EXAMINING HOW FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME FACULTY MAKE SENSE OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES WITH, AND RELATIONSHIPS TO, EACH OTHER AS FACULTY MEMBERS AT THE SAME COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A Doctoral Thesis Presented

by

Rachel Lyke

to the

Graduate 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
December 4, 2019
Table of Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................................. 7
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................ 8
Chapter One: Introduction to the Study and Theoretical Framework ............................................. 10
  Statement of the Problem .................................................................................................................. 11
  Justification of Research Problem .................................................................................................. 12
  Deficiencies in Evidence .................................................................................................................. 14
  Relating the Discussion to the Audience ....................................................................................... 14
  Research Question .......................................................................................................................... 16
    Sub Questions ................................................................................................................................ 16
    Definitions of Key Terminology .................................................................................................... 16
  Theoretical Framework .................................................................................................................... 18
    Critics of Role Theory .................................................................................................................... 21
    Rationale for Using Role Theory .................................................................................................. 22
    Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 23
Chapter Two: Literature Review ...................................................................................................... 24
  Introduction ...................................................................................................................................... 24
  Role Theory ..................................................................................................................................... 26
    Role Expectations and Ambiguity .................................................................................................... 27
    Total Role Concept ....................................................................................................................... 29
    Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 30
  Increasing Presence of Adjunct Faculty .......................................................................................... 31
    Roles and Expectations of Adjunct Faculty ................................................................................... 32
    Importance of Resources ............................................................................................................... 33
    Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 34
  Faculty Identities ............................................................................................................................... 35
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chapter Three: Research Design</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative Research Approach</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Tradition</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criteria for Qualitative Research</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Audit</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Reflexivity and Transparency</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evolution of Identity Related to Participant Population</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identified Role</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time and Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Development ................................................................. 116
Faculty Meetings as Opportunities for Connection and Understanding ........ 117
Desire for Variety ............................................................................ 118
Recommendations for Practice .......................................................... 119
  Provide Deeper, More Regular Asynchronous Interactions and Development
  Opportunities .............................................................................. 119
  Online Faculty Forums ................................................................. 119
  Centralize and Digitize Information .................................................... 121
  Seeking Faculty Input .................................................................... 122
  Provide Clear Definition of Role Expectations .................................... 123
Implications for Personal Practice ...................................................... 125
Recommendations for Future Research ................................................ 126
Conclusion ....................................................................................... 129

Appendices
  Appendix A: Initial Request Email ..................................................... 132
  Appendix B: Recruitment Letter to Community College Faculty Members .... 134
  Appendix C: Consent Form ............................................................... 136
  Appendix D: Interview Protocol .......................................................... 141
  Appendix E: Member Check Form ...................................................... 143
References ....................................................................................... 144
Abstract

Higher education no longer consists of a traditional student body, a venue, a method of delivery and a single faculty population (Betts & Heaston, 2014). Colleges and universities increasingly depend on conditional, non-tenure track adjuncts who frequently lack resources, development and training (Smith, 2015, p. 236). Two-thirds of all college and university instructors in the United States are non-tenured or off-tenure track faculty, commonly referred to as contingent faculty (Gappa, 2000; Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Kezar & Sam, 2013). This increase corresponds with a decrease in full-time faculty positions at some higher education institutions. The 2006 American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Contingent Faculty Index reported that between 1995 to 2003, full-time, tenured faculty positions declined by more than 2000 (AAUP 2006).

Although there is literature about adjunct populations (Lorenzetti, 2016) and adjunct onboarding (Shattuck, Dubins, & Zilberman, 2011), the experiences community college part-time1 and full-time faculty have as they teach on the same campus has been mostly ignored. Community colleges tend to use a large number of adjunct faculty with professional (as opposed to traditionally academic) backgrounds to train skilled, vocational workers for the professional environment (Milliron & Wilson, 2004). It is vital to include research on how faculty interact with one another, and how these interactions affect perceived individual roles on campus. Role Theory will be applied to this study in order to show that individual experiences contribute to individual satisfaction and the role that one assigns to him or herself as a colleague and educator.

Keywords: Faculty, Adjunct, Tenure, Professional Relationships, Lived Experiences, Professional Development, Community College, Role Theory

---

1 The terms “part-time,” “adjunct,” and “part-time adjunct” are used interchangeably throughout this study.
Acknowledgements

I applied to this program about a month after finding out I was pregnant with my first child and was accepted when I was approximately four and a half months along. Having followed this slightly insane timeline, it became abundantly clear that there was no way I could be a successful doctoral student without support (and caffeine). First and foremost, I want to thank my husband, Scott. You have encouraged every single one of my academic pursuits, and there have been several. From using your technical skills to find a paper I was sure I had deleted, to believing in me when I was going through serious imposter syndrome, to being completely ready to take on hundreds of daddy-daughter days so I could do my school work on the weekends, you are the epitome of integrity and love. I am forever grateful for you.

Speaking of my weekend school work sessions, I have to thank the employees of Panera and Starbucks in Wallingford, Connecticut. I am very sorry that I took up your tables for up to seven hours at a time while completing discussion board posts, papers, and an entire dissertation. I promise to continue my patronage, just in much shorter doses.

I would like to thank my parents, Ronald and Marianne Goldfarb. Truly putting into words the love and appreciation I have for you would take an entire chapter of this study. I may never be able to show how deeply I respect you both for your intelligence, compassion, humor, kindness, and love. You are who I hope to be when I grow up.

Thank you to all of the wonderful and supportive people I have met in this doctoral program. There have been numerous fellow students and faculty members who have inspired me and pushed me to be the best version of myself. In particular, thank you to Kirsten Bilas, my friend. You provided me with such support and encouragement, and I am forever grateful that
we met in class and were able to spend our residencies together. Thank you to my advisors and readers with whom I quite literally could not have completed this work. Dr. Ricardo Valdez, Dr. Michael Thomas, Dr. Mounira Morris, and Dr. Jennifer Lawlor will always be the people I refer to when I think of who provided me with the support, extremely beneficial constructive criticism, and tools I needed to accomplish my goal.

Finally, to my daughter, Sophie. You have never known me when I was not a student. Frankly, you have been completely unsupportive. You never seemed to care that I had deadlines. I am fairly certain that you timed your teething around my assignment schedule. During the two courses I completed before you were born, your insistence on making me nauseous just as I sat down to work was irritating at best. However, hoping that mommy’s slightly dark sense of humor was passed on to you, I want you to know how deep my love for you lives. I would do anything for you, and I cannot wait to watch you grow. Even though I am finished with school, we can still shout “Dissertation! Dissertation!” on Sunday mornings.
Chapter One

Introduction to the Study and Theoretical Framework

A phenomenon in higher education has been the “two-tier employment structure” (Benjamin, 2010) which includes part-time adjunct faculty and full-time, tenure track full-time faculty. The higher education environment has seen a significant shift over the last few decades from a full-time majority to most instructors falling into the part-time, non-tenure track category (Eagen, Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015). Traditionally, community colleges use adjunct faculty more than other higher education institutions (Antony & Valadez, 2002), with reports indicating that as of 2011 nearly 70% of faculty at community colleges were adjuncts (Jolley, Cross and Bryant, 2014). They are essential players in the task of creating and promoting learning environments (Kezar & Sam, 2010). According to Gappa, Austin and Trice (2007), faculty as a collective whole are the most valuable asset to a higher education institution.

The lack of willingness from full-time faculty to teach introductory classes coupled with their increasing rates of retirement (Lindholm, 2004) played a role in the decision of colleges and universities to increase hiring of adjunct faculty (Karmen, 1978). Additionally, this transitional increase has been directly related to the appearance of previously underrepresented student populations who are creating a demand for online degree programs as well as satellite campuses in rural and international settings (Leslie, 2002). As is sometimes the case in hiring nurse educators to teach clinical courses, adjunct faculty nurses are valued and being hired at increasing rates due to their professional experiences (Woodworth, 2017). However, Eagan, Jr., Jaeger, and Grantham (2015) explain that the increase in hiring did not necessarily correspond with an increase in resources or “supportive policies” (p. 448). Little is known, however, about
the perceptions of the tenure track of their part-time peers. In some cases, full-time faculty receive the majority of interaction with university staff and administrators, while adjuncts tend to arrive to campus “under cover of darkness, rarely participating in the intellectual dialogue of the institution” (Popper, 1997, p. 83). The aim of this Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis is to use the data collected from a sampling of full and part-time faculty from various academic departments at a single community college to identify how socially defined categories influence everyday activities and relationships. Without assuming satisfaction or dissatisfaction amongst the population being studied, the research presented in this study strives to begin a conversation of faculty sensemaking that is as substantial and effective as that which exists on onboarding and online learning.

**Statement of the Problem**

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the hiring of part-time adjunct faculty at community colleges and four-year universities. This change in traditional academia has been quite noticeable, but little has been investigated or written about how part-time and full-time faculty have adjusted to such a co-existence. The omission is problematic in that a lack of such assessment has the potential for creating campus cultures of professional segregation and biased hierarchy. A study of the lived experiences of and relationships between the two groups creates “more supportive policies and practices targeted toward part-time faculty” (Eagan, Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015), as well as full-time faculty. Marks and MacDermid’s (1996) argument for role balance suggests that seemingly contradictory role facets such as full-time research vs. part-time instruction, may actually become complimentary when faculty collaborate and engage in regular interactions (Neumann, 1992). Sensemaking is the ability to make sense of a situation or thought and to shape the way others make sense (Whittle, Housley, Gilchrist, Mueller, & Lenney, 2015,
Engaging both of these strategies as well as a theoretical framework of Role Theory in the analysis of lived experiences of adjunct and full-time faculty at a single community college provides a rich understanding of the cultural climate of a given institution, as well as ideas for future leadership and engagement activities (Ancona, 2011).

**Justification of Research Problem**

Higher education faculty teaching positions are very often being filled with part-time adjuncts, going against the historical trends that favored full-time, tenure track faculty (Lewis & Wang, 2015). While there has been a significant amount of literature written on adjunct faculty onboarding training and the reasons why people choose to teach on a part-time basis (Lewis & Wang, 2013; Lewis & Wang, 2015; Fulton, 2000; Lindholm, 2004), there is a lack of research considering relationships between full-time and part-time faculty members. University administrators often see hiring part-time instructors as a cost saving action because they are paid by course and very often do not receive benefits (Benjamin, 2002; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Lewis & Wang, 2013; Wallin, 2004). Hiring this way treats adjunct faculty as outside contractors who receive lower wages and no employee benefits such as insurance and retirement (Dolan, et al., 2013). Adjunct faculty often feel unvalued due these cost-cutting measures, comparing their professional value to a “Walmart model” (Bakley & Brodersen, 2017). There is a fear among part-time, non-contract faculty that although their hiring is seen as beneficial, in a budget crisis they could and are often the first on the chopping block (Fulton, 2000, p. 40).

Low wage and minimal (if any) health benefits handicap the ability of adjunct faculty to be successful in their work (Benjamin, 2002). Although many adjunct faculty report feeling
highly committed to and satisfied with their teaching roles, “many are understandably dissatisfied with their compensation and opportunities to keep up with their fields” (Benjamin 1998b). Rutz, Condon, Iverson, Manduca, and Willett (2012) found that faculty status and an individual’s perception of his or her place within the university, specifically in relation to job security, play a role in the effectiveness of his or her teaching. This study aimed to examine professional experiences and relationships of faculty, which included those they have with their students as well as one another. Jepsen, Varhegyi, and Teo (2015) found that certain learners, specifically those that possess dominant reflector or activist styles of learning, are influenced in their perceptions of teaching quality. They explain that there is a belief among some experts in the field that when students perceive their instructors to be of a “higher quality” (regardless of actual teaching ability), the students are more likely to “adopt high quality approaches to their learning” (p. 579).

Stryker (1968) explained that an absence of role balance amongst faculty can prioritize roles and role-sets in a hierarchical, siloed imbalance. Without assuming that conflict exists, the purpose of this study is to begin to develop an understanding of how part-time adjunct faculty and full-time, tenure track faculty are interacting and perceiving one another and their own roles in higher education. There is a demonstrated need for administrators and department chairs to understand the experiences of their full-time and part-time faculty, as a sole focus on only one group would limit the possibility for creating a culture of inclusiveness and professional respect. Recommendations listed in Chapter 5 of this study can provide practical and effective solutions to creating cohesive, collaborative, and highly productive faculty.
Deficiencies in Evidence

Much has been researched and written about the onboarding and training of adjuncts at both brick and mortar institutions and online schools (Deigel, 2013; Rich, 2016; Lion & Stark, 2010; Shattuck, Dubins & Zilberman, 2011; Lorenzetti, 2016; Malik, 2015; Niess, 2011). Adjunct faculty satisfaction has been studied significantly (Hardy & Laanan, 2006; Antony & Valadez, 2002; Townsend & LaPaglia, 2000; Eagan, Jaeger & Grantham, 2015; Rich, 2016), but the canon is limited by the one-sidedness that ignored how full-time faculty perceive and interact with their part-time counterparts. Ott and Cisneros (2015) compared faculty relationships and workplace interactions, but did so solely with full-time faculty (non-tenure track and tenure line). Glaringly missing from the topic of faculty satisfaction is a conversation that includes part-time, adjunct faculty. This study seeks to fill the gap through an exploration of the experiences of adjunct and full-time faculty after they have been onboarded and trained. The very absence of this academic phenomenon from current research is a problem in itself that requires immediate attention.

Relating the Discussion to the Audience

Research on faculty experiences will “contribute to better institutional policymaking” (ASHE, 2010, p. 48) on the part of department chairs, deans, and college and university administrators. According to Harvey, Sigerstad, Kuffel and Keaton (2006), possessing a critical understanding of faculty experiences and roles and “identifying the critical needs” (p. 230) associated with the various faculty categories benefits college and university administrators in their overall personnel costs. While there has been research which shows that department chairs often do not provide support to their adjunct faculty (Banachowski, 1996; Gappa, Austin &
Trice, 2007; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Wallin, 2004), Diegel (2013) determined through a study of adjuncts and college administrators that department chairs and mentors were the most valuable individuals as it relates to onboarding and retaining adjuncts. Bidwell (1957) found that mentors and chairs had a rather dominant role in the academic system through an ability to utilize role expectations in order to define behaviors of their faculty. A vested interest in the professional satisfaction of adjunct faculty by their superiors is key to creating a positive working environment. In order to avoid a one-sided solution, it is imperative that administrators consider the experiences of all of their faculty. Finkelstein and Cummings (2012) found in a study examining the view of American faculty and their perception of their universities, that middle managers, department chairs, and deans held pervasive and relatively strong roles in research, “budgeting, new program development, and administrator selection” (p. 57). The gap in dates of these studies provides an indication that the way in which adjunct faculty are both valued and supported has shifted.

Too often, examinations of professional development and personal feelings of satisfaction are seen as insignificant compared to the research and teaching responsibilities of faculty, particularly those whose status is greatly dependent on publication. An investigation into the extrinsic contributors to job satisfaction (and dissatisfaction) such as compensation, advancement opportunities, and professional relationships (Kalleberg, 1977) will benefit the entire college campus as well as the individual instructor. Given that faculty role stressors have been linked with negative consequences such as occupational strain and increased rates of leaving academia (Lease, 1999), it should be of particular interest to supervisors and administrators, including faculty affairs and human resource professionals, to understand how instructors are coping in a diverse academic landscape. This study is situated within the
theoretical framework of Role Theory and identifies the professional experiences of different
groups of faculty at a community college.

Research Question

The primary research question for this study of faculty was: “How do faculty members, 
both adjunct and full-time, make sense of their professional experience and relationship to each 
other as faculty members at the same community college?” In order to gather a deeper 
understanding of faculty relationships and experiences, the sub-questions below were asked. 
Given the four categories of adjunct faculty (Lorenzetti, 2016) and the complexity associated 
with such diversity, an additional sub-question specifically for that population was also asked. 
The purpose of this question is to understand the evolution of and connection between behaviors, 
tasks, roles, and identities of community college faculty.

Sub Questions

1. What sort of expectations or stereotypes do adjunct and full-time faculty perceive are 
   associated with their respective titles?
2. What are your regular interactions with faculty of the opposite group?
3. How well do you feel your college does in providing professional development to all 
   faculty?

Specifically for Adjuncts

1. Why have you chosen to teach part-time?

Definitions of Key Terminology

According to Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2000), terms that are used which may not 
be understood by those outside of his or her field of study should be explicitly defined. The 
following key terms are commonly used in this study and require such definition in order to 
allow others to comprehend how such terms relate to the topic.
Adjunct Faculty—Those whose major responsibility is not related to the institution in question; faculty who are customarily assigned one or two classes with class-related responsibility only (AAUP)

Collaboration—Work jointly with others especially in an intellectual endeavor (Merriam-Webster)

Community College—A two-year government-supported college that offers an associate’s degree (Merriam-Webster)

Full-Time Faculty—Faculty who work about fifty-five hours a week with responsibilities outside of the classroom including student advising and research (AAUP)

Identity—An internalized and byproduct of a given role (Stryker & Burke, 2000); Identity can be achieved when one exhibits the knowledge and behavior associated with a given community (Baker & Lattuca, 2000)

Mentoring—Programming or individual interactions revolved around classroom teaching and academic career development (AAUP)

Professional Development—Activities that improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of academic subjects they teach and enable [them] to become highly qualified; (Hirsch, 2006)

Role—The function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular situation (Peters, Nestadt, & McHugh, 2017)

Tenured Appointment—Indefinite appointment that can be terminated only for cause or under extraordinary circumstances such as financial exigency and program discontinuation (AAUP)

Tenure-Track—A professor’s pathway to job security (AAUP)
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study is Role Theory. Role Theory is a sociological perspective that stems from the social psychology field. Originating in the early 20th century (Zai, 2015), it considers the organization of the individual as well as the collective group (Turner, 2001) and how tasks and responsibilities form roles, which in turn are often used to stereotype and define categories of people (p. 233). Hinden (2007) describes Role Theory as a sociological theoretical perspective that utilizes a theatre metaphor, referencing the way in which individuals act out prescribed behaviors. Stryker’s (2001) depiction of the theatre metaphor envisions actors reading scripts that have been “written by culture and shaped by evolutionary adaptation” (p. 211). Early proponents of Role Theory such as Georg Simmel, George Herbert Mead, Ralph Linton, and Jacob Moreno often differed in their use of role terms, which has drawn criticism to it over the years. Mead, for example, stated that the content of one’s world varies when social interactions and relationships themselves shift (Brown, 1952). Linton focused on the relationship between the aging process and the transformation of roles (Linton, 1942). The modern primary focus of Role Theory is to provide an explanation of how the performance of everyday activities is in fact the acting out of socially defined categories. In regard to faculty experiences in the less traditional academy that has welcomed (at high rates) faculty who do not meet the previously upheld trajectory of full-time professors and educators, the idea that one’s basic tasks can influence his or her role in the larger organization is incredibly relevant.

Role-related stress as a result of workplace and social environment interactions has also been studied (Richards & Levesque-Bristol, 2016) by those examining faculty development. There has been a significant use of Role Theory in sociological and anthropological research,
though the concept of the role has been debated amongst authors. Role negotiations in organizations emphasize how supervisors and their employees negotiate specialized arrangements and job flexibility (Meiners, 2018). The primary focus of studies utilizing Role Theory examines patterned and characteristic social behaviors, assumed identities, and understood scripts and expectations (Biddle, 1986). Meiners (2018) suggested that roles initially emerge and continually evolve as individuals share information and influence one another (p. 29). In the case of role conflict in the workplace, scholars found that negotiation amongst supervisors and their employees decreased the rate of which these issues will occur (Major & Morganson, 2011).

Role Theory consists of several sub-categories: Functional Role Theory; Symbolic Interactionist Role Theory, Structural Role Theory, Cognitive Role Theory, and Organizational Role Theory. Organizational Theory, for example, assumes that roles within an organization are associated with social positions and “generated by normative expectations” (Biddle, 1986, p. 77) that reflect the demands of small groups as well as the organization as a whole. However, this particular category of Role Theory is limited by its assumption that all conflicts will be worked out and the participants will be happy with the outcomes (p. 74). Interactional Role Theory understands that the “patterning of social interaction among individuals and groups of individuals” (Turner, 2001, p. 234) is a basis for identifying role assumptions. This particular category considers the inequality of valued and devalued roles, which presents a larger and more complex question of what are the characteristics that make up each type of role? Structural Role Theory would not be effective for this study as its focus rests more on the environment than the individual. Symbolic Interactionist Role Theory, however, focuses on the evolution of roles through social interactions and the development of role identities in informal and formal settings.
(Gordon, 1976). The study outlined here utilized Symbolic Interactionist Role Theory to form a deeper dimension of the understanding into how one’s role identity as full-time or part-time faculty member affects daily professional experiences. Once the interviews have been conducted, a Role Theory lens was applied to the data of this study to provide a deep comprehension of how professional experiences are able to represent role behaviors and stressors of community college faculty.

Biddle (1986) provided insight into overall Role Theory through the explanation that human behavior is determined by one’s “social identity” (p. 68) as well as the situation that one is in. Zai (2015) explained that expectations are often considered to be “the impetus behind roles and have ultimately guided individual behavior” (p. 10). Turner (2001), when examining the basis of the understanding as an individual’s role in society, explained that one may act and feel different depending upon the group one is with (p. 233). Throughout the analysis phase of Turner’s study, the experiences of faculty participants at a community college vary or even alter depending upon the people he or she is with. Zai’s (2015) research on academic librarians utilized Role Theory as a way to redefine their roles within higher education due to the restructuring of the focus of their roles “from access to expertise” (p. 1). With advances in technology and the ability to access references without setting foot in a library, the “broader instructional role” (p. 20) of academic librarians has redefined the entire profession.

