members (Sonner, 2000). Some scholars suggested this occurred because contingent faculty were afraid of upsetting students and losing their employment (Halcrow & Olson, 2008).

Critics claimed that contingent faculty negatively impact student learning (Baldwin & Wawrynski, 2011; Benjamin, 2002; Bergom, Waltman, August, & Hollenshead, 2010; Carrell & West, 2010; Eagan & Jaegar, 2008, 2009; Eagan et al., 2015; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Geiger, 2005; Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Jacoby, 2006; Jaegar & Eagan, 2011a, 2011b; Maxey & Kezar, 2015; Umbach, 2007). Researchers found that the higher the percentage of contingent faculty students were exposed to the lower the graduation rates (Bergom et al., 2010; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Jacoby 2006); the less likely those students transferred from a 2-year to a 4-year institution (Bergom et al., 2010; Eagan & Jaegar, 2009; Jaegar & Eagan, 2011b; Eagan et al., 2015); and the less likely that these students were retained the following fall (Eagan & Jaegar, 2008; Eagan et al., 2015; Jaegar & Eagan, 2011a). Eagan and Jaegar (2009) submitted that these finding had more to do with the contingent faculty’s working conditions than the faculty themselves. Additionally, Harrington and Schibik (2004) found that greater exposure to contingent faculty resulted in lower persistence by students. In fact, students who were taught by contingent faculty performed significantly worse in more advanced courses than students who were taught by tenure track faculty (Carrell & West, 2010).

Researchers contended that contingent faculty affected core undergraduate programs (or general education programs) negatively impacting early college students as well as those who were less prepared for the rigors of college and most in the need of attention and quality instruction (Benjamin, 2002; Geiger, 2005). Additionally, literature suggested that contingent faculty prepared less for their courses, were less available and accessible to students as a result of
the nature of their part-time employment, and, as a result, students were less likely to connect with them (Eagan et al., 2015; Umbach, 2007). Furthermore, researchers suggested that contingent faculty negatively impact student success and retention because they typically did not utilize student-centered teaching in the classroom (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011; Eagan et al., 2015; Umbach, 2007). Research showed that contingent faculty spent two to four times less out-of-class student-related hours as their full-time counterparts and nearly one-third of contingent faculty at four-year higher education institutions reported not holding any office hours. These findings refuted the common assumption that contingent faculty were student-oriented (Benjamin, 2002). Benjamin (2002) declared that “full-time, tenured faculty are, in fact, not only demonstrably better qualified but also devote proportionally more time to their students than do contingent faculty” (p. 10). He went on to emphasize that “excessive dependence on contingent appointments is detrimental [emphasis added] to undergraduate learning” (Benjamin, 2002, p. 10). While critics warned about the numerous disadvantages to utilizing contingent faculty in higher education institutions, they were here to stay and it behooved institutions to find ways to integrate them into their academic communities and to help them build satisfying careers in order to maximize their contributions to their institutions.

**Integration of Contingent faculty**

By nature of their role, many part-timers were often not integrated into the college community in which they were an integral part. Gappa and Leslie (1993) defined integration as “the effort institutions make to ensure that their contingent faculty members are successful, valued, and supported in what they do” (p.180). Contingent faculty members wanted to be part of the college community and developed meaningful relationships with other faculty and collegiate peers (Feldman & Turnley, 2004; West, 2010). Even so, many contingent faculty felt
isolated, alienated, or invisible (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Gappa, 2000; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; West, 2010). Additionally, they felt like second class citizens whose main purpose was to preserve the jobs of full-time faculty (Gappa, 2000; Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Many contingent faculty felt they were not respected or given many opportunities to get involved in their departments and institutions (Halcrow & Olson, 2008). Research showed that integrating contingent faculty into the university or college community reduced feelings of isolation and allowed these faculty members to feel valued and connected to the institution and its mission (Burnstad, 2002; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Green, 2007; Wallin, 2004; West, 2010). “Most part-timers express anger and frustration over their exclusion from collegial activities and career opportunities and the general lack of appreciation” (Halcrow & Olson, 2008, p. 4). At the very least, contingent faculty needed the same access to information and resources as their full-time counterparts including being integrated into the culture of the college or university (Nutting, 2003; Wallin, 2007; West, 2010). Students often were not aware whether their instructors were full-time or contingent faculty members and, as a result, expected their instructors to be knowledgeable about all aspects of the university, which was less likely to be true for a part-timer (Geiger, 2005). By integrating contingent faculty into the university community this improved the overall satisfaction of contingent faculty.

**Satisfaction of Contingent Faculty**

Contrary to what many people assumed about contingent faculty because of their temporary, part-time status, these faculty report high levels of overall satisfaction with their jobs (Antony & Valadez, 2002; Benjamin, 2002; Eagan et al., 2015; Toutkoushian & Bellas, 2003). In fact, Antony and Valadez (2002) found that contingent faculty seemed to be as satisfied as full-time faculty. However, they noted that contingent faculty were less satisfied than full-time
faculty with their students and the autonomy (i.e., academic freedom) inherent in the professorship that was cherished by tenured faculty and their students. Hoyt (2012) confirmed Antony and Valadez’s (2002) findings on contingent faculty’s lower satisfaction with autonomy and found that contingent faculty were also less satisfied than full-timers with other working conditions such as compensation, contract length, the ability to teach other subjects, and better communication. They believed these working conditions affected both loyalty to institutions and turnover. Lack of job security, benefits, and opportunities for advancements were several additional reasons cited for dissatisfaction among contingent faculty (Toutkoushian & Bellas, 2003). A major factor that bred dissatisfaction among contingent faculty was the perceived lack of respect they were afforded by their full-time peers (Eagan et al., 2015; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, & August, 2012). This was evident in departmental meetings, through interactions with department chairs, and a general feeling that they were ignored or not valued by full-time peers (Eagan et al., 2015; Waltman et al., 2012).

Eagan et al., (2015) found that contingent faculty who felt respected by their full-time peers and their institution self-reported higher levels of satisfaction. Therefore, department chairs and college administrators considered providing opportunities for integration in both the department and the institution as a whole in order to foster respect between all faculty and, ultimately, higher levels of satisfaction of all faculty. After all, contingent faculty who believed that their institution recognized good teaching and felt their teaching was valued by their department self-rated as more satisfied (Eagan et al., 2015). Supporting this idea, Kezar (2013b) found that contingent faculty “perceive that departmental policies shape their performance and their ability to create quality learning experiences” (p. 588-589). However, she found that unsupportive departmental policies were far more common and even when cultures were supportive it was unlikely that
multiple policies were implemented that were supportive of contingent faculty. Furthermore, she noted that contingent faculty were not in and of themselves the problem, but negative policies and practices that affected or impacted contingent faculty shaped negative outcomes. These findings suggested that working conditions not the contingent status ultimately affect the satisfaction of contingent faculty (Eagan et al., 2015).

Some researchers who studied contingent faculty satisfaction disaggregated contingent faculty into two groups: voluntary contingent faculty or those who wanted and chose to work part-time; and involuntary contingent faculty or those who worked part-time but wanted a full-time teaching position (Antony & Hayden, 2011; Eagan et al., 2015; Maynard & Joseph, 2008). Maynard and Joseph (2008) found that voluntary contingent faculty were not underemployed because they voluntarily chose to work part-time. Eagan, Jaegar, and Grantham (2015) agreed with this notion by suggesting that contingent faculty were underemployed if they wanted or needed full-time work. They also found that contingent faculty that were underemployed (i.e., involuntary contingent faculty) were significantly less satisfied than voluntary part-timers. In fact, voluntary contingent faculty reported being the more satisfied with their employment than full-timers or involuntary contingent faculty (Antony & Hayden, 2011; Eagan et al., 2015; Maynard & Joseph, 2008). They were also as satisfied as full-time faculty with their salary and workload but less satisfied with benefits (Antony & Hayden, 2011; Eagan et al., 2015). In contrast, involuntary contingent faculty were less satisfied with wages, job security, advancement opportunities, the methods used to evaluate them than voluntary contingent faculty (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Kezar & Sam, 2010; Maynard & Joseph, 2008). These differences in satisfaction highlighted the diversity that existed among contingent faculty (Eagan et al., 2015) and gave further credence to the notion that contingent faculty were not all the same.
Although contingent faculty were a diverse group, Sorcinelli (2007) stressed the importance that every faculty member, whether they were contingent or full-time, tenure-track or tenured faculty, or voluntary or involuntary contingent faculty, needed to be supported and provided meaningful growth opportunities through professional development.

**The Need for Professional Development for Contingent faculty**

Since contingent faculty not full-time, tenure-track faculty members made up the majority of instructors teaching college students today (Lyons, 2007; NCES, 2011; Harrington & Schibik, 2004), they were largely responsible for educating today’s youth and adult learners. In fact, it was more and more common for contingent faculty to teach more than half of the course sections offered by a college or university (Cox & Leatherman, 2000; Fulton, 2000; Lyons, 2007, Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). However, colleges and universities often did not dedicate adequate resources for professional development of contingent faculty (Eagan et al., 2015; Kezar, 2013a, 2013b). Backhaus (2009) suggested that universities should understand the types of contingent faculty they employ in order to determine what motivated them to participate in professional development. “In higher education, faculty development involves fostering skills both in teaching and in research, as well as preparing faculty to manage their careers” (Backhaus, 2009, p. 40). Professional development was important for any instructor, whether they were full-time or contingent faculty, to further develop their skills, classroom acumen, and professional abilities. Dolan, Hall, Karlsson, and Martinak (2013) found that contingent faculty were “committed professionals who want the recognition of their status as educators as well as the professional development opportunities to increase their effectiveness in the classroom” (p. 43). They noted that contingent faculty want to learn new pedagogical skills and fully participate in their institution’s community. Harrington and Schibik (2004) noted that “greater attention to how
institutions use and support part-time and adjunct faculty should have a direct and positive effect on retention and student learning outcomes” (p. 5).

With such a diverse group that had diverse reasons for teaching and needs, what were the best ways to provide professional development to contingent faculty? Burton, Bramberry & Harris-Boundry (2005) suggested that professional development programs and activities in universities and colleges needed to focus on increasing the teaching effectiveness for new teachers, not only because it will develop better and more effective teachers, but it will also improve student achievement and interest in school, which was linked to teaching efficacy. Burton et al. (2005) defined teaching efficacy as the teacher’s “confidence in his or her ability to influence student performance and learning” (p.160). They found that this issue has been largely overlooked by higher educational institutions and researchers. They suggested that educational institutions at every level should implement professional development programs, activities, or seminars for new teachers to improve their teaching efficacy, which will provide the tools and knowledge to address the trials and tribulations that take place in the classroom and make them more effective teachers. Leslie and Gappa (2002) agreed that contingent faculty were assets not “replaceable parts” and educational institutions needed to provide professional development activities that improve teaching effectiveness, morale, and institutional loyalty (p. 66).

Wallin (2007) noted that educational institutions supported contingent faculty by establishing professional development programs specifically designed for this instructional majority that meet their needs. Lyons (2007) found that these instructors need five elements in a professional development program:

1. A thorough orientation to the institution, its culture, and its practices;
2. Adequate training in fundamental teaching and classroom management skills;
3. A sense of belonging to the institution;
4. Both initial and ongoing professional development; and
5. Recognition for quality work that was perceived as appropriate and adequate (p. 6).

Following along that same line, Morton (2012) suggested that institutions should create professional development that provide opportunity, supervision, community, advancement, and respect for contingent faculty. Forbes, Hickey, and White (2010) found four areas that contingent faculty perceived a need for professional development: 1) role expectations and ambiguity; 2) the need for appropriate materials; 3) assistance with technology and access to resources within the department especially more experienced faculty to combat isolation and integrate adjuncts into university community; and 4) establishment of a more involved orientation program. Ziegler and Reiff (2006) suggested colleges and universities should develop mentoring programs for contingent faculty as the primary means of professional development and integration to the college community. Planned, meaningful professional development designed specifically for contingent faculty should result in attracting and retaining this important instructional majority thereby reducing turnover, improving effectiveness, and increasing program success (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). While the options for professional development for contingent faculty seemed limitless, this research focused on a specific subgroup of contingent faculty that switched to teaching in the academe after years of success in a different profession. They were second-career contingent faculty.

**Second-Career Contingent Faculty**

Several researchers suggested that second-career faculty were a growing trend (Bedford, 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Fogg, 2002; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003) and that more and more faculty were not taking the traditional path to the academe because of
the challenges in the marketplace faced by higher education institutions (Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Simendinger et al., 2000; Webb, 2009). Cruz and Sholder (2013) suggested that “more and more faculty are coming to academia from a foundation as a successful professional” and it was becoming more common to switch to academia mid-career (p. 1). Therefore, it was important to learn more about how second-career contingent faculty understand, perceive, and experience their transition to the academe. While the majority of literature and research was on second-career full-time faculty (e.g., Barrett & Brown, 2014; Conboy, 2013; Crane et al., 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Shaker, 2013; Wisneski, 2013), teacher preparation and education programs for elementary and secondary education teachers (e.g., Castro & Baum, 2009; Chambers, 2002; Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Korthagen, 2008; Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Vermunt, 2010; Tigchelaar, Vermunt, & Brouwer, 2012) or focused on both full- and part-time non-tenure-track faculty together (see Smith & Boyd, 2012), there was a paucity of literature on second-career contingent faculty. Therefore, this study sought to fill this gap by attempting to understand how second-career contingent faculty perceive and experience their transition into a new career in the academe. This insight might help higher education institutions understand the motivations, goals, and experiences of a segment of the new instructional majority, ultimately helping them fulfill their missions. It provided a glimpse of the challenges and benefits of second-career contingent faculty, many of which might be addressed by universities and colleges through faculty development, institutional policies, and hiring practices. However, first, researchers must answer the question: Who were these second-career contingent faculty and what were their needs and motivations to teach in the academe?

Second-career contingent faculty were similar to LaRocco & Brun’s (2006) full-time, tenure-track second-career academics, full-time, tenure-track faculty at four-year colleges or
universities who were “practicing professionals” in a related field with a minimum of three years of experience before their switch to academia. The only difference was that second-career contingent faculty were prior practicing professionals with a minimum of three years of experience in a related field to the one they taught and switched careers to academia to become part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track contingent faculty. Some called them professional contingent faculty (Bedford, 2009), others full-time, part-timers (Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003), and yet others distinguished this group further based on their scholarly engagement (Cruz & Sholder, 2013). Regardless, these second-career contingent faculty were “competent, part-time professors who have significant expertise in their discipline” (Bedford, 2009, p. 2). While they were contingent faculty and much of the earlier literature applies to them, second-career contingent faculty had specific needs, motivations, benefits, and challenges that must be addressed by higher education institutions in order to maximize their impact on these institutions and their students.

**Benefits of Utilizing Second-Career Contingent Faculty**

In today’s global workplace and marketplace, it was typical for individuals not only to hold a number of different jobs in their lifetime but also to change careers. Many universities and colleges were looking for and pursuing these experienced professionals who sought to switch careers to become part-time professors in the academe, especially in the applied fields of business, education, health care, and human services (Crane et al., 2009). These second-career contingent faculty were valued for their extensive practical experience, specialized skills, and content knowledge they bring to the classroom (Crane et al., 2009; Fogg, 2002; Haggard, Slostad, & Winterton, 2006; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006). As a result, these faculty members were able to apply theory and course material to real-world situations, providing invaluable
connections to practical and professional situations thereby helping prepare future practitioners in their respective fields (Chambers, 2002; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Simendinger et al., 2000; Smith & Boyd, 2012; Wisneski, 2013). “They can bring concrete examples and illustrations, which they have lived, that can be drawn upon to bring the curriculum to life” (Simendinger et al., 2000, p. 106). In addition, they were often more up-to-date in their field than those that had been academicians their entire career (Simendinger et al., 2000). These former professionals were “confident they will bring the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to the teaching-learning setting” (Haggard et al., 2006, p. 318). Furthermore, second-career contingent faculty were “energized longer than faculty members who are feeling a sense of burnout from long years in the same role” (Crane et al., 2009, p.25). Crane, O’Hern, and Lawler (2009) suggested four major benefits of second-career faculty: 1) starting a new career resulted in newfound enthusiasm, energy, and excitement; 2) autonomy, which was treasured in the academe, invigorated professionals who did not enjoy such freedom in their prior careers; 3) passion and self-confidence in their abilities and eventual success overshadowed any fears of the unknown, unfamiliar, and possible failure; and 4) a strong sense of responsibility as they recognized their ability to affect and impact future professionals in their field.

Second-career contingent faculty often possessed a number of skills, workplace habits, and competencies that aided their successful transition to the academe. During their years of practical experience and professional prowess, they often developed a strong workplace ethic and transferable soft skills such as interpersonal skills, effective oral and written communication skills, patience, organizational skills, time management; problem-solving skills; or experience working effectively in teams (Castro & Bauml, 2009; Chambers, 2002; Wisneski, 2013). They were also mature, highly motivated, self-confident, self-directed, and assertive, which was
directly related to the prior success they achieved in their previous career (Castro & Baum, 2009; Resta, Huling, & Rainwater, 2001; Simendinger et al., 2000). Furthermore, second-career contingent faculty brought a diverse perspective (Bedford, 2009) that was vastly different from their scholarly full-time counterparts who had little practical experience in their field. Not only did second-career contingent faculty offer diverse perspectives, but they also had diverse reasons why they chose to switch careers to teach in the academe.

**Reasons for Switching Careers to Teaching in the Academe**

Although there was limited literature on second-career contingent faculty, a number of different reasons were found for why this subgroup of the new faculty majority switched careers to teach in the academe. For some, the decision was practical but far more second-career contingent faculty pointed to altruistic reasons for switching careers. Most second-career contingent faculty expressed a love of teaching, working with and helping students, making a difference to students, the institution where they teach and society in general, or having the honor of preparing the next generation of professionals in their field (Chambers, 2002; Crane et al., 2009; Kilimnik, Correa, Vieira de Oliveira, & Barros, 2012; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Shaker, 2013; Smith & Boyd, 2012). For many others, teaching in the academe was their “dream job” (Chambers, 2002). These individuals regarded teaching in the academe as more than just a job and were grateful to make a difference doing what they loved (Shaker, 2013). Conboy (2013) suggested that second-career faculty made students more “practice ready” by sharing their inside knowledge of their professions and trade (p. 148). Some second-career contingent faculty taught one or two college courses previously before transitioning permanently to the academe (Crane et al., 2009). Some enjoyed the less-restrictive environment of the academe (e.g.,
creativity and autonomy allowed) as opposed to the business world and could financially afford to switch careers to the academe (Chambers, 2002).

Second-career contingent faculty possessed a number of skills and competencies that make them attractive to higher education institutions. They brought a strong work ethic, a tolerance for diversity, the ability to think analytically to their new profession as instructors in the academe, and, most importantly, the willingness to innovate and try new things such as new, student-centered methods of teaching (Chambers, 2002). As a result of their prior work experience, they brought “a less traditional perspective on schools, students, and classwork” (p. 216). While there were a number of different reasons why second-career faculty switched to the teaching profession and a number of benefits to utilizing them, there faced a myriad of challenges as they adapted to teaching in the academe.

Challenges Faced by Second-Career Contingent Faculty

Several researchers noted the transition of second-career contingent faculty into the academe was rife with challenges (Crane et al., 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Simendinger et al., 2000; Smith & Boyd, 2012). One major hurdle second-career faculty faced was the vast difference between feedback in the business and professional world and in the academe. In the professional and business world, feedback was typically varied and intricate (e.g., sales revenue, performance reviews, and income and balance sheets) but the most common form of feedback in the academe was student evaluations (Simendinger et al., 2000; Wisneski, 2013). This gave students an incredible amount of power, especially since researchers were unsure of the validity of these evaluations and whether they were impacted be the popularity of the contingent faculty members, relaxed standards, or leniency in grading (Felton, Mitchell, & Stinson, 2004; Langen, 2011). Langen (2011) found several methods were used to evaluate
contingent faculty (e.g., observation in the classroom, reviews of syllabus teaching materials, and grades, peer evaluations, informal feedback, and self-evaluations) in addition to student evaluations but stressed that evaluating contingent faculty was too crucial to use assessment methods that were ineffective.

Another challenge was the lack of status experienced by second-career contingent faculty, which was difficult to handle for those who experienced significant success and status in their previous careers (Simendinger et al., 2000; Smith & Boyd, 2012). This lack of status and the respect that went with it often left second-career faculty feeling marginalized (Bergom et al., 2010). Additionally, second-career contingent faculty who were accustomed to working collaboratively with peers and effectively in teams previously in the business and professional world were often shocked by the newfound autonomy of academic freedom (Fogg, 2002) and the lack of collaboration and teamwork found in higher education settings. They often struggled with the lack of guidance and direction they received as a result of this freedom (Wisneski, 2013). Furthermore, second-career contingent faculty were often stymied by the lack of a clearly defined career path as such was usually evident in the business and professional world (Wisneski, 2013).

Wisneski (2013) noted that several misalignments of expectations were faced by second-career contingent and full-time faculty. These misalignments, the academic reality, and the actions faculty members took to mitigate these misaligned expectations were shown in Table 3.
Table 3

Misaligned faculty expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Academic Reality</th>
<th>Mitigating Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A high degree of collaboration exists with faculty peers</td>
<td>Faculty members were left to their own entrepreneurial pursuits</td>
<td>Embrace the inherent autonomy of academic freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course materials will be provided from previous instructor</td>
<td>Faculty members view course materials as proprietary knowledge assets not to be shared</td>
<td>Trust your own subject-matter expertise when deciding what students must learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry examples could be repurposed as show-and-tell lecture materials</td>
<td>Student learning requires active engagement in completing authentic tasks</td>
<td>Adopt a robust instructional design approach that aligns instructional materials with student-centered learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum remains relatively static from year to year</td>
<td>Students demand relevance and applicability of skills when selecting courses</td>
<td>Leverage summers to innovate course materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence in the classroom will be rewarded through recognition and promotion opportunities</td>
<td>Lack of formal career models for non-tenure track faculty result in ambiguous advancement opportunities</td>
<td>Aim to refresh 20-30% of course design each year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from “So, You Want to be a Professor,” by J. E. Wisneski, 2013, *Business Horizons*, 56, p. 552. Copyright 2013 by Elsevier Inc.

Not unlike other new contingent faculty, second-career contingent faculty lacked pedagogical skills and were often not prepared to develop, design, and deliver courses (Killimnik et al., 2012; Wisneski, 2013). Since academic freedom served as the linchpin of the professoriate, they received little guidance in this area. Second-career contingent faculty needed to learn that it often took several semesters of teaching a course before they became comfortable with the design and implementation of that course (Wisneski, 2013). Table 4 illustrated some of the classroom challenges that second-career faculty faced and offered possible solutions for how these challenges were overcome.
Wisneski (2013) noted that while there were a number of challenges that second-career contingent faculty overcame when transitioning to the academy, he suggested that there is “something undeniably noble and selfless [emphasis added] about joining the ranks of academia after a successful career in industry” (p. 559). Regardless of the motivations of second-career faculty, one of the most significant challenges they faced was the change in cultures from the business and professional world to the academe.

**Culture Shock & Transition Hurdles of Second-Career Contingent Faculty**

Many second-career contingent faculty members experienced “culture shock of moving into a world where the challenges can be both subtle and severe” (Crane et al., 2009, p. 27). Learning about the culture of the academe seemed to be one of the greatest hurdles second-career faculty overcame in their career transition (Crane et al., 2009; Fogg, 2002; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Wisneski, 2013). This involved learning about and understanding not only the culture of the university but also the culture of their respective departments, both of which were often vastly different from the previous professional and business cultures second-career faculty members knew and were accustomed to in their previous careers (Simendinger et al., 2000).

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### Table 4.

Overcoming challenges in the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Challenge</th>
<th>Possible Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaging the student learner</td>
<td>Seek opportunities to create field-study practicums, case-based discussions, pro bono projects, online simulations, and independent research opportunities for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing student performance</td>
<td>Develop grading rubrics that tie learning objectives directly to instruments used to evaluate performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Leveraging student feedback to assess performance | Seek informal feedback from students during office hours  
Use peer observation and personal teaching diaries to confirm student feedback  
Seek consultation on interpreting student evaluations. |
After all, most second-career contingent faculty were not “adequately ‘schooled’ in the politics and culture of academic institutions” (LaRocco & Bruns, 2006, p. 636). While these faculty members struggled to articulate the culture and politics of academic life, they were easily able to clearly articulate the culture and politics of their previous profession. Several researchers confirmed this lack of clarity in expectations, goals, and objectives that made the transition to teaching difficult for second-career faculty (LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Simendinger et al., 2000; Smith & Boyd, 2012). For example, navigating and understanding the university’s hierarchy was difficult for second-career faculty (Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Fogg, 2002).

Second-career contingent faculty had to “prove themselves again in this new cultural environment. Starting over once one has been ‘at the top’ can be a challenging and humbling experience” (Simendinger et al., 2000, p. 106). Second-career contingent faculty quickly learned that changing to teaching in the academe was more than changing tasks performed, it involved organizational culture change (Simendinger et al. 2000). This meant learning new artifacts, values, beliefs, underlying assumptions and norms (Schein, 2010). After all, “unlearning old norms, roles and values . . . while learning new ones is essential for their new role in the academy” (Barrett & Brown, 2014, p. 3). This took effort, but the result was significant. A second-career contingent faculty member who invested the “time and energy to learn the culture is quick to earn the respect of the organization’s cultural caretakers” (Simendinger et al., 2000, p. 107).

Simendinger, Pula, Kraft, and Jaspers (2000) suggested three strategies that were implemented to lessen the “clash of cultures:” 1) strategies to improve efficiency such as clarifying goals, grounding content in courses with theory, and clearly communicating expectation to students; 2) strategies for improving social interaction including asking for
increased formal feedback and establishing supportive relationships with colleagues and students; and 3) strategies for improving cultural adjustment and satisfaction, which including learning about and acclimating to the departmental and institutional culture and changing the lens second-career faculty use to evaluate and appreciate this new culture as opposed to using old values, norms, and rules of the previous profession (pp. 107-108). If these strategies were implemented by second-career contingent faculty, they should successfully adapt and enjoy a smoother transition into the academe.

**Assisting the Transition to the Academe**

Crane et al. (2009) recommended that universities and colleges should differentiate their professional development program in order to assist all faculty’s transition to the academe, especially second-career faculty whose needs were different from young, novice faculty members who transitioned to the academe through more traditional means. Specifically, she suggested that higher education institutions should design programs to help the transition of second-career faculty by addressing the particular issues these faculty members were confronted with because they faced a “steep learning curve” (Crane et al., 2009, p. 27). Other researchers agreed and suggested that mentoring programs would be a good place to start (Barrett & Brown, 2014; Crane et al., 2009; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006). Additionally, universities and colleges should consider the age of second-career contingent faculty and the stage in life they were in when pairing them with mentors for ultimate effectiveness (Crane et al., 2009). As an added bonus, these mentors could help second-career contingent faculty to learn and understand the culture of the academe. Additionally, developing relationships with colleagues was also important to a smooth transition process (Simendinger et al., 2000). If no formal mentoring program exists, second-career faculty who sought mentors (even informal ones) and networked
across the college or university were assisted in their adaptation to the academe (Barrett & Brown, 2014; Crane et al., 2009). After all, “informal co-mentorship can foster feelings of safety, respect, and support, key factors that may positively influence resocialization” (Barrett & Brown, 2014, p. 12). Irrespective of how universities support this growing segment of the new faculty majority, it was clearly important that all faculty, regardless of appointment type, felt supported in order to maximize their contributions to their institutions and students.

**Conclusion**

Although contingent faculty became the majority of instructors teaching our students and future leaders in higher education, the experiences and perceptions of a specific subgroup of this new majority - second-career contingent faculty - were largely unexplored in the literature. This was true even though second-career contingent faculty were a growing trend (Bedford, 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013, Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003) and more and more faculty were not taking the traditional path to the academe (Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Simendinger et al., 2000; Webb, 2009). As a result, developing a greater understanding of the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty will be important for universities and colleges throughout the United States “as accreditors begin to pay closer attention to how institutions employ and treat nontenure-track faculty of all types” (Shaker, 2013, p. 61). Since much of the second-career faculty literature focused on full-time, tenure-track faculty (e.g., Barrett & Brown, 2014; Conboy, 2013; Crane et al., 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Shaker, 2013; Wisneski, 2013) and not on second-career contingent faculty, this study will address that gap and add to the knowledge about this important and growing subgroup of contingent faculty. Since students will benefit by receiving quality instruction from all faculty (Burnstad, 2002), it
will behoove universities and colleges to learn more about the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty on their adaptability to teaching in the academe.

Chapter Three: Research Design

Methodology

There was one overarching research question this phenomenological study attempted to address: What were the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty on their adaptability to teaching in the academe? This open-ended broad research question lent itself to a qualitative research method with an exploratory design where the goal was to explore a phenomenon in great detail, which allowed for multiple realities to be expressed by the participants (Cresswell, 2013). In addition, “an exploratory design is best suited to qualitative research methods that allow for in-depth analysis of complex and layered issues and is flexible enough for highly open-ended research questions, data collection protocols, and analyses” as found in this study (Butin, 2010, p. 80). In keeping with qualitative research, the research question did not list or predict specific variables (Cresswell, 2012). Furthermore, the research question explored the phenomenon of career adaptability by giving voice to the participants’ lived experiences, a hallmark of qualitative research (Cresswell, 2012; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). As a result, the participants’ words comprised the data collected, analyzed and interpreted in this qualitative research study (Butin, 2010; Cresswell, 2012, 2013; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Therefore, this study provided rich, thick descriptions of participants’ lived experiences (Butin, 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Geertz, 1973; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015) and valued the context where these experiences take place, both of which were fundamental characteristics of qualitative research (Fraenkel et al., 2012).
Qualitative research in the constructivist paradigm was chosen for this study because there was scant literature on second-career contingent faculty’s adaptability to teaching in the academe suggesting more in-depth information from the participants was needed to explore this phenomenon (Butin, 2010). Additionally, the research question fit with the constructivist paradigm, where “meaning is always contextual and always interpreted” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 16). In other words, people uniquely perceived, interpreted, and assigned meanings to their worlds and experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and researchers only knew what was true for this participant at this time in this place (Smith et al., 2009). Lastly, all aspects of the study were designed keeping in mind the unique perspective of qualitative research and the constructivist paradigm.

**Research Design**

This qualitative research study was designed using the interpretive framework of social constructivism. This framework focused on how the participants perceived and interpreted their world and their experiences and the meanings and values they assigned to them (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It acknowledged that “people look at matters through distinct lenses and reach somewhat different conclusions” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 19). In social constructivism, as in this study, the researcher played an active role in the study and that was why reality was co-constructed by both participants and researchers (Smith et al., 2009). In addition, this study did not seek one right answer but, instead, the multiple realities of its participants, which was congruent with social constructivism and qualitative approaches like Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, & Hendry, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). This study relied on the concept that reality was subjective and was perceived by people through their experiences, expectations, and knowledge (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In keeping with the methodological...
beliefs common to social constructivism, an emergent design was employed that was representative of the exploratory nature of the study and allowed the researcher to modify the focus of the research and adapt to unexpected findings as they unfolded in the study (Butin, 2010). Table 5 showed the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological beliefs of social constructivism and how this study exemplified these philosophical beliefs (Cresswell, 2013).

