SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF ADJUNCT FACULTY AND DIVISION CHAIRPERSONS REGARDING TEACHING SUPPORT, MENTORING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the similarities and differences in perceptions between division chair people and adjunct faculty regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. Adjunct faculty have a significant presence in higher education institutions and need to feel supported so they are prepared to teach. A phenomenological approach, as well as an interpretivist lens, were used to gain insight on adjunct faculty and division chair people at one rural-based community college in the Midwest. Three division chairs are interviewed, along with five adjunct faculty from each of their departments, totaling 18 participants.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The fabric of higher education has changed dramatically in recent years with a sudden increase in the presence of part-time, non-tenured faculty. There are multiple reasons for the influx of this new group of faculty to higher education classrooms. Some reasons include reduced public funding, increased emphasis on technology, internationalization of the curriculum and course offerings, increased employer expectations of college graduates, and the aging workforce of full-time, tenured faculty members (Watters & Weeks, 1999). In response to these dramatic changes, numerous community colleges rely on part-time faculty to teach a significant number of classes. According to the National Center for Education Statistics in 2008, 67% of community college faculty assumed part-time status. Despite their presence on campus, a majority of adjunct faculty, as well as full-time faculty, have limited training in pedagogy, student learning styles, classroom management techniques, and grading rubrics (Watters & Weeks, 1999). With this in mind, educational leaders play a crucial role in providing adjunct faculty with the necessary tools to ensure that academic quality be upheld. This study focuses on what academic leaders, specifically division chairpersons, do in terms of providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty who teach in community colleges. While the relentless rise of part-time appointments over the past three decades constituting nearly half the academic workforce may be “old news,” it is clear that the academic profession has endured a massive makeover (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2007). Since adjunct faculty have a significant
presence in community colleges, it is crucial they are supported so they are prepared to effectively teach students. Little research exists on what division chairpersons do to ensure adjunct faculty are getting the necessary support, mentoring and professional development opportunities to uphold academic standards and ensure quality learning. This study focuses on part-time adjunct faculty only, not full-time temporary faculty.

This chapter is divided into ten sections. They include the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions and sub-questions, the significance of the study to academe, the definition of key terms, assumptions, the delimitations and limitations, and overviews of related literature and methodology.

Statement of the Problem

Adjunct faculty members are important community college constituents. They provide instruction and guidance to students pursuing higher education degrees. There has been a tidal change in academic staffing patterns that is moving, seemingly inexorably, toward creating a predominately contingent academic work force (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2007). Nationally, a new community college student is more likely to be taught by an adjunct faculty member than by a full-time faculty member (Smith, 2007) because of the significant budget pressures community colleges face. Within the cauldron of shrinking state funding, changing enrollment patterns, and retirement of full-time faculty, all play a role in the need to hire adjuncts. Additionally, adjunct faculty provide a buffer for full-time faculty because in many academic areas, decreases in enrollment affect the hiring and use of part-time faculty before they impinge on full-time faculty jobs (Green, 2007). Adjunct faculty typically are hired to teach lower level general
educational classes as well as specialized classes that might be outside a full-time faculty member’s area of interest or expertise. The growth of online programs, hybrid courses, and laboratory courses is also changing the role of faculty because division chair people can use the talents, connections, and skills of adjunct faculty to assist in developing curriculum, providing internships, tutoring, and serving on advisory councils (Green, 2007). However, most adjuncts in the community college setting are hired strictly to teach a course or two per semester. While they provide the community college with a certain amount of flexibility, they may not have the credentials or the teaching experience of full-time faculty. Despite these drawbacks, adjunct faculty provide a fresh and reality-based perspective in the classroom (Wallin, 2007). Adjunct faculty add diversity, scholarly enrichment, and scheduling flexibility to any community college. Past research, that will be displayed in the upcoming literature review, demonstrates that adjunct faculty lack teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities within their departments or throughout the community college. In creating a collaborative department, one would look to the division chairperson to welcome and monitor adjunct faculty. Division chair people play a critical role in creating conditions that will induce or inhibit adjunct faculty preparedness, commitment, and loyalty to the department (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). It is crucial that division chair people recognize the developmental needs of adjunct faculty so they can be prepared to effectively teach and have the opportunity to become an integral part of the community college.

Adjacent faculty presence in community colleges. Whether they are described as invisible, strangers, the working poor, vagabond workers, or accidental faculty, adjunct
faculty have a lower status position in academe and have been regarded as providing low-quality instruction, being disconnected from campus culture and contributing to grade inflation (Smith, 2007). Therefore, they must be supported, mentored, and have the opportunity to participate in professional development so they can effectively teach students. With the cost savings to community colleges alone, adjunct faculty will continue to be hired and play a key role in achieving the mission and have an enormous impact on academic culture. Students appreciate the fact that many adjunct faculty are practitioners who pepper their classroom lectures with real-world experiences plus, adjunct faculty have connections to the community that can assist in maintaining or enhancing the reputation of the community college. Internships, service learning, and work-school partnerships can easily be created between the student and surrounding community because of the connections most adjunct faculty have to their professional careers outside of part-time teaching. Division chair people can also offer classes that full-time faculty normally cannot or do not want to teach because they are outside their area of expertise or the time of the class offering is not suitable to a full-time faculty member. Many adjunct faculty are hired not only for their credentials but because they can teach weekend and evening classes. Additionally, adjunct faculty can provide internships and job opportunities for students because of their connections to the surrounding community, and have the potential to add diversity to community college culture because of their rich experiences (Green, 2007). It is critical that division chair people explore the role that adjunct faculty play and to cultivate effective professional development activities that will assist them to succeed in the community college
environment. Not only will this improve their pedagogical skills but it will enhance the special ability adjunct faculty have in providing interesting and contemporary examples that relate to course content.

**Academic quality.** Contrary to popular belief, most research proves adjunct faculty are as effective as full-time faculty in terms of meeting student outcomes in the classroom. Students learn as much, perform as well, and their student evaluations are comparable to those of full-time faculty (Leslie & Gappa, 2002). Past research shows the quality of adjunct faculty members’ teaching is a pertinent issue for administrators in higher education because most adjunct faculty have not had training to effectively teach. Questions of quality will continue to be asked as the role of adjunct and full-time faculty continues to change because of online, accelerated, and hybrid instruction becomes more popular. The division chairperson must strive to always assign adjunct faculty to classes they are credentialed to teach and comfortable teaching. If a division chairperson becomes desperate to fill a class he or she cannot find anyone to teach the class and assigns an unprepared adjunct faculty to the course, academic quality will suffer. However, this should not stop the division chairperson from making use of adjunct faculty members’ valuable experiences and talents just because they are new to teaching or to the department. Having a team of full-time and part-time faculty address an issue together can be a valuable practice and pay big dividends for both the community college and individual faculty members (Green, 2007). Division chair people need to be aware of opportunities across campus or create opportunities so adjunct faculty can contribute to the intellectual culture and continue to maintain high quality in the classroom. If adjunct
faculties are not introduced to these opportunities inside and outside of their department, they will never have the potential to contribute beyond the classes they are teaching.

Integration into the fabric of the community college. Administrators, specifically division chair people, must invest time, effort, and resources into all hired adjunct faculty members and embrace them as crucial, needed entities in the academic department. The marginalization of adjunct faculty and their lack of integration into community colleges could have the potential to affect educational quality if the proper training is not available. While there is more of an increased awareness now than in past years, adjunct faculty are not always included in critical discussions with their peers, not because of lack of desire but because of lack of time and other constraints (Smith, 2007). To combat this problem, division chair people should meet regularly with adjunct faculty to discuss institutional mission, service to students, academic values, the changing higher education landscape, student diversity, and the use of technology (Green, 2007) so they feel supported, prepared, and appreciated. It is imperative that division chair people be sensitive to the needs of adjunct faculty and to be sure they have access to the same information and resources as full-time faculty (Wallin, 2007). One way to accomplish this is to provide ongoing orientation and professional development opportunities for all adjunct faculty from the time they are hired. Adjunct faculty need to understand what the community college expects of them through ongoing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. Realizing that adjunct faculty choose to teach for a variety of reasons, division chair people must be cognizant of the best methods to integrate them into the culture of the community college and prepare them to effectively
Most adjunct faculty bring numerous skills and talents with them to the community college, making them extremely well-qualified. It is up to the division chairperson to develop and mold those skills to benefit students and the college. In summary, division chair people are the key entity in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities so all hired adjunct faculty are prepared to effectively teach. If the division chairperson fails to create such opportunities, adjunct faculty may flounder and not have the ability to contribute effectively in the classroom or the academic department.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the similarities and differences in perceptions between community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities.

Research Questions

The following questions will be used to support this study and inform the inquiry:

1. What is the perception of division chair people of adjunct faculty members on campus?

   1a. What is the perception of division chair people in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty within their department?
2. What is the perception of adjunct faculty regarding the role of division chair people in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities?

3. What, if anything, do division chair people do to support or hinder adjunct faculty on campus?

Significance of the Study

There is much to understand regarding the sudden increase in adjunct faculty employment in community colleges. The increased use of adjunct faculty appears to follow from supply and demand imbalances in the academic workforce, developing patterns of work and employment unique to individual academic disciplines, changes in the economic foundations and organization of American colleges and universities, and large underlying shifts in patterns of work in American society (Leslie, 1998). This study is significant because it targets the importance of teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty in a community college. Adjunct faculty have an instructional advantage because they are usually professionals working in their fields of expertise, providing their students with a practical, real-world education. Without extensive teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities available for adjunct faculty, they will not be prepared to teach students or have the opportunity to become an integral part of community college culture.

While extensive research exists on the need to provide ongoing support to adjunct faculty in all higher education institutions, little research exists on the importance of the role division chair people play in securing the fate of adjunct faculty so they will become
an inclusive part of community college culture. This study will provide new information and insight into what division chair people can do to effectively retain and support adjunct faculty in one community college setting. Other community college administrators, division chair people, adjunct faculty, and full-time faculty will benefit from the results of this study because the crucial components of what adjunct faculty need from their division chair people and departments will be uncovered.

To a varying extent, adjunct faculty may end up being resentful and frustrated with their institution but still choose to continue because of the intrinsic rewards they find in teaching. “The failure to extend to part-timers the benefits and collegial privileges of academic employment indicates that institutions have not yet recognized that part-time faculty can be a major asset to their educational programs and community relationships” (Gappa, 1984, p.2). Division chair people at this college will benefit a great deal from this study because it will demonstrate what entities work well in making adjunct faculty feel like an inclusive part of community college culture, as well as, what can be improved. Best practices in creating teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities can be implemented by division chair people for adjunct faculty in their department from the knowledge gained from this study. Additionally, any academic leader in higher education will benefit from reading this study because adjunct faculty are present in every higher education institution and need to be supported so they are prepared to effectively teach students.
Definition of Terms

Below are the definitions of how each of the terms will be used for this study.

• Academe: A higher education academic community where instruction occurs.

• Academic: A faculty member or administrator who is a member of an institution of higher education learning.

• Academic division: a division of a college that gives pedagogy on a specific subject. Also referred to as an academic department in this study.

• Adjunct faculty: Part-time higher education faculty who are not on a tenure track and whose contracts last one year or less. The terms “adjunct,” “adjunct faculty,” “non-tenured faculty,” and “part-time instructors” will be used interchangeably (Ellison, 2002).

• Community college: A state supported higher education institution which offers associate’s degree and certificate programs but, with few exceptions, award no baccalaureate degrees.

• Culture: The integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group (Cross, 1989).

• Division chairperson: The academic leader of a specific academic department in a college or university. Also referred to as a department chairperson in this study.
• Mentoring: The supportive development of an individual employee through the use of an experienced person (Rae, 1994).

• Professional development: The formal and informal means of helping instructors not only learn new skills but also develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice, and explore new or advanced understandings of content and resources (Grant, n.d.).

• Support: A person that serves as a foundation or basis for teaching pedagogy in the higher education classroom.

An organizational chart (see Appendix J) was created for clarity purposes in understanding the structure of report for each division.

Assumptions

This study is based on the following five assumptions. First, all colleges have department chair people and these are the individuals who have the responsibility of overseeing adjunct faculty. Second, adjunct faculty want to be supported, mentored, and have professional development opportunities available to them so they can advance their teaching skills and feel integral to the community college culture. Third, each division chairperson has hired qualified, experienced adjunct faculty to be a part of the department and to teach classes they are credentialed to teach. Fourth, the three division chairs participating in the study care about the quality and professional development of each adjunct faculty in their departments and want to make their experiences worthwhile and meaningful to all involved. Fifth, the participants will give honest responses to the questions given during their interviews.
Delimitations and Limitations

This study is delimited to adjunct faculty members and division chair people only who are currently employed at one community college. Second, this site is a large rural community college in the Midwest. Generalizations will not be made from the results of this study because it is only representative of one community college with a specific population of students. Third, each division chairperson will provide the researcher with a list of all currently employed adjunct faculty within their department. The division chair could limit the list to only adjunct faculty with whom they have a positive relationship with, or all experienced adjunct faculty, or all newly hired adjunct faculty, influencing the results of the study. Fourth, this study is delimited by the number of participants; fifteen adjunct faculty and three division chair people, all of whom are employed at the same community college. While generalizations will not be made because of the sample size, suggestions for division chair people regarding best practices when providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty in the community college will be proposed.

Limitations to the study that cannot be controlled by the researcher include whether the adjunct faculty member is new to community college teaching or returning and the department or curriculum within which the adjunct faculty member teaches. Additionally, gender dynamics regarding a male adjunct faculty member having a female division chairperson or a female adjunct faculty member having a male division chairperson cannot be controlled by the researcher. Furthermore, whether the adjunct
faculty member teaches at other community colleges or institutions, or is employed full-time outside of the academic arena, could also prove limiting to the study because he or she may not be concerned with support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities.

Overview of the Literature Review

Chapter two is a review of literature that supports the purpose of this study. The major themes of the literature review are characteristics of adjunct faculty, institutional motivations, professional development for adjunct faculty, and the role of division chair people. By focusing on community college adjunct faculty exclusively, it informs this study as to what institutions, specifically division chairpersons, do to retain and support them, as well as, identify what needs to be improved and is lacking to support this special culture. There is a void in the literature regarding what division chair people should specifically offer or what specific protocols are needed when providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty so they are prepared to effectively teach students.

Overview of the Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, phenomenological design involving interviewing as the primary form of data collection. Three division chairpersons from non-occupational studies divisions will be interviewed along with five current adjunct faculty members from each of the departments for a total of 15 adjunct faculty members
participating in this study. Two interview question protocols will be used, one for the division chairperson interviews, the other for the adjunct faculty interviews.

Organization and Remainder of the Study

The dissertation is made up of five chapters. Chapter one entails the introduction to the study. Chapter two reviews the literature that supports the purpose of this study. Chapter three highlights the methodological approach used to collect, organize, analyze, and synthesize the data obtained from interviews of adjunct faculty and their respective division chair people. Chapter four presents the findings from the research performed in chapter three. Chapter five discusses the research findings, implications from the study, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Since the presence of adjunct faculty continues to increase in community colleges, it is crucial to understand how division chair people influence the experiences of adjunct faculty so appropriate teaching support, mentoring, and professional development can take place. The purpose of this study is to understand the similarities and differences in perceptions between community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. The following review of literature is organized into four major themes: characteristics of adjunct faculty, institutional motivations, professional development for adjunct faculty, and the role of the division chairperson.

Characteristics of Adjunct Faculty

The first area of exploration in this literature review defines the major characteristics of adjunct faculty members and the crucial roles they assume within a college. The various types of adjunct faculty are discussed along with the major characteristics they bring to community college culture.

Adjunct faculty are part of five distinct groups. According to Gappa and Leslie (1993), the first group is known as the professionals. These are specialists because they supply a practical education as professionals working in field. They bring the advantage of their primary careers to the classroom, and without them, the university would not be
able to offer students the latest in practitioner skills. “Students appreciate the fact that many adjunct faculty are practitioners who pepper their classroom lectures with real-world experiences” (Green, 2007, p.30). Adjunct faculty provide connections to the community which, in turn, can improve or secure the reputation of the university and provide job opportunities for students.

The second group is known as the aspiring academics (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). They are informally called “professional adjuncts” (Gappa & Leslie, 1993) because division chair people can depend on them consistently from semester to semester to teach a certain amount of classes. They are either professionals working in the field or were formerly professionals who now piece together part-time teaching assignments in one or a variety of disciplines because full-time (tenure track or non-tenure track) teaching positions are not available. They likely remain adjunct faculty until full-time positions become available for which they will apply.

The third group engages in part-time instruction as a transition into retirement from their longstanding, primary careers or after they retire from full-time teaching. These individuals are known as the career-enders (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). This heterogenous group consists mostly of retired K-12 school teachers or aging professionals who are experts in the business, healthcare, or technology arenas. They typically teach one to three classes per semester and are not interested in seeking a full-time teaching position.

The fourth group is known as the free-lancers (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Their careers are made up of numerous part-time jobs worked simultaneously. One includes
teaching in higher education. They are known to work for more than one university or community college during the same semester plus spend time working in their designated area of expertise. They typically teach one or two courses per semester and their reasons for working part-time make sense in the context of their lives. This composite group of freelancers includes those seeking affiliation with an institution for a variety of reasons or individuals who choose to build their careers around a series of part-time jobs that are generally interrelated but occasionally focus on varied skills and talents (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). They have varied professional experiences that are applied in the classroom. They are typically uninterested in tenure-track positions, a salary, or benefits (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Additionally, Gappa and Leslie (1993) mention a fifth group. It is a small, somewhat undefined group known as the “full-time” part-timers. They have a combination of part-time appointments at the same institution and may sign a one to three year renewable teaching contract with the university. Through these full-time appointments, institutions hope that these full-time professionals will provide more service, instructional continuity, and cut down on the number of part-time adjunct faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Little research exists on this group, and not many institutions use this approach because it is difficult to find adjunct faculty willing to commit one year at a time because their employment is contingent on fluctuating enrollments, budgetary concerns, and addition of new programs.

As demonstrated above, adjunct faculty are very diverse in terms of their motivation for teaching. Realizing that adjunct faculty teach for a variety of reasons,
administrators need to ask themselves how they can best support them (Wallin, 2005) so they will be retained and integrated into community college culture.

Institutional motivations for hiring adjunct faculty. As stated by Gappa (1984), the reasons for employing adjunct faculty vary based upon institutions’ needs and missions. Adjunct faculty are employed in the highest percentage at community colleges where they slightly outnumber full-time faculty (Gappa, 1984). Adjunct faculty are an integral part of the community college’s effectiveness and they typically gain more respect and better treatment than those teaching at four-year institutions because they are a more integral part of the culture. However, a great majority of adjunct faculty still feel disconnected and isolated from full-time faculty, other adjunct faculty, and campus leaders. In terms of numbers, they are more proportionate to full-time faculty and have more opportunity to gain full-time positions because of increasing enrollments and new programs with new classes being offered frequently (Gappa, 1984).

Adjunct Faculty Perceptions

While adjunct faculty constitute a significant proportion of faculty on college campuses, many do not feel like an integral part of the institution. Building off of Gappa’s (1984) research, Green (2007) states that while many adjunct faculty members enjoy their work, some feel disconnected and unappreciated. “They show up at night to teach when all of the staff are gone or if they teach during the day, they sometimes have to run to teach class and leave, often to another class or institution” (p.31). Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) suggest adjunct faculty need to feel a part of the intellectual life of the campus. Division chair people must create ways for full-time and adjunct faculty to
work with and engage each other. This supports the idea that division chair people either promote or hinder the inclusion of adjunct faculty on campus by either providing opportunities, open communication, and networks for the adjunct faculty to flourish, or because of various reasons like lack of time, let the adjunct faculty figure it out for themselves.

While adjunct faculty constitute a significant presence in community colleges, they are often regarded as a minor, unimportant entity in achieving the institutional mission. The second theme identifies how adjunct faculty are perceived by community college constituents in being second class citizens. Even though community colleges rely heavily on adjunct faculty to teach a majority of classes, they often lack sufficient resources to effectively do their jobs. Despite their presence and importance in academia, adjunct faculty as a whole are the subject of too little study and thoughtful policymaking (Gappa, 1984). There are six major areas related to how adjunct faculty are treated as second class citizens across the institution. They include appointment, support services, communication with peers, participating in governance, compensation, and job security.