Both Role Theory and this study are emic in nature, in that they examined phenomena from within a specific social group. Berry (1999) attests that an emic approach to research permits an understanding of the way in which a language or culture is constructed…helps one to understand individuals in their daily lives, including their attitudes, motives,
interests and personality…[and] provides the only basis upon which a predictive science of behavior can be expected to make some of its greatest progress, since even statistical predictive studies will in many instances prove invalid” (p. 41; p. 167).

**Critics of Role Theory**

Nabers (2011) criticizes Role Theory by stating that it is actually not a theoretical framework, but rather, a group of “interrelated, yet sometimes contradictory, concepts” (p. 75), citing the various approaches within Role Theory. For instance, within Role Theory exists two approaches to identifying the root definition of one’s role: structuralist and functional. The structuralist standpoint attests that roles are created and subsequently influenced by societal norms, whereas the functional standpoint concludes that roles stem from “shared, normative expectations that prescribe and proscribe behavior” (Nabers, 2011, p. 75).

Biddle’s (1979) writings on Role Theory preemptively echoed Nabers with a concession that much ambiguity exists within the framework. For instance, he cites the various and sometimes contradictory definitions that scholars have of the term “expectations” as it relates to role expectations of individuals, groups, and the other. Role expectations vary, Biddle explains, depending if they are of the individual as opposed to the collective (p. 6), and so they can be situational, societal or personal. He explains that this is a result of many of the terms used in Role Theory stemming from the common language. While this is not completely problematic, it does leave quite a bit of grey area related to interpretation.
Rationale for Using Role Theory

The topic of faculty relationships and experiences has the potential to be approached from an etic perspective, that is, a focus on how faculty roles are perceived by outside groups such as students, department chairs, or those external from the academic setting. However, such an exploration would not result in applicable outcomes that have the potential to positively affect faculty culture at community colleges. The role one assigns to him or herself is telling, and the role-sets that one develops with colleagues and supervisors stem from regular interactions as well as the perceived status of the individuals (Richards & Levesque-Bristol, 2016).

Furthermore, the structural foundations and social problems of organizations must be assessed along with the more individual and personal aspect of role (Piliavin, Grube, & Callero, 2002). Just as one should repair the broken bridge along with saving the drowning victim, in the case of a study of the roles of higher education faculty, it is imperative to examine all faculty in order to avoid only fixing half of the problem.

Understanding the perspective of the subject as opposed to that of the “other” allowed for a holistic and fully grounded basis for change. External expectations placed on an individual that are based on his or her assigned role could greatly differ from those that one holds for himself or herself. In the case of faculty roles and expectations, even the type of adjunct one can be defined as, will carry its own expectations. Given that roles create expectations, analyzing the interview data with a Role Theory lens will foster the start of a conversation of how one’s role as an educator in higher education directly affects his or her professional experiences and interactions.
Conclusion

A qualitative Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis study of the experiences and relationships of community college part and full-time faculty warrants, if not requires, a theoretical framework that promotes an understanding of expectations, categories, and behaviors. Understanding the “how” of how an individual or group makes sense of relationships, experiences and roles provides a connection between the categories. Past separation of and inequality between the two groups, correlated with the inevitability that they will be working closer and closer as adjuncts are hired and tenured faculty retire, suggests that faculty development studies must include both groups in order to achieve legitimacy. This particular study took the data coming from story-telling of part-time and full-time community college faculty and analyzed it through a lens that questions where behaviors come from, how they are perceived, how groups make sense of their experiences and relationships, and in terms of faculty development, what administrators and community college leaders can do to create professional growth amongst all of their instructors.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Just as the higher education student population has changed through the inclusion of adult learners and those who have greatly benefited from online and distance learning (Miller, 2017), so has the make-up of college faculty and the prevalence of adjunct faculty (Jolley, Cross & Bryant, 2014), particularly at community colleges (Fagan-Wilen, Springer, Ambrosino, & White, 2006). The 1947 President’s Commission on Higher Education, known as “The Truman Commission” addressed issues of low enrollments, racism, antifeminism, access issues, and financial barriers in higher education (Gilbert & Heller, 2013). For example, the current Title IV of the Higher Education Act, which was originally created to offer financial aid and loan opportunities, was a piece of the Commission’s report. The Commission encouraged the expansion of the two-year junior college (currently known commonly as the “community college”), which could help to accommodate a growing student population, better local economies, and serve the interests of both the local community and the entire state through education (p. 431).

From the Commission’s creation and promotion of the modern community college have come institutions of higher learning that have often provided vocational training and the skills and education necessary for one to transfer to a four-year college or university. Community colleges present opportunities for education for those who face financial, familial, or geographic obstacles. With open admissions policies for most programs, access did not often present as an issue for those planning to attend community college. The student population has drastically changed as it is often made up of minorities, adults, and those whose desire to remain close to home often come from the need to work and/or take care of family members (Bragg, 2001).
Miller and Tuttle (2006) have written on the importance of the rural community college, for example, as an agent for creating “adult self-identity reformation” (p. 66).

Community college faculty, according to Levin et al (2010), were central to the mission of the two-year college through their roles as “essential contributors to student outcomes” as well as “student development and attainment” (p. 54). Although community college faculty equally contribute to the two-year college mission, discrepancies in participation and engagement exist. Latz and Mulvihill (2011) found in a survey on community college faculty development that full-time faculty were significantly more likely to read scholarly journals, attend conferences and Brown Bag presentations, and visit Centers for Teaching and Learning. However, adjunct faculty were most interested in improving their teaching skills (p. 33). These findings are encouraging given that adjuncts sometimes lack formal training in pedagogy. Recognizing the importance of all community college faculty, there is a need to gain understanding of how they make sense of their experiences, relationships, limitations, and roles in order to promote job satisfaction, retention, and growth. The literature review was designed to address the following categories: Role Theory and Total Role Concept, the roles, expectations and the increased hiring of adjunct faculty, full-time faculty identities, the importance of resources and mentorship as they relate to faculty experiences, role identities and stereotypes, social roles, and studies regarding faculty satisfaction.
Role Theory

A qualitative study of community college faculty situated within the framework of Role Theory measures not just satisfaction, but how one’s role and subsequent identity challenge, encourage, and/or inhibit experiences and relationships. Role and identity are internalized and externalized in both nature and practice (Baker & Lattuca, 2010). Baker and Lattuca (2000) state that identity can be achieved when one exhibits the knowledge and behavior associated with a given community. Acceptance of the meanings and expectations of said role are also necessary to the development of identity (p. 819). From a social psychological perspective, roles are external to the individual whereas identity is more internalized and more of a byproduct of a given role (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Reynolds’ (1992) explanation of the socialization and acculturation process of the newcomer, which she refers to as “social interdependence” occurs when sense is made of “self, other, and relationship to the other” (p. 638). In a professional setting, a role can thereby be bestowed onto an individual either by him/herself, co-workers, or even the institution.

In her book, In Defense of Modernity: Complexity of Social Roles and Individual Autonomy, Rose Laub Coser (1991) explores social and cultural influences on the autonomy of defining social roles and behaviors. Coser’s explanation of the development of individual roles is that they are often easiest to define when individuals know one another, as roles are often created through a “shared definition of the relationship” (p. 1). This concept is particularly interesting when considering professional relationships, which connects individuals only to the extent to which they choose to take part in integrative behaviors and practices (Dumas, Phillips, and Rothbard, 2013).
Role Expectations and Ambiguity

Lacognata (1965) explains that roles, and more specifically, role expectations, which one either creates for himself or herself or are bestowed by others, are often related to the persons position within a given social system. He attested that human social behavior is seen as “a function of the positions an individual occupies” (p. 337), and conducted a study using role theory that examined faculty role expectations. Given the fact that this study was conducted in the early 1960s, understandably Lacognata’s 156 study subjects consisted solely of full-time faculty, as adjunct faculty hiring primarily began to increase in the 1970s (Eagen, Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015). He found amongst the population he studied that faculty from different departments may disagree on classroom instruction or disciplinary behaviors. However, the findings also suggest that simply teaching in different departments did not create barriers to role expectations. Given the diversity that now exists in the academic workforce, current research on professional interactions and roles focuses on much deeper and more complex differences. In their discussion of workplace relationships, integration, and racial dissimilarity, Dumas, Phillips, and Rothbard (2013) explained that the discovery of dissimilarities between co-workers can highlight their differences and “loom large in employees’ perceptions because people tend to give more weight to information that confirmed their preexisting ideas or conclusions” (p. 1380).

Activity and participation in the community contributed to the creation of identity (Baker & Lattuca, 2010). The role of the faculty member, Richards and Levesque-Bristol (2016) explained, can be predicted when there is an understanding of how these roles are “defined and managed” (p. 10). In Role Theory, one’s expectations of him or herself as well as what s/he expects of others determines context-specific behavior (Hindin, 2007). It is based on the prediction that personal behaviors stem from one’s social position and situation. Dependent
upon whom one is interacting with, individual behavior could vary (Turner, 2001). Examining faculty experiences and relationships through the lens of a theoretical framework that promotes the importance of roles and behaviors creates a balanced study that aligns personal story-telling with qualitative sensemaking, which is the way individuals make sense of their situations and how others perceive them (Whittle, Housley, Gilchrist, Mueller, & Lenney, 2015). Sensemaking consists of “meaning construction,” which follows when individuals interpret occurrences within and outside of their organizations (Cornelissen, 2012, p. 118).

The potential uncertainty of one’s role and professional status presents a great need for research that examines, in simplistic terms, how faculty are doing. Role conflict, role strain, and role stress are defined by Grace (1972) as results of problems that “arise as the result of role incompatibilities” (p. 2). Role conflict arises when a significant gap exists between what one wants to do versus what one must do (Drysdale, Gurr, & Goode, 2016, p. 39), as replacing a want with a need can subsequently changes one’s role. Individual incompatibility in regard to cultural contexts, community conflict or conflicting perceptions of the roles of others can also lead to such strain (Grace, 1972, p. 5).

Using Role Theory in a study of frontline managers in the retail industry, Evans (2016) argued that there was a potent connection between role stressors and the delivery, implementation, and performance of human resource management (HRM). In particular, autonomy in one’s role without mentoring from senior management along with “a lack of clarity in organizational strategy…brought about reports of role ambiguity” (p. 3143). Goode (1960) explained that role strain was felt when one’s total role system becomes too demanding, either because of the individual’s overabundance of interests or the pressures implemented by external
factors. Linville (1987), however, provided a different perspective on role stresses by stating that an overload of these factors actually prevent stress by offering opportunities for refocus. McBride, Munday, and Tunnell’s survey (2006) of 900 community college faculty in 11 states focused on job satisfaction and its relation to a propensity to leave one’s job. They found that an increase in role and meaning conflict, respectively, with one’s own role as well as the perceived roles and statures of colleagues lead to an increased propensity to leave one’s teaching position. Role conflict, according to the authors, was a stronger influence than role ambiguity (p. 157). This finding had the potential to imply that an investigation into the complexity of multiple roles and the possible redefining of them could be negative and that it is best to place people in their roles and not ask questions or reflect. In short, some may find peace in ignorance being bliss, even if they are not necessarily happy or confident. However, a lack of reflection or even conflict could result in perpetual ambiguity, which many higher education institutions that are attempting to shift away from the silo approach to leadership, would state is not a positive alternative.

**Total Role Concept**

Drysdale, Gurr, and Goode (2016) created a model of Role Theory they termed “Total Role Concept,” which merged several psychological theoretical frameworks and principles that considered the consequences that occurred when desires conflict with realities regarding their professional roles. The visual of Total Role Concept is that of four concentric circles, the outer three representing the expected, augmented, and potential expectations, respectively, and the innermost circle representing the core role that is supported by the rest. Each circle and expectation hold its own actors, influencers, and possibilities. The duties and responsibilities that exist within the core circle are fundamental to one’s role in that they are typically the logical
functions such as planning, budgeting, and problem-solving (p.42). They exist as expectations with little room for revision or compromise, as they belong to the role, not the individual. However, that which exists within the core can and often does differ between varying communities. Being an adjunct at multiple higher education institutions involves learning not only what it means to be a part-time instructor, but also what it means to be a part-time instructor for each location.

The expected circle includes the expectations that the other circles can have on a given role or position (formalized or implied). Augmented expectations are closely connected to the individual in the role, as they are what he or she believes are important and needed in order to be successful. There is, of course, the potential for expected and augmented expectations to conflict, at least at the initiation of one’s tenure. Potential expectations are often influenced from the augmented circle, and they are often, according to the authors, what can define success or failure for the individual in his or her role. Within these circles exists a conflict and collaboration between “rational decision-making, tough-minded analytical skills” and the “role-pushing” (p. 43) experimental visions.

Conclusion

Identifying what the various expectations of an individual’s role are and actively adjusting them as one’s role becomes more developed and explicit is essential for emotional and professional growth. The shift to more diverse leaders, students, and faculty on college campuses leads to inevitable ambiguity and questioning of the expectations associated with one’s role. How role influences identity and one’s feeling of connection to his or her professional
environment is a question that needs to be considered as colleges hope to retain the new crop of faculty.

**Increasing Presence of Adjunct Faculty**

Adjunct faculty are becoming the majority of faculty on campuses across the country (Bergson, 2016). The expanding number of online colleges has been a major influence in the hiring of adjunct faculty, as schools are using that population, as opposed to full-time faculty to teach the increased number of introductory courses required (Hardy, Shepard, & Pilotti, 2017; Lewis & Wang, 2015). Additionally, hiring freezes on full-time faculty have led to a valuing of the flexibility of part-time faculty (Woodworth, 2017). For any consideration of faculty relationships and experiences, it is critical to understand that part-time adjuncts come to campus with very different backgrounds, professional development experiences, and expectations than their full-time counterparts, though the goal of educating and preparing students in their chosen fields exists among adjuncts and full-time instructors.

Lorenzetti (2016) drew on the work of Howard Tuckman (1985) who created a model which separated adjunct faculty into seven categories based on their reasons for teaching part-time. Tuckman’s categories are semi-retired, graduate students, hopeful full-timers, fullmooners, homeworkers, part-mooners, and unknown, which refer to those whose rationale for teaching is not clear. Lorenzetti condensed this work and presents four categories of adjunct faculty; specialists, who are experts or professionals in their fields, freelancers, who teach part-time while holding down other full or part-time jobs, career-enders who use these teaching assignments as “pre-retirement” jobs, and aspiring academics who hope to parlay these part-time assignments into full-time teaching positions. Hollman (2013) expands upon these groups by identifying an
additional category of adjunct: The Professional Online Adjunct. This group included those who teach online for several institutions, overstepping geographic boundaries and/or university limitations that only allow adjuncts to teach a maximum number of courses at that institution. All of these categories of adjuncts are present at community colleges where they share classroom space with full-time faculty whose careers have been based in and guided by publication, teaching, and research pursuits.

**Roles and Expectations of Adjunct Faculty**

Ernst Benjamin, a senior consultant and special projects director of the American Association of University Professors, staunchly opposed the increase of adjunct faculty in higher education, citing an “over-reliance on part-time and other ‘contingent’ instructional staff” as a factor in the diminishing of “faculty involvement in undergraduate learning” (Benjamin, 2002). He explained that his dislike for the increase of adjunct faculty is not due to any perceived lack of pedagogical skills on the part of the part-timers. Rather, his belief is that a “lack of support, professional development opportunities, evaluation, and above all, involvement in student learning” (p. 3) poses a threat to the quality of education provided to students. Along with this lack of support and training, lower wages contribute to lack of professional satisfaction amongst part-time faculty. Part-time faculty earn from a third to a half of what tenured faculty make even though, particularly at community colleges and at predominantly online schools they make up about two-thirds of the faculty population (Fulton, 2000).

Landrum (2009) conducted a study in which he questioned if full-time faculty achieved higher student evaluations results and more strict grading strategies than part-time faculty. After evaluating data from 361 courses being taught in a single semester, he found that this was not the
case, and that there was no significant difference between full-time faculty and part-time faculty in these categories. Jaeger and Eagan (2011) found that the student/part-time faculty interaction during the first year of study at a public, four-year university led to poorer academic performances on the part of the students. While they acknowledge that administrators should not discontinue the use of adjunct faculty altogether, as there are several categories of adjuncts, the “quality of instruction” must be evaluated and monitored by “improving our understanding” of this group (p. 532). In 2016, only 56% of adjunct faculty reported feeling very satisfied with the support they received from their schools regarding their teaching (Yakoboski, 2016). The same report indicates that only 23% of adjunct faculty were very satisfied with the support they received for professional development (p. 54). An increase in satisfied part-time faculty “will create better working conditions for all stakeholders in the institution” (Meixner, Kruck, & Madden, 2010, p. 146).

**Importance of Resources**

Saleh and Bista (2014) found in an examination of full-time faculty satisfaction at a mid-southern public university, that while tenured and tenure-track faculty were satisfied with campus climate, collegial relationships and teaching responsibilities, they were concerned about the lack of resources or time to participate in research and service. This finding is surprising given that the responses were from full-time faculty, who tend to be perceived as being provided with the teaching and research resources that part-time faculty lack. Although it may seem simplistic, a lack of resources or proper onboarding for adjunct faculty can result in negative student experiences (p. 61). In the case of clinical nursing adjunct faculty, while they bring substantial practical experience and an eagerness to become familiar with the faculty role to their classrooms, they are often unfamiliar with campus services (Peters and Boylston, 2006).
Swafford and Waller (2018) found in a study of the resource needs of adjunct faculty teaching in dual enrollment agricultural management programs, that “without adequate teaching materials…the quality of instructional activities may also be hindered” (p. 23-24). In the scheme of feeling as though one has truly stepped into the role of a college faculty member, a lack of institutional knowledge and/or physical resources can be notable inhibitors.

**Conclusion**

Adjunct faculty face many barriers in both finding teaching positions and then being provided with necessary information. Common barriers that exist in the current literature relate to a lack of knowledge about campus resources and policies. Lack of job security, in that the absence of a contract allows for course assignments to be changed at a moment’s notice, also constitutes a barrier to success for many. Research on academic policies and a further examination of how a lack of job security affects the experiences of adjunct faculty will be beneficial for the understanding of faculty roles.

Regardless of the feelings of some who oppose the increased hiring of adjunct faculty, it cannot be denied that they play a prominent role in 21st century higher education, particularly with increases in non-traditional students and online learning. Adjuncts are making up a significant percentage of faculty, particularly at two-year community colleges, but research shows that there is a discrepancy with their levels of satisfaction related to support they receive on campus. The fact that some of the criticism of adjuncts actually falls on the lack of resources and support they receive shows that the issue is not adjuncts themselves, but rather the perception of others that they are inferior to their full-time counterparts. Based on the research in this area, it is clear that although much has been written about faculty onboarding, action is
still required in order to better onboard adjunct faculty in the same way that full-time faculty often are.

**Faculty Identities**

There is a fear among part-time, non-contract faculty that although the hiring of them is seen as a cost-saving practice, in a budget crisis they could and are often the first on the chopping block (Ott and Cisneros, 2015). Full-time faculty have been long been considered “the foundation of an institution’s academic workforce” (Ott & Cisneros, 2015, p.10) in regard to their professional stability, particularly upon receiving tenure, as well as the amount of time spent by them on “research, appointment, and service” (Bland et al, 2006 as referenced in Ott and Cisneros, 2015). Colbeck (1998) describes the role of full-time faculty as something that is socially and institutionally constructed, as well as multi-dimensional in its variety of responsibilities outside of the classroom. Full-time faculty are typically required to serve as academic advisors, committee members, and of course, researchers and publishers of scholarly work. Dillon and Fisher (2000) addressed the need for university administrators and organizations such as The National Academic and Advising Association to provide sufficient training to faculty advisors. They explained that advisors who are engaged with their students as opposed to feeling that the responsibility is a “necessary burden” (p. 16), will greatly contribute to their success.

**Maximizing Faculty Competencies**

Harvey, Novicevic, Sigerstad, Kuffel, and Keaton (2006) studied role categorization of full-time business school faculty through the framework of Role Theory, considering the perspectives of deans and other administrators. The categories they created, newcomer, fast-
tracker, solid citizen, achiever, minimalist, and overachiever, all allow for variability and variation, and according to the authors, require varying types of assessment, as well as mentorship and professional development offerings. They conclude that in the future, colleges and universities will have to maximize faculty competencies while allowing individual faculty roles to be “reflection of the institution’s enhanced competency” (p. 236).

Reynolds (1992) studied experiences of junior faculty and emphasized valuing and nurturing faculty research that diverges from a homogeneous thought collective. These examples present the viewpoint that it is imperative to consider the individual within the category, proposing that the participants define the role as opposed to the role defining the participants. Furthermore, a shift away from the homogeneous collective provided support that the concept of role identity is fluid and has the possibility to be revised with the introduction of new participants and experiences.

Reid, Sexton, and Orsi (2015) implemented Project Engage, which was a 16-month teaching enhancement program for full-time faculty. It provided them the opportunity to redesign large introductory courses in an effort to improve undergraduate student engagement. A professional development program for full-time, tenure track faculty called the New Faculty Program (NFP) was implemented at Montclair State University in an effort to acquaint new faculty with the culture of the institution as well as the promotion process (Pierce, 1998). Lindholm’s study of 36 full-time faculty members (2004) utilized theoretical frameworks of career choice to explore why the participants were attracted to careers of collegiate professorship and academic work. She concluded that from an “organizational standpoint” (p. 631) an understanding of faculty vocational decision-making would benefit (full-time) faculty recruitment. Research on full-time faculty is very important, as those who have chosen careers
in academia are rightfully regarded as content experts in their chosen fields. However, given the changing landscape of higher education it would be irresponsible for future researchers to continue to separate full-time, tenure track faculty and part-time, adjunct faculty. Woodworth (2017) addressed this in a study on satisfaction rates of nurse educators by being one of the first researchers to include adjunct faculty in the conversation.