Table 5.

Philosophical beliefs of Social Constructivism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretive Framework</th>
<th>Ontological Beliefs (the nature of reality)</th>
<th>Epistemological Beliefs (how reality is known)</th>
<th>Axiological Beliefs (role of values)</th>
<th>Methodological Beliefs (approach to inquiry)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Constructivism</td>
<td>Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences &amp; interaction with others.</td>
<td>Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.</td>
<td>Individual values are honored</td>
<td>More of a literary style of writing used. Use of inductive method of emergent ideas obtained through methods such as interviewing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplified in this study</td>
<td>Seeking each participant’s truths</td>
<td>The researcher is intimately involved in the research and is not an objective, outside, observer. The researcher must, however, bracket her inclinations, own perceptions, and ideas and focus on the stories of the participants. The researcher interprets the sense-making of participants offers possible meanings not absolutes.</td>
<td>Each individual is respected for his/her experiences and perceptions</td>
<td>One-on-one, in-depth interviews will be used in this study. Both inductive and deductive reasoning will be used in this study to analyze the transcripts of participants in order to get to deeper meanings and obtain a greater understanding of the phenomenon being studied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was chosen for this research study over other qualitative approaches because “it is consistent with the epistemological position of . . .
[the] research question” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 46). This research question allowed the researcher to access deep, detailed information about how participants perceive, interpret, and assign meaning to their world and the phenomenon under investigation. IPA differed from other phenomenological approaches because of its idiographic nature and hermeneutic approach making it ideal for this research study (Shinebourne, 2011).

**Research Tradition: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

This study employed a fairly recent but growing qualitative research approach called Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Murray & Holmes, 2014; Pringle et al., 2011; Rodham, Fox, & Doran, 2015; Smith, 2011; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Jonathan Smith (1996) coined the term Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in his seminal work claiming that the aim of IPA research is “to explore the participant’s view of the world and to adopt, as far as is possible, an ‘insider’s perspective’ . . . of the phenomenon under study” (p. 264). In other words, IPA focused on participants’ sense-making of the lived experience in a specific context for people who experienced the same phenomenon (C. Clarke, 2009; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). As a result, IPA was an appropriate qualitative method to use since the purpose of this study was to give voice to the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty members regarding their adaptability to teaching in the academe and then to interpret the meaning of their voices, experiences and perceptions in a specific context (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Additionally, IPA was concerned with participants’ subjective accounts because it assumed that individuals sought to understand and interpret their experiences in a way that made sense to them (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). IPA also recognized the active role of the researcher in attempting to make sense of the participants’ experiences and sense-making (Finlay, 2014;
Larkin et al., 2006; Pringle et al., 2011; Smith, 2004), which distinguished it from other phenomenological approaches (Pringle et al., 2011). Furthermore, IPA supported the dualistic nature (descriptive and interpretive) of this study.

There were three hallmarks of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis:

1. It was phenomenological
2. It was hermeneutic.
3. It was idiographic (Shinebourne, 2011; Smith, 2004, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was appropriately adopted for this study because it met these three hallmarks. This study was phenomenological because it explored contingent faculty’s perceptions and experiences with a single phenomenon – career adaptability. In addition, this study was concerned with the subjective accounts of the participants and their personal experience with career adaptability, a common characteristic of phenomenological research (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2015). It was hermeneutic because it was interpretive and relied on participants making sense of their experiences and the researcher attempting to make sense of the participants’ sense-making. The focus was on the interaction of the individual and the environment as well as the interaction between the researcher and participants. This study was idiographic because it focuses on “what the experience for this person is like, what sense this particular person is making of what is happening to them” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3). The researcher interpreted the statements of each participant in order to understand their experiences and search for convergences and divergences amongst individual and across cases (Smith, 2004, 2011: Smith et al., 2009).
The philosophical foundations of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

IPA has roots in three philosophical underpinnings: phenomenology with Husserl as the seminal theorist, hermeneutics or the theory of interpretation grounded by Heidegger, and symbolic-interactionism, which suggests that the individuals gave meanings to events but these meanings were accessed through an interpretative process thereby making it idiographic (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 1996, 2004, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). All three underpinnings played a significant role in this growing research tradition but its foundation started with phenomenology.

Since IPA was a phenomenological approach, understanding phenomenology and its role in this research tradition was essential. The philosophical approach of phenomenology involved the study of experiences in order to study, understand, and interpret the lived experience (Cresswell, 2013; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009). “The founding principle of phenomenological inquiry is that experience should be examined in the way that it occurs, and in its own terms” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 12). IPA meets the criteria of phenomenological research since it was inductive, subjective, and dynamic (Brocki & Weardon, 2006; Reiners, 2012, Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al., 2009).

The major philosopher and founder of descriptive phenomenology was Edmond Husserl (Cresswell, 2013; Larkin et al., 2006; Reiners, 2012). Husserl theorized that phenomenology was descriptive and involved the study of individual experiences. For Husserl, phenomenology was a way to get individuals to know and assign meaning to their own experience of a phenomenon, to be able to express and identify the essential features of those experiences, and, in turn, shed light on the experience of the phenomenon for others (Smith et al., 2009). In other words, phenomenologists believed that through interactions between researchers and participants, knowledge and understanding of a particular phenomenon was achieved (Reiners, 2012).
Husserl declared that phenomenology should focus on the “things themselves” by seeing them “as they present themselves in their own terms, rather than as defined by prior scientific hypotheses or abstract conceptualizations” (Smith & Osborn, 2015, pp. 25-26). Husserl believed that perceptions, thoughts, memory, emotion involved “intentionality” or a “directed awareness or consciousness of an object or event” (Reiners, 2012, p. 1). He urged researchers to adopt a “phenomenological attitude” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 13) by bracketing or putting aside their preconceived, taken-for-granted perceptions of the world (Finlay, 2014; Rodham et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2009). By adopting this attitude, researchers gained a fresh perspective on a phenomenon and were open to new ideas (Finlay, 2014; Shinebourne, 2011). As a result of Husserl’s philosophical writings, IPA researchers focused on reflection (Smith et al., 2009).

While Husserl’s descriptive phenomenology continued to serve as a foundation for IPA, the research tradition moved beyond serving as a merely descriptive one to an interpretive one with its roots traced back to Martin Heidegger.

Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl’s, went in a different direction than his teacher by developing interpretive phenomenology, which focused on hermeneutics or the philosophy of interpretation (Reiners, 2012, Smith et al., 2009). Hermeneutics went further than mere description as suggested by Husserl and sought to understand the taken-for-granted meanings in everyday happenings in specific contexts (Reiners, 2012; Smith et al, 2009). It was both descriptive and interpretive (Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000; Smith et al, 2009). Heidegger suggested that access to the lived experience only took place through interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). He rejected epistemology (how reality was known and described) and took an ontological approach (the nature of reality) to phenomenology instead (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger assumed that an individual’s understanding of the world was a direct result of that individual’s
interpretation of it. He believed that phenomenology should examine both the surface of the phenomenon and that which was hidden underneath. He believed the latter was accomplished when researchers go beyond merely describing individuals’ experiences to interpreting the meaning of those experiences (Reiners, 2012). For Heidegger, sense-making was always contextual (Larkin et al., 2006). He believed that an individual was “always and indelibly a ‘person-in-context’ . . . and hence was only properly understood as a function of our various involvements with that world” (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 106). Therefore, while people made sense of their world through their lived experiences, an IPA researcher made sense of participants’ sense-making. In other words, “what is real is not dependent on us, but the exact meaning and nature of reality is” (Larkin et al., 2006). Simply put, understanding took place because of the interaction between the researcher and the participant (Smith et al, 2009) which allowed the researcher to become part of the world he or she was describing and interpreting (Larkin et al., 2006). Researchers, therefore, used a participant’s story to uncover its relatedness to a phenomenon but only for that person in that specific context (Larkin et al, 2006). This resulted in a “third person view of a first person account” where the researcher attempted to see the world as the participants saw it (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 110). Due to the significant influence of Heidegger and others that followed, IPA differed from other phenomenological approaches because it moved beyond mere description to interpretation of the participants’ experiences in a specific context that was influenced by both the participants and the researcher.

Heidegger, unlike Husserl, did not feel that researchers needed to bracket their preconceptions or previous experiences because prior understanding was assumed with hermeneutics since interpretation was not without presuppositions (Reiners, 2012; Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al, 2009). Heidegger suggested that researchers only partially achieved bracketing
(Smith et al., 2009) and that preconceptions always existed but were minimized if the researcher focused on the participant’s story, experiences, and hidden meanings. This research followed this stance on bracketing and made the participant and his or her story the focus not the researcher’s preconceptions (Shinebourne, 2011; Smith, 2007).

Other philosophers agreed with Heidegger’s view that bracketing was not necessary. Gadamer (2004/1975) suggested that preconceptions were a reality. Instead of bracketing and putting aside preconceptions before interpreting the meaning of the participants’ stories, researchers recognized they would only become aware of their preconceptions once they began the interpretation process (Smith et al., 2009). Freshwater (2005) agreed suggesting that researchers could not completely acknowledge their biases because they could not acknowledge biases they were not consciously aware of or those that they did not yet know. IPA recognized that it was inevitable that the process of attempting to understand participants’ lived experiences was influenced by the researcher’s own experiences and preconceptions (C. Clarke, 2009; Rodham, Fox, & Doran, 2015). While the works of Gadamer, Heidegger, Husserl and others provided the philosophical and theoretical foundations of IPA, this research tradition had a number of key features that distinguished it from other qualitative, phenomenological approaches.

**Key features of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

Quality IPA research had a number of features that distinguished it from other approaches. First, IPA was a flexible, descriptive methodology that explored in detail individuals’ lived experiences and how they made sense of those experiences (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Pringle et al., 2011; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). IPA had an emergent design providing the researcher with the flexibility to change any of the
phases of the study (e.g., research questions, data collection methods, data analysis) after the study was underway to adapt to unexpected and unanticipated findings (Smith et al., 2009). Finlay (2014) argued that IPA researchers needed to be “open to new understandings” (p. 122). Therefore, this researcher must be open to the meaning, divergence, and convergence found during the interpretation of the data (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). By doing this, rich insights into the phenomenon of career adaptability were presented based on the unique participants’ experiences in that same context (C. Clarke, 2009; Smith et al., 2009).

Another key feature of IPA was the hermeneutic circle. This involved the process of looking at the parts (i.e., individual texts and transcripts) to understand the whole (i.e., overarching themes) and looking at the whole to understand the parts (Smith et al., 2009). It suggested the data analysis process was iterative (Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Sutherland, Dawczyk, De Leon, Cripps, & Lewis, 2014) and that researchers went back and forth through the data from individual texts and transcripts to major themes and then back to the individual data and transcripts to showcase those themes (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Shinebourne, 2011; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). In this sense, IPA was inductive because the researcher examined specific cases and moved to general themes common to several cases or across cases (C. Clarke, 2009; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). It was also inductive because ideas emerged, whether anticipated or unanticipated, that were not bound by a predetermined theory, which created an opportunity to discover information that was not considered (C. Clarke, 2009). It was deductive because the researcher moved from general themes to specific examples of those themes through participants’ verbatim excerpts (Smith et al, 2009). IPA researchers sought patterns or common themes across cases and were often
interlinked to create a holistic description (Finlay, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). Typically, each theme was supported by verbatim text from participants’ transcripts (Finlay, 2014; Pringle et al., 2011; Rodham et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015; Sutherland et al., 2014). This interpretation of meaning and data and the active role of the researcher set IPA apart from other phenomenological approaches.

A third feature of IPA involved a double hermeneutic, which occurred when the researcher attempted to make sense of the participants who attempted to make sense of their lived experiences (C. Clarke, 2009; Finlay, 2014; Rodham et al., 2015; Shinebourne, 2011; Smith, 2004, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). This was important since IPA acknowledged that researchers did not directly access someone’s lived experience or first-hand knowledge of the adaptability experiences of the second-career contingent faculty participating in this study (C. Clarke, 2009). However, IPA was “an effective data gathering tool for researchers because it was an attempt to get as close as possible to the personal experience of an individual by allowing them to turn their thought processes back to the detailed events of a unique, lived experience” (Rivituso, 2014, p. 72). In addition, the researcher was able to get as close to the participants’ experiences and perceptions as possible by bringing her prior experiences, knowledge, biases, preconceptions and personal lens to the interpretation of data (C. Clarke, 2009). As a result, the participants’ meaning-making was first-order and the researcher’s sense-making was second-order (Smith et al, 2009). As such, the focus of IPA research was the participant and what he or she thought, expressed, and believed about the phenomenon under study (Murray & Holmes, 2014; Smith et al., 2009), which resulted in deep insights and thick, rich descriptions (Butin, 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Geertz, 1973; Smith et al., 2009).
Additionally, IPA research combines empathic and questioning hermeneutics (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). It was empathic by attempting to understand what the experiences were like for the participants from their viewpoint (C. Clarke, 2009; Finlay, 2014; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). It was interrogative and curious by asking probing questions in order to make sense of those experiences while grounding that sense-making in the participants’ texts and stories (C. Clarke, 2009; Finlay, 2014; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). While hermeneutics and phenomenology heavily influenced IPA, a major feature of this research tradition was not yet explored: idiography.

A hallmark of IPA research was its idiographic focus (C. Clarke, 2009; Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 1996, 2011; Smith et al, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). “Idiography is concerned with the particular” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). There were two levels of commitment to the particular in IPA research. First, there was a detailed, thorough, systematic and in-depth analysis (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith 2004; Smith et al., 2009). Second, IPA research focused on developing an understanding of a phenomenon by looking at the perspective, perceptions, and expressed and unexpressed ideas of particular individuals in a specific context (Smith et al., 2009). Idiographic research such as IPA was inductive because the researcher examines in detail one specific case, and then another specific case, and then the researcher cautiously moved to more general themes or claims after looking for convergence and divergence in the individual cases (Smith, 2004). It was deductive because it allowed the researcher to move from the general themes to the specific examples or excerpts that justified those themes from individual participants’ transcripts (Smith et al., 2009). Since individuals’ experiences were unique to them, in that context, at that given time, these experiences were responsive to an idiographic approach like IPA. Since the results were derived from the intense examination of individual cases, the
researcher was able to make detailed, precise statements about the participants, grounding any interpretations in verbatim text from the transcripts (Finlay, 2014; Pringle et al., 2011; Rodham et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015; Sutherland et al., 2014). Therefore, this study, as with most IPA research, focused on participants’ stories and subjective truths of their lived experience (Smith et al., 2009).

Although the focus remained on the participants and their stories with IPA, the researcher used her own experiences and understandings reflexively during the research process. Several researchers noted that reflexivity was important to IPA and good qualitative research (C. Clarke, 2009; Finlay, 2014; Newton, Rothingova, Gutteridge, LeMarchand, & Raphael, 2011; Sin, 2010; Smith et al., 2009). Finlay (2014) suggested reflexivity involved “a process of continually reflecting upon interpretations of both our own experience and the phenomenon being studied, in order to move beyond the partiality of previous understandings and investments” in a specific result (p. 130). This required self-awareness on the part of the researcher. There were two common approaches to reflexivity the researcher used in this study: 1) the researcher’s impact on the data was minimized by acknowledging the researcher’s preconceptions and their potential influence as well as honing in on the participants’ lived experience and stories (Newton et al., 2011; Rodham et al., 2015; Sin, 2010); and 2) employed subjectivity with the study design, data collection and analysis, and listing of findings (Newton et al., 2011). Rodham, Fox, and Doran (2015) argued that researchers who were reflexive and curious were more receptive to alternative viewpoints and perceptions, which was ideal for the emergent design of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Newton, Rothingova, Gutteridge, LeMarchand, and Raphael (2011) suggested that researchers who were not reflexive risk presenting their study, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as objective and the one truth, which went against the subjective
nature of the constructivist paradigm and qualitative approaches such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Newton et al. (2011) encouraged researchers to accept and appreciate the subjective nature of qualitative research such as IPA because this resulted in rigorous research. Horsburgh (2003) supported the use of reflexivity because it involved the “active acknowledgement by the researcher that his/her own actions and decisions will inevitably impact on the meaning and context of the experience under investigation” (p. 308). In this IPA research, the researcher recognized that her previous experiences impacted the interpretations she made from the data collected but she strived to keep the stories of the participants the focal point (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

Participants

This study employed a purposive sampling strategy, which was the most popular sampling strategy for IPA research (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; C. Clarke, 2009; Cresswell, 2012, 2013; Horsburgh, 2003; Smith et al., 2009, Smith & Osborn, 2015; Sutherland et al., 2014). With this nonprobability sampling strategy, participants represented a particular perspective and offered insight into the phenomenon being studied rather than representing a certain population (Horsburgh. 2003; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2009). Since this study used purposive sampling, the researcher used prior information and her own judgement to select participants she believed gave her access to the phenomenon and data she needed (Fraenkel et al., 2012). One drawback to utilizing this sampling method was that the researcher’s judgement could be incorrect. If this happened, it would result in the participants not meeting the criteria for participation or providing the researcher with the data she needed to conduct quality research (Fraenkel et al., 2012).
The researcher recruited four to six participants for this study. The participants were second-career contingent faculty that taught in the same department at a 4-year, public university in the Northeast. Second-career contingent faculty were prior practicing professionals with a minimum of three years of experience in a related field to the one they taught and switched careers to academia to become part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track contingent faculty. The range of participants proposed allowed the researcher to adapt to participants who might withdraw from the study leaving a large enough sample size remaining to conduct a study that maintained trustworthiness.

Smith et al. (2009) suggested a sensible sample size for IPA studies was three to six participants. This resulted in an adequate number of cases to develop meaningful points of convergence and divergence among participants without overwhelming the researcher with extremely large data sets. The small number of participants also allowed for a richer and more intense depth of analysis (Pringle et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Since the goal of IPA was to explore in detail participants’ personal experiences and researchers were committed to intense analysis and interpretation of the data, a larger sample size would only result in an unmanageable dataset that overwhelmed the researcher (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) suggested that it was better in IPA research to have a sample that was “too small” (p. 51). They suggested that IPA researchers should strive for quality of sample size rather than quantity because “successful analysis requires time, reflection and dialogue, and larger datasets tend to inhibit these things” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 52).

The only commonality between participants was their status as second-career contingent faculty in a single department at a public, 4-year higher education institution located in the Northeast. This resulted in a homogeneous sample for this study as recommended for IPA.
research (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; C. Clarke, 2009; Rivituso, 2014; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). No other criteria such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, race, place of residence, or socioeconomic status was used in the selection process.

One limitation of employing a small sample size in this study was its effect on external validity. The results of this study were not generalized to all second-career contingent faculty in the department, at the university, or to second-career contingent faculty in general. The results were true for these participants at this time and in this place.

**Recruitment and access.** Since the researcher served as a second-career contingent faculty member at the same university as the participants, the researcher was able to use prior knowledge of contingent faculty, her best judgement, and easy access to recruit participants that experienced the phenomenon under study, which was common with purposive sampling strategies (Fraenkel et al, 2012). Study participants were found through the university’s public website by typing the participants’ names in the search bar on the homepage of the university’s website or by visiting the Continuing Studies webpage. Therefore, the participants were accessible to anyone including the general public.

To recruit participants, the researcher sent an email request to potential participants that met the criteria for inclusion in the study asking them to volunteer to take part in this research study and outlining the purpose of the study, the criterion to participate (experience with the phenomenon under study in the same context), study methods (i.e., Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis), and the time commitment (a minimum of 90 minutes - two 45-minute interviews) required if they participated in the study (see Appendix A for participant recruitment materials). If the researcher did not receive a response from these individuals after three weekdays, the researcher sent an abbreviated follow-up email (See Appendix A). If no
response was received again, the researcher put a hard copy of the initial participation request in the potential participants’ mailboxes or attempted to speak to these individuals in person during their office hours.

For those faculty members who agreed to participate in this study, two 45-minute, in-depth interviews were scheduled on or nearby campus. The researcher did not offer an incentive to those who agreed to participate. To protect the identity of study participants, the participants’ names were altered in the final written analysis and publications. In addition, the name of the university was not revealed and only the university’s location (Northeast) was included in the final written analysis and publications. Participants were advised that all information was anonymous and were asked to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix B) agreeing to participate in the study (Smith et al., 2009). Signed consent forms will be retained for three years after the conclusion of the study and then will be shredded. Permission was secured by Northeastern University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to conducting the study. Since this study focused on the participants’ personal perceptions and experiences not the institution where they taught, the participants were capable, consenting adults who volunteered for the study, and all participants were accessible on the university’s public website, the university where the participants taught was not be contacted nor was approval sought by the researcher from that university’s IRB.

Ensuring Protection of Human Subjects

Since the protection of human subjects was paramount to a high quality, ethical study, it was a top consideration in this study. There were no foreseeable risks, harm, or discomfort for study participants who were consenting adults and not part of a vulnerable population (Cresswell, 2012, 2013; Fraenkel et al, 2012). In addition, this study did not use deception or a
control group thereby protecting participants from harm (Cresswell, 2012). Furthermore, participants signed a statement of informed consent indicating their understanding of the study and agreeing to participate in the study by partaking in the interviews. Prior to the start of the interview, the researcher reviewed the issue of consent and during the interview the researcher asked for the participant’s oral consent to continue if any difficult or sensitive issues arose thereby adhering to strict ethical guidelines (Smith et al, 2009). Participants were informed that they had the right to opt to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the interview and up to one month after the interview (Smith et al., 2009).

Participants were made aware that results were anonymous, meeting ethical guidelines for IPA research (Smith et al., 2009). Recognizing that other individuals (e.g., advisor, reviewers, and readers) saw the analysis and written work prepared by the researcher, the researcher did not offer confidentiality to participants because that implied no one else had access to the data (Smith et al., 2009). However, the researcher provided anonymity by protecting participants’ identities and not revealing the name of the university where they taught in the final write-up and publications. This resulted in participants being more forthcoming during the data collection process.

**Data Collection**

IPA employed flexible data collection processes (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The data collected in this study was participants’ stories through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, one of the most common data collection strategies used in IPA research (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; C. Clarke, 2009; Smith, 2004, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The flexibility this type of interview offered allowed the researcher to let the participant take her where the participant wanted to go. These interviews gave the participants a say in the
information covered during the interviews. Such interviews created interaction between the researcher and participant but allowed the participants to tell their stories in their own way and with their own words (Smith et al., 2009). The object was to allow the participant to talk and the researcher to listen. While the participants led the interview by telling their stories, the researcher was involved by building rapport with the participants that developed a comfort level that allowed the participants to speak honestly and freely. The researcher also engaged in active listening, asked probing questions to get more details, and followed up on participants’ comments and any unanticipated issues that arose that were relevant to the research question whether or not they were included in the interview schedule (Smith et al., 2009). Unanticipated issues that arose during interviews were important because they often brought up an issue the researcher did not consider or anticipate (Smith et al., 2009). Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and then analyzed and reported by the researcher. In order to prepare for the interview, the researcher developed an interview schedule.

An interview schedule with 10 open-ended questions (see Appendix B) was developed to allow the participants to freely respond with a detailed account of their experiences and perceptions of their adaptability to teaching in the academe thereby yielding data that ultimately answered this study’s research question (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). This schedule contained the questions the researcher intended to ask the participants and the typical order of those questions. However, the flexibility of IPA allowed the researcher the ability to adapt during the interview and take questions out of order as issues arose or eliminate a question that was already addressed by the participant. In order to ensure a good, quality interview, the researcher avoided over-empathic, manipulative, leading, and closed questions and employed a series of open-ended questions that elicited a detailed account of the participants’ lived
experience. As recommended by Smith et al. (2009), the researcher transcribed the first interview before conducting the others in order to make any necessary adjustments for the remaining interviews. Once the researcher began collecting data, the data was stored in a safe, responsible manner to protect the data and the participants.

**Data Storage**

All interviews were audiotaped for transcription purposes only. This provided a verbatim account of the data collected as required by IPA (Smith et al., 2009). These transcripts documented the participants’ and researchers’ nonverbal communication (e.g., pauses, hesitations or fillers, laughs, sighs, etc.). This data was stored on the researcher’s password-protected laptop hard drive and a back-up copy was stored in a password-protected file on an external hard drive. Both the laptop and the external hard drive, along with the recordings and printed transcriptions were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s locked office and were only be accessible to the researcher. Recordings, printed transcriptions, and data were destroyed one year after the conclusion of the project. Prior to this, an important step in this research project – the analysis of the data by the researcher – took place.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis in IPA studies typically involved an iterative, inductive, and deductive pattern that was rigorous and systematic (Smith et al., 2009: Sutherland et al., 2014). It was repetitive or iterative because it involved reading, re-rereading, and analyzing each transcript line-by-line searching for themes of convergence and divergence to emerge in individual cases and then across cases (Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Sutherland et al., 2014). It was inductive because researchers move from specific instances/cases to more general claims or themes (Brocki & Weardon, 2006; Reiners, 2012, Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). These themes
were eliminated or changed as additional data was analyzed. Data analysis was deductive (moving from general themes to specific instances) because themes were highlighted in the final write-up by including relevant verbatim excerpts of participants’ remarks from the transcripts (Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al, 2009; Sutherland et al., 2014). In fact, IPA scholars recommended that studies like this one with four to eight participants include verbatim quotations from at least three of the participants to showcase a particular theme (Finlay, 2014: Smith 2011).

This study followed the six steps recommended by Smith et al. (2009) to ensure a data analysis that was ‘good enough’ (p. 81). The six steps were described in Table 6.

Table 6.

**Six steps for data analysis in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis research.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step One: Data Immersion</strong></td>
<td>This involved the reading and re-reading of data. The purpose was to enter the world of the participant keeping the focus on the participant by actively engaging with the raw data of the interviews. Records of the researcher’s recollections and observations of the interviews were reviewed and bracketed in order to keep the focus on the participant.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step Two: Initial Noting</strong></td>
<td>This was the most time-consuming and detailed step in data analysis. During this step, the researcher focused on the participants’ words and language use detailed in the transcripts. The goal was to record exploratory comments on a line-by-line basis on anything in the transcripts that were significant or of interest. There were three levels of comments noted in the transcript: descriptive comments; linguistic comments; and conceptual comments. Additionally, areas of convergence and divergence were noted as well as contradictions, amplifications, and echoes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step Three: Developing Emergent Themes</strong></td>
<td>During this phase, the researcher began the inductive process common in IPA research by moving from the specific meanings found in individual cases to emerging general themes. The researcher accomplished this by analyzing the initial notes for areas of convergence and divergence. Themes were written as phrases and reflect the words of the participants as well as the researcher’s interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step Four: Emergent Themes</strong></td>
<td>This stage involved mapping all the emergent themes in order to look for connections and similarities across cases. All themes were printed on a separate piece of paper. The researcher looked for patterns among themes that emerge. Similar themes or even opposite themes were grouped together and a new</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Across Cases

‘super-ordinate’ theme emerged. Some themes were discarded if they were not evident across several cases. Researchers looked for temporal, narrative or cultural themes by identifying contextual elements. Researchers also looked for the frequency with which a theme appears in the transcript as a signal of what was important to participants. Themes for each case were recorded in a table.

Step Five: The Next Case

This step required the researcher to repeat the previous four steps for the next participant’s transcript and then doing it all again for the next case, and then the next until all cases were analyzed. It was essential that the researcher maintained a commitment to the idiographic nature of IPA and took each case on its own terms. The researcher bracketed the comments and themes from the prior case or cases before analyzing the next allowing new emergent themes to be discovered.

Step Six: Patterns Across Cases

This final step involved looking across cases for patterns. This involved comparing all tables of emergent themes documented by the researcher to look for connections and potency of those themes across cases. This led to labeling a theme differently or to reconfiguring a theme. This step was graphically presented in a table in the data analysis section of the final write-up. This table included the super-ordinate themes and a list of the specific statements made by participants that were related to that theme and the specific location where the comment was located in the transcript. All themes were supported by evidence from the transcripts directly.


The researcher used a hard copy of the transcript with two additional margins – one for exploratory comments and one for themes that emerge during analysis as recommended by Smith et al. (2009), which allowed the researcher to manually code the data. According to K. Clarke (2009), manual coding resulted in an intimate connection with the data and required the researcher to become immersed in the data, an integral aspect of IPA research. In addition, the results of the study were reported in the third person, which is typical of IPA research (Shinebourne, 2011).

The researcher analyzed the verbatim texts or transcripts at three levels (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009). The first level of analysis was noting descriptive comments that describe what the participant said. At this level of analysis, the researcher took what was said at face value and no interpretation of meaning was used. “These understandings of things which matter
to the participant (the key objects, events, experiences in the participant’s lifeworld) are often highlighted by descriptions, assumptions, sound bites, acronyms, idiosyncratic figures of speech, and emotional responses” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 84). The next level of analysis moved beyond the face value of the words.

The second level of analysis involved noting linguistic comments by analyzing how the participants specifically used language (e.g., metaphors, laughter, and pronoun use) during their interview. At this level of analysis, the researcher paid attention to “pronoun use, pauses, laughter, functional aspects of language, repetition, tone, degree of fluency (articulate or hesitant)” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 88). A particularly powerful linguistic device that was often noted at this level of analysis was the metaphor because it “links descriptive notes . . . to conceptual notes” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 88). While the first and second level of data analysis concentrated on content and meaning, the next level focused completely on interpretation.

The third level of analysis was by far the most interpretive. This level involved the researcher making conceptual comments, which moved away from the explicit claims made by the participants to a more interpretative meaning of what was meant by the participants. This level involved engaging with the data in a more questioning and interpretative manner. It took the form of a question posed by the researcher based on the participants’ statements. These interpretations drew on the researcher’s professional knowledge and personal experiences (Smith et al., 2009). “Conceptual annotation is often not about finding answers or pinning down understandings; it is about the opening up of a range of provisional meanings” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 89). All interpretations proposed by the researcher were grounded in the verbatim texts and transcripts of the participants (Pringle et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015; Sutherland et al., 2014). In other words, interpretation came directly from the words and
stories of the participant. This moved the analysis from the descriptive to the interpretive (Smith et al., 2009).

Since this was participatory research and the researcher served as a contingent faculty member in the same department of the same university as the participants, the findings were assessed by the researcher in relation to her experiential and professional knowledge. In keeping with IPA research, this study presented the results to showcase the convergences and divergences found in the data (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The researcher did not make generalizations with the analyzed data due to small sample sizes (C. Clarke., 2009; Smith et al., 2009).

