UNDERSTANDING HOW ADJUNCT FACULTY AT A PRIVATE, CATHOLIC COLLEGE IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES MAKE SENSE OF THEIR EXPERIENCE BALANCING WORK-LIFE ROLES: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

A thesis presented
by
Mark A. Gould

to
The School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

in the field of
Education

College of Professional Studies
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
July 2016
Abstract
The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of a qualitative research study, which sought to explore how adjunct faculty members from a small, Catholic college in the Northeast United States describe their experience balancing life roles. This research was conducted through the lens of Clark’s (2000) work/family border theory. Eight adjunct faculty members from a small Catholic College in the Northeast were purposefully sampled. The data, which was collected through in-depth interviews, was analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Through this analysis, five themes related to adjunct faculty members’ work-life balance emerged. Those themes were (a) balance through flexibility; (b) conflict through lack of control; (c) teaching feeds passion; (d) appreciation from support; and (e) conflict from college interaction.

*Keywords*: adjunct faculty, work-life balance
Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my advisors. Dr. David Szabla started out as my first advisor before moving on to another position. Dr. Tova Sanders was nice enough to take me into her group. She was always supportive and encouraging throughout this process, and I am truly grateful for her persistence in keeping me moving forward toward the completion of this study. I want to also thank my committee members, Dr. Sandy Nickel and Dr. Todd Leach, for their mentorship throughout the past years. Your input and insight into this research has truly helped improve this study.

I could not have completed this process without support from my colleagues at Merrimack College. Specifically, I want to thank Dr. Lauren Bent, Dr. Carol Glod, Dr. Chris Hopey, Dr. Kathryn Nielsen, and Janet Syed. These colleagues kept encouraging me along this journey. I want to thank Dr. Rory Tannabaum, who proved to be an excellent editor and APA specialist. His feedback and careful editing of my paper was invaluable.

Additionally, I could not have completed the research without the assistance from Claudia Poravelis. Any study of human subjects depends heavily on the generosity of those who agreed to participate in this study. I want to thank those adjunct faculty members who gave so willingly of their valuable time to participate in this study. Although I am bound by our confidentiality agreement, if you are reading this, I truly appreciate the time we spent together for this study.

I would like to thank my wife Meg for her love and support, which has sustained me throughout this long and sometimes arduous journey. Although reaching this goal has been part of my life for the past nearly eight years, knowing she was there as my best friend always kept me going. I would like to thank my children, Jack and Kate. I could always count on them
asking, “when will you be done?” I appreciate the sacrifices they made to support my completion of this study.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Victor and Claire Gould, who were so enthusiastic and optimistic about the completion of this study. I now have something for you to read on those sleepless nights.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to Dissertation</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positionality Statement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taxonomies</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuckman’s taxonomy</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biles and Tuckman’s taxonomy</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gappa and Leslie’s taxonomy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty Standing</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjunct Faculty Pay</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative Support and Supervision</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work-Life Balance</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER THREE: Research Design</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Approach</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment and Access</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protection of Human Subjects</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: Findings and Analysis ........................................... 72

Participant Profiles ................................................................. 72
Amy .................................................................................... 73
Beth .................................................................................... 73
Carol .................................................................................... 73
Claire .................................................................................... 73
Kate .................................................................................... 74
Meg ..................................................................................... 74
Wendy .................................................................................. 74
Victor ................................................................................... 74

Super- and Subordinate Themes ............................................. 74
Balance through Flexibility .................................................. 76
Flexible schedule. ............................................................ 77
Comfort through commingling ......................................... 78
Maintaining organization .................................................... 80
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to Dissertation

Part-time faculty now account for more than half of academic appointments at colleges and universities across the nation (Eagan, 2014; McCarthy, 2014; Miller, 2015). Another 20 percent are full-time without tenure, and only 30 percent are traditional tenured or tenure-track appointments (Miller, 2015). According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), as of 2013, 76 percent of all higher education instruction positions were filled on a contingent basis (Yu, 2016). This number has increased 300 percent from 1975 to 2011 (Yu, 2016). According to data from the U.S. Department of Education, the percentage part-time faculty teaching at degree-granting institutions has increased from 33 percent in 1993 to 41 percent in 2011 (Curtis, 2013). Additionally, the percentage of tenure-line instructors has declined from 35 percent in 1993 to 24 percent in 2011 (Curtis, 2013). Currently, 70 percent of the teaching in colleges and universities is performed by faculty who are not in tenure-track positions (June, 2012). As tenure and tenure-track appointments become increasingly more scarce, faculty desiring to teach at the collegiate level must choose part-time and term-limited appointments instead (Eagan, 2014). Many colleges and universities view part-time faculty as a way to fill in for subject area temporary needs, provide budgetary savings, and cover courses closely tied to industry (Eagan, 2014).

Adjunct faculty members are forecasted to play a large role in the instruction at most colleges and universities for three reasons (Thompson, 2003). First, due to recent economic challenges, colleges have had to reduce the number of tenure-track positions and hire more adjunct faculty, who are much less expensive than tenured faculty (Thompson, 2003). These adjunct faculty members earn a median of $2,700 per course, and most receive no benefits according to a survey by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce, an advocacy group (The Hechinger Report, 2015). In addition, an increase in hiring of adjunct faculty by colleges has
occurred because it allows for flexibility. Uncertainties such as fluctuations in enrollment and full-time faculty out on sabbatical or out on medical leave make it imperative to be able to hire as needs change (Thompson, 2003). Finally, Thompson (2003) argues that adjunct faculty can provide a better educational environment because of their teaching focus and the real-world expertise they bring into the classroom.

Research shows that many adjunct faculty members pursue their positions in order to maintain a better work-life balance (Philipsen & Bostic, 2010). Thus, in order to successfully recruit and retain adjunct faculty in a very competitive market, colleges and universities need to understand the triggers that can influence an adjunct’s perceived work-life balance satisfaction, which can influence their commitment to that college or university (Hagen, 2002). Therefore, the purpose of this interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) study is to explore how adjunct faculty members at a small, Catholic college in the Northeastern United States make sense of their experiences navigating the boundaries between work as adjunct instructors and other life roles.

**Significance**

Increasing the number of Americans who obtain a college degree is a key initiative to growing and strengthening the middle class and increasing the country’s competitiveness globally (U.S. House of Representatives, 2014). In order to support the attainment of college degrees, which is critical for our economy, institutions are increasingly dependent on adjunct faculty (U.S. House of Representatives, 2014). In 1970, adjunct faculty made up 20 percent of all higher education faculty, and today they represent half of all faculty (Eagan, 2014; Kazar, 2013; McCarthy, 2014).
It is clear that adjunct faculty members will continue to have a place in colleges and universities for the foreseeable future (Heuerman & Jones, 2013). According to an article in the *The Economist* (“Social media and job titles: A pixelated portrait of labour – LinkedIn offers a new way to look at employment,” 2012), new research from LinkedIn suggests that “adjunct faculty” is the fastest growing job title in America, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that postsecondary faculty will have a faster than average growth in employment over the next decade (19 percent from 2012 to 2022), with many jobs expected to be for part-time and adjunct faculty (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

Adjunct faculty have been recognized for bringing real-world experience and expertise from their field of study into the classroom in which they teach, filling in temporary teaching gaps, providing for unexpected growth in program areas, and saving institutions significant funds (Eckler, Field, & Goldstein, 2009; Wickun & Stanley, 2000). These factors enable institutions to offer not only required courses, but also additional courses that would not ordinarily be scheduled without the adjuncts’ additional expertise (Eckler et al., 2009). Clearly, adjunct faculty members complement full-time faculty, thus enriching the overall diversity of curricula. In doing so, they bring an increased level of productivity and flexibility to degree programs (Wickun & Stanley, 2000). In addition, those adjunct faculty who excel in the classroom could be considered as desirable candidates for full-time faculty positions at institutions who are planning on hiring additional faculty in the future (Thompson, 2014).

However, for many adjunct faculty, the part-time and very unpredictable nature of this work is full of negative implications, such as “standing on the second or third rung of the academic ladder” (Ritter, 2007), becoming mere delivery systems of standardized content (Moser, 2014), and having no job stability (U.S. House of Representatives, 2014). Additionally,
they often get very little, if any, administrative support from their colleges (Miller, 2014), they are not offered professional development opportunities, nor are they paid for office hours (Goral, 2014), and regardless of their dedication to their classes, they receive low salaries and no benefits (June, 2011). Some research on adjunct faculty work equity shows a picture of inequality between adjuncts and tenure-track faculty, with the latter but not the former experiencing job security and prospects for promotion (Schmidt, 2013). A 2010 survey of non-tenure faculty by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce showed a low median compensation rate for adjuncts as $2,700 per three-credit course (Flaherty, 2013). At four courses per semester, that is only $21,600 annually compared to starting tenure-track salaries that average $66,000, according to the American Association of University Professors (Thornton & Curtis, 2012). Therefore, the salary of adjunct faculty depends on the sheer number of courses they teach each year (Hananel, 2013). Over the last several years, various adjunct faculty advocacy groups have been calling for better treatment of adjunct faculty. The Delphi Project, which brings together faculty groups and college administrators, has taken on the issue of how adjuncts are treated (Jaschik, 2012).

In November 2013, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce Democrats launched an eForum to invite adjunct faculty to comment via email on their working conditions. Because many of the eForum respondents were juggling several teaching responsibilities at multiple institutions along with another job, many expressed that they do not spend adequate time on course preparation and office hours (U.S. House of Representatives, 2014). Ninety-eight percent of the adjunct faculty members who commented on the impact of their working conditions with their students felt that due to the demands on their schedule, they were missing opportunities to better serve their students (U.S. House of Representatives, 2014). Thus, as the
number of adjunct faculty increases at colleges and universities, working conditions, low pay, and lack of support have had adverse effects on students (Jaschik, 2012). Given these findings, institutions of higher education must learn how to use and develop this valuable resource, adjunct faculty, in a way that maximizes both the success of current students and the continuing success of higher education institutions (Heuerman & Jones, 2013).

Many adjunct faculty members who teach at multiple institutions are forced to give up time with their family as well as other parts of their personal lives. For those adjunct faculty members who specifically teach online, the lines between work and home can become very blurred when they are working from their homes (Aguilar, 2001). This can lead to increased work-life balance challenges, affect their teaching and other work performance, increase stress levels, increase the likelihood of burnout, and impact their overall satisfaction levels (Aguilar, 2011). The purpose of this IPA study is to explore how adjunct faculty members at a small, Catholic college in the Northeast describe their experience balancing life roles.

**Research Question**

To this end, the following research question will guide this study: How do adjunct faculty members from a small, Catholic college in the Northeast describe their experience balancing life roles?

**Positionality Statement**

Each researcher brings their own perspectives into any research project they conduct. These perspectives must be acknowledged and accounted for in each research process (Dooley, 2002). Study validity can be questioned without fully disclosing the researcher relationship to the content being researched (Dooley, 2002). Thus, in this section, the researcher will share their experience with adjunct faculty to clarify any biases.
In the case of this particular study, the researcher is a college administrator who has worked closely with adjunct faculty members for more than 10 years. While the findings from this study will be of particular interest to the researcher, it is important for the researcher to acknowledge and remain aware of preconceptions and bias that could compromise their subjectivity (Maxwell, 2005). The IPA research approach to data collection is committed to a degree of open-mindedness, thus the researcher will need to attempt to set aside any preconceptions in respect to designing and conducting interviews (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

According to Hopkins (2007), positionalities may include aspects of identity such as race, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, etc., as well as personal experience of research such as previous projects worked. The researcher will be careful to be aware of his own positionality in terms of his identity as well as any previous experiences and preferences (Hopkins, 2007). The researcher is a middle-aged, White male who could be defined as privileged in regards to his socioeconomic status as well as his “power position” at three colleges/universities for the past 20 years. Working on the administration side of each college/university, the researcher has spent most of his career dealing with adjunct faculty issues such as hiring, reviewing, recruiting, and firing. In the researcher’s experience, adjunct faculty members have been seen solely as a resource to fill any available teaching slots not being filled by full-time faculty. The researcher’s assumptions are based upon his work from the prospective of “control” of an adjunct faculty member’s ability to earn a living. The researcher has never taught as an adjunct faculty member, nor has he had to worry about balancing “part-time” work and family. Additionally, the researcher is married and has strong support at home, thus he cannot fully appreciate how adjunct faculty members might feel about making personal decisions that may
not always be easy on them and their families. In addition, the researcher cannot appreciate how an adjunct faculty member might be the sole means of income and, therefore, they may need to work for multiple institutions, which causes them to have very little time with their family. Thus, the researcher may struggle to fully understand the struggles many adjunct faculty members face to provide for and spend time with their families.

Hopkins (2007) suggests that those involved in research should usefully employ an open approach that acknowledges the continuing production, management, and negotiation of positionalities in different contexts. These experiences of the researcher have formed the basis of this topic of inquiry. Therefore, it must be made clear that the purpose of this study is not to influence or marginalize a particular group of faculty, but rather to help better understand their experiences.

**Theoretical Framework**

Clark’s (2000) work/family border theory was used as the theoretical lens through which to view this study. This theory aims to explain how individuals manage and negotiate the work and family domains and the borders between them in order to attain a work-life balance. Clark argues that the primary connection between work and family systems “is not emotional, but human” (p. 748). Key to this theory is the idea that “work” and “family” represent different domains that influence each other, predict when conflict will occur, and give a framework for attaining balance (Clark, 2000).

Central to work/family border theory are four concepts: domain, borders, border-crossers, and border-keeper and other domain members. The relationships between these concepts are displayed in Figure 1.

The first component in Clark’s (2000) theory is the domain (work or family.) This is followed by the borders, which divide work and home for the border-cropper and the border-keepers (Clark, 2000). The borders are the part that constrains how one keeps work and family separate from one another. These borders may be physical, temporal, or psychological ones, and there may even be a combination of two or three of these borders (Clark, 2000). According to Clark, the border-cropper is the character (in this case the adjunct faculty member) who lives in and operates in both domains, and the border-keepers are those who keep one domain from crossing over into another.
This theory stresses that how one navigates between work and family is for the most part dependent on the roles and relationships one has in each sphere (Clark, 2000). Furthermore, one’s sense of belonging within each domain and how one is viewed by others in the work and family spheres influences the degree of support received in a given domain (Clark, 2000). This theory also argues that permeability, flexibility, blending, and border strength are the constructs that identify how experiences, emotions, and expertise pass over the borders between work and family domains (Clark, 2000).

Clark (2000) defines permeability as “the degree to which elements from other domains may enter” (p. 756). For example, permeability is the ease with which an adjunct faculty can bring their work home and how they take home issues to their work (teaching). Clark also cautions that permeability is not always negative, especially when experiences that cross family and work domains bring positivity to the specific domain.

The third characteristic of Clark’s (2000) theory is the flexibility of a border or the extent to which a border may contract or expand depending on the demands of one of the domains on the other. For example, a physical border may be very flexible if an adjunct faculty can work from home teaching an online class.

The fourth characteristic is called blending, which describes the sharing of experiences between borders when permeability and flexibility are strong (Clark, 2000). High levels of blending create what Clark (2000) calls “borderlands,” which are areas that can’t be defined as work or family. For example, self-employed individuals working from home often find a blending of their life-domains as they talk on the phone with clients while completing household chores (Clark, 2000).
Border strength is the final construct that explains how experiences move from one domain to another. Border strength is created by the permeability, flexibility, and blending of the domain borders (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) suggests two propositions regarding the border strength. The first proposition is that “when domains are similar, weak borders will facilitate work/family balance,” and the second is that “when domains are different, strong borders will facilitate work/family balance” (Clark, 2000, p. 758). Thus, border strength is the ability of an individual to bring experiences across the borders of his or her domains (Clark, 2000). The border strength between domains facilitates the balance between work and family.

Another relevant concept, according to Clark (2000), is that of central participation, which refers to how invested an individual is in their workplace community. If being a central participant gives them more choices, then balance between work and family is more easily attained (Clark, 2000). For example, central members by and large have more options and freedom, which makes it easier to attain a positive sense of work-life balance (Clark 2000). When someone is viewed as less central to the workplace community, it will be more difficult to get necessary support (Clark, 2000). Clark states that support from other-domain members is likely to come from border-keepers who understand and are informed about other-domain happenings.

Clark (2000) defines work-life balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict” (p. 751), stating that, “though many aspects of work and home are difficult to alter, individuals can shape to some degree the nature of the work and home domains, and the borders and bridges between them, in order to create a desired balance” (p. 751). She explains that the roles individuals portray within the two domains of
work and family can create conflict, which leads individuals to feel “imbalanced in their work and family lives (Clark, 2000).

In the context of this study, Clark’s (2000) work/family border theory will be utilized as a lens through which factors such as border strength, border-crossers, border-keepers, and other domain members can be viewed. These factors will direct attention towards these elements with work-life balance.

Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature relevant to adjunct faculty work and work-life balance in higher education. The following chapter, Chapter Three will present the methodological design used to conduct the study. Next, Chapter Four will discuss the results of the research and an analysis of the data collected from the participants. Finally, Chapter Five will discuss the findings, recommendations, and implications of the study.

**Definition of Terms**

**Adjunct Faculty.** Those who are identified as part-time faculty and/or lecturers (AAUP, 2014).

**Borders.** Lines of demarcation between domains (Clark, 2000).

**Border-crossers.** People who make daily transactions between the two domains of work and family (Clark, 2000).

**Commingling.** Someone who occupies both spheres (family and work), each with their own unique aspects (Korabik, Lero, & Whitehead, 2008).

**Domain.** Worlds that people have associated with different rules, thought patterns, and behaviors (Clark, 2000). Work and family can be two different domains.

**Full-time Faculty.** A permanent employee (10- or 12-month continuing contract) at a single institution.


**Job Satisfaction.** The degree to which one positively evaluates specific aspects of their job in general (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992).

**Part-time Faculty.** Those who teach less than full-time faculty and teach for one or more institution(s). They are often referred to as lecturers and have no access to insurance or retirement plans (AAUP, 2014).

**Permeability.** The degree to which elements from different domains may cross over into another domain (Beach, 1989).

**Role Conflict.** Emotional stress when competing demands are made on an individual in the fulfillment of his or her multiple social roles (Clark, 2000).

**Tenure/Tenure-track Faculty.** Those faculty members who hold indefinite security and academic freedom status in one or more campus units and hold the title “associate professor” or “professor” or faculty members who are seeking tenure and hold the title “assistant professor” (AAUP, 2014).

**Work/family Balance.** Positive and negative associations related to an individual’s work and non-work roles, which would include but not be limited to family and other non-working activities such as civic or community engagement (Brough & Driscoll, 2010).

**Work/family Border Theory.** “Family and work domains are separate psychological life arenas and the interaction between them is dependent upon the strength of the borders between them” (Clark, 2000).
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

The following literature review begins by providing a review of current research on adjunct faculty in higher education. The review then explores the subject of work/family balance. It starts with broad and general categories, then moves toward an analysis, which is more closely related to the focus of this study.

Since the utilization of adjunct faculty continues to increase on most college campuses, it makes it compelling for colleges to identify and understand how adjunct faculty manage work-life balance. The purpose of this literature review is to examine existing information regarding the experiences of adjunct faculty and how these experiences affect their ability to manage work-life balance.

The general higher education literature utilizes the terms “contract instructors/faculty”, “part-time”, or “adjunct” interchangeably and defines these terms as: “those individuals who are temporary, non-tenure track faculty employed less than full-time” (Gappa & Leslie, 1993b). Many adjunct faculty are “practitioners,” who occasionally teach and have “work-related” responsibilities that take most of their time (Gappa, 1984b). Other adjunct faculty members teach part-time at multiple schools, which combine to equal a full-time teaching load (Louziotis, 2000). In almost all cases, these adjunct faculty are paid per course, have semester-by-semester appointments, no health insurance or retirement benefits, no voice in faculty affairs, and limited promotion or salary raise opportunities (Banachowski, 1997). They often must prepare to teach without offices and are unable to hold office hours or assist students outside class (Dean, 2015).