**Importance of Mentorship**

Creating learning and development programs and opportunities without research would be ineffective and irresponsible. This, perhaps, is part of the reason why the topics of adjunct faculty onboarding and orientation (Dolan, Hall, Karlsson, & Martinak, 2013; Eliason & Holmes, 2012; Schaar, Titzer, & Beckham, 2015;) and satisfaction (Antony & Valadez, 2002) have been so significantly researched. What much of the current research fails to acknowledge is that the onboarding process does not end on one’s first day of teaching. Checking in on faculty to obtain an understanding of their professional experiences with their colleagues can lead to an “application to reflective practice” (Barnacle, 2004) at colleges and universities on part of the department chair and human resources level. Given the importance of professional mentors to the overall success of full-time and part-time faculty (Diegel, 2013), the data from this study and those that follow in its footsteps are vital to creating and maintaining cohesive and collaborative college campuses. Professional development of faculty as a topic of research has prompted examinations of the importance of teaching teachers.

**Role Identities and Stereotypes**

McCafferty (2014) stated that “developing communities of learning both within classes and institutions” (p. 22) is a cornerstone of online learning. When educators enhanced their
pedagogical training through professional development, student learning was greatly enhanced (Rutz et al, 2012). Almost no research has been conducted on how part-time and full-time faculty interact on a daily basis, or their perceptions of one another based on their respective faculty roles and classifications. Understanding the internalization and influence of role stereotypes is valuable in any study of identity, experiences, and relationships. Cornelissen (2012) explained that the views of others can strongly affect how individuals frame their roles, particularly when those views “conflict with the professional’s own convictions and beliefs” (p. 129). Based on this interpretation, the very concept of “role” is in itself dual and vulnerable to outside influence. However personal it may be to the individual, even from the very beginning, one’s role is not his or hers alone.

One’s job allows the individual to view the world from a specific vantage point, thus creating his or her narrative and career identity. Jones (2010) explained that “identities emerge as a result of interaction and negotiations” (p. 3). For those who have received their Ph.D. or Ed.D. in the pursuit of academic careers, the faculty identity began to form while completing their doctoral program. While in graduate school, doctoral students become familiar not only with the content of their respective disciplines, but also funding processes, institutional culture, and their future roles as teachers and researchers (Baker and Lattuca, 2010). According to Austin and McDaniels (2006) the role one possesses while involved in graduate school is a desired outcome of the socialization within one’s cohort. Piliavin, Grube, and Callero (2002) utilized role theory in research on volunteering and how “commitment to prosocial role identities develops, and how such identities lead to prosocial actions” (p. 473). Through their study they highlighted the conflicting roles that exist within the volunteerism community. Roles conflict, they attest, due to varying motivations, past experiences, and definitions of what it means to be a
good volunteer. These concepts add complexity and depth to the roles of “full-time” and “part-time” that far exceed pay rates, teaching hours, or credit hours.

Townsend and LaPaglia’s (2000) study of academic perception amongst 311 community college faculty across seven institutions found that the way two-year and four-year faculty made sense of their positions was that while neither group felt personally marginalized, the former felt the latter saw them as such. Sensemaking of one’s experiences enables not just the individual, but also his or her mentors and leaders, to obtain a strong understanding of the dynamics of a given environment (Ancon, 2011). This understanding ultimately led to the creation and implementation of leadership activities that involve “visioning, relating, and inventing” (p. 3). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have recently been found to meet the professional needs of online faculty who desire onboarding and community connection even while teaching in a virtual setting (Bedford & Rossow, 2017). Just as how adult education requires a recognition and use of the experiences of the non-traditional students, (Pierce, 1998), so does the professional development of faculty require an appreciation of the experiences and relationships that they have in their professional environments.

While a great amount of literature has been written about adjunct faculty satisfaction (Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007; Banachowski, 1996; Wallin, 2004; Fountain, 2005), and studies exist that focus on full-time faculty engagement and teaching abilities, it is apparent that a conversation surrounding how professional identities affect their interactions and relationships is lacking from the overall literature. Jones (2013) is one of few researchers who have considered the effect of an increased adjunct population on full-time faculty. Through his study of Canadian full-time faculty, he found that overall they were not negatively impacted by adjunct faculty or
any other academic support positions because of the differing terms of employment and representation.

Social Roles

Social roles are implicit in everyday behavior and language (Coser, 1991). Labeling someone a teacher, according to Coser, implies that the person “occupies a position entailing specific demands and rewards (status) and that the person teaches (task), but also that in doing so he or she relates to students (role)” (p. 3). While this definition may be applicable to K-12 teachers, there is still a question of what it means to be a college instructor. What does it mean to be a teacher who also conducts research or advises students? What does it mean to teach a class after working a full day as a consultant or accountant? The roles of full-time and part-time faculty are highly complex. College faculty operate in such a multi-faceted realm of tasks, behaviors, and relationships, that giving them only the singular role of “teacher” would assume that they do not navigate through and perform multiple activities and tasks in any given day.

Marks and MacDermid (1996) expertly questioned if an over commitment to multiple roles results in personal conflict and a moving away from the role that one finds most fulfilling. For example, faculty who teach service-learning immersion courses in which they live and work with their students in locations often quite far away from their home campuses, often take on the roles of “mentor, placement coordinator, community liaison, discussion and reflection facilitator, troubleshooter, evaluator, and advisor” (Warner and Esposito, 2008, p. 510). Daffron’s (2010) piece on the dual identity of faculty who also hold coordinator and director level administrative roles at their universities points out the pressures this particular population endures. He explained that while some faculty he interviewed stated that holding dual roles deterred
boredom, others did admit that possessing the identity of a chameleon on campus required a mentor who could assist them in dealing with any negative feelings associated with “no longer feeling at home” (p. 3) in their departments. That is an example of when role conflict and role ambiguity are clearly interconnected and equally contribute to stress.

When everyday behaviors are directly influenced by social roles (Biddel, 1986), it became as intriguing as it was necessary to undergo a study that examined such a breakdown of roles and experiences in a relatively new population: the mixture of part-time and full-time faculty teaching at a community college. This new sampling was the innovation that faculty development needs (Bedford & Rossow, 2017) in order to be relevant, because the education of educators was perceived as critically important and a positive influence on student outcomes (Kane, Shaw, Pany, Salley, & Snider, 2016). Given the rather ambiguous nature of the role of the term “adjunct,” a study in faculty relationships is just as much an exploration of how adjuncts themselves define their roles.

Self-reflection and having the ability to define oneself, as opposed to having definitions thrust upon the individual, allowed for more honest responses (regardless of whether others agree with them). In this researcher’s own experience teaching a memoir writing class at a women’s prison located in the northeastern United States, those inmates who were given the ability to write their own stories, put their own names on paper, or even use a capital letter “S” in the word “she” to reference themselves, experienced significant catharsis and sense of self. This freedom from personal reflection came from the constant pounding from judges, lawyers, and correctional officers, to place definitions (rule-breaker, convict, bad mother) and identifiers (“inmate” or a prison identification number) on them. Toso (2006) calls prison “the place of confined, broken,
disowned, and silenced stories” (p. 20). While the everyday experiences of adjunct faculty and female prisoners differ on a level that is nearly tragic, both groups present a case for being given the opportunity to speak their truths and provide their accounts of everyday existence, whether it be behind bars or behind a desk. From a different perspective, female inmates who pursue their education while incarcerated can fall into the population that would benefit from community college education given the low cost, often open admission, and developmental level courses offered.

Briscoe (2005) explained that “a balance is always held between being enough like the rest of our group to be part of that group, but enough other for individuality” (p. 30). In Role Theory, conformity and consensus are highlighted as being connected yet unique ways that individuals in a group come to an understanding of set behaviors and functions (Zai, 2015). Consensus, however, implied that individuals have made their own decisions, whereas those displaying conformity, Zai attests, have been pressured to do so (p. 10). This aspect of Role Theory applied to a study of community college faculty adds an additional layer of understanding by determining if one group of faculty exercises an influence over the other. Examining under the lens of consensus versus conformity also provides insight into whether or not some faculty members adapt into their roles based on the actions of others, or if they have carved out their own social roles (and thereby their subsequent experiences, as the former influences the latter). Whether led by consensus or conformity, the relationships uncovered between the two groups will present understanding that has not yet been explored in faculty development literature.
**Faculty Satisfaction Studies**

Antony and Valadez (2002) conducted an empirical study of part-time faculty satisfaction, which utilized responses to determine the reasons why those participants chose to teach part-time. Their work, as well as that of Clery (2011), found that although they were paid less and did not have some of the same professional opportunities as full-time faculty, adjuncts overall displayed similar satisfaction as their counterparts. Something to consider when further examining these findings, however, is that satisfaction is affected by different influencers for the two groups of faculty. For example, DeCosta, Bergquist, Holbeck, and Greenberger (2016) found that the process of conducting student evaluations made some online full-time faculty feel that receiving feedback was fair and effective whereas others felt that the process was not scaled fairly.

As online learning has increased in popularity (and sometimes out of necessity) there has been a “rise in organizations and publications dedicated to serving the needs of online educators and exploring issues related to this evolving instructional modality” (Perry & Pilati, 2011, p. 95). Many of these studies have focused on the nursing field (Allison-Jones & Hirt, 2004; Cranford, 2013; Brannagan & Oriol, 2014; Reiners, 2012; Santisteban & Egues, 2014), which has, due to low numbers of full-time faculty, greatly increased the number of adjunct faculty being hired to teach clinical courses. For example, Santisteban and Egues (2014) found in a study of nursing adjunct faculty that basic orientation of university policies, history and statistics is not enough to fully prepare practitioners for teaching. This claim is not unique to the nursing field, as it is well-founded that continuing mentorship, development opportunities, and benefits are often needed to retain adjunct faculty (Trust, Carpenter, & Krutka, 2017).
Kelly (2006) utilized role theory in an investigation of levels of role conception, engagement, and status amongst full-time and part-time faculty in clinical nursing baccalaureate programs. By defining the theory as an action that occurs when all faculty, especially part-time faculty, are allowed “the opportunity to discussion program expectations” (p. 10) and evaluate their teaching, Kelly places engagement in a role that predicts the likelihood of instructor success and overall satisfaction. The clinical faculty role, Kelly concluded, is fostered when teaching theories and strategies were offered through professional development opportunities. It was when this happened, the study found, that both role stress and job turnover were significantly decreased (p. 12). Kelly’s study was beneficial to the nursing education canon because of the position of many nursing faculty who had spent most of their careers in clinical settings, not planning to move into higher education. It is this population of faculty and their unique roles as former practitioners turned faculty, both in the nursing and general education environments, that necessitates a reevaluation of the role of “faculty” as it had previously been defined.

**Conclusion**

Although identity, as previously presented here, can be the result of a very personal and individual categorization, it can still be greatly influenced by societal factors. Callero (1994) wrote that individuals who encompass roles (such as a faculty member) are not the only ones who have access to their role identities through the perpetuation of stereotypes. Given its nature as both an internalized and externalized aspect of one’s role, identity significantly contributes to the potential for the separation of groups and individuals based on who or what they have been determined to be.
Summation

Rich (2016) conducted interviews with 27 adjunct faculty that showed how professional inclusion, work schedule, and resources were extrinsic factors that influenced professional well-being and satisfaction. While this research certainly addresses a key transition in hiring (Eagan, Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015) in higher education, it focuses on the individual faculty member and ignores the effect that s/he has on a full-time faculty who could see him/her as either a professional threat or an accomplished colleague. The perceptions faculty have of one another’s roles as educators (and subsequent quality of teaching), be they full or part-time, can influence future best practices for creating a single faculty body. Through a study of part-time, community college sociology faculty, Curtis, Mahabir, & Vitullo (2016) concluded that administrators and full-time faculty needed to provide support and introduction to their adjunct colleagues in order to increase student success. This study and others like it, while beneficial to understanding the need for adjunct faculty inclusion, continue to promote the separation of full-time and part-time faculty.

While all faculty arrive to campus with very different backgrounds, skills, and expectations, it becomes clear after reviewing the current literature that 1) the rates of adjunct hiring continue to increase, 2) full-time and part-time faculty are working closer together than ever, and 3) it would do faculty, administrators, and students a great service to shift the conversation in a way that brings together full-time and part-time faculty rather than separate them. Roles, according to Gordon (1976), provide a basic structural component of personal and societal systems of culture, motivation, and sensemaking. Through an analysis of everyday experiences and relationships of faculty, the IPA study outlined in this dissertation provides a continuation of such work by utilizing Role Theory in the uncovering of what those influences
are and how they may differ between full and part-time individuals. The study connects the concepts of roles, identity, and the community college environment with the experiences of and relationships between full-time and part-time faculty members, whose professional co-existence is in itself a fairly recent higher education phenomenon. The study will begin the conversation of how community college administration can create a collaborative and respectful environment among faculty that will lead not only to faculty satisfaction, but also to student success. By including full-time and part-time faculty in the same study of a community college, asking them the same questions about their perceptions of the roles of themselves and their colleagues, creates a research landscape that values the collaboration of two-year faculty.
Chapter Three: Research Design

The research question that guides this qualitative IPA study is: How do faculty members, both adjunct and full-time, make sense of their professional experience and relationship to each other as faculty members at the same community college? Questions posed to participants sought to provide a comprehensive picture of how each person came to community college teaching, how individuals perceived themselves based on role and how others perceived them, and whether collaboration with colleagues (or lack thereof) influenced the sensemaking of identity and feelings of connectedness with the campus community.

Qualitative Research Approach

This study uses a Constructivist-Interpretivist approach, which is drawn upon throughout both the data collection and analysis stages in order to identify “multiple, apprehendable, and equally valid realities” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 129) from both groups of faculty. Constructivist-Interpretivism is dependent upon participant viewpoints to provide an understanding of the socially constructed reality of phenomena (Ponterotto, 2005; Mertens, 2005). Creswell (2012) explains that within this paradigm the researcher plays an equally active role in his or her attempt to gather “views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies” (p. 12). The interactive nature that Constructivist-Interpretivist researchers aim to achieve in their interview-based studies leads to a highly sophisticated presentation of a given phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2005).

Methodology

The researcher employed a qualitative Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study which would allow for participant storytelling obtained from one-on-one semi-structured interviews to guide the narrative of faculty experiences and relationships. Such conversations
allowed the researcher to explore the experiences of, and relationships between, full-time, tenured and part-time, non-tenured faculty at a mid-sized community college located in the Mid-Atlantic region. The IPA explores the participants view of a topic (Smith, Jarman, & Osbourn, 1999), allowing for personal perceptions and accounts to guide a qualitative journey of a given phenomenon. Through a detailed exploration of lived experiences and how individuals make sense of them (Smith, 2004), an IPA study creates a narrative that can be just as telling and valuable as quantitative, numerical data. IPA involves self-reported data that is often obtained through interviews and small focus groups. Data is inductive and interrogative (Smith, 2004) and is aligned with sophisticated and thematic analysis (Smith & Osbourne, 2015). Qualitative research is often concerned with sensemaking in naturalistic settings such as homes and schools and focuses on the quality of experiences (Cassidy et al, 2011; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). This form of research is highly applicable to a study of faculty experiences because quantitative data such as amount of time spent together, number of credit hours taught or amount of professional development meetings attended do not tell the full faculty story.

An analysis of the experiences of both groups of faculty creates a less biased collection of data, as it prevents a single-sided representation of the faculty experience. Even contradictory accounts will provide substantial understanding of how faculty perceive their experiences and roles. These realities are unique not only to each group (full-time and adjunct), but to the individual faculty members themselves. Their meanings are “brought to the surface through deep reflection” (Ponterotto, 2005), in this case through open-ended interview questions that aim to begin the conversation of a relatively new phenomenon in higher education. Individual interviews that allow the participant to decompartmentalize experiences, relationships, and
perceptions of the various roles of faculty at his or her institution provide a solid understanding of what, if anything, needs to be altered in initial faculty onboarding and training.

While a case study could have examined regular interactions and personal experiences amongst the two groups, the IPA challenges participants to explore their direct relationships to the people, places and events that surround them. It allows for a flexibility in the types of questions asked and theoretical perspectives that can be aligned with the data (Smith & Osbourn, 2015). Furthermore, the ability to contextualize existing research (Cassidy et al, 2011) through the use of an IPA study allows for continual growth of a given subject area while eliminating the potential for the researcher to presume that his or her findings eliminate the need for future study. The topic for this study, which focuses on the professional relationships between adjunct and full-time faculty, is not based on numerical or other quantitative data. Personal accounts, when balanced and analyzed through a theoretical perspective, garner levels of understanding, compassion, and skepticism that are all necessary to further the study of a given phenomenon. All of these things can all be found through an IPA study.

**Research Tradition**

Key scholars who were early in developing the IPA study are Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. Husserl’s descriptive-transcendental phase focuses on breaking understanding down to just the essentials and core meaning of a person, place, thing or experience. Barnacle (2004) explains that Husserl’s belief was that everything that exists in the world (and one could interpret, the world itself), is a phenomenon and therefore something that can be experienced (p. 58). Husserl places meaning on experience and connects the individual’s understandings to his or her mere existence in the world. This philosophy applied to the modern IPA study provides
researchers with a starting point for understanding how to interpret words and the themes that come from their groupings.

Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty deviate from Husserl’s belief by suggesting that an individual’s positionality limits his or her ability to fully understand a given situation. Rather, the best one could hope to accomplish when framing the world is to interpret it rather than gain a complete understanding (Reiners, 2012). Heidegger is credited with broadening the concept of hermeneutics by focusing on the concept of being in the world (as opposed to the world itself, which was Husserl’s focus) (Reiners, 2012). Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty are credited with defining “existential” by emphasizing worldliness and embodied nature as ways to interpret experience (Larkin, 2013).

Husserl believed that “the essential features of an experience would transcend the particular circumstances of their appearance and might then illuminate a given experience for others” (Larkin, 2013). Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty suggest that what Husserl describes is impossible because of the inability to remove one’s own experiences and positionality from those of others. They believed that at best, interpretation (hermeneutics) can be achieved, but not a full compatibility with the experiences of others (Larkin, 2013; Reiners, 2012). More recently, scholars such as Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006) have highlighted that a secondary but just as crucial focus of IPA studies is to “give voice to the concerns of participants” (p. 102). The role of the researcher in a qualitative study, Barbour (2003) states, is of great importance due to the effect that creating relationships with participants, conducting interviews, interpreting data, and providing insights can have on the overall outcome. Perhaps therein lies a compromise, with the combination of hermeneutics and social justice guiding the IPA researcher to a place of utmost understanding and rationality.
This methodological approach supported this study by allowing one to make sense of the experiences of several groups. Research questions pondered both how participants considered their roles and experiences on an individual basis as well as within the context of the study site. Given that IPA requires a relatively small participant pool, it was vital to include research questions that considered how the individual experience affects the larger population, and vice versa. Data analysis of an IPA study utilizing Role Theory required a first read through considering the individual experience and perception, and subsequent readings considering how multiple perspectives affected one another.

**Participants**

Historically, adjunct faculty can be found in higher numbers at community colleges where there are many sections of introductory and general education courses. However, with new methods for the delivery of education, such as online classes, as well as larger populations of non-traditional students, adjunct faculty are being hired at increasing rates across all institutions of higher education (Wallin, 2004 as referenced in Christensen, 2008).

Seven participants were recruited for this study. Participants in this IPA study consist of three full-time tenured faculty and four part-time adjunct faculty at a community college located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The small group of participants aligns with the criteria for an IPA study, with the researcher noting that there was also an attempt to recruit full-time tenure track faculty, but none volunteered. Participant age, gender, professional backgrounds, and areas of teaching vary. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. The researcher aimed to recruit a diverse faculty population in order to avoid limiting the research to a single department, and age group. All participants were at least 18 years old.
While there was no preference for the types of classes that faculty participants taught (introductory, developmental, specialized), these pieces of information help with understanding one’s experiences on campus. The identity of all participants remains confidential, and any direct quotations from or references to them in the study report will include aliases. Participants have not been made aware of their aliases. The size of the focus group has been kept to seven participants to both adhere to IPA specifications and allow for intensive conversations which detail the individual experiences of each participant.

**Procedures**

**Data Collection**

The primary source of data collection within an IPA study is the one-on-one interview. As such, data for this study has been collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with one participant at a time. Six of the interviews were conducted face to face with one being conducted via email due to the participants last minute schedule change. Each face to face interview lasted approximately one hour. Interviewing participants one on one guarantees anonymity for participants while allowing them the freedom to be as transparent with their responses as they like, being assured that the chance for repercussions from superiors and colleagues is highly unlikely.

Participants were recruited with the assistance of the Dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences at the community college where the study was conducted. This community college was selected for the study site due to the researcher’s connection to it through a relative who worked there for many years. The researcher also worked part-time in the Admissions Office of the
study site during breaks from college, but never had any professional interactions with anyone involved in this study.

Email communications were used to contact all faculty. The researcher’s Northeastern University email address was included on the communication, and those interested in participating were instructed to contact the researcher directly. This methodology avoided the possibility of the Dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences knowing the identity of the faculty participants. All Institutional Research Board (IRB) requirements have been followed and applications for both the home institution and study site were submitted to the respective IRB offices. Questions focus on participants interactions with other faculty members (in his/her group as well as the other), professional development opportunities offered by the institutions, and how each person sees his/her role as an instructor and member of the college community. Viewpoints, as opposed to understandings, have been sought after (the latter will be determined later in the process through analysis.) While the researcher took notes during interviews, they were also recorded so that misunderstandings and misinformation would be avoided. After each interview the recordings were transcribed and analytically coded (see below for details) in order to identify themes and additional questions that would be useful to include in subsequent interviews.