**Trustworthiness**

As with all good, scholarly research, this qualitative study must be deemed credible (Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000). Researchers suggested that trustworthiness was a more appropriate term than validity or reliability for qualitative research like this study (Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Rodham et al., 2015; Rolfe, 2006; Sin, 2010; Yardley, 2000). Cresswell and Miller (2000) suggested that qualitative researchers used “trustworthiness (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) and authenticity (i.e., fairness, enlarges personal constructions, leads to improved understanding of constructions of others, stimulates action, and empowers action)” to ascertain credibility (p. 126).

Yardley (2000) suggested four criteria to assess the quality of qualitative research such as IPA. She suggested that high quality research needed to be measured with criteria not hard-fast rules to legitimate the research, maintain its flexibility, and search for multiple realities. Table 7 showed Yardley’s (2015) four core principles for evaluating the trustworthiness and validity of good, qualitative research.
Table 7

Core principles for evaluating the trustworthiness and validity of qualitative research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitivity to context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevant theoretical and empirical literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants’ perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical issues</td>
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<td>Empirical data</td>
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<th>Commitment and rigour</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thorough data collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depth/breadth of analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodological competence/skill</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-depth engagement with topic</td>
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<tr>
<th>Coherence and transparency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and power of your argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit between theory and method</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transparent methods and data presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Impact and importance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Practical/applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural</td>
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This research demonstrated *sensitivity to context* (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000). This process was started when the researcher reviewed and synthesized relevant theory and extant literature that was necessary to guide the study (Yardley, 2000). Smith et al. (2009) noted that IPA researchers demonstrated sensitivity to context early in their research. After all, by selecting IPA as the research tradition for this study, the researcher demonstrated a sensitivity to context because this research explored a particular phenomenon in a particular context (Shinebourne, 2011; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). In this study, sensitivity to
context was also demonstrated during the in-depth interviews because the focus was on the participants’ stories and perspectives. During the intense data collection process, the researcher was sensitive to context and developed a strong rapport with the participant in order to obtain sufficient details that resulted in the collection of rich, thick descriptions (Butin, 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Geertz, 1973; Smith et al., 2009). Sensitivity to context continued during data analysis when the researcher immersed herself in the data, ultimately attempting to make sense of the participants’ sense-making (Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). It was further demonstrated by giving voice to the participants and including an appropriate number of verbatim excerpts from participants’ transcripts in the final write-up, allowing readers to check the validity of the researcher’s interpretations (Finlay, 2014; Rolfe, 2006; Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Additionally, the researcher presented interpretations as only possible understandings not as absolute truths and cautiously offered more general claims (Smith et al., 2009). By showing sensitivity to context, the researcher took the first step toward conducting a valid, rigorous, trustworthy study.

The second criteria Yardley (2000) suggested for a good, qualitative research study was commitment and rigour. This researcher showed commitment by mindfully attending to the participants during the in-depth interview and through careful and systematic analysis of the data (Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) defined rigour as the “thoroughness of the study” (p. 181). The specific, homogeneous sample of second-career contingent faculty in this study was an example of the study’s rigorous nature. The participants were recruited based on the fact that they met a specific criterion (i.e., second-career contingent faculty) - required to address the research question and were, therefore, an appropriate sample for this study. The in-depth nature of the interview and data analysis also exemplified the thoroughness of the study.
(Smith et al., 2009). “Good IPA studies tell the reader something important about the particular individual participants as well as something important about the themes they share” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 181). To further demonstrate rigor, the final write-up included verbatim quotations from at least three of the participants for any given theme as recommended by IPA scholars (Finlay, 2014; Smith, 2011). This level of detail helped the reader assess the validity of the researcher’s claims and the trustworthiness of the study (Finlay, 2014; Rolfe, 2006; Shinebourne, 2011; Smith et al., 2009).

Yardley (2000) suggested the next step to ensure trustworthiness was transparency and coherence. Transparency was judged by how well the researcher described each phase of the research process (Shinebourne, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). To meet this criterion, the process of selecting and recruiting participants, conducting the interviews, developing the interview schedule, and analyzing the data was presented in detail in both written and graphic forms. The researcher also made the data (e.g., transcripts, audiotapes) available to others (e.g., advisor, reviewers, and readers) for analysis. Readers were the most important judges of the coherence of IPA research (Smith et al., 2009). If research was trustworthy, the answer to the following questions about coherence were “yes”: Did the argument make sense? Were the themes logical? How were contradictions handled? In addition to the readers finding arguments in the final write-up being coherent, the research question, the philosophical perspective adopted, and the method of investigation and analysis undertaken fit well together making the study trustworthy (Yardley, 2000). While this research exemplified commitment, rigour, transparency, and coherence, the ultimate test of trustworthiness lied in the impact or importance of its findings.

Yardley (2000) suggested the fourth principle to judge trustworthiness in qualitative research was its importance and impact. This was the real test of validity and trustworthiness for
a research study because “real validity lies in whether it tells the reader something interesting, important, or useful” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 183). In addition, this study demonstrated a practical and socio-cultural impact (Yardley, 2000). It added to the limited knowledge base about career transitions and adaptability of second-career contingent faculty, had the potential to impact universities’ hiring practices of second-career contingent faculty, and possibly changed the way higher educational institutions, policy makers, department chairs, and contingent faculty themselves talked about and provided for this instructional majority.

Smith et al. (2009) stressed that conducting a virtual audit with IPA research “shows a considerable commitment to quality and validity” (p. 184). This required making available the research proposal, the interview schedule, annotated transcripts, tables of themes, draft write-ups, and final write-ups allowing others to “check through the ‘paper trail’” to determine whether or not the researcher’s findings were plausible and the final write-up was credible, systematic, and transparent (Smith et al., 2009, p. 183). In addition to providing a virtual audit trail, the researcher explicitly expressed her preconceptions to ensure trustworthiness (Rodham et al., 2015). Furthermore, the researcher had two participants review the researcher’s interpretations of the participants’ stories in order to determine the research was trustworthy (Smith et al., 2009). Lastly, the researcher took steps to ensure this study has the qualities of good research minimizing potential threats to internal validity.

Potential threats to internal validity were addressed in the research design and approach. One threat that was minimized was participant mortality. This study was designed with a sample size that involves a range of four to six participants. This ensured the researcher was able to retain the study’s trustworthiness by collecting and analyzing an adequate dataset even if one or two participants withdrew from the study. Since all participants in this study experienced the
same phenomenon in the same context (i.e., the university), location as a threat to internal validity was minimized. Since the researcher shared attributes with the participants, she acknowledged her preconceptions and then concentrated on the participants’ stories and experiences, thereby minimizing researcher bias (Smith et al., 2009). By following these steps, potential threats to internal validity were minimized and a trustworthy study was conducted and reported.

Chapter Four: Report of Research Findings

Contingent faculty are the new normal in higher educational institutions. They comprise the majority of instructors in higher education in the United States today (Eagan, Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015). Since contingent faculty are a varied, heterogeneous group (Bedford, 2009; Bedford & Miller, 2013; Bettinger & Long, 2010; Kezar & Sam, 2010; Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003), this research targeted a very specific subgroup of contingent faculty – those that chose teaching part-time in the academe as a second career. Second-career contingent faculty were defined as prior practicing professionals with a minimum of three years of experience in the field in which they teach who switched careers to academia to become part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track contingent faculty. These second-career contingent faculty were regarded as “competent, part-time professors who have significant expertise in their discipline” (Bedford, 2009, p. 2). The purpose of this study was to give voice to the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty members regarding their adaptability to teaching in the academe and then to interpret the meaning of their voices, experiences and perceptions in a specific context (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2015). There was one overarching research question this phenomenological study attempted to address: What were the perceptions
and experiences of second-career contingent faculty on their adaptability to teaching in the academe?

The six participants of the study currently worked as contingent faculty members at one of three four-year public higher education institutions located in the Northeast. All participants taught communication or public relations courses at these institutions. All participants had a Master’s degree and worked anywhere from 10 to 35 years in the field before switching careers to teach part-time in the academe. Together they represented 113 years of professional experience in communications and public relations. All participants achieved some level of success or prominence in their original careers (e.g., television co-anchor, owner of a PR firm, producer, or a member of the executive team) and claimed they were highly respected by their colleagues. Five out of six participants (83%) taught at more than one university or college at the same time. Participants’ careers as contingent faculty members ranged from three to 15 years in duration. Combined, the participants had 51 years of teaching experience. Most participants said that knowing what they know now, they would switch careers to teach in the academe all over again. In order to protect their identity, participants were assigned a pseudonym. Therefore, the participants will be referred to as “Hannah”, “Christy”, “Deb”, “Frank”, “Gina”, and “Erin”.

Data for this IPA study was collected in two 45+-minute semi-structured interviews. In order to get participants to be comfortable right away in the interview, the first few questions focused on their professional backgrounds and their first careers. Although these questions were not related to the study’s research question, they provided meaningful information on the participants’ prior work experiences, duties, and accomplishments. Participants also shared what the responsibilities and duties of their first careers, the number of years they worked in the field before switching careers to become contingent faculty, and the number of years they have been
teaching in the academe. Participants also discussed what they liked and disliked about their former careers. In several cases, the latter provided the impetus for the career change for most of the applicants. Two of the six participants reviewed the presentation of their stories in order to ensure the trustworthiness of this study.

Profiles of Study Participants

After sharing their perceived competencies that their prior work experience provided these contingent faculty members, there were four distinct skills or competencies all participants shared that aided in their transitions to teaching in the academe. They were: 1. Good people skills/interpersonal communication skills; 2. Practical, real-world experience; 3. Public speaking skills; and 4. Enjoyed working with college-age individuals. All participants felt their prior work experience and the multiple competencies they developed while working in that career aided in their successful transition to teaching in the academe.

All participants felt that they adapted very well to teaching in the academe. All participants exhibited the qualitative descriptors of four out of five career adapt-abilities presented by Savickas and Porfeli (2011). Participants exhibited curiosity, confidence, concern, and control. Participants in this study did not exhibit cooperation/commitment. All participants overcame challenges they faced in their second-career through trial and error, with help from resources they sought out, or from simply learning by doing. All participants possessed unwavering self-confidence and an absolute certainty that they would be successful as a college professor. All participants cared about their students and worked diligently to ensure that their classrooms offered a challenging, interesting, and rewarding learning experience. Additionally participants strongly believed that they made a number of valuable contributions to the department and to student learning and achievement. However, Savickas and Porfelli’s (2011)
descriptors do not comprehensively cover all the characteristics these second-career contingent faculty members exhibited, felt, or experienced. For example, all participants noted that they received little to no support from or interaction with their department chair leaving them feeling underappreciated, undervalued, and like second-class citizens. They all felt that stronger, more strategic coordination by the department chair and university would have enhanced and facilitated a smoother transition and a sense of belonging in the department. Lastly, participants extended several recommendations for accomplished professionals who are considering switching careers to teach in the academe that may help them adapt to their new role. The following in-depth summary explicates the participants’ perceptions of their lived experience, how they made sense of those experiences, and their adaptability to a career as contingent faculty members.

The Participants

Hannah

Hannah indicated that she worked in marketing, communications, and public relations for both nonprofit organizations and a for-profit environmental company for more than 20 years. She worked her way up in each organization reaching her ultimate goal of sitting on the executive team of the environmental company. As Hannah pointed out, “I always wanted to sit on a management team. I thought that would be, you know, a really interesting experience, um, and to be able to make decisions.” She was the only woman on the executive team and she enjoyed being an integral member of the leadership team that grew the company from 50 to more than 300 employees. She managed staff, trained new employees, and strategized about how to grow the company and develop new services. The company grew to encompass all of New England and as far south as Maryland. With the expansion of the company came a lot of travel. After her
first son was born this began to take a toll on her. About her infant son, Hannah remembered thinking:

He doesn’t even know who I am at this point. Because I would get up and I had to travel into Somerville and so I’d be leaving the house at like 5:00, 5:15. He wasn’t even up. And then I wouldn’t get home until 7:00 and he is in bed or I am travelling and I wasn’t home at all.

Another aspect of the job that kept Hannah away from home was the long hours demanded by her employer, which eventually wore her out. Hannah noted:

You know I was growing very tired of it. I was TIR ED (stressed this word) because I was working so hard all the time. And, that was the expectation. You had to work at least a minimum of 50 hours, which was always questioned to begin with.

In addition, she noted how stressful the job became because “it was just a constant, steady, um, and a very high energy, like always on sort of thing.” The final straw happened when Hannah disagreed with the direction in which her company was going. As Hannah put it, “And so, I thought it was a good time to sort of make that change” [to teaching in the academe]. Hannah had prepared for that eventuality by enrolling in graduate school while working full-time and climbing the corporate ladder. Therefore, she set herself up to make the career switch to teaching in the academe.

Hannah always had an “inkling” that she wanted to teach. She noted:

I guess I always did have that inkling. I liked to teach people in the corporate world so it became more clear that, you know, this is what I would like to do because I did head up a lot of the training aspects.
Hannah noted that this experience led her to realize that teaching was something she enjoyed. She said:

It kind of gave me a lot of experience teaching people how to write, teaching people how to speak in public, teaching them to use all the new technology products and things. So, I was constantly teaching them the strategy and the vision of the business. So it just sort of became something I was doing quite a bit of. Um, and, I enjoyed it.

Hannah was ready for a change and made the decision to switch careers to teach in the academe. She applied and was hired as a contingent faculty member at a four-year public university in the Northeast. She has worked as a contingent faculty member for six years. She enjoyed the flexibility, freedom to create and deliver courses, and the ability to shape minds and help students become successful. Hannah expressed her belief in the power of a public education and personally was proof that someone can succeed in business and in the professional world with a public education. She passionately explains:

The fact that you can come out of a state school and you can have a really great education and you don’t have to be a second-class citizen because you didn’t go to an Ivy League school or you didn’t go to a private school. It’s all about what you’re going to put into it. . Just because it doesn’t have this name on it doesn’t mean that they’re still not going to be great in the workforce and make the money they want and be successful.

This desire was what drove her to teach at public higher educational institutions. This past semester, she taught simultaneously at two public, four-year institutions in the Northeast. She clearly stated she loved it and if given the opportunity to do it all over again knowing what she now knows, she did not hesitate to say she would definitely do it again.
Christy

Christy had an impressive career as a “lifelong journalist.” For more than 20 years, she worked as a journalist, news reporter, and news broadcaster. She explained that she “covered the gamut of being an investigative reporter, a consumer reporter, a breaking news reporter, and um, an in-depth, um, reporter and producer.” She started as a reporter and advanced rapidly to news director at a small radio station in the Midwest. She assigned reporters to cover news stories and decided what news stories would be covered and in what order. After that she was in television in major metropolitan markets. She “interviewed many different people in all walks of life, all positions, and, um, you know, from kings to peasants as they would say.” Her main focus was finding and bringing the truth to light. Additionally, she served as a co-anchor of a news magazine show in a major metropolitan market in the Northeast. At that time, Christy felt that was “the peak of my being in a position of authority and stature and having control over my life to a great, you know, degree.” Christy was modest about her accomplishments but in some ways she was a pioneer in the broadcasting field. She noted, “You know, when I started in television in the, um, 1980s, women were still pretty new, you know, in the broadcast seat or even as reporters. . . It was a lot different then than it was today.”

Christy explained that she was drawn to journalism, to the constant change and excitement it offered. She enjoyed revealing injustices and looking out for the “little guy”. She particularly relished shining a spotlight on areas that needed improvement or change. She loved the variety that came with the profession and not being tied down to a desk doing repetitive tasks day in and day out. It was never the same nor monotonous. And, with it came power. As Christy points out:
You know, there is a lot of power that comes with being a news reporter. A lot of responsibility and also a lot of power. You do have the power to change people’s lives, and, um, individually and groups of people in a major way, simply by, um, unearthing facts that people might not have known about and shining a light on it.

Toward the end of Christy’s career in television, news was changing. She disliked that there was too much emphasis on frivolous news stories and that the news was becoming “just another form of entertainment.” She explained what type of news she believed is newsworthy:

I, um, really believe in news that you can use. What kind of news can we put on the air that is going to be important to people’s lives to better their lives, and, um, improve their lives? Just tell them what their rights are. Um, that’s the kind of thing that is, uh, missing from news now and it was starting to disappear near the end of my career in television, too.

Christy’s passion for making news was palpable. As she explained:

But, if I was a news reporter, it was like somebody gave me this key to open doors all over the city – to politicians, to royalty, to presidents, to the poor, the disadvantaged, the young, the old. And, I could walk through all these doors, a different door with a different person and interview them and tell their story. And, so, because it was in my nature to be like that anyway. I think it is in my nature to walk through new doors, and do new things and just make it work. Because it interests me.

Unfortunately, she became disheartened with the way news had changed. In fact, she noted that “social media has changed the way news is delivered.” She stated:

Well, when, I mean years ago, families sat down and listened to Walter Cronkite and or Huntley Brinkley. I mean there were three newscasts on and that was it and they were all
on at 6:00 and they were all on for half an hour. And that was it. And, people gathered around the living to listen to the news together as a family and digest the news. And, it was much more serious then. And you see those old clips of those anchor people and they were always white males. They were doing some, eh, eh, serious journalism and journalistic work. Now people’s desires for news is based on that, um, little pop of adrenaline you get when your phone beeps, because you subscribe to breaking news stories and that’s the extent of it. I’ve seen it in my own students now. You know, the extent of news ingested now is just headlines. Oh, did you see Russia just bombed Syria? Oh, did you see Turkey just shot down a plane. You know, did you see there was this mining disaster? And then, that’s it. There’s no context. There’s no digging deeper into why did this happen or could it happen again. And, um, um, I think that is kind of strange. I think our brains are being rewired that way in terms of we want all the information we can get all the time but at some point it becomes meaningless.

Interestingly enough, Christy fell into teaching “by pure accident.” She never envisioned herself as an educator. After she had retired from television and was not working, one of her friends asked her to take over her college course because she was moving to the Midwest. She took over the course and has been a contingent faculty member for the past 11 years. She expressed a profound love for working with the students. She found, completely by accident, that she enjoyed teaching in the academe and providing her students with knowledge and skills that “would serve them for the rest of their lives.” Christy is the only participant that did not teach at more than one institution at a time. She had worked at private higher education institutions in the past and ended up at the four-year public institution in the Northeast because it had an opening and “the nature of the beast is that you go where the openings are.” In fact, at this time, the one
class she was assigned for the spring semester was under-enrolled and thus canceled at the last minute leaving her no classes or income this semester. She was assigned two classes for the fall semester but had no guarantee they will run.

**Deb**

Prior to becoming a professor, Deb owned a public relations (PR) and communication firm for 15 years. As owner, she managed a staff of four employees and one student intern. Deb’s firm worked primarily with nonprofit, education, and health organizations. The firm handled every aspect of public education and public relations for its clients including producing videos and television spots, newsletters, and websites. In addition to managing staff and PR campaigns, Deb was the main point of contact for clients. She participated in numerous client meetings but always kept her hand in the creative work produced by her firm. She noted that her firm was highly regarded by its clients. In fact, her firm’s success and popularity meant that she rarely had to advertise her business because loyal clients always referred her firm to other business people whose companies often became clients as well. Her firm “provided quality for a much lower price than for-profit PR firms.” Deb developed strong, personal relationships with her staff creating a very interactive, creative, yet “down to earth” atmosphere in her firm. Deb extolled the benefit of being the owner of the firm because she was able to hire people she liked and worked well with as employees. She believed she created a “very personal, interesting, and friendly atmosphere.” Deb enjoyed the creative work her business completed for its clients. She also really liked her clients and especially loved working with nonprofits. The aspect she disliked about owning a PR firm was that “it really does take over your life.” As the principal of the firm, clients expected her to be available to them every hour of every day. As Deb put it, “Every client thinks they are the only client, so you are available all the time.” Additionally technology was
rapidly changing and in order to keep up Deb’s firm was constantly investing money back into
the company to upgrade equipment. The cost of running the business continued to rise. As Deb’s
firm grew she was relegated to do more and more administrative work and less of the creative
work she thoroughly enjoyed. She “became much more of an administrator than a small, warm,
and fuzzy- just me and a couple of people doing fun things.” Unfortunately, at that point, Deb’s
late husband became quite ill and she chose to the business. After her husband past away, she
went back for her Master’s degree in communication and taught two undergraduate classes in
communication as part of the degree program. She noted that she was “always happiest when I
am doing something that is direct, that has a direct impact and that’s also creative.” She
discovered that she loved teaching and decided to make it her second career. Deb has served as a
contingent faculty member for the past 8 years. She currently teaches simultaneously at two four-
year public universities in the Northeast.

Frank

Frank worked for 22 years for the same utility company before switching careers to teach
in the academe. He started as a service technician and worked his way to a supervisory role. He
also served as the union representative and rose to the ranks of management. Additionally, he
served as a liaison between the utility company and their business customers. He noted that there
was a lot of independence and problem-solving involved in this work, which aided his ability to
adapt to teaching in the academe. He explained that he was on his own once he was assigned
various jobs and tasks, which prepared him for handling a concept so treasured in academia,
academic freedom. He noted, “I’m kind of a humble person but I was, kind of, at times, the go-to
guy.” Through his employment with the company, he developed a number of marketable and
transferable skills that served him well in the classroom and in his second career as a contingent
faculty member. In particular, he had excellent soft skills and utilized them to handle negotiations and crises. Frank enjoyed the comradery promoted in the company but as the company grew, the “family atmosphere” left and it became much more corporate, which Frank liked a whole lot less than his earlier days at the company. Frank took advantage of the company’s tuition reimbursement program and went back to school to obtain both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Frank had several professors in his master’s program that “were beyond mentors” to him. They suggested he consider teaching, which was something he thought he would enjoy. He applied and was accepted to a doctoral program because he wanted to teach at the college level but one of his mentors suggested he would not get a proper return on the investment because of his age. His mentor told him he could teach as a contingent faculty member without a doctorate. Therefore, he never enrolled in the program. Frank quickly discovered an opening at a local, four-year public institution in the Northeast. He applied and even though he had limited teaching experience he was hired. He has worked as a contingent faculty member there for the past nine years and loved engaging and interacting with the students. In addition to teaching at the four-year, public institution, Frank worked as a contingent faculty member for a private higher education institution in the Northeast.

Gina

For Gina’s first career, a picture was worth a thousand words. Gina owned her own photography business. While she was in college earning her bachelor’s degree, she worked part-time for a photographer taking photos of children. After her first child she started a one-hour photo lab and ran that business for three years. With the birth of her second child and the high cost of daycare, she sold the photo lab business and became a stay-at-home mom. During that time she began to take on jobs as a freelance photographer and as the number of those jobs grew,
she ended up owning and running her own full-time photography business. She specialized in taking sports photos of children and developed numerous clients who ran sports recreational leagues. Her work was seasonal – soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, baseball in the spring, etc. While taking photographs of sports teams and the children that play on them may not seem like a difficult job, Gina explained that there was a lot that went into her business to keep it operational. First she had to line up the whole season and schedule dates for the teams and leagues to have pictures taken. She took the photographs and returned the photos to the teams and children before the end of the season. She communicated with the league and the coaches. She spent countless hours on the computer reviewing and editing the photos, uploading the photos to be processed, processing the orders, and creating spreadsheets of the orders. After she received the prints, she sorted them by team and then delivered the team packages to the league. Then, she would move on to the next seasonal sport. Gina noted that if she counted the total number of hours she put in from planning through delivery of the photos, she admitted that she probably didn’t make that much. She likened it to “a labor of love.” She noted that if her success was measured on how much money she made as a photographer then she would admit she was not very successful. However, if success was measured in how she and her business were regarded by others, then she said her business was highly successful because “I was very well-respected for the work that I did.” She noted that she lost a couple of leagues as clients only to have them return the next season because they were not satisfied with the other company they had hired to replace her. Gina thoroughly enjoyed working with children and preserving those memories for them and their families. While Gina thoroughly enjoyed her photography business, the work didn’t “earn enough to provide an income” that she was comfortable with to raise her family.
Gina noted that she always wanted to teach. She originally was a special education major in her baccalaureate program. Due to the lack of jobs available in the field locally at that time she switched to communication. She later earned a Master’s degree in communication as well. As she was taking courses to get certified to teach high school, she was hired to teach communication courses part-time at the local community college and found that she liked teaching college students. Over the 15 years of teaching in higher education, she taught at both the community college and a four-year, public university in the Northeast.

**Erin**

Erin has had a distinguished broadcasting career. While she was getting her bachelor’s degree, Erin interned at a sports broadcasting station in a Northern state. She was “the intern that never went home.” During her internship, she also was assigned “freelance gigs” to make money. The station eventually offered her a contract and she worked there until a baseball strike forced layoffs. She went on to grad school with an assistanceship to get a Master’s degree in Broadcasting. While getting her Master’s she applied for and was hired to manage the university’s television station. At the same time, the university hired her to teach one undergraduate course in broadcasting. Erin described this hectic time when she noted: “I was working full-time in broadcasting. I would walk across campus, teach a class, go back and work some more.” She moved on from there to work in pharmaceutical broadcasting in the Mid-Atlantic region. She quickly moved up the ranks to producer. She produced educational videos on the findings from pharmaceutical studies. Broadcast videos are one way of disseminating the information and findings from these studies or grant awards. These videos often serve as continuing medical education credits (CME credits) for doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals. She interviewed a lot of interesting people about a lot of interesting topics. Erin
said the work was fascinating and she learned a lot of scary things about pharmaceuticals. She said she often found herself remarking “What? What? Oh, my God. No. That’s a side effect. Does anyone else have an issue here?” A downside to the job was it involved a lot of travel, which meant she “was never home.” On the plus side, she had a no-holds barred expense account and “wining and dining” guest experts was part of her job description. She explained, “We’d drive them around in a limo. We had makeup. . . I got to take them to dinner anywhere and there was no limit.” She mentioned that one time she took the entire crew out to dinner because they put in a lot of extra hours. Erin noted that the job was exciting, glamorous, and interesting. She worked as a producer until 9/11 and all the funding for pharmaceutical broadcasting dried up. From there she took another job as a producer this time in the private sector broadcasting company in another Mid-Atlantic state. She was paid well but it had a significant downside. Mistakes were costly. Erin pointed out, “If you make a mistake, especially like satellite time or uplink or you’re off on something, your mistake is going to cost you, say, at least $5,000. Because it’s not network, you know. It’s . . . It is an event.” She explained that pharmaceutical representatives would go into hospitals and arrange for the company’s broadcasts to be shown to the medical staff affiliated with the hospital. As a result, a mistake in production or airing of the broadcasts was costly. Again in this job, she traveled a lot and “was always exhausted.” Additionally, she disliked the egos she had to deal with. She mentioned one client she called the “Queen of Darkness” who altered the broadcast so significantly every single time that it would not look anything like what she produced. As a result, Erin concluded, “I don’t want to show anybody this. I don’t want to put my name on it. You know it was like slowly career death.” She noted that the job was extremely stressful and, between the travelling and the stress, eventually it wore her down. She noted, “I drank a pot of coffee a day and switched around noon to Diet
Mountain Dew. I smoked like a chimney because all broadcasters smoked. It’s so bizarre (laughs). And they’re all divorced (laughs). I can see this pattern.” Even with the stress and travel, Erin loved the creativity involved in broadcasting. Erin pointed out, “I thought it was the coolest thing. By the time you got done with a program and saw the finished work, I was like – I made that!”

Erin moved back home after getting divorced and managed a restaurant for short while. Then she worked in Career Services for a Northern for-profit college that was known for its broadcasting program. In that capacity, she used her connections in broadcasting to secure internships and jobs for broadcast students. Later, she remarried, moved to New England, and switched careers to teaching in the academe. She worked as a full-time, contingent faculty member for the past three years. During that time, she taught at a four-year public institution and two private higher education institutions. During one year, she taught at all three institutions simultaneously to cobble together a full-time salary, but does not intend to do that again anytime soon. When it comes to teaching in the academe, she noted that she “never thought it would be full-time. I thought it was fun.” She had envisioned a life-long career in broadcasting where she worked for more than 10 years. “I thought I was going to be a female Wolf Blitzer (laughs)” even though she never worked in news. She asked, “Do you remember Holly Hunter in Broadcast News (laughs)? That was the goal. I just thought teaching was kind of fun.” Erin noted that she immensely enjoyed engaging with students in the classroom.

**Emergent Themes**

Through this research, the researcher sought to understand the perceptions and lived experiences of second-career contingent faculty as they adapted to teaching in the academe.
Participants had different reasons for switching careers to teach in the academe. As they learned to adapt to the new culture and roles of contingent faculty, each participant faced and conquered similar yet unique challenges and issues. The participants’ stories were not intended to be generalizations. They represented the specific individuals’ experiences and perceptions, which are specific to the individuals in their particular context at that particular 4-year public higher education institution where they taught. All but one participant have continued to teach at their respective four-year public higher education institutions. Only one participant did not continue as a contingent faculty member due to low enrollment in her assigned class and a last-minute class cancelation. However, she was assigned classes for the upcoming fall semester. The findings herein illustrate the participants’ perceptions and lived experiences and are illustrated by the metaphor of the second-career contingent faculty as the Experienced Tour Guide planning a trip.

**Theme One: The Destination**

The first task every Experienced Tour Guide must tackle involved selecting the destination for the trip. This takes an awareness and curiosity of the world around you and a sense for what trip or destination would be a good fit for your needs. If the Tour Guide planned a historical trip, the Battlefields at Gettysburg would be a much more appropriate sojourn than Daytona Beach. While there is no guarantee that you would enjoy the trip to Gettysburg, a lot of forethought would go in to choosing the right destination based on your goals, needs, personality, interests, and nature. The same was true of the participants’ level of curiosity about their professional careers, future, and seeking the resources for continual improvement.

All of the participants were curious about their world and how their profession fit into their world. They were future-focused, self-reflective, explorative, observant, and investigative. None were remotely worried about making a career change after more than 10 years of
experience in their first careers even though they had achieved some level of prominence or stature. The thought of failure never entered into their minds. They simply believed they could and would do it. Somehow. They knew what they wanted to do – they wanted to teach in the academe – and they knew that they would get there. This was extremely important to their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe because they all felt they were not supported and had to find their own way. As Hannah put it, “It was like sink or swim. So, I swam.” As a result, their curiosity manifested itself in a number of different ways.

**Future-focused.** When planning a trip, the *Experienced Tour Guide* must be future-focused. The guide needed to ask: Where should we go? In doing so, the guide explored different options and imagined what the trip to a specific destination would be like. Like the tour guide, participants also gave significant thought to switching careers to teach in the academe, what that new career would look like, and whether or not it would be a good fit.

During the interview, Hannah noted that she always had an inkling that she wanted to be a teacher and because she was thoughtful about her future she took the steps to make that possibility a reality someday. She noted, “So I set myself up early which is why I went to grad school right away, because I always thought I might want to teach. So I said I am going to go and pursue it now while I still, you know, can and want to. Um, and, it’s just my personal sort of goal. So if I ever want to teach I have it and it kind of worked out, so.”