First, regarding appointment, few institutions have formal hiring processes because hiring adjunct faculty depends on student enrollments and full-time faculty assignments. Leslie (1998) found that fifty-two percent of the institutions in her survey hired adjunct faculty primarily on enrollment. Enrollment based decisions can have a negative effect on students and classes but a positive effect on the budget. When adjunct faculty contracts are issued a few days before a semester begins, adjunct faculty have minimal time to prepare their lectures, order texts, or develop their syllabi (Gappa, 1984).
Furthermore, Gappa and Leslie (1993) interviewed administrators at various colleges and found the recruitment of adjunct faculty was “ad hoc,” primarily initiated by applicants themselves or faculty already in the department. Gappa and Leslie (1993) further argued that adjunct faculty should be recruited and selected for the particular qualities a department or program needs, not just because they might be available and cheaper than hiring a full-time faculty member. Current practices of employing adjunct faculty, such as hiring them a few days before the semester begins or asking them to teach a class that they might not be credentialed to teach can be detrimental to making them feel like they are an important part of the academic culture. This could potentially create negative consequences to the institution as a whole.

Next, adjunct faculty rarely have the same level of support for their teaching compared to full-time faculty. Telephones, secretarial assistance, and graduate assistants are seldom available to adjunct faculty (Gappa, 1984). According to a survey by Tuck (as cited in Gappa, 1984), adjunct faculty spend an average of seventeen and a half hours each week in activities related to their part-time employment. However, fifty-seven percent had no office and thirty-two percent shared an office. The absence of adequate office space for adjunct faculty conveys the message to adjunct faculty and their students that they are less important than full-time faculty. The students see their instructor as available or not available and without office space could make them difficult for students to locate (Gappa, 1984). Adjunct faculty could potentially feel hindered from achieving their teaching potential by their lack of access to basic resources. Institutions
may save direct costs of space and services but could incur indirect costs in the resulting frustrations and disconnect that adjunct faculty harbor (Gappa, 1984).

The lack of office space can hinder adjuncts’ abilities to meet and communicate with colleagues regarding best teaching practices, campus concerns, and available technological resources. The only available space adjuncts may be able to find is the classroom where they teach. This leads to feelings of isolation and disconnection from other adjunct faculty and full-time faculty. Networking, sharing pedagogies and areas of expertise with other faculty within the discipline is crucial for the survival of adjunct faculty. Gappa’s (1984) writings indicate that many perceive the institution as bent on division chair people communicating their authority to adjunct faculty who feel insecure to begin with and need no reminders about who holds power. The informal sharing of teaching methodologies and student issues seldom occurs because administration and full-time faculty are operating from within their own offices, faculty meetings, or within the narrow frameworks of their own disciplines. “The uncertain access to information, doubts about reappointment, and the sense of having lower status can give rise to fear in the adjunct faculty member” (Gappa, 1984, p.5). Not only are adjunct faculty affected by lack of effective communication channels occurring within the department or across campus, but students are also affected. Students will potentially suffer from the lack of effective communication channels between adjunct faculty and their division chair people because students look to their instructor for information regarding campus resources, policies, and campus events. For example, Edmonson and Fisher (2003) state that while adjunct faculty may not be designated as advisors for students on degree options or
certification requirements, they should certainly be aware of these programs to answer basic student questions or refer them to the appropriate person to find the information they need. Adjunct faculty who are totally removed from what is happening within the department may lose credibility with frustrated students who have unanswered questions (Edmonson & Fisher, 2003). Additionally, another downside of adjunct faculty is they may be hesitant to make their classes rigorous, fearing poor student evaluations which could influence reappointment the following semester (Gappa, 1984). Since adjunct faculty are paid for the classes they teach and their employment is temporary, they are less likely than full-time faculty to make a class rigorous or extremely challenging. They fear that rigor will create upset students, which could potentially reflect them in a negative light to their division chairperson, hindering reappointment the following semester (Gappa, 1984).

The next issue concerning adjunct faculty is that they rarely have input or a role in departmental or institutional decisions. Their participation may be encouraged at the departmental level but this would depend on the willingness of the department chairperson. In a study done by Leslie (1998), forty-two percent of the adjunct faculty sample reported that they had either a full or proportional vote in departmental decisions. Furthermore, adjunct faculty were more likely to participate in governance as observers or only have speaking privileges (Leslie, 1998). Not including adjunct faculty in decisions can make them feel disenfranchised. Additionally, without their involvement, they do not collaborate with full-time faculty in their department or lack integration into
the fabric of their discipline because they are not exposed or welcomed into this subset of their academic culture.

Furthermore, adjunct faculty are paid considerably less compared to full-time faculty. It is the responsibility of the division chairperson to make them aware of how, when, and how much they will be paid. Leslie (1998) states that adjunct faculty fall under three salary patterns: the hourly rate, in which each hour spent in class is counted as an hour for pay purposes; the semester rate, which provides a fixed sum for credit or contact hour per semester; and the pro rata schedule, which is computed as a fraction of the current salary for full-time faculty. Regardless of the method of compensation used, adjunct faculty compensation per course in typically one-half to four-fifths the amount of a comparable class taught by a full-time faculty instructor on a yearly salary (Leslie, 1998). Studies of equity in compensation detail that no clear-cut procedures exist to assess the credentials and workloads of adjunct faculty as compared to full-time faculty. Tuckman and Caldwell (1979) state that salary differentials can be accounted for by differences in education attained, academic experience, quality of institution attended, healthcare benefits if offered, and related personal and institutional characteristics. Additionally, Tuckman and Caldwell (1979) stress that if the number of adjunct faculty continues to grow and if institutions continue to pay them according to past practices, an increasing number of adjunct faculty will become dissatisfied with their compensation.

In regard to job security, adjunct faculty are typically ineligible for tenure status. They do not assume that their contracts will be renewed, even if they perform well, since their appointments are based almost entirely on enrollment (Leslie, 1998). In a survey
done by the College and University Personnel Association in 1980, the primary feature of adjunct faculty status in higher education is their expendability, meaning they are hired solely on need from semester to semester. The expendability of adjunct faculty could lead to larger classes and fewer course offerings which, in turn, influences the quality of education (Leslie, 1998). According to Schneider (1999), most adjunct faculty would rather not discuss this topic at all as “open mouths lead to closed doors.” All a division chairperson has to do is not renew their contracts. “No explanations required and no grievance procedures provided as adjunct faculty just disappear” (Schneider, 1999, p. 2). The institution makes no promises regarding long term commitments or guaranteed number of teaching sections. As a result, adjunct faculty do not voice their opinions or take a stance on student issues. Adjunct faculty can be transient entities in the academic culture leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection, making the division chair that much more crucial in providing opportunities for adjunct faculty to grow and thrive in the classroom, teaching discipline, and academe. It is one of the responsibilities of the division chairperson to support adjunct faculty during student grade appeals, student conduct issues, and any other issues or concerns that arise throughout the semester. Adjunct faculty will then feel more confident and connected to the institution if they know they have an ally in their supervisors, allowing them to focus more on improving their teaching instead of just keeping their jobs. This study will identify what division chair people can do to ensure that adjunct faculty feel like a part of the institution.
Providing Professional Development Opportunities

Adjunct faculty are responsible for a significant portion of the entire instructional output in community colleges across the United States, making it crucial for them to be equipped with the necessary tools to effectively teach. However, they remain essentially uninvolved in developing curriculum, selecting textbooks, and participating on committees. Faculty professional development may be so important to community colleges because the faculty who are hired may not be familiar with the philosophy of the community college or the characteristics of community college students (Townsend & Twombly, 2006). Minimal research exists that defines specific protocols for implementing effective professional development programs that target adjunct faculty.

Clark (1985) conducted a study that showed approximately sixty percent of the 2,600 accredited institutions surveyed claimed they had some sort of a program which was loosely defined as professional development for adjunct faculty. The four key areas targeted in these professional development programs were faculty involvement, instructional assistance, traditional teaching practices, and faculty assessment. McKeachie (2006) points out that most colleges and universities have some adjunct faculty professional development in the areas of improving teaching skills, workshops for the development of additional skills, and technical and financial assistance for career changes. However, most institutions create their own professional development plans for adjunct faculty. Professional development is dependent on financial resources, campus space, and appropriate personnel to train adjunct faculty. Some institutions make
attendance mandatory by offering a stipend of some kind, while others leave it entirely up to the adjunct faculty member to attend.

Ostertag (1991) stresses that adjunct faculty professional development plans must provide for the immediate needs of adjunct faculty, afford opportunities for continued professional education, and offer options for technical/occupational upgrading in their specific disciplines. In one study, adjunct faculty felt the greatest emphasis in the professional development program should be on student assessment, teaching methodology, and curriculum updating (Ostertag, 1991). Next in importance were opportunities for increasing discipline specific knowledge and studying topics of personal interest (Ostertag, 1991). While it may be taken for granted that a full-time faculty member will have professional development funds available to attend national and state conferences, workshops, and receive tuition remission, most adjunct faculty have to pay their own expenses. Without financial support, adjunct faculty are less likely to participate in these important activities to advance their teaching. This reinforces the large disconnect between what is available for a full-time faculty member verses an adjunct faculty member.

Additionally, Wallin (2005) states that community college administrators are often concerned that faculty understand that they are teaching adult students with a variety of needs, backgrounds, and abilities. However, they often do not bring that same thinking when planning and organizing professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty (Wallin, 2005). It is essential to understand the ways adults learn by providing opportunities to teach adults, so students can learn.
Offering a monetary stipend, some type of certificate, or an item from the university bookstore for example demonstrates that professional development for adjunct faculty is valued. Quite often, faculty development programs only include full-time instructors, are of short duration, offered no pay or stipend, covered several topics in one year, and have little application or time to reflect (Wallin, 2005). Ostertag (1991) noted that regardless of monetary rewards for participation in professional development, adjunct faculty were very supportive and enthusiastic about it. “They feel more a part of the organization, and more importantly, they seem to feel more confident about teaching” (Ostertag, 1991, p.10). By offering adjunct faculty professional development, they are more likely to feel like an important entity in the academic culture. Including adjunct faculty in good faculty professional development programs could only serve to enhance the quality of instruction and mission of the community college (Wallin, 2005).

Providing Orientation to Community College Culture

In transitioning from the notion of adjunct faculty professional development to adjunct faculty orientation to the community college setting, the ERIC Development Team (1986) outlined four major approaches that higher education institutions can take to assist adjunct faculty in acclimating them to campus and assisting them in their teaching. This acclimation can lead to better pedagogy, longevity and commitment to the institution, and the establishment of professional relationships with full-time faculty and other adjunct faculty in their disciplines. The first approach highlighted is the curriculum approach. Traditionally, adjunct faculty professional development was conceptualized as a set of in-service workshops that complement the adjunct faculty members’ subject
expertise with pedagogy and background information about the institution, much like professional development does (ERIC Development Team, 1986). It is crucial that adjunct faculty development occur continuously throughout the semester. Seminars or workshops that are one-shot events do little to build a culture of teaching and treat teaching as a simple task (Townsend & Twombly, 2006).

Pedras (1985) builds on this curriculum approach by outlining it in six major steps. They are (1) assigning the administration of the adjunct faculty professional development program to one person like the division chairperson; (2) surveying adjunct faculty to determine training needs; (3) using a prioritized listing of these needs to develop the training program and write course syllabi; (4) determining what format classes should take and specify when, where and how often they should be offered; (5) securing adequate funding; and (6) supplying the necessary support services, such as a handbook for adjunct faculty. Pedras (1985) warns division chair people that the success of the curriculum approach to adjunct faculty professional development depends largely on the degree to which adjunct faculty themselves are involved in the planning process.

The second approach highlighted by ERIC Development Team (1986) is staff development through peer support. This approach involves forming peer support networks where adjunct faculty can share their experiences with other adjunct faculty. “When such networks are developed, instructors can turn to their peers for assistance in problems not covered in orientation sessions, establish a rapport, and alleviate a sense of alienation that adjunct faculty often feel” (ERIC Development Team, 1986, p.3).
The third approach is the personnel management approach. This approach involves personnel management policies included in adjunct faculty handbooks, like hiring and firing procedures for example, but also includes instructional improvement. It is a blending of policies that a newly hired adjunct faculty would not normally be aware of, plus effective pedagogies for student learning are also included. Since all adjunct faculty members are subject to the institution’s recruitment, hiring, and evaluation policies, it makes sense that these policies should be developed with improved instruction, quality and student learning in mind (ERIC Development Team, 1986).

The fourth approach is the adult education approach. This concept is used because, for the most part, adjunct faculty view their professional development as an adult education process, becoming aware of instructional problems as they arise in their classrooms. With this awareness, adjunct faculty grow more receptive to professional development interventions (ERIC Development Team, 1986). Heelan (1980) created a model that illustrates the adult education approach which is similar to the personnel management approach mentioned above. It involves aspects of the adjunct faculty member’s formal relationship with the institution, including the pre-hiring interview, the development of the employee contract, orientation sessions, performance evaluation, and in-service professional development workshops. Heelan’s (1980) proposed model is based on the assumption that adults attend a learning experience because they have become aware of an interest, a problem, or need, and want to seek growth or renewal in changing or solving the problem.
Adjunct faculty professional development can be conceptualized in a variety of ways. Each approach seeks to instruct adjunct faculty in pedagogical techniques, integrate adjunct faculty into campus culture, and improve the quality of instruction (ERIC Development Team, 1986). Whether division chair people create professional development opportunities specific to each discipline or the entire adjunct faculty population on campus, opportunities must be in place so adjunct faculty can become acclimated to the institution and prepared in the classroom, supporting the purpose of this study. Failure to create professional development opportunities will leave the adjunct faculty member floundering and students will ultimately suffer. The aforementioned information informs the purpose of this study because offerings of professional development by the division chairperson can either promote or demote adjunct faculty inclusion on campus, leaving the adjunct to thrive or become further disconnected from the institution.

The Multiple Roles of Division Chairs in Community Colleges

While the job responsibilities vary for a division chairperson from community college to community college, the importance of investing time, energy, and resources into adjunct faculty is crucial to their success. Examining the portrait for faculty development at community colleges demonstrates that a single individual or small group of individuals are responsible for overseeing it. The job of overseeing faculty professional development is often just one of the several that these individuals undertake at community colleges (Eddy, 2005). This study is unique because it examines the important roles division chair people have in providing teaching support, mentoring, and
professional development to adjunct faculty. While previous research has focused on the
department chairperson’s role in developing tenure-track faculty, little attention has been
paid regarding their role in nurturing the careers of adjunct faculty. Division chair people
have the major responsibility of supervising tenured, tenure-track, and adjunct faculty.
The major differences between tenure-track faculty and adjunct faculty are tenure-track
faculty have a full-time teaching load of three or more classes per semester, are typically
offered healthcare benefits, and sign contracts with the institution that are renewed
yearly, as compared to adjunct faculty who typically teach two classes or less per
semester, are offered no healthcare benefits, and their employment is contingent from
year to year. Regardless of being tenure-track faculty or adjunct faculty, “it is the
responsibility of the division chairperson to help all new faculty succeed by providing
them with the necessary resources and support to be successful in academic institutions”
(Wheeler, 1992, p.87). Since research is limited in regard to division chair people
supporting adjunct faculty only, this portion of the literature review will examine the
division chairperson supporting tenure-track faculty but will be applied to characteristics
that relate to adjunct faculty. Additional research is required to determine whether these
findings of tenure-track faculty translate to adjunct faculty.

Wheeler (1992) states that division chair people can posit success of new and
returning faculty by identifying their needs, examining the potential roles in which they
can be helpful in providing opportunities for professional development to take place. It is
the immediate context that drives decisions on what is most pertinent to faculty
development offerings at community colleges (Eddy, 2005). If the division chairperson
adopts the facets of individual faculty concerns and institutional needs, adjunct faculty are much more likely to be prepared to teach and will be better acclimated to campus processes. “Without systematic action by the division chairperson, the “sink-or-swim” model will prevail, a result that can be costly both to individual faculty members and to the institution” (Wheeler, 1992, p.88). It is better to have a plan in place before the adjunct faculty member is hired in terms of what support, mentoring, and professional development is needed so the division chairperson can focus their efforts then on tailoring it specifically to adjunct faculty, instead of trying to pick up the pieces after they have already begun to struggle.

Previous research on the intricate roles division chair people have in faculty professional development suggests that the chairperson should strive to provide every faculty member with the following expertise and abilities once they are hired and before they enter the classroom to teach. They are the knowledge of understanding institutional roles and expectations, the ability to learn how the institution operates in getting things done, the opportunity to find resources in reference to library and technology resources, the opportunity to develop collegiality among full-time and part-time faculty members, the ability to obtain feedback on their professional progress from their division chairperson, the ability to improve their skills and performance in their professional role as a higher education instructor, and the ability to find a balance in work-life expectations (Wheeler, 1992). If the division chairperson can set the aforementioned items as a foundational goal to achieve with each adjunct faculty member, the adjunct faculty member is much more likely to feel supported and thrive in community college culture.
Characteristics of effective division chairpersons. It is crucial for a division chairperson to facilitate progress and growth in the early years of an adjunct faculty’s academic career. Wheeler (1992) highlights three professional roles that link division chair people to the tasks of supporting, mentoring, and providing professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty. If a division chairperson is cognizant of being a resource for adjunct faculty, serving as an institutional authority or representative for adjunct faculty, and provides balance between teaching and an adjunct faculty member’s career outside of the community college, adjunct faculty can become an integral part of the community college fabric. An overview of each role is provided below.

Chairperson as a resource link. Whether the chairperson is referred to as a matchmaker or broker, the role of making a connection between adjunct faculty and resource people on campus is crucial to the survival of adjunct faculty (Wheeler, 1992). The chairperson can provide a lot of important information to the adjunct faculty member directly just from them being an employee of the community college. However, for information outside of their context, the chairperson must connect them to other campus personnel and resources. Orientation sessions before the semester begins for all new adjunct faculty can lessen the gap and make the unknown of teaching less overwhelming. Some chair people develop and present an orientation on their own, while others draw on campus resource people (Wheeler, 1992). Other chair people, especially from smaller departments, believe that they can provide an orientation by “meeting around the coffee pot” or dropping in to visit faculty members in their offices. Informal meetings can be
powerful entities in building relationships but are often overlooked because of shortness of time or lack of initiative by the division chairperson or faculty members (Wheeler, 1992). In summary, division chair people must strive to get all adjunct faculty orientated to the community college and connected to the appropriate campus resource personnel through a combination of formal and informal methods that are most appropriate.

*Chairperson as an institutional authority or representative.* The division chairperson is likely the first institutional representative the adjunct faculty member comes into contact with in terms of defining institution expectations. The chairperson plays a crucial role in the development of verbal and written correspondence that pertains to the job description and where important campus resources are located, plus new faculty members need counseling and availability from their division chairperson when they hear conflicting views regarding campus or departmental policies, from other adjunct faculty, tenure-track faculty, or students (Wheeler, 1992). If the division chairperson is available as an ongoing institutional guide to the adjunct faculty member, distractions from their main priorities, confusion, frustration, and stress can be prevented.

*Chairperson as an evaluator.* It is pertinent for the division chairperson to establish ongoing assessment of an adjunct faculty member’s progress throughout the semester. The division chairperson should meet with faculty and identify the institutional benchmarks for progress in teaching and meeting other departmental and institutional expectations (Wheeler, 1992). In addition to assessing progress, the chairperson should also be proficient in providing positive and constructive feedback, coaching, and conducting annual classroom evaluations (Wheeler, 1992). In a study conducted by
Creswell (1990) and colleagues, a priority constantly stated by division chair people was to be honest and direct in the evaluation and other interactions with faculty. The stance is that artificial and inflated assessments, plus avoidance of difficult issues can cause problems later. Without honest and timely feedback, faculty become confused and unclear about their status and progress (Wheeler, 1992). By providing open and honest feedback, the division chairperson can provide adjunct faculty with a realistic assessment of their strengths and weaknesses and point them in the right direction.

Additionally, Creswell (1990) and colleagues propose a series of steps through which division chair people can stay in tune with faculty on any situation or problem that may arise and help them address any needed changes. The steps are (1) to detect signs of faculty needs, (2) explore the options individually with the person, (3) to collaboratively develop a plan for action, and (4) to enact the plan and monitor the results. If division chair people have the ability to monitor every adjunct faculty member in their department, they will become aware that each adjunct faculty member has unique needs and concerns that can be addressed and conquered through careful observation and in-depth dialogue. Skill in listening to faculty is a crucial entity in the role of the division chairperson (Creswell, 1990). Listening builds trust and good faith, which can provide a basis to overcome misconceptions and incorrect assumptions.

Chairperson as a model of balance. Division chair people can be advocates for adjunct faculty who are trying to balance part-time teaching with a full-time career outside of the community college. Additionally, adjunct faculty have personal obligations such as family, as well as many participate actively in their community. Chair people can
encourage faculty to make time for their family, community, and themselves, to build it into their schedules (Wheeler, 1992). Significant efforts must be made to stay mentally refreshed otherwise adjunct faculty will experience burnout and possibly alienation from their full-time career and family. They will not be able to contribute in a positive way to their full-time career or civic duties if they are stressed and overwhelmed. However, many division chair people also have difficulty in achieving balance between their academic and personal lives, but those who are able to model a balance strategy not only benefit personally but are able to make the expectations believable to their faculty (Wheeler, 1992).