The review of literature is organized into the following major themes: the nature of adjunct faculty, adjunct teaching workload, adjunct faculty standing, adjunct faculty pay, adjunct faculty governance, administrative support and supervision, and adjunct faculty
satisfaction. Additionally, work-life balance literature is reviewed to explore the impact work-life balance has on adjunct faculty satisfaction. Additionally, there is a focus on the different work-life balance conceptual models and why the family/work border was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study.

With the increased costs of higher education and the increased amount of student loans for college graduates, the public is asking for greater accountability. In the past few years, there has been an increased reliance on adjunct faculty at colleges and universities (Salomon-Fernandez, 2014). At most colleges and universities, the ratio of adjunct to tenure-track faculty has been disproportionate, with more adjuncts hired than full-time faculty (Salomon-Fernandez, 2014). A popular concern for most adjunct faculty members is that due to their status, they have little voice in the decision-making process at the institutions where they teach. Some are not even allowed to attend or vote at faculty meetings, while others are barred from taking part in academic senates at all (Jerde, 2014).

However, at some universities, non-tenure faculty members are gaining new platforms for power. At the University of Southern California (USC), Ginger Clark, a non-tenured faculty member, is among the latest to be elected to a leadership role (USC’s Academic Senate) (Jerde, 2014). Advocates for adjunct faculty at USC and elsewhere have praised her election to this role as a major step forward in the inclusion of faculty other than tenured ones in leadership positions (Jerde, 2014).

For many adjunct faculty members, the main issue is the low pay they receive. Many struggle to make enough to pay their bills each month. Arik Greenberg, who is an adjunct professor at Loyola Marymount University, was speaking to Paul Solman from the PBS Newshour program regarding the “lack of benefits which include no medical, no dental, no
retirement, no sick leave, nothing” (PBS, 2014). Other adjuncts interviewed on the program complained of being on food stamps due to the low pay that they receive as adjunct faculty members. Many others state that they must drive to three different universities to teach just to make ends meet (PBS, 2014).

In a few rare cases, institutions have stepped up to provide their adjunct faculty members with higher pay and benefits. Recently, Tufts University adjuncts ratified a three-year agreement that will give them significant pay increases, job security, and health and retirement benefits (Salomon-Fernandez, 2014). Under this agreement, the adjunct faculty at Tufts will also be compensated for advising (Salomon-Fernandez, 2014). However, very few institutions can take the lead that Tufts has taken, as they do not have the money to be able to afford to devote it toward their adjunct faculty.

Another recent trend for adjunct faculty has been unionization. Just recently, adjunct faculty members at three Vermont colleges have voted to unionize. Adjuncts at Burlington, Champlain, and St. Michael’s Colleges voted to form a union affiliated with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) (Flaherty, 2014a). The union is organizing adjunct faculty members across the country, and these are the first colleges in Vermont to join the SEIU (Flaherty, 2014a). Jeffrey Ayres, a dean of St. Michaels, stated that, “Adjuncts are an important part of the college in providing an excellent educational experience” (Flaherty, 2014b).

For the first time, the Undergraduate Teaching Faculty Survey includes data regarding adjunct faculty. This survey, which covers 2013-14 is published by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles (Flaherty, 2014c). Kevin Eagan, who is the report’s lead author and an assistant professor at UCLA, reports that there is better news for adjuncts than in the past (Flaherty, 2014c). About 40 percent of adjuncts
reported having between one and three months notice to prepare for a course (Flaherty, 2014c). However, many adjuncts still lack access to institutional resources and professional development (Flaherty, 2004c). Just 19 percent reported having access to a private office, although 53 percent said they have access to a shared office (Flaherty, 2014c). Only 40 percent have access to a personal computer, and 36 percent have an official phone number or voicemail (Flaherty, 2014c). Eagan stated that perhaps the most significant finding “was that just one in eight adjuncts have access to professional development funds” (Flaherty, 2014c). Eagan goes on to say that, “it speaks to the areas beyond basic resources that provide the opportunity for faculty to connect with the field and attend workshops to improve their teaching” (Flaherty, 2014c).

Finally, one area that is lacking for part-time faculty is data. According to Bradburn and Townsend (2014), there is a lack of current data on postsecondary faculty members. This gap is making it difficult for organizations such as the Institute for Higher Education Policy and the Department of Education to initiate the reforms they are advocating for (Bradburn & Townsend, 2014). For instance, the often cited figure that well over half of all college and university faculty are employed in a part-time or adjunct capacity is questionable. Since the data for this figure comes from a head count at each institution, we are unsure how many faculty members may be counted more than once due to the fact that they may teach at multiple colleges and universities (Bradburn & Townsend, 2014).

**Taxonomies**

Several past studies have attempted to define and categorize adjunct faculty. These studies have centered on various characteristics of part-time faculty.
**Tuckman’s taxonomy.** The first study on adjunct faculty members’ workplace characteristics and roles was conducted by Tuckman (1978), who interviewed 3,763 part-time instructors and created a taxonomy of seven, mutually exclusive categories for part-timers from the results of his study (Bogert, 2003). The following are the seven categories:

1. *Semi-retireds* (2.8% of the total sample) were former full-time academics/professionals who have reduced their teaching hours with no interest in future full-time status.
2. *Graduate students* (21.2%) were pursuing their degree and trying to gain teaching experience.
3. *Hopeful full-times* (16.6%) were those pursuing full-time teaching positions while teaching part-time.
4. *Full mooners* (27.6%) were those who held primary jobs of 35+ hours outside academe.
5. *Homeworkers* (6.4%) worked part-time due to other commitments outside of academe.
6. *Part-mooners* (13.6%) were those who held part-time teaching positions while working less than 35 hours a week.
7. *Part-unknowners* (11.8%) were those whose reason for working part-time was unknown (Tuckman, 1978).

**Biles and Tuckman’s taxonomy.** Biles and Tuckman (1986) established another taxonomy that classified part-time faculty by their employment situation. The four classifications included the following:

1. *Moonlighters* are employed in another job, and they teach just one course. They
have no fringe benefits, tenure, sabbatical, etc.

2. *Twilighters* are not employed outside the institution, but the institution chose not to employ them full-time. They have no departmental vote but receive prorated fringe benefits and longer contracts.

3. *Sunlighters* are like full-time faculty in every aspect except the amount of time they work. They receive prorated benefits, committee assignments, advisees, and tenure and sabbatical eligibility. Their probation period is a maximum of 17 semesters, and they have the opportunity to negotiate full-time status.

4. *Person on occasional part-time leave* are full-time faculty who may leave the institution or teach part-time for a short period of time. They may return to full-time status or continue in the part-time phase. This category is included but is not limited to women who have small children (Biles & Tuckman, 1986).

**Gappa and Leslie’s taxonomy.** Gappa and Leslie (1993) further defined and enhanced Tuckman’s original taxonomy. The following are the four categories defined by Gappa and Leslie for adjunct faculty working in higher education:

1. *Career enders* include those in Tuckman’s semi-retired category as well as those who are already retired and those approaching retirement. Many of these of individuals are well established in their work and careers.

2. *Specialists, experts, and professionals* are employed elsewhere, usually as their primary career. Their love of teaching is their sole reason for teaching, and they do not rely on their teaching income.

3. *Aspiring academics* are those faculty who have aspirations to be fully engaged and active faculty members in institutional governance. Additionally, their preference is
to be recognized members of the faculty with a status similar to that currently associated with tenure-track or tenured faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Also included are part-time faculty who hold terminal degrees or doctoral candidates who desire full-time teaching careers (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Additionally, this group includes part-time faculty members who have combined several part-time appointments at numerous institutions, sometimes teaching heavier loads than full-time faculty. This group is referred to as “freeway fliers” (p. 48).

4. **Freelancers** are a compilation of Tuckman’s (1978) part-unknowners, part-mooners, and home-workers categories. Part-time faculty in this category are in higher education by choice but do not aspire a career in academics (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

**Workload**

The trend of the increased use of adjunct faculty has many in higher education concerned. In 1969, 78 percent of the instructional staff comprised tenure or tenure-track professors, with adjunct faculty making up the rest, according to the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California (Flaherty, 2013c). By 2009, the figures had changed dramatically, with 33 percent of faculty in tenure track or tenured positions and 67 percent of faculty working as adjuncts (Flaherty, 2013c). Of those non-tenure-track positions, only 19 percent were full-time (Flaherty, 2013c). More recently, nearly half of all instruction is delivered by an adjunct faculty member or graduate assistant in four-year colleges (Benjamin, 2002).

Maisto, president of the New Faculty Majority, a national advocacy group for adjuncts, said not all adjunct professors want to be on the tenure track (Flaherty, 2013c). Additionally, a large increase in tenure-track hiring would leave a large number of adjuncts without work
Maisto added, equal pay for equal work, increased job security, and more support from colleges and universities to do research, participate in professional development, and meet with students are central goals for adjunct professors (Flaherty, 2013c).

Adjunct faculty workload is a growing concern for college human resources departments who are now tracking hours to ensure adjuncts don’t work enough hours to require colleges and universities to provide them with health insurance (Miller, 2015). Due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which was designed to get more people access to health insurance, this trend of a higher percentage of college instruction coming from adjunct faculty may not continue (Flaherty, 2012). The ACA has defined full-time employees as those who work 30 or more hours per week (Flaherty, 2012). The problem for colleges and universities lies in the fact that any adjunct faculty who teaches too many courses for any particular college will become eligible for coverage in that institution’s insurance plan. An adjunct faculty’s pay is based upon the number of courses they teach, not by the hour, which makes it difficult for colleges to determine how to calculate the number of hours an adjunct works for each class they teach (Dunn, 2013). The IRS only states that colleges need to use “reasonable” methods for counting hours.

Effective December 2012, Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) cut course loads for 200 adjunct faculty and 200 additional employees to avoid paying $6 million in ACA-related fees originally slated to start in January 2014 (Flaherty, 2012). The ACA has since been delayed one year until January 2015 (Flaherty, 2013f). However, CCAC decided not to wait to hear from the IRS regarding how the hours per week for their adjunct faculty would be calculated. Instead, CCAC capped their adjunct faculty workload at 10 credits per semester, down from the previous 12-credit limit (Flaherty, 2012).
Several other colleges have followed CCAC and cut the hours of their adjunct faculty. In response to these cuts, the American Association of the University Professors (AAUP) issued a statement calling on colleges not to cut hours in order to avoid the costs of health insurance (Flaherty, 2012). Maisto, president of the adjunct organization New Faculty Majority, said that by reducing teaching hours for adjunct faculty, colleges and universities are not only sidestepping the law, but also failing to invest in the faculty who are teaching the majority of the classes for these institutions (Straumsheim, 2013a). What is ironic is that a mere two weeks later, the AAUP criticized National Louis University for replacing nearly half of its full-time faculty with adjuncts (Straumsheim, 2013a).

Some adjunct unions have filed complaints over colleges setting new limits on adjunct hours. Specifically, the adjunct union at Kalamazoo Valley Community College challenged such a limit, filing a grievance stating that the new policy violated the union’s contract and that the college was obligated to negotiate over that type of change (Jaschik, 2013). This new trend of colleges cutting their adjunct teaching loads is doubly bad news for adjunct faculty. First, they will be prevented from ever becoming eligible for college-assisted health insurance, and second, due to their teaching workload reduction, their income is also being reduced. Instead of receiving most of their teaching assignments from one or two colleges, adjunct faculty will be forced to find work at additional colleges if they are to maintain their normal teaching loads. Thus, even the best performers are going to need to search for other teaching opportunities. Furthermore, colleges will need to utilize a larger pool of adjunct faculty members because they will be teaching fewer courses due to the ACA. This has happened at the University of Akron, which employs more than 1,000 adjuncts. After the institution reduced the teaching load from 12 credits to 8 credits per semester, they likely will not be able to satisfy student demand unless
they hire more adjuncts (Straumsheim, 2013c). This trend could make it very competitive amongst colleges to secure the best adjunct faculty. Therefore, the best adjuncts will need to work at several institutions, staying under each one’s credit-hour cap, and they will leave the area if they find full-time employment (Straumsheim, 2013c). According to Cross and Goldenberg (2003), even though there may be a weak academic job market, some faculty members are being recruited by multiple institutions.

**Faculty Standing**

While some adjunct faculty members are seeking full-time status, a majority of them are experienced professionals who find satisfaction in teaching but are not eagerly searching for a full-time academic position (Leslie & Gappa, 2002). However, another survey revealed that a majority of adjunct faculty members seek full-time teaching work. Of the responses, 55.4% said they prefer full-time, tenure-track appointments, and 44.6% said they do not (Jacoby, 2005).

Studies have been done to explore possible differences in the attitudes of adjunct faculty based upon where they are with respect to their career stage. One study found that adjunct faculty in the late-career stage hold significantly more positive work attitudes (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). Both professional commitment and job satisfaction were significantly higher among late-career adjunct faculty than among early- or mid-career faculty (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). In addition, late-career adjunct faculty were more likely to voluntarily engage in non-teaching “citizenship” activities for the good of the institution and were less likely to search for a position with another institution (Feldman & Turnley, 2001).

This study also captured the downside for those early in their career in accepting an adjunct position. There were two main disadvantages. First, those early in their careers who
accept an adjunct position fear it will look bad on their resume (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). Second, many will find themselves stuck in an adjunct position that is unchallenging, and as a result, lose interest in their career (Feldman & Turnley, 2001).

Current research suggests that social sciences and humanities adjunct faculty are less satisfied with their position as an adjunct than those in occupational and vocational areas (Levin, Kater, & Wagner, 2006). Colleges are in essence hiring liberal arts faculty for their labor as substitutes for full-time faculty and not for their expertise, because adjuncts in these areas are cheaper to employ than full-time faculty (Levin et al., 2006). The economic benefit to colleges for hiring this group of faculty (adjuncts) allows them to fill slots for lower-level courses for large numbers of students (Levin et al., 2006). In a few instances, adjunct faculty members have shown their displeasure for how they are treated. For example, adjunct instructors at City University of New York (CUNY) have asked not to be called “professor” on their syllabi (Flaherty, 2013d). Further, the syllabus section also details how adjuncts differ from their tenure-track colleagues: “‘CUNY’s reliance on adjuncts impairs the conditions under which courses are taught and the quality of your education,’ it reads. ‘Adjuncts are not regular members of the faculty; we are paid an hourly rate for time spent in the classroom. We are not paid to advise students, grade papers or prepare materials for lectures for class. We are paid one office hour per week for all of the classes we teach’” (Flaherty, 2013d, para. #6).

Adjunct faculty members continue to be employed in colleges for numerous reasons. The most obvious benefit is to keep overall instructional costs as low as possible; however, there are a few other reasons that colleges are using adjunct faculty in record numbers. Adjuncts provide colleges flexibility in scheduling in what would otherwise be a very rigid schedule if they only used their full-time faculty, who have strict expectations for when they
Another reason for the use of adjuncts is the fact that classes in specialized disciplines fluctuate widely from semester to semester depending on situations such as the economy (Cross & Goldenberg, 2003). In addition, many adjunct faculty members are hired for the purpose of improving teaching, as many tenured faculty focus on their research and devote less energy to their teaching (Cross & Goldenberg, 2003).

Many colleges appreciate the talent, dedication, and service that adjunct faculty bring to their institution. To reward these adjunct faculty members, institutions retain and reappoint them over extended periods of time, and some adjuncts are even offered term positions. Many adjunct faculty make a career out of teaching a series of courses at multiple institutions, just as many adjuncts teach for the love of teaching (AFT Higher Education, 2010).

**Adjunct Faculty Pay**

Adjunct faculty pay is a concern for adjunct faculty. One of the reasons that there has been a large increase in the hiring of adjunct faculty over the past decade is because of the cost savings it brings (Benjamin, 2002). The much lower pay per course leads many adjunct faculty to seek teaching opportunities at multiple colleges, which leaves them with less time to spend with students and other faculty members (Benjamin, 2002).

A reoccurring complaint by many adjunct faculty is that they are underpaid, in terms of both salary and benefits. The American Federation of Teachers surveyed adjunct faculty nationwide and found that 35 percent of adjunct faculty earn less than $2,500 per class (AFT, Higher Education, 2010). Adjunct salaries range from a low of about $400 per course to as high as $4,000 per course in some of the more prestigious colleges, and adjuncts tend to be utilized in English, modern languages, and math, where they teach more entry-level courses (Avakian, 1995). About 57 percent of the survey respondents said their salaries are falling short, and only
28 percent reported that they receive health insurance (AFT, Higher Education, 2010). The national average per course is $3,000, and a full load of four courses per semester yields an annual salary of $24,000 (Dean, 2015).

Adjunct faculty members earned a median of $2,700 per semester-long class during the 2012-13 academic year, according to an AAUP survey of thousands of part-time faculty members (McKenna, 2015). However, due to the variety of teaching loads, it may be challenging to calculate the average adjunct faculty’s annual salary. For example, National Public Radio reported in 2013 that the average yearly salary for adjuncts was between $20,000 and $25,000. A survey conducted among nearly 500 adjuncts in March 2015 by Pacific Standard found that a majority of them earn less than $20,000 a year from teaching (McKenna, 2015). These low salaries, along with the lack of other benefits such as health insurance, are paving the way for unionization of adjunct faculty across the country.

According to Flaherty (2016), even if adjunct faculty should be paid more, it may not be possible to give them the salary increases they seek. The author argues that many colleges with limited resources will be able to make the most difference by increasing adjunct pay over cutting costs and providing more scholarships to students in need (Flaherty, 2016). Central to Brennan and Magness’ (2016) main point is the fact that adjuncts are less expensive than full-time tenure track faculty and any attempts to increase the pay for adjuncts will negatively impact the institution. If a college increased wages for adjuncts, it could only afford to do so for a limited number of them and would result in the rest losing their jobs (Brennan & Magness, 2016). According to the authors’ basic calculations, there are 752,669 adjuncts who teach 1,578,336 courses annually, costing about $4.3 billion (Brennan & Magness, 2016). That calculates the per-course pay to roughly $2,725. To further their point, Brennan and Magness
came up with what they describe as a minimally acceptable job package of a $50K salary teaching six courses per year, plus benefits and office space, which add to a total cost of $72K per year. Replacing the 752,669 adjuncts and their 1,578,336 courses with 263,056 faculty holding minimally acceptable job packages would cost colleges and universities $18.9 billion (Brennan & Magness, 2016). Their paper also references the SEIU’s “aspirational proposal” to have all adjuncts make $15 thousand per course, plus benefits (Flaherty, 2016). It is estimated that would cost colleges and universities $19 billion more annually (Flaherty, 2016). Moving to fewer better-paid adjunct faculty would mean a reduction of approximately 450,000 adjuncts and would likely affect course offerings, possibly to the detriment of students (Brennan & Magness, 2016).

Over the past few years people have been turning to the *Chronicle of Higher Education’s* data website (data.chronicle.com), which stores data for adjunct pay across the country. This website, which receives data from actual adjunct faculty and college administrators, allows for anyone to search in a particular region or even at a particular college to see the going pay for adjunct faculty (Williams, Newman, & Newman, 2013). The data shows large pay disparities across colleges in different regions of the country and in different disciplines. The overall pay per course as reported was $2,987 per three-credit course, with adjuncts at 16 colleges reporting earning less than $1,000 per course (Williams et al., 2013). Adjunct faculty members at rural, smaller-sized, two-year institutions were paid the lowest: $1,808 per three-credit course (Williams et al., 2013). Rates of pay differ by state or region. For example, in Texas the reported rate is $2,805, while in California the average pay is $3,888 per course (Williams et al., 2013). There was also a difference in pay depending what degree is held by the adjunct faculty.
In one case, an adjunct faculty teaching in history reported getting paid $800 more for having a PhD instead of a master’s degree (Williams et al., 2013).