Deb noted that she chose to switch careers after her husband passed away. Feeling lost, she told her grief counselor:

I kept saying to her – I have no idea what my future is. I look and it’s like a blank slate. Because my future was supposed to be with my husband and all of this and all of that has just disappeared. It’s like standing on the edge of a cliff and just nothing. So, she had me
do a bunch of activities and exercises. And one of them was, sort of, to do a diagram with myself in the center and then to put like inner circle. What are the things you absolutely need in your life and then what are the outer circles? And then, what is the stuff that you need to get rid of? What is the stuff you don’t want in your life? And, when I did that exercise and I looked at all those things that were at the very core of what I needed and wanted, which she then explained that it’s the core of yourself, not just what you need and want. And, then looking at these outer circles and the stuff I did not want. To me, suddenly I just looked at her and I said this is clear. I want to go back to school. I want to learn. I want to teach. I want to engage. I want to have interactions. I want to change people’s lives. Teaching could do all that.

For Deb, this revelation was “life changing.” She realized that she needed to work in a profession that she loved and she realized that teaching was the right fit for her. She further explained it by stating, “If your house blows up, you can either rebuild it or you could rebuild a different house. So, I decided to mostly rebuild a different house.” Remarkably, she made that decision without fully knowing how that was going to happen but believing she would make it happen. She noted:

I mean I didn’t exactly know the end route but I knew that I was on the right path. And, I knew that I was committed to doing whatever it took to get there. And, that’s just part of who I am. When I commit to something I commit all the way. There’s never a question. Um, unless it becomes very, very clear that this is the wrong thing to do. Um, but, yeah. I committed to it wholly, and I, I knew would get to where I needed to go.

Originally, Gina majored in special education in her undergraduate career with the hope of becoming a special education teacher. Due to the limited local job market at the time, she switched to communication because she always enjoyed media. She noted that after she obtained
her Master’s degree, teaching in the academe was something that was “introduced to me as something just to try because I was thinking of going into teaching anyway.” She discovered she loved it and “you don’t have to worry about state certification like you do when you teach K-12.”

**Self-reflective.** In planning the trip, the *Experienced Tour Guide* reflected about destinations she had previously been to and those that she had never been to but offered the type of experience she wanted. She would think about destinations that she would personally find interesting, exciting, and provide a memorable experience. The participants engaged in similar self-reflection.

As Hannah conducted training programs in her company, she reflected on the experience noting that she really enjoyed teaching others. She pointed out, “I liked to teach people in the corporate world so it became more clear that, you know, this is what I would like to do.” Her ability to self-reflect also impacted the way she interacted in the classroom. This is evident when she said the following:

So, in the corporate world I didn’t really put myself out there very much. I sort of kept my personal life to me. Didn’t really talk a lot about it. I just didn’t. And I think as a, um, what I learned over time is, and that would have been what people might have said about me, is that they didn’t really know that much about me, um because I wasn’t so open about it. So, over time as I went on, I started to let people in a little bit more and it seemed like they were more receptive to me, um, and my ideas. So, I’ve learned that and I’ve taken that into the classroom, where I am a little bit more open about like, you know. If people are struggling, I’m like, well, I’ve had that issue or here’s how I dealt with it. And, I just try to be a lot more transparent. I don’t mind saying that, you know, I have
two young sons and telling them the real deal because I feel like they appreciate that more.

In addition, Hannah reflected on ways to better reach her students frequently asking, “How could I do this differently? What might reach them? Because sometimes I feel like I’m not but I want to.”

All participants were constantly looking for ways to improve as educators and to make their classes more engaging and interesting for students. Christy pointed out, “It is one thing to come with a knowledge of your profession, but is another thing to know how to develop lessons that will be interesting, exciting, and revelatory for students.” She insisted that second-career contingent faculty cannot simply fill their classes with “war stories” because if they do not find ways to engage their students, learning will not take place. Christy also suggested the “quality and thoroughness of the course now is much higher now than when I first started teaching” due to “educating myself constantly, constantly, constantly.” Christy’s repetitive use of constantly served to emphasize that the process of educating oneself, learning, and improving as an instructor never ends.

Deb described how she grew as a contingent faculty member over time and with experience when she stated:

When I first started I was um a little bit more tentative about trying to create relationships. I had kind of heard a lot of stories that relationships aren’t created when you’re an adjunct. So I think a part of me was this is just the reality of it, but I think I’m an outgoing person and it doesn’t take a lot for me to start making conversations with people and making friends. Um, and so now I’m more comfortable being outgoing in
these places. Whereas I think initially I was really being sort of tentative and seeing how things work and who talks to you and who walks by you and things like that.

Erin found that an important way to improve her classrooms and effectiveness as contingent faculty member was to ask for feedback from her students. She noted, “I ask for their feedback now. Did this work? What did you like about it? What should I change? What helps? What doesn’t help? And I solicit their opinions and try to give them a voice.” She insisted that it was important to give students a voice and to respect their opinions, ideas and feedback. She stated, “I’ve had some great suggestions and I thought, oh yeah. I can change that and can I do my job better. But I do think they appreciate it because I do have respect for them and that makes a better environment.” She found that implementing students’ suggestions in her subsequent classes made them more effective, engaging, and interesting.

**Explorative.** The *Experienced Tour Guide* must investigate all destination options before settling on a final destination for the trip. A multitude of options existed and the route taken could vary depending on the stops chosen along the way. All participants “took the bull by the horns” and explored options before making choices. In addition, they sought out different resources that assisted them in navigating and adapting to teaching in the academe.

As Hannah indicated, “Before I even went on the interview, I reached out to some teacher friends to ask what do I need to know about teaching in a nutshell, from a more academic sense.” Using her experiences in the corporate world, Hannah understood the power of networking and exploring existing resources. She explained that she did a lot of research because “I knew that if I was going to be successful, I had to be able to talk the talk, and understand the language.” She knew that was not all she was going to need to do to adapt successfully. Hannah noted, “And,
again, tapping into my network. Who do I know that is a professor? Who can help me and, you
know show me the ropes? And things that maybe they screwed up and kind of learned from.”

Meanwhile, Christy acknowledged that she was “winging it” when she first started
teaching. She noted:

So, I just felt like, I know that I’m flying by the seat of my pants on this and I’m just
going to do the best job that I can do. And, I’m going to find out what works and what
doesn’t work as far as lesson planning, and um, getting students engaged in something,
getting them to understand something.

Christy knew she would continue to explore until she figured it out and produced an engaging,
interesting class for her students.

Deb mentioned ways in which she explored in order to adapt to teaching in the academe.
She noted, “The way of adapting was really, uh, just again the flexibility, the tuning in to kind of
what’s expected, how things work, how decisions are made, how you communicate with whom.”

Erin explained that she was constantly looking for ways to improve her courses and
claimed “I am constantly playing with things each semester. I tell my students I cannot leave
things alone. I tend to tweak things. I’ve never taught the same class twice even within one day.”
She admitted that being a perfectionist influenced this tendency. She added, “I can’t imagine not
having something new. That’s where the perfectionist tendencies come out. I’m like - this could
be better. It never stops.” Erin admitted that the Internet made this much easier. She pointed out,
“I do more research for ideas. With the expansion of the Internet it is so much easier to find
exercises and information now that I can use in class.”

Frank took a different approach. He sought help from his mentors. He noted:
I remember the first time I had to pick a book for a class I went and saw a mentor of mine and I sat down with her and asked ‘How do you do this?’ I mean, I remember Googling about the topic. There are virtually thousands of people trying to get you to use their book and some of them are so similar. And I remember saying to her – ‘What’s the process of picking a book for your class?’ She went over it with me. She asked: What are the demographics? What are you looking for them to do? She told me it has to be something useful. It has to be something that enhances your class. You don’t want it to just fill time. You want it to enhance what you are teaching so they go hand in hand. And I remember, we sat down and we went over some books. And she would kind of test my brain. She would ask – ‘Why do you like that book?’ And, I would tell her why and then she would play the devil’s advocate type of thing, which was good. Uh, and in my old days, I would have taken that personally, but it was good because she got me to think.

**Observant.** The *Experienced Tour Guide* was observant. The guide paid attention to the likes and dislikes of guests on past trips and learned quickly what worked and what did not work. She never hesitated to try new things or adventures on the trips and always sought to develop a trip that ensured high customer satisfaction. Like the guide, all participants noted that they were observant and that this contributed to their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe.

Hannah was excited when she mentioned, “You know, I would enjoy when the light bulb would come on with people. And, you could get people to really, you know, kind of bite off and enjoy it and see what they are capable of doing.”

Erin pointed out, “I have a habit of watching people and picking up patterns. I think I developed that skill a long time ago as a first generation college student. . . So I was observant and curious.”
Deb noted that she observed students to ensure they were learning and understanding core concepts in the class. She explained that it is “all about what’s working, what’s not working. When am I seeing the lights turn on? When am I seeing it not turn on? When do I see their eyes glaze over?” Deb watched her students’ reaction closely. “To me it was about becoming more observant and interactive but also about scaffolding a lot of knowledge so that they are climbing up the ladder with me instead of expecting them to be at the top of the ladder.”

**Investigative.** The *Experienced Tour Guide* investigated all options for possible destinations for the trip. The choices were unlimited and the guided needed to determine the best ways to find out what destination would fit the best. Being investigative was a significant characteristic displayed by all participants. After all, the participants were accomplished individuals in their fields and were not accustomed to sitting around waiting for something to happen. They were resourceful and actively sought out the information or resources they needed to successfully adapt to academia. As a result, they investigated and explored their surroundings in order to successfully adapt to becoming a second-career contingent faculty member.

Hannah relayed her experience with exploring her surroundings as follows:

And, luckily for me, I had gone undergrad at where I started teaching right away. So I was familiar with the players. So, I would go back and some of the people were still there. And, I would ask them – hey, what you think about this? Or where do I go for that? So, there was a lot of finding my own way, because being new there is a whole other realm to academia that you don’t even know about. You know, even just like I mean even like, how do I order a textbook? I have no idea how I order a textbook. And I think that fact that made it even worse is that it was over the summer, and pretty much it is hard to find anybody, you know, actually working over the summer to even help you.
Hannah noted that it was a significant challenge to learn about the people, the environment, and the differences between the corporate and academic worlds. She expressed that she had a learning curve and that it was difficult at times to figure out “how to get things done in an academic world.” However, she felt she adapted very well to teaching in the academe and noted that “For me, I guess I was just lucky because, again, I could sort of just easily find my way, and I am pretty resourceful.”

Christy referred to herself as a “self-taught educator.” “I’ve read articles about teaching and ideas for assignments, but really I am, kind of, creating my own course from, from my own experience.”

Deb found exploring her surroundings and seeking out assistance extremely helpful to her ability to adapt to teaching in the academe. She noted:

Other adjuncts sharing ideas and concerns and frustrations. Absolutely. To me that has been huge. And some full-time people at some of the colleges have been somewhat supportive on a more surfacy level. You have to find them. I seek them out now.

**Theme Two: The Sites**

Once the destination was determined, the *Experienced Tour Guide* must turn all efforts toward determining the specific sites the tour will visit during this trip. This took planning, preparation, optimism, and concern. All participants showed concern for their future but they did not dwell on it or let it prevent them from making decisions and moving forward toward their goals. Unlike Savickas and Porfeli’s (2011) findings, none of the participants indicated they spent any significant amount of time thinking about what their future would be like (forward-thinking) or worrying about how the choices they made today will shape their future (connects present and future). These were not areas where the participants showed concern and, as a result,
are not included in these findings. They simply knew what they wanted to do and just went out and did it. They accomplished this because they possessed strong planning skills, were optimistic and hopeful, and emphasized being prepared. These concerns manifested themselves in different ways for each participant.

**Planful.** Like the *Experienced Tour Guide*, all participants were planners and their planning ability allowed them to adapt to teaching in the academe. In order to ensure that their students learned and got the most of out their classes, they carefully planned out their courses seeking to engage their students and ensure learning took place. When they did not know how to do something they sought out expert assistance or mentors to show them the way. They took responsibility for their own learning as an educator and were fully commitment to whatever effort and planning it took to be a high-quality educator.

When Hannah was faced with learning a new Learning Management System, she sought expert advice. She noted:

> My husband’s, um, boss, his wife, was or is still a professor at a college. So, I literally, sat with her for about five hours at a Starbucks one day and said - tell me everything you know about Blackboard. And we went through it all and it was great. And, then I went to the Learning and Teaching Center or whatever, and I sat with them about, you know, Blackboard. And obviously I can grasp technology pretty quickly, but I was like - How do you use it? What’s best? What have you learned? So, getting tips, and tricks, and best practices from people who already knew about it was really important to me. So, I guess the challenge was that you’re sort of out on an island and you don’t really know, um, and, and you don’t have a lot of time to ramp up and figure it out.
Hannah’s mention of being “out on an island” is a reference to the lack of support she received as a second-career contingent faculty member and highlights the important role her planning skills and her innate curiosity played in her success as an educator.

Deb echoed these sentiments when she talked about the amount of time and effort that went into developing a class that was being taught for the first time. She stated, “Teaching any course for the first time . . . you, yourself have to set aside so much learning time . . . and you don’t feel like you’re being compensated for it when you are an adjunct.” She emphasized that it takes a lot of planning, effort, and hard work to develop and implement a class.

Gina mentioned that she was constantly planning new ways to engage and reach her students. She said:

There are always things that I say - you know what? I’m not quite happy with the way this works out. Um, I’m feeling like I can get more out of my students if I try a different approach. And, uh, so I’m always looking at those gray areas. They are areas that work but they don’t work as well as I think they should work so let’s try something new.

Gina noted continually making changes in her classes takes a lot of planning, time, and effort.

**Optimistic/Hopeful.** The *Experienced Tour Guide* was always optimistic that the planned trip will be a success. All participants were not only optimistic and hopeful about their new careers and becoming quality educators, they were certain they would find their way and be successful. They did not have all the answers but they did not have any doubts about themselves or their careers as educators. They understood that they had a lot to learn and were constantly taking steps to improve as instructors, but they believed they were in right field doing work they loved.
Deb expressed hope for her situation as a contingent faculty member. She pointed out, “I feel like right now I am at two schools that I enjoy that seem to be a good fit for me and have been somewhat steady. I’m hedging because we just don’t know what’s going to happen.” She added that she was confident she would land on her feet somewhere if anything changed at these institutions.

Gina explained that she did not plan on doing anything else but teaching. She said:

I do like teaching at a public school because I feel like I’m more of a help to those students because I’m able to recognize the needs of those types of students. I feel like I’m benefitting them more than at a school where students come academically prepared. Gina especially loved the concept of helping her students become better students who will have better lives because they were educated. She said, “I mean it was just something I knew I could do so I just jumped right in and did it.”

Hannah was hopeful that switching careers to teach in the academe was a good move. She said:

I knew I wasn’t going to make a lot of money but at least I was going to keep busy and get some experience under my belt and do something that I would enjoy, hopefully. And that seems to be the case so it has worked out I guess.

Since teaching and students were the participants’ primary focus, they took steps to connect with their students in the hope of positively impacting them. Frank clearly expressed that he served as a resource for his students beyond the classroom. He noted:

On the last day of class I always tell my students - As a teacher, it goes beyond this class.

Okay, I’m a teacher and I’m here. This isn’t the end of it. If I can ever be of any help
even if it’s just to sit and talk to me or if you want to vent or if I can write a letter for you to study abroad, by all means look me up. When I say that, I’m sincere about that.

Deb also expressed concern about impacting her students. She noted:

I really feel like I connect with and make a difference with my students and I hear that all the time. I think there is a strong sense of mutual respect. And, um, that, uh, that education can be engaging, and enjoyable, and challenging, and hard all at the same time.

And, I think most students get on board my bus, so that’s good.

Caring about students and being optimistic about their learning and future was also a characteristic that all participants shared. Christy said it simply, “I’m engaged with my students. I like my students.” All of the participants expressed this simple concept – they liked their students. They enjoyed working with college students and were dedicated to making their learning interesting but challenging.

**Prepared/Ready.** Since there were so many details that went into planning and running a trip, the *Experienced Tour Guide* had to be prepared. In that same light, all participants expressed the importance of being prepared. Hannah noted, “I am prepared. I always am prepared but now I don’t have to have every second planned out in the classroom. I can just go with it based on what is happening.” Deb also noted the importance of preparation. She explained:

I think, certainly, um, teaching any course for the first time . . . you, yourself have to set aside so much learning time. So, the learning time and the prep time for each course was huge and you don’t feel like you’re being compensated for it when you are an adjunct.

Deb like several other participants noted that as a contingent faculty member, she was paid per course and that compensation did not take into account the enormous preparation time required to design, alter, and improve a course. The compensation covers the implementation of the
course, but not all the other time contingent faculty members put into ensuring an engaging, quality course, which as Christy noted could take “many, many, many more hours of preparation outside of the classroom before you are even on campus.” Christy echoed Deb’s sentiments when she noted that the “preparation time for teaching a class is enormous.” Since she was no stranger to hard work and was highly committed to her students and their success, she explained, “I was willing to commit to the hard work out of the classroom to prepare myself in the classroom.” She explained how she accomplished this by noting, “I’ve spent many, many hours online seeking information about lesson plans, and syllabi by professors that are being taught at other universities, and trying to better myself” in order to be “the best I can for my students.” Christy noticed this made a difference. “With each year, I’ve become a better professor, a better educator.” Erin mentioned similar experiences. She said, “I tell my students I cannot leave things alone. I tend to tweak things. I’ve never taught the same class twice even within one day.”

One aspect that most participants were not prepared for and needed to adapt to was the variety of skill level and, at times, the lack of readiness of public university students. However, they also felt that bringing them up watching them grow was extremely rewarding. Frank noted that he was surprised so many of his students were not ready for the rigor of college and did not take their academics seriously. He pointed out:

I find a lot of the freshmen here, and I can’t say that it’s just the public school, but some of them seem like they’re not ready. I found when I first started teaching there’s a lot of young men and women that don’t take it serious. And I found to be the biggest thing that I couldn’t comprehend because where it was always so important to me I had a hard time grasping like why don’t they understand how important this is?
However, he also noted there was a distinct difference from most of his public school students as opposed to students attending private institutions. He felt that for students attending private schools “that this [getting an education] is something they’re almost expected to do, but at a state school it’s something they really want to do.”

Christy mentioned the challenges and rewards of teaching students with diverse skill and readiness levels when she stated:

The kids at this public institution, you get a real mix of skill levels. You get some, uh, very smart, capable kids and then you get some kids where you wonder how they got into college. And, um, and so, I guess the challenge for me is when I see all of them doing better by the end of the course, you know when I see the improvement in even the lower-performing ones, then I get a lot of self-satisfaction about that that they’ve received something worthwhile for their money (laughs). For me, it makes me very much more conscious of giving them bang for their buck. These are hard-working kids. A lot of them are from lower-middle class families. A lot of them are first-year college kids. A lot of them have, um, problems at home, family issues. . . All of those issues that don’t come up so much in the private school level. You, you, you tend to get wealthy international students or um, upper middle class well-off, entitled white students who’ve been privileged, who’ve been privileged their whole lives with all the tutoring they needed, all the extra help they needed, all the SAT prep that costs hundreds of thousands of dollars that have given them a leg up. And with all that comes a sense of entitlement at the private school level. At the public school level, they are just so thankful to be learning. My students are just – Oh, thank you so much. I learned so much in this class. This was such a great class. You know, I learned so much in this. They are so appreciative and you
know that they are working so hard to make their lives better, to get a job. You say the word job to a public university college student and their ears prick up. All their, 100 percent of their attention is on you if you say job, this is going to help you get a job. Um, private school, yeah, they care about jobs, too, but you know maybe (laughs) daddy is going to help them get a job when they get out.

Gina also stated that she gets more satisfaction out of helping students enrolled in the public university. She pointed out:

Some, not all, of the students at public state schools are simply not prepared. In a lot of ways, I do like teaching at the public institution because I feel like I’m more of a help to those students because I’m able to recognize the needs of those types of students. I feel like I’m benefitting them more than at a school where students come academically prepared.

**Theme Three: The Schedule**

As the coordinator of the trip, the *Experienced Tour Guide* set the schedule of activities and schedule for the trip. Like the tour guide, all of the participants controlled their destiny and their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe. Participants made independent decisions, contemplated their next steps, and then moved in the direction that was going to ensure success. They independently sought out resources and information that would help them achieve their goals, held themselves accountable and were persistent in their pursuit of becoming a quality educator even though they often received little support and guidance. Even when things happened that were out of their control, there was expectation that, in the end, it would work out.

**Independent/Autonomous.** As with the *Experienced Tour Guide*, all participants were extremely independent and autonomous. They independently made decisions about their new
career and sought out the resources they needed to be successful as a second-career contingent faculty member. Hannah noted, “To some extent, maybe I just figured things out on my own. Um, so maybe that’s good. I don’t have to rely on others. I am very self-reliant. I’m resourceful.” Christy used a powerful metaphor suggesting a classroom “becomes your own little kingdom.” She added, “You go into that classroom and you shut the door and it’s all yours.” As a result, she was able to independently conduct the class as she saw fit. Christy and Hannah were not alone. Deb echoed this sentiment when she said, “I tend to be a very independent, autonomous worker and then love to present my stuff. That’s from my years as a PR person – do all your work and then present it and everybody loves you.”

**Contemplative/Preemptive.** As a result of the *Experienced Tour Guide*’s years of experience, the tour guide would think about every aspect of the trip before planning it. However, even the best laid plans will run afoul and the *Experienced Tour Guide* needs to make the best decision possible given the information and situation. Like the tour guide, at times participants were contemplative and at other times, they threw caution to the wind and moved forward without considering the consequences displaying a fearless and assuredness that they would succeed.

Hannah talked about being contemplative when she began considering switching careers. Exemplifying how she thought before she acted she said:

Well I was just (pauses) done where I was. And, it wasn’t a light decision. It happened a year or two in progress of me thinking about what I was going to do and where I was at. . So, I started looking around to see what local colleges had to offer. And, the local state school I went to just happened to have a position posted. And, I was like: If I have to
teach, I’d like to teach there. That would be my first choice. And, um, I decided to apply and it just kind of lined up really quickly and nicely.

For Frank, being a professor was “something I had always thought about. . . I remember thinking – boy that must be a really neat profession. To be able to help develop individuals or be a mentor or be someone who affects someone’s life.” These thoughts provided the impetus for Frank to go back to school, obtain his bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and then to switch careers to teaching in the academe.

The personal tragedy of Deb’s husband passing away plunged her into a transitional period of employment. She no longer owned the PR business but she needed to work. She described the impetus or as she put it “the perfect storm” that led to her returning to school to get her Master’s degree and, ultimately, switching careers to teaching:

There was a transitional period when my husband past away. I took a job doing day-long educational sessions for business and community leaders about community issues. And, also ran a similar program – a college leadership program for this agency. So, I was working for a nonprofit agency. Um, and, what I realized was (sighed) the work at that nonprofit had a lot of drawbacks but what compelled me, what I loved about the work even though it was very high stress, um, were the educational session days and were working with the college students. And, I kept thinking if that was all I had to do for my job is the educational part, not all of the administrative part that once again was becoming my life and um, very high stressed, that that could be good. I also remembered that I had taught many, many years ago at New England Tech in video production and script writing. So I knew that I enjoyed teaching and I was good at it. And, I have to say I had several friends say why don’t you go back to school and get your master’s. I had a friend
of mine say you’re the smartest person I know, why don’t you have your master’s? So, I think all of that was the perfect storm to decide to do something different, and kind of get closer to my heart.

Deb noted that it all worked out because today she noted, “I feel like I’m in a place I love.”

**Accountable/Trustworthy.** In order to be successful, the *Experienced Tour Guide* must be both accountable and trustworthy. Accountability and trustworthiness were consistent themes found in all participant interviews. Participants held themselves to high standards in terms of being a quality educator and took full responsibility for their actions even though they received little support and guidance. Hannah explained this when she said:

One class was my own and I could build it exactly how I wanted but the other one I felt like I should be more in line with standards because it was a core curriculum class. Um, and I’m pretty big on making sure that, you know, being consistent is important and making sure that I’m catching the essence of the class in that they’ll be able to build upon what it is I’m teaching them.

Obviously her accountability extended to her students because she wanted to be fair to them. Therefore, she engaged in “creating rubrics and making sure my grading is as fair as I can make it.” Hannah also found that if she opened up to students trust developed, which resulted in students opening up to her and ultimately, enhanced learning. She noted:

I could see differences when I could connect with them more on a personal level. And, maybe getting to know them on a personal level, too. Not just putting my life into their life but really trying to understand what it is they are doing and what they are going through and thinking about it from their perspective. That has helped me a lot and shaped
part of my change. I think I’m just a lot more me all around in the classroom as opposed to it’s the super professional teacher me. Now, it’s me, me. Hannah’s comparison of the “super professional teacher me” and just “me” was telling. Was she trying to achieve some ideal originally? Was that “super professional teacher” the “perfect” teacher? Was she trying to be perfect? Is that the perfectionist in her talking? Is this a trait of all second-career contingent faculty? Is it a mere leftover trait from their first career? Now that she had six years of teaching experience under her belt, was she more relaxed and more like herself? Was she no longer worried about being perfect? Like Hannah, most of the participants admitted they were perfectionists. As a result, they held themselves accountable for being good instructors and being good employees. They were fully committed to doing whatever it took to make that happen in order to ensure they created a maximum learning environment for their students.

 Deb felt being trustworthy was important to her students. She felt if she respected her students they would, in turn, trust and respect her. She pointed out, “I just feel like the students are always owed respect even if we don’t think they are as prepared or as engaged or whatever. They are still adults. It’s their life and we need to approach it with respect.”

 Frank echoed Deb’s sentiments when he noted, “I always like to establish trust with my students. It’s another corny phrase, but to get respect, you have to give respect. And, I think that’s what I learned in my other career.”

**Persistent/Passionate.** The *Experienced Tour Guide* was persistent and passionate. There was no question that the devil was in the details when it came to planning a trip and the tour guide needed to be persistent to lock down every detail of the trip. The tour guide also needed to be passionate about trip planning and coordinating a trip. That persistence and passion would be obvious to those taking the trip. Unlike with Savicka and Porfeli’s (2011) findings,
patience was not a characteristic of any of the participants in the study. All participants, however, were persistent and passionate. They knew what they wanted and they did not hesitate or wait for it to happen, they made it happen. They also were persistent in their pursuit to improve themselves through professional development programs, seeking out other resources, and asking for student feedback, which helped them explore new ways of doing things both in and out of the classroom.

Persistence is exemplified when Hannah stated the following:

You know, being a part-timer like I’ve taught a lot of different classes. So, I’ve had to really brush up on things that I have learned and know about but wouldn’t consider myself to be an expert in, such as communication theory. Um, you know that’s a difficult one. And, I was teaching that theory class in a three-hour, once a week class. You want to talk about difficulty in trying to reach students and keep them motivated and interested.

All along while I’m pretty much learning and relearning the information so I can present it in a way.

Participants seemed to equate their persistence with their passion for teaching and their students. All participants mentioned the importance of passion. Hannah said, “I think passion is important. You can’t be passionate about everything but about your job, it is usually helpful.” When asked if she would do it all again knowing what she knows now, Hannah instantly replied, “Yes! I would because I enjoy it. It is what I am passionate about. I do like teaching people. I like to see them be successful.” Hannah capitalized on opportunities to encourage her students to find their passion when she stated:

And, I tell my students that, too. You’re going to leave and go look for a job. Think about what you are passionate about. Like, what excites you? And, then look in those areas first
so you can be invigorated every day about going to work. Because, that is your life.

Because you will pretty much know those people you work with much better than your own family half the time. You know you’re with them more. You’re there all the time.

Um, so, if you can be working in a line that interests you, then I think you are halfway there to being successful because you are already sort of set up to be doing that. As opposed to just taking any old thing that comes along and you’re miserable because you hate it. You’re trying to sell widgets and you don’t see the purpose in widgets and why am I doing this? So, yeah. Passion is good.

Gina explained that she is passionate about helping students learn, grow, and better themselves. She said:

If you don’t care about students and care about whether they’re learning and have a sense of value for their education for them and know how important it is for them to become educated. You know, that’s the whole passion for this is for them as people, but for them as people who are trying to become better people. You know, that’s what we all went into education for and what we strive for. I’ve always thought of education as a way of helping people not just teaching.

Deb felt passion was an integral reason why she switched careers and was committed to adapting to this “foreign culture.” She explained her passion for teaching and

Being able to challenge students, get them to see things differently, uh, open their eyes up to stuff they never thought about is just always really cool to me. And, then on the selfish side, it’s just, it uses so much of my own creativity in developing and designing courses, and lectures, and activities. To me, it’s a very, very creative, um, process that I love.
Self-principled. All participants much like the Experienced Tour Guide were self-principled and held steadfast to their beliefs both in themselves and in their career choice. However, many were not vocal about those beliefs when they first transitioned to teaching in the academe. With time and experience came a greater willingness to speak up and speak out. As Hannah noted, “I didn’t have a lot to offer in the very beginning when I started teaching. But now, I will contribute and talk about what I’ve done and see what happens. In that sense, I am not holding back now because I feel like I have a lot under my belt and I have a lot of experience to offer.”

Frank strongly believed in giving his students the benefit of the doubt. He did not require students to submit medical documentation that they were sick. He noted, “If you say you are sick then I believe you. If you are sick, you are sick. If you want to lie to me then you have to live with it.” He maintained this policy even though he personally experienced a student who took advantage of his belief that his students are adults and should be treated with respect and understanding. He explained:

I had a student that called me up and said that he was sick. And, I said, gee that’s too bad. I said make sure you read chapter six, you have a presentation due in a few days. I need the outline for the next class. Part of the note, and I’m paraphrasing, was I can’t get out of bed. I really don’t feel good. If you really want me to come – maybe that’s because they know me. So I said ‘oh no. Stay in bed. Get a good rest.’ That type of deal. So, I’m walking from my class to my car and there were some students playing Frisbee on the lawn and it couldn’t have been any worse. As I’m walking by a Frisbee hits me in the leg. So, I bend over to pick it up to throw it to the student and who is it? It’s the student who said he was sick and in his dorm room in bed. So, I went to throw him the Frisbee and he
looked at me and I looked at him. I said, ‘John, you have some explaining to do.’ Then I threw him the Frisbee and kept walking and he was so dumbfounded. But, the good news is he never missed another class after that (laughs).

Frank noted that although John took advantage of his trust, he held firm to his belief that respecting his students and giving them the benefit of the doubt worked more times than not. After all, he declared that the students are adults and “If a student lies about being sick or lies about their grandmother dying for the fifth time, they are not so much hurting me as they are hurting themselves.”

Although Deb eagerly expressed her love and passion for teaching in the academe, she also firmly explained that she would have given it up if she lost herself. She asserted:

You know I think was able to adapt without losing my authentic self. I think if I had at any point felt like my authentic self was being buried by the academic atmosphere, I would have . . . I would have jumped ship.