Data Analysis

Data without analysis is merely information. It cannot be utilized to create reform or nurture understanding. Analysis is required so that the researcher may identify themes, commonly used phrases, categories, and subcategories that provide clear and formal perspective of a given situation and that allows for reliable recommendations to be made. For transcription
of the interviews, the Rev.com phone application was utilized, and MAXQDA was used to analyze the data. Inductive analysis of the data will also be used to condense the interview data, identify common themes, and create codes. Subsequent readings of the transcript will be done through axial coding in order to identify relationships and connections between primary codes. A journal for the researcher’s personal takeaways from each interview was kept as well as a place where positionality and personal opinions can be kept (as opposed to the actual study). While positionality of the researcher should not influence the data collected, it could provide an additional layer of understanding or context.

As the basis of the research findings will come from interviews, MAXQDA coding using direct quotations has been included in the presentation of findings. Although this study is highly qualitative (as opposed to a quantitative one with numeric data), a chart listing the codes and sub-codes will be included along with descriptions of each. The literature review in the previous chapter serves as a reference to the history and literature of the various topics and theories presented in this study.

Criteria for Quality Qualitative Research

Ethical Considerations

As “inseparable parts of the final creation” (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009, p. 279), the research and participant become involved in a study through their own unique yet linked ways. Balancing the power relationship between the researcher and participants is unique to qualitative research. Unlike in quantitative studies where the researcher is presumed to be the expert and authority, in a qualitative study there is a sharing of information and experiences that balances the authority that one person may potentially hold (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach,
Furthermore, in a single study it is possible for power to shift dependent upon the relationship between the researcher and each participant, as well as each stage of the study such as data collection when the participant holds the power and interviewing when the researcher does. Recognition of the fluidity of power in correlation with acceptance of the responsibilities as the leader of the qualitative study (Haverkamp, 2005, p. 151) creates the trustworthiness necessary to facilitate truthful, useful, and open conversations. Approaching each participant and interview with a “concerned, careful, and compassionate attitude” (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009, p. 285) ensures ethical practices are held to the highest standards.

Consideration of the safety and welfare of the research participants is of the highest concern of the researcher in the case of this study. Informed consent has been obtained through conveying to each participant the desired outcomes of the study as they are presented in Chapter One. Additionally, informed consent includes educating participants on their rights during the study, their right to leave the study at any point, and their right to confidentiality (Merriam, 2009). Informed consent documents have been signed by each participant prior to participating in interviews, and copies will be provided. Participants were informed that if at any time during their interviews they felt unsafe or uncomfortable answering any questions, they were given the option to not answer. Interviews did not last more than an hour each, which was done purposefully in order to avoid mental or physical exhaustion on the part of the participant or hinderance of one’s ability to complete work during work hours. All interviews were recorded in order to ensure accuracy of responses, and participants were informed that there was a possibility that follow up conversations would be conducted via phone calls or emails should clarification from either party be needed. In the reporting of direct quotes and/or references, all participants have been provided aliases that keep their identities known only to the researcher.
Credibility

Without the numerical data found in quantitative research, skeptics of qualitative studies have an assumption that analysis stems in part from the researcher’s personal opinions. Trustworthiness, as defined by Guba and Lincoln (1981), is the most necessary criteria that ensures rigor and credibility of collected data. This is particularly important for data collected from a qualitative study due to the potential for a biased interpretation of narrative.

Dependability, the consistency and transparency included in how a study is conducted, will be as explicit as possible (Morrow, 2005) through conversations between researcher and participants. Modifying Siedman’s “Three-Interview Series,” which suggests conducting three separate interviews that focus on life history and experiences, a reconstruction of the details of one’s experiences, and a reflection on the personal meaning each experience has on the participant (Siedman, 2006), this study addresses each area in single interviews. Details on one’s life history, which Siedman suggests put the participants experiences in context and should be collected during the first of three interviews, were collected through initial introductory email communication and expanded upon during face to face interviews. This consolidation of interviews is due to the schedules of participants and the researcher, and the desire of the latter to not create an inconvenience or exploit an excessive amount of the participants time (McConnell-Henry et al, 2011). Follow up conversations, which provide credibility of the data, were conducted via email after the face to face interviews. While they addressed and hopefully prevented the possibility that some participants may “say things they are later surprised they have shared” (Siedman, p. 89), such conversations do not serve as additional interviews due to inadequate interviewing techniques (McConnell-Henry et al, 2011).
Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability to apply the findings of a study to other situations (Krefting, 1991). It allows for the descriptive data of a study to be utilized in further investigations, and also supports the credibility of the research. Transferability will be utilized in this study, particularly in the analysis when the actions and behaviors of the participants are examined within their context. It engages the use of “why” as a complex question that requires understanding of macro and micro influences. According to Ponterotto (2006), it provides “a sense of the emotions, thoughts, and perceptions that research participants experience” (p. 541). Without this description it is impossible for a study to contain transferability, as it is thick description that creates interpretation and analysis that are filled with the “credibility and resonance” (p. 542) needed for further application.

Internal Audit

In order to create an internal audit of the data that would maintain the researcher’s credibility, a personal, reflective journal was kept throughout the entire proposal, research, data collection, and analysis process. Keeping this journal allowed the researcher to recall nuances of the interviews that would not be captured through straightforward transcription. Journal entries allowed the researcher to ensure that the problem of practice was guiding both the literature review research as well as the study design itself, avoiding the possibility of veering off into slightly related yet disconnected topics.

Self-Reflexivity and Transparency

Perhaps the most obvious and explicit piece of my positionality on this topic is related to my work experience in higher education. Specifically, I have only worked in support staff and
administrative roles in higher education since graduating from college. Following graduation from college, I have worked at a community college, two Ivy League universities, a for-profit university, and a private, Jesuit university. The variety of higher education institutions where I have worked has exposed me to a wide array of students, faculty, and staff.

While working at the for-profit university in the Associate Faculty (adjunct) Support Services Office, I also taught online as an Associate Faculty member. Over the course of almost three years, I taught College Writing in eight-week online modules to both traditional and non-traditional students. At this particular institution, there was a concerted effort to provide part-time faculty teaching online and on campus with instructional support, formal onboarding and development opportunities, work spaces, and mailboxes, as such support can often result in more effective teaching and positive student perception of their instructors (Fagan-Wilen, Springer, Ambrosino, and White, 2006). Pay increases were also provided when a faculty member received a higher-level degree (though the difference between for example, having a master’s degree and a doctoral degree was only $100 per course taught). In the case of salary, increases were more gestures of good faith rather than adequate and competitive raises.

Although I have never taught as a full-time, tenure track faculty member, I have worked with and for many of them. Their perceptions of adjunct faculty have run the gamut from appreciation to pity to outright disrespect. While such interactions with faculty certainly drove the interest in this topic, it was imperative to solely focus on the experiences of those being interviewed and to not allow influence from previous encounters. Furthermore, given the various reasons for adjunct faculty choosing to teach part-time such as pre-retirement jobs or freelancing while working full-time (Lorenzetti, 2016;), it will be crucial to identify the various categories within the adjunct group. For example, it would be incorrect to assume that one in the
retirement stage of life will have the same experiences or perceptions as someone piecing together multiple part-time teaching jobs as a way to eventually gain a full-time appointment. Having a simultaneous view of the adjunct experience as both an instructor and support staff member, I have been quite aware of discrepancies between full-time and adjunct faculty in regard to support and perception. These experiences have driven my desire to investigate faculty experiences from a research and theory-driven understanding. Although pairing one’s own interpretation of data with the personal accounts of research subjects is an aspect of an IPA study (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012), my interpretation will be guided by sound research and theoretical perspectives, as opposed to personal biases.

**Limitations**

Given that this study only includes faculty at a community college, it is noted that further research at four-year and online universities would benefit the conversation surrounding faculty experiences. No assumptions have been made that the recommendations set forth in this study are applicable to other types of colleges or universities such as four-year or online institutions. Subsequent studies using this data and additional research may focus specifically on levels of instructional engagement related to job satisfaction.

The emphasis on personal experiences and memory could possibly affect how reliable the data is perceived to be. This is where common themes and codes can help to legitimize an individual’s perceptions/experiences. In regard to the IPA study itself, the small sample size may be a focus of criticism as it could be seen as limiting the legitimacy of the findings. Morrow (2005) states that for qualitative, interview-based studies, “numbers mean little” (p. 255). The ideographic nature of an IPA study that emphasizes concern for particular, distinct experiences
of individuals, as noted by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2008), provides justification for the use of a small participant group. While they will be considered together to form a larger understanding of the adjunct–full-time faculty experience at a community college, it will be emphasized that no one response should generalize or define the overall faculty experience. It is the hope of the researcher that this study provided “parallel data” (Barbour, 2003, p. 1026) that may influence and guide further and possibly larger studies of faculty experiences.

**Conclusion**

The co-existence of full-time tenured and part-time adjunct faculty has often been overlooked in literature which examines faculty experiences, onboarding, and development. While both groups often carry different expectations and external perceptions, the literature written about each of them individually concludes that the faculty all desire to provide the best education to their students. The findings presented in the next chapter of this study present the results of an investigation which hoped to identify how both internal and external influences affect faculty experiences and relationships.
Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of and relationships between part-time and full-time faculty at a community college. Utilizing Role Theory as the theoretical lens, this study does not merely provide a superficial quantitative account of how often faculty interact with one another. Rather, the interviews conducted provide a holistic view of how tasks, accessibility to resources, perception, leadership initiatives (or lack thereof), career goals, and the structure of responsibilities assigned to each faculty category play a striking role in defining one’s faculty experience.

Participants

Seven faculty participated in this study, four of whom were part-time adjuncts and three who were full-time and tenured at the time of their interviews. They had been teaching at the collegiate level between one year and 34 years and came from several departments across campus. Of the four adjunct faculty, two, Brad and Irene were exclusively teaching at the collegiate level. Brad was at the beginning of an academic career with the hopes of one-day procuring a full-time teaching position, and Irene was nearing the end of a career in teaching. The other two adjuncts held jobs outside of higher education, Erica as a freelance graphic designer and Sharon as a full-time staff member in the Advising Department of the study site. Sharon hoped to one day obtain a doctoral degree in higher educational leadership or counseling, and possibly teach full-time, but was currently finding professional satisfaction in her role. Additionally, Patty, one of the full-time tenured faculty participants indicated that at the time of the interview she was teaching as an adjunct at a four-year university in the same state. Carol is a full-time tenured faculty member in the Art Department who also serves as the Vice Chair.
Julie holds a dual role as a full-time faculty member and the director of a center on campus that promotes the enrichment of teaching and learning and is geared towards full-time and part-time faculty at the school. Her latter role provides her significant interactions with adjunct faculty at the study site.

**Evolution of Identity Related to Participant Population**

Although there has been a significant amount of literature written on adjunct faculty and the evolution of their presence on college campuses, an in-depth literature review revealed that very little has been written about their relationships with their full-time faculty counterparts. The literature that did mention the co-existence of the groups lacked first-person accounts or interviews (Curtis, Mahabir, & Vitullo, 2016; Ott and Cisneros, 2015). In order to conduct a study that considered the “who,” “how,” and “why” as opposed to just the “what” and “when,” a theoretical framework was applied to the research. Role Theory is a social psychological theory that considers how one’s role in a given environment is created from external and internal influences, as well as the prescribed tasks already assigned to a given role (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Therefore, identity actually becomes a byproduct of something that may not necessarily be completely personal or solely comprised of one’s own beliefs.

A fascinating aspect of Role Theory is its explanation that roles are fluid and ever-changing, either due to the passing of time, the physical changing of space or the removal and/or additions of people with whom one interacts (Coser, 1991; Lacognata, 1965; Turner, 2001). The initial reaction to Role Theory may be negative, as the thought that others affect one’s individual identity can be disconcerting and goes against the concept of free will. However, as is the case of faculty roles, particularly junior faculty whose careers may have not yet been fully realized,
Role Theory actually promotes and explains the natural and inevitable evolution of one’s self throughout a lifetime. One understands that even negative interactions or tasks are worth learning from, and can be greatly beneficial to personal and professional growth.

Faculty experiences and relationships are greatly affected by one’s own faculty role and the perceptions of his or her colleagues. In turn, role and role perception have the ability to affect the quantity and quality of interactions, relationships, and overall experiences. Understanding how role affects daily experiences makes it even more pressing to understand how roles are developed and where they fit in the larger group, as discovery begets perception, which begets behavior, which begets experience. This research incorporates Role Theory as a way to identify how the predetermined values and tasks of their given faculty categories affect how they and others see themselves. It also considers whether or not such predetermined values and tasks should be altered, not because of any sort of sympathetic, single-sided agenda, but rather because the expectations of students, staff, and faculty are different than they were only a few decades ago.

With the goal of identifying how different groups of faculty perceive others and themselves as well as the quality of their interactions, this study provides firsthand accounts through one-on-one interviews conducted with full-time and part-time faculty at a community college located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. This chapter offers an analysis of the interview transcripts through the use of themes and sub-themes that offer a clear understanding of the evolving phenomenon that is the increased co-existence of full-time and part-time faculty. Based on an analysis of the interview transcripts, three main themes were identified: 1) Identified Role (1.1 Part-Time Faculty, 1.2 Full-Time Faculty, 1.3 Educator, 1.4 Career Coach/Advisor, 1.5 Staff/Administrator, 1.6 Freelance Faculty), 2) Other’s Perceptions of
Faculty Roles (2.1 Faculty Role Affects Others Perceptions of the Individual [Positively or Negatively], 2.2 Faculty Role Does Not Affect One’s Ability to Teach), and 3) Interactions and Collaborations (3.1 Within Own Department, 3.2 Outside of Own Department, 3.3 Self-Initiated, 3.4 Initiated by Administrators/Staff). Table 4.1 below provides a visual representation of the major superordinate themes and sub-themes identified based upon participant interviews.

**Table 4.1 – Superordinate and Sub-Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Brad</th>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Erica</th>
<th>Irene</th>
<th>Julie</th>
<th>Patty</th>
<th>Sharon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Faculty</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Coach/Advisor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelance Faculty</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other’s Perceptions of Faculty Roles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Role Affects Other’s Perceptions of the Individual (Positively or Negatively)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Role Does Not Affect Ability to Teach</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions and Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Own Department</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following section of this chapter will provide an expansion of the themes and sub-themes presented in the above table. Direct quotes from the seven participants will show the importance of these themes as well as the need to conduct research on this topic. Concluding summaries of each theme as well as a final summation will also be presented.

**Identified Role**

The first major theme of this study to emerge was the identified role that each participant held in regard to his or her teaching. They had each self-identified their roles when expressing interest in participating in the study. Follow up questions regarding the number of courses taught by each participant cross-referenced with the classification provided by the study site confirmed each role. Throughout the conducting, transcription, and analysis stages of each participant interview, it become apparent that the tasks that faculty were performing created the roles they found themselves in, whether they had intentionally taken on these tasks or not. Three participants even made reference to “wearing more than one hat” in their professional careers. Roles of the faculty participants which will be examined in this chapter include Part-time and Full-time, Educator, Career Coach/Advisor, Staff/Administrator, and Freelancer.
**Part-Time and Full-Time Faculty**

While seemingly basic and certainly simple to ascertain, one must approach the classification of part-time or full-time faculty without bringing forth personal stereotypes, as roles of this nature have evolved and are still evolving. Roles of higher education faculty are no longer restricted to traditional full-time and part-time. Within adjunct faculty alone there is the category of the seeker of a full-time teaching position, the end of career retiree, the freelancer, and the K-12 teaching subject matter expert. As distance learning becomes more popular and necessary, there is also the online adjunct. Each role comes with its individual identities, tasks, goals, roadblocks, and expectations. As Patty, a full-time tenured faculty in the Math Department stated regarding the adjunct subgroups:

So, I think even in that category [adjunct faculty], there's a range of interaction and involvement. Again, because they have different lives going on outside of here…So the one who's really involved, this is primarily what she does...

As the adjunct participants of this study fit into almost all of the categories listed above, their accounts paint a vivid and most importantly, realistic picture of the community college adjunct experience at their institution. Brad, for example, sees himself on a “lifelong pedagogical experiment.” hoping to one day hold a full-time faculty position. A roadblock he faces in finding a full-time faculty position at a four-year college or university is that the highest degree he holds is a masters. A doctoral degree is typically required at four-year colleges and universities for any full-time teaching positions above an instructor, and so part of Brad’s identity in this category of adjunct faculty is that of a person who has limited options. Seeking a full-time professor position while lacking the qualifications that many colleges and universities
require could create role conflict, which is when one’s identity is based on and formed by his or her limitations (Drysdale, Gurr, & Goode, 2016). However, while still desiring to one day be hired to a full-time teaching position at the study site, Brad has identified a version of the role conflict he experiences within his community college students. In his view, just as many of his students were limited in their choices for where they would attend college, he is limited in where he can find a career in academia. Adjusting to the role of a part-time faculty member has allowed him to relate to students with whom he feels a connection based on similar non-academically focused backgrounds. He explained:

…Kids going to community colleges also don't have a background in academia. And so, I can relate to that. So, I thought it'd be easier for me to meet them at their level since we share a common background. And as it turns out, I would say that my experiences with students at community colleges overall have been better than my experiences with students at universities.

While he still hopes to obtain a full-time teaching position, he emphasized that he truly loves the study site and wants to continue teaching there.

Erica worked as a full-time graphic designer, but after having her daughter began doing speaking engagements in classes that friends of hers were teaching at community colleges and art schools. Her self-described faculty identity is that of a ninja who arrives on campus at night, only being seen by other adjunct faculty who teach evening classes. However, even with her slightly covert association with the campus, like Brad she felt that the study site provided the most support for adjunct faculty. She felt that at the study site, as opposed to other schools where she had taught, she had the most interaction with full-time faculty due to the friendly
environment of the school. She explained that not only has being an adjunct allowed her the time to devote to raising her daughter, but it also enriches her graphic design business, and vice versa.

Part-time is good because I still work as a designer. Sometimes, I'm designing full-time and teaching part-time. Sometimes, I'm designing part-time and momming and teaching. So, it's sort of like one of these things where one hand washes the other. The teaching is an exciting environment to be in, because I feel like, depending on where I am, there's the whole think tank and…cutting edge equipment. My clients like that because they think that I understand all these cutting-edge tools, and I do. I am more of a value to them if I have that, and being in an academic environment is good for creativity. So, I don't ever feel stagnant in my other business. And I don't feel stagnant here…So, I'm learning. And that way, I can share that information with my students.

Her experience highlights a benefit of hiring adjunct faculty from outside of the academy who can bring significant real-world experience to their classrooms. Unlike Brad and Sharon, Erica has no desire to obtain a full-time faculty position, though her aspiration to inspire and prepare her students for their careers is just as strong. Her experience of only being on campus at night and subsequently having limited interactions with her colleagues resonated with a comment made by Patty, who explained that a major reason full-time and part-time faculty did not often meet was their differing schedules, with the former mostly teaching during the day and the latter in the evening.

Julie became a full-time faculty member at the study site when a position opened up while she was teaching there part-time. For her, becoming a full-time faculty member was a
matter of being at the right place at the right time. Similarly, though not quite in the same linear trajectory of Julie, Carol also found herself in teaching positions due to circumstance. As a trained artist, she had originally been teaching at the study site in a full-time tenure track position when the position was cut. She began teaching there part-time and eventually went back to full-time once a new position was created. She eventually obtained tenure and took on an administrative role as Vice Chair. Patty started teaching part-time while taking a break from her marketing career after having children. She found that through teaching she could focus on the part of her corporate position she had enjoyed, which was training new employees who were coming straight from college. Eventually she was hired to a full-time tenure track faculty position and obtained tenure. Interestingly, although teaching is a great love for all of the full-time study participants, they all came to the study site with primarily non-academic professional backgrounds. While teaching and education have become their professions, they were not necessarily always a part of their paths.

Educator

While citing various reasons for working in higher education and teaching at a community college, all of the participants indicated that they saw themselves as educators. Though it would seem to be a given that all faculty identify as educators, it is important to recognize that while they may have responsibilities outside of teaching, each participant highlighted that their primary goal each semester is to prepare and inspire their students. Brad explained that an interest in philosophy led him to a master’s program where he was quickly informed that the only things one could presumably do with an M.A. in philosophy were teaching or writing. He decided to use the ideas and theories he had learned as catalysts for deep
critical thinking at the student level even if it would be done outside of philosophy courses. He outlined his decision by saying:

I had this moment where I realized as much as I like reading 800-page books line by line and researching, that's not what I think is most important about philosophy. I kind of discovered that what I valued more was using philosophy as a means of introducing people to critical thought, opening minds, that kind of thing. And so, I said… I'm going to forego the Ph.D. I specifically want to teach in community colleges.

Patty found that teaching in the Math Department combined her love of educating young people with her practical understanding of topics such as graphing. Like Patty, Carol, a full-time faculty member, found that teaching at a community college combined her professional passions with her desire to be a teacher. After working in an art gallery for two years, she accepted a full-time teaching position at the study site in order to fulfill her passion for both art and education.

Similarly, teaching at a community college fulfilled multiple passions for Irene, an adjunct who had previously taught science at the K-12 level. Irene found that she preferred teaching at community colleges because of the small class sizes and diverse student populations. She, like three other participants, began teaching at the advice of friends and colleagues who were working in higher education and familiar with the need for adjunct faculty at the collegiate level.

About finding her path from working in corporate marketing to becoming an educator, Patty explained:

I thought, "Well I could try that as a part-time thing and see." And so, I came here, actually and was teaching part-time on Saturdays and really loved it. What I was enjoying doing in my corporate setting where I was hiring managers, I was hiring people just out
of college, and training them, and working with them, and building the team. And I was like, well that's what I enjoyed most there, not selling more domain names. So, it kind of combines both those interests.