Compounding the disparity of adjunct faculty pay versus full-time faculty pay is the fact that most adjunct faculty do not receive benefits. As one adjunct noted, “being paid a salary that is significantly lower than my full-time colleagues for the same contract and associated teaching hours is degrading, demeaning, and produces a lifestyle of insecurity and uncertainty of employment” (Hollowell, 1998, p. 1).

Colleges, however, look to adjunct faculty to fill a need based upon unpredictable enrollments. Moreover, despite the fact that many argue that the use of more and more adjunct faculty may not be good for the “academy,” there is very little evidence in the literature that supports this statement. In fact, there has been almost no supporting literature that has been discovered in this review that demonstrates any significant difference in student satisfaction in classes taught by full-time versus adjunct faculty. The part-time faculty work force is largely voluntary, reasonably well-off in economic terms, and professionally qualified for the work they do (Gappa & Leslie, 1996a). Data also supports the contention that an overwhelming majority of part-time faculty (86 percent) expressed overall satisfaction with their part-time employment (Benjamin, 1998).

**Governance**

Adjunct faculty governance has become a concern for adjunct faculty. According to a report released by the AAUP, even though adjuncts now make up nearly 75 percent of the higher education teaching workforce, “they continue to be routinely excluded from department meetings, discussions on curriculum, and governance activities, leading to a sense of inequity (Basu, 2012b). The report said the word “faculty” should be used to describe all faculty (full-
and part-time, non-tenure-track, and graduate student employees) who have independent teaching or research duties (Basu, 2012b). According to Joe Berry, the principal author of the report,

Rather than change recommendations for increased adjunct participation, the report subcommittee added protective language, including the recommendation that adjunct hiring mirror tenure-track hiring processes, making it more objective and less dependent on the whims of individual faculty members, such as department chairs (Flaherty, 2013b, para. #5).

However, there was one critical caveat mentioned in the report. It stated that adjunct faculty “may be restricted” from evaluating tenure or tenure-track faculty due to the fact that the duties of adjuncts and tenured faculty are very different at some institutions (Basu, 2012b). Only about 22 percent of adjuncts reported that they were union members (Williams et al., 2013).

At Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the faculty desired to give adjuncts voting rights. However, the administration, citing concerns about adjuncts voting on tenure or promotion, took serious action and suspended the Faculty Senate (Basu, 2012b). Adjunct faculty at Catholic colleges have tried to unionize, but many Catholic colleges argue that adjunct unionization threatens a college’s religious freedom if it occurs through unwelcomed involvement by the National Labor Relations Board in their union elections and labor affairs (Schmidt, 2013).

Tenure-track faculty members often resist allowing governance by adjunct faculty because they feel the adjuncts are too dependent on administration to exercise autonomous judgment (Thompson, 2003). Frequently, adjunct faculty members do not choose to participate in governance issues even if they are allowed to do so. According to the *Chronicle of Higher
Education’s adjunct database (adjuncts.chronicle.com), 70 percent of adjuncts said they didn’t participate in faculty governance because taking on more responsibilities wasn’t worth the time (Williams et al., 2013).

One of the most widespread trends for colleges and universities in recent years is the growth of adjunct faculty unionization. “Unionizing is a straight forward path to preserving the quality of higher education and ending the exploitation of adjuncts,” said Amy Dean (2015), a fellow of the Century Foundation and a principal at ABD Ventures. Unionization has spread to campuses in Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, where efforts are underway to organize unions for both graduate assistants and adjunct faculty (Dean, 2015). The American Federation of Teachers has added more than 50,000 new members in higher education since 2000 (Hananel, 2013). According to a report by the American Association of University Professors, adjuncts now constitute 76.4 percent of all faculty across all institution types (Segran, 2014).

Many institutions have approved unions for adjunct faculty. The Board of Regents at Eastern Michigan University endorsed the first-ever contract accord with the institution’s new union for adjunct faculty in 2011 (Lederman, 2011a). Adjunct faculty members at Georgetown University voted to unionize, with nearly three-quarters of the eligible faculty members who voted supporting the union (Lederman, 2013). Adjunct faculty at Northeastern University voted in favor of joining a union, as well as adjunct faculty at College of Saint Rose, Bentley University, and Temple University (Moore, 2014; Schmidt, 2015a; Schmidt 2015b; Thomas, 2014). This follows other New England schools, including Tufts University and Leslie University, which have recently voted for unionization (Moore, 2014).
More recently, adjunct faculty at Saint Louis University have voted to unionize. Adjunct faculty from the university’s College of Education and College of Arts and Sciences voted 89 to 28 in favor of forming a union with the SEIU (Mytelka, 2016).

The Professional Staff Congress that represents the union for City University of New York (CUNY) has failed to allow the adjunct faculty at CUNY to vote against the Pathway program, which is designed to ease the transfer of students at the system’s community colleges into its four-year institutions (Jaschik, 2013c). During the voting, it was reported that adjuncts left the room furious after it was decided not to allow them to vote, calling the outcome, “surreal, grotesque, and a disgrace” (Jaschik, 2013c, para. #3). This action certainly increases the awareness of whether college faculty and administrators are giving a worthy voice to the adjunct faculty who hold a majority of the teaching assignments at most colleges (Jaschik, 2013c).

Adjuncts are also joining with students and parents to create a national advocacy group called the New Faculty Majority (Dean, 2015). According to Maria Maisto (2015), president and executive director of the New Faculty Majority, “After decades of deteriorating conditions, adjunct organizing—‘acting like a union’ in diverse legal, political and professional environments—provides the best route to meaningful improvement in the quality of higher education” (para. 5). According to Lieberwitz, professor of labor and employment law at Cornell University, with the disproportionate hike in the number of less expensive, more flexible adjunct professors, fewer tenure-track positions open (Yu, 2016). Thus, for those who do not see tenure in the near future, the security of a union becomes more appealing (Yu, 2016). As tuition has continued to rise, the share that has gone to instructional costs has either flat-lined or decreased (Miller, 2015). Many feel that unionization will strengthen an institution’s
mission. The adjunct faculty members who organized at Georgetown University, “helped it remain true to Catholic social teaching on labor,” according to (Maisto, 2015, para. 4).

However, some feel the trend of unionization of adjunct faculty might not be helpful. “This trend could hurt a college’s ability to hire adjuncts to teach particularly unique subjects,” says Mark Schneider, vice president at the American Institute for Research (The Hechinger Report, 2015, para. 23). He also stated, “There’s a whole big push getting people with field expertise to teach courses... for example, a judge or a working lawyer heading up a law course. The unionization of adjunct faculty would complicate this” (The Hechinger Report, 2015, para. 24). In addition, many of the adjuncts who teach as a side job to their regular employment would have to pay dues to a union that does not really represent their interests.

Ronald Ehrenberg, director of Cornell University’s Higher Education Research Institute, thinks that the unionization of adjunct faculty could raise tuition at those institutions that are not already well-financed (The Hechinger Report, 2015). Additionally, as revealed in this study, practices such as flexibility, feeling welcome, and office space were important to adjunct faculty members. These topics are not often being addressed in union negotiations.

Unions are trying to gain ground in representing adjunct faculty in right-to-work states, but it is certainly an uphill battle. Many still believe that union representation would help increase the pay and working conditions of adjunct faculty. Right-to-work states cannot require employees to officially join or pay union dues, and states such as Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia go a step further, prohibiting collective bargaining outright for public employees (Flaherty, 2013e). But does unionization for adjunct faculty equal better pay? The results of many initial contracts suggest the answer is yes. According to John Curtis, who is the director of research at AAUP, “median pay per course was 25 percent higher for
adjuncts where part-time faculty had union representation ($3,100 on average, compared to $2,475)… but ‘concrete benefits’ don’t stop at pay” (Flaherty, 2013c). Typically, adjunct faculty with union representation also were more likely to have better access to certain other benefits such as retirement and health insurance (Flaherty, 2013b). Although, in many cases, limited benefits may not be viewed as enough by many adjuncts, they can be a moral victory. Kaiser Gibson of Tufts University, who wants to be respected by receiving more comparable benefits, said, “We want a sense of ourselves as part of the university as well as part of a professional contingent of teachers, rather than lucky but isolated freelance adjuncts” (Flaherty, 2013e).

The SEIU has pushed the envelope by advocating a campaign to pay adjuncts $15,000 per course (Flaherty, 2015). They hope that this figure will gain national attention on how little colleges are paying their adjunct faculty (Flaherty, 2015). Tufts University’s adjunct faculty, who are now part of a union, will make at least $7,300 per course starting in September 2016. Those who have eight or more years of service will make at least $8,760 per course starting in fall 2016 (Flaherty, 2015).

Unionizing is not the only option for some adjunct faculty. In Arizona, which is a right-to-work state, 1,400 out of a total of 6,000 adjunct faculty members from the Maricopa County Community College District’s Adjunct Faculty Association, who teach more than 60 percent of courses, are provided with the opportunity to buy health insurance through this professional association (Flaherty, 2013f). In addition, in some cases current faculty unions have added provisions for their adjunct counterparts. In one example, the faculty union of the State University of New York (SUNY) has adopted a measure in which adjuncts who go on and off SUNY’s payroll can remain members of the union (Lederman, 2011b).
Regardless of one’s position on adjunct faculty governance or union representation, the fact is that a majority of teaching assignments on most college campuses are held by non-tenure and tenure-track faculty, and this majority is relatively silent. Where does the blame reside? The administrators say the increased use of adjunct faculty is based upon the economic realities that they face, and the unions’ leaders tend to question the motives of college administrators who are increasing the number of adjunct faculty just to save money on salaries and benefits (Basu, 2012a). Part-time/adjunct faculty may be currently an underclass and mostly invisible part of American colleges and universities. However, this should not be continued in order to maintain the integrity of higher education and quality of delivery for all students (Halcrow & Olson, 2008).

**Administrative Support and Supervision**

Studies have shown that students can suffer academically when they are taught by adjunct faculty, most of whom are good teachers but are not properly supported in the ways their tenured colleagues are (June, 2012). For example, many adjuncts lack office space, which means they have no private space to meet with students (June, 2012, Jaschik, 2013d). In his research, Hollowell (1998) describes adjuncts as saying, “students are not well served when we have no office in which to meet privately with them…” (p. 1). Most adjunct faculty lack basic institutional support that could improve their effectiveness in the classroom, such as orientation, professional development, or mentoring from full-time faculty. As a result, the teaching majority on most college campuses receive the least support, thus making it unnecessarily difficult for them to perform at their best (Jaschik, 2013d).

On the other hand, how can colleges justify investing large amounts of resources in and providing support for adjunct faculty who are not fully loyal to their individual institutions?
These adjuncts may take all of the benefits they gain to another institution. The dilemma becomes this: if a college invests in them, will they leave anyway, or if a college does not invest in them, will they leave as well? Additionally, if a college invests in them, will that make the difference in them wanting to stay? Have adjuncts been deprived of the support they need to remain motivated to perform at their best?

Most colleges offer some kind of basic orientation to their adjunct faculty, but at many colleges, adjuncts question the usefulness of the orientation program (June, 2013). Because most adjuncts have time conflicts with a scheduled orientation due to their other teaching obligations, even if the information is helpful, many miss out (June, 2013). Orientations that have been recognized as being useful include topics such as college information on academic policies, academic support services, career support services, adjunct faculty benefits, resources on pedagogy, online support, and how to accommodate students with disabilities (June, 2013).

Paul Umbach, an associate professor of adult and higher education at the University of North Carolina, conducted a study on part-time faculty and student success. Umbach concluded that adjunct faculty were unwilling to devote as much time to students outside the classroom as their full-time colleagues were (Schmidt, 2008). However, Umbach said, “We are not treating these part-time faculty in a way that they are feeling valued” (Schmidt, 2008, para. 6). Keith Hoeller, chairman of the adjunct faculty committee of the Washington State affiliate of the AAUP, commented that what Umbach’s study is measuring “is not really part-timers versus full-timers, but institutional support” (Schmidt, 2008, para. 33). Several colleges have made significant strides in providing support to their adjuncts. In one example, at Houston Community College’s Southwest Campus, 200 adjuncts were given iPads to help in teaching (Jaschik, 2013a). The college plans to provide another 200 additional adjunct faculty with iPads
next year to show their support in providing adjuncts with the appropriate teaching tools (Jaschik, 2013a).

According to Feldman and Turnley (2001), who studied 105 non-tenure track faculty, lack of supervision was evident. Participants of this study felt that they would benefit from more communication and access to their academic supervisors, which in turn would allow greater integration with other faculty and students (Feldman & Turnley, 2001).

**Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a term used to describe the overall happiness of an employee. Jepsen and Sheu (2003) define job satisfaction as the overall attitude of liking or disliking a job. Jones and George (2003) define job satisfaction as the collection of feelings and beliefs about a current job. An employee is motivated by job satisfaction, which links to their sense of self and commitment to the organization (Lambert & Hogan, 2009).

According to Sosik and Godshalk (2000) organizations that have the ability to reduce job-related stress for their employees have more satisfied employees, which increases productivity. Some of the most common job-related stress factors include lack of supervision, ambiguity, lack of group cohesiveness, role conflict, and lack of opportunity for promotion (Lambert & Hogan, 2009). High levels of stress factors reduce job satisfaction and can lead to career changes (Lambert & Hogan, 2009).

Hrobowski-Cullbreath (2010), who conducted research on satisfaction and work-life balance, found that responses to questions on extrinsic and intrinsic factors and job satisfaction had a significant, positive correlation with the response to questions for work-life balance. Positive values for the significant standardized coefficients suggested the overall relationship
was a positive linear, thus showing that job satisfaction significantly contributed to improved levels of work-life balance (Hrobowski-Cullbreath, 2010).

Several studies have examined job satisfaction among university faculty and have focused on different factors that lead to job satisfaction. In one study, four major areas in the literature were identified: work and career satisfaction, rewards and salary, benefits and job security, and relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators (Rosser, 2005). Wagoner (2007) studied job satisfaction for both full-time and part-time faculty using five variables: overall, job security, advancement opportunities, salary, and benefits. The results of the study found that full-time faculty were more satisfied than part-time faculty in terms of job security, advancement opportunities, salary, and benefits (Wagoner, 2007).

The major motivators for adjunct faculty, according to Leslie, Kellams, and Gunne (1982), are the following (listed in their order of importance): personal satisfaction, enhancement of one’s non-academic profession, achieving a full-time faculty position, and financial. That financial gain was listed last and personal satisfaction first only emphasizes the value of “personal satisfaction” for adjunct faculty, which is why they became an adjunct in the first place. Adjuncts receive the most satisfaction by teaching students and being able to connect the knowledge shared in the classroom to the real world (Lyons, 1999). About 57 percent of those adjunct faculty surveyed said that they teach because they like to teach and not primarily for the money (AFT, Higher Education, 2010).

Other related job satisfaction for adjunct faculty include both being able to bring job-related experiences into the classroom and learning from students who may be currently employed while attending classes. Another reward for adjuncts who love to teach is the recognition and appreciation they receive from their students (Ritter, 2007). Additionally,
adjunct faculty members are offered opportunities for experiencing job satisfaction in other ways. For example, many colleges and universities are offering in-service training workshops, which can focus on areas such as classroom technology and teaching techniques (Fagan-Wilen, Springer, Ambrosino, & White, 2006).

According to Maynard and Joseph (2008), adjuncts who were involuntary were more dissatisfied with pay, advancement, and job security than full-time or voluntary part-time faculty. In all other aspects, they were as satisfied as the other group (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). The results of their research suggest that adjunct faculty positions are not generally dissatisfying and that satisfaction levels of voluntary adjuncts were more similar to those full-time faculty than to adjuncts who were seeking full-time faculty positions (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). These results demonstrate the complexity of the different groups of faculty (both adjuncts and full-time) and their attitudes of job satisfaction.

Feldman and Turnley (2001) identified three areas that led to higher job satisfaction for adjunct faculty and three factors that led to lower job satisfaction for adjuncts. Those factors that led to higher job satisfaction were scheduling flexibility, contact with colleagues, and job autonomy and challenge. Lack of advancement opportunities, poor fringe benefits and low pay, and poor supervision were the three factors that led to low job satisfaction for adjuncts. Feldman and Turnley (2001) also found that those adjunct faculty who were in later career stages held significantly more positive attitudes, including job satisfaction and professional commitment, than those who were in early or mid-career stages.

Tomanek (2010) found that adjunct faculty were the most satisfied with the following factors: autonomy and independence of their job, equipment and facilities available for classroom instruction, departmental leadership, freedom to control course content, and course
assignments. Adjunct faculty were found to be least satisfied with benefits, lack of professional
development, prospects for career advancement, social relationships with full-time faculty, and
office/lab space (Tomanek, 2010).

Although job satisfaction in general is relatively high among adjunct faculty, there are
significant variations (AFT, Higher Education, 2010). Sixty-two percent of those surveyed said
they are very or mainly satisfied with their jobs (AFT, Higher Education, 2010). However,
satisfaction varies between those adjunct faculty who seek full-time employment and for those
who prefer to work part-time. Only 49 percent of those seeking full-time employment reported
being satisfied, while 75 percent of those happy with part-time work reported being satisfied
(AFT, Higher Education, 2010).

Satisfaction levels also vary by institution type. Sixty-eight percent of adjunct faculty
reported to be satisfied at two-year colleges, and 67 percent of adjunct faculty at private four-
year institutions reported to be satisfied (AFT, Higher Education, 2010). However, only 50
percent of adjunct faculty at four-year public institutions reported to be satisfied (AFT, Higher
Education, 2010). Those adjunct faculty members who taught fewer classes were more satisfied
than those who taught more classes. Specifically, there was a nine-point increase to 72 percent
for those adjuncts who teach only one course (AFT, Higher Education, 2010). By teaching only
one course, adjuncts may be able to better manage their work-life balance, thus increasing their
satisfaction.

Since many universities and colleges rely on a large percentage of adjunct faculty
members to teach classes, their satisfaction can be important to the success of an institution, as
it would be increasingly difficult to find adjuncts to teach if they are not satisfied with their
teaching positions (Bosley, 2004). Furthermore, studies have shown that job satisfaction
significantly contributes to improved levels of work-life balance (Hrobowski-Cullbreath, 2010). Being in touch with adjunct faculty to know what motivates them will help administration to better understand how they can better support these adjunct faculty members so they can feel appreciated and more part of the institution (Wallin, 2004)

**Work-life Balance**

Work-life balance remains important in today’s fast-paced, electronic-access world. However, not until the past decade have human resource professionals begun to realize the benefits of work-life balance for both employees and employers (Clutterbuck, 2003). Some of the benefits include reduced absenteeism, turnover, and employee satisfaction (Morgan, 2009). There have been a few employers who don’t necessarily see a need for work-life balance. The former General Electric CEO, Jack Welch, had some strong words for women trying to climb the corporate ladder. “‘There’s no such thing as work-life balance. There are work-life choices, and you make them, and they have consequences’” (Tuna & Lublin, 2009, para. 2). Welch also advised, “you may have to choose between taking time off to raise children and reaching the corner office” (Tuna & Lublin, 2009, para. 1).

It is important to define work-life balance. For the purposes of this research, a very broad definition has been adopted in order to be as inclusive as possible. Thus, the term “work-life balance” encompasses positive and negative associations related to an individual’s work and non-work roles, which would include but not be limited to family and other non-working activities such as civic or community engagement (Brough & Driscoll, 2010). According to O’Driscoll (1996), there are typically five main models used to explain the relationship between work life and outside work life. The first model is called the separate sphere model, which recognizes that there are two distinct systems dominated by women holding the family system
and men holding the work system (Chow & Berheide, 1988). There may be some connection at the broadest level, but the system is based upon system interdependence (Chow & Berheide, 1988). More recently, practice is shifting to using the interactive model of system interdependence to better understand the relationship between work and family (Chow & Berheide, 1988).