The aforementioned four roles are extremely high expectations that place a lot of demand and levels of skill and commitment on division chair people. While no division chairperson can be expected to be a perfect model every day on the job, these roles provide the chair with a foundation for action in supporting, mentoring, and providing professional development to adjunct faculty. The chairperson can reduce the magnitude of potential problems by efficient planning, establishing effective communication channels, compromising, coordinating, and by keeping the departmental and institutional goals in perspective (Wheeler, 1992). If adjunct faculty perform well, the division chairperson who assisted them can share in the credit and be confident that academic quality is being upheld to a high standard within their division.

How division chair people support adjunct faculty through departmental orientations. Division chair people must discover ways to support adjunct faculty for academic quality to be upheld. First, division chair people who want to utilize more
adjunct faculty need to hire and sustain top-notch individuals who will be committed to the school’s mission (Mello, 2007). This can be accomplished by recruiting throughout the professional community and a thorough interview which includes a teaching demonstration. From there, it is up to the division chairperson to develop adjunct faculty. They must take steps to ease adjunct faculty into their specific roles: such as walking them around campus, introducing them to full-time faculty, covering departmental policies regarding class cancellations, grade submissions, and providing a handbook that covers parking, library hours, and technological resources (Mello, 2007). This effort would begin the inclusion process of adjunct faculty into academic culture.

Whether by formal or informal means, the division chairperson is the key player in orientating adjunct faculty to campus and the academic department. Unfortunately, most formal orientations for adjunct faculty, though they vary in length, content, and purpose, often turn into perfunctory descriptions of bureaucratic procedures with an emphasis on giving basic information about services, facilities, and who is whom in the organizational chart (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). While this type of information is useful, it does not introduce the adjunct faculty member to effective practices in becoming connected to the department or community college. Therefore, it is important that the division chairperson fill in any gaps left by the institutional orientation. Robert Boice (1992) describes the ideal first-time adjunct faculty orientation as having the following elements: (1) keeping it formal and relaxed, (2) limiting the number of administrators to a few and have them make brief comments, (3) offering three 12-minute workshops on teaching and learning concepts, and (4) organize small clusters of full-time
faculty with adjunct faculty so adjunct faculty can ask questions in an informal manner. In regard to Boice’s (1992) fourth concept, the purpose of the informal dissemination of information from full-time faculty member to adjunct faculty member is to create opportunities that will help the adjunct faculty member become acculturated into the life of the department and to feel less like an outsider. Whereas formal orientation may take place at the institutional level, informal orientation activities are predominantly in the purview of the department chairperson (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). If every adjunct faculty member can feel welcomed on a personal level as well as guided on a professional level can assist the adjunct faculty member in forming an attachment to the community college. “Ways to foster this attachment include how the adjunct faculty member is introduced to the departmental community and how social interactions are engineered” (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000, p.74). A division chairperson can significantly help a new adjunct faculty member feel valued and connected if early introductions to full-time faculty, staff, and seasoned adjunct faculty in their department include more information than just the person’s name and their role within the community college. It will link adjunct faculty to people in the community college environment that share the same personal or professional interests, as well as, establish connections in their department.

How division chair people support adjunct faculty through mentoring. The division chair person’s role in creating mentoring relationships for adjunct faculty can vary considerably from department to department. Because adjunct faculty are thrust into new courses with new students when they first arrive, having someone with whom to
discuss problems, concerns, or ideas can solve many issues that arise (Bensimon, Ward, 
& Sanders, 2000). In some departments, the division chairperson is the mentor to all 
adjunct faculty and plays an active role in their development. However, in other 
deptments, chair people assign new adjunct faculty to an experienced adjunct faculty 
member or a full-time faculty member to serve as a mentor for the transition into their 
new role (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). An assigned mentor can assist new 
adjunct faculty in prioritizing and setting goals for their teaching. Ideally, a mentor can 
answer questions a new adjunct faculty member may not want to ask a chairperson. 
Although the desirability of establishing mentors for new adjunct faculty is widely 
shared, few departments actually have structured ways of creating mentoring 
relationships and determining if they work (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). Whether 
by structured, formal, or informal means, division chair people must take an active role in 
mentoring all new adjunct faculty and facilitate connections with all faculty in the 
department so mentoring relationships can have the opportunity to develop.

If division chair people are serious about developing adjunct faculty, mentoring 
must be deliberate. Mello (2007) states that it is crucial for the division chairperson to 
assign each adjunct faculty member a mentor from the full-time faculty, particularly one 
who currently teaches or has recently taught the course assigned to the adjunct faculty 
member. Division chair people can facilitate teaching mentoring by encouraging new 
adjunct faculty to seek out experienced adjunct faculty or full-time faculty for advice on 
various teaching questions (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). Adjunct faculty will 
become acclimated to the institution quicker and begin to establish rapport. A classroom
visit by the mentor can provide crucial and essential feedback to the newly hired adjunct faculty member. If mentoring opportunities are in place, the division chairperson then can make teaching more rewarding for the adjunct faculty member by stressing their value to the institution, actively acknowledging their contributions, and perhaps even promoting team teaching opportunities between adjunct faculty and full-time faculty (Mello, 2007). “If administrators invest some time and effort, they will find that adjunct faculty are valuable assets that produce significant returns” (Mello, 2007, p.43). If division chair people invest time and effort into each adjunct faculty member, the adjunct faculty member is much more likely to feel like an important piece of community college culture.

How division chair people support adjunct faculty through professional development. As mentioned under the above aforementioned theme titled Providing Professional Development Opportunities, professional development for adjunct faculty can be proposed and created in a variety of ways. Also, as previously mentioned, there are many different types of professional development opportunities that can be offered. Many institutions have offices devoted to adjunct faculty professional development (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). These services can equip the adjunct faculty member with the many needed tools in being prepared to effectively teach. Division chair people should not only know what the campus has to offer but should also consider working with these services to create professional development specific to the academic department (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). The division chairperson is the crucial link between either creating the professional development within the department or
connecting the adjunct faculty member to the appropriate resources on campus so professional development can be provided there. Investing in the professional development of adjunct faculty can be an effective strategy, as some adjunct faculty seek full-time positions when they become available (Townsend & Twombly, 2006).

*How division chair people foster collegiality.* Since there is only a subset of adjunct faculty interested in becoming hired full-time, it is crucial that division chair people immerse the newly hired adjunct faculty members into campus culture and make them aware that their contributions are valued and appreciated. Mello (2007) outlines three major duties division chair people should perform upon hiring adjunct faculty members so they will bond more closely with the community college.

The first duty is to include the adjunct faculty member in departmental communications, meetings, parties, and other events. It is crucial to seek their input and value their knowledge during discussions related to teaching. “Because adjunct faculty usually are not putting energy into research and service activities, they often are more focused on teaching and student needs than full-time faculty, therefore they have a great deal to offer on these topics” (Mello, 2007, p.44). Taking the time to get to know adjunct faculty and including them during informal and formal gatherings can be extremely valuable to full-time faculty and the department as a whole. Full-time faculty members should view adjunct faculty as their colleagues and tap their professional knowledge from working in the field and having experience “on the job” to ultimately improve their content and delivery of information in the classroom.
The second duty is to tap the professional knowledge and experience of the adjunct faculty member. Ask adjunct faculty to share their professional expertise and on-the-job knowledge by giving presentations during faculty meetings, acting as resources for students, or providing industry contacts for the full-time faculty members (Mello, 2007). This will increase the richness of lectures and class dialogue, plus provide students with a practical, real-world education because they will be exposed to knowledge outside of their textbooks.

The third duty is to recognize and acknowledge adjunct faculty teaching skills and talents either discipline wide or throughout the community college. Division chair people should give annual adjunct faculty teaching awards or include them whenever full-time faculty are considered. This kind of attention will assist adjunct faculty in developing a true sense of connection to the university.

Additionally, Edmonson and Fisher (2003) recommend that the division chairperson “take care of the little things” so to speak. For example, the division chairperson must make sure that all adjunct faculty have the necessary information on appropriate grading scales, sample syllabi, and grade entry procedures (Edmonson & Fisher, 2003). Most new adjunct faculty are not familiar with these procedures or if new policies are adopted by the department, even experienced adjunct faculty need to be made aware. Other seemingly minor details or basic needs include how adjunct faculty will be evaluated, payroll procedures, current school calendar in regard to holidays, how to obtain a parking permit or faculty identification card, and phone numbers for secretaries, institutional technology, and the dean’s office (Edmonson & Fisher, 2003). By providing
adjunct faculty with these items, it makes them feel like an important part of the institution and is crucial to their success and preparedness when part of academic culture.

Division chair people who treat adjunct faculty well and manage them as critical assets will find that their adjunct faculty are loyal, productive, and insightful members of the faculty team (Mello, 2007). The presence of adjunct faculty in community colleges can enrich the department, full-time faculty, students, and institution as a whole. The division chairperson must recognize the importance of the experience and expertise that adjunct faculty bring to the classroom and implore the aforementioned items to make adjunct faculty feel like crucial, needed entities of the institution. For the most part, adjunct faculty members do not teach or want to have a full-time presence. They teach to distribute their knowledge and find a passion in doing so.

Conclusion

Division chair people must provide the necessary foundation for which adjunct faculty can thrive. If adjunct faculty are regarded as inclusive entities in higher education culture and significant time and effort is put forth by the division chairperson, community colleges will greatly benefit. By highlighting the key areas in this literature review: characteristics of adjunct faculty, institutional motivations, ways to provide professional development for adjunct faculty by keeping the motivation theory in mind, and the role of the division chair, one better understands the importance of this special group to community colleges. Focusing exclusively on community college adjunct faculty will inform institutions, specifically division chairpersons, on what they are doing well to retain, support, and develop adjunct faculty, as well as, identify what needs to be
improved and is lacking to support this special culture. There is a void in the literature regarding what division chair people should specifically offer or what specific protocols are needed when providing professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty so they are prepared to effectively teach students. Previous research takes into account testimonials from adjunct faculty only regarding their role in higher education culture, while this study is unique in that it will provide testimonials from division chair people in their role in supporting community college adjunct faculty. Additionally, previous research has not demonstrated if the division chairperson role in developing adjunct faculty specifically translates to community college division chair people and adjunct faculty. The uniqueness of getting the adjunct faculty perspectives as well as the division chairpersons’ perspectives in supporting adjunct faculty exclusively further reinforces the need for this study.

As the population of adjunct faculty continues to increase, the role of the division chairperson in supporting, educating, mentoring, and retaining adjunct faculty for quality to be upheld is crucial. Taking the time to understand this culture from the perspective of the adjunct faculty will allow division chairs people to better serve their needs which, in turn, will benefit students and academic departments in a positive way so learning and quality can thrive.

The conceptual model below illustrates the key features of this study. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the similarities and differences in perceptions between community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. The
community college arena is used because adjunct faculty have a significant presence there. The four balloons pointing to the adjunct faculty box represent what division chair people assess when hiring and retaining adjunct faculty. The balloons include the adjunct’s overall role in academe, the adjunct’s effect on academic quality in the classroom, the adjunct’s teaching motivations, and how the adjunct provides a real-world education to students. The three balloons pointing to the division chairperson box represent the role of the division chairperson in relation to adjunct faculty and the academic department overall. These include leading the academic department through expertise and experience, hiring and supervising adjunct faculty, and making opportunities available so adjunct faculty can thrive in their roles.

In reference to the inner part of the conceptual model, the two-way direct arrow linking the relationship between adjunct faculty and their division chairperson signifies how adjunct faculty perceive their division chair people based on the quality of this relationship. The one-way, discontinuous arrow signifies the importance of the division chairperson providing support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities on an ongoing, continual basis for each adjunct faculty member so they are prepared to effectively teach. From there, the one-way discontinuous arrow demonstrates that if support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities are implemented, the adjunct faculty member will become an inclusive part of departmental culture. These two arrows are not direct or continuous because it is up to the division chairperson to create and make these opportunities available. If the conceptual model is upheld, adjunct faculty will perceive their division chair people in a positive way and be provided with the
necessary tools to be an effective instructor and an integral part of the community college.
Figure 1. Adjunct Faculty Perceptions of their Division Chair People in Community Colleges.
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the qualitative research method proposed for this study and the rationale for its implementation. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the similarities and differences in perceptions between community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. Non full-time faculty have become the lifeline of a vast majority of colleges and universities (Baron-Nixon, 2007). The number of adjunct faculty members was increasing steadily, to the point that most colleges and universities could not function efficiently without them (Lyons, 2007). Therefore, it is important that adjunct faculty are supported in order to be prepared to effectively teach. While the topic of adjunct faculty has been studied quantitatively, this study is unique in that it takes a qualitative approach. This chapter includes the research design, sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures and problems, human subject considerations, procedures for coding and analyzing data, data presentation, time line, and appendices.

Restatement of Research Questions

The research questions for this study ask:

1. What is the perception of division chair people of adjunct faculty members on campus?
1a. What is the perception of division chair people in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty within their division?

2. What is the perception of adjunct faculty regarding the role of division chair people in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities?

3. What, if anything, do division chair people do to support or hinder adjunct faculty on campus?

Theoretical Framework

This study was approached through an interpretivist lens. This lens is appropriate because interpretivism focused on the multiple realities individuals shared when constructing knowledge from the same given context (Creswell, 2007). Conclusions were drawn from the experiences of fifteen adjunct faculty members and three division chair people from one community college. To uncover the shared realities, interviews with adjunct faculty and division chair people were conducted. Once all of the initial interviews were completed, a follow-up focus group of adjunct faculty was conducted to delve deeper into their initial transcriptions. Knowledge was formed by humans as they made sense of experience and transformed that understanding into consciousness (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Additionally, shared realities among the adjunct faculty as to what division chair people did to impact their experiences within the department were sought and these perspectives were triangulated with the perception of the division chairs. Conclusions were derived from the participants’ reflections upon their
direct lived experience of being an adjunct faculty member or a division chairperson at the one community college chosen for this study.

Research Design-Phenomenological Method

Qualitative research was used as the research method of inquiry. Qualitative methods facilitated the study of issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002) from the perspective of the research participants to examine specific issues and problems. More specifically, phenomenology, a form of qualitative research, was especially appropriate for this study. This qualitative researcher strove to understand the deep structure of knowledge that came from visiting personally with informants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meanings of phenomena (Creswell, 2007).

“Phenomenology provides a way of exploring lived experience – the actuality of the experience – from the inside, and to transform the lived experience into a description of essence” (Osborne, 1994, p.170). This method allowed exploration as to how people experienced, described, and interpreted a phenomenon. The phenomena of this study were the perceptions of adjunct faculty and division chair people in regard to teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. “Phenomenology uses a descriptive approach that allows exploration of the conscious experience directly through participant introspection, rather than inferentially through overt observation” (Osborne, 1994, p.168). In being consistent with the foundation of phenomenological research, emphasis was placed on identifying “essence” between adjunct faculty and division chair people participating in this study. The researcher focused on the essential meanings of
the individual experiences to understand the essence or shared experiences among the participants (Patton, 2002).

Furthermore, this study took on a social phenomenological approach because adjunct faculty interpreted their own reality and subjective meaning of being a part of community college society. While adjunct faculty were viewed as members of a community college, they consciously developed meaning out of social interactions (Creswell, 2007) with full-time faculty, other adjunct faculty, and their division chairperson. Additionally, Creswell (2007) stated that the central tenets of social phenomenology included determining what an experience meant for the persons who have had the experience in society and were able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the descriptions provided by adjunct faculty and division chair people during the study, general meanings based upon what they had experienced in their academic department and community college manifested. As Creswell (2007) stated, the essences of structures of their experiences were derived.

Conceptual Framework

The social identity theory was used as a lens to understand how adjunct faculty perceived their role in the academic department. Social identity theory deals with intergroup relations--meaning how people come to see themselves as members of one group termed the in-group in comparison with another group termed the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). If opportunities were not created for adjunct faculty to thrive within their department, their social identity of belonging to the “group” failed to develop. Adjunct faculty viewed themselves as members of the same social category
within the academic department. The division chairperson played a crucial role then in making sure adjunct faculty were part of the in group. Akerlof and Kranton (2000) concluded when “agents,” or for the purpose of this study “adjunct faculty,” considered themselves part of the in-group, they maximized their presence by exerting a high effort level, but on the other hand, if they considered themselves outsiders, they required a higher effort by the leader of the in-group for inclusion within the group to occur. In other words, if division chair people provided consistent developmental opportunities for adjunct inclusion and created a sense of community and connectedness, less time and effort was put forth and academic quality was more likely to be upheld.

Population

In an effort to unveil the answers to the posed research questions, one community college is the primary focus of study. For the purpose of this study, the community college was referred to as the pseudonym Tri-County Community College. It had approximately 10,500 actively enrolled students and adjunct faculty comprised almost thirty percent of the teaching population. Tri-County Community College was chosen because it had a large adjunct faculty population in all eight academic departments studied and adjunct faculty were supervised directly by the division chairperson of each department. The researcher obtained permission to conduct this study from Tri-County Community College’s Institutional Review Board in the form of a confirmation email.

Based on their willingness to participate, three division chair persons from three separate academic divisions were selected along with five current adjunct faculty from each of their divisions. All division chair people from non-occupational disciplines were
emailed an introductory letter (see Appendix E). Ideally, the researcher sought to interview three chair people who had varying years of experience and of different gender to add diversity to the participant pool. Each division chairperson was asked to submit a list of all current adjunct faculty in their division. From the provided lists, adjunct faculty were purposefully selected at the discretion of the researcher based on their years of teaching experience, a minimum of a master’s degree, and gender. The researcher strove for an equal balance of male and female participants because previous research demonstrated adjunct faculty pools as being a fairly equal ratio of women to men. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) stated purposeful sampling was used to select individuals from a particular population that was informative about a topic of interest. While this type of sampling method is difficult to generalize to other subjects and the results depend on unique characteristics of the chosen sample, this type of method usually yields high participation rates, is not time consuming, and is easy to administer (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Since the fifteen adjunct faculty were selected based on the posed criteria below, the division chair people did not know which adjunct faculty participated and anonymity was preserved.

For an adjunct faculty member to be eligible to participate in this study, he or she must have met the following criteria. They had experience being an adjunct faculty member for a minimum of two semesters, hold at least a master’s degree from an accredited higher educational institution, and taught undergraduate level classes in a non-occupational studies discipline such as math, English, or social studies. Eligible participants were chosen and were contacted by email once the list of participating individuals was generated by the division chairperson.
Although adjunct faculty cultures were different from division to division, this study was only trying to capture the essence of experiences of adjunct faculty who taught at one community college. This community college was deemed appropriate because it had a large adjunct faculty population in each non-occupational studies department and adjunct faculty were supervised by their division chairperson. Generalizations are not made regarding all adjunct faculty members at every educational institution across the nation, but conclusions were generated based on the rich descriptions and disclosures from the fifteen adjunct faculty and three division chair people who participated in this study.

**Instrumentation**

To best understand the phenomenon of adjunct faculty perceptions of division chair people, semi-structured interview protocols were used. Protocols for the adjunct faculty, as well as, the division chair people were created in Appendix A and Appendix B. A semi-structured protocol allowed the researcher to use the interview questions as a guide to ensure the research questions were answered but allowed for elaboration and extension from the posed questions to gain richness from each participant’s experience. See Appendix C for the crosswalk table which illustrates the connection between the two interview protocols and the research questions.

**Procedures for Data Collection**

Three division chair people from non-occupational studies were emailed an introductory letter (see Appendix E) followed by a consent form (see Appendix F) to sign for participation in the study. The introductory letter asked the division chairperson to
provide the researcher with a list of all current adjunct faculty members. Once this list was received, the researcher emailed an introductory letter to all potential adjunct faculty participants (see Appendix D) followed by a consent form (see Appendix F) to sign to participate in the study. Data was collected during the one-on-one interviews with each of the 18 participants, and a follow-up focus group of participating adjunct faculty was conducted after all interviews were completed.