**Career Coach/Advisor**

Perhaps it is the nature of the community college faculty member, but the role of career coach was part of all but one of the participants self-identified roles. With many of their students planning to transfer to four-year colleges or universities after obtaining an associate degree, the participants who identified as career coaches or advisors felt that it was their job to prepare students for future coursework. Even when one’s major did not directly align with the course(s) she or he were teaching, faculty still felt that they were providing students with the critical thinking skills necessary for collegiate learning. Erica, a graphic design adjunct faculty and a freelance graphic designer, found that she can provide recommendations for the practical applications of her student’s academic interests and skills.

The students that I get at the college level and the art school level often don't know what they want. They're not sure what. It's like, "I've got this creative ability," or, "I like working with color; I don't really know how I'm gonna do it." There, I'm definitely the guide, and I'll say to them, "What do you wanna do? What do you think you're gonna do after this? Let's see what we can do with that and make it into something that is a marketable skill."

As instructors of many students whose future educational plans included either transferring to four-year schools or moving straight into the workforce after graduation, several participants cited having the desire to prepare their students for “the real world.” For instance,
Carol, a member of the full-time faculty and Vice Chair of her department, explained that regardless of whether her students planned to continue their education or immediately pursue employment, part of her role was to prepare them for the future. She stated, “My main role is teaching and training young artists and helping them to achieve their goals, whether that's professional or academic, and helping them to grow as artists.”

This student-teacher relationship and faculty role seemed to be community college specific. While students at any college would presumably be planning to graduate with a degree, that task for community college students happens faster, in as short as after two years, and is sometimes not necessarily a given as it would be for a student attending a four-year college or university. In such situations, it becomes vital to identify the goals of each individual student in a rather short period of time and provide resources from day one. At times this means building a foundation of learning. This desire to support students from the beginning of their educational journeys was not unique to full-time participants of the study. Sharon, a part-time faculty member who also works as a full-time staff member in the Advising Department at the study site, cited that ensuring “each student has equal access and opportunity to learn to his or her fullest potential” as one of her desired outcomes for each class she teaches.

While only one of the participants actually held a full-time job in the Advising Department of the study site, all explained that their respective roles as faculty members included assisting their students with tasks and skills that fell outside of the content of the courses they taught. For example, Patty illustrated the different ways in which she serves as an advisor depending upon which student she is interacting with. At times she has helped students with their basic study skills.
I had one [student] come and sit in the office, and she's like, "You said I could come talk about anything, so I'm going to talk about when I should do my homework." Because she's working full-time and has a crazy schedule. And with the statistics students, it's more talking to them about transferring...you know, seeing if they need assistance getting the services on campus.

Patty felt confident in her ability to answer questions related to transferring to four-year institutions. However, Erica found that when students asked her these types of questions she had to look online for the information, as the faculty handbooks she had received over the years were often outdated. The participant narratives associated with this role highlighted a space where guidance and communication from departments such as admissions and advising could be of significant use for faculty, providing them with the same guidance they hope to give to their students.

**Staff/Administrator**

Another role that all of the full-time and one of the part-time found themselves exemplifying was that of a staff member or administrator at the study site. Similar to two of their part-time colleagues, the full-time participants of this study do not solely teach. All of them identified as staff or administrators as well, serving as a vice department chair, director of a teaching and mentoring center, and development coordinator. Their multiple hats indicate that at this particular community college the traditional role of the full-time scholar faculty member has been somewhat altered. Carol, for instance, plays a large role in the hiring of faculty for her department:
I'm responsible for the Art Department and I also wind up hiring adjuncts and I work with the adjuncts to mentor them. I'm also involved in [the teaching and learning center]. I've run the mentoring program along with my mentoring team…so I've got lots of different hats.

Being assigned to administrative roles along with their teaching seemed to be rather common amongst full-time faculty at the study site community college, where research is not necessarily a focus or criterion for tenure. Administrative support in various forms was prevalent within the roles of the full-time faculty in this study. Julie, who has a background as a counseling psychologist, believes that her teaching experience prepared her for her current administrative role as head of the teaching and learning center.

I have two different hats. In addition to collegial department meetings and things of that nature with my full-time colleagues, committees and all of that, [being] the director of [a center on campus that promotes faculty mentoring], I develop programming to support adjunct faculty and full-time faculty. I also wear the student success course coordinator hat. Right now, I'm the only full-time faculty member teaching that course. All the faculty that I work with are part-time faculty. We're having monthly meetings. We have trainings before the beginning of the semester so that they feel supported and included in the process.

In several cases the sole full-time faculty members of a department at the study site were the chair and vice chair. This role of being the only full-time faculty member puts department chairs in the situation where they mentor and develop solely part-time faculty who often have a variety of professional and personal engagements. Although some of the adjunct faculty felt that they
were literally not seen by their part-time or full-time colleagues, they did have regular interactions with their full-time department chairs and often found these people to be their cheerleaders and members of their support systems.

**Freelance Faculty**

A topic which had not initially been considered but came out through participant interviews was adjunct faculty as freelance workers outside of their teaching roles. Reasons why adjunct faculty freelance include but are not limited to earning additional income while maintaining their professional work, and putting together full-time teaching loads at multiple schools. The last reason often has to do with restrictions colleges and universities have regarding the number of classes adjuncts can teach per semester. While the demands of freelancing can sometimes be stressful as freelancers often have to juggle the demands and expectations of multiple locations and industries, the adjunct participants of this study who identify as freelancers reported feeling that these additional sources of employment positively influence their teaching.

Erica’s background is in graphic design, and, depending on her teaching schedule she takes on clients. Additionally, depending upon the number of clients she has, she may take on more classes if they are available. Her ability to bring technical knowledge to her clients and explain practical applications of course content to her students has allowed her to create a positive career path that fosters her creativity. These types of adjuncts have the ability, although they are not teaching full-time, to provide this additional component to their courses through knowledge of current trends within their respective industries.
Although Brad’s postgraduate employment experiences have been within higher education, he would still be considered a freelancer adjunct because he teaches at multiple schools. For Brad, who hopes to eventually obtain a full-time faculty job, holding teaching positions at multiple schools provides additional income and allows him to make connections with various department heads. While stress was cited as a side effect of teaching at multiple schools, particularly because of the commute and inability to meet with students as often as he would like, Brad appeared to accept his freelancing situation as a necessary evil to be able to eventually obtain a full-time faculty position. Like Brad, Patty, a full-time faculty member, also fell into this higher education freelancing category, as at the time of her interview she was teaching part-time at a four-year college in the same state as the study site. She was not teaching part-time for career development, as she was already a tenured professor at the study site. Rather, she cited the benefit of an additional income as well as enjoyment in teaching her other students as reasons for doing so.

Conclusion

Although role may at first consideration appear to be not much more than a basic defining characteristic, the research conducted for this study presents how indelible it is in guiding one’s experiences and interactions. While defined by things outside of one’s control, role allows an individual to identify where she or he is both professionally or personally, and subsequently has the ability to carve a unique and personal path. Given that this study has been driven by a lack of literature, it is quite important to examine role as a superordinate theme, as it provides the observer with a clearer understanding of the players in the unique environment of 21st century two-year higher education. It would be detrimental to assume that all part-time faculty have the same grievances, expectations, roadblocks, and needs. New opportunities for
higher education in rural, international, and underrepresented communities could increase the number of such subgroups.

In many cases, except for Brad who has been on the typical academic professional track, both full-time and part-time faculty participants more-or-less simply fell into their collegiate teaching roles either after teaching at the K-12 level or pursuing other careers. Their priorities each semester were to educate their students, and, unique to the community college setting, prepare them for transferring to four-year colleges and universities. As they define themselves as educators, they become unified. Whether one sits on a committee, has tenure, or is provided with a physical workspace momentarily falls away in a mutual understanding of the importance of education. On the other hand, the differences between the groups and the tasks they take on in their roles must not be discounted.

The research outlined in this theme presents an argument for adapting the accepted faculty roles and the expected tasks that define them. Particularly at a community college, adjunct faculty can do more than just teach one introductory class at a time, and the full-time, tenured faculty member’s focuses can be more administrative than research focused. Role Theory holds that roles have the ability to evolve, so even in a higher education environment it would seem to be only natural for faculty roles to adapt, with or without formal administrative direction or approval. From their identified roles inevitably come perceptions of each role which came either from the participants or others on campus. Role perception, the second superordinate theme, considers how stereotypes, preconceived notions, and traditional collegiate identities correlate with actions and behaviors.
Role Perception

The second superordinate theme found during the analysis stage of this study was Role Perception. This study aims to classify participants and determine their professional roles while examining their narratives through a theoretical lens which suggests personal evolution through external influence. As such, it became clear that one must consider how different roles are perceived by the individual and those with whom he or she is surrounded. In the case of Role Theory, it is partially through understanding how people perceive one another that one can see the “why” behind actions and behaviors. While none of the participants believed that their students felt one way or another regarding their full-time or part-time teaching categories, the responses to how they were perceived by their colleagues varied. The subcategories of role perceptions that will be examined in this section are how faculty role affects other’s perceptions of the individual and faculty roles not affecting one’s ability to teach.

Faculty Role Affects Other’s Perceptions of the Individual

According to the participants of this study, perception based on the faculty role one holds exists in both positive and negative forms. Adjunct faculty can be perceived as either effective or detrimental. The interactions that this full-time group has with adjuncts, either serving as hiring managers or mentors, indicated that for the most part the study site encompasses a culture of inclusion amongst all faculty particularly at the hiring stage. Semantics also plays a role in crafting the perceptions others have of a faculty member. Throughout the interview process for this study, it became clear that there are many ways to describe both full and part-time faculty based on the behaviors and tasks they perform. While all of the participants are considered faculty members, not all are called “professor” by their colleagues. Sometimes this
differentiation is created by written guidelines that require a certain number of teaching hours, while other times it is based more on labels stemming from typecasts.

At any given college or university, those who do not teach full-time are described as part-time, contingent, temporary, adjunct, associate faculty, or instructor. The wording used to describe faculty has the ability to affect his or her self-worth as an academic. Erica explained that she preferred to be referred to as “part-time” as opposed to “adjunct” because for her, the former alludes to being a part-time professor, while the latter reflects a lack of permanence and status:

Some places call me "part-time." I like that. I am a part-time professor. Some places call me an "adjunct," which makes me feel a little expendable, as opposed to part-time which makes me feel like I'm actually an employee. It's better at some places than it is at others… at art schools, all of them, there are no full-time employees. There's full-time staff, but there's no full-time faculty…everybody's called part-time, and everybody is equal.

For those who experienced changing roles at the study site, the simultaneous shift in how they were perceived by others was quite clear. The transition that Julie experienced moving from an administrative role to one that included both administration and teaching provided her with a feeling of newly found respect from her peers. She stated:

I think absolutely labels matter…I would say that I felt like I had more credibility when I became a teacher. Moving from student services over to the academic side of the house, I felt like that added to my credibility. Even though I was the same exact person, people started to care more about what I had to say.
Of all the full-time faculty participants, Patty had most recently transitioned from full-time tenure track to full-time tenured. She reported feeling supported by her colleagues in her department during the process and explained that when she could not fulfill certain contractual obligations due to needing to complete the work required of her in order to be promoted, they did not fault her. In fact, she explained, they made sure she was aware of what she needed to be complete at the time in order to complete the tenure process. She stated:

…here the tenured faculty are supportive, so they make sure you know sort of the steps you need to follow to get towards tenure. They're not looking to hold you back. That's around the campus. And they understand ... like we were having contractual issues, but the full-time, the tenured faculty realized I couldn't follow all of those things because of my tenure [track] status.

Her role and the role she hoped to obtain influenced her actions and behaviors. In her experience the tenure track role did negatively affect how her colleagues treated her. In her case, promotion was seen as something that would benefit the department in which she taught.

For Patty, the progression up the faculty hierarchy ladder was a supportive experience, and her role in it felt organic once she had transitioned into a full-time teaching career. Brad, an adjunct, felt that the traditional faculty hierarchy, when based on role was not necessarily a negative, as long as the criteria for defining each group included factual, non-subjective characteristics of each group such as pay and teaching load:

I don't think the hierarchy is intrinsically bad. I won't say that. I just think that certain hierarchies are bad. So, if it's like you're a full timer, you're an adjunct, I get paid more than you do, I have less teaching load than you do, that's okay if the full timer isn't
basically spitting on the adjunct. You know, you're less than me. So, I think the hierarchies can exist and they'll be successful if the roles are authentically derived, and if there's a mutual respect between the roles.

Brad’s perception of faculty hierarchy indicates an acceptance rather than full support of the practice. Three of the adjunct participants felt that within this hierarchy there was an unspoken need to prove themselves as qualified educators to their full-time colleagues, even though they had been hired to teach the same students. Important to keep in mind about the adjunct faculty participants of this study is that many of them possessed the same or similar education as their full-time colleagues, even though not all of them desired to obtain full-time teaching positions. Amongst them was an echo that they were at the same intellectual level as full-time faculty, and in some cases were technically teaching the same course load, just at more than one institution. Irene, a long-term Anatomy and Physiology adjunct at the study site, explained her experience that adjunct faculty have to prove themselves academically and intellectually before they can be accepted. She explained, “when an adjunct is hired, I don’t think our background is known…There’s definitely a period of time when you’re proving yourself. I feel perfectly accepted by the full-time faculty now. I think they know that I’m competent and they respect me.”

Brad’s experiences support her statement. However, he felt that in some cases barriers still existed that prevented adjuncts from gaining the respect of their full-time colleagues regardless of their backgrounds. He explained:

I do think you should have to work hard to get the respect, but the problem is, there are sometimes barriers in place because of the arbitrary distinction between full-timers and
adjuncts that prevent you from getting that respect even if you work hard…So you could be doing more work than a full timer in terms of teaching, and it wouldn't matter. Even like I'll show up, I'll dress professional every day or business casual, and I'll just see people waltzing around in shorts and a T-shirt. Wow, I would never do that. And yet that's ... If I did that, I feel like that would be looked down upon versus if someone in their 50s who's been teaching here for a while does that, it's okay, whatever.

Sharon provided an explanation of the origin of certain faculty perceptions, citing more macro causes such as campus cultural climate, politics, or resources (or lack thereof) as opposed to just personal opinions or stereotypes. In her opinion, it is up to the individual to establish him/herself as a competent member of the campus community, regardless of how others perceive a faculty member because of his or her role. This opinion takes the “responsibility” of stereotyping off of the individual, putting it more on past practices and behaviors.

I feel it is someone’s responsibility, regardless of faculty category, to ensure that you are not only receiving the best communication, tools, and training to best carry out your position, but it is also the responsibility of the college to provide professional development, everyday support, and open communication as often and as clearly as possible throughout the academic year, and during non-teaching times as well.

Discussions regarding faculty perceptions organically led to conversations about the need-basis piece of adjunct faculty, and how this loose scheduling affects perception. Erica explained the role of the adjunct as a need-basis hire whose existence should be taken as a solution to a problem rather than the problem itself. She explained:
The classes are gonna run, the students are signed up for it. If you need someone to teach the class, that's where you need the part-time people. To fill in. And they're not a threat… If somebody calls me tomorrow and says, "I'm stuck and I have no web design teacher. Will you teach this the next semester?" I probably won't say no if it works with the rest of the schedule.

Brad agreed that lack of guaranteed courses and frequent last minute course changed affected the perception of adjunct faculty, but stated, “We can do whatever we want because you need us, we don't need you,” mentality that some college administrators have that he had encountered did not exist at the study site. Although in many cases adjunct study participants felt that the study site provided the most inclusion of any of the schools where they had taught, the contrasts in pay, professional development, and perceived status still created an “us versus them” atmosphere amongst full-time and part-time. Important to note was that some participants felt that individuals created negative faculty perceptions and separations, others felt that separation was a natural effect of how faculty hierarchy has been created in higher education, and some saw both as major causes.

**Faculty Role Does Not Affect Ability to Teach**

None of the participants felt that their students cared or were all that much aware of whether or not they were considered full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, or held tenure. This finding contradicts the claim made by Jaeger and Eagan (2011) that being taught by part-time faculty could negatively impact student success. As Erica explained, “I don't think the students are aware. It doesn't matter who comes into the classroom. If they're teaching a class, they call them Professor.” Referencing whether the students understand the difference in roles, Brad
responded, “So with the students, I would say no, because I don't really think they get the difference. They just say like, ‘Oh, you're my teacher.’” Julie agreed with this statement, stating that she believes that students see faculty the same regardless of whether they are full-time or adjunct. Carol added to that sentiment by stating that it is better for the student’s own success to not consider any sort of separation or divide amongst faculty. She explained, “Students shouldn't be able to stay, ‘Oh, he's just an adjunct, so you didn't do a good job.’ It shouldn't be like that. It should be, we are all concerned student success.”

A unique faculty role was held by Sharon, an adjunct and full-time staff member at the study site. She felt that her dual role positively impacted her ability to access information for her students and prepare her courses.

My roles as both, I feel positively affects my ability to navigate needed information, coordinate my own curriculum, and even provide direction and support to students that may need more than just what is being taught in the classroom. It has only served me well, and better and better with each semester.

Brad reported an instance where he “felt like a full-time faculty” and it affected in a small way how he saw himself. He explained:

This is a big thing, it might sound silly, but I freaked out the other day, because I realized if I need to bring something to the testing center or the printing center, I can just give it to the office, and they run it over for me. I was like, ‘Wow. No other place has offered this to me.’

In this case his faculty role did not differ at all from his full-time colleagues. Although he does not have a designated office space of his own, the staff in his department assist him in the same
way they do with full-time faculty. As someone who was teaching at multiple schools that were quite far away from each other, having the type of support he described was a great time saver.

Carol explained how she takes time to work with her adjunct faculty in order to ensure they are at their best in their classrooms. She explained:

I think we respect the adjuncts here. I don't know about administration, but we respect them. I really work my adjuncts in my department specifically, so they're good teachers because we want them to be good teachers.

It is interesting to note her distinction between the administration and her own group, which is closer to the departmental level. It was clear that the chairs and vice chairs at the site were supportive of mentoring their faculty and preparing them to do their best in educating their students. While the role of central administration in supporting faculty mentoring programs was unclear to the adjunct participants, it is important to note that this leadership does provide release time for the center’s faculty leaders to participate. These accounts from part-time and full-time faculty at the study site presented a feeling of comradery that anyone given the title of faculty should be respected by their students as subject matter experts. There is certainly a feeling that if you teach at the study site, you have allies.

**Conclusion**

Each participant believed that not only were their students unaware of their respective faculty categories, but such categories are not even be a consideration when students determine the effectiveness of their instructors. According to the participants, the role of educator is the only role that students should see consider in reference to their teachers. In terms of the perceptions of their colleagues and superiors, participants were not naive to the disparities
between them. Three adjunct participants felt that although their educational and/or professional backgrounds matched those of their full-time colleagues, they had to prove themselves as competent when first starting at the study site (and elsewhere for those teaching at other institutions). There was a feeling that department chairs, hiring managers, and/or other college administrators could do a better job at introducing adjuncts to the greater faculty population and making them aware of their qualifications.

The adjunct faculty study participants saw themselves as essential to the college because their hiring allows courses to run and provides additional educational guidance to students. While the study site still follows some of the traditional faculty role tropes, an overall consensus amongst participants was that they are treated with respect by their colleagues, particularly once they establish themselves in an academic capacity whether that be through tenure, performance in the classroom, or restructuring one’s position with a focus on teaching. While in an ideal world each faculty member would be judged based on skills and accomplishments and rewarded accordingly, the study site reflects where the current phenomenon of increased faculty coexistence exists today as perceptions lead to roles and consequently, experiences.

**Interactions and Collaboration**

The third superordinate theme of this study involves the interactions and collaborations between faculty, their colleagues, and other administrators on campus. While such experiences had always been a primary focus of this study, not until the interview and analysis phase was it clear that the “where” and “how” pieces were just as important as the “when” of this theme in particular. While this study does not reside in a world of generalizations and there is certainly room for larger investigations, the small group nature of an Interpretive Phenomenological
Analysis study did allow for the researcher to notice prevalent phenomena such as how interactions were being created and where they were located. It became vital to understand whether interactions were insular amongst one’s own department or extended throughout the campus. Additionally, understanding whether faculty were encouraged to interact with one another through formal on-campus events, or alternatively from individual, self-initiated actions explained how such relationships evolved. Given the rather consistent experiences of the adjunct faculty participants, an assumption (based on evidence) can be made that the nature of their interactions was typical of many part-timers at the study site. This portion of the analysis factors greatly into recommendations for future actions, which will be highlighted in the final chapter of this study. Subcategories that will be outlined in this section are interactions within one’s own department, interactions outside of one’s own department, self-initiated interactions, and interactions initiated by administrators and staff.

**Within Own Department**

Interactions with colleagues typically occurred within one’s own department. In most cases interactions between full-time and part-time faculty began at the hiring level. After the hiring stage, most interactions took place at faculty meetings led by department chairs, or one-on-one conversations in department offices. Brad recounted his department’s faculty meetings and the opportunities those in his department have had to lecture outside of their regular classes.

My department is very good and open, and we have meetings together. And we not only do club and reading groups where we can talk to each other, we do these seminars now, where we have the faculty present on a topic to the students, because they're interested in
finding out, ‘What does my teacher do? I know what these other guys say [in reference to textbook authors], but what is their field of study?’

Regarding collaboration with colleagues, Erica also felt confident that she could collaborate with other faculty in her department and share resources such as guest speakers. She explained, “If somebody else has a guest speaker, I don't have to say, ‘Would it be okay if my students sit in on that?’ I know that, of course it's okay, within my own department. So, I haven't tried going out of my department.” Full-time faculty who held administrative roles in their departments reported regular interactions with their part-time and full-time faculty. Because many of the faculty in the departments at the study site are adjuncts, the faculty community is made up of practitioners who understand contemporary theories, research and applications of their course content. This sense of a shared identity brings part-time faculty together on the basis of common backgrounds and perceptions.