In contrast, the spillover effect model hypothesizes that one world (work or family) may have spillover effects on the other in either a positive or negative way (Guest, 2001). One issue of concern is that simultaneous presence in the two systems often will strain individuals, families, and the work environment (Chow & Berheide, 1988). This model clearly rebuts the notion that work and family are completely isolated, and it sees the leading issue of relationship as a matter of priority rather than of boundary (Chow & Berheide, 1988).

The third model is the interactive model, which recognizes the mutual interdependence between work and family and allows for reciprocal influences of work and family (Chow & Berheide, 1988). This model recognizes that the effects of a women working in the family can be positive or negative depending on family and work conditions (Adcock, Barker, & Benston, 1982).

The fourth model is the compensation model, which proposes that what may be lacking in one sphere in terms of satisfaction or demands can be made up in the other (Guest, 2001). Although an individual may not be highly compensated for their work, that work may bring other “compensation,” such as prestige outside the work environment.

The fifth model is Clark’s (2000) work/family border theory, which proposes that “family and work domains are separate psychological life arenas and the interaction between them is dependent upon the strength of the borders between them” (p. 748). Clark’s theory
argues that individuals are daily border-crossers as they move between home and work. Interesting questions are raised about the existence of borders for those who work from home (Guest, 2001). People who frequently cross between the two borders are called border-crossers, and those who can match the demands of each domain are said to have centrality (Donald & Linington, 2008). Central border-crossers typically have a high degree of influence in each of the two domains, which affords them an increased ability to negotiate the domain and border characteristics and control over their lives (Donald & Linington, 2008). Those who are only peripheral border-crossers tend to have less control over the family and work borders (Donald & Linington, 2008).

Clark (2000) developed the work/family border theory in response to the deficiencies she saw in the current theoretical research on work and family. Unlike other models, such as the compensation and spillover ones, which focus on the emotional linkages at the work/family boundary, Clark’s theory addresses how these are separate in places, time, and people that are associated with family against work and vice versa. The work/family border theory has been selected for this study due to its direct applicability to the topic of “satisfaction” for adjunct faculty. Clark (2000) defines balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict” (p. 751).

The following definitions of these models explain the relationship between work and life:

• **Compensation model.** What may be lacking in one sphere in terms of satisfaction or demands can be made up in the other (Guest, 2001).

• **Interactive model.** Mutual interdependence between work and family and allowance for reciprocal influences of work and family (Chow & Bernheide, 1988).
• **Separate sphere model.** Two distinct systems dominated by women holding the family system and men holding the work system (Chow & Bernheide, 1988).

• **Spillover effect model.** One world (work or family) may have spillover effects on the other in either a positive or negative way (Guest, 2001).

• **Work/family border theory.** “An attempt to explain this complex interaction between border-crossers and their work and family lives, to predict when conflict will occur, and give a framework for attaining balance” (Clark, 2000, p. 748).

In the past, many organizations have created flexible work policies not to serve employees and families, but to serve themselves, which over time has resulted in unfulfilled expectations and resentment by employees (Reagan, 1994). According to Lave and Wegner’s work (1991), employees become central participants when organizations help them internalize the domain’s culture, connect with those who already have central membership, and when organizations assign employees responsibilities they can personally identify with. Central participation empowers employees by giving them the tools they need to increase work/family balance (Clark, 2000).

The question for adjunct faculty is how they consider what a manageable teaching load is based upon family commitments such as children or elderly parents. Additionally, for those who are central border-crossers, do they obtain better job satisfaction than those who are not? Further, which issues affect work-life the balance the most, and how do adjunct faculty manage their work-life balance?

Some research suggests that there are three areas of focus that can benefit one’s college when it comes to adjunct faculty. First, colleges should think about how they recruit adjunct
faculty. The nature of adjunct work is very unpredictable as it is, so adjunct faculty need to have realistic expectations of future teaching assignments might be (Feldman & Turnley 2001). Second, how adjunct faculty members are supported will have a significant impact on how well they can perform in the classroom (Feldman & Turnley 2001). Clark (2000) states that “border-crossers” who are central participants (i.e., have influence) in both domains (work and family) will have greater work/family balance than those who are not central participants in both domains. Thus, applying Clark’s (2000) model, those adjunct faculty members who are central participants with college administration in regards to support issues are more likely to be able to reach a positive work-life balance. Issues such as lead time regarding teaching assignments can help adjuncts prepare well in advance for their classes. Colleges should understand how they can better support their adjunct faculty in terms of their work-life balance, as a more satisfied adjunct faculty member could have a positive effect on retention and student learning outcomes (Schibik & Harrington, 2004).

Finally, it was clear that adjunct faculty would appreciate more quality supervision and mentoring from senior colleagues (Feldman & Turnley 2001). Training supervisors to be more accommodating when family needs arose was ranked second to pay raises in a study in which working families were asked what changes would improve their quality of family life while maintaining productivity (Galinsky & Hughes, 1987). These items will not only help with job satisfaction of adjunct faculty, but also will help them improve the quality of education they deliver to students. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights on adjunct faculty members’ perceptions of work-life balance.
CHAPTER THREE: Research Design

The problems addressed in this study are the challenges adjunct faculty face in balancing their work and life roles. Adjunct faculty members are of particular interest with regard to work-life balance, as, according to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), they make up 50 percent of total faculty (McCarthy, 2014). This study seeks to provide insight into the challenges that may exist among adjunct faculty so that college administrators may better prepare to address any issues learned. Furthermore, this study seeks to elicit strategies to address and prevent potential turnover of adjunct faculty due to their struggles with work-life balance.

Research Question

The following question will guide this study: How do adjunct faculty members from a small, Catholic college in the Northeast describe their experience balancing life roles?

According to several researchers (Baron-Nixon, 2007; Eagan, 2014; Kazar, 2013; McCarthy, 2014), adjunct faculty now make up almost half of all instructional professionals in U.S. colleges and universities. However, they are not as respected or as well-paid as full-time faculty (McCarthy, 2014). Adjunct faculty members fill an unquestionable need, but poverty-level pay, no benefits, and limited association with colleagues has caused academic mistreatment of adjunct faculty (Burk, 2000). Nevertheless, adjunct faculty will continue to teach the majority of courses at most colleges in the future due to recent economic challenges such as decreasing state and federal funding (Flaherty, 2013c). There has been very little research conducted that looks at the adjunct faculty perceptions and sense-making of work-life balance. Research on work-life balance of adjunct faculty is needed to fully understand adjunct faculty’s perception on work-life balance and how it affects their careers.
Nearly every adjunct faculty member, regardless of their family status or situation, will ultimately encounter a degree of difficulty in achieving a satisfactory balance between their teaching and personal lives. Without clear boundaries between work and family, an adjunct faculty member typically is led to a situation in which work takes over, often to the detriment of other life roles. Faculty of both genders continue to be challenged with their duties at work and at home, often dealing with childcare and/or the caring for an aging parent, without any workload adjustments (Philipsen & Bostic, 2010). Jess White, an assistant professor of anthropology at Western Illinois University and a panelist at a Purdue University conference on work-life balance, said that there is an expectation in higher education: in order to become successful, you must minimize your personal life, including family (June, 2011). However, some of the unique aspects of being an adjunct faculty member, particularly the flexibility of schedules (hybrid and online courses), can provide them with the opportunity for achieving a positive work-life balance.

**Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative research approach designed to capture understanding of the lived work-life balance experiences of adjunct faculty at a small, Catholic college in the Northeastern United States. Work-life balance, as experienced by adjunct faculty and as interpreted by the researcher, is explored to make sense and attach meaning to the lived experiences of a particular group of adjunct faculty.

The methodology of this study was a qualitative research study, which honors an inductive style (Creswell, 2009). The concepts, which are based from this particular paradigm, were used to examine how people make sense of their life experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Many “naturalistic” researchers are guided by a “social construction” approach that focuses on
how people perceive and interpret their experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) add that a descriptive research study increases our understanding about what happens and seeks to understand what people’s experiences mean. Through interviews, the researcher gathered lived experiences of adjunct faculty at a small, Catholic college in the Northeast, rather than perceptions, views, beliefs, or interpretations in accordance with guidelines stated by Van Manen (2014).

A research paradigm or particular perspective usually sets the context for a researcher’s study (Ponterotto, 2005). An interpretivist perspective looks at the outside world as not simply out there, but as an ongoing story reshaped by the participants involved in a particular phenomenon (Butin, 2010). Rubin and Rubin (2010) define interpretive constructionism as “the core of understanding is learning what people make of the world around them, how people interpret what they encounter, and how they assign meaning and values to events or objects” (p. 19).

By framing a study that centers on individuals with a shared experience through the constructionist paradigm, the goal of understanding the lived experiences from the point of view of those who have lived it may be realized (Schwandt, 1994). The constructionist paradigm allows for the philosophical anchor of ontology, which concerns the nature of reality and being (Ponterotto, 2005). Through this lens, the following question can be addressed: what is the form and nature of reality, and what can be known about reality (Ponterotto, 2005)? This ontology framework links with the naturalist (interpretive constructionism) paradigm in that they both recognize that there are multiple constructed realities known as the relativist position (Ponterotto, 2005).
Research Approach

The use of a qualitative approach best fits this research because it focuses on collecting data in a natural setting cognizant to those being studied, while the data analysis attempts to demonstrate patterns and/or themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In a phenomenological study, multiple themes and concepts will be expressed through the examination of ones’ life experiences in a particular situation (Smith et al., 2009). Human experience is the main epistemological basis for qualitative research (Van Manen, 2014). Phenomenological reflection is retrospective and not introspective, as a person cannot reflect on a lived experience while living through the experience (Van Manen, 2014). Instead, lived experience is always retrospective, which is a reflection on an experience that has already passed or been lived through (Van Manen, 2014).

According to Smith et al. (2009), the basis of qualitative research is focused on the quality and fiber of the experiences of participants and explains events that they have experienced. More specifically, researchers who are performing qualitative research are interested in studying participants in their own environments. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) delineate five distinct features of qualitative research, including: naturalistic, descriptive data, concern with process, inductive, and meaning. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), the first feature, “naturalistic,” refers to the importance of the actual setting of the research and the researcher’s involvement as a collector of data within that context. Second, “descriptive data” is data in the form of words or pictures, and it is collected rather than data such as numbers. Third, “concern with process” refers to the fact that qualitative researchers are most concerned with the process and not with the outcomes or products. Fourth, “inductive” refers to how qualitative researchers analyze data, looking at each particular data separately and then grouping the like data together to develop emerging themes rather than collecting data to prove or...
disprove a hypothesis. Fifth and finally, “meaning” refers to how the researcher tries to understand how each person makes sense of their life experiences.

**Phenomenology**

The first major theoretical underpinning of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) comes from Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre, who are leading philosophers who have been able to interpret phenomenology and those areas most relevant to IPA researchers (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology is an overall term that encompasses both a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches (Finlay, 2008). Phenomenology is a discipline that studies structures of experience or consciousness (Smith, 2013). Phenomenology is the study of “phenomena,” which is the appearance of things as they appear in our experience from the subjective or first person point of view (Smith, 2013).

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach in which researchers attempt to understand the meaning of experiences of people in particular situations (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology utilizes an intersubjective approach, which refers to the relational and shared nature of our engagement in the world (Smith et al., 2009). There are two phases that comprise a phenomenological inquiry. First is the descriptive or transcendental phase, and second is the hermeneutic or existential phase (Smith et al., 2009). Simply, phenomenology studies the social organization of various types of experiences ranging from emotion, imagination, memory, thought, and perception (Smith, 2013).

A German philosopher, Edmund Husserl is generally considered to have created the field of phenomenological inquiry; he described phenomenology inquiry as an experience involving the careful examination of human experience that should be examined in the way that it occurs and in its own terms (Smith et al., 2009). The structures of these forms of experience
typically involve what Husserl called “intentionality,” which is the focus of this experience toward the property of consciousness of or about something (Smith, 2013). Husserl’s understanding of phenomenology grew out of his attempt to “understand the nature of mathematical and logical truths, and from his more general concern with a critique of reason whereby all the key concepts required for knowledge be rigorously scrutinized as to their essential meanings, their validity, and justification” (Moran, 2000, p. 10). Husserl reasoned that an experience would transcend the particular circumstances of their appearance and might then “illuminate a given experience” for others (Smith et al., 2009). These make up meaning or content of a certain experience and are distinct from the things they mean or represent (Smith, 2013).

Phenomenology evolved through two students of Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who further defined it. Heidegger advanced Husserl’s thinking by viewing phenomenology in a way that moves from the transcendental project and toward the hermeneutic and existential emphases (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger’s central interest is concerned with the conceptual basis of existence from a worldly “person-in-context” and the phenomenology concept of intersubjectivity, which refers to the shared, relational, and overlapping nature of our engagement in the world (Smith et al., 2009). In Being and Time, Heidegger’s subject is dasein, which means literally “there-being” (Smith et al., 2009). It cannot be meaningfully detached from the pre-existing world of people, objects, language, and culture and implies and necessitates a degree of reflective awareness (Smith et al., 2009). Consequently, interpretation of people’s meaning-making in the context of dasein is a central component of Heidegger’s definition of phenomenological inquiry.
Merleau-Ponty advanced phenomenology in a different direction by looking at the embodied nature of our relationship to the world, which led him to see primacy of our own individual, situated perspective (Smith et al., 2009). As a result, Merleau-Ponty focuses on our relationship to the world, as body-subjects, which shapes the fundamental character of our knowing about the world we live in (Smith et al., 2009).

Classical phenomenologists practiced three general methods. First, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty spoke of pure descriptions of lived experiences, as one would find in their own past experience (Smith, 2013). Second, one would interpret an experience by relating it to relevant features of context, as did Heidegger and his followers who spoke of hermeneutics, which is the art of interpretation of social and linguistic context (Smith, 2013). Finally, one can analyze the form of a type of experience (Smith, 2013). However, all the classical phenomenologists employed an analysis of an experience, factoring out notable features for further refinement (Smith, 2013). As stated by Wertz (2005), “phenomenology is a low-hovering, in-dwelling, meditative philosophy that glories in the concreteness of person-world relations and accords lived experience, with all its indeterminacy and ambiguity, primacy over the known” (p. 175).

The second major theoretical body of writing regarding IPA comes from hermeneutics, which is a theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). The three most influential hermeneutic theorists are Schleiermacher, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Schleiermacher was one of the first philosophers to write about hermeneutics in a form that involved grammatical and psychological interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Schleiermacher suggests that “there is something unique about the techniques and intentions of a given writer, which will impress a very particular form of meaning upon the text which they produce” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 22).
Thus, this meaning is left the interpretations of the reader as well as the context in which it was originally written (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger is known for “dissecting the various meanings which can appertain to appearance, in order to outline the way he interprets the ‘appearance’ of our being” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 24). Appearance has a dual meaning for Heidegger; first the visible meaning, and second the concealed or hidden meanings (Smith et al., 2009). Gadamer has focused his work with the analysis of literary and historical texts and “emphasizes the importance of history and its effects of tradition on the interpretive process” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 25). Perhaps the most important concept in hermeneutic theory is the hermeneutic circle, which is based upon the relationship between the part and the whole at a series of levels (Smith et al., 2009). In other words, to understand a particular part, you must look to the whole and vice versa, and the meaning of a word may only have full meaning when seen in a sentence (Smith et al., 2009).

The third major influence upon IPA is idiography, which is focused on the particular (Smith et al., 2009). Idiography operates on two levels. First, there is a focus on the particular in the sense of “detail,” which in this case goes to the depth of analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Secondly, idiography is focused on the understanding of how particular experiential phenomena such as a relationship or event have been understood from the perspective of individuals in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, IPA can utilize small, purposively selective and carefully situated samples (Smith et al., 2009).

Interpretive phenomenological analysis is a specific method of phenomenological inquiry studies that details analyses of lived experiences and can be conducted on a relatively small sample size with the goal of finding a reasonably homogeneous sample (Smith et al., 2009). An IPA is centered on pursuing an idiographic commitment, viewing participants in
their own particular context, and exploring personal perspectives (Smith et al., 2009). Since this study looks to understand the phenomenon of experiences of a particular group of adjunct faculty at a small, Catholic college, an IPA approach was selected.

Participants

For IPA studies, samples are selected purposively rather than randomly, because a specific sample of potential research participants can offer insight into a unique experience (Smith et al., 2009). Purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases that can be studied in depth (Patton, 1990). Patton (1990) identifies and describes 16 types of purposeful sampling. They include extreme or deviant case sampling, typical case sampling, maximum variation sampling, snowball sampling, confirming or disconfirming case sampling, politically important case sampling, convenience sampling, etc. This study used a criterion-based sampling protocol to identify and recruit participants. The following criteria were used to recruit and purposefully select participants:

1. currently adjunct faculty who have taught for at least a year at the college;
2. have taught on-ground or hybrid classes, not only online classes;
3. employed in another job, teach only one or two courses at the college, and receive no fringe benefits, tenure, etc. from the college;
4. are willing to participate in one, with the possibility of a second, freely engaging interview at a time and location that is convenient for them;
5. agree to the use of audio recording of the interview(s); and
6. agree to the publication of the data from this study with all personal information being held confidential, and a copy of the study made available for their review after the completion of the study.
Maximum variation was utilized to select participants for this study. This strategy aimed at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation (Patton, 1990). For small samples, a great deal of heterogeneity can be a problem because individual cases are so different from each other (Patton, 1990). The maximum variation sampling strategy turns that apparent weakness into a strength by applying the following logic: that any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a program (Patton, 1990).

Eight participants were chosen, which falls within the adequate sample size for an IPA research study (Smith et al., 2009). Participants were current adjunct faculty members who teach at a small, Catholic college in the Northeast. The factors that were varied for this study were as follows:

1. Both men and women were interviewed.
2. Those who teach on-ground and those who teach hybrid courses.
3. Those who have taught for many years and those who have taught for only a few years.

This allowed the participants to have an understanding and specific experiences in relation to the college environment upon which they will be reflecting.

**Recruitment and Access**

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received for this study from Northeastern University (see Appendix F, the “Application for IRB Approval”), and a “Request for Site Access” (Appendix A) was sent to the small Catholic college to gain access to its adjunct faculty. Then a “Call for Participation” (Appendix B) was distributed to adjunct faculty
at the small Catholic college in the Northeast. The call for participation gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, participant criteria, and contact information. The call for participation (Appendix B) also included a statement reading, “selection for the study is not guaranteed, but will be determined during a brief, 10-minute intake call.”

During the “intake call,” the researcher briefly explained the scope of the research project and asked criteria-based questions. The intake call was intentionally kept brief, and very few personal details and experiences were asked. After determining if the individual would be an adequate candidate, the researcher stated whether or not the individual qualified for the study. The researcher then explained the potential participant’s role if proceeding further and asked if the participant would like to schedule a time for the formal, 60-minute interview to be held on the college’s campus.

In an IPA, informed consent must be gained for two main reasons. First, the interviewer needs to explain to the participants what to expect from the interview process and, second, the likely outcomes of the data analysis, including verbatim statements in the final research document (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher shared with the participant the types of topics that would be covered and the interview schedule prior to consent, as stated as guidelines by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). Finally, again as stated as guidelines by Smith et al., the researcher reviewed the consent form prior to the 60-90-minute interview and allowed the participant to withdraw from the study at any time and up to one month after the interview.

Prior to the actual interviews, one “pilot” interview with one adjunct faculty who was not part of the study took place to assess the effectiveness of the adjunct faculty questionnaire and conversation guide. Appropriate modifications, such as additional probing questions, were made to the interview guide to ensure clarity and logical sequence of the questions.
Individuals who were asked to set up formal interview times towards the end of the intake call were also informed they would be sent an “Informed Consent to Participate in Research” form (Appendix C) via email. They were asked to read over and sign the form, then either fax, email (scan as a PDF), or mail it back or bring it to the researcher on the day of the first interview.