Mishler (1991) suggested that the nature of the act of meaning-making was best described by the person who had experienced the process. The narrative interview was the most common method of qualitative data collection because it elicited and obtained detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation and was well-suited in explicating how individuals made meaning of various life events and experiences (Mishler, 1991). The purpose of the adjunct faculty interviews was to discover the interpretations the adjunct faculty had about being supported by their division chairperson and community college. The purpose of the division chairperson interviews was to discover the interpretations the chair people had about how they provided support and created mentoring and professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty in their divisions. Appendix A was the semi-structured interview protocol for adjunct faculty. Appendix B was the semi-structured interview protocol for division chairs. Probing questions were used “to deepen the response to a question, increased the richness and depth of responses, and gave cues to the participant about the level of response that were desired” (Patton, 2002, p. 372). Appendix C was a crosswalk table which illustrated the connection between the interview protocol and the research questions.
Once permission was obtained from potential participants to conduct the interviews, three division chair people were contacted and invited to participate in the study. They were also asked to submit a list of names and contact information for all adjunct faculty in their divisions. An introductory letter was emailed to every eligible adjunct faculty asking them to be a participant in this study. Upon agreement from five adjuncts from each of the three divisions, consent forms were emailed before each interview. Separate consent forms were emailed to the three division chair people. On the bottom of the consent form (see Appendix F) was a place for the participant to sign if they consented to the interview and agreed to be a participant in this study. All participants were asked to bring the consent form with them to the interview. Next, the researcher emailed each participant and set up a mutually convenient meeting time and place for the one hour interview.

The interview consisted of standardized open-ended questions, from the semi-structured interview protocol, in a pre-determined order and sequence. The communication with each participant flowed without interruption so rich responses were obtained and the feeling of comfort was generated. The researcher hand wrote responses along with recording the interview on audio tape. The interviews were transcribed verbatim which provided the basis of data analysis. Field notes were also taken during each interview to understand the physical setting, behavior of the participant and researcher, and any nonverbal communication that occurred because this was a way to offer an understanding of the interview context that did not manifest with transcribed notes (Creswell, 2007).
Once the interviews were completed, the audio tapes were locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher’s office and will remain there for two years after data analysis was completed. After the two year time period, they will be destroyed.

The three division chair people interviews occurred first, followed by the fifteen adjunct faculty interviews. The researcher reserved the right to follow up with participants via phone call or email after the initial interviews were completed. Each participant received a copy of his/her transcript. Participants were asked to review the transcript and offer any additional edits or comments. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. A formal thank you letter (see Appendix H) was emailed the day following the interview to thank each participant for their time and for participating in the study.

**Follow up focus group of adjunct faculty.** In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (Creswell, 2007). Triangulation of the data occurred by conducting an adjunct faculty focus group once all of the individual interviews occurred. Adjunct faculty were asked at the conclusion of their initial interview if they would be interested in participating in a focus group that delved into themes that emerged from the data. Content for the focus group session was based on findings uncovered during the adjunct faculty interviews. See Appendix I for the list of focus group questions. The focus group lasted for one hour and was located in a corner of the cafeteria at the community college. All participants were emailed a consent form (see Appendix F) prior to the focus group. They were asked to bring it with them to the focus group. The focus
group dialogue facilitated validation or clarification of initial individually based findings and verified findings through the triangulation of data.

The researcher audiotaped, with permission granted, responses and hand wrote field notes during the interview, which were transcribed verbatim for analysis. All original tapes, from the individual interviews and focus group, were stored in a locked filing cabinet to protect the confidentiality of the individuals and group interviewed and will be destroyed after two years. Participants had an opportunity at the conclusion of the focus group to review the researcher’s notes and modify any responses to the posed questions.

Procedures for Analyzing and Coding Data

The qualitative interview and follow-up focus group data were transcribed verbatim via phenomenological data analysis. Phenomenological analysis identified thematic content, investigated phenomena in a meaningful way, and recognized the importance of the phenomenological concept of actually experiencing the phenomena as depicted by the participants. The interviews were analyzed to identify issues, interpret relevant meanings, and identify patterns and/or themes (Patton, 2002). The analysis of data occurred simultaneously with the collection of data. The individual interviews and focus group transcript data were stored using Microsoft Office Word 2007 and NVivo 8 software. Once the data had been reviewed, edited, and organized, I began a series of analytic procedures to analyze the data.

The first part of phenomenological data analysis required horizontalization of the collected data into descriptive narratives which sought to represent the meaning derived
from studying the phenomenon of adjunct faculty perception of their division chairperson (Creswell, 2007). By applying horizontalization, each statement was treated as having equal worth, and worked to develop a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements (Creswell, 2007). By applying the process of horizontalization, categories were generated which created patterns evident in the setting and expressed by the participants. Through this, salient, grounded categories of meaning held by the participants in the setting were generated (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

The second part of analysis required reviewing the data and performing open coding. “Coding data was the formal representation of analytic thinking” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The researcher grouped statements of the data into “meaning units” which were textural descriptions of the experiences which included verbatim examples (Creswell, 2007). These codes were developed based on the research questions and the theoretical constructs. Codes were placed into categories using NVivo 8 software. While themes were developed from open coding as stated above, “in vivo” or participant codes were developed (Creswell, 2007) to fully construct the overall description of the meaning and essence of their lived experiences.

**Trustworthiness**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), qualitative researchers typically use as many strategies as possible to ensure design validity. Multi-method strategies which included individual interviewing and an adjunct faculty follow-up focus group allowed triangulation of data. To confirm the analysis of all gathered thematic content, participant language verbatim accounts during the interviews and focus group occurred,
along with mechanically recorded data using audio tape recorders were also used. Additionally, member checking and participant review to check for accuracy during data collection and information synthesis during interviews and focus group confirmed the analysis of all gathered thematic content. The meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry had more to do with the information richness from the participants, observations and analytical capabilities of the researcher than with the sample size (Patton, 2002).

Outlining for the reader precisely how the data were collected, what research decisions were made, and how findings were derived aids in the process of conducting qualitative research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Personal conversation and behaviors that had nothing to do with the purpose of the study were refrained. “The quality of the information obtained during an interview was largely dependent on the interviewer” (Patton, 2002, p.341).

When researchers undertake phenomenological research, it was crucial that they set aside all prejudgments, a term known as bracketing (Creswell, 2007). The researcher relied on his or her own intuition to obtain a true, clear picture of the experiences they were trying to capture from adjunct faculty and division chair people.

Ensuring consistency. To ensure consistency in the analysis of the findings, Lincoln and Guba (1986) based this notion on four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirm-ability. Credibility was ensured though the engagement with the participants and the phenomena during the conduction of individual interviews and the concluding focus group. Member checking and triangulation of the data occurred during the follow-up focus group to report the findings and transcripts from the
interviews back to the participants. Once all of the data were collected, I reviewed each transcript and identified salient thematic content from each of the 18 profiles using NVivo 8 software. Additionally, the common meaning structures were substantiated with participants’ verbatim accounts of adjunct faculty perceptions of their division chair people and what division chair people did to provide teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty. The interview and focus group transcriptions were used in this process to assist in ensuring the dependability of the themes that had been initially identified.

To ensure the credibility, dependability, and transferability of the findings to another context or setting, and because bracketing of the participants’ personal experiences was difficult, the themes were also reviewed and validated by a colleague who formerly was an adjunct faculty member and who now, like the researcher, works closely with adjunct faculty. This colleague was not a supervisor of any of the adjunct faculty participating in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined the role of the peer de-briefer as a “devil’s advocate,” an individual who kept the researcher honest; asked hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations; and provided the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher’s feelings. This outside reviewer thoroughly examined my context and assumptions so researcher bias was avoided.

Comparative pattern analyses was used to support the confirm-ability piece of analyzing data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Rich descriptions of the themes, using verbatim accounts only from the adjunct faculty and division chair people testimonials, were developed so that judgments about the degree of fit and transferability of the data could
be made. Once the above was completed, the researcher constructed an overall
description of the meaning and essence of the experiences (Creswell, 2007) of
community college adjunct faculty and division chair people in regard to the purpose of
this study.

**Researcher bias.** To avoid researcher bias and subjectivity, epoche and bracketing
were used. Creswell (2007) described a technique called epoche in which the researcher
bracketed his or her own personal experiences and biases in order to study the
phenomenon exclusively through the voices of the informants.

The lens through which the researcher looked through included that of a former
adjunct faculty member for one year, a current full-time faculty member and department
coordinator for six years. Since one of the researcher’s job duties at her institution is to
supervise adjunct faculty, she provided teaching support, mentoring, and professional
development opportunities to adjunct faculty. Therefore, close relationships were
continually established with adjuncts which potentially created researcher bias when
conducting this study. While the researcher was a supervisor of adjunct faculty, which
initiated the interest in this study, she was not a supervisor of any of the adjunct faculty
participating in the study, nor affiliated with the chosen community college.

**Summary**

The detailed outline of the methodology yielded an interactive, structured, in-depth process that brought meaning to a naturally occurring phenomenon of adjunct faculty presence in community colleges. While the researcher did not make
generalizations about the entire population of adjunct faculty from the conclusions of this
study, but attempted to gain a deeper understanding of the primary variables that promoted and demoted adjunct faculty inclusion, and the role of the division chairperson in supporting this small sub-population of adjunct faculty. Supporting, mentoring, and providing professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty members who educated students was crucial to the success, growth, and quality of community colleges.
CHAPTER IV

Presentation of the Data

The purpose of this study was to understand the differences in perceptions between community college adjunct faculty and their division chairpersons regarding the chairperson’s role in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. This study involved a phenomenological design to understand the essence of adjunct faculty perceptions of their division chairperson, as well as, how division chair people perceived their roles overseeing adjunct faculty. This study was approached using an interpretivist lens. This lens was deemed appropriate because interpretivism focuses on the multiple realities individuals share when constructing knowledge from the same given context (Creswell, 2007). Conclusions were drawn from the experiences of fifteen adjunct faculty members and three division chair people from one community college. To uncover the shared realities, interviews of the adjunct faculty and division chair people were performed along with a follow-up focus group of adjunct faculty. The focus group of adjunct faculty was conducted to triangulate thematic content from the individual interviews.

Overview of Chapter IV

This chapter is organized by academic division. Characteristics of each division are described in order to gain a sense of how each division operates. Second, the division chairs peoples’ perspectives in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development to adjunct faculty are described and supported by participant quotes. Third, adjunct faculty perceptions of teaching support, mentoring, and
professional development opportunities are discussed. Last, a conclusion of major findings between the division chairperson and their adjunct faculty are reviewed, including a summary of the key similarities and differences in perceptions of adjunct faculty and division chairs.

Tri-County Community College

At the time of the study, Tri-County Community College is a public, rural-based community college that serves a population of approximately 12,000 students on one main campus. The community college employed 217 full-time faculty and 348 adjunct faculty. The community college was made up of eight non-occupational academic disciplines and offered certificate and associate’s degree programs. The division chairperson was a full-time faculty member nominated to the position for a term of five years, was the supervisor of both full-time and adjunct faculty in each division. Due to the large number of adjunct faculty, a center termed the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence (FCTE) existed that was dedicated to providing support and professional development to adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty had office space, computer access, and copying service available through the FCTE. Additionally, adjunct faculty could meet with students, network with other adjunct faculty, and attend non-discipline specific professional development workshops hosted by full-time faculty. Division chair people relied on the services provided by the FCTE and sent adjunct faculty there to obtain support and professional development opportunities.
Humanities Division

The humanities division was the largest of the eight divisions at Tri-County Community College. The chairperson was a full-time faculty member in the department ten years before assuming the role of division chairperson role four years ago. He was responsible for supervising over thirty adjunct faculty members. Two adjunct faculty participants were professionals while the other three participants were aspiring academics. As a group, adjunct faculty participants had been teaching for Tri-County Community College a minimum of 4 years during the time of the study. The department contained disciplines ranging from art and music to history and foreign language. Each discipline was made up of approximately twenty percent adjunct faculty compared to eighty percent full-time faculty except for the music department which only employed three adjunct faculty members. The department did not have office space for adjunct faculty so they prepared for classes either at the FCTE or in the classrooms in which they taught. The division chairperson’s office was located close to the communication department’s full-time faculty offices because he was formally a communications full-time faculty member. Since the division was so large, full-time faculty offices were spread over three levels of the building.

The division chairperson could not be a content expert in all the departmental disciplines, therefore discipline coordinators were appointed to orientate and mentor adjunct faculty. The role of the discipline coordinator is discussed in detail below.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is from the perspective of the humanities division chairperson. His insights on providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty are displayed. The second
part is from the perspectives of humanities adjunct faculty participants on how they desired teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities from their chairperson.

Division Chairperson Perspectives

This section is written from the perspective of the humanities division chairperson. Providing support through frequent communication, creating mentoring opportunities, and encouraging professional development opportunities are the three sub-headings to this section. These ideas lend insight into how the chairperson provided adjunct faculty with teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities.

Providing support through communication. The humanities chairperson was passionate about supporting adjunct faculty. The chairperson knew his division could not operate without adjunct faculty and he valued their services. He felt some of the newly hired adjunct faculty should be oriented to the department and educated about effective teaching practices but felt he did not have enough time to facilitate these initiatives personally. He stated:

A lot of adjunct faculty will tell you that they don’t receive a lot of support from me because I am not in frequent contact with most of them. I’m not uncomfortable with what they would say but those who I do provide support to will probably perceive me as being more positive than anything else.

Since the humanities division was large and the chairperson was in place for only four years, he did not hire all of the adjunct faculty and did not regularly interact with each adjunct faculty. Although the chairperson did not regularly connect with all adjunct faculty, he did establish strong relationships with some because he taught in the same
discipline. He noted, “I think the adjunct faculty who know me will say I do a good job supporting and spending time with them to ensure their needs are accommodated for.”

When asked about adjunct faculty in other disciplines and adjunct faculty he did not hire, he felt some adjunct faculty would call him a “stin ker” or “slacker” because he could provide more support. He was well aware that he needed to interact with and provide more teaching support to his adjunct faculty.

While being regularly available to interact face-to-face with adjunct faculty was important to the chairperson, he was too busy to hold regular meetings. He stated, “I would like to interact more with adjunct faculty face-to-face and hold meetings, but frankly this is an impossible job in getting everything done so I try to do the best I can.”

Attending administrative gatherings, meeting with full-time faculty, and developing curriculum often got in the way of providing support to adjunct faculty. Even though he did not make it a point to interact face-to-face on a regular basis, he felt strongly about adjunct faculty feeling comfortable visiting his office to ask questions or seek advice. He noted:

I interact with my adjunct faculty over email or they come into my office on almost a daily basis because first of all it’s a pretty open door here. If somebody has an issue like an unruly student for example, they know they write me an email, call me, or stop in.

Regardless of the chairperson’s duties, he wanted to make a conscious effort in supporting his adjunct faculty because he wanted them to feel appreciated. He stated, “I think that I probably not only can communicate and interact more, but ought to… maybe just to say ‘I love you guys’ and I’m sorry I haven’t said that more often but I appreciate
you.” The chairperson communicated his respect and value for adjunct faculty and wanted his adjunct faculty to feel important and an integral part of the department.

**Mentoring opportunities.** Since his division was large with multiple disciplines to supervise, the chairperson did not have a significant role in mentoring his adjunct faculty because he was not a content expert and did not know best teaching practices for every discipline. Therefore, he appointed full-time faculty members to act as disciple coordinators to serve informally as adjunct faculty mentors.

The discipline coordinator dealt with course issues and answered discipline specific questions from other faculty. The coordinator met with adjunct faculty to discuss textbooks, pedagogy, curriculum changes, and anything else the adjunct faculty needed. Because of the chairperson’s multiple commitments, there was little time to consult with and assist adjunct faculty, making the role of the discipline coordinator important. While the chairperson noted the discipline coordinator helped adjunct faculty a great deal, it was not uncommon for adjunct faculty to figure things out for themselves. He stated, “In a lot of ways, adjunct faculty are probably on their own as far as finding out where the ropes are and how to use them.” He felt guilty that sometimes adjunct faculty had to fend for themselves and not all of their questions got answered.

Providing every adjunct faculty member with a formal mentor did not occur in the humanities department. The chairperson never set up formal mentoring relationships by teaming an adjunct faculty member with a full-time faculty because he did not think all of his adjunct faculty needed mentors. Some of his adjunct faculty requested mentors so he assigned them while others did not, creating an inconsistency. He felt he should assign all new adjunct faculty a full-time faculty mentor of the same discipline so they could seek
advice, but felt the more experienced adjunct faculty members did not need a mentor. He explained, “Sometimes I might team up an adjunct faculty member with another adjunct faculty member but I am kind of more laissez faire with people, as compared to my colleagues in other divisions who have a more structured way of mentoring adjunct faculty.” This chairperson did not force mentors on his adjunct faculty if they did not want one. He noted, “I would assign them a mentor only if I felt someone needed it or they requested a mentor specifically.” The chairperson did not feel a formal mentoring system was needed for his adjunct faculty. Moreover, he knew it was still ultimately his responsibility to orientate, mentor, and provide ongoing support to adjunct faculty but felt the role of discipline coordinator helped him a lot to accomplish those feats.

**Professional development opportunities.** There were many facets that characterized professional development in this division. Some examples included providing teaching pedagogy workshops, orientations to Tri-County Community College, and funding to attend professional workshops and conferences outside of the college. While the chairperson felt professional development opportunities were important so adjunct faculty could improve their teaching and learn from experienced full-time faculty, he did not offer any formal professional development at the departmental level. He relied mainly on adjunct faculty receiving professional development through the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence (FCTE).

Since Tri-County Community College had such a large adjunct faculty population, the FCTE’s main purpose was to orientate and assist adjunct faculty. Division chair people from every academic department were supported significantly by the FCTE as this center oriented adjunct faculty and provided them with an office space, mailbox,
and photocopying service. This was a centralized place where all adjunct faculty could prepare for their classes, receive their campus mail, attend formal workshops on improving pedagogy and classroom management skills, and exchange teaching ideas with other adjunct faculty. By having the FCTE, the chairperson’s job became easier because the FCTE provided adjunct faculty with college-wide support and professional development. Additionally, through the FCTE, an adjunct faculty member could apply for funding to attend an academic conference outside of the college or subscribe to professional literature.

The chairperson appreciated how he could direct his adjunct faculty toward the FCTE for general, non-discipline specific professional development topics such as: developing good classroom management skills, classroom management techniques, student learning styles, and incorporating technology into class assignments. He stated:

At the divisional level, I really don’t offer any professional development. I rely mainly on the FCTE. They hold an Adjunct Faculty Academy before the beginning of each semester where an adjunct faculty member can receive information about teaching pedagogies, classroom management techniques, active learning, etc. It is mandatory that an adjunct faculty member attend so I feel confident that they are receiving at least some professional development there because I just don’t have the time to do it.

Moreover, the chairperson was aware of the deficiency on his part that he did not offer any formal professional development opportunities, but looked from time to time to his full-time faculty to provide social, informal gatherings that adjunct faculty could attend to talk about teaching.

One way the chairperson noted he kept pulse on how much or little professional development his adjunct faculty needed was to look at the end of semester student evaluations. He stated, “I look at the student evaluations of all adjunct faculty to look for
problems with their teaching.” The chairperson did not have a formal adjunct faculty teaching evaluation system where he regularly observed adjunct faculty teach. Therefore, he relied mainly on how the students evaluated his adjunct faculty members’ teaching so he could then recommend the opportunities available through the FCTE. He stated:

I will say that in terms of evaluating the adjunct faculty, that has probably been a weaker point over the years. I can’t say I spend a lot of time doing that because I have to do that with full-time faculty. I usually try to do it with brand spanking new adjunct faculty so I can recommend professional development to them.

If the chairperson received student complaints or if adjunct faculty wanted a classroom evaluation, the chairperson would perform an evaluation. However, he also had to annually evaluate every full-time faculty member in his division so he rarely had the time to evaluate all of his adjunct faculty population. Therefore, the chairperson designated a full-time faculty to observe an adjunct faculty member teaching at times. He stated:

Sometimes I evaluate adjunct faculty by observing them teach but mostly I ask the full-time faculty in the discipline to do it. My division is really diverse so I might not know if their pedagogy is sound or not. It is that or maybe I am just lazy.

The chairperson felt the end of semester student evaluations were sufficient in providing him with the feedback he needed regarding the strengths and weaknesses of adjunct faculty teaching. If he did not receive any complaints and the evaluations were positive, the chairperson would continue to hire the adjunct faculty member. If not, he would evaluate the adjunct faculty member’s teaching. He wanted to see the adjunct faculty improve his or her teaching skills and seek out professional development opportunities through the FCTE because he preferred not to discontinue the teaching relationship unless there were perpetual problems.
In conclusion, the humanities chairperson had a large adjunct faculty population to support. He was aware he could put more effort toward supporting adjunct faculty but felt the multiple demands of his role often got in the way. The chairperson appointed discipline coordinators to support adjuncts and serve as informal mentors if needed to ensure their questions were answered and teaching advice could be sought. He relied solely on the FCTE to provide professional development opportunities to his adjunct faculty because he did not offer anything at the divisional level. He felt adjunct faculty perceived him positively and tried to make their teaching roles easy by being available to them as much as his schedule allowed.