Deb’s mention of the importance of retaining her “authentic self” was a very salient point. All participants recognized that things are done differently in academia, but they all had a clear sense of who they were and where they were going and it was important to Deb and the other participants that they remained true to themselves. Deb’s remarks showed that second-career faculty could accomplish this and adapt successfully.

**Theme Four: The Departure**

After intense planning and organizing, the *Experienced Tour Guide* confidently boarded everyone in the tour on the bus, ordered the trip to begin, and the bus departed. The destination was known, the route was mapped out, and the sites selected. The tour guide was confident that the bus would get there and the trip would be a success. Like the tour guide, none of the
participants lacked confidence. Instead, they exuded it. It was not arrogance, however, but just a self-assuredness or confidence that they could simply do it. They would do it. Even if they were asked to take on a task they had never done before (e.g., teach a new class), they accepted the challenge with unwavering confidence that they would find a way to be successful. Was this confidence a direct result of the level of professional success that the participants already achieved in their first career? Were they accustomed to success and, therefore, believed they would continue to be successful in whatever they chose for a career? Was it because they had already faced a myriad of challenges in their first career and withstood the test of time that they felt they could tackle almost anything? The evidence suggested so. There was never a doubt in any participant’s mind that he or she wouldn’t become a contingent faculty member and wouldn’t be a good one. They unilaterally believed in their skills, abilities, and drive to make it happen. And, they were right because they have all achieved their goal of becoming educators. The confidence of the participants was displayed in a variety of ways.

**Efficient/Productive.** The *Experienced Tour Guide* had to be productive, efficient, and manage time effectively in order to organize every aspect of the trip for guests to enjoy. Every detail mattered. Like the Tour Guide, the participants were also efficient and productive. These were skills they learned and mastered in their first careers as evidenced by their rise to prominent positions in their fields. They were not idle people. That continued to be true after they switched careers and adapted to teaching in the academe. They became dedicated, committed professionals and educators who were constantly tweaking what they did in the classroom to ensure they were the most efficient, productive, and effective instructors they could be. They unanimously were focused on their own productivity. All but one of the participants taught at more than one institution in a given semester. As a result, five out of six participants stated that
time was a factor that forced them to be more efficient and productive. As Hannah put it, “I guess I’m very disciplined both in and out of the classroom because when you don’t have a lot of time you have to use every second you have.”

Christy used an unusual analogy to explain how she became more efficient and productive as an instructor. She likened teaching to becoming a good mother. She explained:

Learning how to teach is a lot like learning how to be a good mother. You are not the best mother with your first child because you’re still learning what you need to do. And, by the time you have your second child or your third child, you know, you understand the whole process a lot better. And, I think the same goes with teaching. Um, it’s just, it’s just another skill. It requires a lot more (pauses), a combination of complex things, but it’s, um, I think it’s just something that you have to learn and it does take time to learn it.

Time and experience were echoed by several participants as keys to becoming a more efficient, productive and better instructor. Frank believed that the single biggest factor that shaped his growth as an instructor was “Experience. Yeah. The hands-on, the doing it. That was the biggest.” As a result, Frank noted that there was a difference in his productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness between when he first transitioned to teaching in the academe as a career and now with experience some eight years later. He explained the difference this way, “Well, I did what was expected of me. I think now, I do things that are beyond what is expected of me. . . Now, I meet those requirements, plus.”

Self-perceptive. The Experienced Tour Guide understood that mistakes will happen but it is of the utmost importance to address them and learn from them. As a result, the Experienced Tour Guide is extremely self-perceptive, a characteristic all participants shared. Participants noted that they learned from their mistakes in a “trial and error” fashion. They also are
continually looking for better ways of doing things in and outside of the classroom to maximize student learning. However, they did not speak of their mistakes with regrets. Instead, they served as learning opportunities for the participants. As Hannah put it, they were “Just maybe ways that I shouldn’t have gone.” Across the board they were not afraid of making a mistake, of trying something new, or making changes in their course, assignments, or approaches to make their classes more engaging and interesting for their students. Christy mentioned learning from a mistake with assigning chapters to students to read as supplemental learning. She realized that did not work. She understood that “if I wanted them to read it, then I would have to start attaching a quiz to it.” She admitted that she learned the hard way that most undergraduate students will not put effort into an assignment that will not be graded just for the sake of learning. Christy admitted she was always learning. “I discard lessons that I didn’t think were that effective and I bring in lessons that are new and more effective.” Frank revealed that he learned from his mistakes through “Experience. The hands-on, the doing it.” He added, “I learned from my mistakes just by being able to identify my mistakes. . . And then, once you identify your mistake, you work on it, you develop it. You do better. And, I’m still doing that today.” Gina mentioned taking a similar approach to learning from her mistakes. She said:


I: Once you evaluated the situation, then what did you do?

JG: Well, actively searched for a way to change it.

Deb refused to let mistakes get her down or stop her from being an effective educator. Instead she learned from them. She explained:

I think there’s a process of you do something or try something and it ends up badly. I mean I’m talking the big mistakes. And, then initially it knocks you off your feet. It
knocked me off my feet and then I’m like—Oh my god, I really screwed up. And, then I take that step back and I say—Okay, so it’s not the end of the world. Nobody died. Right? It’s a lesson in imperfection. What can we learn from this? How would we do this different next time? And, I think that’s my philosophy. And, certainly there have been some big mistakes and afterward I’ve thought—How could you even think that was a good idea?

Deb repeatedly referred to teaching in the academe as a “lesson in imperfection.” She explained that was because while she wanted to be perfect fully admitting that she was a perfectionist, she learned that mistakes would happen and it was far more important for her to learn from her mistakes rather than dwell on them. Not surprisingly, all participants indicated that they had made mistakes in the past but they also learned from them. They also noted that they continually attempted to improve their classes, tried new assignments, and looked for better ways to engage their students in order to make their classes more interesting and a rich learning environment.

**Reliable.** In order to be successful, the *Experienced Tour Guide* must be considered reliable and dependable. The same was true for the participants who clearly exhibited this characteristic. After all, all of the participants had achieved some level of status in their first career, which it would have been difficult to accomplish without being both reliable and dependable. However, they also learned that students expected them to be reliable in the classroom as well. Christy noted that she had to learn to meet students’ expectations when she noted

> When I first started teaching I would work out my whole syllabus at the beginning of the semester, you know, but I was very rarely able to stick to it. . . I realized that I had to
change my behavior because I had to respect students’ expectations. I feel now the responsibility that we will pretty much follow the syllabus.

By sticking by the syllabus, Christy has proven herself a more reliable instructor, which allowed her to consistently meet students’ expectations.

Frank felt it was important for his students to feel that he was dependable and reliable. He often went out of his way to demonstrate this. He noted, “I’ve driven here on my days off to meet students here because they couldn’t make my office hours.” He clearly wanted students to understand that he was willing to go the extra mile.

Erin concurred that it was important for her students to find her dependable and reliable. She said, “I respect my students and my students know that I’m not blowing smoke. That I walk the talk. But I do think they appreciate it because I do have respect for them and that makes a better environment.”

Proud. The *Experienced Tour Guide* took pride in her work. Similarly, all participants were filled with pride and humility about their professional accomplishments and were proud of the work they did as educators. All participants felt that they made a difference with their students and their pride shone through. Hannah noted, “I get invigorated when I walk in the classroom, pretty much every day. And, I think about that. It’s like – Yeah! – when I engage with the students and have a really great class.” Christy stressed how proud teaching makes her feel and how truly rewarding it was when she noted:

I get so much out of my students. I get so much out of that personal and professional satisfaction you get when a class has just ended and you say – Oh, yes! That was a good class. I know they really enjoyed this. They had an AHA moment! Or you leave thinking, this is going to help them in their lives. This is going to help them be a better citizen, a
better professional. It’s going to help them get the job they didn’t think they were going to get. That’s just personal satisfaction. I think that’s what people who teach feel, whether it’s fifth grade or university.

Christy expressed pride in watching her students grow and develop.

You get a real mix of skill levels. . . when I see all of them doing better by the end of the course, you know, when I see the improvement in even the lower-performing ones, then I get a lot of self-satisfaction about that that they’ve received something worthwhile for their money.

Deb’s pride in her job shone through when she said:

I feel like I’m in a place I love. I do still, um, I just enjoy it so much, um, and I really feel like I connect with and make a difference with my students and I hear that all the time. I think there is a strong sense of mutual respect. And, um, that, uh, that education can be engaging, and enjoyable, and challenging, and hard all at the same time. And, I think most students get on board my bus, so that’s good.

Reaching their students was extremely important to all the participants. Deb pointed out:

I mean I hear from my students all the time. Um, how much they’ve learned from my class. And, the messages are often – Here is what I’ve learned about communication. Here’s what I’ve learned about thinking deeply. Here’s what I’ve learned about becoming a better communicator myself. So, um, so, the sense that I get from the feedback from my students, those who apply themselves, is that they really get it on different levels with me . . . I think they get the deep thinking part of it, the eye-opening – I never saw things this way. I just had a student who said something to the effect of now I see camera angles, now I read between the lines. But I’ve also had students, many students, and sometimes
they are the surprising ones say I’ve grown as a person. I’ve grown in confidence. I’ve grown as a communicator. And, to me that’s, that’s incredibly rewarding, too. That they’ve changed who they are because of the course.

Deb noted that rewarding experiences like these provide her with a tremendous amount of pride, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for her second career.

Frank’s pride shone through when he said:

There is nothing better than at the end of the semester and they come up to you and shake your hand. Or they email you because they are shy. Or they tell you I’ll never be good at public speaking but at least now I can tolerate it. It is so fulfilling.

Gina was quick to relate the pride she felt when students told her that her classes made a difference. She continued:

I have to say that it’s always a good feeling when you can run into a student years after they’ve been in your class and have them tell you what an impact you did have on them either in terms of the subject matter or in terms of them as a student and what they decided to do as a career. Because then you know what I’ve been doing is, I’ve been doing it right. Because if I’ve had that kind of impact on this student, you know, maybe there’s others too and maybe they haven’t told me, but, when you hear it then it kind of confirms that what you’re doing, you’re doing right for the right reasons.

**Self-confident.** With experience came self-confidence and this was as true for the *Experienced Tour Guide* as it was for all participants. All participants exuded self-confidence. They were not arrogant or boastful. They simply believed in their abilities and that they would accomplish whatever they set their minds to regardless of the challenges and obstacles they faced. Christy noted that when she first started she did not fully know what she was doing but
she knew she would figure it out. She said, “I’m flying by the seat of my pants on this and I’m just going to do the best job that I can do. And, I’m going to find out what works and what doesn’t work.”

All participants possessed a high degree of self-efficacy and self-assuredness. They were confident about being educators and believed they had a lot to offer both students, the department, and the university. As Hannah explained, “I feel like I’m just a lot more comfortable with the idea that I teach and I have a lot more to share. . . I feel like people want to know what I think. More so, and so they ask and I tell them. So, since I’ve gotten that vibe, even when they don’t ask I’m telling them.”

Frank mentioned that time and experience have made him more confident. He noted, “I’m much more comfortable in the classroom than I was certainly at the beginning. . . I am confident. I know what I’m doing. I, I understand. I know what I’m going to see.”

**Contributions.** As a result of their significant professional experience, all participants felt they brought invaluable insights and contributions to the university, department, classroom, and their students. They not only taught it, they had done it. Hannah said, “I just think I bring another dimension. You know, I’m not – I don’t just bring a book (laughs). I feel like I bring MY experience, which is important I think.” While Hannah laughed after saying “I don’t just bring a book” to take the edge off the comparison between herself as a former accomplished professional in the field and career academics – those that have never worked in their field but had only studied the subject. This implied analogy spoke volumes about how she felt. She believed she brought more than just a textbook and subject matter expertise to her classes and her students. In addition to subject matter expertise, she brought actual know-how and real-world experience, which provided significant meaning and learning opportunities for students as well as
opportunities to showcase how the material covered in class was applied to practice. This analogy hinted that she brought more to a course and to students than traditional, career academics.

Frank held a similar belief. He pointed out:

I really feel that an awful lot of teachers, professors, I always hear them coin the phrase, ‘In the real world’ or ‘in your working life’ you either couldn’t do that or couldn’t be there or whatever. Yet, a lot of the people that say that, and I don’t mean to be judgmental but, they’ve never been there. I’ve seen professors and teachers, and they are great professors, great teachers, but that’s all they’ve ever done. They’ve only always ever been in academia. . . They don’t understand that whole other atmosphere. . . When I say, you know, in the real world, if you had a job, I speak from experience.

Christy suggested that being able to bring her professional experience into the classroom made for a greater learning experience for her students. She noted, “I think just like any professional if you are teaching in the same field that you were in as a professional, um, there is no substitute for that experience, wisdom, insight, um that you can share with your students.”

She went on to say:

There is no substitute for that experience, wisdom, insight, um, that you can share with your students. Um, I bring something to the table, um, that another journalism professor who never was a journalist themselves can’t. . . I mean you can study journalism all you want. You can read all the books you want. You can watch videos all you want but if you’ve never gone out and done it, if you’ve never been in the field and have to deal with all the things that go on in the field as a real working professional, then I think that person is missing something.
Erin asserted that her professional background gave her more credibility with her students. She felt the same way when she was a student. She relayed this story:

Part of why I didn’t go straight into academia and part of why I wanted to make sure if I ever did teach was I was such a shit in college. I was like – How do you know? You’ve never done this. Good, you read some books on it. That’s how I was like. The only teachers I ever gravitated to professor-wise were ones where I would find out – oh, you did this. For real. Okay, I like you. Tell me more. Otherwise, I was like - Did you ever get out and touch the camera?

Erin did not want to be that person who only read books on a topic but had never done it. She said, “I guess I wanted to show students a peek into the secret life of.” She wanted to bring so much more to the table for her students and she believed she has met that goal. “My students had fun when I could walk in the room and tell them – Get this shit. They would be like – What? What happened? And I would tell them like what went wrong because equipment always dumps on you.” She believed those learning opportunities grounded in actual real-world work experience were invaluable to students. “It’s a way of branching theory and practice.”

**Theme Five: Roadblocks and Detours**

Even the Experienced Tour Guide, with all the planning, organizing, and dedication, encountered unexpected roadblocks and detours. These “bumps” in the road caused the tour to take a different route than planned but always headed toward the final destination. As with the roadblocks and detours experienced during the tour, participants also found roadblocks that impeded their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe. Even though they expressed possessing the ability to work with and get along with others, most participants experienced a less than collegial atmosphere in their respective departments. Most felt this led to a more competitive
environment and less comradery and collaboration. Therefore, the results of this study did not confirm Savickas and Porfeli’s (2011) findings of cooperation and commitment as adaptabilities. The qualitative descriptors for cooperation and commitment were not prominently mentioned by participants. Therefore, they were not been included in the findings. Instead all but one participant indicated they faced more of a competitive environment as a second-career contingent faculty member.

**Competition.** Most of the participants lamented the fact that there were not a lot of full-time jobs available for second-career contingent faculty who have an impressive record of professional experience but do not have a terminal degree. In fact, a couple even suggested that finding contingent positions in the Northeast was surprisingly difficult. To this effect, Erin noted, “I thought moving to New England and the Boston area . . . I thought it would be easier to get a job here because every other block there’s a freaking college here.” She found it more difficult than she expected because the competition is “so much greater than other parts of the country.” Deb mentioned similar experiences. She stated:

> A lot of folks had told me that with my experience I would be able to easily get a lecturer position with a Master’s. A full-time lecturer position. So, I was a little naïve that that is actually extremely difficult. That was, that was unexpected.

Deb stated that she believed in order to compete for a full-time position you need a terminal degree. She believed that is what universities and colleges value today.

Christy quickly pointed out the difficulty that former professionals had moving into teaching positions. She stated:

> I know this one particular women who would love to get into teaching but it is very, very hard for most professionals to move into a teaching job. And, part of the reason is, um, I
think it is so competitive because it’s wonderful to go teach what you know at the university as a former professional. Um, it’s a wonderful way to finish out your working years. . . Yet, those opportunities do not exist.

Christy felt that a lot of professionals would like to share what they’ve learned in their professional careers with students but it was highly competitive and not easy to do.

Most of the participants felt that there was even competition for part-time positions.

Hannah noted this stunning example of competition among contingent faculty:

So, when I first started out, there was this guy and I worked with him a lot. And, he taught at another school. And, I thought, gee, it might be interesting to teach there because it was right down the street. So close. It was a private school. And he looked at me and said, “You know, we don’t talk about those kinds of things in the adjunct world because in the end we’re all competitors.” And, I was like – Wow! How do you like that? I guess I won’t go there with you anymore. Since then I’ve been a little bit more guarded.

I: Guarded with other adjuncts?

Hannah: Yeah. It was a little bit like that where we were. Like, I could feel it with some people – like a lot of competition. They were like – well, you’re teaching this many classes and I’m only teaching this many. And, I’m like – hey, I don’t know. I don’t know why because I’m not the one doing it. I would find the people who were not like that because I’m not really like that, competitive like that. I just do my thing. I want to have fun and I want to learn and, whatever. So, I would look for those people as opposed to the people who were looking at me like who are you? What are you doing here?

Christy also found that competition was an issue with contingent faculty. She said:
We’re being, um, put in the position of competing against each other for the same limited amount of work. Then that creates levels of suspicion – why did that adjunct get three courses and I only got two? Why did that adjunct get a better schedule than I got? Why did they hire this new person over here? Do I have any rights, any seniority rights? This has never been made clear. You create this atmosphere of separation, and then suspicion and insecurity, and all of that combines to being a generally unhappy worker except when you are with your students.

Gina noted discrepancies in assignment of classes that led her to feel there is an unfair, competitive environment for contingent faculty. She explained:

There are some adjuncts that get three or four courses every semester. And, if they’re getting three and four and I can’t even be getting two. . . I just feel like there’s favoritism there or else he just gives out the courses to just to fill them and doesn’t put the thought into it, which then tells me he doesn’t care about people, he just does his job.

Unlike his colleagues, Frank was the only participant that never encountered competition among contingent faculty even though he fully expected to experience it. He said:

I was a little leery because coming from my past career, you might get a new boss or a new person and you always wondered - Who is this person? Are they after my job? Are they after my work? I was a little nervous that might occur, especially as a part-timer. How am I going to be looked at as a part-timer. But as it turned out that never even existed. Every single thing that I got was nothing but positive. Can I help you? Here’s my email. Can I help you with a class plan? Here’s my syllabus. Take a look at it and see what you think about it. If I can help you out, let me know. There was never any
animosity. No reluctance to help me out. If anything it was the opposite. I couldn’t have
gotten enough people to help me out.

He went on further to explain that he never hesitated to assist other contingent faculty in their job
searches. He was shocked when others mentioned competition as an issue when he explained:

I just recently took a resume from someone that I work with and I’m going to take it over
to [private college] and give it to them. And, I mentioned that to my wife and she said:
‘Well, aren’t you afraid that he’s going to take your job?’ I had never thought about that.

Like Frank, the other participants agreed that other contingent faculty were often willing to help
other contingent faculty and they learned who they could approach for assistance.

The Clock. All participants expressed that time was their enemy in building comradery
and relationships with other contingent faculty. It was a major roadblock and was often
compounded by the fact that participants taught at more than one institution at a time and/or held
another job. As Hannah suggested:

And, then the other thing was that I was always very busy so I didn’t have a lot of time to
sit around and socialize. It wasn’t that I didn’t want to. But, when I was teaching five
classes, and that’s a lot of classes. I’ve got my own consulting I’m doing. I’ve got a lot
going on so every second that I’m there, I’m working. And so, mostly, my conversations
were niceties for a very little amount of time and then it’s like what have you learned?
How’s it going? Can we help each other? I don’t know. I guess I’m very pointed in that
way. That’s what happens when you’re busy and I guess they probably figured that out
too because it wasn’t going to be sit around in between classes and shoot the breeze.

Christy argued that there were five reasons why she participated in limited discussions or
interactions with other contingent faculty. She said, “I’m not having a lot of discussions with my
peers. We’re all busy. We’re all part-time. We’re all on different schedules. We’re all commuting and we have nowhere to sit.”

Gina agreed but understood how difficult it could be to get part-timers together for meetings or networking events. She explained that contingent faculty present some interesting logistical challenges. She stated:

A lot of adjuncts like me that have other careers or other jobs and work other places, so, if they were to say well we’re going to do this on a Tuesday and I’m teaching somewhere else on a Tuesday, then I’m not going to be there. Even if I want to go, I’m not going to be able to go.

Erin noted that the limited interactions with her colleagues and the time constraints she faced at juggling contingent faculty positions at more than one institution negatively impacted her ability to form bonds and lasting, personal relationships. She noted:

This is the first job I’ve ever worked at it. . . I’ve always made friends. I moved around a lot. Usually you meet someone and you make friends and find someone to hang out with. That has not happened here.

Erin noted that establishing meetings or gatherings where contingent and full-time faculty can interact, meet, and get to know each other might facilitate a stronger support network for all faculty and build “more of a team atmosphere where we’re all in this together.” She strongly believed that would make the department stronger and ultimately benefit students thereby increasing student outcomes.

All participants expressed a desire to build comradery and collaborations within their department but most felt this was an enormous task that needed a more comprehensive approach
and, perhaps, a new way of higher education institutions, administrators, and department chairs looking at contingent faculty.

**Theme Six: The Breakdown**

Even the best laid plans run amok. No Experienced Tour Guide hoped for or planned for the bus to breakdown but sometimes this simply happened. It was not something the tour guide controlled or anticipated. However, it happened nonetheless. All participants in the study felt they faced several, unexpected breakdowns or setbacks in their second careers that were out of their control. They felt unsupported in their new role as contingent faculty. They felt alone and left to fend for themselves. As a result, they felt like they were castaways, stranded on an island, or left swimming in an ocean. In addition, they also felt unappreciated and almost disregarded. The lack of status and respect they experienced led to feelings of being second-class citizens whose role was minimized. This was completely opposite of the success and stature they achieved and were accustomed to in their first careers. Furthermore, they lamented the lack of power and job security they had as contingent faculty members. The following excerpts illustrated the participants’ feelings, perceptions and experiences as castaways.

**Lack of Support.** All participants bemoaned the lack of support they received during their transition to teaching in the academe and continued to receive today. They were surprised and dismayed by this lack of support, which impeded their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe. They were able to overcome this significant obstacle by taking the steps necessary to figure it out on their own but they acknowledged that this was very different from their experiences in their first careers.

Hannah lamented the lack of support she received by saying:
One of the things I didn’t really expect was that I didn’t have a lot of support. So from that, you know, as far as everything I would do on my own, I was fine. But, as far as like - gee, where do I even get the textbook? And, what textbook am I supposed to be using? You know, am I supposed to be following any standards here or can I do what I want to do with this class? Like those kinds of things. I was very . . . I was just sort of swimming around.

Christy repeated similar feelings when she noted, “I don’t remember anyone giving me ever, ever, any help in my transition.” Christy’s repeated use and emphasis of ever attempted to show both her disappointment and frustration with the lack of support. She noted that she sought out other contingent faculty members for advice and tips but even so felt “pretty much you were on your own. . . . Basically, my growth, my learning, my transition was all on me.” Christy further added. “Where do you even begin when you get zero support, completely zero support from, you know, the current chair and the university administration?”

This idea that the participants were not supported by the university and the department chair was a common theme among participants. Deb was surprised and dismayed by the lack of response she received in the past from her department chair. She stated:

There were some schools where the chair or other people did not even want to meet with me before I started other than that initial job interview. I found that very surprising and very off-putting because you would think that you would want to connect and talk both about the courses you are giving them and the workings of the school. So, that’s been surprising.

Erin mentioned a similar experience when she said, “I’ve never had a conversation with my chair. Ever. I don’t think anybody’s ever looked at my syllabus except my students.” She
admitted, however, that there was another somewhat positive side to this as well. “I think here there is a much stronger value in academic freedom. I am allowed to use whatever approach I want to use, really.” Even so, she expressed surprise by the lack of leadership demonstrated by her department chair by stating, “You can’t go down the highway on cruise control without someone in the driver’s seat.” She made a valid point that the car cannot drive itself and the department chair as the leader of the department should be driving the car or steering the direction of the department. Unfortunately, this was not Erin’s experience and her sentiments were echoed by other participants. Christy, who strongly agreed with this notion, said:

The chair has never once asked me how my teaching is going. Has never asked me anything about my life at the university, He only meets with me if I request a meeting. I’ve probably had in three years, three, brief, five-minute meetings with him. Um, he has not ever given me, um a heads-up on where the department’s going. What’s my future there? So, um, I would say what I get from him as the department head is almost zero. . . and no interaction at all with any full-time professors.

Christy hinted that the problem could potentially be the way universities approach the role of department chairs. She said:

I didn’t know until recently that this is rotating job. The chairman of the department is a rotating job. So, they’re not invested in it. Who is going to be invested in it, um, if it’s just a short-term gig where you earn a little extra money on the side and your main challenge is filling (bangs table) these (bangs table) slots (bangs table) with all these different adjuncts. That’s, that’s, that’s it. There’s no community building. There’s no, there’s no sharing of, you know, academic experiences and educational learning or
anything that would enrich people in a kind of more of a communal way. There is nothing.

When asked what her department chair could have done to help her adapt to teaching in the academe, Christy rapidly fired the following series of pointed questions:

Why not introduce me to the other faculty members? Why not check in with me to ask how things are going? Um. Why not include me in faculty meetings along with other VL faculty? Why not make sure the VLs have a place to work and see students?

Christy went on to explain that she felt it was important to be integrated in the department and have opportunities to able to interact and engage with others in the department because doing so enriches someone as a person and an educator. She stated:

I think every school should, would benefit if they offered, um, visiting lecturers a lot more support and guidance, um, workshops, peer-to-peer mentoring. Um. I think it would have been beneficial for all of these schools to develop a sense of comradery, a sense of community, a sense of belonging, which none of them do very well.

She further explained, “There’s no community building. There’s no, there’s no sharing of, you know, academic experiences and educational learning or anything that would enrich people in a kind of more of a communal way. There is nothing.” Christy expounded on this by saying:

To be able to share that with another person, enriches your life as a person. It enriches your life as an educator. Uh, it makes you a better teacher and, um, I mean, and everybody deserves support from the administration of their department and of the school. I mean that’s what – college means collegial. Collegial means let’s all work together. Let’s not pretend that we work together when nobody is working together.
Christy’s last point was a significant one. If both full-time and contingent faculty were responsible for student learning and success, ultimately achieving the mission of the university, should not both full-time and contingent faculty be equally supported and integrated?

**Lack of Status.** To compound matters further, the participants, all accomplished professionals, were regulated to a minimized role whose lack of status ran contrary to their prior career experience. As a result, they felt like “second-class citizens”, which often left them feeling isolated, alone, and disposable.

As Hannah put it, “I like to be in the thick of things, so for me, being more, I would say, in the backseat rather than driving the car, is a little bit tough.” Interestingly, Hannah did not portray herself as a passenger – an equal with the driver. Instead she expressed that she felt more like a backseat passenger – a little (inconsequential) child, perhaps – as opposed to driving the car, which she was accustomed to in her first career. Her choice of words here in this metaphor belied her frustration with her lesser status.

Deb used another analogy to illustrate this same point. She noted that as a second-career contingent faculty, she was surprised when she came in “as a successful professional and is suddenly treated as a Freshman in their graduate class.”

Christy relayed a story about having one of her students present his speech in the hallway with people walking by because she did not have an office to meet with students and a class was using the conference room. She called that situation, “Completely ridiculous.” Christy further noted that contingent faculty “were made to feel like really (laughs) second-class citizens. And they were pretty much ignored by the full-time faculty. Um, it’s like they didn’t even count.”

Christy’s last point was not an uncommon sentiment among participants. Hannah echoed it when she noted:
I don’t know if they focus it more like they are disposable. They are just part-time. And, I get that sense. You’re here one semester and you might be gone the next so . . . they don’t seem that they want to spend a tremendous amount of time with you or invest a lot because they feel like maybe, you know, I see a lot of you and your kind (laughs). And, maybe you’ll be gone again. That’s just my feeling.

Hannah’s reference to “you and your kind” gave the impression that contingent faculty were regarded as outsiders, foreigners, or even aliens. This begs the questions: Is this how full-time staff view contingent faculty? Do department chairs and institutions feel the same way? Do they feel contingent faculty are disposable? Unfortunately, that was the overwhelming perception of the participants in this study. Do all or a majority of contingent faculty feel this way? If so, what can be done to rectify this?

Lack of Respect. Participants also expressed frustration over the lack of respect they experienced. After all, the participants were accomplished professionals that were highly respected in the former careers. However, as contingent faculty members they did not feel respected. In fact, all participants made statements indicating that they felt their significant professional experience and accomplishments were not valued by the academy.

Christy indicated that she felt this was a systemic issue when she stated, “I think it’s the university system that rewards a tenure-track hire over, you know, somebody with a professional background.”

Erin noted experiencing this notion because she doesn’t have a Ph.D. after her name. She felt that she was not looked upon favorably by the department chair and other full-time faculty. In fact, she felt disrespected by the “majority of traditional academics. And, what I mean by that is those that never had a career outside of the schoolhouse.” She pointed out:
I feel like there is some sort of animosity toward those who haven’t spent our whole career in the school house. We’re almost discredited because we’ve actually, God forbid, done it! (laughs) You know, but because we don’t have the same three letters we couldn’t possibly be as elite or smart. Whereas I’m like – have you actually ever made anything that has aired?

All participants felt that their professional experience was not as valued as the intellectual pursuits of life-long, traditional academics in higher education. Gina simply said, “There are times when I feel I was not respected.” Erin further emphasized this point when she stated:

I was aware as an adjunct, you know, we’re already a step behind, being judged, because in their eyes we wasted time actually trying to do it, you know. Um, so, I already felt a step behind so it was almost like a challenge to see – do you have any idea what you’re doing?

The notion that Erin felt her professional experience was viewed by traditional life-long academics and university administrators as “wasted time” was a powerful one. This ran contrary to the belief that the participants held that their professional experience enriched their classrooms and their students’ learning. However, this belief was not reinforced by others in the academe as Erin noted:

If you think you are going to walk into the academe and anybody is going to give a shit if you have an Oscar, an Emmy, hmmm, I don’t know, a top 40 hit in the last decade. They do not care. Unless, you know, well, where is your degree from, what is it in, and what journal have you published.
Even though Erin felt her professional accomplishments were not respected in the academe, she noted that she felt respected by other contingent faculty and the students, the latter seemed to hold the most weight or importance. This was a sentiment expressed by all participants.

Deb was forthright when she expressed her desire to receive the respect she believed she earned and deserved when she said:

I would like somehow for adjuncts to be seen as genuine faculty members in the department. As people who deserve the same kind of respect and interaction. To be seen as part of the team is something that I’d like to see a lot more of. Not just as people who camp out in the conference room because they have no office.