During the interview, the purpose of the study was reviewed, and the “Informed Consent to Participate in Research” form (Appendix C) was collected. Additionally, this allowed a chance to build a comfortable relationship with the participant. The participant was thanked for complying with the request to sign the Informed Consent to Participate in Research form, and the information on the form was briefly restated.

At the beginning of both the intake call and formal interview, time was spent learning about the professional background of the researcher (current position as a college administrator, specifically as an associate vice president). During the formal interview, the Informed Consent to Participate in Research form (Appendix C) was reviewed with the participant.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

Before collecting any data, a detailed Doctoral Thesis Proposal (DTP) and an “application for approval for use of human participation in research” was submitted to Northeastern University’s and the college’s IRB. The purpose of IRB review is to assure that appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of humans participating as subjects in the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The IRB process requires assessing the potential risk, such as psychological, physical, social, or legal harm (Creswell, 2009). The research process of interviewing human subjects did not take place until after the approval process had been fully completed.
An introduction statement that states the purpose of the research, expressing that participation is strictly voluntary and measures were taken to ensure confidentiality, was shared with participants at the beginning of each human subject interview. In many cases, potential interviewees want no proof to exist that they were the ones who have provided information (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Individuals will be reminded that at any time they may withdraw from the research interview. In addition, participants were also asked to sign a “consent to participate in research” (Appendix C), which indicated their agreement to participate in this study. Every effort possible was made to ensure confidentiality. At no time were any names associated with any interview information. Any information that could be used to identify a participant was altered to protect their identity. The recording of the interview was not labeled with a participant’s name, but rather with a pseudonym. Further, all of the study-related files were encrypted and password protected. Only the researcher and principal investigator on the research project had access to identifying information.

Data Collection

Data from eight participants through in-depth, open-ended, face-to-face interviews was collected for this IPA study, a number suggested by Smith et al. (2009). One semi-structured interview, with the option of a second semi-structured interview for each of the participants, was used in this study. In-depth interviews are recommended as one of the best ways of accessing personal experiences of participants in a phenomenological study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Smith et al., 2009). Interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry and helps to understand the lived experiences of other people (Seidman, 2013). It is through interviews that the researcher utilized the naturalist perspective, which allows the interviewees’ experiences to be expressed through words to create a better understanding of the complexity of examining situations in
which many factors interact (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This form of data collection is informed by an interview question in which the “conversation” between the interviewer and interviewee allows the interviewee to tell in their own words their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). In this scenario, the interviewer listens, and the interviewee talks. In this semi-structured interview method, the researcher has a specific topic to learn about in which the researcher has prepared a limited number of open-ended questions to solicit a participant’s meaning of experiences they have had (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In preparing for these types of interviews, “questions should be prepared so that they are open and expansive with the participant encouraged to talk at length” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 59). This inductive approach allows participants to talk at length about their experiences in the hopes that various themes will emerge (Smith et al., 2009).

Primary interview questions in IPA are “directed towards phenomenological situations in which they focus upon people’s understandings of their experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 58). These questions should be “open-ended” and not “closed” questions, and they should be exploratory not explanatory (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) suggest that these questions reflect process rather than outcome and that they focus on meaning about “people’s understandings, experiences and sense-making activities between them” (p. 59).

A responsive interviewing method that emphasizes the importance of building a relation of trust with the participants being interviewed was incorporated (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), early in the interview one should briefly inform the participant of the purpose of the study and make assurances that all of what is said will be strictly confidential. This method focuses on non-threatening questions using a friendly, gentle tone during the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Through these interviews, the
phenomenological approach will allow the meaning of the adjunct faculty members’ experiences in the context of their lives to be explored (Seidman, 2013).

For this study, the interviews were held face-to-face in a quiet and private location on the college campus, thus maintaining confidentiality. The interviews were roughly 60-90 minutes long, and the purpose of the study was explained, the signed Consent to Participate in Research form (Appendix C) was reviewed with the participant, then the researcher asked the questions (see Appendix D). A second interview was an option if the researcher felt it would be necessary to further capture the experiences of the participants. This option was not used in this study. At the end of the interview, participants were asked permission to be contacted for any follow-up questions if necessary. If the participant declined to be contacted for any follow-up questions, their responses were still included in this study.

The interviews were audio-recorded by a digital recorder. Both an iPhone and iPad were used as back-up to ensure that the audio was successfully captured. Audio memos have no limit to audio length, and all recordings are digital. The recordings were saved to a computer as a .wav or .mp4 file.

In addition to interviews, it can sometimes be useful to collect “additional data to assist contextualize the interview material” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 73). Additional data (qualitative documents) such as minutes of meetings, official college reports, etc. could have been collected to further explore and make better sense of the topic at hand, as suggested by Creswell (2009) and Smith et al. (2009). Any additional data sources may be useful for the future contextualization and development of needed data analysis (Smith et al., 2009).
Data Storage

An electronic recording of each interview was downloaded and saved to an online (iCloud) storage account. To ensure confidentiality and security, all files were encrypted and password protected, keeping them secure from others. In addition, participants’ names were not used. Instead, pseudonyms were used in place of any identifying information.

The recordings from the interviews were converted to paper transcripts by utilizing a professional transcript company. This transcript company was required to sign a Transcript Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study (see Appendix E), which ensured the confidentiality of the participants. This confidentiality statement requires that the recordings be deleted within two weeks of completing the transcriptions.

Transcripts (Microsoft Word documents) were saved in the same manner as the electronic recordings. Only the researcher and the principal investigator have access to the original files and actual names. The data will be used for a doctoral thesis project, as well as any future journal articles, presentations, or additional research. In all cases, strict confidentiality will be preserved for all participants. After the doctoral thesis project has been completed, any hard-copy materials containing participant information will be destroyed, and all electronic data will be permanently deleted from the online (iCloud) storage account. The signed Consent to Participate forms (Appendix C), along with all remaining electronic data stored on the USB flash drive and external hard drive, will remain untouched and kept locked in a safe. Data, once analyzed needs to be kept for a reasonable period of time. Sieber (1998) recommends 5-10 years, then discarding the data. All remaining data and documents will be destroyed five years following the completion of the study.
Data Analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, they were coded and analyzed on hard-copy printouts. There is value in manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing down codes that give a researcher more control over ownership of the work (Saldana, 2009). It is not always helpful or easy to gain a true literal perspective on a computer screen (Saldana, 2009). The analysis of data in an IPA can be characterized by moving from the particular to the shared and from the descriptive to the interpretive, as well as principles that entail understanding the participant’s point of view (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). In an IPA study, there is a commitment to the examination of how people make sense of their life experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al’s (2009) six-step process was used to analyze the data collected in this study. The steps behind this process are:

1. Reading and re-reading
2. Initial noting
3. Developing emergent themes
4. Searching for connections across emergent themes
5. Moving to the next case
6. Looking for patterns across cases

**Step 1: Reading and re-reading.** The analysis process begins with reading and re-reading the data from one of the interview transcripts. Additionally, the audio-recording of the transcript is listened to in order to gain a better understanding of the tone of the participant, which will help build a more complete analysis (Smith et al., 2009). To avoid summarizing the data too quickly, this step is about slowing down one’s tendency to build a quick synopsis (Smith et al., 2009). Repeat reading allows for an increased understanding of the narratives.
**Step 2: Initial noting.** During this step, the process begins with writing notes on the transcript, documenting comments first. This first step focuses on describing the context/subject of what the participant has said (Smith et al., 2009). Next, the transcript is re-read, and linguistic comments are made, which focuses on exploring the language, such as repetition, tone, and any metaphors used by the participants (Smith et al., 2009). Finally, the transcript is re-read, and conceptual comments are made. During this stage, the analysis is more interpretive, and it deals with the transcript at conceptual level, which usually involves a focus on the participant’s understanding of the subject they are discussing (Smith et al., 2009). One technique, called deconstruction, may be helpful as it provides an opportunity to employ strategies of de-contextualization to bring the participant’s words and their meaning into better focus (Smith et al., 2009).

**Step 3: Developing emergent themes.** With the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual commenting complete, a larger set of data is left. This larger set of data is the start of the next stage of the analysis, which is emerging themes (Smith et al., 2009). Without losing the complexity of the data, the volume of detail of the data is reduced while keeping the themes in the order they occurred. This requires shifting away from the transcripts and instead working with the initial notes (Smith et al., 2009). These notes are then be turned into concise phrases that contain enough abstraction to be a conceptual theme, which brings together a scope of understanding of not only the participant, but also that of the researcher (Smith et al., 2009).

**Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes.** During this step of the analysis, a map or charting of the themes and how they fit together is created. The goal for the researcher during this step of analysis is to list, review, and cluster themes that are related. Once the themes are put into groups, super-ordinate themes are identified by utilizing several
techniques such as abstraction and subsumption (Smith et al., 2009). Other techniques defined by Smith et al. (2009) include polarization, contextualization, enumeration, and function; they are utilized to build a table that identifies the page/line and the themes that the researcher notes are located for future reference.

**Step 5: Moving to the next case.** This step repeats the process of the remaining transcripts once the first transcript has been completed. All remaining transcripts are treated independent of any previous transcripts by bracketing the ideas that emerge from the analysis while working on the next (Smith et al., 2009). According to Smith et al. (2009), this process assures that the study follows with IPA’s idiographic commitment.

**Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases.** The final step in the analysis involves looking for patterns across all of the transcripts. All of the sub-ordinate themes are reviewed looking for connections across all of the data analyzed. These themes or sub-ordinate themes that are particular to an individual transcript also represent instances of higher-order concepts that multiple cases share (Smith et al., 2009). In the conclusion of this step, themes and sub-ordinate themes for the group to illustrate the theme for each participant are built.

**Trustworthiness**

The following measures will be taken to ensure the trustworthiness and uphold the integrity of the research and its findings. Approaches to enhance trustworthiness/validity include member checking, clarifying the bias of the researcher, rich, thick description, and fieldnotes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2009).

**Member checking.** Member checking is mainly used in qualitative inquiry methodology and is characterized as a quality control procedure by which a researcher attempts to improve the accuracy, validity, and credibility of the content of a recorded interview during a
research interview (Doyle, 2007). In this study, the subjects being interviewed were given the chance to review the transcripts, initial codes, and interpretations from their interviews. The interview transcript and coding were provided to each interviewee via email, allowing them to provide the researcher with any feedback regarding the validity of the content of the interview. Participants were allowed to request that the researcher make modifications as they saw fit. This process enhances the trustworthiness of this study.

**Clarifying the bias of the researcher.** The background of the student researcher (academic administrator) was stated from the start of the research, and an attempt to suspend any preconceptions when it comes to designing and conducting the research interviews was made (Smith et al., 2009). Researchers, especially those performing qualitative research, must learn how to become aware of and deal with bias (Stake, 2010). Bias is the lack of objectivity and is by definition a potential predisposition to make errors (Sciven, 1998). Interviewers need to be sensitive to their own emotions as related to any preconceptions. Interviewees are likely to sense a researcher’s feelings regarding a topic and may be silenced during a research interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Rich, thick description was used to communicate the findings of the results. This type of description was used to help provide numerous perspectives about a particular theme, making the results become more realistic and thus, richer (Creswell, 2009).

**Fieldnotes.** Qualitative researchers may have preconceived assumptions regarding the subjects they are researching. However, by utilizing fieldnotes, the researcher is able to reveal that many of their initial assumptions may become weak as they confront the empirical evidence they encounter in the field (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).
Limitations

As with any qualitative study, there are limitations to both the researcher’s sampling method and the researcher’s sample size. The first limitation of this study is that it involved only a small number of participants. With only eight people, it is not possible to generalize the findings. Additionally, this research study is limited to one small, Catholic college located in the Northeastern United States. The results of this study may not be transferable to other institutions located in different states.

In addition, my particular perspective has certainly influenced my thinking about these issues regarding adjunct faculty. During this research project, the researcher will do his best to recognize and be forthcoming about his personal opinions regarding adjunct faculty. By following rigorous data analysis techniques, the researcher has strived to eliminate as much bias as possible.

The research design in this study will employ a qualitative approach in order to describe the adjunct faculty’s experiences related to work-life balance. The data collection methods (i.e., the four phenomenological themes, interview approach, and document analyses) will provide an opportunity for the researcher to collect almost any issues involving the experiences of those being interviewed (Seidman, 2013).
CHAPTER FOUR: Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate how adjunct faculty members from a small, Catholic college in the Northeastern United States describe their experience balancing life roles. Eight adjunct faculty members were selected using a purposeful sampling procedure in order to gain the perceptions of adjunct faculty. Clark’s work/family border theory (2000) was utilized as the theoretical framework for this study. All the interviews took place in private locations that were convenient for the participants. All interviews were recorded and then professionally transcribed. The research question guiding this study was, “How do adjunct faculty members from a small, Catholic college in the Northeast describe their experience balancing life roles?”

This chapter is organized into three main sections: an introduction, participant profiles, and a discussion of the super- and subordinate themes based upon the research findings. The focus of the research findings is based from the point of view of the participant’s voice with quotations from the participants being used to clarify their perceptions.

Participant Profiles

For this study, eight adjunct faculty members were purposely chosen. This sample represented seven women and one man. At no time were real names used to identify any participants. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.
Table 1

Participants in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Beth</th>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Claire</th>
<th>Kate</th>
<th>Meg</th>
<th>Wendy</th>
<th>Victor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male or female</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M or F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>14+</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree</td>
<td>EdD</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obtained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach at other</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of adjunct</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Type of adjunct terms: 1 = hopeful full-time, i.e., those pursuing full-time teaching positions while teaching part-time; 2 = full mooners, i.e., those who held primary jobs of 35+ hours outside academe.

Amy. Amy recently earned her EdD and has been an adjunct faculty member at Catholic College for less than five years. She is married and has young children, which makes her role as an adjunct faculty member challenging. She holds a full-time administration position at another college.

Beth. Beth is married and has two children. She recently finished her master’s degree and has been teaching at Catholic College just over five years. She teaches as an adjunct at several institutions.

Carol. Carol is an empty-nester, single parent who has taught as an adjunct at Catholic College for nearly 15 years. She also teaches at several nearby institutions.

Claire. Claire is married and has one child. She has been teaching as an adjunct at Catholic College for more than five years and would like to land a permanent teaching position at Catholic College if the opportunity arises.
Kate. Kate is married and an empty nester. She cares for her elderly parents, who live more than 500 miles away. She has a PhD and has been teaching as an adjunct at Catholic College for only two years. She teaches at other institutions and landed the teaching opportunity at Catholic College through a friend.

Meg. Meg is married and has two children. She moved to the Northeast from California and has taught at Catholic College for three years. She landed her teaching opportunity at Catholic College through two colleagues who had already taught there. She teaches at several other institutions.

Wendy. Wendy is married and has two children. She has been teaching at Catholic College for the past two years. She also works at another institution, but she would like to secure a full-time teaching position at Catholic College if one becomes available.

Victor. Victor is married and has two children. He has been an adjunct faculty for the past 20 years, but he has only taught at Catholic College for the past five years. He has a full-time teaching position at a local high school.

Super- and Subordinate Themes

The interview protocol and questions are part of Appendix D. The analysis of the interview data yielded five super-ordinate themes and eleven corresponding sub-themes. The super-ordinate themes and their corresponding sub-themes are as follows:

1. Balance through flexibility
   1.1. Flexible schedule
   1.2. Comfort through commingling
   1.3. Maintaining organization)
2. Conflict through lack of control
   2.1. Constrained by overlap
   2.2. Feeling guilty
   2.3. Blurred boundaries by lack of dedicated space
   2.4. Conflict from inconsistency
3. Teaching feeds passion
4. Appreciation from support
   4.1. Appreciation from family support
   4.2. Support by the college for unique circumstances
5. Conflict from college interaction
   5.1. Welcomed but not connected
   5.2. Lack of voice

Super-ordinate themes and their corresponding themes were identified in at least five of the eight participants’ interview data. Table 2 provides a listing of the super-ordinate themes and their corresponding subordinate themes, which emerged through the analysis process, as well as the recurrence of each sub-theme across participants. A “yes” indicates that a topic was mentioned by a particular participant. A “no” only means that a certain topic was not mentioned and not that a participant had a negative response to a certain topic.
Table 2

*Identification of Recurring Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super-ordinate themes</th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Beth</th>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Claire</th>
<th>Kate</th>
<th>Meg</th>
<th>Wendy</th>
<th>Victor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Balance through flexibility</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Flexible schedule</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Comfort through commingling</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Maintaining organization</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conflict through lack of control</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Constrained by overlap</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Feeling guilty</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Blurred boundaries by lack of dedicated space</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Conflict from inconsistency</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teaching feeds passion</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Appreciation from support</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Appreciation from family support</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Support by the college for unique circumstances</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Conflict from college interaction</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Welcomed but not connected</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Lack of voice</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Balance through Flexibility**

The first super-ordinate theme that emerged in this study captures the participants’ experiences of how being an adjunct faculty member has provided them with flexibility and freedom in terms of their schedules. The researcher found three specific areas of convergence...
across participants related to balance through flexibility. First, participants were very pleased that teaching as an adjunct faculty member has created flexibility in their schedules. Second, participants shared their ability to commingle their work and family. They shared that this was a great help towards work-life balance. Finally, the topic of maintaining organization consistently was mentioned by several of the participants. Their ability to stay organized by using time management techniques helped them balance both work and family. Thus, the three themes discussed here are flexible schedule, comfort through commingling, and maintaining organization.

**Flexible schedule.** Nearly all of the participants shared how being an adjunct faculty member allows them the opportunity to have a flexible schedule and maintain a positive work-life balance. Kate shared how being an adjunct faculty member helps her to stay balanced so she can spend time with family: “I mean, the reason I do it, really, is because it helps me to be able to achieve that work-life balance in a way that I wouldn’t be able to with a full-time job. So I could do a full-time job, but I wouldn’t have the same flexibility.” She concluded, “So it does allow that, and that’s an advantage.”

Victor’s words illustrated his appreciativeness of what he does, and he stated that although he may miss some family time, he doesn’t see it as a complete negative. He said, if I have to give up, like, a Tuesday night to go to class, I do miss out on games or other things my kids are involved in. I mean I don’t really complain a whole lot about my situation. In fact, I kind of think I’m fairly lucky that I’m able to hold down these positions and the schools want me to teach for them. I think that’s a great thing. So you have to kind of decide for yourself how much is too much, and I feel very strongly that here I am balancing all of that, which a lot of people would
say, “Oh my gosh, how do you do that?” But it works for me, and I don’t that it’s too much at this point, and I find it a nice balance, actually.

Similarly, Carol enjoys the flexibility that being an adjunct faculty has for her family life:

So I guess the idea of being adjunct makes it possible to have flexibility. So I think that’s what I like about it, is the balance that comes from being able to do that. Being an adjunct allows you to do all those different things.

Carol also stated, “There is some flexibility [from being an adjunct] that makes watching who wants to be a millionaire at 12:30 a.m. in any given week day, a possibility.”

Claire shared similar experiences regarding her flexibility. She stated, “I can be home to put my daughter on the bus and be home to take her off the bus.” She also said, “Instead of trying to carve out time on the weekends to go grocery shopping, I can do it during the middle of a weekday when nobody is there.” Kate has similar experiences. She stated, “One of the reasons I like doing it [adjunct teaching] is because I can fit everything.”

**Comfort through commingling.** Almost all of the participants shared experiences of commingling work and family, which further enhanced their ability to be flexible. Meg’s experiences are similar to the others. She stated,

They commingle. That probably is my main role and my most important one other than family. And so I tend to, I don’t ever let go of it. I’m working on myself. So, I would love to believe that there are more boundaries. If you talk to my husband he will be like, “No, she is there fully.”