Adjunct Faculty Perceptions

This section describes the perspectives of humanities adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty wanted teaching support, a formal mentor, and professional development opportunities so they were prepared to teach. Receiving support through communication, mentoring, and professional development opportunities are the three sub-headings.

Receiving support through communication. Adjunct faculty participants felt supported if they were provided with an orientation upon being hired, stayed abreast of departmental happenings, and had frequent contact with the chairperson to get their teaching questions answered. Participants perceived their chairperson positively because they felt he was available if needed to satisfy their needs. They felt comfortable meeting or emailing him questions because he would always respond. One adjunct faculty member reflected on the positive relationship he had with his chairperson. He felt it was a very gratifying feeling to know his chair was approachable and added, “It is great that my
chairperson is approachable, a team player, and an effective communicator.” Participants discussed how they felt confident their chairperson understood how important adjunct faculty were to the department and wanted to support their teaching. One adjunct faculty member felt the chairperson also understood the importance of obtaining supplies and equipment she requested to teach her music class effectively. She stated, “All I have to do is ask and I feel like I am provided with the necessary materials and equipment to do my job effectively.”

While it was not uncommon for participants to state their chairperson was busy and sometimes ignored them, they still felt the chairperson provided as much support as possible. They would, however, like to stay more aware of departmental happenings.

Matt stated:

The only way I feel support specifically is moral support. I think my chairperson is pretty good at that. I feel wanted when I am here teaching I guess. I have taught at other schools and I’ve never felt wanted before, ever. That part I like. In terms of policies and stuff in the department, sometimes I feel like adjunct faculty get a little ignored because we are not always aware of curriculum and textbook changes for example.

Participants were aware their chairperson was very busy and could not support their every need. They usually took their own initiatives to seek out their discipline coordinator or other adjunct faculty to learn of departmental happenings or get their teaching questions answered. One adjunct faculty member reflected on how it was up to the adjunct to ask questions and interact with people to ensure that he knew what was going on in the department. She stated:

I just tend to be out asking questions and finding out these things but not all adjunct faculty are like that. I have colleagues who are like, “I didn’t know that” and I have to say, “They decided that three weeks ago.” It’s kind of how you approach it. I just jump in and find out if it affects me, but not everyone does that.
Furthermore, another adjunct faculty participant felt it was important for adjunct faculty to be a part of the departmental communication loop. He was still very pleased with the amount of support he received from his chairperson. He stated, “He goes out of his way, even when he is too busy to help me with my teaching when I’ve needed it he is there. I feel like I get 100% support and don’t feel like I have a rough time in any respect. I feel very good about that.” Adjunct faculty participants enjoyed being a part of humanities division and felt their chairperson dedicated time and effort toward supporting their teaching needs.

Mentoring system. Adjunct faculty participants wanted their teaching questions answered and did not hesitate to seek advice from their chairperson, full-time faculty in their department, and other adjunct faculty. Since this department did not have a formal mentoring system, adjunct faculty were not assigned formal mentors. If participants wanted a mentor, they felt comfortable asking their chairperson for one. Because the department was so large, discipline coordinators often served as informal mentors to adjunct faculty because they were viewed as experts in pedagogy of that discipline. As one participant stated, “When I think of who might be a mentor to me, I first think of my discipline coordinator because I interact with him the most to discuss teaching.”

While not all of the adjunct faculty wanted a formal mentor because they had experience and “knew the ropes” of how the department operated, communicating and interacting regularly with other faculty to talk about teaching was important to them. An adjunct faculty member of over ten years, stated, “I wouldn’t want a mentor even if my chairperson assigned me one. I am 50 years old and have been doing this enough. I don’t want anyone telling me, ‘You should do this, this, and this’.”
While a formal mentoring system was not in place, participants used their discipline coordinator if needed or interacted with other faculty in their departments. One adjunct faculty noted, “If I have questions about lecture material or how to perform a class activity, I always ask my discipline coordinator.” The role of the discipline coordinator appeared to serve as a mentor for adjunct faculty in this large department and participants enjoyed having someone available to answer their questions and provide teaching advice.

**Professional development opportunities.** Adjunct faculty participants felt professional development was valuable to enhancing their teaching skills and appreciated the many opportunities were available through the FCTE. They frequently received emails from the chairperson or flyers in their mailboxes about upcoming workshops. Adjunct faculty needed to have professional development available on campus and funding to attend discipline related conferences so they could improve their teaching. Adjunct faculty participants did not elaborate much on specific professional development opportunities available, or numerous workshops they have attended through the FCTE, because some of them were too busy teaching their classes and had demands outside of Tri-County Community College. They mentioned how the FCTE was where all professional development for adjunct faculty occurred on campus. The workshops were not discipline specific but focused on improving pedagogical skills and classroom management techniques. Adjunct faculty did not have professional development opportunities available to them at the departmental level so attending the FCTE workshops was the only opportunities in which they could partake. In regard to lack of professional development at the departmental level, one adjunct faculty member stated, “I
am not aware of professional development opportunities that relate only to our department. Most of the opportunities available on campus though could be applied to any discipline.”

While they all felt professional development was important to improving their teaching, some did not participate. While the chairperson always made them aware of what was available through the FCTE, some adjunct faculty taught at the same time opportunities were offered, were not interested in the topics, or just did not have the time. A seasoned adjunct faculty member with ten years teaching experience stated:

They provide things but I am kind of the black sheep. I don’t like those things and when I’ve gone to them I felt like they were a waste of time. I suppose I don’t take advantage of a couple things that I know I should.

However, participants valued having the opportunities available through the FCTE and some attended when they could. Moreover, they appreciated never being pressured by their chairperson to participate or take on more than just their teaching roles in the department. While one adjunct faculty member commented that she never felt pressured to take on more than her teaching role, she reflected on how she liked to get involved in professional development opportunities and other happenings when she had the time. She stated:

By nature of who I am, I do more. I’m on the FCTE as the adjunct representative. I’ve developed a course and am now in the process of possibly doing some collaboration in learning communities with other faculty as part of my professional development. I go beyond just teaching my class. I guess I do those things because I want to be full-time but I do enjoy it. It’s stressful but I wouldn’t do it if I didn’t want to.

Participants felt their chairperson took professional development seriously and kept them aware of FCTE offerings, but some chose not to attend for various reasons.
The adjunct faculty participants felt the most important form of their professional
development occurred via teaching evaluations. They wanted their chairperson to visit
their classrooms and perform evaluations so they could become aware of what they were
doing well and needed areas of improvement. However, participants admitted they were
not evaluated consistently by their chairperson. For example, one participant taught for
four years and had never been evaluated. Another was evaluated once in thirteen years.
Along the same lines, another participant was only observed three times in the last eleven
years. She stated, “It would be nice to have an actual structure set up for evaluation
because I haven’t had any formal feedback in a long time from my chairperson regarding
my teaching skills.” Since participants did not attend professional development activities
regularly, they felt it was important to receive feedback from their chairperson following
a classroom evaluation. Adjunct faculty participants sought advice on how to improve
pedagogy or classroom management skills. One adjunct faculty participant yearned for
consistent feedback because he had never received a classroom evaluation from his
chairperson. He commented:

It kind of goes into that being ignored part because I know that the full-time
teachers get called in and they have discussions about their teaching. There is
nothing like that for adjunct faculty. Almost no feedback or the only feedback I
get is, “Wow, your classes are filling up quickly, that’s good.” I want to know
how I can improve.

Adjunct faculty participants were not evaluated regularly. They wanted chair
people to evaluate their teaching so they could be provided with feedback on how to
improve. Doing a good job in the classroom was important to them and most did not have
the time to attend professional development opportunities. They knew their chairperson
cared about making their teaching experiences’ rewarding and believed consistent teaching evaluations would be beneficial.

Conclusion

The chairperson found it difficult to provide teaching support to every adjunct faculty member so he appointed a full-time faculty member from each discipline to be a discipline coordinator. The discipline coordinator served the role as a mentor to new and returning adjunct faculty. The chairperson made himself available to adjunct faculty because he cared about them. He did not offer any professional development at the departmental level for adjunct faculty participants, relying solely on the FCTE to accommodate their needs.

Adjunct faculty participants perceived a positive relationship with their chairperson. They felt comfortable meeting and interacting with him but knew he was busy. Therefore, they often asked questions and sought advice from discipline coordinators. Adjunct faculty believed the chairperson was an advocate in making their role meaningful and kept them aware of professional development opportunities through the FCTE. While most adjunct faculty did not partake in professional development, they preferred their chairperson perform yearly teaching evaluations so they could continue to improve their teaching skills. At the time of the study, they were evaluated very inconsistently.

One similarity in the findings was that both the chairperson and adjunct faculty participants felt a formal mentoring system was unnecessary. Adjunct faculty would ask for a mentor if they needed one and the chairperson believed the role of the discipline
coordinator to be valuable in supporting their teaching needs. Another similarity in the findings was that both the chairperson and adjunct faculty participants felt professional development was important to improving teaching skills and the chairperson never placed pressure on adjunct faculty to participate, nor did adjunct faculty feel they were being pressured by their chairperson. There was a mutual understanding between adjunct faculty and the chairperson in that adjunct faculty would attend professional development if their schedules allowed. The chairperson fully supported their decisions and the adjunct faculty participants felt respected.

One difference in findings was the chairperson perceived that teaching evaluations occurred more consistently than adjunct faculty participants. Most adjunct faculty were never or rarely evaluated by the chairperson despite their numerous years of service. Another difference in the findings was the chairperson believed he could provide more support to serve his adjunct faculty but the adjunct faculty participants were satisfied with the amount of support they received. The participants perceived him to be available when they needed him versus the chairperson felt he did not have the time to reach out and effectively support the adjunct faculty.

English Division

At the time of this study, this division consisted of only the English discipline. The chairperson was responsible for supervising over twenty five adjunct faculty and fifteen full-time faculty members. Three adjunct faculty participants were aspiring academics while the other two participants were career enders. As a group, each participant had been teaching for a minimum of three years at Tri-County Community
College during the time of the study. The division chairperson had assumed her role two years ago after being a full-time faculty member in the English department for eight years. The chairperson wanted her department to be a cohesive unit and did not differentiate between the caliber of teaching between full-time faculty and adjunct faculty. Formal orientations were in place for all new adjunct faculty. Each had a formal full-time faculty mentor. The chairperson organized English specific professional development opportunities like Let’s Talk Teaching. These opportunities allowed English full-time and adjunct faculty to gather and discuss pedagogy and curriculum specific to English content.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is from the perspective of the English division chairperson. Her insights on providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty are described. The second part is from the perspectives of English adjunct faculty participants on how they desired teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities from their chair so they were prepared to teach.

Division Chairperson Perceptions

This section is from the perspective of the English division chairperson. Teaching support, mentoring, and providing professional development opportunities are the three sub-headings to this section. Gaining perspective on how the chairperson provided adjunct faculty with teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities is displayed in order to accomplish the purpose of the study.
Providing support through communication. The chairperson wanted adjunct faculty to receive support from the time they were hired. She designated two of her office staff to meet with new adjunct faculty members and deliver an electronic orientation she created that reviewed departmental processes such as grade submission and attendance. The chairperson knew adjunct faculty were busy prepping for classes, teaching at other colleges, and had demands beyond the college so she tried to make their part-time role easier. She stated, “Adjunct faculty have lots to worry about when they are first hired. I offer support by keeping them in the loop on anything that comes down the pipeline so it makes their job a bit easier.” The chairperson knew every one of her adjunct faculty by name even though she did not hire all of them. The chairperson scheduled her office hours a few times throughout the semester in the evening so she could be available for the adjunct faculty who taught at night. She wanted adjunct faculty to feel valued and important in the department so she converted two unused storage rooms in the department to large, shared adjunct faculty offices. The chairperson knew adjunct faculty would often use the offices in the FCTE, but she wanted them to have a space in the department where they could prepare teaching materials, meet with students, and share teaching advice with one another.

The chairperson was aware, however, that full-time faculty were offered more support and resources compared to adjunct faculty. She did not feel adjunct faculty in her department lacked support but simply received less than full-time faculty. She stated:

I feel that adjunct faculty needs are sometimes, and only sometimes, not recognized throughout the college as well as full-time faculty. This bothers me because I know I have some really excellent adjunct faculty who are every bit as good as full-time faculty and deserve the same levels of support.
The chairperson ensured all of her adjunct faculty obtained the necessary resources and information they needed to be prepared to teach. She noted:

I try to send the message from the beginning of each semester that I am here to offer support to all adjunct faculty. I invite them all to come to our initial division meetings during the fall semester but only seven or eight attend. I also send out a feedback form after their first semester of teaching to see what they need more of and what they think I can do better to support their teaching role. Last year’s feedback seemed to find them happy with the amount of support I provide but only half of them filled it out.

The chairperson felt she was positively perceived by adjunct faculty because she never heard negative feedback from them. She was dedicated toward making them feel like equals to full-time faculty and offering seemingly support. The chairperson knew her adjunct faculty were not on campus as much as full-time faculty because of demands outside of teaching but she still cared about providing them resources and support. She felt adjunct faculty knew they could depend on her if needed. She stated:

I do what I can to offer adjunct faculty support but what can I do when somebody is teaching at other colleges? Adjunct faculty are not on campus the way full-time faculty are. They are not paid for it and usually only have the time to show up and teach. When they are here, I want to generate enough support so they know they can depend on me to make their teaching easy.

The chair was passionate about providing teaching support to adjunct faculty but was also realistic that she could not always be available because of her multiple demands as chair. She felt supporting the teaching needs of her twenty-five full-time faculty members often got in the way of adjunct faculty needs. She noted:

Sometimes it is easy to overlook a part-time employee by getting sidetracked with having too many other things to do. Since adjunct faculty are not on promotion track or not always someone you have to deal with daily, their needs are often overlooked because of the immediate demands of my twenty-five full-time faculty members.
The chairperson knew she was not under any pressure to keep all of her adjunct faculty satisfied but once adjunct faculty were hired, she felt a commitment that she owed it to them to keep giving them classes if they were good instructors. She wanted adjunct faculty to be able to depend on her as much as she depended on them to teach. She stated:

I really appreciate adjunct faculty. I’ve got some great people here and I try to send those people first to teach in the classroom. The thing is, adjunct faculty can be here today and gone tomorrow and we are under no obligation to renew them but once an adjunct faculty is here, I try to generate enough support so they feel committed. I feel I owe it to them to keep giving them classes if they are doing a good job.

The chairperson made a conscious effort to support adjunct faculty needs because she cared about them. She spoke about how if she had extra money in the budget, she would send some their way because adjunct faculty are not paid enough for their teaching. The chairperson was determined to make adjunct faculty feel like their teaching was valued by being available to meet with them, inviting them to departmental gatherings, and keeping them in the discussion loop on any type of teaching talk.

**Mentoring opportunities.** During the time of the study, a formal mentoring system was implemented by the chairperson for the English department. The chairperson assigned every new adjunct faculty a full-time faculty mentor. She chose a full-time faculty mentor who taught the same or similar classes as the adjunct faculty so the mentor could share lecture materials and teaching ideas. The formal mentoring system extended to seasoned adjunct faculty members who also taught in the department. Even if the adjunct faculty had experience in teaching, he or she was still assigned a mentor at the beginning of every fall semester. The chairperson felt mentors could serve as sounding boards for adjunct faculty to run teaching ideas past and share materials and advice about
best teaching practices. She felt mentors were valuable in providing adjunct faculty with the necessary tools to teach because she was busy and did not have to worry about adjunct faculty not being prepared.

The chairperson wanted her adjunct faculty to feel like they had consistent resources from her and a mentor upon hire. She stated:

I will provide the resource of a mentor to start with. I am not under any illusion that when I assign them their mentor upon hire that they will be the same mentor they are working with five years down the road. I just care about giving them someone to start with.

She did not mind if the adjunct faculty switched mentors throughout the semester as long as they had someone who could assist them with their teaching needs. The chairperson was happy with the mentoring system and believed mentors helped new and returning adjunct faculty become integrated to the department and feel comfortable about teaching.

Professional development opportunities. The chairperson took adjunct faculty professional development seriously. She was aware that some of the adjunct faculty did not have strong teaching backgrounds and felt she needed to take responsibility to ensure there were developmental opportunities available for them. The chairperson felt full-time faculty had more time to partake in available opportunities, plus there was more money in the budget for them to attend professional development outside of Tri-County Community College. This bothered the chairperson because some full-time faculty outperformed adjunct faculty as teachers and wondered if this was because adjunct faculty were not exposed to as much professional development as full-time faculty were.

She stated:

I feel that professional development is not on par with full-time faculty and I know that the student complaints I get are 99 percent adjunct faculty. The
question is, “Why is that?” I think there are many answers to that question that I have sorted through but it is a question of, “Why is this?” and I think part of it is that full-time faculty have more resources available to them and more time to focus on student needs.

While full-time faculty had more resources available to them, the chairperson relied on the FCTE to offer non-discipline specific professional development to her adjunct faculty. Additionally the chairperson created *Let’s Talk Teaching* seminars which were professional development discussions exclusively for English adjunct faculty. The chairperson wanted adjunct faculty to stay abreast of new and changing content in the area of English so she created these forums where adjunct faculty informally networked with other English faculty and exchanged teaching ideas. Moreover, if she found any extra money in the budget the chairperson told adjunct faculty to buy books in the campus bookstore that would enhance their teaching. She stated, “I tell my adjunct faculty to browse through the bookstore and pick up a book or two that looks interesting and to put it on the budget.” Additionally, the chairperson used extra money to subscribe to a professional literary magazine that adjunct faculty could use to enhance their lectures. The chairperson also created an email listserv of all full-time and adjunct faculty in the department so she could email professional development opportunities occurring through the FCTE or outside of Tri-County Community College. Even though many of her adjunct faculty were busy and could not participate often, she was dedicated to keeping them in the loop of available opportunities.

Even though there was not a lot of money available for adjunct faculty professional development outside of the college, the chairperson encouraged her adjunct faculty to apply through the FCTE by filling out the necessary paperwork for partial
reimbursement. The chairperson felt strongly about professional development being important to improving adjunct faculty teaching skills. She stated:

I have adjunct faculty come up to me because I have to sign off on their professional development if they are requesting money in the budget through the FCTE. They give me a copy of it that I put in their file so I have a sense of who is out there doing what. Sometimes an adjunct faculty will say, “Gosh, I really need fifty dollars for this professional development opportunity” and I try to find money in the English budget or contact the FCTE. I say, “Fine, whatever you need if we can provide it.”

Besides adjunct faculty attending professional development experiences, the chairperson felt classroom teaching evaluations were another tool she could use to improve adjunct faculty teaching. She implemented a system a year ago where a full-time faculty would sit in on an adjunct faculty member’s class with a form that contained standardized series of tools to look for during the one hour time observation. She felt the form provided consistency and a way to gauge how adjunct faculty teaching improved each year. Before the teaching evaluation system was in place, she did not consistently evaluate her adjunct faculty because she did not have the time. She stated:

I will say that in terms of evaluating the adjunct faculty, that has probably been a weaker point over the years but I have only had this job for two years. I can’t say I spend a lot of time evaluating adjunct faculty because I have to spend time evaluating full-time faculty. I usually try to do it [evaluate] though with brand spanking new adjunct faculty.

She felt having a full-time faculty evaluate each adjunct faculty kept her aware of adjunct faculty teaching skills, classroom management style, and rapport with students. The full-time faculty followed up with the adjunct faculty after each evaluation to discuss areas of strengths and weakness. The chairperson would review the evaluation and meet with the adjunct faculty only if she felt there were improvements to be made.
Adjunct Faculty Perceptions

This section is from the perspectives of English adjunct faculty only. Teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities are the three subheadings of this section.

Receiving support through communication. The adjunct faculty participants felt the relationships they had with their chairperson were positive because she provided so much teaching support. Every participant was pleased by how the chairperson orientated them to the department and provided teaching resources. The participants felt their chairperson took time out of her busy schedule to answer questions and be available to them. One adjunct faculty stated, “Her office is always open and you can walk into the English department if you want to stop and talk. She is very approachable.” The participants also felt that the chairperson offered support by being their advocate when they had a student related issue in the classroom. They appreciated how the chairperson trusted the adjunct faculty’s judgment and respected his or her decisions when classroom issues arose. For example, one adjunct faculty stated:

There have been several times where issues have come up and I needed the division chairperson. She always has time to listen and is very supportive. I really feel like she has my absolute back so to speak. This gives me confidence in my teaching and I feel better because I know that I can talk to her and support is there.

Because support was ongoing from the chairperson, the adjunct faculty perceived the trust and respect the chairperson held for them made them better teachers. They could approach their teaching with confidence because the chairperson provided them with resources so they were prepared to teach. One adjunct faculty member noted, “I’ve never had any issues whatsoever with getting the things I need or with not feeling as though I
have support to try something new in my classroom.” Adjunct faculty participants spoke of how the chairperson always encouraged them to try something new in the classroom and to be creative. They loved having this autonomy because the chairperson trusted their judgment. One adjunct faculty member stated:

I have no problem communicating with my chairperson about new ideas I want to implement in my class. She supports me by offering a fresh perspective on the best way to implement a new class activity that compliments my lecture for example. I really appreciate that.