**Outside of Own Department**

As referenced above, most of the interactions the adjunct participants had with other faculty typically occurred with members of their respective departments. Irene, who teaches part-time at one of the extension sites as well as the main campus, did not feel familiar with or connected to the administrators at the main campus who were outside of her department. While she referenced a positive relationship with the director of the extension site where she taught, regarding the leadership at the main campus she explained, “I don’t know any of the administration here…I mean they’re in their little places away from the rest of us and I don’t really have much reason to interact with them.”
In contrast with Irene’s experience, Sharon, who was an adjunct at the study site while also working full-time in the Advising Department, had been able to interact with other faculty and staff. She served as a co-advisor to the student Christian Club and as such, found it easy to meet people who were outside of the department in which she taught. Many of Sharon’s interactions with other faculty have occurred as a result of her full-time staff position. In her case, the interactions were initiated by the administration in that she was hired to her full-time position, but could also be considered self-initiated as she interacts outside of formal group workshops or sessions. She is more aware of such opportunities than some of the other adjuncts at the study site given her regular interaction with students and the necessity that she be aware of student organizations. Her particular situation brought up an interesting consideration, which is whether it could be effective for an institution to purposefully recruit a portion of its adjunct faculty population from full-time staff members. Doing so has the potential to promote the long-term employment of staff while creating a community of faculty which feels strongly connected to the institution.

Scheduling is often cited as a reason for the lack of interactions or relationships between part-time and full-time faculty. Unlike Sharon, other adjunct faculty participants had the desire to attend events outside of their teaching obligations but could not due to other responsibilities. Erica explained that if her schedule allowed, she would attend faculty art exhibits at which there was interaction with all faculty as well as administrators and students. She stated:

Adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, [and] staff are encouraged to submit work to it. When they have the opening, whoever is available to go, goes. We all mingle together in that friendly smiley way that we do. So, it's really nice.
Carol, a full-time faculty member and an administrator who has experienced interactions with faculty outside of her department, pointed out that while some full-time faculty have expressed that they don’t feel that adjuncts reach out to them, it is a two-way street and full-timers need to introduce themselves as well.

One of my colleagues complains, ‘Who is that person? They never say hello to me.’ Well, he needs to say hello to them too. But sometimes they [part-time faculty] come in and they just leave.

Unlike the faculty who Carol references above, Patty explained that her role as the Development Coordinator for her department put her in a unique position for a full-time faculty member. In this role, she would often interact with adjuncts within and outside of her department given the regularity of which they taught developmental courses. Subsequently, she has become a mediator or conduit of information for faculty at the study site.

…adjunct faculty will come into the office and ask questions or send me emails…even if it's not a course that I'm coordinating, [they will ask] ‘Do you know where I can find this? Will you share this with me?’…So if I'll say, ‘Oh, I don't have a syllabus for that course. Let me ask around,’ People will definitely send it back to share, but there's not always a direct line of communication between adjunct faculty and full-time faculty, even in the courses that they're teaching in common.

While the role of Development Coordinator was created for the purpose of having a full-time faculty member mentor and assist faculty teaching developmental courses, Patty’s work with faculty outside of her department stemmed from her own self-initiated tasks. Her experience in this type of an administrative role begs the question of whether or not more full-time tenured
faculty should take on positions such as Patty’s that put them in regular communication with part-time faculty (as opposed to hiring part-time non-academic staff members). Having a clearly defined point of contact could be quite helpful to adjunct faculty, particularly those specifically navigating developmental level courses and their unique challenges and curriculum.

**Self-Initiated**

For adjunct faculty who do not serve on committees, interactions with colleagues are often the result of one’s individual actions, and often occur organically without much, if any planning. Rather, interactions come about as the faculty complete their regular teaching and class preparation tasks. This sub-theme considers whether it is necessary for college leadership to play a significant role in the promotion of faculty interactions and collaborations. Erica’s account of how she interacts with faculty highlights the fact that interactions for her truly depend on the time of day that she is on campus. For example:

“There's the two lab coordinators and the other professors who are there [the department computer labs] on the days that I'm there. If it's a night, it's usually other adjuncts. If it's the day class, there's I think, one other full professor who's there, two others, friendly and smiley. And it definitely feels like they're part of my network if I had a question, if we wanted to discuss something, I feel like I can discuss things with them as an equal and nobody's gonna look down on me. They're not, ‘Ah, you're just an adjunct. I can't talk about that with you.’ That does not happen here. It's like we're all working in the same place. They work here full-time; I work here part-time.

Brad has had a similar experience at the study site in that his interactions with colleagues typically depended on his teaching schedule and came about without formal administrative
influence. He recounted, “I see some people regularly in the adjunct office because we're there at the same time, because we have regular office hours and we teach at the same time. So, I've made a friend with a couple of them, but not everyone.”

When asked about the site’s attempts to encourage faculty interactions, he felt that his most substantial collaborations occurred outside of formal programming. He stated:

I think they [college administration] kind of encourage you to meet other adjuncts by going to these Intro to Campus Seminars. So, you're forced to do these little icebreaker activities and that kind of thing. But the more significant stuff happens, if it happens, is during those shared office hours in that shared office space I think…I guess like it happens more spontaneously in a decentralized manner.

Patty’s description of faculty feeling comfortable enough to criticize college leadership to those in their department, while not necessarily positive experiences, supported Brad’s claim above that faculty often feel most comfortable within their own departments. She further explained that those who criticized leadership tended to be those faculty who had been at the school for quite some time. She stated:

It tends to be the same folks. And then they tend to be, they tend to have been here for a while and they're comfortable giving their opinion, so they're comfortable walking through there [the department office and departmental sponsored events] and saying, "I don't like this question on the final exam," or blah blah, blah, you know. So, there's definitely, I think even within the adjunct faculty, the more vocal and the less the ones who just come and teach their class. Which is great. So. it's not just in a dismissive way, it's just that's what they do.
Her point speaks to the difficulty many institutions undoubtedly face in catering to faculty who have different and sometimes conflicting scheduled and priorities. It would be unrealistic to expect a college or even a department to be able to provide curriculum or professional development to all of their faculty in the exact same way. At the study site this seemed to be acknowledged amongst the full-time faculty of this limitation, though they all appeared very enthusiastic when it came to supporting their adjunct peers.

**Initiated by Administrators/Staff**

At the study site there is a center that promotes the enrichment of teaching and learning. Funding for the center comes from the central administration of the college. It provides teaching resources, mentoring programs for faculty, and learning academies and workshops for full-time and part-time faculty. Programs are offered for topics such as creating a syllabus, online learning, motivational tools, and technology assistance for YouTube, Microsoft Office, flipped classrooms, etc. The center also acknowledges faculty accomplishments on its website and gives faculty awards for excellence in teaching. Julie is provided with two course releases per semester in order to serve as director of the center. She noted that the center also offers new faculty mentoring programs for both full-time and part-time faculty. The program for full-time faculty, she explained, touches more upon promotion and tenure “and is a little bit more robust, honestly.” She explained that while the center tries to provide a similar program for part-time faculty, “you have more responsibility as full-time faculty,” and so more content is required for their orientations and programming. When discussing the mission of the center, Julie explained:

Each new person, in both camps, are assigned two mentors: a department mentor and a [teaching and learning] mentor. So, you have someone in your department and someone
outside your department that you can go to with questions...Our mission is much more about improving the teaching and learning.

Carol echoed Julie’s statements that the teaching and learning center provides substantial mentoring opportunities for all faculty. She stated:

I'm on the board [of the teaching and learning center]…and we do a lot of professional development, and I think the college does a good job… We have workshops once a month on different topics related teaching, some based research, we have tech workshops, we have workshops at the beginning of the semester, sometimes we have an end of the semester thing. There's the mentoring program, we do a lot of professional development.

There were conflicting accounts of the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning enrichment center amongst the participants, specifically the adjuncts. While it was referenced by all of the full-time faculty participants as a resource for adjunct faculty, several of the adjuncts expressed a feeling that the events and lectures put on by the center were geared more towards teaching online or the very basics of teaching, which they did not find useful. For example, Irene, who had been teaching at the collegiate level for fifteen years, and Brad who had recently completed his master’s degree, did not feel the need to read up or attend sessions on creating a syllabus or engaging students, as they already had significant experience doing so. In their particular cases, their roles as an experienced educator and an academic, respectively, excluded them from acting out the role behavior of attending such programming. That being stated, they certainly appreciated the existence of the center and the support it offered. Referencing the center, Brad explained:
They [the study site] have a whole department that's dedicated to teaching people how to teach online courses and taking them through the steps to do that. And this doesn't apply to me, but they also have programs for, I hate to say this, but older teachers who haven't been familiar with online platforms. So, like, how to make a syllabus...basic things. So, they offer that, which is good.

Discussing other course-content related support on campus, Irene felt that the course masters in her department, who are full-time faculty, assisted her and the other adjunct faculty with the technological components of their courses. She said:

They're the course masters so they're supporters, I guess. Yeah, they do, actually they do a lot to facilitate adjuncts...Every semester they run programs so that we're all up to speed on the computer-related things that we're expected to use in class. They're teaching us ins-and-outs of these computer programs that come along with the textbook. They give us a lot of materials that they've prepared so we don't have to spend our time preparing.

Sharon felt that the adjunct faculty center at the study site was another resource for faculty to support their course preparation. She stated that it also provided a way for adjunct faculty to interact with each other and keep them informed of events and academic updates occurring on campus. The center is an office space where adjuncts can work in-between classes, meet with students, have access to printers and copy machines, and is run by a full-time staff member. Of the adjunct faculty center, Sharon explained:

The energy towards collaboration within the adjunct faculty arena is positive – we have an adjunct faculty center here at the College that is run by a full-time staff member, and
the communications to and from the center, as well as the benefits it offers adjuncts are
certainly beneficial, helpful, and supportive. A good environment is provided for us there. I have had minimal direct professional interaction with full-time folks, but that
may be because of something as simple as scheduling reasons or differing hours on
campus. I feel the culture and support of collaboration between faculty is a strong one, as
far as I have experienced.

Five of the participants, three part-time and two full-time faculty, explicitly stated that
their departments chairs often played the most prominent role in providing them with
opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and overall support. In these cases, it was the
department chair, rather than the larger and more distant institutional leadership, that offered
guidance and support. For example, Brad felt that the chair of the History and Social Science
Department, who is his chair as Philosophy falls in this department, strongly supported him due
in part to their shared academic interests; something he had not experienced at other colleges
where philosophy was lumped within larger, more general departments that were led by chairs
with little background in the subject. He explained:

I really love working here. The department head here is super, super nice. We have a
common background, because we both studied continental philosophy…and so I think we
kind of hit it off right from the beginning. He's specifically a philosopher and I think the
thing that makes us click is not only our background, but he cares about community. We
talk about this all the time. He's very concerned with building the philosophy program
from the ground up with a really strong foundation. And I think when he came, the
philosophy department was one way, and then he's been trying to do a lot since he got
here. And so now, we have a philosophy club and me and him run that together. There's
a philosophy reading group that me and him run together that is also student run. We have department meetings where we talk about, ‘Okay, here's the kind of class you want. Let's talk about stuff we're doing in the future. Let's talk about organizational stuff.’ So, I really feel like an actual faculty member here.

Brad’s final statement, “So I really feel like an actual faculty member here,” highlights the impact that can be had on adjunct faculty when their expertise is looked upon as an asset. The use of the word “actual” presumes that many part-time faculty exist in the contingent, disposable faculty role where they do not feel like they are allowed to contribute to the campus community.

He was the only adjunct interviewed who was actively pursuing a full-time teaching position at the time of the interviews, so the opportunity to share his knowledge and interact with students impacted his opinion of the study site and his department chair in a positive manner.

Erica also felt that her department chair was one of her strongest supporters on campus, specifically because of her willingness to work with the faculty in the department and encourage their ideas. She explained:

She's sort of like a cheerleader. She's amazing. She's got a ton of ideas. If something comes up and she has an idea for me, she doesn't hesitate to contact me. I feel like, I can approach her whether it's about a student or something else that, "Have you ever been through this, before?" I can approach her. She's very approachable and easy to talk to and I think that's really, really important.

Carol saw herself as a similar type of chair, as in her capacity as vice chair she has always worked with her adjuncts to better themselves as teachers. She explained, “I really work my adjuncts in my department specifically, so they're good teachers because we want them to be
good teachers. I also let them have academic freedom, so they'll tell me what they’re gonna do, but we talk about that and they come up with their own projects.” In cases such as those outlined in this section, many department chairs and administrators at the study site not only created spaces for faculty engagement such as department meetings, but also made their part-time faculty feel valued by the school. The academic freedom referred to by Carol indicated that there are those at the study site who see adjuncts not as contingent, temporary workers, but as educated, skilled teachers.

Slightly outside of the sub-themes of this superordinate theme but nonetheless important was that several of the adjunct participants felt that at the study site they had a higher number and better quality of interactions between full-time and part-time faculty than at the other colleges they had or were currently teaching at. Patty, a full-time faculty member acknowledged:

[There is] not always a direct line of communication between adjunct faculty and full-time faculty, even in the courses they’re teaching in common…you know, they're not just going to walk into someone's office and say, ‘Hey, I'm John Smith teaching Calc 1.' "I know, I see you're Doctor So-and-So. You're teaching Calc 1. Can we talk? I don't think there's a culture of that openness here, but I don't know that there is that culture anywhere.

Supporting the finding that participants felt that the culture of higher education, rather than individual biases, leads to disconnection between faculty groups, Erica, who teaches in a different department, stated that although she taught primarily in the evenings at the study site, “There's definitely much more interaction here than there is at other places.” She referenced the
“friendly, smiley people” with whom she interacted and that they enhanced her experience on campus. Her perception was that many of the individual faculty she had met at the study site were able to break through the established divides between full-time and part-time adjunct faculty. Brad echoed this sentiment by explaining that compared to the other colleges where he was teaching part-time, the study site “does it better than a lot of other schools in terms of just adjunct faculty feeling like they can ask questions of other, or that they can go to full time faculty to kind of get some advice.”

**Conclusion**

While professional collaboration amongst part-time faculty and their full-time and part-time colleagues did not appear to be a priority for the central administrative leadership of the study site, as shown through participant accounts, there has been a mostly successful attempt to at the very least bring faculty together to meet one another. Though the study site provides some opportunities for faculty to meet *outside* of their departmental administrative offices, formal events can be difficult to schedule around teaching schedules, as well as other adjunct obligations such as full-time day jobs and teaching at other schools. The full-time faculty interviewed reported regular interactions with full-time and part-time faculty through collegial collaboration, committee work, and personal friendships. A common theme of the interviews specifically with adjunct participants was that there was not much if any collaboration with faculty or administrators outside of their departments since they do not sit on committees or have the time to attend on campus events or trainings due to scheduling conflicts. All of the adjunct participants felt that the campus sponsored events geared towards faculty development and orientation were positive but basic and not helpful for those who already had the technical and pedagogical skills needed for teaching at the collegiate level. Sharon, an adjunct who also
worked full-time at the study site, was the most eager of the adjuncts to still attend these events, as she hoped to eventually obtain a full-time teaching job there.

Based on the interviews with adjunct faculty, it appears that the actions and mentalities of department chairs should be used as examples by others on campus who hold leadership and mentoring roles, as relationships and experiences at the micro level appeared to be more positive and effective than those at the macro level. Five participants noted that their respective chairs have contributed to their own faculty engagement and development, citing that they often championed part-time faculty and provided opportunities to share their skills and knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom.

**Summation**

In developing the overall direction of this study, the following questions became the drivers for the subsequent research: How do faculty members, both adjunct and full-time, make sense of their professional experience and relationship to each other as faculty members at the same community college? In what ways, if any, do these roles impact faculty members actions and behaviors, or the perceptions of others? Is teaching affected due to whether one is a full-time faculty or adjunct? The analysis of the participant interviews has allowed the researcher to use their accounts to understand at a personal level the relationships between and experiences of faculty at a community college in the Northeast region of the United States. The Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis method was utilized so that the researcher could use personal narratives and direct quotations to examine the phenomenon of an increased co-existence between the two faculty groups.
Throughout the interview process, topics which had not originally been considered by the researcher were brought up by the participants. Semantics, sub-groups, and self-initiated interactions underscored an autonomy on behalf of much of the faculty based on their confidence as content experts and educators. Professional and educational backgrounds lay the foundation of each faculty member’s unique role and encourage role-specific behaviors such as pursuing a career as an educator. However, just like individual roles, that of the faculty member is constantly changing throughout the lifecycle of one’s career. Although it is not uncommon to find a large mix of part-time and full-time faculty at community colleges, they are still unique places to begin a conversation on faculty roles, relationships, and experiences. The additional tasks that community college faculty often take on allow for a conversation surrounding how one’s peers, tasks, and environment establish or effect individual roles to take place on their campuses. While at the study site there certainly existed roadblocks often associated with the separation and hierarchy between full-time and part-time faculty, according to several of the study participants it was one of the most inclusive campuses they had worked. The findings of these interviews are valid and trustworthy because of the Constructivism-Interpretivist approach which emphasizes that knowledge emerges through the individuals' interaction with the environment over the course of his or her experience. It aligns with the sensemaking that is negotiated by individuals through their lived experiences.

The perception of one’s faculty role by others was acknowledged by many of the participants as an inevitability of academia, particular at the beginning of one’s career. Whether it was an administrative staff member moving to a faculty position, full-time faculty obtaining tenure, or the very existence of the part-time adjunct and the bit of mystery surrounding her or his background, faculty participants of this study believe that hierarchies and biases are
impermanent, and can be altered through interactions and relationships. Adjunct faculty at the study site felt valued by their respective department chairs, and those who had taught had other colleges cited the study site as being the most inclusive and supportive school at which they had been employed. They took on autonomous ideology when establishing themselves as professional, prepared members of the faculty, whether it was by attending professional development sessions on campus, dressing the part in professional attire or bringing their professional backgrounds into their courses.

Typically, faculty have always been seen as advisors to their students in both formal and informal ways. At a community college, however, where students often arrive lacking preparation for collegiate level academics, have personal and professional responsibilities outside of their studies, and in many cases plan to transfer to four-year institutions, the role of advisor requires the faculty member to become a jack of all trades. As stated by some of the study participants, it is beneficial for them to understand at the very least a little bit of everything regarding campus resources and course requirements.

Faculty roles at the study site follow the trajectory of Role Theory in that the tasks and behaviors of the individual both define and stereotype their categories, while also guiding the perceptions others have of them. Faculty are affected by external influencers such as treatment from department chairs and administration, quality and quantity of resources offered, frequency of interactions with colleagues, and initial perceptions based on assigned faculty standing. As their tasks and behaviors change when they seek promotion, participate at on campus events, and interact with colleagues and administrators, so do their roles.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between full-time and part-time faculty at a community college, with the goal of understanding how professional roles and the behaviors, responsibilities, and perceptions related to them affect faculty’s overall experiences. This topic represents a gap in the literature. While much has been written about the experiences of faculty, little exists that examines both part-time and full-time faculty together. This omission constitutes a problem of practice given the increased hiring of part-time adjunct faculty across colleges and universities (Bergson, 2016), along with changes in how and where courses are taught and the presence of a non-traditional student population (Miller, 2017).

The theoretical framework that was used to further examine these phenomena was Role Theory, which is a social psychological perspective that uses the imagery of actors in a theatre to portray how individuals act out their identities and roles (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Role Theory considers how individual behaviors and individual cultures are created. Applied to practical daily life applications, Role Theory makes clear that the roles that individuals take on are ever-changing and often influenced by the behaviors of others. In the case of this study, the behaviors the faculty participants are influenced by their colleagues and supervisors. The consensus and compromise of role evolution make individuals both vulnerable to outside influence yet also empowered with the ability to partake in a regular and deeply personal reflection of the evolution of their identities.

For this particular study, an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach allowed the researcher to examine with each participant the tasks associated with his/her academic position at the study site, whether or not such a professional role invited stereotypes or
pre-packaged perceptions, and how, if at all, interactions and collaborations with colleagues and supervisors impacted the quality of one’s experiences. Research for this study was conducted with a qualitative approach to utilize personal accounts in order to create narratives of how faculty perceive themselves and one another, and subsequently where they felt their opportunities and roadblocks existed. Given that the increase of professional co-existence between full-time and part-time faculty is a recent phenomenon in higher education, it was fitting that an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was used to approach the interview process. The IPA lends itself to small participant pools to highlight individuals’ lived experiences that can be presented through one-on-one interviews. The sample size of this study included seven participants who, at the time when interviews were conducted, were faculty at the study site. Six participants sat for a one-on-one, semi-structured, hour-long interview with the researcher, with one participant conducting her interview via email communications with the researcher due to her unanticipated scheduling conflicts. The email interview process involved multiple exchanges in order to achieve clarification of the participants responses. Four of the participants were part-time adjunct faculty at the time when the interviews were conducted, and three were full-time faculty.

The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of the participant interviews allowed the researcher to answer the initial research question of: “How do faculty members, both part-time adjuncts and full-time, make sense of their professional experiences with and relationships to each other as faculty members at the same community college?” Upon conducting a narrative analysis of the interview transcripts, the researcher determined that there were three superordinate themes and twelve sub-themes: 1) Identified Role (1.1 Part-Time Faculty, 1.2 Full-Time Faculty, 1.3 Educator, 1.4 Career Coach/Advisor, 1.5 Staff/Administrator,
1.6 Freelance Faculty), 2) Others Perceptions of Faculty Roles (2.1 Faculty Role Affects Others Perceptions of the Individual [Positively or Negatively], 2.2 Faculty Role Does Not Affect One’s Ability to Teach), and 3) Interactions and Collaborations (3.1 Within Own Department, 3.2 Outside of Own Department, 3.3 Self-Initiated, 3.4 Initiated by Administrators/Staff). Themes and sub-themes reflected the quality and quantity of faculty participants’ professional interactions, the level of support they received from colleagues and supervisors, and how they made sense of the tasks, expectations, interactions and potential roadblocks that influenced their professional roles and identities. The scope of the study was not to determine which group of faculty had an “easier” experience or if one group over the other was less inclined to participate in campus activities. Faculty status of “full-time” or “part-time” was imperative to use as an identifier because it is part of the formation of one’s professional identity and subsequent actions, behaviors, and relationships.