Wendy also shared that she commingles the two. She stated:
I would say they commingle. So just in terms of I think preparation for classes, that may have been time I would have had with my family previously. So at this stage of the game, especially where it is new material, a lot of this material has been new for me. At this stage of the game, that preparation I think overlaps time that would have been family time. So work and family time, I would say, was commingled. Wendy experienced a time when things were commingled, and she had to choose one over the other. She stated, “there was a day a week ago that I was supposed to do something with one of my children, and I just had to cancel that. I just couldn’t do it, because I had some responsibilities for preparation.”

For others, such as Claire, work and family blurred during extremely busy periods or when a serious family event takes place. She stated:

Well, sometimes it gets commingled when I’m thinking about students or especially during the crunch time. If I have students who are having difficulties, constantly thinking about that and they probably should not, because then it gets all mixed up with other stuff that I’m trying to get accomplish.

Kate’s response, however, diverges from most of the other participants. She stated, “They’re pretty separate. Yeah they’re pretty separate. I can’t think of any way in which they wouldn’t be.”

Victor’s words illustrated that he does not keep work and family separate. He noted: I don’t keep them separate, because looking holistically from my standpoint, it’s just a part of my life, what I do. So it’s all one to me in the sense that it’s a part of what I do, and I don’t have a big disconnect from what I teach during the day to evening, because I
teach the same things only in different capacity. So it’s all one in that way and the way that I see it.

**Maintaining organization.** Several participants mentioned that they utilized time management techniques to avoid the struggles of work-life balance. By staying organized and utilizing calendars, many of the participants found they had more free time to spend with their family. Participants shared their experiences of how managing their time well helped them stay more organized and create more flexibility to spend time with their families.

The one participant who did not share any struggles to manage work-life balance related his experience with focusing on time management. Victor, who has been an adjunct for 20 years, shared that staying focused and organized alleviated his work-life balance struggles. He recounted experiences regarding family support, stating that he has support from his wife and two children, who may assist him in staying so organized. Victor stated the following regarding his efforts to manage his time effectively:

Well, I think to do it well, and it’s almost been 20 years of doing it. I think more than anything it’s being very, very aware of your time management. So staying on top of time management is really important, and I literally have a calendar in my computer in which everything that I know I’m assigning and also going to have a grade or assess when they come in or how they come in and then I set up a yellow pad off of that, just of daily work and also weekly work that I have to keep up with. I don’t waste my time usually, and knowing exactly what’s going on with other things in my life like baseball games and soccer games by writing all these things in my calendar. I can’t think of a time where it was really challenging simply because I
set my own hours. I’m in the luxury in all of my positions to be able to as long as
I’m organized and I manage my time.

Beth also mentioned time management as one of the outcomes of successfully handling
her role as an adjunct faculty. She stated:

I want to say that it has made me quite a bit more organized in my life just because I
don’t have office hours where I can go to work, you know, I am not given particular
time to grade or to do the exterior work that I have to do outside of just the day I
 teach, so I have to do some pretty stringent planning in the course of the week of
when I can fit in.

Amy was the third and final participant who mentioned how focusing on time management has
assisted her in managing her work/family balance. She stated:

I think in my experience I became a new mom while I became a faculty member or
an adjunct faculty member. So I was sort of walking through two transitions if you
will, like being a new adjunct faculty and being a new mother, and that was figuring
out a lot of things at the same time, and I managed my time well, I think, when we
were busy we try to maximize our time and really work efficiently, and I definitely
did that, and I had to do that very quickly, like just figure things out really quickly
and how it was going to maximize my time.

**Conflict through Lack of Control**

The second super-ordinate theme that emerged in this study captures the participants’
struggles as they attempt to balance their work-life roles. The researcher found three specific
areas of convergence related to conflict through lack of control across participants. First,
participants were very frustrated with how challenging it is to balance both work as an adjunct
faculty member and their family time. Second, participants described their experiences of feeling guilty for having to miss family time. Third, participants shared their persistent struggles to be without available physical space by the college; they shared that this would be a great help towards work-life balance. Finally, conflict from inconsistency was mentioned by several of the participants. They desired more consistent scheduling of the classes they teach for the college. Thus, the three themes discussed here are constrained by overlap, feeling guilty, blurred boundaries by lack of physical space, and conflict from inconsistency.

**Constrained by overlap.** The participants viewed family time as an important component of their work-life balance. They articulated a desire to be able to balance the time they spent as an adjunct faculty member and the time they spent with their family. However, most of the participants shared experiences of being frustrated by the overlap of both work and family. Beth commented, “That’s been a big concern, how do I fit a class in with family? The perfect balance for me would be being able to do my work during the hours that my kids were at school.” Similarly, Meg stated that she “tries to from the Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday to not have four days of what I’m obsessing about; what assignments and what various things to really try to find a balance there where I’m fully with my family.”

Amy shared how she is constantly looking for her balance with family. She stated: So I think it is always checking in, in both areas and just being consistently vigilant and aware of what I am doing to make sure that everything is balanced, and I constantly do that.

She further indicated her reliance on her spouse for support to keep her world in balance. “So that means that my husband and I are co-parenting and that we are sharing responsibilities with
our daughters and with the house, in that I will also be fulfilled at work, and in this case, it means my regular job and adjunct responsibilities.”

Some participants try to keep all of their work and family separate. Carol found that she attempts to keep them separate even though she struggles with it. She indicated that, “I try to keep all of my teaching assignments as separate jobs, I am not real successful at it, but I give it a shot.” Here she gives an example:

So I read an article and think, “Wow, this is awesome. I need to prepare this for Catholic College, or I need to suggest this for another college.” Then I can’t remember where I put it, so having it being similar is wonderful, and having it be similar is also awful. As far as do, I keep my personal life, like when I am going to watch television, when I am going to go out to dinner with my friends, when I am going to clean up my yard, do I keep that stuff separate. However, that’s never been one of my life skills. You know, so the answer to that question is it’s not well organized. But I don’t blame that on the adjunct role. I think that’s just a personality trait of mine, which is both the good news and the bad news. The good news is I can accomplish a lot. The bad news is it can be crazy.

Claire explained her frustration regarding how difficult it is to not allow her work to cut into her family time, which is very typical among all of the participants. Claire stated, “It’s difficult because so not only do I adjunct here, I adjunct at another university. I had to tutor over at the other university, so that’s a third class that I teach, and then anywhere from four to six hours of tutoring. So I tend to have to shuffle things back and forth.”

Claire’s words indicate that she is juggling many things that make it difficult to find a good balance. She further describes her different roles:
So it can get complicated because I have to remember, “Okay, where am I supposed
to be on this particular day? Am I supposed to be at Catholic College, am I
supposed to be at the other university, or am I supposed to be at both?” And then
getting there, technically they’re close, but the roads to both are a nightmare. My
husband has a weird schedule. There are times when we’re both home together
without our child. That’s awesome because now we can have a long time to be
husband and wife, whatever, and get other stuff done.

Similarly, Beth also finds it challenging to balance work and family.

I would say I always find it challenging. It has been particularly challenging in the last
two years while I have been pursuing my graduate degree too.

Beth told this story to explain:

There was a weekend I remember well. It was a couple of weeks after my son got
sick. We had decided to take Columbus Day weekend up in Upstate New York
camping, and I just remember thinking the Tuesday’s class was going to be about
emotion, which I did my graduate, my master’s on and various things, and I just had so
much I wanted to be doing about that. And so how do I take this weekend, enjoy time
away with the family, but also be excited about the things I want to tweak and teach. So
that was, I’d say, the hardest weekend for me, where I did brain work in this little cabin
in the woods, and I was like no, I should have done that ahead of time. So, I’d say that
was probably the perfect storm because I didn’t have my Monday, when my kids were at
school when I could be preparing.

Kate expressed a conflict with her husband due to her schedule as an adjunct faculty.

She stated:
Well yeah, that’s a problem because like I said, it takes more time than I thought and my husband has a really cushy job for which he gets paid really well, which is why I can work for so little. But when he’s off, I mean he’s off a lot. He works hard when he’s at work, but he only has to work like four days a week. So when he’s off, he wants to go play and do fun stuff and very often I have to say to him, I have to work. I have to grade papers, or I have to do this or I have to do that. And so that’s hard for him, and that makes it hard for me because he’s uncomfortable, and we don’t like having fights about it but there’s this kind of gnawing feeling in my stomach, like he’s supportive in many ways and I feel like I should be there when he wants to go do something.

Additionally, Kate goes on to express her experiences trying to balance her different roles:

I feel like I’m always working, and a lot of it is the adjunct teaching, but like I said, I have these other things going on too, and they’re all, you know, I consider it work even if I’m not getting paid for it. And I feel if I make a commitment, I feel obliged to follow through on it, and very often it’s my family that it eats into my family time. And so I probably rather have a little more time with my family, and it’s hard to kind of juggle like how to anticipate, how much time anything is going to take.

Wendy was the only participant who was actively pursuing a full-time teaching position. She felt she had to make a decision to stop working at another university in order to fit in her current responsibilities as an adjunct. She stated,

I have been really pursuing a faculty position for about a year and half. But you know, without a doctoral degree, without a terminal degree, and no previous formal
teaching experience, it’s difficult to break in. So, with a definite anticipation that at some point I will get a real position, I starting teaching the maternity course. Even with my certifications, having been out of school for a long time and not been on a maternity ward, I will say I found it very heavy, concentrated material. So having to prepare and deliver the material was extremely grueling. At the same time, I was working 28 hours at another university in health services. Not being able to handle both, I had to make the decision of which way I really wanted to go. So I did give my notice, and I phased myself down to per diem at the other university because there was really no way to balance the two of them. So I had to make that decision, and it was a difficult one. My husband and I, because we own a business, we have to pay our own health insurance, so that’s quite a big ticket, so that was a difficult choice, but I think in the long run the right one.

In a response to the question about how she handles the challenge of balancing both work and family when there is a conflict between both, Amy describes her experiences thus:

My husband travels for his job, he is in sales, and so I think it is challenging because we both have work commitments. So that part has been challenging and particularly when he travels. He can be away for two days at a time, four days, five days a week, and that just makes it, like, there is no work-life balance. Sometimes, I think that we can get into arguments about whose job is more important. Like at that time at night or something, if it is 6 o’clock, I have got to deal with an issue or he has got a phone call. It’s like sometimes there is a little clash about whose issue is more of a priority at that time. So I would say that priorities and the traveling piece are most difficult. I think that has been when it is challenging to have that balance.
Additionally, Amy describes how her adjunct role takes her away from her family. She shared,

From the family perspective, some of the challenges are that it pulls me away from that when I have to go, especially during a face-to-face class. So I have to arrange childcare, and my husband is a baseball umpire, so especially in the Spring, that is difficult because on the weekends he is always at games, so it is really careful planning to make sure that we have care for the girls.

Several of the participants shared that they feel compelled to work during family time, and often that is done at home. Claire shared her frustration with how she can’t always contain her work to working hours. She stated,

I do have to bring stuff home to work on generally, so what I try to do unsuccessfully is try to get my work done before my daughter gets home so that I don’t have to work when she is there. This doesn’t always work, especially at the end of the semester. Then I feel very hurried and just because there’s so much that has to be done. Also in my spare time, my husband is not only a teacher but is an artisan, and he doesn’t really have a head for the paperwork, and I do. So I end up doing that sometimes as well. I’ve tried to shove a lot of it back on him because it’s really his business, not mine. I try very hard to contain my work to working hours. I do not always succeed, and that’s when I get very frustrated.

Claire also stated,

I don’t feel like I’m at home doing work either because Catholic College employs me in one role. The other university employs me in two roles. And so it’s not like, well, this is sort of the side job. I need both of them, and it’s just, it’s frustrating,
it’s frustrating because I want to have work at work, and I don’t, and I want home to be home.

Similarly, Beth felt that she was unable to contain work to working hours. She stated, “I am often doing work on weekends during family time, so I would say it is not easy to separate work from family time.” She went on to say, “I have to make time for the work, and sometimes that interferes with other aspects of my life.” Continuing her statement by sharing an example of how this creates conflict, she said,

I would say there have been a couple of times that that has happened, and primarily it is because I had to teach on the night that my husband had to teach, so that meant that neither of us could be present, so that takes on an awful lot of planning if it is an evening, you know, it takes trying to plan who is going to take care of the kids, if the kids have activities, who is going to drive them to various places, but also just kind of the planning of what are they going to eat. So I would say that that’s been a conflict, I would also say that it has been, those times when I have had to leave to go grade, or if it is weekend time, that I have to kind of step away from being with my family, I would say that that has times I felt like not something I wanted to do but had to do.

**Feeling guilty.** Several of the participants described feeling guilty for having to miss family time. Beth stated, “I would say I feel guilty those times when I had to leave to go grade, or if it is weekend time, that I have to step away from being with my family.” Kate shared her feelings of guilt when she can’t spend time with her husband because of the papers she is grading. She stated, “I feel if I make a commitment, I feel obliged to follow through on it and very often it’s my family that suffers, which often makes me feel guilty.” Amy often teaches on
weekends and feels guilty when she spends most of the day away from her family. She stated, “I am pulled away a lot on the weekends from my family, and so I felt guilty. There was a lot of guilt around being away from my daughter.”

Carol describes her experiences of frustration in trying to balance her work and family. She stated,

It happens every April to the middle of May because the nature of the other positions that I have. So it was like six weeks of a nightmare. I never felt like there was any moment that I shouldn’t be doing something. It’s that classic thing about teaching. If you come home and you don’t do anything, you’ve got guilt, and if you come home and you do things, you have resentment, and that was how I was feeling. I say to myself, wait a minute, I don’t need this, so yes, I would say that when the work that you are doing all comes to a head at the same time, it’s difficult.

**Blurred boundaries by lack of dedicated space.** Several participants shared their frustration with lack of physical space both at the college and the necessary space at their homes. This lack of physical space blurred the boundaries between work and family for them due to the fact that they either had no space at home that was separate for work or no space at the college to do their work. Claire shared her experiences with how she is challenged to find space at her home. She stated,

The place where I live right now, I don’t have space for even my own office. So I do a lot of my work on the dining room table, and that to me is invading the sacred almost, and so I don’t want to do it there, I really don’t. I want to be able to be at one space all the time, and that’s sort of, it’s not just bringing home to family, but it’s because I’m at two different institutions by necessity.
Similarly, Wendy shared her desire for some dedicated office space that would be a great help towards work-life balance. She stated,

I think a big help would be having some office space to be able to allow those to be separate. I think sometimes the problem is that a home office and anybody that works at home probably feels the same, so maybe to be able to have a little bit of office space at the college, you know, even if it was almost subletting an office, a lot of time may help that.

**Conflict from inconsistency.** Another area that was mentioned by numerous participants was how their teaching schedule was important to their ability to obtain a successful work-life balance. This was an area of support from the college that made a positive impact on them. Beth shared, “I would say that I am fortunate that at Catholic College and another college to have program managers who are very willing to give me the timeframes and classes I want to teach, which has been helpful.” Similarly, Meg shared her experiences of having a predictable teaching schedule. She stated,

I think it works out great knowing when I’m going to be teaching (i.e., Tuesdays and Thursdays). And so I’m saying, “Okay, I have that Wednesday be really intense, and the Monday will be always the day before, but then to try to, from the Friday through Monday, to try to not have four days of what I’m obsessing about and what assignments and what various things, to really try to find a balance there where I’m fully with my family.

Claire responded that one of her biggest challenges is getting her schedules from multiple institutions to fit into her teaching schedule. She stated,

Well, the biggest challenge has been really getting my schedules to line up well. So
I sort of tell my boss at Catholic College, this is what I want, and he is very accommodating. That’s pretty easy, but scheduling with the other school that has a completely different system is very complicated. I have to fill out this calendar with the time blocks that I want and the time blocks where I don’t. Many times they don’t have these nights I want available. Then they say, “Okay, you can teach classes that are at 5 o’clock at night. “I’m not interested in teaching that late. So then I have to be like, okay, and then they want these schedules at different times. So this worked out really nicely this time, and I sort of lucked out.

Victor wishes for more predictability and flexibility from the college’s administration when it comes to scheduling. He said, “If it fits my schedule, yes, if it doesn’t, it’s kind of like, why there is no predictability, there is no adaptation, there is no ‘we want to work around your schedule.’”

**Teaching Feeds Passion**

The third super-ordinate theme that emerged in this study was how participants acknowledged their love and passion for teaching. The researcher found one specific area that related to this theme. First, the participants expressed how teaching as an adjunct energizes them. All of the participants truly enjoy teaching and the rewards of helping young people learn.

Participants were asked to describe some ways in which being an adjunct has impacted the other parts of their lives. All of the participants expressed their love of teaching. Victor stated, “I love what I am doing, and my students are a high priority for me.” Similarly, Wendy stated, “I have very positive student interactions that remind my why I love teaching and why this is a good path for me.” Meg also stated, “I just knew I’d go back to teaching, and it was
very much what I hoped it would be. I loved going back into the classroom as a teacher. There is a lot of just emotional joy. I am giving freely and happily and happy to be teaching.”

Additionally, Amy shared how teaching energizes her. She stated,
I think it has definitely contributed to me personally, and I would say my family, because it is something that I love, teaching, I love being in the classroom. I love higher education. So because of that personal fulfillment, I feel like I am inspired, I am energized, and when I come home, I am in a really good mood.

**Appreciation from Support**

The fourth super-ordinate theme that emerged in this study was how participants acknowledged the support from their family. The majority of the participants in this study experienced support from family and from the college that assisted them in successfully handling the challenges of being an adjunct faculty member. As far as support from the participants’ families, almost all shared experiences of strong support from a spouse and/or children. When it came to making meaning of the support from the college, most participants shared experiences of how they received support during significant family circumstances. Thus, the fourth super-ordinate theme that emerged in this study captures the participants’ appreciation from support as an adjunct faculty member. The two themes that signify these specific areas of convergence across participants are appreciation from family support and support by the college for unique circumstances.

**Appreciation from family support.** The majority of the participants were fortunate to have strong family support systems that assist them in balancing their role as adjunct faculty members and family members. Beth shared experiences of having a supportive spouse and children who have helped her handle her work as an adjunct. She stated,
I would also say just having a supportive spouse who is willing to step in when, like say for example, this weekend I have a ton of grading to finish off for my classes at Catholic College, and so tomorrow basically I need to take the day and go. So knowing that my husband is available and willing to step up has also been helpful to me. The kids have had to become quite a bit more self-sufficient on those days when both of us are gone, or if I have to work on a weekend day, you know, they have to be all right with the fact that I am not there. So I would say that on both ends my husband has adapted to roles that maybe he wouldn’t have played before, and the kids have kind of adapted in that way.

Wendy also shared her experiences with family support. “When I spend times at night or early in the morning, my husband will step in and either take the kids to school, or if it is at night, occupy them and just make it clear to them that I need to do work.” Similarly, Amy shared her experiences. She stated:

Yeah, my family has been critical, especially my husband. He knows that I love the work I do and that it is personally fulfilling and appreciates that I contribute financially to our family. So I think he is very supportive of that and the work I do and knows that my career is important to me and the entire family. So he is very supportive, which helps me with creating work-life balance structures.

Amy also shared an example of her experiences relating to family support:

So the class that I teach at Catholic College on Saturdays and the weekends just had to be the day that, like, you do your grocery shopping, household stuff, laundry. I told my husband, I really want to do this, but when I come back from teaching, I don’t want to be teaching all day and then have to go shopping and get to house or whatever, I want to
spend time with my family. So we talked about that, and actually he started grocery shopping, and he still does to this day, like he does every week, which is awesome.