**Lack of Power.** Another unexpected finding of this study was the lack of power that participants noted during their interviews. Participants felt they were not given opportunities to serve on committees and take on roles that had power. In other words, they were not part of the strategic decision-making at their respective universities. As a result, they were not represented in the power structure and did not have access to key individuals in the university’s power structure, which was completely opposite of full-timers at their universities. The power structure for full-time faculty was much broader and included additional individuals in the university’s power structure beyond their department chair including but not limited to their dean, the provost, the tenure/promotion committee, the president etc.

Participants felt they did not have to a voice in decisions that directly impacted them. As a result, they often felt powerless. Instead, the main and sometimes sole contact with the university power structure for the participants was the department chair. Therefore, the department chair wielded a lot of power as far as the participants were concerned and this impacted their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe.
Christy stressed the concept that contingent faculty have no power because they have been “divided and conquered.” She explained:

If a system is set up where a group of workers cannot meet, can’t have a meeting place at their place of work and cannot have uh regular meetings with management or in this case the chair of the department, then that system has effectively dispersed the entire workforce, the entire adjunct workforce. So, that we are all islands unto ourselves. We have no political power. We have no ability to mobilize.

As a result, Christy felt powerless to create change and this resulted in a situation whereby “All of my satisfaction is exclusively in the four walls of the classroom. There is no satisfaction at all any other place on that university campus for an adjunct.”

Gina also felt that including contingent faculty in the power structure was important. She said this could be as simple as recruiting contingent faculty members to attend and vote during department meetings in order to allow contingent faculty a voice in the strategic decisions made by the department. She said, “If I didn’t have a conflict, I would attend especially if it meant being able to work with other colleagues and know about things.” Deb noted there were benefits to being included in the department and the university such as showcasing your skills and getting to know your colleagues and peers. She would welcome the opportunity to provide service to both her department and the university. She noted:

At the school where I did my Master’s, we were invited to the larger faculty meetings and we were invited to serve on committees. And, I served on the book committee when I was getting my master’s degree, um, the book selection committee for my program. So, I as able to do service and get to know that group of faculty members on a real good basis.
And they were also able to see, you know, some of my skills that they wouldn’t be able to normally see.

Deb expounded on the contributions she thinks she could bring department committees when she said:

I think, again, being a small business owner for 15 years, I think I know all about organizing, productivity, getting things done, asking the right questions, keeping things moving. I think if I were to serve on a committee, I . . . you know, I used to run committees all the time. I used to facilitate groups with my clients all the time. I’ve been on boards. I’ve been on committees. So, I mean those strong administrative skills and consulting skills, in a way, are something that were such a huge part of my business that could help.

By being included Deb felt that it would create a work environment that fosters inclusiveness, a sense of belonging, and collaboration, all aspects that were commonplace in the business and professional world in which she had previously worked. Erin agreed with that there was no reason why both full-time and contingent faculty could not work together. She said:

In a perfect department, there’s room for both. Both bring strengths to the table that neither side should diminish. I feel as though it’s been set up as a battleground even to the point of hostility, which seems insane to me.

Her reference to a battleground painted the picture that full-time and contingent faculty are at war when they did not need to be. Was this notion of departments being set up as battlefields perpetuating the bifurcated system of have (e.g. full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty) and have nots (e.g., contingent faculty) common in universities today? How should universities and departments mitigate or resolve this situation?
Lack of Job Security. All participants were deeply concerned with the lack of job security that their contingent status afforded them. They expressed dismay over the fact that they did not have any idea whether they would have a job beyond the current semester. Even when they were assigned courses for the next semester, they were not guaranteed a job because at times their courses were cancelled due to low enrollment or they were bumped from the course by a full-time faculty member whose chose to take their course because the one the full-timer originally selected did not run due to low enrollment. The participants constantly worried because the job they loved inherently came with an extremely high degree of uncertainty. Christy was simply frustrated to be “teaching under these conditions – for no money, no job security, no benefits.”

The lack of job security was also a concern for Gina. She said, “Job security is always an issue. You always have to think about whether you’re going to have courses to teach next semester.” She also noted that the assignment of courses was completely at the discretion of the department chair. She said, “There’s no guarantee . . . whether or not you’re going to get a fair shake.” She was puzzled that there was no system of seniority for contingent faculty. She noted that her department chair consistently assigned her courses for the fall semester, but none for the spring semester even though she was available. This caused her to seek contingent status elsewhere for the spring semester.

The lack of job security was also a significant concern for Deb, which left her feeling undervalued, unsupported, and constantly worried. She stated:

I think the hardest parts of the adjustment are still the financial end, um, is a big thing I am still wrestling with and the lack of long-term security makes me very nervous all the time. The number of hours I am putting in is probably as much as when I had my business. So, I’m doing six long days a week through the semester. Usually Sunday is a
10-12-hour day. So, that when you ever stop to think about what you’re getting paid versus the number of hours you are putting in – I don’t even want to go there . . . And, I felt especially the last couple of semesters I really felt pretty isolated socially because so much of my time was devoted to teaching and prep and grading.

Past experience gave Deb a good reason to be concerned. She noted:

I had spent two semesters at a school I love teaching three courses a semester and, um, hadn’t heard about courses for the next semester so I emailed my chair and I said just to let you know I’m wondering if you have any sense of this semester. This schedule is working well for me. And, I got back a two sentence email saying ‘I’ve already done the schedule and sorry you’re not on it.’ And, I cried and cried and cried for like a whole day because I had finally felt like everything was together and finally working and this was the college I loved most and I had been teaching three courses a semester for two semesters. So, that was a low point.

Deb felt strongly that this showed a “lack of security, lack of respect, lack of communication from the people who are actively hiring and supervising you.” The idea that as a contingent faculty member, Deb taught at an institution in a given semester and might not be the next really worried her and she made repeated reference to it. She was not alone, however, as all participants expressed this concern in one way or another. Participants’ teaching careers were at the mercy of their department chair. Their department chair controlled whether they were assigned classes, how many classes they were assigned, and ultimately if they had a job from semester to semester. This resulted in a constant state of worry and uncertainty for participants and created undesirable and poor working conditions. What can institutions do to mitigate this? Participants eagerly shared their ideas and feedback.
**Theme Seven: The Feedback**

Not surprisingly, participants felt strongly about what they would like to see in their departments and how they would, ultimately, like to be treated. Although the participants expressed it differently, they desired opportunities to be supported, recognized, and respected as educators. And, they believed this could be accomplished with a little planning and coordination from the department and a new perspective about contingent faculty from the university.

Hannah laid out a three-tiered plan:

Well, I think a more organized approach. You know, even, um, even, you know, just meeting with HR, and having a sort of a welcoming session, an orientation of such, of people working at the college. I think it would be helpful to say - You’re a new employee. You should be put through the same thing as every other new employee, which is here’s our campus, here’s is where everything is, this is what we do – you know, a lot of big picture stuff, that, you know, I would for any new employee coming to work for me. Um, so that they get grounded and they really understand. So, for whatever reason it becomes sort of this back door. You sort of enter into this silo of like, hey, they sort of think that you’ve been working here and you are going to know where everything is and how it is going to work. And, I think the second step would be to actually meet with the department and bring in all the people that are new to the department and do the same thing. So, you get your sort of global view from a university perspective and then you also get your department’s view and then if you are in a special niche inside of that, then meet with someone from that area. It’s kind of a three-tiered approach, I think. That would be helpful. And, it would also build comradery. You’d come in with a class of people who you could work with and talk to, um, and you would know a lot about what
was going on and it wouldn’t be so much like you were trying to find your way. You know, they are telling you and showing you the path to success. And, ultimately, I mean that’s what you want your employees to do. You want to keep them around, I would say.

All participants noted that their respective department chairs provided minimal if any assistance, guidance, or support. Most wished that their department chair was more approachable and interacted with them more frequently, which would make them feel as if they were integral members of the department and part of the team. Hannah suggested:

Even maybe, just check-ins, you know once a month would be good. Like maybe even set up – hey, let’s go to lunch your first day or something would be nice. Something that creates more of a bond. More of like, it is okay to come and ask me questions. You know, I’m not going to bite you.

Christy strongly felt that the department chair as the leader of the department should create networking and learning opportunities for contingent faculty. She said:

The chair of the department could begin at the very most basic level by holding a monthly meeting with the adjunct instructors. This could be, uh, you know, not just a grievance session, and that’s probably why they’re not held because they don’t want to hear any grievances from the adjuncts. It could be shaped more with, um, a speaker that might come in, or um, you know, um, or a challenge to share syllabi. Different topics that could be done on different months. The things that they are trying to do on a university basis. Um, and I still realize they will face the same challenges of, um, the whole timing in the scattered schedules that exist. But, still, to do this meeting and, maybe the monthly meeting isn’t, um, the first Wednesday of the month because everyone can’t make the first Wednesday of the month. So, maybe the first meeting is on a Wednesday and the
next month it’s on a Thursday. So, people can, at least, attend some of them. And, there should be, there should be a, uh, a suggestion box, as silly as that sounds. A suggestion box where someone can anonymously say – hey, is there, is there a way we can have our water cooler like filled, um, you know (laughs)? I mean, you know, silly things like that that make the workplace. Um, to be, to be kept, and also to make it an information session so we’re not getting all our information about what’s happening in the department through word-of-mouth or random emails, but, you know, news about what’s the department is doing.

Christy also felt it would be beneficial to include contingent faculty in faculty meetings and provide them with a place to meet with students. Another suggestion she offered was pairing contingent faculty “with a buddy in the department.” Erin suggested that departments should invite contingent faculty to meetings where food would be served and different topics would be discussed. When Erin discussed the role her department chair played in her transition to teaching in the academe, she said, “I’m still working on hi.” She also expressed interest in having an introduction to the department and to the staff. She noted:

Like when you get a job even at McDonald’s usually somebody says ‘Hi. How are you doing? Let me show you a few things. Here’s the run down. If you need anything let me know.’ Here at [the public, four-year university], it’s like alright. Good luck. Who are you?”

Deb had similar experiences as she stated, “The department chair is non-communicative and non-supportive. I have been, kind of, taken aback at how non-communicative this chair is with me but I hear he’s with everybody.” Deb found other contingent faculty far more
supportive. She added, “There is a strong, informal support system there for people who want it, um, who want to interact with each other and learn from each other. Some people prefer not to.”

Unlike their previous career, basic orientations did not take place in higher education. Erin stated that “introductions never happened at any of the schools I’ve taught at so I think it is just the norm. There are some very strange cultural norms” in higher education. Deb was surprised when she broached the subject of an orientation. She pointed out:

I specifically asked if there were any orientations or could I meet with anybody and I was told – ‘Not really. There is a faculty conference you might go to, you know between semesters.’ But, no. I was told no. And, not even to meet with the person running the program. I specifically asked if I could set up a meeting with that person.

Deb was adamant about the importance of providing opportunities for contingent faculty members to meet each other and get familiar with department. She stated:

There should be a pre-semester meeting. I know everybody is busy that first week or two but there should be some kind of meeting where everybody gets together, meets each other, and gets a rundown of the department. Um, you know, get some kind of orientation – people that are new – but also have the opportunity to meet some established folks.

Deb expressed that such a pre-semester meeting would help build comradery and a vitally important support network for all contingent faculty. She added, “I do wish there were more a sense of community and a sense of belonging at the places I work.”

The lack of an orientation was surprising to all participants and seemed nonsensical. All participants felt such an introduction to the department (local view) and university (global view) would greatly benefit second-career contingent faculty members and other contingent faculty as well. It would build comradery, a sense of belonging, and would make second-career contingent
faculty feel welcomed and part of the team. Would this lead to better productivity, enhanced student learning, and, ultimately, better student outcomes?

Finally, participants offered advice to other successful professionals who were considering switching careers to teach in the academe. Participants offered some sage advice and fair warnings. Hannah said, “Make sure that it is what you would like to do. . . Make sure you love working with students, because if you don’t like that age group, forget it.” Erin echoed this sentiment when she said:

If you’re going to do it, do it for the students. Do it because you enjoy engaging with them and that you enjoy spending time with them because that is the reward.

The participants also offered tips on areas that might not be so obvious. Hannah warned, “Just be ready to be playing a lesser role if you are going to be part-time, at least for a while. You got to build your credibility.” Christy warned, “It is very, very hard for most professionals to move into a teaching job. And part of the reason is, um, I think it is so competitive because it’s wonderful to go teach what you know at the university.” Deb added other suggestions when she stated:

You will not make much money. So, you have to do it for love. I would advise them to look carefully at the schools and programs and make sure it’s going to be a good fit. I would also advise them to probably start small. Um, to try it and see if they like it because I think some people have, and I did too, have a different idea of what it’s going to be in their heads than what it actually is. So, I would advise people to teach one or two adjunct courses before making the decision to to move into teaching.
Concluding Statement

The metaphor used in this research study to describe the lived experiences and perceptions of second-career contingent faculty was an *Experienced Tour Guide* planning a trip. The seven emergent themes and their accompanying qualitative descriptors (noted in parenthesis) discovered in this study exemplified the various stages the tour guide went through to plan a trip. They were: 1. The Destination (curiosity); 2. The Sites (concern); 3. The Schedule (control); 4. The Departure (confidence and contributions); 5. Roadblocks and Detours (competition and the clock); 6. The Breakdown (lack of support, respect, power and job security) and; 7. Feedback (opportunities). This chapter presented a summary of the findings of the study and each theme was supported by verbatim text from participants’ transcripts (Finlay, 2014; Pringle et al., 2011; Rodham et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015; Sutherland et al., 2014). All participants shared their perceptions and experiences about their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe as a second career. Without exception, the participants attained some position of status during their first career after 10 or more years of professional experience in their field. In many cases, in that first career they were the one in charge. This changed drastically when they switched careers and while they successfully figured out their way on their own, they were left feeling unsupported, underappreciated, and undervalued. They all craved recognition, support, power, and respect as quality educators and vital members of the academe and their respective institutions. To worsen matters, none felt secure with their employment and often felt powerless. Even so, all participants felt they adapted to teaching in the academe very well and they were doing what they loved. The following chapter examined the implications and significance of these findings as well as the extant literature on second-career contingent faculty in order to determine ways to positively impact this subgroup of today’s instructional majority.
Chapter Five: Discussion of Research Findings

Confirming several researchers’ previous findings (Ebberwein et al., 2004; Hartung & Borges, 2005; & McMahon et al., 2012), this interpretative phenomenological analysis study supported the notion that the construct of career adaptability can be studied qualitatively. This IPA study addressed one overarching research question: What were the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty on their adaptability to teaching in the academe?

Several researchers suggested that second-career faculty were a growing trend (Bedford, 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Fogg, 2002; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003) and that more and more faculty were not taking the traditional path to the academe (Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Simendinger et al., 2000; Webb, 2009). In this study, participants were prior professionals that worked for 10 or more years in the field achieving some level of status in their respective first careers prior to switching careers to teach part-time in the academe. Therefore, this study sought to explore the phenomenon of career adaptability by second-career contingent faculty from those closest to the phenomenon. In keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, this study sought to give voice to the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty members regarding their adaptability to teaching in the academe and then to interpret the meaning of their voices, experiences and perceptions in a specific context (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2015). In addition, it sought to determine the similarities and differences amongst the sense-making of these participants. Since there was scant literature and limited research on second-career contingent faculty prior to this study, this study sought to fill gaps in the literature on second-career contingent faculty by obtaining the stories of these understudied individuals in order to provide a deeper insight into their perceptions and experiences with the phenomenon of career adaptability.
While the reasons the study participants switched careers to teach in the academe varied, most supported Brown et al.’s (2012) conclusion that participants’ career change was driven by either a desire for a new challenge or substantial and meaningful personal development. Hannah expressed this when she spoke of being ready for a new challenge when she noted:

You know I was growing very tired of it. I was TIRED (stressed this word) because I was working so hard all the time. And, that was the expectation. You had to work at least a minimum of 50 hours, which was always questioned to begin with. . . it was just a constant, steady, um, and a very high energy, like always on sort of thing. And so, I thought it was a good time to sort of make that change” [to teaching in the academe].

Deb illustrated the need for a new challenge and personal growth when she decided to switch careers to teaching after her husband’s death when she shared this analogy: “If your house blows up, you can either rebuild it or you could rebuild a different house. So, I decided to mostly rebuild a different house.”

Career adaptability was clearly evident among all study participants and the career adaptabilities participants exhibited aided them in their transition from professional to professor. This finding confirmed Maggiori et al.’s (2013) suggestion that adapt-abilities were needed to tackle and meet the demands of a job and new careers today. In addition, participants exhibited career adaptability continuously throughout their tenure in their second career as contingent faculty and not only during the initial transition, which confirmed the previous findings of McMahon et al. (2012). Therefore, this study added weight to McMahon et al.’s (2009) suggestion that career adaptability can be applied beyond career transition periods. It suggested that the resources and strategies the participants used to adapt to teaching in the academe continued to assist them in adapting to and improving throughout their second career years after the transition period. This
finding could potentially impact approaches to career development since continuing to foster career adaptabilities may significantly impact the evolution and ultimate success of one’s career as well as a successful and smooth career transition.

Based on their stories, the participants exhibited four out of five of the dimensions that comprise the construct of career adaptability. These dimensions (curiosity, concern, control, and confidence) represent strategies and resources the participants used to adapt to their second careers. Although the participants believed that they were able to get along with and work well with others, cooperation/commitment, the fifth and a later addition to the career adaptability construct (Savickas et al., 2009), was not found in this research. This was consistent with McMahon et al.’s (2012) claim that only the four dimensions of curiosity, concern, control, and confidence were “consistently identified” (p. 2012).

This study confirmed researchers’ findings that career adaptability was understood on three different levels: external (reporting objectively), internal (feelings, perceptions), and reflexive (interpretations, conceptualizations) (McMahon et al., 2012; Savickas, 20008). On an external level, participants reported their transition objectively as when Hannah noted, “Before I even went on the interview, I reached out to some teacher friends to ask what do I need to know about teaching in a nutshell, from a more academic sense.” On an internal level, participants related their feelings, perceptions and reactions as when Erin relayed her frustration with how she was treated because of her contingent status:

I feel like there is some sort of animosity toward those who haven’t our whole career in the school house. We’re almost discredited because we’ve actually, God forbid, done it! (laughs) You know, but because we don’t have the same three letters we couldn’t
possibly be as elite or smart. Whereas I’m like – have you actually ever made anything that has aired?

The reflexive level involved participants’ interpretations and conceptualizations. This was exemplified by the analogy that Christy gave comparing teaching to motherhood. She noted:

Learning how to teach is a lot like learning how to be a good mother. You are not the best mother with your first child because you’re still learning what you need to do. And, by the time you have your second child or your third child, you know, you understand the whole process a lot better. And, I think the same goes with teaching. Um, it’s just, it’s just another skill. It requires a lot more (pauses), a combination of complex things, but it’s, um, I think it’s just something that you have to learn and it does take time to learn it.

All participants expressed career adaptability on all three of these levels as they relayed their stories.

The participant’s stories identified additional, unanticipated dimensions not previously considered in the literature. These additional dimensions included the following qualitative descriptors: competition, the clock, and lack of support, status, respect, power and job security. While these additional dimensions specific to these second-career contingent faculty at that particular time served as significant impediments to the participants’ adaptability to their second career, the participants found ways to overcome these obstacles and roadblocks on their own in order to successfully adapt to teaching in the academe.

Data analysis generated seven emergent themes from the data collected from the study participants and their related qualitative descriptors. The metaphor of an Experienced Tour Guide planning a trip was used to clearly illustrate each theme and how the participants saw themselves. The following discussion focused on these themes and how the findings support and
add to the limited literature on the career adaptability of second-career contingent faculty. In addition, the significance of the conclusions, limitations of the study, and this research’s implication for practice were discussed.

**Interpretation of Emergent Themes**

Seven super-ordinate themes emerged from the participants’ stories. These seven themes were presented using the metaphor of an Experienced Tour Guide planning a trip as follows:

1. The Destination (curiosity)
2. The Sites (concern)
3. The Schedule (control)
4. The Departure (confidence and contributions)
5. Roadblocks/Detours (competition and the clock)
6. The Breakdown (lack of support, status, respect, power, and job security)
7. Feedback (opportunities)

Although all seven themes were interconnected by the lived experiences and perceptions of the participants, there were two themes that were the most prevalent and strongly represented in the findings. They were: The Departure (confidence and contributions) and The Breakdown (lack of support, status, respect, power, and job security). All participants exuded confidence. In fact, they presented as more than confident, they were certain. They possessed an unwavering assuredness that they knew where they were going even if they did not know how they would get there. As Deb noted, “I knew I would get to where I needed to go.” All of the participants knew they wanted to teach in the academe and they were sure they would figure out how to do it and do it well. As Hannah put it, “It was like sink or swim. So, I swam.” Christy pointed out, “I’m flying by the seat of my pants on this and I’m just going to do the best job that I can do. And, I’m
going to find out what works and what doesn’t work.” Every single participant was simply committed to doing whatever it took to become an excellent educator.

All participants noted that they loved to teach and they were passionate about it. They loved to interact with and engage their students. As Christy noted:

I get so much out of my students. I get so much out of that personal and professional satisfaction you get when a class has just ended and you say – Oh, yes! That was a good class. I know they really enjoyed this. They had an AHA moment! Or you leave thinking, this is going to help them in their lives. This is going to help them be a better citizen, a better professional. It’s going to help them get the job they didn’t think they were going to get.

Their passion for teaching and their students motivated all of the participants to find ways to successfully adapt to teaching in the academe.

The participants wholeheartedly believed that they made significant contributions as educators and had a lot to offer their respective universities, departments, and, most of all, their students as second-career contingent faculty. As Hannah noted, “I just think I bring another dimension. You know, I’m not – I don’t just bring a book (laughs). I feel like I bring MY experience, which is important I think.” Christy suggested that her professional experience was invaluable to her students when she noted:

There is no substitute for that experience, wisdom, insight, um, that you can share with your students. Um, I bring something to the table, um, that another journalism professor who never was a journalist themselves can’t . . . I mean you can study journalism all you want. You can read all the books you want. You can watch videos all you want but if you’ve never gone out and done it, if you’ve never been in the field and have to deal with
all the things that go on in the field as a real working professional, then I think that person is missing something.

The participants believed their professional experience was meaningful, especially for students, even though they often felt their extensive professional experience was not valued or respected in the academy. In fact, Erin felt disrespected by the “majority of traditional academics” or “those that never had a career outside of the schoolhouse.” She pointed out:

I feel like there is some sort of animosity toward those who haven’t spent our whole career in the school house. We’re almost discredited because we’ve actually, God forbid, done it! (laughs) You know, but because we don’t have the same three letters we couldn’t possibly be as elite or smart.

Erin’s sentiment that she did not have three letters – Ph.D. – after her name and therefore was not respected by “traditional” or career academics was a common theme among participants. Like Erin, all of the participants clearly wanted to be recognized and respected as educators by their full-time colleagues, department chairs, and the universities they served. They believed they brought a lot to the table in their new roles as second-career contingent faculty and longed to be treated like part of the team. Deb expressed this sentiment clearly when she said, “I would like somehow for adjuncts to be seen as genuine faculty members in the department. As people who deserve the same kind of respect and interaction [as full-time faculty] - to be seen as part of the team.”

Unanimously, the participants were surprised and dismayed by the lack of support they received as contingent faculty. As a result, they often felt isolated, castaway, and left to fend for themselves. Hannah noted this plainly when she stated, “One of the things I didn’t really expect was that I didn’t have a lot of support. . . I was just sort of swimming around.” Christy noted a
similar experience when she said, “I don’t remember anyone giving me ever, ever, any help in my transition . . . Basically, my growth, my learning, my transition was all on me.” As a result of their resourcefulness and commitment to teaching and their students, the participants found different ways to mitigate this unexpected void.

The participants often felt powerless. Christy pointed out that she believed that contingent faculty have been “divided and conquered.” This was best illustrated when she said:

If a system is set up where a group of workers cannot meet, can’t have a meeting place at their place of work and cannot have uh regular meetings with management or in this case the chair of the department, then that system has effectively dispersed the entire workforce, the entire adjunct workforce. So, that we are all islands unto ourselves. We have no political power. We have no ability to mobilize.

This presented a significant impediment to the participants’ adaptability to teaching in the academe. This confirmed Halcrow and Olson’s (2008) findings that contingent faculty were not given many opportunities to get involved in their departments and institutions. For these participants the power structure at their respective universities were somewhat limited to their department chair who controlled the assignment of classes, their schedule, and their ability to remain employed. This power structure is quite different from the one that impacts full-time faculty, which includes deans, provosts, tenure committees, etc. For study participants, their world and role was mainly limited to their department, which was governed by the department chair. Unfortunately, some of their experiences with their department chairs were less than stellar. As Deb noted:

There were some schools where the chair or other people did not even want to meet with me before I started other than that initial job interview. I found that very surprising and
very off-putting because you would think that you would want to connect and talk both
about the courses you are giving them and the workings of the school.

Erin simply said, “I’ve never had a conversation with my chair. Ever.” Since the department
chair served as the leader of the department, he or she was responsible for creating and fostering
the culture within the department for all faculty. Christy suggested that the problem could
potentially be the way universities approach the role of department chairs. She said:

I didn’t know until recently that this is rotating job. The chairman of the department is a
rotating job. So, they’re not invested in it. Who is going to be invested in it, um, if it’s
just a short-term gig where you earn a little extra money on the side and your main
challenge is filling (bangs table) these (bangs table) slots (bangs table) with all these
different adjuncts. That’s, that’s, that’s it. There’s no community building. There’s no,
there’s no sharing of, you know, academic experiences and educational learning or
anything that would enrich people in a kind of more of a communal way. There is
nothing.

As with previous qualitative studies conducted on career adaptability, all seven themes
manifested differently between participants (McMahon et al., 2012). However, all six
participants exhibited career adapt-abilities and a willingness and ability to adapt to teaching in
the academe, which resulted in high levels of adaptation. The participants were willing and ready
to adapt to their new career and circumstances because they possessed the wherewithal,
strategies, and resources to successfully adapt. This finding mirrored previous studies (Porfeli &
Savickas, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In addition, this study concurred with Zacher et al.’s
(2015) suggestion that individuals “with high career adaptability were more open to potential
career changes, possessed more psychosocial resources that facilitated career changes, and were
less worried about the social and materialistic implications of career changes than…

[individuals] with low career adaptability” (p. 170). Therefore, individuals with high career adaptability like the study participants were more willing to take more risks with career changes (Zacher, Ambiel, & Noronha, 2015).

The adaptability of the participants as demonstrated by the seven themes was reviewed in the following paragraphs.

**Theme One: The Destination (curiosity).** All of the participants were curious about their world and how their profession fit into their world. They were future-focused, self-reflective, explorative, observant, and investigative. None were remotely worried about making a career change after more than 10 years of experience at their jobs even though they had achieved some level of prominence or stature. The thought of failure never entered into their minds. They simply believed they could and would do it. Somehow. As Hannah put it, “It was like sink or swim. So, I swam.” They knew what they wanted to do – they wanted to teach in the academe – and they knew that they would get there even if they did not know exactly how. Deb exemplified this when she said, “I didn’t exactly know the end route but I knew that I was on the right path.” These findings confirmed previous researchers’ findings that second-career contingent faculty were mature, highly motivated, self-confident, self-directed, and assertive as a result of the success they achieved in their previous career (Castro & Bauml, 2009; Resta et al., 2001; Simendinger et al., 2000). Deb personified these characteristics when she made the courageous decision to switch careers to teach in the academe after her husband passed away. She explained, “If your house blows up, you can either rebuild it or you could rebuild a different house. So, I decided to mostly rebuild a different house.” Remarkably, she made that decision without fully knowing how that was going to happen but believing she would make it happen.
She possessed almost a blind faith as she noted, “I knew that I was committed to doing whatever it took to get there.”

The curiosity the participants exhibited manifested itself in self-reflection, exploration, and observation. As with several researchers previously, this study also found that participants without an education degree had very little to no pedagogical training and little experience with teaching, curriculum development, syllabi preparation, grading, or classroom management techniques (Burton et al., 2005; Lyons, 2007; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). The participants mitigated this by constantly finding ways to grow and improve themselves as educators. Christy suggested the “quality and thoroughness of the course now is much higher now than when I first started teaching” due to “educating myself constantly, constantly, constantly.” Christy’s repetitive use of the word “constantly” emphasized that the process of educating, learning, and improving herself as an educator never ends. Participants were left on their own to fend for themselves and find innovative ways to seek out assistance and improvement. Erin found that asking her students for feedback was a great learning experience for her and helped her grow as an educator. She noted, “I ask for their feedback now. Did this work? What did you like about it? What should I change? What helps? What doesn’t help? And I solicit their opinions and try to give them a voice.” As a result, Erin found she received and was able to implement some great suggestions that have made her courses more effective, engaging, and interesting. She noted, “I’ve had some great suggestions and I thought, oh yeah. I can change that and I can do my job better. But I do think they appreciate it because I do have respect for them and that makes a better environment.”

Hannah explained that she sought out expert advice before she even interviewed for the contingent faculty position. She pointed out, “Before I even went on the interview, I reached out
to some teacher friends to ask - What do I need to know about teaching in a nutshell, from a more academic sense?” Finding mentors, either formal or informal ones, helped the participants adapt to teaching in the academe. Frank’s story about seeking out his mentor when faced with an unfamiliar task exemplifies this. He noted:

I remember the first time I had to pick a book for a class I went and saw a mentor of mine and I sat down with her and asked ‘How do you do this?’ I mean, I remember Googling about the topic. There are virtually thousands of people trying to get you to use their book and some of them are so similar. And I remember saying to her – ‘What’s the process of picking a book for your class?’ She went over it with me. She asked: What are the demographics? What are you looking for them to do? She told me it has to be something useful. It has to be something that enhances your class. You don’t want it to just fill time. You want it to enhance what you are teaching so they go hand in hand. And I remember, we sat down and we went over some books. And she would kind of test my brain. She would ask – ‘Why do you like that book?’ And, I would tell her why and then she would play the devil’s advocate type of thing, which was good. Uh, and in my old days, I would have taken that personally, but it was good because she got me to think.

While such a task may seem commonplace to a full-time, career academic, selecting a textbook was overwhelming for second-career contingent faculty who had never done so before and were not provided any guidance by their department.

The participants were also very observant and willing to consider new ways of doing things. Deb noted that she observed students to ensure they were learning and understanding core concepts in the class. She explained that it is “all about what’s working, what’s not working. When am I seeing the lights turn on? When am I seeing it not turn on? When do I see their eyes
“glaze over?” Deb watched her students’ reaction closely. “To me it was about becoming more observant and interactive but also about scaffolding a lot of knowledge so that they are climbing up the ladder with me instead of expecting them to be at the top of the ladder.”