The efforts to promote faculty inclusion at the study site were well-intentioned. In some cases, attempts at inclusion and professional development were even successful. However, given that many of the positive experiences recounted by the faculty occurred due to self-initiated behaviors rather than campus-sponsored activities, it is clear that there is need for examination and evaluation of the more formalized ways in which faculty can be supported. The contents of this chapter will elaborate upon the findings presented in Chapter Four. Each section will explain how the respective finding adds to the literature presented in Chapter Two. Findings include the need for professional development opportunities that focus on faculty collaboration, the adaptation of the traditional faculty role to reflect 21st century community college needs, and suggestions for informing part-time faculty of campus information so that they may become
more impactful resources to their students. Recommendations for further research and for practice will complete this chapter.

**Discussion of Findings**

Through further analysis of the findings presented in Chapter Four, three principle and overarching themes emerged that correspond with, and provide value to, existing literature and previous research. This section elaborates on these findings and discusses how they interact and intersect with what has been written on these themes, which include mentorship and support, the importance of information sharing, and the need for variety and evolution within professional development.

**Mentoring and Support**

Findings varied with some faculty citing difficulty in finding professional mentorship at the study site, while others explained that they felt a constant level of support from their colleagues and supervisors. In the case of a full-time faculty participant who held a vice chair position in her department, the mentorship she offered to her faculty for both professional and personal counsel, she believed, made both part-time adjunct and full-time faculty feel a stronger connection to the department. Faculty participants reported feeling that their own experiences of being professionally mentored (or a lack thereof) had direct effects on the experiences of their students depending on how prepared and engaged faculty were as teachers. They stated that they had more positive experiences and feelings towards the study site when they received individual mentorship.

This study revealed that one’s full-time or part-time role at the study site often dictated the type of mentoring he or she received. Part-time adjunct and full-time faculty participants
who were teaching or had taught at other schools indicated that the study site, though not perfect in its mentorship strategies, provided the most substantive opportunities of all of their schools. It became clear that while both groups saw the professional mentoring of faculty as essential for their success, part-time adjunct and full-time faculty found it more practical to engage in one-on-one mentoring in unscheduled, ad hoc settings and pairings. These experiences reflect the finding of Fountain and Newcomer (2016) that most faculty, both full-time and part-time engage in informal mentoring, which they state is quite prevalent in the United States.

**Evolving Roles and Professional Mentorship**

The roles that faculty held at the time of the interviews impacted their experiences related to both mentoring and teaching. As the roles of faculty evolved along with changes related to student populations and content delivery methods of collegiate-level learning, the need for methods of mentorship of faculty continue to evolve as well. Even full-time faculty participants cited holding multiple roles at the college, often balancing administrative and faculty (not student) mentoring responsibilities with their teaching. Three part-time, adjunct faculty participants described occasionally feeling disconnected from the school due to lack of interactions with administrators and leaders of the college. This finding aligns with the writing of Williams, Layne, and Ice (2014), which shows that lack of such mentoring results in faculty feeling disconnected, unsupported, and unprepared to teach, particularly faculty in non-traditional roles such as online instructors and part-time adjunct faculty.

**Evolving Roles and Mentorship Interactions**

Baker and Lattuca (2010) explained that faculty activity and participation in one’s academic community have been shown to contribute to the creation of professional identity.
Participants in this study affirmed such findings through their respective desires to either mentor or be mentored by their peers to foster a strong academic community and enhance their own roles as educators and collaborators. Julie, a full-time faculty member who also runs the teaching and learning center on campus, highlighted the importance of assigning both a center mentor as well as a department mentor to new faculty (though participation of mentors and mentees was completely voluntary). Participants who did not have substantial or frequent interactions with colleagues or supervisors experienced some degree of role ambiguity at points of their careers. While they were able to confidently define themselves as teachers and educators, they were less successful defining their larger roles within the study site outside of their classrooms. This finding corresponds to Murray (2007) who found that faculty whose realities met their expectations with regard to their professional roles were more satisfied in their positions.

Given the concept in Role Theory that one’s expectations of his or her role affects context-specific behavior (Hindin, 2007), it is not surprising that those faculty participants without strong professional support systems limited their role on campus to primarily just teaching. These experiences both define and limit their identity development because they keep faculty stagnant, limiting their opportunities for role evolution. Feeling a belonging to a single system and participating in an environment that one perceives to be supportive allows for what Frey et al (2006) define as collaboration. A part-time adjunct participant who also held a full-time staff position on campus reported feeling a strong sense of belonging because she was aware of faculty events on campus. Another part-time adjunct stated that while she felt a strong connection to the school’s extension site where she taught, and its director, she did not feel particularly engaged with the main campus or its leadership. Such experiences also correspond
with Jones (2010) who explained that “identities emerge as a result of interaction and negotiations” (p. 3). This study on faculty relationships and experiences adds to the literature by presenting how a lack of interaction can result in faculty having ambiguous or clouded identities.

**Connection Through Mentorship**

Throughout the interviews conducted for this study, participants consistently noted that their department chairs provided substantial and meaningful professional support and advice. Because most of the participants had not anticipated careers as college professors—having fallen into teaching due to love of their respective fields and a variety of personal and professional circumstances—guidance and mentorship from their direct supervisors gave them the practical skills and emotional support which are necessary to be successful teachers. This finding directly aligns with research by Allgood, Hoyt, and McGoldrick (2018), which states that when department chairs were proactive in their onboarding efforts by assigning mentors to their new full-time faculty, faculty reported feeling better prepared to teach. While part-time adjunct faculty found that their interactions with faculty and staff outside of their departments was limited, it was primarily their respective department chairs who offered guidance to all faculty participants in regard to curriculum and pedagogy, student engagement, and professional development.

All participants in this study further exemplified findings from the literature through their own experiences with mentorship at the site. Specifically, they felt that their department chairs saw them as content experts and respected them as such, which supported Diegel’s (2013) finding that department chairs were the most valuable assets college campuses have when it came to supporting, acclimating, and retaining part-time adjunct faculty. Furthermore, during
their interviews, all participants discussed the way they felt supported by department chairs and those whom they identified as mentors, and the affect such support had on their teaching, as well as their acclimation to the study site. For example, a part-time participant stated that his department chair allowed him to engage in academic experiences such as leading student groups, a responsibility that had not been provided to him at other institutions where he had taught as a part-time adjunct. A full-time faculty participant who also served as Vice Chair of her department emphasized how seriously she took her role as mentor to her faculty, even those who had been with the college for a long period of time. Given the participants’ desire to progress from a part-time to a full-time career in academia, this experience expanded his opportunity for professional growth. Because most of the participants had not anticipated careers as college professors, having fallen into teaching due to love of their fields and a variety of personal and professional circumstances, guidance and mentorship from their direct supervisors gave them both the practical and innate skills necessary to be successful instructors.

A discrepancy did exist between the views of full-time and part-time faculty in that the latter did not feel that they received as much support from administrators and leaders at the school as their colleagues. Currently there is limited research that examines the level of support faculty receive from school leadership. Although neither group cited a lack of mentorship as being detrimental to their success in the classroom, all participants felt that having a strong mentor at the school positively influenced their ability to teach, they felt appreciated for their knowledge, and felt connected to the college. This finding correlates with Ancon (2011) who proposed that connection with a mentor or leader allowed for a better understanding of one’s role within the larger environment.
Multiple and Flexible Identities

A finding from the interviews that all of the participants desired to engage in mentorship as mentors and/or mentees was quite informative. For example, a full-time faculty participant who had recently obtained tenure noted that her department chair had been supportive in acknowledging that she should not sit on certain committees or complete other required tasks while she was preparing to apply for tenure. Additionally, a part-time faculty participant noted that the director of the extension site where she taught was someone whom she identified as a supporter that made regular attempts to interact with and assist her. The participant stated that she was unfamiliar with the administration at the main campus except for her own chairs, and noted that this was due to a lack of proactive support and communication from those administrators who to her, felt faceless and unknown.

Participants in the study explained how they are both students and educators, benefiting from having others mentor them while desiring to provide mentoring to their students both inside and outside of the classroom. Similar to their students who encounter a less traditional college experience than those at a four-year institution, faculty at the study site explained that being able to identify supervisors as mentors helped to clarify their own roles as teachers, avoiding feelings of role ambiguity, which can occur in any profession when the level of importance one feels about one’s role disconnects with the quality of professional support that is being provided. This finding of how faculty’s feelings of uncertainty can lead to disconnection supports Evans (2016) who found that a lack of mentorship from supervisors and leaders across several professional settings led to ambiguity and confusion related to one’s individual role within the organization as well as the very structure of the organization itself.
Participants spoke of navigating the varying cultures of different campuses and long-distance driving commutes connected with teaching at multiple schools and of holding both faculty and administrative roles. All participants felt that such duality was simply part of the academic profession, indicating that temporary frustrations were softened by being able to identify mentors on campus to whom they could go for guidance. Both part-time and full-time faculty who also taught at other colleges and universities stated that the study site provided more mentorship than their other schools, even if such relationships were limited to one’s department. Daffron’s (2010) finding that mentoring provides support for faculty who hold multiple roles at a single institution or teach at more than one reflects the feelings of the participants of this study that they often feel like chameleons in juggling these multiple identities. Based on the current literature as well as the findings compiled from the study participants, it can be concluded that intentional mentorship from direct supervisors not only provides faculty with necessary information, but shapes how they perceive their roles as educators within the greater college or university setting. While this finding outlined the important “who” that influences the experiences and relationships of faculty, the following section will outline the “what” that is needed by faculty.

**Importance of Information Sharing**

Through their interactions with colleagues and students, part-time adjunct as well as full-time faculty participants had discovered the impact and subsequent consequences of either having or lacking information related to the study site. Participants explained that the need for an understanding of policies, processes, and resources came from the role of the faculty member as the first line of communication for many students seeking guidance. For those participants who felt they lacked pertinent information, feelings of isolation and lack of appreciation from
leaders and administrators at the study site became prominent, though those who reported such feelings did not have any plans to leave their teaching roles.

**Lack of Information Limits Faculty Participation**

Excluding the part-time adjunct faculty member who worked at the site as a full-time employee, all part-time faculty participants indicated in their interviews that they had been left to their own devices to find accurate, up-to-date campus information. Being put in such a position led to a lack of clearly defined faculty identities amongst these participants. These experiences illustrated the findings of Saleh and Bista (2014) who found that not being provided with resources such as updated employee handbooks or information on campus policies and regulations resulted in negative experiences on the part of the faculty. Full-time participants, however, felt confident in either being provided with or knowing where to find up-to-date campus information. This difference highlights a discrepancy between full-time and part-time faculty, that one participant stated she had hoped would have no longer existed given the rising number of part-timers.

According to Inkpen (2000), the knowledge that one holds has the ability to add to the efficiency of an organization when shared with other organization stakeholders. The experiences of part-time participants of this study present how a lack of knowledge has the ability to limit participants' contributions to such group substance. For one part-time faculty participant, for example, the failure of the college administration to provide her with an updated handbook highlighted what she perceived to be the overall lack of appreciation for part-time adjuncts. Having to seek out information as straightforward as parking regulations—or as complex as transfer requirements and academic discipline policies—underlined an environment where
particular populations of faculty at the study site felt supported but only to a certain extent. Their experiences highlight a limitation of the institution and reflect the findings of Peters and Boylston (2006) that although part-time faculty felt prepared and confident with their course content, a lack of information about campus resources caused uncertainty regarding navigating the institution, interacting with colleagues, or assisting their students outside of the classroom.

**Students Success is Dependent on Faculty Knowledge of Campus Resources**

All faculty participants cited enriching the minds of their students and preparing them for future academic and professional endeavors as their top priorities for each semester. None of the participants felt that students cared or were all that much aware of whether or not they were considered full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, or held tenure. This finding contradicts the claim made by Jaeger and Eagan (2011) that being taught by part-time faculty could negatively impact student success. Faculty noted that when students sought guidance from them regarding how to balance their work-life responsibilities, they felt eager to assist their students but were unaware of what resources on campus were available. A full-time faculty participant who served as a mentor to new part-time adjuncts noted the benefits of all faculty knowing about the student services on campus such as the testing center and counseling department. Participants felt that it was unacceptable for them to not be able to provide students with updated information. One part-time adjunct referenced having been given a faculty handbook when she first began teaching at the study site but noted that the information was no longer accurate.

Curtis, Mahabir, and Vitullo (2016) found that administrators needed to provide support and introduction to their part-time adjunct colleagues to increase student success. Their study presented evidence that the more knowledge adjunct faculty had of campus resources and
policies, the better they were able to support their students in matters outside of course content. The experiences of several participants agreed with this literature, indicating that because their students were focused on either transferring to four-year colleges or seeking employment directly after receiving an associate degree, the need for faculty to have information on the policies and logistics surrounding such goals was critical for student success. Supporting the finding of Curtis et al (2016), three of the part-time participants in the study felt that not being provided with updated information had left them at one time or another feeling unsupported or unappreciated as critical members of the campus community. This underscores Smith’s (2015) finding that the part-time, non-tenure track adjunct instructors that colleges and universities are hiring at increasing rates frequently lack resources, development and training. Three of the four part-time participants stated that their initial formal onboarding, while more substantial than what they had received at other institutions, did not include enough information about campus resources.

It is important to note that unlike the participants in Swafford and Waller’s (2018) study who lacked teaching resources, these participants felt prepared when it came to course content-specific materials, due to their own teaching backgrounds as well as support from their individual department chairs and vice chairs. With six of the seven participants of this study having not started their careers with the intention of being college professors, the importance of information sharing supported studies which found that such practices benefited not only individual faculty or departments, but the entire college campus. While there are many different ways faculty can become clear about and comfortable within their roles, the following finding presents one of the possible methods of “how.”
Interactions and Professional Development

It became clear during interviews that all participants placed great emphasis on interactions with supervisors and colleagues as well as professional development opportunities. The quantity and quality of opportunities for both professional development and interactions impacted how participants considered their roles within the study site. Even those with positive feelings about the site acknowledged a discrepancy of opportunities between part-time adjuncts and full-time faculty.

Professional Development

Participants noted that the college provided a formal onboarding programming to all new faculty, both part-time and full-time, with some sessions for the full group and others designed for separate groups to focus on topics specific to them. However, four participants pointed out that as they continued teaching at the study site, additional professional development opportunities were rarely available. They explained that many of the topics focused basic classroom engagement techniques and learning to use online discussion boards, which did not serve to maximize faculty competencies (Harvey, Novicevic, Sigerstad, Kuffel, & Keaton, 2006) for those who already had experience in such areas. These participants desired professional development similar to that described by Kelly (2006), which presented more advanced teaching theories significant to various academic areas. Their experiences with professional development at the college greatly varied, ranging from non-existent (due to lack of interest or available time) to a substantial amount of time focused on development due to faculty or leadership roles, with only the full-time faculty participating in the latter. Additionally, a disconnect existed between the mission of the teaching and learning center on campus and faculty participants’ perceptions
of the relevance of its curriculum. Further, those who taught in the evenings or had other responsibilities outside of teaching found that the timing of such programs did not work for their schedules. The importance of this finding, as supported by the literature, is that role stress can be significantly decreased when professional development opportunities are offered (Kelly, 2006).

**Faculty Meetings as Opportunities for Connection and Understanding**

While participants saw informal interactions as sometimes positive, they acknowledged that the unpredictable and passive nature of such meetings did not reflect an urgency on the part of college leadership to create engagement or unity amongst faculty. Rather, faculty meetings reflected positively on the individual department and its chair. Four of the participants mentioned faculty meetings when referring to good opportunities to meet faculty in their department with whom they may not otherwise interact. The positive response to faculty meetings aligns with Bowman’s (2015) finding that through effective department faculty meetings that promote collaboration, which aimed to collectively seek out productive and helpful objectives for the entire group, faculty felt both trusted and supported by their colleagues.

All participants expressed appreciation of the varied teaching, educational, and professional backgrounds of their colleagues, citing them as positive to student experiences, countering Dumas, Phillips, and Rothbard’s (2013) finding that the discovery of dissimilarities between co-workers can highlight their differences and “loom large” (p. 1380) in perceptions. The hope of these participants was that highlighting such differences would create appreciation rather than segregation, and that a lack of introduction and mutual understanding led to negativity. They noted that in meeting other faculty members they enjoyed learning from them
what classes were being offered on campus. Stepping out from one’s own department, one participant explained, made her feel that she better understood the school at which she taught.

Desire for Variety

Part-time faculty participants described a desire for a variety of professional development topics that focus on more than just pedagogy. All participants felt confident and strong in their pedagogical skills due to their substantial years of teaching and/or backgrounds with the content taught in their classes. One participant reported feeling that the development opportunities being offered were geared more towards “older populations” who needed training on topics such as online learning and technology basics. Another participant felt that “professional development” referred to “developing as a teacher.” and she noted that this would be quite different at a nearby four-year university. These statements contrast with Kelly (2006) who found that faculty who had previously held careers outside of teaching nonetheless required professional development that focused on basic teaching theories and strategies. Additionally, a survey of community college faculty conducted by Latz and Mulvihill (2011) found that part-time faculty at two-year colleges preferred professional learning offerings which focused on the basics of teaching. The findings of the study presented here did not align with Latz and Mulvihill.

Again, in contrast, full-time faculty in the study, while very supportive of professional development programming, expressed a similar lack of interest in the rudimentary topics that were often presented. Their desire to participate in development that would contribute to their respective fields of study aligns with Akerlind (2011) who found that there has been a shift in faculty focus, moving away from an emphasis on the self and one’s individual needs to more of an awareness on the other—in this case one’s field or social community. The desire for departmental-specific training presents an understanding that all faculty, regardless of role,
contribute not only to individual students or personal development, but to the larger field of study and campus community.

**Recommendations for Practice**

This study provides a deeper understanding of how community college faculty make sense of their professional experiences and relationships in connection with the roles they possess. Participant interviews uncovered areas where faculty felt supported by the study site, as well as areas that need improvement. Based on an analysis of the findings, their relationship to existing research and themes within the theoretical framework of Role Theory, the following recommendations for practice and future research developed.

**Provide Deeper, More Regular Asynchronous Interactions and Development Opportunities**

Attempting to engage faculty who have varied schedules and responsibilities is a formidable task for college administrators, particularly when faculty are not compensated for their participation. Consequentially, it has become essential for professional development, mentoring, and even mere introductions to be shifted to online settings where faculty can participate as their schedules allow. Similar to how online learning addresses the varied schedules of adult and non-traditional students, asynchronous models for faculty engagement are becoming more and more necessary as adjuncts are being hired in greater numbers (Bergson, 2016; Hardy, Shepard, & Pilotti, 2017; Lewis & Wang, 2015; Woodworth, 2017).

**Online Faculty Forums**

All of the participants were aware of the center on campus that provides teaching support, and most knew of the mentoring program it ran. However, without the time or scheduling
flexibility to participate in such programming, some faculty found themselves feeling disengaged from events taking place during the day or on days when they were not on campus. As a full-time faculty participant indicated, the college only reaches part-time faculty who want to be involved in professional development and mentor programming. The interviews uncovered, however, was that a lack of attendance is often not correlated with a lack of interest; given the opportunity, the faculty participants who were not attending sessions would consider doing so if they were delivered in a different venue and/or format.

Mimicking an online classroom discussion board, a Professional Learning Community as outlined by Bedford and Rossow (2017) would include a faculty discussion board serving as a place for idea and information sharing. While primarily an asynchronous resource, it could host monthly or bi-monthly scheduled sessions based on topic suggestions provided by faculty. These sessions would also be recorded for future viewing. Such actions would allow the forum to serve not only as a virtual gathering spot but also as a mini-Ted Talk or Lynda.com-style interactive space. For the study site, tasking the teaching and learning center to run the faculty discussion board (with technical assistance from the Information Technology office) would be the most practical route, as these staff and faculty members have experience working in faculty onboarding and engagement. For schools that do not have such resources, ownership could come from academic affairs or faculty affairs, the office of organizational development, or a combination of the above-mentioned tools. Much of the frustration for part-time faculty is that they can feel that their contributions are not valued, so one goal of these discussion boards would be that administrators and department chairs would actively interact with faculty through this medium and take their input into consideration when engaging in strategic planning at the individual, department, and institutional levels.
Centralize and Digitize Information

One of the challenges many part-time faculty participants faced was being unaware of the resources available on campus. Stemming from the feedback obtained through participant interviews, a recommendation for practice is to create a central electronic location where all faculty can access relevant, current information about campus policies, procedures, and resources. Keeping in mind that, as participants indicated, faculty are often the primary source of information for students, implementing such an information source for them will also benefit students, as they will have increased confidence in their instructors as resource specialists as well as subject matter experts. Such an initiative would be a substantive method of addressing the legitimate concern that faculty onboarding ends once one begins teaching.