Similarly, Victor shared his experiences of support and understanding from his family. He specifically shared his children’s understanding of his work commitments. He stated,

In terms of support, both kids understand that that’s part of my job. I mean they both know that I get on the computer and I’m not playing games. They understand that I’m working. If they come up, I can stop and deal with an issue if I have to and help when I’m working, and it’s just like anything else. If you have a good supportive home life in general with people around you, both your kids and spouse who understand that’s what you do, that you don’t go nine to five, you walk out and now I’m free to do whatever I can. But there is give and take on it. I don’t know how it would work, to be honest with you, without the support at home. I am lucky I have a spouse who understands this.

Kate’s experiences were a bit different from the others. Her husband has a job with a lot of flexibility, and he often wants her to be able to take time off to do things based upon his schedule. This doesn’t always work for her. She also shared regrets of neglecting her family as she focused on her career. She stated,

Well he’s [my husband] helped me, but he’s also made it challenging. And I can understand his perspective, but I also grew up in a house where my dad was constantly telling us that the most important thing you can do in your life is find a meaningful job, meaningful work. And so that was sort of ingrained in me from a very early age, and so I’ve always had this tendency to pay more attention to my work than my family. And so that’s sort of inbred, I think, and that internal, that
sort of an internal struggle that I always struggle with is, you know. I want to do
certain things in my professional life and get to certain places in my professional
life, but what’s the cost of that? And I can think of times even when my kids were
little where I neglected them too, because I was on a path and was more focused on
my work than I was on my family. And I would say probably that in my whole life
that’s the thing that I regret more than anything.

**Support by the college for unique circumstances.** Several of the participants shared
experiences of strong support from the college during challenging family circumstances such as
a family illness. In several cases, the college administration stepped up and found a
replacement instructor, which demonstrated their understanding of the adjunct’s family
priorities. Meg shared her experiences at Catholic College when her son had a chronic illness.
She stated,

> With my son being sick, there was a time when it was really intense towards the end
> of the semester, and I worked out that another faculty member would teach the
> remainder of the class. So, I felt very supported in that when I was going to have to
> be at the hospital for many, many hours that day. I have taught here for four years
> and never called in sick, never missed a class, but to set that up a couple of weeks
> ahead and know I could do it without feeling like I was burning bridges or upsetting
> anyone. That was fantastic.

Meg found that the college administration was good about not pushing her too hard to
take on too much work. Meg expressed:

> I think that people that I’ve worked with as an adjunct, administrators and other
> faculty, have been really good about not pushing me and being very understanding.
If I say, “No that’s really too much, I can’t do that,” they’ve been very understanding about that. And they’ve also, you know, like the other class they want me to teach here is an internship module, and they’re giving me this syllabus, and I know they’ll be around to help me with placements. I mean, so I think that providing the kinds of support that they do is helpful in terms of achieving that balance that you’re talking about.

Similarly, Victor responded that he was appreciative of the support and understanding he receives from the college. He indicated, “So if you have a pretty good relationship with people you’re working with, you can fix any problems quickly.” Victor also acknowledged that, “they also understand that you’re doing the best you can to balance life.” He concluded, “So that support at the institution, just feeling that connection with the person who is overseeing it is really important.”

**Conflict from College Interaction**

The majority of the participants in this study experienced a lack of interaction from Catholic College. The fifth and final super-ordinate theme that emerged in this study captures the participants’ lack of experience with being connected to the college they teach at. The researcher found two specific areas of convergence across participants related to the conflict with the college due to separation from the college community. First, several participants shared that although they feel generally welcomed at the college, they still did not feel part of the institution. Second, the participants shared experiences of being discouraged by lack of voice in regards to curriculum and instruction. The two themes that signify these specific areas of convergence across participants are welcomed but not connected and lack of voice.
**Welcomed but not connected.** Six out of the eight participants expressed that they did not experience a connection to the college administration. They expressed that they felt only connected to the students they teach. Beth expressed this well, stating, “I feel connected to my students when I am teaching my students, but I don’t feel connected to others.”

Victor recalled his experiences with the college administration. He stated,

I will go a whole six months not hearing a word out of them, not a word, not an update, nothing. And then all of sudden I’ll get a “we’d like you to teach intro to philosophy starting this term beginning in four weeks, please respond immediately with whether you can do it.” So that’s been my experience with them, which is very formulaic and very—I hate it. I don’t like it at all.

Beth specifically cited her lack of connection to the college administration. She stated,

I feel not connected overall. I only feel connected to my students. I don’t feel like I have more of a role or connection besides my singular class I teach. I would say that I feel the life of an adjunct is kind of an island on their own. I would say that I feel very isolated as an adjunct in terms of I feel like I don’t get a lot of social interaction.

Other participants shared that the college administration was nice enough and treated them well, but they still did not feel connected. Carol stated, “People are very nice, but there is nobody whose office I would visit except Sister Mary. Other than her, there are no other people where I would stop them in the hallway and speak with them. I am not trying to be negative. I think I am being realistic.”
Similarly, Kate expressed her connection to the college. “I feel welcomed here and comfortable here, but I don’t feel part of this school. They send me emails and stuff because I am on the faculty list, but I don’t go to any of the faculty meetings or the big meetings. I feel like a guest in this college and don’t feel like I am part of the college.”

Wendy made sense regarding her experience with the college administration, stating,

So it has not been great from the get go. I will say trying to communicate with the administration, trying to get straight answers has been very difficult about what the status, where do you see me here. Until recently, it just seems like it may start to improve here, but I have felt quite disconnected.

Amy was even more direct in sharing her experience. “I feel no connection whatsoever. I mean I enjoy teaching, I enjoy the students, but I don’t feel connection to the program or the institution,” she stated.

Other participants, like Claire, who have been teaching at this college for a longer time than the others, expressed a slightly different experience. She stated,

I have a good relationship now with the director. He really listens and wants my input and the other adjunct’s input. I really can get to know my students, and that connects me to the college. Catholic College doesn’t pay me as much per class as the other school I teach at, but it’s about personality and feeling good about it.

Meg concurred when sharing her experience at the college. She stated, “It’s deep and multifaceted. There is a lot of intellectual connection, but there’s also a lot of just emotional joy. I think people who are here are glad to be here.”

The participants responded differently to their connection to the college faculty than they did to their connection to the college administration when sharing their experiences.
Although a few of the participants shared their experience as not having any connection to faculty, most of the participants had a favorable connection to one or more faculty members. It seems they took it upon themselves to meet a few other faculty members at the college.

Amy was one of the participants who felt that she had a connection to the faculty. She stated,

Again to compare the two places, at Catholic College I feel much stronger connection, and I think it is because I am here during the day so I will have lunch with other adjunct faculty members. I will work with them, we may have a joint class or co-teach a class together, or we will prepare a lesson and we will kind of swap classes. So I feel there is strong connection with the adjunct faculty at Catholic College.

Claire shared a similar experience of her connection to faculty at the college. She had worked with an adjunct faculty member from another university who introduced her to Catholic College. She stated,

I'm really close to one of the other adjunct faculty members. We had shared office time together and really got to know each other. I also worked with her at another university. So we kind of have a Catholic College-other university thing going on. She was actually one who got me into the other university, so I owe her big time for that.

Similarly, Wendy felt that she had met other faculty. She stated, “So I have met with some other adjuncts that have taught the course that I was teaching, and they were helpful and supportive.” Additionally, Kate stated, “There was one guy who was like in
the next cubicle over who I talked to a few times. He was nice enough, but we didn’t get to be friends.”

Beth’s experience regarding her connection to faculty diverges from most of the other participants’ experiences. She stated,

I do not have an extensive relationship with any other faculty except for in situations where I have been given the opportunity to work directly with them on something. I don’t think I ever had any interaction with full-time faculty except in maybe one or two faculty meetings where I just felt, I mean, I felt like I am sitting amongst strangers, and I left and still felt like we had been in a meeting together, but there was no real interaction involved.

Similarly, Carol shared, “My relationship with other faculty is mostly non-existent.”

**Lack of voice.** Another related theme that emerged along with the “not feeling connected to administration” was that of “voice.” Beth felt that she didn’t have a voice as an adjunct faculty member in either of her adjunct roles. She stated:

I would say that one of the challenges that I have had in both of my roles, actually at Catholic College and at Community College, is that I feel like I have knowledge and skill to influence curriculum and influence kind of patterns of ways that writing is being taught, but because I am not a full-time faculty member, my voice has no real authority. I mean I have been fortunate at Catholic College that they have at times given me the opportunity to give my input, but I feel like I don’t have a place, as nobody knows who I am. So if I go and say to somebody in kind of, in authority, I think we should do things differently, I don’t necessarily think I am given that credence to have that voice.
Amy shared a similar experience, one in which she was trying to help ensure students were having a good experience in another class they were taking, and she stated, “but I really felt I had no power, and I don’t have much of a voice in curriculum development.” She added, “It is frustrating not feeling I have any power or authority to make a change.”

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how adjunct faculty members at a small, Catholic college in the Northeast describe their experiences navigating the boundaries between work as adjunct instructors and their other life roles. A close analysis of the interview data yielded several insights into how the participants described their experiences as adjunct faculty members. First, the participants acknowledged it is not easy to separate work and family, thus they were challenged by lack of separation.

All of the participants shared their experiences about how much they love teaching and how fulfilling it is for them. It was clear to the researcher that all of these adjunct faculty members teach for more than just the money they receive. Many shared experiences of emotional joy and how it energizes them when they are in the classroom. Additionally, the participants shared that being an adjunct faculty member provided them with the flexibility to spend more time with their family and pursue other projects and additional/new opportunities. For many of them, this is exactly why they are an adjunct faculty, because they are not interested in being a full-time teacher.

Most of the participants shared experiences of the difficulty in having any separation between work and family. For many, this lead to difficulty in maintaining work-life balance. Most of the participants shared frustration with how challenging it is to balance both work as an
adjunct faculty member and their family time. This was especially true for those participants who were teaching at two or more institutions.

The majority of the participants experienced support not only from their family but also from the college under extreme family circumstances, which assisted them in successfully handling the work-life balance challenges of being an adjunct faculty member. Almost all of the participants shared experiences of how their family provided strong support for their role as an adjunct. Participants shared how they could not imagine being able to balance their work and family roles without support and understanding from their family. The participants also appreciated the support they received from the college, especially during major family events and situations. Several mentioned how a consistent teaching schedule was important in supporting their ability to teach at multiple institutions, thus supporting a better work-life balance.

The majority of the participants in this study perceived a lack of connection to Catholic College, although they wished to be more connected. Although they feel generally welcomed at the college, they still did not feel like they are part of the college. Many shared that they only experienced a connection to the students in their class and no one else. Several participants wished to be more valued and respected by the college administration. When it came to the sub-ordinate theme of lack of voice, the participants used the term “my voice” when discussing not being heard in terms of curriculum and instruction.
CHAPTER FIVE: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this study, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) methods were employed in order to understand the perceptions of how adjunct faculty members from a small, Catholic college in the Northeastern United States describe their experience balancing life roles. The key findings were interpreted using Clark’s (2000) work/family border theory as a framework. This chapter, which discusses the findings from the study, is divided into three sections: implications for theory, implications for research, and implications for practice.

Implications for Theory

Clark’s (2000) work/family border theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Through the analysis of data, the findings confirmed the components of this theory. Borders, as described by Clark (2000), are the part that constrains how one keeps work and family separate from one another. The border-crosser is the character the adjunct faculty member lives in and operates in within both domains (Clark, 2000). The border-crossers’ sense of belonging within each domain and how they are viewed by others in the work and family spheres influences the degree of support they receive in a given domain (Clark, 2000). Belonging and support are two of the components from Clark’s model that were found in this research.

Clark’s (2000) model is comprised of eight propositions. The following outlines the eight propositions and how the super-ordinate themes are connected to each of them.

The first proposition states:

- **Proposition 1a:** When domains are similar, weak boarders will facilitate work/family balance.

- **Proposition 1b:** When domains are different, strong boarders will facilitate
work/family balance (Clark, 2000). The super-ordinate theme that corresponded to this proposition was “balance through flexibility.” Adjunct faculty members who enjoy flexibility with their schedules and commingle their work and family have permeability of their two borders (work and family). The research found that nearly all of the participants experienced domains that were similar, with weak borders that made it easier to facilitate work/family balance. Almost all of the participants shared experiences of commingling work and family, which further enhanced their ability to be flexible. Thus, this is consistent with Clark’s (2000) proposition 1a due to the fact that the participants were able to find a good work/family balance.

The second proposition states:

- **Proposition 2:** When the border is strong to protect one domain but weak for the other domain, individuals will have: a) greater work/family balance when they primarily identify with the strongly border domain; and b) lesser work/family balance when they primarily identify with the weakly bordered domain (Clark, 2000).

The super-ordinate theme that corresponded to the second proposition was “conflict through lack of control.” The participants’ adjunct roles required them to be flexible regarding their family role so they could work additional hours, but they did not allow them the same flexibility when the need arose at home. Thus, this is consistent with Clark’s proposition 2b.

The third proposition states:

- **Proposition 3:** Border-crossers who are central participants in a domain (i.e., who have identification and influence) will have more control over the borders of that domain than those who are peripheral participants (Clark, 2000).
The super-ordinate theme that corresponded to the third proposition was “conflict through lack of control.” The participants’ adjunct roles required them to be flexible about their family role so they could work additional hours, but they did not allow them the same flexibility when the need arose at home. One of the keys to being a central participant is being connected with others who have central membership. The participants did have connection with their families and were central participants at home. Conversely, they were peripheral participants at Catholic College. Thus, this is consistent with Clark’s (2000) proposition 3 due to the fact that the participants were peripheral members as adjuncts and real control came from the College administration.

The fourth proposition states:

- **Proposition 4:** Border-crossers who are central participants (i.e., who have identification and influence) in domains will have greater work/family balance than border-crossers who are not central participants in both domains (Clark, 2000).

The super-ordinate theme that corresponded to the fourth proposition was “conflict from college interaction.” The participants did not experience identification and/or influence as a central participant in their role as an adjunct faculty at Catholic College. Thus, this is consistent with Clark’s (2000) proposition 4 due to the fact that the participants were peripheral members.

The fifth proposition states:

- **Proposition 5:** Border-crossers whose domain members have high awareness of other domains will have higher work/family balance than border-crossers whose domain members have low other-domain awareness (Clark, 2000).

The super-ordinate theme that corresponded to the fifth proposition was “conflict from college interaction.” Catholic College (work domain) did not sufficiently communicate or understand
adjunct faculties’ family (border), thus they had a low other-domain awareness leading to lower work/family balance for the adjuncts.

The sixth proposition states:

- **Proposition 6:** Border-crossers whose domain members show high commitment to them will have higher work/family balance than border-crossers whose domain members have shown low commitment to them (Clark, 2000).

The super-ordinate theme that corresponded to the sixth proposition was “conflict from college interaction.” The participants stated that they only felt connected to their students and not to Catholic College. There was lack of communication from the college, which added to the feeling of being disconnected.

The seventh proposition states:

- **Proposition 7:** When work and family domains are very different, border-crossers will engage in less across-the-border communication than will border-crossers with similar domains (Clark, 2000).

The super-ordinate theme that corresponded to the seventh proposition was “conflict from college interaction.” The participants described their domains as similar, which should have lead to more communication. However, there was not very good communication from Catholic College. If there had been, it would have helped mitigate work/family conflicts.

The eighth and final proposition states:

- **Proposition 8:** Clark’s (2000) model states “frequent supportive communication between border-keepers and border-crossers about other-domain activities will moderate the ill-effects of situations that would otherwise lead to imbalance” (p. 764).
There were two super-ordinate themes that corresponded with the eighth proposition. First, “appreciation from support” corresponded to Proposition 8. The participants in this study shared experiences of family support and some support from the college under unique circumstances. This support led to the participants sharing experiences of increased satisfaction and greater work/family balance. The second super-ordinate theme was “conflict from college interaction.” The participants stated that they only felt connected to their students. There was lack of communication from the college, which added to the feeling of being disconnected. This low work/family balance is consistent with Clark’s (2000) model, which states that when people do not feel there is a high commitment and communication, they will have a lower work/family balance. Thus, the lack of communication from Catholic College had an adverse effect on work/family balance.

**Implications for Research**

During the literature review, numerous current research topics on adjunct faculty were explored. One of the first areas that came up in the literature review and also in this study was the lack of office space allocated by colleges and universities for adjunct faculty. In a survey published from the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles, just 19 percent of adjunct faculty reported having access to a private office, although 53 percent said they have access to a shared office (Flaherty, 2014c). Several participants in this study shared their desire to have office space made available to them, as they struggled to have the necessary space at their homes. The participants also mentioned how some dedicated office space would be a great help towards work-life balance.

A second topic that was identified both in the literature review and this study was the desire for adjunct faculty to have schedules that are more consistent and reliable, which would
allow them to prepare while balancing their lives. In a survey published by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles, about 40 percent of adjuncts reported having between one and three months notice to prepare for a course (Flaherty, 2014c). In this study, participants mentioned how having a predictable schedule was important to their ability to obtain a successful work-life balance. This is especially important due to the fact that most of the participants are teaching at multiple institutions and need to get their schedules to fit their availability to teach.

A third area that came up in both the literature and this study was the issue of workload. Adjunct faculty workload is a growing concern for colleges, which are now tracking hours to ensure adjuncts don’t work enough hours to qualify for health insurance benefits (Miller, 2015). In this study, several participants shared with the researcher that Catholic College has a teaching limit, which forces them to look to other colleges for additional teaching opportunities.

**Implications for Practice**

This study’s findings may have a number of implications for college administrators. Much of the results found in this study focused on adjunct faculty’s real desire to feel a sense of connection toward the institution they are teaching for. The other areas that the research in this study supports are the need for college administrators to provide adjunct faculty with dedicated office space, stable teaching schedules, and a voice in regards to curriculum and instruction. Although one of the participants mentioned pay, this study did not specifically focus on adjunct pay. Moreover, the following statement from Kate is not really about pay but how increased value shows worth: “I mean if they could pay adjuncts more that would do something to validate that this is important, what you’re doing is important, but that’s not why they hire
adjuncts, they hire adjuncts because they’re cheap. It’s a hell of a lot cheaper to hire an adjunct.”

The results from this research suggest that there are real opportunities to reach out to adjunct faculty to connect them to the college or university. Ongoing communication is an important way to help adjunct faculty stay connected to the college. It is additionally important for adjunct faculty to have access to department chairs. With adjunct faculty only being on campus to teach, it is challenging to interact and communicate with the chair or even other faculty. This may result in making them feel generally disconnected with the college. Some adjunct faculty may not be interested in being all that connected to the college, so it is up to the college to see how engaged they want to be. For those who are interested in staying connected with the college, there are many ways for colleges and universities to connect with their adjunct faculty.

First, informational meetings and/or professional development workshops offered at convenient times would be two ways to cultivate adjuncts’ connection to the college. To encourage even more adjuncts to attend, colleges should consider offering events online. It is important to schedule relevant topics for adjunct faculty. If they don’t find the topic important or valuable, they won’t participate. Topics such as Blackboard training or how to teach international students have proved to be popular on many campuses. Some colleges have specific centers that offer professional development programs to all faculty members on a regular basis, such as a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, can cultivate a culture of connection to the college.

Many of the participants in this research study voiced concern for the need for dedicated physical space. There is often a shortage of office space on campuses for these faculty
members to meet with their students and/or prepare for their classes. Even when adjuncts are provided physical office space on campus, it is usually inadequate. If they have tests, papers, etc., they cannot leave anything in the office, because the office may not have a lock or may be shared with other adjuncts. Thus, colleges and universities could provide joint adjunct space, which would allow for adjuncts to feel welcomed and connected with other faculty. This would help build a more engaged, loyal group of adjunct faculty members for that institution and increase the adjunct faculty’s job satisfaction.