The adjunct faculty participants also highlighted the fact that the chairperson offered support by making them feel like they were an important part of the department. They appreciated that she kept them in the communication loop by creating an email listserv, inviting them to division meetings and gatherings, and making them feel welcome when they were hired. One adjunct faculty recalled:

She is the only division chairperson in my whole career who ever sent me a “Glad you are here in the fall card.” I had to write her back and say that it was the first time this has ever happened and it was very, very nice to do. It made me feel supported and an important part of the faculty. I like her a lot.

Adjunct faculty gained support from their chairperson because they perceived her to truly value and respect their teaching. They enjoyed their part-time role because the chairperson was available, an advocate, and encouraged them to implement new activities in their classes.

**Mentoring system.** Mentoring was important to adjunct faculty. Most adjunct faculty wanted a mentor to informally network with, learn from their teaching experiences, and ask questions. The English department was made up of adjunct faculty who taught for many years. Some of the adjunct participants were hired long before the formal mentoring system was created. They were not given a formal mentor so they felt
like they were on their own in developing the structure of their classes. One adjunct faculty participant stated, “I walked in and they said, “Here, teach the class.”” They just kind of threw me to the sharks. I didn’t have a mentor because there had never been a mentoring program in my department.” Adjunct faculty participants found that without having someone to whom they could ask questions and obtain course materials, their part-time teaching role could be difficult and a lot of work.

With the addition of a formal mentoring program in the department, adjunct faculty found the resources they desperately needed. They enjoyed sharing teaching ideas with their full-time faculty mentors. One adjunct faculty stated, “The division chair assigned me a full-time faculty mentor to work with and I had an excellent gal and she helped me out tremendously.” The adjunct faculty felt having mentors was crucial for all new adjunct faculty so they could understand departmental processes and enter into teaching with more confidence. One adjunct faculty stated, “I think for brand new adjunct faculty, I like the concept of us having a mentor where we can learn from them and even sit in on their classes if we want and learn how they teach.”

Even before the addition of a formal mentoring system, adjunct faculty spoke of how informal mentoring happened frequently in their department. The participants would informally meet in the hallways with the chairperson, full-time faculty, or other adjunct faculty to ask questions about pedagogy, share classroom activities, and discuss English specific topics. They enjoyed these informal experiences and felt the exchanges made them better teachers. One adjunct faculty stated, “I think the informal mentoring is just as valuable as the actual pairing of an adjunct to a full-time faculty mentor. As long as we are receiving support, we are happy.”
Formal or informal mentoring relationships were important to adjunct faculty because they could establish connections to other people in the department, learn from one another, and be provided with resources to assist with and improve their teaching. Without mentoring, adjunct faculty felt isolated and unsupported because they were not receiving necessary guidance.

Professional development opportunities. The adjunct faculty participants were very satisfied with the amount and type of professional development offered to them. They mentioned formal activities offered through the FCTE and informal gatherings available in the department. The adjunct faculty felt the chair did a great job in keeping them informed of the events by emailing them through the listserv, putting flyers in their mailboxes, and through informal exchanges in the hallway. Since the chairperson had to approve professional development for every adjunct faculty, the participants felt comfortable going to her for approval and asking for money to attend professional development opportunities outside of Tri-County Community College.

While adjunct faculty were busy teaching and had demands outside of the college, they tried to get involved in professional development. When they could attend, adjunct faculty felt the opportunities were worthwhile to improving their teaching. One adjunct faculty stated:

I don’t think anyone could say there isn’t enough professional development happening. The opportunities through the FCTE are wonderful. Flyers are put in our mailboxes, as well as, the chairperson emailing us information about upcoming opportunities. I don’t have time to do all the things I want to do.
Many participants also mentioned the education classes available through the FCTE for a minimal charge. Classroom assessment techniques and classroom management skills were two classes adjunct faculty mentioned enrolling in and thoroughly enjoying.

One adjunct faculty member mentioned the “Let’s Talk Teaching” seminars available through the FCTE for English adjunct faculty. She noted, “I love gathering with English adjunct faculty to exchange teaching and pedagogy ideas related to English topics only. I learn from others and get new ideas to try in my classes.” Moreover, other adjunct faculty elaborated on how they felt informal professional development occurred regularly between English adjunct faculty. One adjunct faculty member recalled:

I enjoy how some of us faculty meet in the cafeteria where we have coffee or whatever to discuss teaching. It is informal so if you want to come fine. It is helpful and a lot of informal mentoring and learning occurs that way.

Adjunct faculty never felt pressured by the chairperson to attend professional development workshops or felt their teaching jobs were in jeopardy if they did not attend. The adjunct faculty participated in professional development opportunities, both formally and informally, because they intrinsically cared about improving their teaching. One adjunct faculty member stated:

What I do in regard to professional development is not required or expected. I go to seminars to learn new technology for example. Tri-County offers that and I really believe that in order to be good at your job you need to participate in professional development. Even tomorrow, I am at a different place learning how to do something.

Adjunct faculty participants were very satisfied with the professional development offered to them, however they felt their teaching needed to be evaluated on a more consistent basis so they would know exactly how to improve. If they were aware of their teaching strengths and weaknesses, adjunct faculty could then participate in
professional development specific to areas they lacked. While adjunct faculty spoke of how they thought they were going to be evaluated by their chair, the evaluation never occurred or did not happen regularly. This disappointed participants because they felt the feedback would be valuable to improving their teaching. One adjunct faculty member recalled:

I was supposed to be evaluated but my chairperson had a million other adjunct faculty and things she had to do so I fell through the cracks. That was two years ago and apparently I am still in the cracks. However, I do get assigned a lot of classes though so she must be relying on what the students are saying about me in the end of semester evaluations.

Another adjunct faculty participant felt the same way about her chairperson relying on the end of semester student evaluations to gauge her teaching skills. She noted, “I was supposed to be evaluated and then it never happened which is really funny. I have never been evaluated here. I guess my reviews are good enough to warrant not being evaluated.” Regardless if the chairperson was using end of semester student evaluations or not to see how each adjunct faculty was performing, participants wanted consistent teaching evaluations. They yearned for feedback and even mentioned how they would not mind their mentor performing the evaluation. One adjunct faculty stated:

I need more feedback from my chairperson or mentor about my teaching because all I get is what my students say. It would be nice to have some kind of system of evaluation. Just once a year or so have an observation in the class for feedback and stuff.

Performing well in the classroom was important to adjunct faculty. They wanted to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and receive feedback from the chairperson or mentor in the form of a classroom evaluation. They could focus on
professional development topics specific to their areas of weaknesses if they were evaluated on a consistent basis.

Conclusion

The English division chairperson wanted to see her adjunct faculty succeed. She treated adjunct faculty members with respect and valued their teaching. The chairperson made herself available to them whenever she could because she wanted to ensure they felt like an important part of the department. She teamed every adjunct faculty with a full-time faculty mentor so adjunct faculty had someone to share teaching ideas with and ask questions. Additionally, the chairperson wanted mentors to perform an annual teaching evaluation on adjunct faculty so they could obtain feedback on their teaching skills. The chairperson also made every adjunct faculty member aware of professional development occurring through the FCTE, dedicated any extra money in the budget to adjunct faculty development outside of the college, and created the “Let’s Talk Teaching” seminars that were for English adjunct faculty to discuss pedagogy. While she was busy in her role as chairperson, she went out of her way to ensure adjunct faculty were satisfied in their part-time roles.

Adjunct faculty participants perceived their chairperson in a positive way. They trusted and respected her and enjoyed teaching in the department. The adjunct faculty appreciated how they could easily approach the chairperson with questions. They also enjoyed how she encouraged them to try new things in their classrooms. While adjunct faculty were busy, they still tried to attend professional development opportunities formally through the FCTE and informally in the department because they felt the
exchanges were worthwhile. They cared about doing a good job in the classroom and wanted the chairperson or their mentor to evaluate their skills more consistently. Some participants were never evaluated while others were evaluated inconsistently and this bothered them. They took their teaching seriously and wanted to be made aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

A key similarity in the findings between the chairperson and adjunct faculty was that both the chairperson and adjunct faculty were satisfied with their relationships. The chairperson had confidence in her adjunct faculty and truly valued their teaching while the adjunct faculty trusted and respected the chairperson. Another key similarity was that both the chairperson and adjunct faculty felt the formal mentoring relationships were meaningful because pedagogical ideas could be regularly exchanged.

A key difference in the findings between chairperson and adjunct faculty was the lack of consistent teaching evaluations being performed on adjunct faculty. While the chairperson spoke of having a formal teaching evaluation system in place, according to adjunct faculty, they were not evaluated consistently. The chairperson knew teaching evaluations were important to perform so she could gauge how well adjunct faculty were performing in the classroom but adjunct faculty were not receiving any feedback.

Science Division

At the time of the study, the science division consisted of four disciplines employing full-time and adjunct faculty with a variety of education backgrounds. The department employed over thirty biology, chemistry, physics, and geology adjunct faculty, as well as, twenty-five full-time faculty members. Three adjunct faculty
participants were aspiring academics while the other two participants were career enders. As a group, the participants had been teaching a minimum of four years at Tri-County Community College. The chairperson had been a full-time faculty member in the science department fifteen years before assuming his role five years ago as chairperson. He felt he understood how to be effective in providing support to adjunct faculty. Most of the adjunct faculty were interested in becoming full-time and devoted time and effort beyond teaching in the department. The chairperson had hired only a small amount of the adjunct faculty but knew each one by name. Both the chairperson and adjunct faculty participants appeared to enjoy their roles and worked diligently to meet their goals.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is from the perspective of the science division chairperson. His insights on providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty are displayed. The second part is from the perspectives of science adjunct faculty participants on how they desired teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities from their chairperson so they were prepared to teach.

Division Chairperson Perceptions

This section is from the perspective of the Science division chairperson. Gaining perspective on how the chairperson provided teaching support, created mentoring opportunities, and offered professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty are the three sub-headings to this section.

Providing support through communication. The division chairperson offered insight on how he provided teaching support to his adjunct faculty. Since he hired most of
the adjunct faculty, relationships were immediately established. The chairperson provided an electronic orientation in his office which included campus processes and specific departmental procedures. The chairperson also set up adjunct faculty with a login name and password so he or she could access teaching materials from the departmental website. From there, he took time to ensure adjunct faculty knew how to navigate their way around campus so they would feel comfortable when they arrived for their first day of teaching. He stated:

The adjunct faculty I have hired say they appreciate getting their feet wet before they get into the classroom. I talk to them about pedagogy and how to work the technology in the classroom for example. Additionally, I walk adjunct faculty down to the bookstore to make sure they have the correct texts to begin their first day of teaching.

The chair offered a unique perspective on providing consistent teaching support to his adjunct faculty. He felt that if he took the time up front to orientate, acclimate, and provide adjunct faculty with the necessary resources to teach, there would be less work later. He noted, “I think the ones I have hired, especially the ones with the least experience, probably feel that I am a very important part of getting them started.”

The more time he could spend with adjunct faculty answering their teaching questions and being available to accommodate their needs, the less time he had to put forth during the semester because he had already provided the initial, foundational support. For example, he stated:

I show an adjunct faculty three examples of syllabi so he or she has something to go on when the syllabus is created for the first time. The adjunct faculty member comes back and says, “I’m thinking of doing this” and I give them feedback. If I did not take the time on the front end to review their syllabus and provide them with feedback a student could come back with a grade dispute at the end of the semester. The grade dispute is more work for me than providing support to the adjunct faculty in the beginning regarding their syllabus.
Furthermore, the chairperson also provided support by being accessible to adjunct faculty. He felt adjunct faculty needed him to be accessible so they could get their questions answered. The chairperson felt being available would give adjunct faculty confidence. He interacted with them in the hallways and departmental office, and always responded to their emails and phone messages in a timely manner. He recalled, “My impression is that anytime the adjunct faculty wanted to get a hold of me it has been almost instantly. The only exception to that would be if they don’t like what I’ve told them.” Staying connected to his adjunct faculty was important to the chairperson because he was their lifeline in the department. The chairperson felt support started with him and the more he could offer in the form of orientation, accessibility, and resources, the more adjunct faculty would enjoy teaching.

The chairperson cared about creating an environment where the adjunct faculty wanted to work. He wanted his adjunct faculty to enjoy teaching and felt that their attitudes toward teaching were dependent on how much support and service he provided. He stated, “I try to provide enough services so they feel valued. It’s kind of nice for them to state what they would like to be teaching over time. It makes them feel important too.” The chairperson provided support by scheduling adjunct faculty early so they always had enough time to prepare for their classes and to ensure he had the most appropriate person teaching each class. The chairperson wanted adjunct faculty to be able to rely on him as much as he relied on them to teach. He stated:
I give an adjunct faculty member a schedule for fall semester and they can plan their life around it because they are much more likely to come back the following winter because I am planning the winter semester right behind that saying, “when are you available?”

The chairperson made supporting his adjunct faculty a top priority because he took them seriously.

**Mentoring opportunities.** The chairperson felt every adjunct faculty in his department needed a mentor because the relationships were valuable. Even if they were experienced teachers, he believed the exchange of teaching advice and best practices was important to sustaining quality in the classroom. The chairperson created a formal mentoring program where every adjunct faculty member was provided with a full-time faculty mentor at the beginning of every fall semester. He stated, “I assign an adjunct faculty to a full-time faculty member that teaches the same class as them or sometimes they might have the same personality or way they look at students.” The chairperson wanted the mentors to review adjunct faculty syllabi at the beginning of every semester, share teaching materials, answer questions, and offer advice about best teaching practices specific to a given course.

While a formal mentoring system was in place, the chairperson viewed himself as a mentor to his adjunct faculty as well. He cared about staying abreast of their needs, offering advice, and keeping them in the departmental communication loop. He recalled:

> It’s not a normal week unless I have an adjunct faculty member asking me questions about how to do something or just coming up to me to talk about something they are dealing with, how they are dealing with it, and what would be the best way in my mind to get through it. It could be a student, faculty, or college issue. I enjoy being a mentor to them when I can.
The chairperson enjoyed answering adjunct faculty questions and listening to their concerns. He felt being a mentor was part of his job description and did not know how to effectively serve adjunct faculty without being an entity that they could rely on.

**Professional development opportunities.** The chairperson wanted to make his adjunct faculty aware of any professional development opportunities occurring on campus. He frequently sent out email reminders about professional development options being offered through the FCTE, as well as, informal professional development gatherings in the department. The chairperson offered webinars about science related topics that adjunct faculty could attend online. He felt this was a good way for his adjunct faculty to gain knowledge to improve their teaching and not have to be on campus. The chair also encouraged adjunct faculty to attend the *Adjunct Academies* at the beginning of every fall and winter semesters. The *Adjunct Academies* were put on by the FCTE and were discussion groups for adjunct faculty to informally network, attend professional development opportunities, and receive further orientation if needed.

The chairperson was aware of professional development opportunities his adjunct faculty attended outside of Tri-County Community College because he had to sign approval forms. He encouraged adjunct faculty to attend any type of workshop or class to improve their teaching skills and to stay abreast of science related content. While there was only money in the budget for partial reimbursement, he felt most adjunct faculty still cared about attending outside conferences. He stated:

An adjunct asked me if it was alright if she went to a conference. Of course I supported that and said “Let’s get the paperwork done and submit partial reimbursement to the FCTE.” I want adjuncts to know up front that I value that. We do not have a rigorous process where we go through and say that each year
this is the professional development that you should do. I’ve had adjuncts that have done stuff I wish I could do. It’s the person not the position.

Next, the chairperson felt his adjunct faculty cared about becoming better teachers because most of them sought full-time faculty positions in the department. He mentioned how some of them went above and beyond their teaching to participate in curriculum development and the creation of course specific resources. The chairperson appreciated how adjunct faculty did not hesitate to put forth the extra effort but was careful to never pressure them because participation was not in their job description. He stated, “It’s nice of them to say, “Yes I can help with that,” and let them get involved with something on the next schedule. It makes them feel important too, but I don’t push it. I ask and it is up to them to follow through.” The chairperson tried to demonstrate he had appreciation for their extra contributions to the department.

In furthering professional development opportunities for his adjunct faculty, the chairperson had a formal classroom evaluation system in place where adjunct faculty members were required to receive a yearly classroom evaluation from their assigned mentor. The chairperson mentioned the evaluation system was in place but did not elaborate on how the system worked. He only spoke of how he looked at the student end of semester evaluations to evaluate performance. He stated, “I look at the student evaluations for all of my adjunct faculty to look for problems with their teaching.” The chairperson felt he could gauge their performance by reading the student comments to see if the adjunct faculty member was lacking in a crucial area. He mentioned that he did not always provide his adjunct faculty with feedback if they were doing a good job, only if problems occurred would he set up a formal meeting. He noted:
I look at those. I really do look at those. I look at the scores and read the student comments to look for problems with adjunct faculty teaching. Sometimes the adjunct faculty member won’t get any feedback on it because I look at it and go, “Ok, and I put it away.” The lack of feedback is a bad thing and I should probably say something no matter what. I do provide feedback though if there are red flags or I notice that the students commented about something “cool” they did. I ask them to share it with me.

He was aware that he should provide all adjunct faculty with feedback regarding student evaluations because some of them were doing really well and needed to be recognized.

In conclusion, the division chairperson enjoyed his role and cared about supporting adjunct faculty. He dedicated time and effort toward orientating, mentoring, and providing professional development opportunities through the department. The chairperson strove to create a department where his adjunct faculty enjoyed teaching because he was passionate about making them feel valued and equal to their full-time faculty counterparts. While a formal teaching evaluation system was in place, the chairperson relied a great deal on student evaluations to assess adjunct faculty performance.

Adjunct Faculty Perceptions

This section is from the perspectives of science adjunct faculty. Teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities are the three sub-headings of this section.

Receiving support through communication. The adjunct faculty participants felt they were provided with the necessary information and resources so they were prepared to teach. They believed the chairperson had confidence in their teaching skills because he did not regularly check in on them. Adjunct faculty were assigned a mentor by the chair.
This mentor would provide the most frequent support, but participants still appreciated knowing assistance from the chairperson was there if needed. One adjunct faculty member stated, “I know a lot of adjunct faculty and it feels like we are all given the confidence of ‘Go do it because we trust you’ from our chairperson. That is what you feel because he is not going to babysit you by stopping by your class and checking up on you.” The more experienced adjunct faculty appreciated that their chairperson was a hands-off guy. They understood how the department operated and were confident teachers. These seasoned adjunct faculty participants spoke of how they received support via infrequent hallway conversations and general emails announcing upcoming division meetings.

However, less experienced adjunct faculty participants discussed how they only received support from their chairperson if there was a problem. If everything ran smoothly in their classes, adjunct faculty had minimal contact with the chairperson. When asked about how she perceived support from her chairperson, one adjunct faculty member stated:

The relationship I have with my chair is ok, it’s not bad. I guess I don’t really see him that much. I say “Hi” to him in the hall but I really would like him to stop by every now and then to get a personal view of how I teach. I only interact and receive support from him if there is a problem.

Furthermore, less experienced adjunct faculty felt the chairperson could offer a lot more support and guidance. One adjunct faculty felt her chairperson did not support her and, as a result, she had a tough time feeling connected to the department because he was never available to answer questions. She stated:

In some cases, he tends to think of adjunct faculty as warm bodies and nothing more. He said he started out as an adjunct faculty member but I think he has kind
of lost touch with what all adjunct faculty have to do. Unless I have a problem with a student cheating or something in the curriculum, I don’t receive support from him. I usually only interact with him about once a semester.

In summary, adjunct faculty enjoyed their part-time teaching roles. They were happy with the amount of support they received from mentors. Adjunct faculty only received feedback from the chairperson if there was a problem, yet they desired continuous contact and encouragement, even when everything was running smoothly.

**Mentoring system.** Adjunct faculty participants appreciated the mentoring relationships. They received a mentor at the beginning of every fall semester. Sometimes their mentor changed each year but they did not seem to mind because the change gave them a chance to form relationships with other full-time faculty. Some participants felt they communicated with some mentors better than others. When asked about the formal mentoring relationship, one adjunct faculty stated, “I received a mentor at the beginning of the fall semester. Sometimes it was the same person, other times it was a different person. Since some of the participants wanted to be full-time faculty, getting to know current full-time faculty in the department was important to them. They were able to ask them questions and learn from their teaching experiences. One adjunct recalled, “I have had some mentors that have been very, very good and I have had some that you just kind of say ‘hi’ to at the beginning of the semester and that is it.” For the most part, adjunct participants were satisfied with their mentors and felt the exchanges were valuable to their teaching.