A beneficial function of this board would be to make it searchable, so that faculty interested in specific topics would be able to find previous discussions. Policies, procedures, and general information related but not limited to advising, transferring, financial aid, parking, IT, human resources and benefits are all possible items to be included in this resource which will allow faculty to become more knowledgeable of the institution’s policies, procedures, and resources. While small colleges and universities may have fewer issues in sharing information with their faculty, bigger schools with large amounts of information require a single resource site to make it much easier for faculty to find what they are looking for, particularly for those teaching part-time and unfamiliar with all of the departments and offices on campus. An institutional administrator will need to be designated as the monitor of the project, as this person can serve as a point of contact for questions regarding faculty resources. The administrator would also ensure that information is accurate and up to date.
The updating of this central faculty information repository could be construed as double work for those who have ownership of it (as information would also be updated on individual office or department webpages). However, the very existence of a “one-stop shop” where faculty can easily access information which either they or their students need will hopefully engage them to the point where they see themselves as essential, empowered and belonging to the institution. As in the previous recommendation, representatives from Faculty Affairs, Human Resources, or department staff would ideally take ownership of creating and maintaining such a space, with a single project manager who would serve as a point of contact for faculty members who are either looking for advice or who would like to provide input. Appointing an actual person to be the point of contact for this online resource will maintain the feeling of personal support that many faculty have come to appreciate and seek out.

**Seeking Faculty Input**

Based on the participant interviews it became clear that the development opportunities provided by the teaching center on campus were rather general, focusing on topics that some participants felt only targeted a small faculty population such as basic engagement strategies for the classroom and tutorials for Microsoft applications. These participants cited that they did not need to “be taught how to teach” because they had substantial teaching experience. While having a strong knowledge of these programs is crucial for both on campus and online learning, the feeling of some participants was that they should not be the sole focus of faculty professional development programming. Four participants expressed that they had never been contacted for input regarding the type of development offerings, and stated that had they, even the action of soliciting input would have been appreciated. Such findings illustrate the need for those creating professional development trainings to be more collaborative with faculty. Based on the findings,
even if one’s ideas are not always used, the simple act of involving faculty in the creation process creates a more positive environment. Although this action would be voluntary and thus, the level of success would be dependent upon participation, participant interviews noted that even a well-intentioned attempt by campus leaders to engage faculty (along with the creation of actionable items based on the collected data) would have a positive impact on perception and faculty satisfaction.

These narratives highlighted the importance of engaging all faculty, regardless of their roles. For the center to attract a higher number of faculty to its sessions, and in an effort to show that the knowledge and experiences that part-time faculty bring are valued, a recommendation for future practice is to make session topics more specific. Topics related to teaching students over the age of 30 or other areas which reflect the current evolution of the student population as it becomes more diverse, would be more relevant to the experiences that all faculty face, particularly in a community college setting. Re-examining the programming offered by the center and creating a collaborative environment between administrators and faculty will maintain the highly important emphasis on teaching while incorporating current higher education trends.

**Provide Clear Definition of Role Expectations**

Hiring managers can ensure that the faculty they hire are aware of the tasks, expectations, and opportunities for growth (if any) connected to their roles to help them avoid being blindsided, as well as encouraging them to fully take advantage of resources and developmental opportunities. This would require an intentional undoing of ambiguous job descriptions, for example replacing ambiguous job descriptions with clear tasks. For part-time faculty hoping to eventually obtain full-time teaching positions, such as one of the study participants, clearly
outlined expectations and pathways towards tenured positions, if applicable, should be provided upon being hired. Participants who had taught or were currently teaching at multiple schools said that the treatment and level of support they received varied greatly between schools. Including conversations that serve to clarify expectations and highlight opportunities for growth and support as formal parts of the hiring and onboarding process would allow both parties to discuss and resolve any preconceived notions, they may have about what it would take to be a full-time or part-time faculty member at that school.

Much of what has been written about Role Theory concerns role conflicts, which occur when there is a lack of clarity between one’s expectations versus the reality of his or her role. As seen through several of the participant interviews, misalignment of role expectations often does not occur solely at the initial hiring stage. Rather, questions and concerns occur over time and come with experience. Jones (2010) states that “identities emerge as a result of interaction and negotiations” (p. 3). The role of the faculty member, Richards and Levesque-Bristol (2016) explained, can be predicted when there is an understanding of how these roles are properly defined. Without such explanation and clarification, there is the potential for role ambiguity or role conflict, both of which have been shown to lead to stress in the workplace (Daffron, 2010). Providing clear definitions and expectations associated with one’s faculty role at the time of hiring can avoid conflict down the line. It is important to note that the participant interviews also revealed that ambiguity can be just as detrimental as directly negative actions because silence implies a lack of interest on the part of the leadership. When faculty understand what is expected of them by others, it influences the context-specific behavior in which they engage (Hindin, 2007).
**Implications for Personal Practice**

For the researcher, the topic of faculty experiences is familiar, having taught part-time online College Writing courses, though never with the intention of pursuing a full-time teaching career. Working in higher education for over ten years has provided substantial interactions with and observations of, diverse groups of faculty, from part-time community college adjuncts to Ivy League tenured professors. The study’s findings inform my understanding of the importance of communication, transparency and accessibility in recruiting and retaining highly competent faculty.

This study has clarified how one’s faculty role as either clinical faculty or research faculty has the potential to create unique needs and obstacles for an individual. The findings will positively influence how I work training the administrative faculty support staff whom I supervise. By adequately identifying the support needs of faculty based on their roles, my staff and I will be able to ensure that administrative tasks and support are taken care of without faculty intervention.

Along with supervising support staff, my position also involves supporting the Administrative Operations Manager in working to identify hiring needs. This position requires a strong understanding of the role of each person in an office or lab, including to whom they report, the tasks they regularly complete, how often they need to work, and how the position works in conjunction with the rest of the area. The study’s themes of mentorship, information sharing, and professional development are just as critical to staff as they are to faculty, particularly in a department that is going through significant personnel and procedural
transitions. An implication for personal practice in my role will involve bringing all three themes into the creation of positions and job descriptions.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings from this study highlight several avenues where future research can be conducted. Much of the potential for additional research falls into areas of inclusion where faculty of different groups can be considered as a whole rather than separate, disconnected members of the campus community. This question of connectedness could be further explored in future research in the context of faculty unionization. At some institutions of higher education all faculty are unionized, whereas at others only full-time faculty belong to unions. Likewise, at schools where adjuncts are unionized, the question of their satisfaction with representation and their perceptions of full-time faculty job security would allow for very substantive research. Such research would provide a new and important understanding of how unionization affects faculty views of their professional roles, information sharing, and other behaviors.

This study included part-time adjunct faculty and full-time tenured faculty. Although tenure track full-time faculty received the recruitment letter created by the researcher, no one from this group volunteered. First and foremost, future research should include full-time tenure track faculty as this group would bring a unique set of behaviors, experiences, perceptions, and needs. Future research that includes tenure track faculty could consider the type of additional support, if any, they require. Additionally, a study using Role Theory would consider how tenure track faculty perceive their roles as educators during this evolutionary stage of their careers, adding to the current literature a richer and more diverse understanding of the faculty experience.
All but one of the participants for this study were female. While one would hope that gender would never play a role in how faculty are treated by their colleagues, supervisors, or students, having a more gender diverse participant population in future research would certainly be desirable. The gender split for this study was the effect of the participants who responded to the initial inquiry. Involving more males or transgender faculty as well as those on the tenure-track will provide further dimension to the conversation of faculty experiences, relationships, and roles.

To make the topic of faculty experiences and relationships more universally applicable, future studies should be conducted at four-year colleges and universities. Researchers studying part-time and full-time faculty at these locations will need to consider the faculty and student populations, expectations, responsibilities, and traditions associated with this type of institution. The dynamic of full-time and part-time faculty co-existing at a school where the former makeup the majority of the faculty population would offer a unique perspective of faculty experiences related to mentoring, teaching, knowledge of institutional practices and policies, professional development, and career growth. Additionally, such research could consider the specific dimensions of faculty experiences based on tenure requirements, student populations, and the varying missions of four-year schools.

Given that this topic explores unique experiences of faculty in a 21st century higher education environment, a logical area to explore in future research would be online education. Faculty may teach students in either hybrid or fully online programs and courses. In many instances, neither students or faculty step foot on the campus of the institution. It is likely that these factors will impact faculty members’ identified roles, expectations and potential role stressors. Studies of distance education faculty will also be able to provide an understanding of
how, if at all, such faculty are able to participate in professional development, and whether their status of “part-time” or “full-time” affects student perception. This study can be replicated within the modality of online education with distance education faculty participants who will provide insights into areas of faculty development and onboarding reflective of the increasingly digital nature of higher education, teaching and mentoring.

To approach the data from a different vantage point, another recommendation for future research on the topic of faculty experiences and relationships would be to conduct quantitative studies. Differing from my qualitative research in its examination of participant experiences, a quantitative study could include survey data results that look at length of service, student and supervisor evaluations, self-evaluations, mentoring interactions, course load, attendance of faculty at professional development events, number of years taught, and merit-based salary increases. Evaluating the relationship between the number of years taught, student evaluation ratings and merit-based salary increases for non-union faculty and other variables would provide a different lens with which to consider faculty experiences. Such research might inform the creation of clearly defined staff and faculty roles, processes, and policies with the goal of onboarding, training, and providing professional development.

Future research that focuses primarily on the educational backgrounds of faculty could add to Lindholm’s (2004) study of faculty careers and why participants were attracted to collegiate professorship and academic work. Such research could analyze and compare the career paths taken by part-time and full-time faculty, while considering implications of reducing the separation between these groups, which was evident in the findings of this study.
Conclusion

The study presented here was guided by the research question: How do faculty members, both part-time adjunct and full-time, make sense of their professional experience and relationship to each other as faculty members at the same community college? Participants provided detailed accounts of the paths they took to become teachers, as well as substantial information related to the experiences they had and professional relationships that had been formed. While one of the primary goals was to fill a gap in the literature of faculty experiences which, for the most part, separated full-time from part-time faculty, important themes emerged to provide further understanding of the roles of these respective faculty and what they see as essential factors for their success.

The first finding that emerged from the faculty interviews was that mentorship and support were most often found within one’s own department, substantiating the role of the department chair as one’s primary mentor. The second theme focused on the impact that providing accurate campus information has on faculty member’s ability to support their students outside of the classroom, as well as in making faculty feel like appreciated, full members of the community. The third theme covered the importance of faculty professional development, with subordinate themes touching upon the need for variety of topics and more informal opportunities to align with the varied schedules of faculty.

Though the canon of literature written on faculty development and onboarding is quite substantial, rarely are studies conducted which include both full-time and part-time faculty together. This study contributes to the literature by including both groups in the consideration of how faculty experience their professional roles. Participants in this study detailed their unique
experiences as faculty at a community college, providing details of how they “acted out” and navigated the tasks and behaviors associated with their respective roles. This study indicated that rather than a singular, large-scale negative action, it is more often a group of smaller omissions, actions, or instances that stall progress and create feelings of isolation amongst faculty. In most cases the breakdowns were not intentional but resulted from faculty and administrators continuing past practices without considering present needs. An implication of this finding is that there is a demonstrated need to address individual issues associated with faculty discontent rather than starting with an attempt to fix the culture.

Participants’ narratives added to the current literature on faculty development, onboarding, and overall experiences, and highlighted their impact on how individuals perceive their own professional roles. The study shows that while faculty are satisfied with the support they receive from their department chairs, there was a perception of a lack of support and engagement coming from higher level administrators at the college. Many participants identified areas where the study site did not provide sufficient support or opportunities but did not consider such shortcomings grounds for wanting to end their employment at the study site. Those who had taught or were teaching at other colleges at the time of their interviews reported that the study site was more successful in moving past antiquated, dismissive practices of part-time faculty.

One of the most positive findings of this study was that faculty believed that their full-time or part-time status did not impact how students felt about their competency as teachers. None of the participants felt that their faculty role impacted how their students viewed them. While none of the participants denied that there were different restrictions and benefits
associated with the various faculty roles, there was an overwhelming sense of mutual respect for their colleagues, particularly peers and direct supervisors within their own departments.

A goal of the study was to create a conversation about community college faculty as a collective group. By considering professional relationships, experiences, and how roles are created and influenced, as well as the use of Role Theory, one can see how connected individual experiences are with the greater community and its mission of student success. The findings provide groundwork for future research that can explore faculty experiences, relationships, and roles at varying types of colleges and universities.
Appendix A: Initial Request Email

Sender: Rachel Lyke, M.A., Student Researcher

Recipient: Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Study Site [Identifying information removed to preserve anonymity]

Hello [Identifying information removed to preserve anonymity],

My father informed me that he had discussed with you via email my desire to conduct research for my Ed.D. dissertation at [Study Site], and that you had presented an interest in allowing this. I would like to thank you. My own experiences at [Study Site] as a visiting student and part-time staff member have shown me how dynamic and academically exceptional it is.

I am currently working on the first three chapters of my dissertation. The title of it (currently) is "Examining the Professional Experiences of and Relationships Between Full-Time, Tenure Track and Part-Time, Adjunct Faculty." In order to provide you with an understanding of the purpose of my research, I have attached Chapter One of my dissertation. This is still in a very rough draft and I am working with my advisor on it. However, I'm including it as it provides the problem of practice and theoretical framework.

Regarding methodology, I will be conducting an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) qualitative study for which I would like to interview small groups of adjunct and full-time faculty. I plan to conduct this work in September/October. I imagine this timing would allow for faculty to get settled into the Fall semester before engaging in interviews/focus groups. I will be working on the Northeastern University IRB form over the next couple of months. Please let me know if [Study Site] has its own IRB form to be submitted.
Let me know if there is any other information I can provide or questions I can answer.

Thank you again,

Rachel
Appendix B: Recruitment Letter to Community College Faculty Members

Dear Faculty Member,

My name is Rachel Lyke, and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University. I am writing to ask for your participation in my current research on the experiences of and relationships between faculty in a community college environment. The title of my dissertation is *Examining How Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty Make Sense of Their Professional Experiences with, and Relationships to, Each Other as Faculty Members at the Same Community College*. The Director of Grants Development and Dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences have consented to my conducting this research at [Study Site].

The topic of faculty development has been of great interest to me for quite some time. My own professional experiences as well as the research I have conducted throughout my doctoral program at Northeastern University have increased my understanding of the needs of full-time and part-time faculty. However, although much has been researched and written on these groups separately, little has been written that integrates all faculty. Given the ever-changing and fluid nature of higher education and faculty populations, I believe that such a study is greatly needed. I am hoping to speak to part-time adjuncts, full-time tenure track, and full-time tenured faculty in order to gain a holistic understanding of the faculty experience at my chosen study site.

The research process will include one-on-one interviews with 9-12 faculty members. I seek to conduct interviews that allow for open-ended conversations that focus on the experiences and opinions of each participant related to his/her career as educators, relationships with colleagues, perceptions of the his/her faculty role as well as the roles of colleagues, and experiences as a faculty
member (part-time, full-time tenure track, or full-time tenured). Each interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Interview locations will be determined ahead of time and will be either at [Study Site] or an agreed upon location within five miles of campus. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions will be made available to each participant, and I will make myself available to discuss any questions and/or collect clarification. Each participant of this study will be kept anonymous, and all files related to an interview will be saved utilizing a pseudonym. All guidelines set forth by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be strictly followed, and participants will not be required to answer questions with which they are uncomfortable.

If you are interested in participating in this study please respond to this email (lyke.r@husky.neu.edu) stating your interest. Once the interview has been scheduled, I will forward an Informed Consent Form that will need to be filled out and sent back to me. I will be happy to schedule a phone or video call with you to go over this request in more detail should the need arise.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Lyke, M.A.

Ed.D. Candidate

Northeastern University
Appendix C: Consent Form

Northeastern University, Boston, MA
Northeastern Department: College of Professional Studies (CPS) - Higher Education Administration (HEA) concentration
Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Michael Thomas (Principal Investigator), Rachel Lyke, M.A. (Student Researcher)
Title of Project: Examining How Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty Make Sense of Their Professional Experiences with, and Relationships to, Each Other as Faculty Members at the Same Community College

Request to Participate in Research Study

You are cordially invited to participate in a research study on the experiences and relationships of faculty at a community college. You have been invited to take part in this study because you are a part-time adjunct, full-time tenure track, or full-time tenured faculty at the study site. This form is a written statement of the purpose and procedures related to this study. Further explanation will be provided to you verbally and via email by the researcher throughout the entire process. At any time you may ask the researcher questions. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. Participation is voluntary, and you will not be required to answer questions with which you are uncomfortable.

Additionally, if at any time you need to drop out of the study you have the right to do so. I invite you to participate in this research and seek your consent to be interviewed and audio recorded. Before agreeing to participate, we ask that you read this form carefully, sign this statement, and we will give you a copy to keep.
This study is being conducted by Rachel Lyke, Doctoral Candidate in Higher Education Administration at Northeastern University. This study is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Michael Thomas.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the unique experiences of three categories of faculty teaching at a community college. Specifically, the integration of part-time adjuncts, full-time tenure track, and full-time tenured faculty creates a complex and relatively new population to the historically traditional higher education environment.

As part of the informed consent process, I would like to explain that there is no compensation offered to participants, so you will not be paid for your participation in this study. In order to ensure anonymity to participants and minimize risk, all hard copy documents and audio recordings related to this study will be kept in either password protected, cloud-based applications or locked physical locations. Any reports or publications based on this research will only use pseudonyms, and will not identify you or any other participant as being part of this project.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study; however, this research study is designed to obtain new knowledge in the field of faculty development, and your answers may help to promote improved professional development opportunities.

Participating in this interview and research is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question and may withdraw from the study at any time.
Specifically, I am seeking your consent for the following:

**Interview:** I would like you to participate in a semi-structured interview that I will record and transcribe. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will take place at a location and time at your choosing. I anticipate this interview will take place between mid-September and mid-October of 2018. The interview will consist of 10 main questions. I will do my best to limit the time required of you, but your input about my findings will be valuable. Follow-up conversations will be held via phone calls. I will offer you the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview. This will provide you a chance to make any clarifications and ask questions.

Please note that your responses will be kept confidential to the best of our ability, and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Any reports or publications based on this research will not identify you or any individual as taking part in this study. Participants’ names will be changed.

Finally, as my focus in this research is on the experiences and relationships of faculty members, I do not anticipate contacting department chairs, deans, or other college administrators for their input on the topic. Although I have enlisted the assistance of administrators to set up this study and recruit participants, they have had no input in the final selection of participants, interview locations, or data collection or analysis.
Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about participating this research. You may contact me at lyke.r@husky.neu.edu or at 203-909-1172. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Michael Thomas at m.thomas@northeastern.edu.

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

I truly appreciate your participation. Thank you very much!

Rachel Lyke, M.A.

---

**Participant’s Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I understand the information presented on this form. I have asked all the questions I have at this time, and my questions so far have been answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study and my understanding that I can withdraw at any time.

Please indicate your consent by signing below

______________________________  ________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part       Date
Printed name of person above

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date
Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Interviewee:
Interviewer: Rachel Lyke, M.A.

Date: Location:

Introductory Statement: This interview is part of a study on the experiences of international student spouses with support services at institutions of higher education. Because your responses are important and I want to make sure I capture everything you say, this interview will be recorded. I will also be taking some written notes during the interview. Is this process acceptable to you?

To meet our human subjects’ requirements at the university, you must sign the form I have with me (provide consent form). Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you uncomfortable, (3) this interview will be audiotaped and (4) we do not intend to inflict any harm (allow time to review form). Do you have any questions about the interview process or this form?

I can assure you that all responses will be confidential - I will only use your pseudonym when quoting from the transcribed text. This will be the only interview. We have gone over the process of the study and you have read the consent form. Do you have any other questions about the process at this time? Do you agree to sign the Consent Form? Thank you.

Interview questions:

1. What courses are you currently teaching at X?

2. How long have you been teaching, and what attracted you to teaching at the collegiate level?

3. What are your future career plans?

4. How do you define your role as a faculty member at X?

5. Do you believe that one’s faculty category (part-time adjunct, full-time tenure track, or full-time tenured) impacts the perceptions that others have of him/her? If so, please provide clarification.

6. Does your own faculty role affect your ability to teach and/or navigate the college outside of the classroom?

7. Do you have opportunities to interact with other faculty members at X? If so, in what capacity? If not, does this hinder your overall experience as a faculty member?

8. How well do you feel your college does in providing professional development to all faculty?
9. What is the culture of your institution regarding the promotion of collaboration amongst various types of faculty (full-time tenured, full-time tenure track, part-time)?

10. What are some examples of your own institutional and cultural engagement as a faculty member at this college?

11. Who do you see as your community or supporters on campus?

12. What are the top three outcomes you hope to achieve each year that you teach at the collegiate level?

13. **Specifically for tenured faculty:** What role, if any, has tenure had in affecting your teaching?

14. **Specifically for adjunct faculty:** What resources are provided to adjunct faculty by X?

15. **Specifically, for adjunct faculty:** If you have taught at multiple colleges, how have you seen the role of the adjunct faculty vary? Are there similarities in the resources provided to or ways in which adjuncts navigate teaching and interactions?

*Closing the Interview: I am finished with my questions at this point. Is there anything that we did not discuss that you think would be important to add at this time?*

*I thank you again for spending this time with me. Your participation in this study has been very helpful. I will be back in touch with you when I have your transcripts and you review them via email at that time.*
Appendix E: Member Check Form

Date of interview:  
Interviewer:  
Participant:  
Interview Time/Date/Location:  

The researcher has reviewed the findings from interview with the participant, and I attest to the following statements (check boxes that apply and initial):

____ I have verified the accuracy of the report  
____ I agree that the description is complete and realistic  
____ I agree that the themes are accuracy  
____ I agree that the interpretations are fair and representative  
____ I do not agree with the description, themes, and/or interpretations and I make the following suggestions (see comments below)

______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________

Comments:
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________________________
References


Kane, R., Shaw, M., Pang, S., Salley, W., & Snider, B. (2016). Faculty professional development and student satisfaction in online higher education. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 14*(2).


Lindholm, J. A. (2004). Pathways to the professoriate: The role of self, others, and
environment in shaping academic career aspirations. *Journal of Higher Education, 75*(6-12), 603.


understanding from the stories of older women. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 80*(3), 762-768.


In M. Murray K. Chamberlain (Eds.) Qualitative Health Psychology. New York, NY: Sage Publications.