All participants were investigative by nature. They were curious and set out to find the resources, tools, and information they needed to be successful in their new careers as educators. Hannah expressed that she experienced a significant learning curve and that it was difficult at times to figure out “how to get things done in an academic world.” However, she felt she adapted very well to teaching in the academe and noted that “For me, I guess I was just lucky because, again, I could sort of just easily find my way, and I am pretty resourceful.” Christy held similar beliefs as she referred to herself as a “self-taught educator.” She explained, “I’ve read articles about teaching and ideas for assignments, but really I am, kind of, creating my own course from, from my own experience.” Deb’s investigative nature paid off because she had to find the resources she needed to be successful on her own including other colleagues that could provide help and advice. She said, “I seek them out now.”

**Theme Two: The Sites (concern).** All participants showed concern for their future but they did not dwell on it or let it prevent them from making decisions and moving forward toward their goals. Unlike Savickas and Porfeli’s (2011) findings, none of the participants spent any significant amount of time thinking about what their future would be like (forward-thinking) or worrying about how the choices they made today will shape their future (connects present and future). These were not areas where the participants showed concern. As Deb noted, “When I commit to something I commit all the way. There’s never a question. . . I knew would get to where I needed to go.” Instead, all participants mentioned they had strong planning skills, were optimistic and hopeful, and emphasized being prepared. These concerns manifested themselves
in different ways for each participant. Christy explained, “I was willing to commit to the hard work out of the classroom to prepare myself in the classroom.”

Contrary to Umbach’s (2007) finding that contingent faculty interacted less frequently with students and spent less time with class preparation, this research found that second-career contingent faculty are extremely dedicated to their students and spend an exorbitant amount of time preparing for class. Frank pointed out that he was willing to go above and beyond for his students when he said, “I’ve driven here on my days off to meet students here because they couldn’t make my office hours.”

All participants expressed concern with being prepared. When it comes to class preparation, Christy noted: “I’ve spent many, many hours online seeking information about lesson plans, and syllabi by professors that are being taught at other universities, and trying to better myself” in order to be “the best I can for my students.” No one told Christy she needed to do this, but she wanted to become “a better professor, a better educator.” Christy further explained that preparing to teach an engaging, quality course took “many, many, many more hours of preparation outside of the classroom before you are even on campus.” This was a consistent theme among all participants. Preparing new courses took a significant amount of time as Deb noted:

I think, certainly, um, teaching any course for the first time . . . you, yourself have to set aside so much learning time. So, the learning time and the prep time for each course was huge and you don’t feel like you’re being compensated for it when you are an adjunct. In fact, all participants noted that they continuously review and tweak their course to make them more effective, interesting, and engaging for students. This drive for continuous improvement and excellence took an exorbitant amount of time. Gina expressed similar beliefs:
There are always things that I say - you know what? I’m not quite happy with the way this works out. Um, I’m feeling like I can get more out of my students if I try a different approach. And, uh, so I’m always looking at those gray areas. They are areas that work but they don’t work as well as I think they should work so let’s try something new.

This study found participants’ primary focus was on teaching and their students, which enabled them to connect with their students. Frank shared an example of how he acted as a resource for his students beyond the classroom:

On the last day of class I always tell my students - As a teacher, it goes beyond this class. Okay, I’m a teacher and I’m here. This isn’t the end of it. If I can ever be of any help even if it’s just to sit and talk to me or if you want to vent or if I can write a letter for you to study abroad, by all means look me up. When I say that, I’m sincere about that.

Deb also expressed concern about impacting her students. She noted:

I really feel like I connect with and make a difference with my students and I hear that all the time. I think there is a strong sense of mutual respect. And, um, that, uh, that education can be engaging, and enjoyable, and challenging, and hard all at the same time. And, I think most students get on board my bus, so that’s good.

Christy said it simply, “I’m engaged with my students. I like my students.” This may be a simple point but it was consistently mentioned by all participants. They liked their students. They enjoyed working with this population as diverse as it is and they were dedicated to making their learning interesting but challenging. This finding mirrored other researchers who found that second-career contingent faculty expressed a love of teaching, working with and helping students, making a difference for students, and were honored to be preparing the next generation
of professionals in their field (Chambers, 2002; Crane et al., 2009; Kilimnik et al., 2012; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Shaker, 2013; Smith & Boyd, 2012).

**Theme Three: The Schedule (control).** The participants in this study controlled their destiny and their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe. Participants made independent decisions, contemplated their next steps, moved in the direction that was going to ensure success, and were passionate and self-principled. They independently sought out resources and information that would help them achieve their goals. As Hannah noted, “I just figured things out on my own . . . I am very self-reliant. I’m resourceful.” They also held themselves accountable and were persistent in their pursuit of becoming a quality educator even though they often received little support and guidance. Even when things happened that were out of their control, there was expectation that, in the end, it would work out.

One benefit second-career contingent faculty presented according to Crane et al. (2009) that was discovered in study participants was they had a strong sense of responsibility as they recognized their ability to affect and impact future professionals in their field. For Frank, being a professor was and opportunity “To be able to help develop individuals or be a mentor or be someone who affects someone’s life.” Hannah also demonstrated a sense of responsibility when she made a point of connecting with her students as she noted:

> I could see differences when I could connect with them more on a personal level. And, maybe getting to know them on a personal level, too. Not just putting my life into their life but really trying to understand what it is they are doing and what they are going through and thinking about it from their perspective.

Hannah also felt that it was important for her to be fair, accountable, and trustworthy. She said:
I felt like I should be more in line with standards because it was a core curriculum class. Um, and I’m pretty big on making sure that, you know, being consistent is important and making sure that I’m catching the essence of the class in that they’ll be able to build upon what it is I’m teaching them.”

Her accountability extended to her students because she wanted to be fair to them. Therefore, she engaged in “creating rubrics and making sure my grading is as fair as I can make it.”

All participants mentioned the importance of passion. Hannah said, “I think passion is important. You can’t be passionate about everything but about your job, it is usually helpful.” When asked if she would do it all again knowing what she knows now, Hannah instantly replied, “Yes! I would because I enjoy it. It is what I am passionate about. I do like teaching people. I like to see them be successful.” Hannah capitalized on opportunities to encourage her students to find work that they were passion about when she stated:

And, I tell my students that, too. You’re going to leave and go look for a job. Think about what you are passionate about. Like, what excites you? And, then look in those areas first so you can be invigorated every day about going to work. Because, that is your life. Because you will pretty much know those people you work with much better than your own family half the time. You know you’re with them more. You’re there all the time. Um, so, if you can be working in a line that interests you, then I think you are halfway there to being successful because you are already sort of set up to be doing that. As opposed to just taking any old thing that comes along and you’re miserable because you hate it. You’re trying to sell widgets and you don’t see the purpose in widgets and why am I doing this? So, yeah. Passion is good.
Gina explained that she is passionate about helping students learn, grow, and better themselves. She said:

If you don’t care about students and care about whether they’re learning and have a sense of value for their education for them and know how important it is for them to become educated. You know, that’s the whole passion for this is for them as people, but for them as people who are trying to become better people. You know, that’s what we all went into education for and what we strive for. I’ve always thought of education as a way of helping people not just teaching.

Passion was a consistent theme across all participants’ stories. It was a strong motivating force that propelled them to excellence, aided in their ability to adapt to their second careers and ensured that they positively impacted their students.

While all participants expressed a great deal of passion for teaching and their students, they also were highly self-principled. This was an important point for Deb when she said:

You know I think was able to adapt without losing my authentic self. I think if I had at any point felt like my authentic self was being buried by the academic atmosphere, I would have . . . I would have jumped ship.

While Deb and the other participants recognized that things are done differently in academia, they all had a clear sense of who they were and where they were going and it was important to them that they remained true to themselves while successfully adapting to their second careers.

**Theme Four: The Departure (confidence and contributions).** As Haggard, S sostad, and Winterton (2006) found, the participants in this study were “confident they will bring the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to the teaching-learning setting” (p. 318). None of the participants lacked confidence. Instead, they exuded it. As Gina said, “I mean it was just
something I knew I could do so I just jumped right in and did it.” The participants were not arrogant. Instead, they possessed a self-assuredness or confidence that they could simply do it. They would do it. Deb simply noted, “I knew I would get to where I needed to go.” Even if they were asked to take on a task they had never done before (e.g., teach a new class), they accepted the challenge with unwavering confidence that they would find a way to be successful. There was never a doubt in any participant’s mind that he or she wouldn’t become a contingent faculty member and wouldn’t be a good one. They unilaterally believed in their skills, abilities, and drive to make it happen. As Crane et al. (2009) found, the participants exhibited a self-confidence in their abilities and a belief that they would eventually succeed, which overshadowed any fears of the unknown, unfamiliar, and possible failure. And, they were right because they have all achieved their goal of becoming educators. Christy noted that when she first started she did not fully know what she was doing but she knew she would figure it out. She said, “I’m flying by the seat of my pants on this and I’m just going to do the best job that I can do. And, I’m going to find out what works and what doesn’t work.” Christy also used an analogy to describe how she gained confidence and became a more efficient and productive instructor. She likened teaching to becoming a good mother. She explained:

Learning how to teach is a lot like learning how to be a good mother. You are not the best mother with your first child because you’re still learning what you need to do. And, by the time you have your second child or your third child, you know, you understand the whole process a lot better. And, I think the same goes with teaching. Um, it’s just, it’s just another skill. It requires a lot more (pauses), a combination of complex things, but it’s, um, I think it’s just something that you have to learn and it does take time to learn it.
Deb refused to let mistakes get her down or stop her from being an effective educator. Instead she learned from them. She explained:

I think there’s a process of you do something or try something and it ends up badly. I mean I’m talking the big mistakes. And, then initially it knocks you off your feet. It knocked me off my feet and then I’m like – Oh my god, I really screwed up. And, then I take that step back and I say – Okay, so it’s not the end of the world. Nobody died.

Right? It’s a lesson in imperfection. What can we learn from this? How would we do this different next time? And, I think that’s my philosophy.

This notion that teaching is a “lesson in imperfection” was reiterated by all participants. They understood that their mistakes were learning opportunities and they made whatever adjustments were appropriate to mitigate or eliminate those errors in future classes. Frank added, “I learned from my mistakes just by being able to identify my mistakes . . . And then once you identify your mistake, you work on it. You develop it. You do better. And, I’m still doing that today.”

Participants in this study noted the numerous contributions they bring to their classroom, students, department, and university. They not only taught it, they did it. Hannah said, “I just think I bring another dimension. You know, I’m not – I don’t just bring a book (laughs). I feel like I bring MY experience, which is important I think.” While Hannah laughed after saying “I don’t just bring a book” to take the edge off the comparison between herself as a former accomplished professional in the field and career academics – those that have never worked in their field but have only gone to school to be educated about it and can only bring the book and what is written about the subject to class because they never have actually done it, this implied analogy spoke volumes about how she felt. She knew she brought more than just a textbook to
her classes and her students. She brought knowledge, know-how, experience, and real-world situations, things that often hold significant meaning and learning opportunities for students.

Frank held a similar belief. He pointed out:

I really feel that an awful lot of teachers, professors, I always hear them coin the phrase, ‘In the real world’ or ‘in your working life’ you either couldn’t do that or couldn’t be there or whatever. Yet, a lot of the people that say that, and I don’t mean to be judgmental but, they’ve never been there. I’ve seen professors and teachers, and they are great professors, great teachers, but that’s all they’ve ever done. They’ve only always ever been in academia. . . They don’t understand that whole other atmosphere. . . When I say, you know, in the real world, if you had a job, I speak from experience.

Christy suggested that being able to bring her professional experience into the classroom made her a greater learning experience for her students. She suggested:

There is no substitute for that experience, wisdom, insight, um, that you can share with your students. Um, I bring something to the table, um, that another journalism professor who never was a journalist themselves can’t. . . I mean you can study journalism all you want. You can read all the books you want. You can watch videos all you want but if you’ve never gone out and done it, if you’ve never been in the field and have to deal with all the things that go on in the field as a real working professional, then I think that person is missing something.

Erin asserted that her professional background gave her more credibility with her students. She felt the same way when she was a student. She relayed this story:

Part of why I didn’t go straight into academia and part of why I wanted to make sure if I ever did teach was I was such a shit in college. I was like – How do you know? You’ve
never done this. Good, you read some books on it. That’s how I was like. The only
teachers I ever gravitated to professor-wise were ones where I would find out – oh, you
did this. For real. Okay, I like you. Tell me more. Otherwise, I was like - Did you ever
get out and touch the camera?

These sentiments shared by participants ran parallel to Conboy’s (2013) findings that second-
career faculty made students more ready to practice in their fields by sharing their inside
knowledge of their profession. These findings also supported previous researchers assertions that
second-career contingent faculty were able to apply theory and course material to real-world
situations, providing invaluable connections to practical and professional situations thereby
helping prepare future practitioners in their respective fields (Chambers, 2002; LaRocco &
Bruns, 2006; Simendinger et al., 2000; Smith & Boyd, 2012; Wisneski, 2013). “They can bring
concrete examples and illustrations, which they have lived, that can be drawn upon to bring the
curriculum to life” (Simendinger et al., 2000, p. 106).

All participants expressed a significant sense of pride in their work. They felt that they
made a difference with their students and their pride shone through. Hannah noted, “I get
invigorated when I walk in the classroom, pretty much every day. And, I think about that. It’s
like – Yeah! – when I engage with the students and have a really great class.” Christy stressed
how proud teaching makes her feel and how truly rewarding it was when she noted:

I get so much out of my students. I get so much out of that personal and professional
satisfaction you get when a class has just ended and you say – Oh, yes! That was a good
class. I know they really enjoyed this. They had an AHA moment! Or you leave thinking,
this is going to help them in their lives. This is going to help them be a better citizen, a
better professional. It’s going to help them get the job they didn’t think they were going
to get. That’s just personal satisfaction. I think that’s what people who teach feel, whether it’s fifth grade or university.

Deb’s pride in her job shone through when she said, “I feel like I’m in a place I love. . . . I just enjoy it so much, um, and I really feel like I connect with and make a difference with my students and I hear that all the time.” Reaching her students was extremely important to all the participants. Deb pointed out:

I mean I hear from my students all the time. Um, how much they’ve learned from my class. And, the messages are often – Here is what I’ve learned about communication. Here’s what I’ve learned about thinking deeply. Here’s what I’ve learned about becoming a better communicator myself. So, um, so, the sense that I get from the feedback from my students, those who apply themselves, is that they really get it on different levels with me . . . I think they get the deep thinking part of it, the eye-opening – I never saw things this way. I just had a student who said something to the effect of now I see camera angles, now I read between the lines. But I’ve also had students, many students, and sometimes they are the surprising ones say I’ve grown as a person. I’ve grown in confidence. I’ve grown as a communicator. And, to me that’s, that’s incredibly rewarding, too. That they’ve changed who they are because of the course.

Deb noted that rewarding experiences like these provide her with a tremendous amount of satisfaction, pride, and enthusiasm.

Gina was quick to relate the pride she felt when students told her that her classes made a difference. She continued:

I have to say that it’s always a good feeling when you can run into a student years after they’ve been in your class and have them tell you what an impact you did have on them
either in terms of the subject matter or in terms of them as a student and what they
decided to do as a career. Because then you know what I’ve been doing is, I’ve been
doing it right. Because if I’ve had that kind of impact on this student, you know, maybe
there’s others too and maybe they haven’t told me, but, when you hear it then it kind of
confirms that what you’re doing, you’re doing right for the right reasons.

These finding contrasted sharply with previous research that found that students were less likely
to connect with contingent faculty (Eagan et al., 2015; Umbach, 2007). Overall these findings
confirmed Bedford’s (2009) contention that second-career contingent faculty were “competent,
part-time professors who have significant expertise in their discipline” (p. 2). Furthermore, these
findings contradict critics that suggested contingent faculty negatively impact student learning
(Baldwin & Wawrynski, 2011; Benjamin, 2002; Bergom, Waltman, August, & Hollenshead,
2010; Carrell & West, 2010; Eagan & Jaegar, 2008, 2009; Eagan et al., 2015; Ehrenberg &
Zhang, 2005; Geiger, 2005; Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011a,
2011b; Maxey & Kezar, 2015; Umbach, 2007).

**Theme Five: Roadblocks and Detours (competition and the clock).** Participant stories
revealed unanticipated obstacles to their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe. These
roadblocks were external to the participants and, at times, out of their control. They involved
competition and time as their enemy. Surprisingly, most participants did not find a highly
collaborative environment in the academy, which was something they were accustomed to in
their first career. As Wisneski (2013) found previously, participants in this study were also
puzzled by the lack of a lack of clearly defined career path, which had been evident in their first
career in the business and professional world. Christy noted that this lack of a clearly defined
career path bred competition among contingent faculty. She said:
We’re being, um, put in the position of competing against each other for the same limited amount of work. Then that creates levels of suspicion – why did that adjunct get three courses and I only got two? Why did that adjunct get a better schedule than I got? Why did they hire this new person over here? Do I have any rights, any seniority rights? This has never been made clear. You create this atmosphere of separation, and then suspicion and insecurity, and all of that combines to being a generally unhappy worker except when you are with your students.

Gina noted discrepancies in assignment of classes that led her to feel there is an unfair, competitive environment for contingent faculty. She explained:

There are some adjuncts that get three or four courses every semester. And, if they’re getting three and four and I can’t even be getting two . . . I just feel like there’s favoritism there or else he just gives out the courses to just to fill them and doesn’t put the thought into it, which then tells me he doesn’t care about people, he just does his job.

Other participants lamented the fact that there aren’t a lot of jobs available in the Northeast for second-career contingent faculty who have an impressive record of professional experience but do not have a terminal degree. To this effect, Erin noted, “I thought moving to New England and the Boston area . . . I thought it would be easier to get a job here because every other block there’s a freaking college here.” She found it more difficult than she expected because the competition is “so much greater than other parts of the country.” Deb mentioned similar experiences. She stated:

A lot of folks had told me that with my experience I would be able to easily get a lecturer position with a Master’s. A full-time lecturer position. So, I was a little naïve that that is actually extremely difficult. That was, that was unexpected.
Deb stated that she believed in order to compete for a full-time position you need a terminal degree. She believed that is what universities and colleges value today.

Christy quickly pointed out the difficulty that former professionals had moving into teaching positions. She stated:

I know this one particular women who would love to get into teaching but it is very, very hard for most professionals to move into a teaching job. And, part of the reason is, um, I think it is so competitive because it’s wonderful to go teach what you know at the university as a former professional. Um, it’s a wonderful way to finish out your working years. . . Yet, those opportunities do not exist. And, I think it’s the university system that rewards a tenure track hire over, you know, somebody with a professional background. Um. And if sometimes they do hire people with professional backgrounds it is only for a limited time. So I think that’s hard. It’s competitive.

Christy felt that a lot of professionals would like to share what they’ve learned in their professional careers with students but it was highly competitive and not easy to do.

Hannah noted this stunning example of competition among contingent faculty:

So, when I first started out, there was this guy and I worked with him a lot. And, he taught at another school. And, I thought, gee, it might be interesting to teach there because it was right down the street. So close. It was a private school. And he looked at me and said, ‘You know, we don’t talk about those kinds of things in the adjunct world because in the end we’re all competitors.’ And, I was like – Wow! How do you like that? I guess I won’t go there with you anymore. Since then I’ve been a little bit more guarded.

Unlike his colleagues, Frank was the only participant that never encountered competition among contingent faculty even though he fully expected to experience it. He said:
I was a little leery because coming from my past career, you might get a new boss or a new person and you always wondered - Who is this person? Are they after my job? Are they after my work? I was a little nervous that might occur, especially as a part-timer. How am I going to be looked at as a part-timer. But as it turned out that never even existed.

Future research could explore if there were gender differences when it comes to the perceptions and experiences of competition by second-career contingent faculty.

All participants expressed that time was their enemy in building comradery and relationships with other contingent faculty. It was a major roadblock and was often compounded by the fact that participants taught at more than one institution at a time and/or held another job. As Hannah suggested:

I was always very busy so I didn’t have a lot of time to sit around and socialize. It wasn’t that I didn’t want to. But, when I was teaching five classes, and that’s a lot of classes. I’ve got my own consulting I’m doing. I’ve got a lot going on so every second that I’m there, I’m working. And so, mostly, my conversations were niceties for a very little amount of time and then it’s like what have you learned? How’s it going? Can we help each other? I don’t know. I guess I’m very pointed in that way. That’s what happens when you’re busy and I guess they probably figured that out too because it wasn’t going to be sit around in between classes and shoot the breeze.

Christy argued that there were five reasons why she participated in limited discussions or interactions with other contingent faculty. She said, “I’m not having a lot of discussions with my peers. We’re all busy. We’re all part-time. We’re all on different schedules. We’re all commuting and we have nowhere to sit.” Universities that address and remove these obstacles to
the adaptability of second-career contingent faculty may be more successful retaining these accomplished, resourceful, and committed educators.

**Theme Six: The Breakdown (lack of support, status, respect, power and job security).** All participants in the study felt they faced several, unexpected breakdowns or setbacks in their second careers. These breakdowns, obstacles or setbacks impeded their ability to adapt to teaching in the academe. Even so, they managed to overcome these obstacles and successfully adapt to their second careers.

Participants felt that they were unsupported in their new role as contingent faculty. They felt they were alone and left to fend for themselves. As Hannah put it, “One of the things I didn’t really expect was that I didn’t have a lot of support . . . I was just sort of swimming around.” Christy had a similar experience. She noted, “I don’t remember anyone giving me ever, ever, any help in my transition.” She felt strongly that “pretty much you were on your own . . . Basically, my growth, my learning, my transition was all on me.” This was a definite source of frustration for Christy as she said, “Where do you even begin when you get zero support, completely zero support from, you know, the current chair and the university administration?” Other participants also expressed frustration with the lack of support they received from their department chair. Erin said, “I’ve never had a conversation with my chair. *Ever.*” She was surprised by the lack of leadership her department chair exhibited. She said, “You can’t go down the highway on cruise control without someone in the driver’s seat.” She felt strongly that the department chair should be driving the car and the direction of the department for all faculty. These findings supported Hecht’s (2014) conclusion that a lack of commitment from the department chair negatively impacted the integration of contingent faculty into the department. They also concurred with Benton and Li’s (2015) argument that department chairs needed to find ways to increase
contingent faculty’s job satisfaction and promote an inclusive environment within the department to ensure that contingent faculty felt that they belonged. The participants’ department chairs, whether knowingly or not, created a hostile and competitive environment, which was the complete opposite of the desired, inclusive environment that might foster the retention of this important group of instructors. These were somewhat shocking revelations considering 80% of all university decisions are made at the department level (Gmelch, 2013) and department chairs were given the authority to make decisions for the department (Wash & Bloomdahl, 2015). Christy intimated this may be a systemic issue based on the way universities approach the role of department chairs. She said:

I didn’t know until recently that this is rotating job. The chairman of the department is a rotating job. So, they’re not invested in it. Who is going to be invested in it, um, if it’s just a short-term gig where you earn a little extra money on the side and your main challenge is filling (bangs table) these (bangs table) slots (bangs table) with all these different adjuncts. That’s, that’s, that’s it. There’s no community building. There’s no, there’s no sharing of, you know, academic experiences and educational learning or anything that would enrich people in a kind of more of a communal way. There is nothing.

When asked what her department chair could have done to help her adapt to teaching in the academe, Christy rapidly fired the following series of pointed questions:

Why not introduce me to the other faculty members? Why not check in with me to ask how things are going? Um. Why not include me in faculty meetings along with other VL faculty? Why not make sure the VLS have a place to work and see students?
Christy went on to explain that she felt it was important to be integrated in the department and have opportunities to able to interact and engage with others in the department because doing so enriches someone as a person and an educator. She stated:

I think every school should, would benefit if they offered, um, visiting lecturers a lot more support and guidance, um, workshops, peer-to-peer mentoring. Um. I think it would have been beneficial for all of these schools to develop a sense of comradery, a sense of community, a sense of belonging, which none of them do very well.

Christy believed that developing comradery, community and belonging by connecting with others and being integrated into the department would foster her personal and professional growth. She noted:

To be able to share that with another person, enriches your life as a person. It enriches your life as an educator. Uh, it makes you a better teacher and, um, I mean, and everybody deserves support from the administration of their department and of the school. I mean that’s what – college means collegial. Collegial means let’s all work together. Let’s not pretend that we work together when nobody is working together.

Christy’s last point was a significant one. This confirmed Halcrow & Olson’s (2008) findings that suggested that contingent faculty expressed frustration and anger as a result of being excluded from departmental and university communities. Since both full-time and contingent faculty were responsible for student learning and success, ultimately achieving the mission of the university, both full-time and contingent faculty should be equally supported and integrated into the department and college community. Universities should find meaningful ways to facilitate both faculty groups working together to achieve student success. They should both be viewed simply as faculty, without further distinction.
Christy felt as a contingent faculty she was being denied an opportunity for personal and professional growth. She noted:

To be able to share that with another person, enriches your life as a person. It enriches your life as an educator. Uh, it makes you a better teacher and, um, I mean, and everybody deserves support from the administration of their department and of the school. I mean that’s what – college means collegial. Collegial means let’s all work together. Let’s not pretend that we work together when nobody is working together.

These findings gave credence to Sorcinelli’s (2007) claim that every faculty member, whether they were contingent or full-time, needed to be supported and provided meaningful growth opportunities. As a result, Christy noted, “All of my satisfaction is exclusively in the four walls of the classroom. There is no satisfaction at all any other place on that university campus for an adjunct.”

To compound matters further, the participants, all accomplished professionals, were relegated to a minimized role whose lack of status ran contrary to their prior career experience. As a result, they felt like “second-class citizens”, which echoed findings by Gappa (2000) and Gappa & Leslie (1993). This study, like many previous studies (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Gappa, 2000; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; West, 2010), found that second-career contingent faculty felt isolated, alienated, or invisible. This lack of status and the respect that went with it often left second-career faculty feeling marginalized confirming the findings of Bergom et al. (2010).

As Hannah put it, “I like to be in the thick of things, so for me, being more, I would say, in the backseat rather than driving the car, is a little bit tough.” Interestingly, Hannah did not portray herself as a passenger – on par with the driver. Instead she expressed that she felt more like a backseat passenger – where the young, inexperienced and, perhaps, inconsequential
children sit. She was no longer driving the car, which she was accustomed to in her first career, she was powerless to steer it at all. Her choice of words here in this metaphor belied her frustration with her lesser status.

Deb used another analogy to illustrate this point. She noted that as a second-career contingent faculty, she was surprised when she came in “as a successful professional and is suddenly treated as a freshman in their graduate class.” In this statement, Deb intimated that as a second-career contingent faculty she was treated like a freshman or newbie, as if she did not know what she was doing. This showed that her extensive professional experience was not valued. This sentiment was echoed by all participants. All participants encountered this lack of status, which confirmed the findings of Simendinger et al. (2000) and Smith & Boyd (2012) that second-career faculty struggle with their newfound lack of status in their second careers. As Simendinger et al.’s (2000) noted, “Starting over once one has been ‘at the top’ can be a challenging and humbling experience” (p. 106).

Not only participants lament their lack of status, they also experienced a lack of respect. Hannah’s experiences suggested that contingent faculty are regarded as “disposable.” She pointed out:

I don’t know if they focus it more like they are disposable. They are just part-time. And, I get that sense. You’re here one semester and you might be gone the next so . . . they don’t seem that they want to spend a tremendous amount of time with you or invest a lot because they feel like maybe, you know, I see a lot of you and your kind (laughs). And, maybe you’ll be gone again. That’s just my feeling.

Hannah’s reference to “you and your kind” gave the impression that contingent faculty were regarded as outsiders, foreigners, or even aliens.
Erin believed that because she doesn’t have a Ph.D. after her name that she was not looked upon favorably by the department chair and other full-time faculty. She felt disrespected by the “majority of traditional academics. And, what I mean by that is those that never had a career outside of the schoolhouse.” She expressed her frustration by stating:

I feel like there is some sort of animosity toward those who haven’t our whole career in the school house. We’re almost discredited because we’ve actually, God forbid, done it! (laughs) You know, but because we don’t have the same three letters we couldn’t possibly be as elite or smart. Whereas I’m like – have you actually ever made anything that has aired?

All participants felt that their professional experience was not as valued as the intellectual pursuits of their full-time, life-long academic counterparts in higher education. Gina simply stated, “There are times when I feel I was not respected.” Erin further emphasized this point when she stated, “I was aware as an adjunct, you know, we’re already a step behind, being judged, because in their eyes we wasted time actually trying to do it.” Such sentiments confirmed Halcrow and Olson’s (2008) findings that many contingent faculty felt they were not respected. Christy believed this lack of respect was a systemic issue because “I think it’s the university system that rewards a tenure-track hire over, you know, somebody with a professional background.” Erin seemed to reinforce this notion when she said:

If you think you are going to walk into the academe and anybody is going to give a shit if you have an Oscar, an Emmy, hmm, I don’t know, a top 40 hit in the last decade, they do not care. Unless, you know, well, where is your degree from, what is it in, and what journal have you published.
This was contrary to previous research that found that second-career contingent faculty were valued for their extensive practical experience, specialized skills, and content knowledge they bring to the classroom (Crane et al., 2009; Fogg, 2002; Haggard, Slostad, & Winterton, 2006; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006).

Deb expressed her desire for equal treatment, respect, and regard when she said:

I would like somehow for adjuncts to be seen as genuine faculty members in the department. As people who deserve the same kind of respect and interaction. To be seen as part of the team is something that I’d like to see a lot more of. Not just as people who camp out in the conference room because they have no office.

Deb’s sentiments summed up the desires that all participants expressed. They desperately want to be respected as educators and faculty members. They do not want to be separated or segregated. They want to be integrated and included. They want to be “part of the team”. This evidence suggested that there may be a pattern of disregard and disrespect of contingent faculty in higher education today. Future research should explore whether such a pattern of disregard exists in higher education and the degree to which professional background and experience was valued.

Not only did the participants experience a lack of support, status, and respect, they also faced a considerable lack of power. Participants were not given the opportunity to serve on committees and therefore could not take on roles that had power. The result of this was that second-career contingent faculty could not participate in making strategic decisions that impacted the university, department, and the contingent faculty themselves. This study revealed that the structure of power for second-career contingent faculty in this study was limited to the department chair. This contrasted significantly with the power structure full-time faculty contended with, which included their dean, provost, tenure and promotion committee, president,
etc. Participants in this study did not have a voice in decisions that directly impacted them. As a result, they felt powerless. As Christy put it, they had been “divided and conquered.” She explained further:

If a system is set up where a group of workers cannot meet, can’t have a meeting place at their place of work and cannot have uh regular meetings with management or in this case the chair of the department, then that system has effectively dispersed the entire workforce, the entire adjunct workforce. So, that we are all islands unto ourselves. We have no political power. We have no ability to mobilize.

As a result, Christy was frustrated because she was powerless to create change. This resulted in a situation whereby “All of my satisfaction is exclusively in the four walls of the classroom. There is no satisfaction at all any other place on that university campus for an adjunct.”