An additional way to engage adjunct faculty would be to establish an Office of Adjunct Faculty (OAF) at the institution. This type of office would create policies, practices, and procedures to assist adjunct faculty in navigating the institution. The administration at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) in Michigan recognized the growing concern to support their adjunct faculty and created an Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs (OAFSP) (Coburn-Collins, 2014). This office was created to provide faculty development and support to the adjunct faculty members at SVSU (Coburn-Collins, 2014). With a total budget of about $250,000 each academic year, the OAFSP has been able to transform the ways in which adjunct faculty are typically treated (Coburn-Collins, 2014). Using several best practices to guide them, SVSU has worked to create a cultural shift in how it treats its adjunct faculty. These best practices for supporting them include:

1. A thorough orientation to the institution, its culture, and practices;
2. Adequate training in teaching and classroom management skills;
3. Both initial and ongoing professional development; and

Similarly, the College of DuPage, a community college which is located near Chicago,
created an Office of Adjunct Faculty Support (OAFS) to improve the part-time teacher experience at their institution (Overstreet, 2014). In any one semester, College of DuPage employs more than 1,200 adjunct faculty members (Overstreet, 2014). Lead by two assistant dean positions, the OAFS provides administrative services to all part-time faculty at the college (Overstreet, 2014). One of the main goals of the OAFS is to assist the adjunct faculty who, in many cases, have very little or no training as teachers in a classroom or with pedagogical development (Overstreet, 2014). Other areas of support range from initial screening and onboarding to professional development opportunities (Overstreet, 2014).

Other examples of initiatives that could be part of an OAF include establishing a mentor program that would team up adjunct faculty with full-time faculty. This would enhance the connection for the adjunct faculty member to the institution and their faculty. In addition to the full-time faculty assisting with academic issues, such as teaching and course development, these mentors will also understand the importance of work-life balance (Mack, 2016). Many of these full-time faculty members are balancing different roles, including research, teaching, service, and family. Building a relationship with these full-time faculty members could assist adjunct faculty since it will allow them to learn how full-time faculty balance their work and family.

Additionally, the OAF could assist adjuncts with finding available office space as needed and hold meetings (each semester) in which they share current events, and new programs, policies, and opportunities for adjunct faculty to participate in campus events. An annual meeting could be organized so that adjunct faculty could be recognized for years of service. All of these suggestions are ways to better engage adjunct faculty who otherwise can feel very disconnected to the institution they teach at.
Another topic that resulted from this research is the need for adjunct faculty to have a voice. In other words, colleges need to seek adjunct faculty input as ways to engage them and help them feel connected to the college. Ways to give them the opportunity to express their views include open forum meetings, focus groups, orientation sessions, and online discussion groups. Providing adjunct faculty members with the opportunity to have their voice heard is an effective way to keep them engaged.

There are several suggestions the researcher has for those adjunct faculty members who desire a better work-life balance. First, stay organized. The research revealed that adjunct faculty who maintained an organized schedule were more likely to have a positive work-life balance regardless of whether they commingled work or family.

Second, adjunct faculty should build relationships early on with department chairs and other department administration. This will help them to get to know individual adjuncts better and to think of them when additional teaching opportunities arise. In addition, this could help in securing a more desirable and consistent teaching schedule, which will help keep a positive work-life balance, and it will simply help adjuncts feel connected to the institution.

Finally, if their schedule allows, adjunct faculty should consider volunteering to participate in additional teaching and non-teaching activities. This will demonstrate their commitment to the institution and hopefully, in return, the institution will provide more paid teaching opportunities and maybe even some paid development/consulting. This will also connect adjunct faculty to the institution. It is understood that most adjunct faculty members should not be expected to provide an abundance of free services. However, by volunteering for a few additional activities, opportunities to become more connected to the institution may arise.
Conclusion

One of the most important trends that administrators from colleges and universities will need to consider in the future that was not addressed in this study is how to deal with the growth of adjunct faculty unionization. Unionization is part of a fast-growing trend in higher education aimed at improving the pay and working conditions of the large number of adjunct faculty teaching at colleges and universities. So for college administrators who may feel threatened by the thought of an adjunct faculty union coming to their campus, often it is said to just treat your adjunct faculty well and pay them a fair wage (Boldt, 2014). Boldt (2014) states that the only guaranteed way to avoid an adjunct union is to make it unnecessary. Conversely, the fastest way to drive your adjunct faculty to unionize is to continue to pay them poorly and treat them disrespectfully (Boldt, 2014).

Administrators and faculty need to keep in mind that adjunct faculty members are a valuable resource in which they need to investment through things such as dedicated physical space, a voice in curriculum and instruction development, and an overall connection to the institution for which they teach. In the end, no matter what the future holds for adjunct faculty, they are an important resource for colleges and universities that support an institution’s most valued constituents, the students they educate.
References


Appendix A:

Request for Site Access Letter

Dear ____________,

My name is Mark Gould, an Education doctoral candidate at Northeastern University. I am writing to gain access, with your approval, to a small group (8-10) of adjunct faculty at your College to interview for my doctoral research study.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into what it is like to be an adjunct faculty member at a small Catholic college in the northeast. The results of this study will hopefully serve as a guide that will assist administrators and faculty the opportunity to better understand the work experiences of adjunct faculty in an effort to enhance the work environment and support adjunct faculty members.

In order to participate, individuals must

1. Be currently employed as an adjunct faculty member and have taught for at least a year at the College.
2. Teach on-ground or hybrid classes; but not only on-line classes
3. Be employed in another job and teach only one or two courses. They must receive no fringe benefits, tenure, etc.
4. Be willing to participate in one, with the possibility of a second freely engaging interview at a time and location that is convenient for them.
5. Agree to the use of audio recording of the interview(s).
6. Agree to the publishing of the data from this study with all personal information being held confidential, and a copy of the study made available for their review after the completion of the study.

This study consists of one face-to-face interview (60 minutes), with a possibility of a second follow-up interview if it becomes necessary to further capture more information. The interview will allow the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences as an adjunct faculty member. All interviews will be confidential and the names of each participant and their respective college will not be included in the study. Pseudonyms will be used for each participant to ensure their privacy in reporting the findings of the study. The audio-recorded interviews will be destroyed after data analysis.

Thank you for considering your adjunct faculty for this study. I can be reached via email at gould.m@husky.neu.edu or by phone at 978-701-2790 with any questions. I look forward to your reply.

Best,
Mark A. Gould, Doctoral Candidate
Appendix B:

Call for Participation Letter

A study is being conducted to gain insight into what it is like to be an adjunct faculty member at a small Catholic college in the northeast. In order to participate, individuals must be a current adjunct faculty member with at least one year of service.

In order to participate, individuals must

1. Be currently employed as an adjunct faculty member and have taught for at least a year at the College.
2. Teach on-ground or hybrid classes; but not only on-line classes
3. Be employed in another job and teach only one or two courses. They must receive no fringe benefits, tenure, etc.
4. Be willing to participate in one, with the possibility of a second freely engaging interview at a time and location that is convenient for them.
5. Agree to the use of audio recording of the interview(s).
6. Agree to the publishing of the data from this study with all personal information being held confidential, and a copy of the study made available for their review after the completion of the study.

This study consists of one face-to-face interview (60 minutes), with a possibility of a second follow-up interview if it becomes necessary to further capture more information. The interview(s) will allow the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences as an adjunct faculty member.

Your participation is entirely voluntary.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please email gould.m@husky.neu.edu or call 978-701-2790. Selection for the study is not guaranteed, but will be determined during a brief 5-10 minute intake call.

You will not be identified by name or by institution. The data will be stored in a locked file and be available only to the researcher and faculty advisor. After the research is concluded, the data will be destroyed. Additionally, participants’ names will never used in the published results.

This study is being conducted by Mark Gould, an Ed.D. doctoral candidate at Northeastern University. This study has been approved by Northeastern University’s Institutional Review Board for research ethics (IRB# _ _ _ _ ).
Appendix C:

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

You are being invited to take part in a doctoral thesis research study. This form will explain the details of this study. 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 give you a copy to keep. You are being asked to be in this study because you are an adjunct faculty at a small Catholic college in the northeast.

There is very little research that examines what it is like to be an adjunct faculty at a small Catholic college. Adjunct faculty members are the focus of this study, as they may have different experiences than those of full-time faculty. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of adjunct faculty who teach at a small Catholic college in the northeast.

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in one 60-minute interview, with a possibility of a second follow-up interview if it becomes necessary to further capture more information. The interview(s) will be conducted by the Student Researcher (Mark Gould). During the interview(s) you will be asked questions about your experiences as well as reflecting on details of your experiences as an adjunct faculty member. At the end of the interview, you will be asked for permission to be contacted for any final follow-up questions, if necessary. (You may decline and still be included in this study.) The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts of the interview along with initial codes/interpretations will be emailed to you within 90 days after the interview. You will have one week to provide me with any feedback, alterations or corrections in regards to these documents, should you choose to do so.

The interview will be conducted face-to-face on the college campus in a private place. The interview(s) will last approximately 60 minutes. A private and comfortable space will be agreed upon by both the researcher and the interviewee to ensure complete confidentiality.

The interview questions will ask you to reflect upon your personal experiences and feelings to being an adjunct faculty member. If you feel uncomfortable replying to any questions that are asked, you are free to decline from answering. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time. Every effort possible will be made to ensure confidentiality, and no other risks (physical, financial, social, etc.) seem likely based on participation in this study.

There will be no direct benefit financial benefit to you for taking part in this study. However, the information learned from this study may help individuals in the field of higher education better understand the realities associated being an adjunct faculty member, which could ultimately help improve the experience for individuals such as you.

Your part in this study will be confidential. Only you and the Student Researcher (Mark Gould) will be present during the interviews. The interview will be audio-recorded, and either the student researcher or a professional transcriptionist (who will have signed a “Transcriber Confidentiality Statement”) will transcribe the recordings verbatim.
Confidentiality will be further maintained in the following manner: No names will be associated with any interview information; the recording of the interview will not be labeled with your name, but rather a pseudonym; all of the researcher’s study-related data files will be encrypted and password protected; the recordings will be destroyed within two weeks of completing the transcriptions. Only the Student Researcher (Mark Gould) and Principal Investigator on this research project (Dr. Tova Sanders) will have any access to identifying information.

The data gathered from these interviews and this study will be used for the Student Researcher’s doctoral thesis project, and potentially for additional use in future journal articles, books, presentations, or research. Even in these additional potential instances, identifying information will always be kept confidential for all participants.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study. However, you have every right to choose not to participate in this study and your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Based on the content and structure of this study, the potential of being harmed in any way is essentially nonexistent. While unlikely, if a participant becomes highly emotional, the researcher will recommend the questioning be terminated at that time and external support resources will be offered as appropriate, should the participant wish to seek additional support. No special arrangements will be made for compensation or for payment for treatment solely because of participation in this research.

You may contact Student Researcher Mark Gould via phone at 978-701-2790 or by email at gould.m@husky.neu.edu. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Tova Sanders (Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115) by email at t.sanders@neu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115; tel. 617-373-7570; email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My signature below indicated that I understand the information and that I consent to participate in this study. Additionally, by signing this document, I am consenting for the interviews to be audio-recorded.

I consent to participate in the research study conducted by Mark Gould.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of the researcher

Date

Printed name of the researcher
Appendix D:

Interview Protocol Form

Intake Call

Thank you for responding for the call to participate in this study. My name is Mark Gould and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University. This research project is my doctoral thesis project. The goal of this study is to explore the experiences of being an adjunct faculty member at a small Catholic college.

As the researcher, I am also the person who will be conducting the interview as well as the intake call, like the one we are doing right now.

Today, I would like to ask you just a few criteria-based questions to determine if you qualify as a participant, and if so, I would give you a more detailed explanation as to the scope of this research project. At that point, if you are interested in proceeding, we can talk about setting up the interview time.

1. Are you currently an adjunct faculty member at this college?
2. If yes, how long have you been an adjunct faculty member at this college?
3. How many courses do you teach in a year?
4. Do you teach on-ground or hybrid courses?
5. Do you maintain a job outside of your work as an adjunct faculty member?
6. If so, what is your position?
7. Are you willing to participate in one, with the possibility of a second freely engaging interview at a time and location that is convenient for them?
8. Do you agree to the use of audio recording of the interview(s)?
9. Do you agree to the publishing of the data from this study with all personal information being held confidential, and a copy of the study made available for their review after the completion of the study.

Based upon your answers, I am happy to tell you that you meet all of the criteria in regards to participation in this study. Now, I have a few more questions to ask you and would also like to tell you a bit more about the scope of this project.

1. What level of students do you teach?
2. Approximately how many students do you teach each semester?
3. Do you teach at any other colleges or universities?
4. If so, where else do you teach?
5. What is the highest degree you have attained?
6. Are you currently looking for full-time teaching work?
7. Do you have a hobby that takes up substantial amounts of time?
8. What/Who does your family consist of?

The purpose of this study is to explore how adjunct faculty members at a small Catholic college in the northeast describe their experience balancing life roles. The main question being asked is: How do adjunct faculty members from a small Catholic college in the northeast describe their experience balancing life roles?

That is a very brief overview of the study. Do you have any questions in regards to the research itself? If not, are you interested in proceeding as a participant in this study? If yes, great. I would like to set up a time for us to conduct the interview. We would meet on campus or somewhere else if it is more comfortable for you. Like I mentioned, the interview will last approximately 60 minutes. There is a possibility of a second follow-up interview if it becomes necessary to further capture more information. What time works for you for the initial interview? Where would you prefer to hold it?

I am going to email you an electronic copy of the Informed Consent to Participate Form which tells you a bit more about the study and answers some common questions people often have in regards to research. I ask that you please read it over, sign it, and email it to me so that I receive it no later than 24 hours before our first interview. If you have any questions or concerns before signing, you are of course free to contact me. Does that work?

Thank you. Before we wrap up this call, I would just like to ask you to consider if you know of any other adjunct faculty at the college who also might meet the criteria for the study, and be interested in participating? If so, I would really appreciate it if you tell them about the study and give them my contact information should they wish to speak to me about participating in my study. Great, that's it for now. I look forward to our interview on ________________ (specific date, time, and location).

**Interview**

**Part 1: Introductory Protocol**

You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as someone who a great deal to share about the experience of being an adjunct faculty member.

This research project focuses on the experience of college adjunct faculty members. Through this study, I hope to gain more insight into how adjunct faculty such as you make meaning of your experiences and balance your work and life. Hopefully this study will allow colleges to better understand the needs of their adjunct faculty.
The interview questions will ask you to reflect upon your personal experiences and feelings to being an adjunct faculty member. If you feel uncomfortable replying to any questions that are asked, you are free to decline from answering. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time. Every effort possible will be made to ensure confidentiality, and no other risks (physical, financial, social, etc.) seem likely based on participation in this study.

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. I will also be taking written notes during the interview. Only myself, and possibly a professional transcriptionist will be privy to the audio files. If a transcriptionist is used, that person will have signed a confidentiality statement, and will also only be provided with the recording label by a pseudonym, meaning they will never even know your name, to maintain confidentiality. The audio files will be destroyed within two weeks after they are transcribed. I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only pseudonyms will be used when quoting from the transcripts.

I would like to begin recording this session now. Is that all right with you?

(Audio recording to begin)

To meet our human subjects requirements at the college, participants have to read and sign the Consent to Participate form, which was provided to you. Thank you for already having send to me the signed document prior to this first interview. Just to review, this document, which you signed states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Do you have any questions or concerns about the interview process or this form?

I have planned for this interview to last about 60 minutes. Today, I have several questions I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

**Part 2: Interview Introduction**

The intent of this study is to gain better understanding into what it means to be an adjunct faculty member at a small Catholic college in the northeast and balance work as an adjunct, family, and other commitments such as your full-time job and personal hobbies. I will ask you focused questions about your life history and experience prior to teaching at the college as well as questions directly related to your time at the college.

Are you ready to begin?

**Part 3: Questioning**
1. Please tell me about how you came to begin teaching as an adjunct faculty member.
2. What did you expect it would be like being an adjunct faculty?
   a. *Prompt:* What was the source of those expectations?
   b. *Prompt:* Has it been consistent with your expectations?
   c. *Prompt:* In what ways has it been different from what you expected?
3. Describe your responsibilities as an adjunct faculty member.
4. Describe how you fit these responsibilities in with your other life roles/responsibilities.
   a. *Prompts* (depending on their response to the responsibilities question above)-
      when/where do you do your grading? When/where do you teach? When/where do you meet with students? When/where do you prepare?
5. Can you describe some ways in which being an adjunct has impacted the other parts of
   your life?
6. Do you keep your adjunct responsibilities separate from your other responsibilities and
   roles or do they commingle? Can you provide some examples?
7. Can you tell me about a time when your work and family borders became commingled?
   a. *Prompt:* What happened? How did you feel?
8. Ideally, what would a healthy work-life balance be like for you?
9. What strategies do you employ to help achieve work-life balance?
10. Describe the factors that support you in your attempts to achieve work-life balance.
11. Can you describe a way in which your family either has helped or made it challenging to
    attain work-life balance? Can you provide another example?
12. Can you describe a way in which your colleagues either have helped or made it
    challenging to attain work-life balance? Can you provide another example?
13. Can you give me an example of a time when you found it difficult to balance your work
    as an adjunct faculty member and other responsibilities/roles/interests (work and home)
    and how you have negotiated this challenge.
14. Can you tell me about a situation where you faced a challenge as an adjunct instructor.
      What did you do? Did you discuss it with anyone?
   b. *Prompt:* Can you tell me another situation where you faced a challenge.
   c. *Prompt:* What other challenges have you faced?

15. Describe your sense of connection to the school.

16. Please describe your relationship with other adjunct faculty members, full-time faculty,
    administrators, and students at the College.
   a. *Prompt:* How do you think you are viewed by others at the College?

17. Please tell me about a positive experience you have had as an adjunct faculty member.

18. Is there anything you would like to add about your roles as adjunct instructor, family
    member, and full-time professional that I haven’t asked?

**Part 4: Wrap-up**

Thank you. This concludes the questions for the interview. If I come across a need to ask you
any follow-up questions, which would most likely only be the case if I felt clarification was
needed in regards to one of your responses, would it be alright for me to contact you?
Sometime over the next month I will email you a word-for-word transcript and my initial
interpretations of both interviews. If you choose, you can review the information, and you will
have one week to provide me with any feedback, alterations, or corrections. Can you please
confirm the email address you would like for me to email the transcript to?

Once this thesis studies complete, which will most likely be in 3 to 6 months from now, would
you like to receive an electronic copy of the document?

Do you have any questions for me? If not, thank you so much for your participation in this
study.

*(Audio recording ends)*
Appendix E:

Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study

This study involves the audio taping of the interviews. Neither the name nor other identifying information about the participant will be associated with the recordings or the transcript. Only the researcher will listen to the recordings.

A professional transcriber who will not be given the name of the participant will transcribe the recording. Once the transcription is checked for accuracy, the recording will be erased. Interview transcripts may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written documents that result from the study. However, neither the name nor any other identifying information, such as voice of the participant, will be used in such presentations or documents. Furthermore, immediately following the interview the participant will be given the opportunity to have the tape erased either entirely or in part.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Student Researcher Mark Gould via phone at 978-701-2790 or by email at gould.m@husky.neu.edu. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Tova Sanders (Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115) by email at t.sanders@neu.edu.

If you have any questions, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115; tel. 617-373-7570; email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Please check one of each of these options.

Transcription of the interview

☐ I consent to having my taped interview transcribed into written form.

☐ I do not consent to having my taped interview transcribed into written form.

Use of transcriptions

☐ I consent to the use of the written transcription of my interview in presentations and written documents resulting from this study, provided that neither my name nor other identifying information will be associated with the transcript.

☐ I do not consent to the use of the written transcription of my interview in presentations and written documents resulting from this study.

Signature of participant ________________________________ Date __________________

I hereby agree to abide by the participant’s instructions as indicated above.

Printed name of person above ________________________________
Appendix F:

NIH Human Subject Training Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Mark Gould successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 12/17/2014

Certification Number: 1637155