**Professional development opportunities.** The adjunct faculty participants wanted to go above and beyond their teaching by getting involved in professional development opportunities available through the FCTE and beyond. Since some desired a full-time
faculty position, they felt dedicating extra time to improve their teaching skills or to curriculum development were essential. The chairperson sent out emails about professional development occurring through the FCTE, plus notified adjunct faculty of Adjunct Academies. Adjunct Academies were held during an evening at the beginning of fall and winter semesters. They targeted new and returning adjunct faculty. The goal was to meet each other, gain knowledge on campus processes, and obtain professional development. Most adjunct faculty attended every semester because they felt the information they obtained was valuable. One adjunct faculty stated:

I always attend the Adjunct Academy because it is fun to talk to other adjunct faculty and brush up on my teaching skills. Most adjunct faculty in my department always attend because the information we receive is valuable.

Adjunct faculty participants attended professional development on their own accord. They were encouraged by the chairperson but never pressured. The adjunct faculty participated because they felt the opportunities made them better teachers. One adjunct faculty noted, “Either you give one hundred percent, or you don’t. I cannot teach halfway, that is impossible so attending professional development maximizes my teaching potential.” Another adjunct faculty spoke of why he attended professional development. He wanted a full-time position and the departmental service made him more aware of how the department operated. He stated, “My chairperson asks me if I would like to participate in opportunities because he knows I want to become full-time and get exposed to what is happening in the department.” Most adjunct faculty participated in what they termed the “extras.” They felt departmental service were valuable and worthwhile to their teaching role and strove to attend as much as their schedules would allow.
Adjunct faculty participants also perceived teaching evaluations to be an important piece of their professional development because they could be critiqued by an experienced instructor. When adjunct faculty were evaluated, the evaluations were performed by their mentors and not the chairperson. Most exchanges occurred with their mentor so receiving feedback regarding their teaching skills was appropriate and comfortable. One adjunct faculty stated:

My mentor would tell me about ways I could improve my teaching by performing a classroom evaluation from time to time. I think the position of the mentor is a higher position in that area for us, as compared to the division chairperson because we interact with our mentor more regularly.

Teaching evaluations were not scheduled regularly and usually happened only when an adjunct faculty requested one. One adjunct faculty stated, “I only received an evaluation because I asked for one. My mentor came in and sat through one class. He put together a written critique with suggestions for improvement.” Moreover, while participants appreciated the evaluation from their mentor, they wanted them to occur more regularly and at the beginning of the semester. Occasionally, the mentor did not visit the classroom until the end of the semester so the adjunct faculty did not have a chance to use their suggestions from the evaluation to improve their teaching. One adjunct faculty recalled, “My mentor did not perform an evaluation of my teaching until the end of the semester so it was kind of too little, too late. I would prefer an evaluation occur at the beginning of the semester so I have a chance to use his suggestions throughout the semester.”

Since mentors always performed teaching evaluations on adjunct faculty, participants still felt the chairperson was aware of how they were doing in the classroom.
because their mentors would provide the chairperson with feedback. Most adjunct faculty did not expect to interact with the chairperson regularly but would have appreciated some feedback from their classroom evaluations. Usually, they only received feedback if an issue arose regarding the quality of their teaching. One adjunct faculty stated:

I know he is aware of everything we do. It’s possible that he does not say anything but he would give us negative feedback if our classroom evaluation was bad. If something is not working, he always contacts us, but if all is running smoothly, the chairperson will not give us feedback to tell us that.

Adjunct faculty wanted to receive feedback from their chairperson when something positive occurred in their classrooms. They felt they worked hard, did a good job and wanted their efforts to be recognized.

Conclusion

The science division chairperson felt orientating adjunct faculty upon hire was a crucial part of making them feel comfortable on campus and to begin teaching. He wanted to create a department where adjunct faculty wanted to work and enjoyed teaching. The chair offered support by being available and providing teaching resources, assigning adjunct faculty a mentor, and supporting the Adjunct Academies program.

Adjunct faculty participants enjoyed their roles as part-time instructors. Most of them sought full-time positions so they were eager to learn how the department operated, attended professional development, and sought advice from the mentors. After they were hired, adjunct faculty did not feel they received a lot of support from their chairperson. Even though they were assigned a mentor, most participants desired more support from their chairperson to stay connected to the department. The adjunct faculty participants also desired regular teaching evaluations from their mentors so they could continue to
improve their teaching skills. Performing well in the classroom, staying connected to departmental happenings, and communicating regularly with chair people and mentors was important to them.

One similarity between the division chairperson and adjunct faculty was that both enjoyed working together on departmental service. The chairperson had a high respect for his adjunct faculty, while adjunct faculty enjoyed being offered the opportunity to participate in departmental service. The chairperson was aware that most of his adjunct faculty wanted full-time teaching careers and asked them to be involved in curriculum development and professional development opportunities. Adjunct faculty appreciated not being pressured and respected the chairperson offering them chances to participate because they could gain exposure to how the department operated.

One difference between division chairperson and adjunct faculty was the chairperson thought he provided enough support to his adjunct faculty. Even though the chairperson assigned adjunct faculty a mentor, adjunct faculty still wanted more support from their chairperson. They wanted to stay connected to departmental happenings, ask the chairperson questions, and receive consistent feedback.

Another key difference among the two groups was the chairperson believed his adjunct faculty were regularly evaluated by mentors even though adjunct faculty participants felt they were inconsistently evaluated. Adjunct faculty wanted mentors to visit their classroom frequently so they could understand what aspects of their teaching needed improvement. The chairperson implemented an annual teaching evaluation system for adjunct faculty but it was not being carried out.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this dissertation, phenomenological methods were employed in order to understand the perceptions of division chair people and their adjunct faculty regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. This chapter discusses the significant findings from the study, key conclusions, implications for policy, practice and research, and recommendations for future research.

Purpose of the Study

Adjunct faculty are important to the academic department because they teach many classes. They require support from their division chair people so they are prepared to fulfill their job responsibilities. While there is research pertaining to division chair’s support of full-time faculty, there are gaps regarding the role division chair people play in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjuncts faculty. The purpose of this study was to understand the differences in perceptions between community college adjunct faculty and their division chairpersons regarding the chairperson’s role in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. The following research questions informed this inquiry:

1. What is the perception of division chair people of adjunct faculty members on campus?
1a. What is the perception of division chair people in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty within their department?

2. What is the perception of adjunct faculty regarding the role of division chair people in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities?

3. What, if anything, do division chair people do to support or hinder adjunct faculty on campus?

Tri-County Community College was the site for this study. Three division chair people from separate departments and five adjunct faculty members from each of those departments were interviewed, totaling 18 participants. Following the interviews and after an initial coding analysis of participant interview transcriptions, a follow up focus group of adjunct faculty participants was held to confirm the identification of emergent themes.

Discussion of the Findings

This section details the major findings of the study while linking the thematic content to the posed literature review from chapter two. These finding included adjunct faculty needs, the creation of mentoring relationships, lack of consistent teaching evaluations, and professional development.

Adjunct faculty needs. This section encompasses three major findings regarding adjunct faculty needs. They are teaching preparedness, feeling valued, and communication.
First, adjunct faculty participants felt they were hired to teach specific classes and given a fair amount of time and resources to teach effectively. They were able to obtain resources from their chair people, mentors, and the FCTE. Since adjunct faculty were present on campus only to teach, chair people ensured adjunct faculty understood their teaching duties and had enough time to prepare. The chairs knew adjunct faculty wanted to do a good job and feel comfortable teaching assigned courses. This finding demonstrates that chair people, mentors, and FCTE personnel wanted adjunct faculty to succeed. Adjunct faculty felt they were hired to teach specific courses and, for the most part, given adequate time to prepare. Since adjunct faculty were provided with a variety of resources in the FCTE like office space and professional development, plus felt comfortable communicating with chairs, mentors, and other full-time faculty, they could perform their jobs effectively. They never spoke of feeling pressured by their chairperson to teach a course in which content was unfamiliar to them. This supports the work by Gappa and Leslie (1993) who argued adjunct faculty should be credentialed and feel comfortable teaching the classes they are assigned and not hired because they are available and cheaper than hiring a full-time faculty member. In this study, adjunct faculty never felt pressured to teach outside their area of expertise and felt comfortable going to chair people with questions about assigned classes.

Second, successful adjunct faculty felt valued. In this study, some adjunct faculty felt they were assigned a lot of classes by their chairperson but did not receive the same benefits or pay as full-time faculty. This refers to Gappa’s (1984) notion of adjunct faculty feeling like second class citizens because they were not paid as much and did not have the same level of support as compared to full-time faculty. Some adjunct faculty
accepted they were paid less and had less money available for outside professional development. They still enjoyed their part-time teaching roles even though resources were not equitable. Another example of inequity was that adjunct faculty did not have their own offices in the department. Despite not having their own offices, adjunct faculty were generally satisfied with their work area in the FCTE because it had computer access and secretarial assistance if needed. This finding further supports Gappa (1984) who stressed that adjunct faculty could potentially feel hindered in achieving their teaching potential if they lacked basic resources like a computer or mailbox. Adjunct faculty felt having a designated area in the FCTE where they could meet with students, prepare teaching materials, and communicate with other faculty to share advice on pedagogy was a crucial part of being prepared to teach. The secretarial support and office space made them feel like their teaching was important and valued by the college because they were provided resources to enhance the quality of their teaching.

Third, ongoing communication was important. Adjunct faculty wanted someone to whom they could ask questions and exchange teaching advice. When they were on campus, frequent communication with chair people and mentors was important to them. However, since some adjunct faculty were only on campus to teach, they did not interact and communicate much with chair people or mentors, resulting in adjunct faculty feeling disconnected from departmental culture. This supports the work of Green (2007) who noted that while adjunct faculty enjoyed teaching, they could still feel disconnected because they were only on campus part-time. Adjunct faculty would like to communicate more with chair people face-to-face but knew chair people were busy so they would email or communicate with mentors. Adjunct participants felt comfortable asking
questions or informally sharing teaching ideas with chair people when they were available.

Chair people encouraged adjunct faculty to interact and exchange teaching advice with other full-time faculty so they could gain confidence in their teaching skills and gain knowledge from full-time faculty experiences. This evolved the idea that the informal sharing of teaching methodologies seldom occurred because administration and full-time faculty operate from within their own offices, faculty meetings, or the frameworks of their own disciplines (Gappa, 1984). In this study, adjunct faculty felt comfortable interacting with chair people and other full-time faculty and felt comfortable setting up a meeting with chair people. While adjunct faculty participants did not see chair people much and communication was sometimes infrequent, they still felt comfortable approaching them. This finding indicated that adjunct faculty appreciated frequent communication with chair people and mentors because their exchanges resulted in adjunct faculty learning from them. Additionally, adjunct faculty stayed abreast of departmental happenings because chair people and mentors communicated with them.

**The creation of mentoring relationships.** Adjunct faculty needed mentors in their department because chair people were busy attending meetings, developing curriculum, and assisting full-time faculty. For two of the three departments, chair people assigned a full-time faculty mentor who taught in the same discipline as the adjunct faculty mentor. This mentoring relationship was valuable because participants could exchange lecture ideas and classroom activities. Furthermore, if the adjunct faculty member had never taught the class, he or she could use their mentor’s syllabus or lectures to gain ideas. This
idea aligns with the point that a mentor should be a person who currently teaches or has recently taught the course assigned to the adjunct faculty member (Mello, 2007). Chairs people could not dedicate a significant amount of time to adjunct faculty. They were aware of the problems that could arise if adjunct faculty could not get their questions answered or become oriented to the department. Therefore, in two departments, a formal mentoring program between full-time and adjunct faculty was created by the chairperson. The creation of a formal mentoring relationship supported the work by Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders (2000) who stated that division chair people set adjunct faculty up with mentors so they have someone to discuss problems with, concerns, or ideas because mentors can solve many issues that arise. Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders (2000) agreed that a division chairperson can significantly help a new adjunct faculty member feel valued and connected if early introductions are made to full-time faculty and relationships are established. The chair people, who developed mentoring programs, tried to give every adjunct faculty member a mentor so they could feel connected. However, only newly hired adjunct faculty really wanted mentors because the experienced adjunct faculty felt like they already understood how the department ran and were more experienced in their teaching roles.

Mentors helping adjunct faculty directly, instead of the chairperson, extended the work of Wheeler (1992) who stated that it was the responsibility of only the division chair to help all adjunct faculty succeed by providing them with the necessary resources and support to be successful teachers. Wheeler (1992) felt that since the chair was the head of the department, he or she should take command of adjunct faculty to ensure they were oriented and prepared to teach. In this study, chair people were too busy to be able
to personally support adjunct faculty, therefore making the established mentoring relationships important to satisfying adjunct faculty teaching needs. Wheeler’s (1992) work did not consider mentors being important extensions of the division chairperson. In this study, not only could mentors serve adjunct faculty needs more frequently, but often times most mentors taught the same classes as adjunct faculty which allowed for sharing of course-related information. The chair people oversaw the mentoring relationships and were available only if adjunct faculty requested a meeting. Most adjunct faculty in the study enjoyed having a mentor because of the reasons stated by Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders (2000), plus communication with mentors was frequent so they were able to stay abreast of departmental happenings. This finding indicated that mentors play a strong role in ensuring adjunct faculty feel supported and stay aware of departmental happenings, and adjunct faculty want someone there to whom they exchange teaching ideas with and share concerns.

The formation of the mentor relationship usually happened when an adjunct faculty was hired but sometimes the formal relationship was not created until the semester began. This evolved the idea that few departments actually had structured ways of creating mentoring relationships and determining if they worked (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000). The established mentoring relationships allowed chair people to be hands-off because mentors could report to them on adjunct faculty progress. This finding affirms the idea that if mentoring opportunities are in place, the chairperson can make teaching more rewarding for the adjunct faculty by stressing their value to the institution, actively acknowledging their contributions, and promoting opportunities for adjunct faculty outside of just teaching (Mello, 2007).
Mentoring was important to the departments in this study. Adjunct faculty appreciated having mentors to answer questions and exchange teaching ideas. Chair people felt adjunct faculty could become oriented to the department, teaching, and aware of departmental happenings via mentoring relationships. This freed up time for the chair people but still allowed them to keep a pulse of the adjunct faculty culture because mentors reported back to them. Therefore, it was important for adjunct faculty to be assigned mentors when they were hired so they could immediately become immersed in department culture and have someone with whom they could interact. This allowed them to approach teaching more easily and made them feel like they were important to the department.

Lack of consistent teaching evaluations. The next key finding that emerged from this study, was the lack of adjunct faculty teaching evaluations. Adjunct faculty participants wanted feedback on their strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. Evaluating their teaching consistently was important to them because they wanted to perform well and improve. Some adjunct faculty were never evaluated while others were evaluated a few times over the course of many years. At the time of the study, there was not a system in place for adjunct faculty to be evaluated consistently. Since adjunct faculty did not receive consistent teaching evaluations, they felt chair people did not know how they taught and would only receive feedback on their teaching by students via end of semester evaluations. Adjunct faculty participants mentioned that “no news is good news” when referring to feedback from chair people because they only received feedback if something negative occurred. This often left adjunct faculty feeling frustrated. This finding supported the work of Wheeler (1992) who stated that chair
people should be proficient in providing positive and constructive feedback, coaching, and conducting annual classroom evaluations so adjunct faculty know exactly how well they are performing. Since adjunct faculty participants did not receive feedback on their teaching, they were not aware of how well or poorly they were performing in the classroom.

Next, if evaluations were performed, adjunct faculty felt they were valuable to their teaching but since most adjuncts were not evaluated consistently, feedback regarding their teaching was usually non-existent. This supported Wheeler’s (1992) notion of the importance of timely feedback. He stated that without honest and timely feedback, adjunct faculty become confused and unclear about their status and progress. Adjunct faculty needed to be evaluated on their teaching so they could remain effective or gain skills to enhance the quality of their teaching.

Since chair people had many duties to perform, they did not have time to evaluate and monitor the progress of adjunct faculty teaching. This reinforced the importance of assigning mentors so they could evaluate adjunct faculty, provide feedback, and report back to chair people on how the adjunct faculty member was doing. Chair people believed mentors were performing adjunct faculty teaching evaluations regularly but, according to adjunct faculty participants, most of them had never been evaluated. Chair people did not have the time to check up on mentors to ensure the evaluations happened. If chair people have the ability to monitor every adjunct faculty member in their departments, they will become aware that each adjunct faculty member has unique needs and concerns that can be addressed and conquered through careful observation and in-depth dialogue (Creswell, 1990).
In conclusion, adjunct faculty wanted division chair people to be accessible to answer questions. They felt chair people, along with full-time faculty mentors, were their main links in understanding departmental happenings. Adjunct faculty wanted teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities available to them so they were prepared to teach effectively. Division chair people strove to provide these items because they felt adjunct faculty were important. However, chair people knew their multiple demands did not allow them to provide adequate support for adjunct faculty. They relied on mentors and the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence (FCTE) to provide service to adjunct faculty. Additionally, adjunct faculty wanted a better teaching evaluation system put in place by chair people. They knew they were doing a good job by the feedback they received from student end of semester evaluations. However, when adjunct faculty were evaluated by chair people or mentors, they found the evaluations to be helpful in improving their teaching and wanted to see this happen more consistently.

Professional development. In this study, the adjunct faculty wanted professional development opportunities available on campus and in their professional fields. They found professional development opportunities on campus provided by the FCTE. Even though they were busy teaching and had demands outside of Tri-County Community College that often prevented them from attending professional development workshops, they appreciated professional development because the opportunities made them feel important. Frequent professional development opportunities were helpful because adjunct faculty needed to improve their teaching strategies and stay abreast of new content in their disciplines. This finding aligned with the idea that adjunct faculty professional development plans must provide for the immediate needs of the adjunct faculty member,
afford opportunities for continued professional education, and offer options in improving content knowledge in their specific disciplines (Ostertag, 1991). Participants felt professional development offered through the FCTE was valuable to improving their teaching skills and occurred at times convenient in their schedules, but some still chose not to participate. This finding does not align with the work of Townsend and Twombly (2006) who stated that many professional development programs are ad hoc or uncoordinated. Professional development for adjunct faculty were taken very seriously by chair people and the FCTE. Moreover, adjunct faculty felt satisfied about having numerous opportunities available to improve their teaching skills.

In regard to professional development opportunities available for adjunct faculty off campus, some money was available through the FCTE if approved by chair people. Most of the time, the monetary amount provided by the FCTE covered half of the cost. Adjunct faculty said chair people felt professional development was important and approved money for them to attend conferences. This finding does not align with the idea that most adjunct faculty have to pay their own expenses to attend professional development because available money is only for full-time faculty (Ostertag, 1991). While adjunct faculty in this study pointed out that full-time faculty received more money for attend professional development, they were happy with the money they received because it made them more likely to participate.

Tri-County Community College was unique because the FCTE provided office space, teaching support, and professional development opportunities for all adjunct faculty. While full-time faculty could also participate, the center was geared toward assisting adjunct faculty only. This finding does not align with Wallin (2005) who found
that most faculty development centers only focused on the needs of full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty appreciated what the FCTE provided them in terms of professional development and support. Similarly, Ostertag (1991) found that adjunct faculty felt more a part of the organization and more confident about their teaching if professional development was ongoing and available to fit their schedules.

While professional development opportunities were available through the FCTE, formal professional development activities did not occur at the department level. Chair people were too busy to focus on professional development for adjunct faculty. This did not mean that chair people felt professional development was not important, but more so that they relied on the FCTE to create consistent opportunities. These continuous professional development opportunities were crucial for adjunct faculty development because seminars and workshops that occur infrequently do little to build a culture of teaching (Townsend & Twombly, 2006). Some informal professional development occurred at the department level via mentoring. For example, mentors often shared advice or best practices. Adjunct faculty found these exchanges to be valuable because they could learn from experiences and insights their mentors shared with them. Professional development occurring through peer support networks where adjunct faculty can share experiences with other adjunct faculty is very valuable to teaching practices (ERIC Development Team, 1986).

In conclusion, professional development provided by the FCTE, as well as, informally at the departmental level was important to adjunct faculty. While they would not always attend, they valued the opportunities. Adjunct faculty appreciated that chair people assigned them mentors so they could ask questions and stay abreast of
departmental happenings. They took their teaching very seriously and wanted opportunities to exchange teaching ideas, learn, and share advice with other adjunct faculty and their mentors.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings from this research hold implications for policy and practice to community college division chairs, adjunct faculty, and full-time faculty. These findings relate to providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty. While this study focused on community college division chairs and adjuncts faculty at one institution only, the findings from this study have implications for other community colleges where adjunct faculty are employed. This section overviews implications for division chairs, adjunct faculty, and full-time faculty.