Deb noted that there were strengths contingent faculty can bring to department and university committees and boards. Deb suggested she would welcome the opportunity to provide service to both her department and the university as she did in her Master’s program. “I was able to do service and get to know that group of faculty members . . . and they were able to see, you know, some of my skills that they wouldn’t be able to normally see.” Erin agreed that there was no reason why both full-time and contingent faculty could not work together. She said:

In a perfect department, there’s room for both. Both bring strengths to the table that neither side should diminish. I feel as though it’s been set up as a battleground even to the point of hostility, which seems insane to me.

This research suggested that the current practice of the bifurcated system of tenured (or tenure-track) versus contingent faculty, or the haves and have-nots respectively, was creating a hostile work environment. If universities desired to fulfill their missions and improve student outcomes
(i.e., graduation rates), a hostile work environment should be less than ideal. It would behoove universities to consider additional policies and practices that would address this issue. Universities that effectively accomplish this may find they will retain a competitive advantage over institutions that simply will not.

A final breakdown noted by all participants was the lack of job security their contingent status afforded them. They expressed dismay over the fact that they did not have any idea whether they would have a job beyond the current semester. Even when they were assigned courses for the next semester, they were not guaranteed a job because courses were cancelled due to low enrollment or they could get bumped from the course by a full-time faculty member whose course did not run due to low enrollment. The participants loved teaching and working with students but they lamented the fact that it came at a high price and an extremely high degree of uncertainty. Christy was simply frustrated to be “teaching under these conditions – for no money, no job security, no benefits.” The lack of job security was also a concern for Gina. She said, “Job security is always an issue. You always have to think about whether you’re going to have courses to teach next semester.” Deb was also deeply concern about the lack of job security as a contingent faculty member, which left her feeling undervalued, unsupported, and constantly worried. She stated:

I think the hardest parts of the adjustment are still the financial end, um, is a big thing I am still wrestling with and the lack of long-term security makes me very nervous all the time. The number of hours I am putting in is probably as much as when I had my business. So, I’m doing six long days a week through the semester. Usually Sunday is a 10-12-hour day. So, that when you ever stop to think about what you’re getting paid versus the number of hours you are putting in – I don’t even want to go there.
These findings echoed Toutkoushian & Bellas’ (2003) finding that the lack of job security, benefits, and opportunities for advancements were several additional reasons cited for dissatisfaction among contingent faculty.

**Theme Seven: The Feedback (opportunities).** Not surprisingly, participants felt strongly about what they would like to see in their departments and how they would, ultimately, like to be treated. Although the participants expressed it differently, they desired recognition and respect as educators. As Deb noted: “I would like somehow for adjuncts to be seen as genuine faculty members in the department. As people who deserve the same kind of respect and interaction.” Deb noted that she just wanted to be viewed as “part of the team.” This sentiment confirmed Dolan et al.’s (2013) findings that contingent faculty were “committed professionals who want the recognition of their status as educators” (p. 43). The participants believed that with a little planning and coordination, they could receive the recognition and support they strongly desired. In order to accomplish this sense of community and belonging, Hannah laid out a three-tiered plan:

Well, I think a more organized approach. You know, even, um, even, you know, just meeting with HR, and having a sort of a welcoming session, an orientation of such, of people working at the college. I think it would be helpful to say - You’re a new employee. You should be put through the same thing as every other new employee, which is here’s our campus, here’s is where everything is, this is what we do – you know, a lot of big picture stuff, that, you know, I would for any new employee coming to work for me. Um, so that they get grounded and they really understand. So, for whatever reason it becomes sort of this back door. You sort of enter into this silo of like, hey, they sort of think that you’ve been working here and you are going to know where everything
is and how it is going to work. And, I think the second step would be to actually meet with the department and bring in all the people that are new to the department and do the same thing. So, you get your sort of global view from a university perspective and then you also get your department’s view and then if you are in a special niche inside of that, then meet with someone from that area. It’s kind of a three-tiered approach, I think. That would be helpful. And, it would also build comradery. You’d come in with a class of people who you could work with and talk to, um, and you would know a lot about what was going on and it wouldn’t be so much like you were trying to find your way. You know, they are telling you and showing you the path to success. And, ultimately, I mean that’s what you want your employees to do. You want to keep them around, I would say.

Deb was adamant about the importance of providing opportunities for contingent faculty members to meet each other and get familiar with department. She stated:

- There should be a pre-semester meeting. I know everybody is busy that first week or two but there should be some kind of meeting where everybody gets together, meets each other, and gets a rundown of the department. Um, you know, get some kind of orientation – people that are new – but also have the opportunity to meet some established folks.

Deb expressed that such a pre-semester meeting would help build comradery and a vitally important support network for all contingent faculty. She added, “I do wish there were more a sense of community and a sense of belonging at the places I work.” These finding echoes previous researchers’ (Dolan et al., 2013; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; West, 2010) conclusion that contingent faculty want to fully participate in their institution’s community. They also may lend credence to research that found that integrating contingent faculty into the university or college community reduced feelings of isolation and allowed these faculty members to feel valued and
connected to the institution and its mission (Burnstad, 2002; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Green, 2007; Wallin, 2004; West, 2010). At the very least, contingent faculty needed the same access to information and resources as their full-time counterparts including being integrated into the culture of the college or university (Nutting, 2003; Wallin, 2007; West, 2010).

All participants noted that their respective department chairs provided minimal if any assistance, guidance, or support. Most wished that their department chair was more approachable and interacted with them more frequently, which would make them feel as if they were integral members of the department and part of the team. Hannah suggested:

Even maybe, just check-ins, you know once a month would be good. Like maybe even set up – hey, let’s go to lunch your first day or something would be nice. Something that creates more of a bond. More of like, it is okay to come and ask me questions. You know, I’m not going to bite you.

These findings concurred with Hecht’s (2014) who suggested that chairs should hold a contingent faculty orientation where department and institutional practices were discussed providing both a local and global perspective. In addition, chairs should discuss with contingent faculty the evaluation and rehiring practices in their departments. These findings suggest confirmation of Bedrow’s (2010) findings that department chairs that were ineffective could breed disenfranchisement and a lack of trust. These findings, which are specific to these participants in these contexts, had potential, significant implications for practice.

**Implications for Practice**

There is a new normal in higher education in the United States. Contingent faculty comprise the majority of instructors teaching college students today and research shows that this trend is here to stay (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Gappa & Leslie,
1993; Lyons, 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). In fact, several researchers suggested that second-career faculty were a growing trend (Bedford, 2009; Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Fogg, 2002; LaRocco & Bruns, 2006; Schnitzer & Crosby, 2003) and that more and more faculty were not taking the traditional path to the academe (Cruz & Sholder, 2013; Simendinger et al., 2000; Webb, 2009). Therefore, it behooves researchers, higher education institutions, and university decision-makers to understand as much as possible about these educators. This study adds to the scant knowledge that exists on a particular subgroup of contingent faculty called second-career contingent faculty.

Since department chairs are responsible for their departments’ hiring and retention practices (Berdrow, 2010), they play an important role in the recruitment, hiring, and development of contingent faculty. As a result, the findings of this study can help them recognize career adaptabilities (i.e., curiosity, concern, control, and confidence) that second-career contingent faculty possess that will aid in their ability and willingness to adapt to teaching in the academe. Department chairs might also adopt preferential hiring practices for second-career contingent faculty that exhibit these career adapt-abilities because these professionals turned professors will likely successfully adapt to their new careers. Hiring second-career contingent faculty knowing they bring special expertise to the classroom because of their practical experience will only strengthen the programs and courses offered by the department (Bergom & Waltman, 2009; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Eagan et al., 2015; Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006; Forbes et al., 2010; Geiger, 2005; Green, 2007; Langen, 2011; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004). In addition, this study’s findings provide concrete ways suggested by second-career faculty themselves that department chairs can promote an inclusive environment in their departments that fosters a sense of belonging. These actions would serve to integrate second-career contingent
faculty into the department and eliminate feelings of isolation, alienation, or second-class citizenship common among contingent faculty. It would also show these essential faculty members the respect they long for but do not currently feel they receive. This could, ultimately, increase second-career faculty members’ job satisfaction positively impacting student learning and outcomes. Another bonus is that it could lead to retention of these faculty members, which would save department chairs and their institutions time and money because new contingent faculty would not need to be hired, oriented and trained.

This study’s findings also provided a blueprint of activities that could be implemented at the department level by department chairs to aid the adaptability to teaching in the academe for second-career contingent faculty. Expanding the recommendations made by Lyons (2007), the researcher recommends department chairs implement the following activities noted by the study participants:

1. **Orientation.** Hold an orientation prior to the start of the semester where new second-career contingent faculty can learn about the university (the “global view”) and the department (the “local view”). This can also serve as opportunity for new faculty members to get to know one another and begin to form bonds with others teaching in the same department. In essence, this could facilitate that start of building relationships with colleagues and the development of an actual cohort.

2. **Welcome and Introductions.** On the first day the second-career contingent faculty officially works on campus, either the department chair or another full-time faculty member who has agreed to serve as an informal mentor to the contingent faculty member will welcome the new employee and introduce him or her to all faculty members in the departments, full- and part-time. This sets the stage right away that
the second-career contingent faculty member is a valued member of the team. In addition, the full-time staff person immediately becomes an invaluable resource for the new second-career contingent faculty, thereby facilitating and, perhaps, quickening the new faculty member’s career adaptability.

3. **Regular Monthly Check-Ins.** The chair or designated informal mentor should check in with the second-career contingent faculty member to determine how the new faculty member is doing and to see if he or she can be of any further assistance. This will provide an opportunity to share best practices, determine the needs of the second-career faculty member, and build comradery within the department.

4. **Networking Opportunities.** The department chair can schedule regular networking opportunities for all faculty, including second-career and other contingent faculty. As this study showed, second-career contingent faculty regard themselves as educators and as faculty. They see no reason why they should be separated from full-time faculty. They want to develop relationships with other faculty members, both full- and part-time. Department chairs should also recognize that contingent faculty have limited time and varied schedules and, as a result, schedule meetings for various days and times in an effort to encourage contingent faculty to participate as their schedule allows. While contingent faculty member may not be able to attend all networking opportunities, they will have a better chance to attend some of these important events if the meeting times vary. If one meeting takes place on a Wednesday during lunch, perhaps, the next meeting can be held on a Tuesday or Thursday. These informal meetings would facilitate the sharing of ideas, best practices, and resources. They also could provide an opportunity to inform contingent faculty about issues, policies,
practices, and the direction of the department and the university. These low-cost events would build comradery and increase skills and knowledge of this instructional majority. These opportunities could be as simple as a brown bag lunch where a specific topic will be discussed or a guest speaker will present information, a social gathering such as a holiday party, or an opportunity to share best practices with colleagues. By including second-career and other contingent faculty, these networking opportunities can foster a sense of belonging, a sense of community, and a sense of comradery for all faculty.

5. **Meaningful, Ongoing Professional Development.** Second-career contingent faculty have specific needs that can be addressed in targeted professional development programs and offerings. During the initial transition to teaching in the academe, second-career contingent faculty may have a greater needed for pedagogical training as they often have little experience with teaching (Burton et al., 2005; Lyons, 2007; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004). However, as they gain experience, they may need professional development in other areas such as student-centered learning, developing research skills, or serving as a mentor themselves. As Benton and Li (2015) note if department chairs get to know contingent faculty personally to determine their goals and needs, then they can develop more meaningful professional development programs because they would be specifically designed for them.

6. **Recognition for Teaching Excellence.** Department chairs can develop strategies to recognize contingent (including second-career) faculty for excellence in teaching. This can be a formal award, nominated by peers and/or students that is presented during an awards ceremony or simply announced within the department and to the
larger university community. By including second-career contingent faculty in such recognition efforts, it builds a sense of belonging and community and helps them feel valued by the department.

7. **Representation on Department Committees.** Full-time faculty are required and evaluated on their service to the department and the university. They chair and participate in department committees that make strategic decisions for their department. If both full-time and contingent faculty are teaching our students and representing the university, should not all faculty voices be heard on all department committees? This study suggests that second-career contingent faculty would like to be involved in the university community. In fact, department chairs should not only encouraged contingent faculty to serve on department committees, they should actively recruit them. If department chairs get to know the second-career contingent faculty that teach in their department, they would be able to determine how they could leverage these untapped talented professionals in conducting the business of the department. It is likely that they will bring a different perspective than a career academic, which may result in a collaboration that finds more creative and better solutions to problems. In order to show that these accomplished professionals turned educators are valued, they should be compensated with a respectable stipend for their time and commitment. Universities should allocate additional funds to departments to support the involvement of contingent faculty, a subgroup of its instructional majority, in the workings and strategic decision-making of the departments.

8. **Service to the University.** Full-time faculty are required to engage in evaluated on their service to the university. Why are contingent faculty not included in this highly-
valued aspect of being a college professor? Department chairs and universities can and should encourage and recruit second-career contingent faculty to actively provide service to the university. In addition, the university should set aside funds to fairly compensate second-career faculty for their time and service to both their departments and the university. This might help to build a more inclusive and rewarding environment for all faculty and demonstrate that the university and the department value contingent faculty as quality educators and contributing members of the team. This may go a long way toward retaining these accomplished professionals and educators and reduce turnover in contingent faculty. It seems fiscally prudent to allocate funds for contingent faculty’s service to the department and the university in order to create a more welcoming, inclusive environment. By doing so, the university recognizes the value, experience, and diverse perspectives of these accomplished professionals and educators.

While these recommendations specifically met the needs of the second-career contingent faculty who participated in this study, these recommendations could also be implemented for all contingent faculty. Most of these recommendations could be implemented for little to no cost to the higher education institution. They would take some planning and effort on the part of the department chair and full-time staff, but the reward should far outweigh the cost. By implementing these practices, the university and departments would clearly demonstrate that all faculty are valued and considered integral members of the team.

The findings of this study have additional significance for practice in higher education institutions across the nation. While there are 80,000 chairs in nearly 6,000 higher education institutions in the United States (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2015a), department chairs typically
receive limited if any training (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2015a; Gmelch, 2015; Wash & Bloomdahl, 2015). This seems nonsensical since in higher education institutions across the United States 80% percent of all decisions were made in departments (Gmelch, 2013) and department chairs were given the authority to make decisions for the department (Wash & Bloomdahl, 2015). Since department chairs play such a pivotal role, universities should require and provide them with leadership training to prepare them for this important role. Part of this training should be developing an understanding about the needs, desires, and perceptions of second-career contingent and other contingent faculty. Therefore, this study’s findings suggest university policy makers should develop training procedures for chairs to make them more effective leaders of both full-time and contingent faculty, which is important because ineffective department chairs breed disenfranchisement and a lack of trust (Berdrow, 2010).

The findings of this study revealed a potential, additional problem of practice outside of the scope of this study that warranted further exploration. The findings suggested there may be a pattern of disregard in universities toward second-career contingent faculty and that their significant practical experience is not valued. Future research should explore this further to determine if a pattern of disregard actually exists for second-career contingent faculty and their professional experience because the increasing use of contingent faculty in higher education will continue (Bedford, 2009; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Zeigler & Reiff, 2006).

Universities have the power to eliminate the bifurcated system of tenured or tenure-track faculty versus contingent or non-tenure-track faculty that currently exists in high education, which results in feelings of second-class citizenship by the latter (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Clark et al., 2011; Dolan et al., 2013; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap,
Instead of segregating and separating full-time faculty from contingent faculty creating a culture of haves and have nots, universities should consider lumping both groups together into one group called faculty. This study’s findings suggest that it would behoove universities to establish hiring policies, professional development programs, and a supportive culture that welcomes these accomplished professionals turned professor as part of the team because of the integral role they play in allowing universities to fulfill their missions (Kezar & Sam, 2010). The researcher suggested that an inclusive and welcoming environment for second-career contingent faculty members will create better working conditions for these educators ultimately increasing job satisfaction in and out of the classroom. This is important as this study’s participants found the latter lacking at their current institutions. University policy makers have within their power the ability to foster second-career contingent faculty members as integral members of the team. After all, these accomplished professionals have a lot to offer their universities.

This study’s findings suggested that universities might greatly benefit from a new perspective on contingent faculty, especially second-career contingent faculty. The findings showed that second-career contingent faculty simply loved to teach and were committed to doing whatever it took to become a good professor. In their first career, they had achieved a position of status and they were committed to excellence professionally. It was not simply what they wanted, it was what they expected and their second career would not be an exception. They were doing what they loved and they would work and work until they were good at it. They also developed a number of skills, competencies, resources, and strategies during their first career that enabled them to adapt to this new profession and become successful and impactful educators. Then were wholeheartedly committed to continuously improve and become better educators. Their dedication to their profession and students was inspiring. They were not transient. They
were in the profession to stay and if treated properly with recognition and respect as an integral member of the team, they would return that ten-fold. They were dedicated to their students, but they also needed to be properly supported to facilitate their improvement and growth as educators and individuals instead of being left alone to proactively create their own support network. Therefore, providing mentor and other professional development programs designed specifically for second-career contingent faculty that reinforce the career adapt-abilities outlined in this study will likely hasten their adaptability to teaching in the academe. More importantly, universities that use and support contingent faculty should see a “direct and positive effect on retention and student learning outcomes” (Harrington & Schibik, 2004, p. 5).

**Limitations of the Study**

This study had several limitations. One limitation was the results cannot be generalized to all second-career contingent faculty or even second-career faculty employed at 4-year public institutions in the Northeast due to the small sample size. While the sample size for this study was within Smith et al.’s (2009) suggested sensible sample size of three to six participants, the results were specific to these participants in these contexts at this time. IPA research such as this study was not intended to be generalized to the entire population of second-career contingent faculty or other settings. Instead, this study provided rich, thick descriptions of participants’ lived experiences (Butin, 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Geertz, 1973; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015) and valued the context where these experiences take place, both of which were fundamental characteristics of qualitative research (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Due to the rich nature of the findings, they should be found useful thereby adding knowledge and contributing to the scant literature available on second-career contingent faculty.
The lack of gender parity was another limitation of this study. There was only one male participant in this study. This reflected the gender disparity of contingent faculty in the communication and public relations fields because there are more female than male contingent faculty members working in these departments. Additionally, the first six contingent faculty members that agreed to participate in the study became study participants and no thought was given to gender parity. Future research should consider gender parity in order to ensure that both male and female second-career contingent faculty voices will be heard. In addition, this may help identify whether any gender differences existed.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to the scant literature available on second-career contingent faculty, there will be significant opportunities for future research on this vital instructional majority teaching our college students today. Since research showed that the trend of universities hiring contingent faculty to teach their students was here to stay (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Lyons, 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006), further exploring this subgroup of faculty members could provide critical information that will help universities fulfill their missions. As this study’s findings showed, second-career contingent faculty adapt well to teaching in the academe and continue to utilize these strategies and resources throughout their teaching careers. Therefore, second-career contingent faculty may be ideal candidates for universities and department chairs to recruit, hire, and retain. Therefore the researcher suggested the following recommendations for future research:

1. Future studies on the adaptability of second-career contingent faculty should seek gender parity. These studies can examine whether or not male second-career contingent faculty
perceive and experience their adaptability to teaching in the academe in the same way as female second-career contingent faculty.

2. Future research can also explore if competition was experienced differently by male and female second-career contingent faculty.

3. Future research could conduct a similar study in a different section of the United States to confirm the results of this study. This might help also determine if there are any geographical differences among the lived experiences of the adaptability of second-career contingent faculty to teaching in the academe.

4. Future research on second-career contingent faculty could use quantitative methods to confirm the findings of this study. This would also allow for results to be generalized to a broader audience.

5. Future research can explore the perceptions and lived experiences of the department chairs, deans, and other administrators of four-year public universities in the Northeast in order to gain the perspective of those that hire and set policies for the institutions on the adaptability of second-career contingent faculty to teaching in the academe. The findings of such research might help identify educational needs of key university decision makers regarding these accomplished professionals/educators as well as inform institutional policies.

6. Future research could involve conducting a longitudinal study of the perceptions and lived experiences of the adaptability of second-career contingent faculty from initial hire and transition into teaching in the academe through first five or more years of employment. This may allow for greater transferability of the findings because the data will be collected over the course of at least five years. Christy’s analogy that teaching is
Like becoming a good mother further exemplifies that time and experience matters.

Following participants over the course of a number of years would allow the researcher to follow the development and implementation of career adapt-abilities, which would add significant knowledge to the scant literature existing on second-career contingent faculty.

7. Future research should explore whether there actually is a pattern of disregard or disdain in higher education toward second-career contingent faculty and their professional experience as this study’s findings suggested.

**Personal Reflection**

When I set out on this journey to record, analyze, and interpret the lived experiences of second-career contingent faculty like myself, I wondered if my colleagues had similar or completely different perceptions and experiences as me. I knew it was important to acknowledge and put aside my experiences and preconceptions and focus on the participants’ stories in order to let the data take me wherever it would. And, that is exactly what I did. I really focused on the participants’ stories and what they said. I let the participants’ stories guide the direction and findings of this research. To ensure that I was focused on their stories, I asked two participants to look at my interpretations to make sure I was getting at the heart of what they said and meant, not what I wanted to say. Through participants’ stories, I found that while their experiences were not exactly the same as each other, they experienced several, similar situations and unexpected turns, which became the major themes found in this study. I was proud to focus on the participants’ stories and their voices. They are impressive individuals and their universities are lucky to employ them to teach students and develop future practitioners. I feel that now more than ever it is important that their stories and voices be heard if we want to change the perspective and discourse on contingent faculty in higher education. While I was not sure what to
expect when I started this study, I was not surprised by the results. I hope that this is only the beginning of a robust dialogue on this very special subgroup of contingent faculty.

Conclusions

This study sought to give voice to an important but little-known or researched population, second-career contingent faculty. While the participants, all accomplished professionals, expressed different reasons for switching careers to teach in the academe, their stories shared a number of common themes. First, all participants loved to teach. It was their passion. They also loved to work, interact, and engage with students. They genuinely cared about their students and they unanimously expressed that they get immense satisfaction from these interactions and helping students grow. They were completely committed to their students and, as a result, on their own they continued to learn and seek improvement as instructors. Across the board, they were passionate, dedicated, creative, and proud of the work that they do. They moved forward with almost a blind faith, confidence, and self-assuredness that they would become great educators and they were willing to do whatever it took to succeed in this role. These accomplished professionals turned professors also made a number of contributions to their universities that full-time lifelong academics were unable to make. They bring years of invaluable, real-world, professional experience that their students found fascinating and extremely helpful. They not only taught it, they lived it, which allowed them to use their experiences to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Wisneski (2013) said it best - There is “something undeniably noble and selfless [emphasis added] about joining the ranks of academia after a successful career in industry” (p. 559).

Even though second-career contingent faculty offered numerous benefits to the institutions where they taught, some of their basic needs were not being met. They were doing
what they loved and that was a driving force for them staying in a career that offered little
support, respect, status, power, pay, benefits, and job security. They did not want to be left to
fend for themselves or to feel like islands unto themselves. Instead, they wanted to be part of the
team and integrated into their departments. They wanted networking opportunities, mentors
(even informal ones), and inclusion in departmental and university meetings and activities.
Ultimately, they desperately want to be recognized and respected as educators like their full-time
counterparts. They want to be seen as “genuine faculty”.

The findings from this study suggested several strategies that universities can employ to
maximize the benefits and strengths that second-career faculty offer. First, universities can get
creative to find ways to offer job security to these important instructors. In order to reward
longevity and seniority, universities could offer multi-year contracts for part-time positions to
contingent faculty that have worked at the institution for five or more years. The contracts would
be offered based on years of service in order to allow those with a greater number of years of
service the first opportunity for these contracts. In order to protect the highly coveted treasure
called tenure, a limited number of these contracts could be offered each year. This would,
however, serve to reward loyalty, longevity, and seniority while offering the job security
contingent faculty desire. Second, department chairs could assign courses to contingent faculty
based on seniority and specialization. Again, this would reward longevity and teaching
excellence, retain these vital faculty members, and provide the job security they desperately
desire. Third, department chairs and officials responsible for professional development for
faculty need to create meaningful professional development programs that specifically target the
unique needs of second-career contingent faculty. If universities want all faculty to be
outstanding educators and achieve greater student outcomes, it only makes sense that they should
provide the resources and training necessary for all faculty, including second-career contingent faculty, to become outstanding educators. Fourth, universities can allocate funds for second-career contingent faculty and other contingent faculty who actively engage in service to their department and the university. By creating policies whereby representation of contingent faculty is required on all university committees, this would set up this instructional majority to have input into strategic decisions for departments and universities. By participating in the strategic decision-making of the department and university, second-career contingent faculty would not feel isolated, powerless, and it would foster a more inclusive, welcoming environment for all faculty. This may increase job satisfaction and lead to improved student outcomes. Lastly, since 80 percent of all decisions in higher education institution across the United States are made in departments (Gmelch, 2015), universities should develop training programs for department chairs to help them develop the skills, approaches, and the tools necessary to become effective, inclusive leaders. After all, as leaders of the department they set the tone for the department and can significantly impact job effectiveness and satisfaction for all members of the department including second-career contingent faculty members. Since ineffective department chairs breed disenfranchisement and a lack of trust (Bedrow, 2010), leadership training for department chairs to help them become effective leaders could result in stronger, more inclusive and effective departments, which would benefit the department, the university and students.

Since colleges and universities were and will continue to be dependent on contingent faculty members for their very survival (Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Lyons, 2007; Wallin, 2004; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006), universities that adopt this new approach to second-career contingent faculty members, may find that they will have a competitive edge over other universities putting
them in a stronger position to attract, hire, train, and retain these remarkable and accomplished professionals who now proudly call themselves educators.
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Appendix A

Participant Recruitment Material

**Initial email**
Good morning ________,

I am writing to ask you if you would volunteer to participate in a research project that I am conducting as part of the requirements for my doctoral degree from Northeastern University. My project is currently overseen by my advisor, Karen Reiss Medwed.

This research project is my thesis and its area of interest is contingent or part-time faculty. Specifically, this study will explore the perceptions and experiences of second-career contingent faculty and their adaptability to teaching in the academy. Second-career contingent faculty are prior practicing professionals with a minimum of three years of experience in a related field to the one in which they teach who switched careers to academia to become part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track contingent faculty.

Based on previous conversations with you, I believe that you fit this criterion and hope that you will consider volunteering to participate in my study. To protect the identity of study participants, all participants’ names will be altered in the final written analysis. In addition, the name of the university will not be revealed and only the university’s location (Northeast) will be included in the final written analysis. Therefore, all information you share with me during this research project will be anonymous.

Participation in the study involves two 45-minute recorded interviews, which will be scheduled on a day and time that is convenient for you. If you volunteer to participate, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form. If you have any questions or are willing to volunteer for this study, please reply to this email or leave a note in my mailbox.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Lisa Bergson

**Follow-up email**
Good morning, ______.

As you may know, we both teach in the Communication Studies department at BSU. I am writing because I need your help. I am wondering if you would kindly volunteer to participate in a research project that I am conducting as part of the requirements for my doctoral degree from Northeastern University. It will involve two 45-minute interviews at a day and time that is convenient for you. Please let me know if you are willing to participate and I will forward more information to you about the study.

Thanks for your time and help,
Lisa Bergson
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies
Investigators: Dr. Karen Reiss Medwed, Lisa Bergson
Title of Project: Becoming the New Normal the Second Time Around: The Perceptions and Experiences of Second-Career Contingent Faculty on Their Adaptability to Teaching in the Academe

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 do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
You are being recruited to participate in this study because you fit the criterion for inclusion in the study as a second-career contingent faculty member. Second-career contingent faculty are prior practicing professionals with a minimum of three years of experience in a related field to the one in which they teach who have switched careers to academia to become part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track contingent faculty.

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this research is to explore participants’ stories, perceptions, and experiences about how they adapted to changing careers to teach in the academe.

What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to voluntarily participate in two 45-minute recorded interviews.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
Two 45-minute interviews will be conducted on campus at the university. The interviews will be scheduled at a day and time that is convenient for the participants.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

Will I benefit by being in this research?
There are no direct benefits for individuals who participate in this study. However, the information learned from this study will add to the scant literature on second-career faculty and potentially help inform hiring policy and practices of higher educational institutions.
Who will see the information about me?
Your participation in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers on 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 of this project. To protect the identity of study participants, all participants’ names will be altered in reports or publications. In addition, the name of the university where you teach will not be revealed and only the university’s location (Northeast) will be included in reports or publications. Therefore, all information you share during this research project will be anonymous. All audiotapes and transcripts will kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office and all audiotapes and transcripts will be destroyed after an acceptable period of time. Participants may withdraw from this study at any time prior to the interview and up to one month after the interview.

What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?
There are no foreseeable risks or harm for you to take part in this study.

Can I stop my participation in this study?
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time prior to the interview and up to one month after the interview. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Karen Reiss Medwed, k.reissmedwed@neu.edu, 1-617-390-4072. You can also contact Lisa Bergson, bergson.l@husky.neu.edu, 508-971-6344, the Principal Investigator.

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, 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously.

Will I be paid for my participation?
You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

Will it cost me anything to participate?
There is no cost to participate in this study.

Is there anything else I need to know?
You must be at least 18 years old to participate

__________________________________________________________________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part

__________________________________________________________________________
Printed name of person above

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

__________________________________________________________________________
Printed name of person above
Appendix C

Interview Schedule

I. Review the Issue of Consent

II. Interview Questions:

1. **Can you explain what you did for work before you switched careers to teach in the academe?**
   - Prompts: What was your role or job description? Tell me more about your daily responsibilities. What was a typical day like? What level of success did you achieve? How were you regarded by your peers, supervisors, underlings?

2. **What did you like and dislike about your former career?**
   - Prompts: What about your former career did you enjoy? What did you dislike about your former career?

3. **Why did you initially decide to change careers to teach in the academe?**
   - Prompts: Why did you want to teach? Why did you want to become a college professor?

4. **Before you started university teaching, how did you expect your transition to college professor would go and was it like you envisioned it or different?**
   - Prompts: How did you envision the transition? Tell me more about what you were thinking or feeling about this transition before you started. Can you give me an example of how it the transition was like you envisioned or different from what you envisioned?

5. **What skills, competencies, and abilities that you possessed aided your transition?**
   - Prompts: Can you describe specific skills and competencies you possessed that helped the transition? What personal attributes, professional skills, or transferable skills did you tap into to aid in your transition?

6. **What obstacles or challenges did you face when you changed careers to teaching in the academe?**
   - Prompts: Can you share specific examples of the obstacles or challenges you faced both in and out of the classroom?

7. **Is there anything that you feel would have made your transition to part-time college professor smoother?**
   - Prompts: This can be anything that would have helped make your transition smoother.

8. **How do you feel you adapted to teaching in the academe?**
   - Prompts: What steps did you take? What did it involve? What would you have done differently?

9. **As a former professional in the field, what do you think you bring to the department, university, classroom, and your students?**

10. **What advice would you offer successful professionals who are considering changing careers to teach in the academe?**
    - Prompt: Knowing what you know now, would you do it all again and why?