**Adjunct faculty.** This section includes three implications for adjunct faculty. Upon hire, adjunct faculty found support from division chair people or assigned mentors. Most often, chair people were too busy to mentor adjunct faculty so full-time faculty mentors served this capacity. It is recommended that adjunct faculty members have assigned mentors. If a formal mentoring program is not in place, adjunct faculty should request a mentor from their chairperson.

Next, adjunct faculty wanted to communicate and interact regularly with chair people, mentors, full-time faculty, and other adjunct faculty in the departments so they could stay abreast of departmental happenings and seek teaching advice. This makes them feel important and connected to the department. It is advised that adjunct faculty stay connected with chair people but not become a burden. They should send emails or
stop in with questions. If adjunct faculty have the time, they should seek out the chairperson or request to be involved in department happenings to gain opportunities to interact with chair people or other faculty in the department. Adjunct faculty should take advantage of any opportunity that arises or create opportunities where they can communicate and interact with seasoned faculty in the department to ask questions or seek teaching advice.

Furthermore, adjunct faculty should strive to participate in professional development when their schedules allow. These professional development opportunities can improve their teaching, plus establish collegiality by giving adjunct faculty an opportunity to meet other members of the department. Lastly, adjunct faculty should gather informally on campus with full-time and other adjunct faculty a few times throughout the semester. Some adjunct faculty participants found informally meeting in the cafeteria to exchange best practices or discuss content specific material was worthwhile. These encounters in exchanging teaching advice and ideas can be very valuable to adjunct faculty teaching practices.

**Division chair people.** This section includes five implications for division chairpersons at community colleges. First, division chair people should provide ongoing support to adjunct faculty by regularly communicating either face-to-face, via email, or correspondences in campus mailbox. Division chair people should also regularly meet with adjunct faculty, maybe not individually since time is a factor but as a focus group. In this study, the division chair people who regularly communicated had a stronger relationship with adjunct faculty because they better understood their needs. As a result, adjunct faculty were more likely to be retained.
Adjunct faculty cared about seeing their division chairperson from time to time so they could informally communicate or just be told they were doing a good job. While the chair people felt adjunct faculty were important and strove to provide them with resources so they could teach effectively, they still felt more could be done to support them. Therefore, the second recommendation is that division chair people assign adjunct faculty mentors. These mentors should frequently communicate with adjunct faculty so they stay connected to departmental happenings, discuss pedagogy and answer questions, and provide an orientation for newly hired adjunct faculty. The mentor should connect with the adjunct faculty frequently, perform regular teaching evaluations, and provide feedback to the chair on how adjunct faculty are performing. If chair people cannot regularly communicate with adjunct faculty, they should rely on mentors to provide the most consistent communication and support to adjunct faculty.

Third, division chair people knew their adjunct faculty were busy teaching and had demands outside for the college. Most adjunct faculty were aware of professional development opportunities available through the FCTE, but some were not interested enough to participate or had the time. However, in one department, the chairperson encouraged and designed discipline-specific professional development opportunities that adjunct faculty enjoyed. Chair people should talk with their adjunct faculty about what type of professional development they would like and when it would be convenient for them to attend. Division chair people should also consider offering workshops or seminars online, or work with FCTE personnel to create online opportunities. Since some adjunct faculty never attended professional development offerings, chair people should consider requiring a certain amount of professional development for adjunct faculty or
offer incentives for participating since these opportunities can make them better instructors. Chair people should encourage and make professional development a norm in departmental culture so adjunct faculty realize participation will improve their teaching skills.

Fourth, division chair people felt thankful the FCTE was available for office space and professional development to adjunct faculty because they did not have room in the department to house adjunct faculty offices nor have the time to create any type of formal workshops. Therefore, a center should be designated for adjunct faculty that provides teaching support and professional development for all disciplines because adjunct faculty have needs unique to them. Adjunct faculty need somewhere to meet with students, obtain resources to prepare their teaching, attend professional development, and interact with other adjunct faculty. If there is space in the department, chair people should provide offices there. However, if there is a center created to adjunct faculty development, adjunct faculty should have space there to work, meet with students, and network with other adjunct faculty. This will give them confidence to teach and increase the quality of their teaching because they will be provided with some of the same resources as their full-time faculty counterparts.

Fifth, chair people should be aware that adjunct faculty care about feeling like they are a valued part of the department. Therefore, chair people should schedule their classes early so adjunct faculty have a sufficient amount of time to prepare, let adjunct faculty have a say in the classes they would like to teach, invite them to department meetings and events, encourage participation in professional development and offer money for them to attend, evaluate adjunct faculty regularly and provide them with
prompt feedback, and make an effort to check in with them frequently. Some adjunct faculty tend to feel like second-class citizens. If the chairperson can treat adjunct faculty with respect and communicate regularly, adjunct faculty are more likely to feel appreciated and continue teaching for the department.

**Full-time faculty.** Based on the results of this study, informal gatherings can be powerful for adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty informally communicating with other faculty can be very valuable to their part-time teaching. Participants enjoyed sharing teaching ideas and asking advice because these exchanges gave them more confidence to teach, established collegiality, and offered adjunct faculty an opportunity to feel like an important part of the department. Full-time faculty should realize new adjunct faculty look up to them and if they do not take time to acknowledge their needs, some end up feeling like second class citizens. Newly hired adjunct faculty are impressionable when it comes to watching what full-time faculty do and how they teach. Therefore, if full-time faculty take the time to interact with adjunct faculty, their teaching can improve because they can learn from full-time faculty’s experiences and collegiality can be gained. Additionally, full-time faculty can learn from real-world experiences and practical applications adjunct faculty have from working outside of academia. If full-time faculty take time to communicate, listen, and share advice and ideas with adjunct faculty, everyone can benefit.

**Adjunct teaching evaluation policy.** While adjunct faculty were generally satisfied with the amount of support they received from chair people, they felt chair people could improve the frequency of classroom evaluations. Adjunct faculty wanted feedback and advice on how they could improve. Therefore, adjunct faculty need annual teaching
evaluations. Since adjunct faculty are hired solely to teach, they needed to be observed in the classroom and offered regular feedback on their teaching. In this study, mentors were designated by chair people to observe adjunct faculty teaching but the evaluations did not occur regularly. Adjunct faculty knew the evaluation process was important and valuable to their teaching and wanted evaluations to be a regular practice that were performed yearly. Once the evaluation was conducted, the evaluator should meet with the adjunct faculty to discuss areas of strengths and weaknesses and offer advice. From there, feedback should be reported to chairperson and a copy of the evaluation should be placed in the adjunct faculty’s file. By having this policy in place, chair people can gain a sense of how much professional development and mentoring are needed for every adjunct faculty member.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study sought to understand the similarities and differences in perceptions of division chair people and adjunct faculty based on teaching support, mentoring, and professional development. Given this study’s findings, future research on division chair people, mentors, and adjunct faculty is recommended.

First, the presence of the FCTE at Tri-County Community College was very unique. Not all community colleges have a professional development center dedicated to teaching and learning initiatives for adjunct faculty. An area for future research would be to investigate the differences between the amount of professional development and funding available to adjunct faculty who have a center on campus compared to adjunct faculty who do not.
Second, in this study, professional development at the departmental level was minimal. Another area of recommended study is to examine professional development at the department level of community colleges exclusively. Departmental professional development topics could be compared to FCTE professional development opportunities to see if the topics were the same and as meaningful to other adjunct faculty. Comparing the two would be valuable because adjunct faculty were so pleased with the professional development offered to them.

Third, this study focused only on adjunct faculty and division chair people at one community college. Broadening the research to more than one community college would determine if the findings from this study translate to other community colleges. Moreover, replicating this study at the university level to determine if adjunct faculty receive more or less support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities than adjunct faculty in this study. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to see if other community colleges have an FCTE that exists similar to Tri-County Community College or is Tri-County Community College unique in how only adjunct faculty utilize the center for teaching support, office space, and professional development applicable to any discipline. Adjunct faculty in this study felt these services were beneficial to enhancing their part-time role. It would be interesting to see if adjunct faculty who used the center had higher teaching evaluations and were more likely to be retained because they obtained the support they needed to sustain their teaching.

Fourth, while the formal mentoring program was handled differently in each department, exploring the long-term effectiveness of mentoring on adjunct faculty is worth noting. Future research could include establishing a mentoring relationship for new
adjunct faculty to determine effectiveness of this relationship in orientating, acclimating, and sustaining adjunct faculty. Furthermore, evaluating how much time was alleviated from the chairperson to accomplish their other job responsibilities could also be explored.

Fifth, researching a greater variety of academic disciplines would allow for better understanding of what certain departments do to provide teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty. This study targeted three non-occupational disciplines. Suggested research could incorporate occupational disciplines to determine if relationships between chair people and adjunct faculty are comparable to the results of this study.

Sixth, examining if gender of the chairperson plays a role in determining how adjunct faculty are defining support. Taking a look at gender dynamics between a male division chairperson providing support to female adjunct faculty, as well as, a female division chairperson providing support to male adjunct faculty to determine if adjunct faculty are satisfied with these relationships.

Seventh, examining the complex roles division chairpersons have in order to understand the multiple demands of their position. Suggested research could analyze how chair people establish their priorities and divide up their time so both full-time and adjunct faculty are sufficiently supported.

Eighth, given Leslie and Gappa’s (1993) five characteristics of adjunct faculty, examine how support changes based on each characteristic. New insight could be gained by determining what adjunct faculty characteristic requires the most and least amount of support and relaying that information to division chair people so they can understand the varying needs of adjunct faculty.
Ninth, this study targeted division chair people as being the main sources of providing support to adjunct faculty. This study found that mentors and the FCTE also provided support so adjunct faculty were prepared to teach. Future research could examine other people or areas of the community college or university that provide support to adjunct faculty.

Tenth, this study found that mentors were valuable in orientating, acclimating, and sustaining adjunct faculty. Future research could target mentors and how they perceive adjunct faculty and how the role of being a mentor benefits them.

Finally, new insight could be gained by taking a look through the lens of full-time faculty on how they perceive the role of adjunct faculty in the departments. Additionally, future research could also incorporate a look through the lens of the chairperson’s role in providing support to full-time faculty.

Conclusion

Obtaining teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities were important to the participants in this study. Division chair people understood that adjunct faculty needed assistance so they could perform well in their teaching roles. Chair people knew they needed to dedicate more time in their schedules to adjunct faculty but felt the multiple demands of their roles often got in the way. They established solid relationships with adjunct faculty by connecting them to full-time faculty mentors.

Adjunct faculty enjoyed their part-time roles. They felt they received a sufficient amount of support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. While most
of the participants felt they could communicate and interact more with their chair people, they knew their chair people were busy and tapped their mentors or other adjunct faculty for advice and teaching resources. Adjunct faculty felt they could be evaluated more frequently by chair people or mentors so they could receive feedback.

One of the reasons this site was unique was because chair people could rely on the FCTE to provide the professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty felt professional development opportunities were plentiful and would participate when their schedules allowed.

Via the findings, chair people and mentors appeared to be the most valuable individuals in supporting, acclimating, and retaining adjunct faculty according to the participants in this study. Without the roles chairs and mentors assumed, adjunct faculty could flounder and teaching quality could be hindered. By taking the time to orientate, mentor, and provide adjunct faculty with professional development, adjunct faculty had the opportunity to thoroughly enjoy their part-time role and establish collegiality in a community college setting.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY INTERVIEW

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of division chairs of adjunct faculty members on campus?
   1a. What is the perception of division chairs in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to adjunct faculty within their department?

2. What is the perception of adjunct faculty regarding the role of division chairs in providing teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities?

3. What, if anything, do division chairs do to support or hinder adjunct faculty on campus?

Interview Questions- Adjunct

1. Why did you decide to become an adjunct faculty member?

2. What is expected of you as an adjunct? What is expected of you in your job description? How does this mesh with the reality of your role?

3. Tell me about the relationship you have with your division chair. What are the expectations? How does it make you feel? Examples?

4. For what reasons and how often do you interact with your department chair? Tell me about those interactions. Can you provide me with examples?

5. How would you describe the department chair’s role as it relates to adjunct faculty? How did you come to that understanding?

6. Tell me about your role within the department. What are your responsibilities? How are those responsibilities communicated and by whom? What are the expectations versus the reality of what is occurring?

7. How do you think you are perceived by your department chair? How are adjuncts perceived as a collective group by your division chair?

8. Tell me about the support related to teaching within your department.
9. Tell me about the mentoring relationships that exist within your department.

10. Tell me about the professional development opportunities that exist within your department.


12. What suggestions/advice do you have for your division chair that would benefit adjuncts?
APPENDIX B

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR DIVISION CHAIRPERSON INTERVIEWS

Interview Questions- Division Chair

1. Describe your role as it relates to adjunct faculty at Tri-County Community College. What is expected of you in your job description as it relates to supporting adjunct faculty? How does this mesh with the reality of your role?

2. For what reasons and how often do you interact with adjunct faculty in your department? Tell me about those interactions. Can you provide me with examples?

3. How do you support and retain adjunct faculty? How well do you think you are doing?

4. In a perfect world, what would you do to effectively support adjunct faculty? What is holding you back? How does this make you feel?

5. Tell me about the support related to teaching within your department.

6. What type of professional development opportunities do you provide throughout the semester to adjunct faculty to ensure they are prepared to teach and quality is being upheld in the classroom? What support documents are available to assist them?

7. What type of mentoring opportunities are available for adjunct faculty when they are hired? Provide an example.

Interview Participants

1. Division chair from ____________ discipline.

2. Five adjuncts from ____________ discipline.

3. Division chair from ____________ discipline.

4. Five adjuncts from ____________ discipline.

5. Division chair from ____________ discipline.

6. Five adjuncts from ____________ discipline.
## APPENDIX C

**CROSSWALK TABLE OF DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

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Date
Dear XXX:

My name is Betsy L. Diegel and I am a doctoral candidate at Central Michigan University. I am in the process of completing my dissertation which investigates the similarities and differences between perceptions of part-time community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. You received this letter because you were identified as a community college adjunct faculty member. I hope that you are willing to participate in this study! Participation includes a one hour interview about your experiences as an adjunct. A follow up focus group will also occur once all interviews are complete. I hope you choose to participate. Please contact me via email to arrange a time and location for our interview. My email is betsy.diegel@davenport.edu. In addition, I have attached a copy of informed consent for the study. Please review, sign, and bring with you to our interview.

No comments will be attributed to you by name in this study and I will hold your responses in confidence to the fullest extent allowable by law. Your institutional affiliation and name will be masked by a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

Thank you in advance for participation in this study. If you feel you have been contacted in error, please contact me. The researcher for this project is Betsy Diegel, doctoral candidate at Central Michigan University.

Sincerely,

Betsy L. Diegel, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Leadership
Central Michigan University
Ronan 319
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
betsy.diegel@davenport.edu  
(989) 295-1353

Dissertation Chairperson: Sarah M. Marshall, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership  
Director of Doctoral Program  
Central Michigan University  
323 Ronan Hall  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859  
sarah.marshall@cmich.edu 989.774.3635
Date

Dear XXX:

My name is Betsy L. Diegel and I am a doctoral candidate at Central Michigan University. I am in the process of completing my dissertation which investigates the similarities and differences between perceptions of part-time community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. You received this letter because you were identified as a community college division chair. I hope that you are willing to participate in this study! Participation includes a one hour interview about your experiences as a division chairperson. Please contact me via email to arrange a time and location for our interview. My email is betsy.diegel@davenport.edu. In addition, I have attached a copy of informed consent for the study. Please review, sign, and bring with you to our interview.

No comments will be attributed to you by name in this study and I will hold your responses in confidence to the fullest extent allowable by law. Your institutional affiliation and name will be masked by a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

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Sincerely,

Betsy L. Diegel, Doctoral Candidate
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Dissertation Chairperson: Sarah M. Marshall, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership
Director of Doctoral Program, Central Michigan University
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Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
sarah.marshall@cmich.edu 989.774.363
Consent Form for Interviews

I understand that Betsy Diegel is requesting my participation in her research project. The purpose of this study is to understand the similarities and differences between perceptions of community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. By signing this statement, I agree to be interviewed. Participants’ identities will be held in the strictest confidence, and under no circumstances will actual identities be revealed in any publications or presentations resulting from this research. I understand that the information gathered in this interview is only to be used for the purpose of research, and that my identity, and the identity of others I might mention in the interview will be purposefully masked and never revealed. Further, I understand that efforts will be made to disguise incidents about which I may speak if the mention of those incidents makes it possible to identify others or me specifically. I understand that I will be provided with a transcript of the interview so that I may review it for accuracy.

I understand that the interview session will be audiotaped and later transcribed by the researcher. At the completion of this project, I understand that all transcriptions and audiotapes will be secured in a locked filing cabinet of Betsy Diegel’s for future research purposes for two years. Audiotapes will not be released under any conditions without my direct written consent. In the writing and presentation of this research, my name will not be associated with any of my interview responses.

Upon my consent to participate in the study, I will sign below and return this form back to the researcher. I acknowledge that Betsy Diegel has fully explained to me the purpose and the need for the research; has informed me that I may withdraw from participation at any time; has offered to answer any questions which I may make concerning the procedures to be followed; has informed me that I will be given a copy of this consent form; and has provided me with the telephone number of Central Michigan University’s Compliance manager (989-774-6777).
I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in the research project.

Please check one statement below:

_____ I agree to participate, and I give consent to have my interview audio taped.
_____ I do not agree to participate.

___________________________________   ____________________
Name        Date
___________________________________
Signature

**Researcher:** Betsy L. Diegel, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Leadership
Central Michigan University
Ronan 319
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
drury1bl@cmich.edu
(989) 295-1353

**Dissertation Chairperson:** Sarah M. Marshall, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership
Director of Doctoral Program
Central Michigan University
323 Ronan Hall
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
sarah.marshall@cmich.edu
989.774.3635
CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP

I understand that Betsy Diegel is requesting my participation in her research project. The purpose of this study is to understand the similarities and differences between perceptions of community college adjunct faculty and their division chairperson regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. By signing this statement, I agree to be interviewed. Participants’ identities will be held in the strictest confidence, and under no circumstances will actual identities be revealed in any publications or presentations resulting from this research. I understand that the information gathered in this interview is only to be used for the purpose of research, and that my identity, and the identity of others I might mention during the focus group will be purposefully masked and never revealed. Further, I understand that efforts will be made to disguise incidents about which I may speak if the mention of those incidents makes it possible to identify others or me specifically. I understand that I will be provided with a transcript of the focus group so that I may review it for accuracy.

I understand that the focus group will be audiotaped and later transcribed by the researcher. At the completion of this project, I understand that all transcriptions and audiotapes will be secured in a locked filing cabinet of Betsy Diegel’s for future research purposes for two years. Audiotapes will not be released under any conditions without my direct written consent. In the writing and presentation of this research, my name will not be associated with any of my interview responses.

Upon my consent to participate in the study, I will sign below and return this form back to the researcher. While the researcher cannot assure that a fellow member might share what has been said during the focus group with individuals outside of the focus group, she will ask all participants at the beginning of the focus group to keep all dialogue that occurs confidential.

I acknowledge that Betsy Diegel has fully explained to me the purpose and the need for the research; has informed me that I may withdraw from participation at any time; has
offered to answer any questions which I may make concerning the procedures to be followed; has informed me that I will be given a copy of this consent form; and has provided me with the telephone number of Central Michigan University’s Compliance manager (989-774-6777).

I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in the research project.

Please check one statement below:

_____ I agree to participate, and I give consent to have the focus group audio taped.

A convenient time for the focus group would be______________________________

_____ I do not agree to participate

___________________________________ _________________________
Name Date

___________________________________
Signature

Researcher: **Betsy L. Diegel**, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Leadership
Central Michigan University
Ronan 319
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
drury1bl@cmich.edu
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Dissertation Chairperson: Sarah M. Marshall, Ph.D.
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989.774.3635
APPENDIX H

THANK YOU LETTER

It has been my pleasure to interview you and gain insight on your role in the community college. Your participation will allow me to accomplish the purpose of my study and complete my dissertation project. Please email me if you could like a copy of this study once it is completed. Thank you for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Betsy L. Diegel, Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Educational Leadership  
Central Michigan University  
Ronan 319  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859  
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989.774.3635
APPENDIX I

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Is there any information from the initial interview that you would like to elaborate on?
2. Do the following themes I have generated from your interview transcriptions resonate with you? Why or why not?
3. As a collective group, what further suggestions do you have for your division chairperson regarding how they can effectively support you?
4. How can academic quality be upheld in your role?
REFERENCES


Heelan, C. (1980). A program of staff development (a proposed model) for credit-free instructors. Minneapolis, MN: North Hennepin Community College


