ABSTRACT

WASHINGTON, KEMAH EUGENE PAUL. Towards a Deeper Understanding of Community College Part-Time Faculty: Perceptions of Role and Expectations. (Under the direction of Audrey J. Jaeger.)

The employment of part-time faculty (PTF) continues to ensue debate among educators, policymakers, and state officials. Recent debate has focused on the impact of employment of PTF on student outcomes, but misses a critical element—the experiences of part-time faculty. This study explores community college PTF members’ perceptions of their roles and expectations, along with their perceptions of the institutional environment. Offering insight into the lived experiences of part-time faculty—as they are critical to the ongoing practices of community colleges—this study informs discussion of faculty identity development. Drawing on PTF typology research, as well as theories of faculty role performance and achievement, faculty socialization, and faculty identity, this instrumental case study explored the experiences of 12 PTF at a North Carolina community college. Classroom observations and document analysis were used to triangulate primary data yielding four key findings: 1) PTF come to understand what it means to be a faculty member largely as a result of graduate school experiences, as well as interactions with community college faculty and department-heads; 2) PTF perceive themselves as educators as opposed to adjunct or PTF; 3) When discussed as adjunct faculty, PTF view their roles as less than those of full-time faculty; and 4) PTF list professional development, personal aspirations, and faculty/department-head interactions as factors that facilitate role performance, and note lack of pay/reward structures, lack of training and orientation, lack of resources, and lack of acknowledgment as factors which hinder role fulfillment.
Towards a Deeper Understanding of Community College Part-Time Faculty: Perceptions of Roles and Expectations

by
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BIOGRAPHY

A native from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Kemah Eugene Paul Washington has resided in Raleigh, NC for the past seven years. After graduating from Penn Wood High School, Kemah completed his B.S. in Public Relations from Millersville University of Pennsylvania in 2003. He subsequently went on to complete a M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration from North Carolina State University in 2006. Currently, Kemah is pursuing a doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration at NC State University where he is researching part-time faculty at community colleges.

An avid entrepreneur, Kemah co-founded Six Degreez Enterprises, LLC in 2001 as an event planning firm. In 2003, he took over the reigns as President and CEO of 6D Enterprises, LLC expanding the company’s horizon to encompass graphic design, printing, website development, artist booking, and event marketing. Some eight years later, 6D Enterprises has been rebranded independently as BRANDilly Marketing + Creative and the W&M Talent Booking Agency.

Currently, Kemah also serves as a Graduate Research Assistant for the Graduate School at NC State University. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time at home with his wife, Brandi, as well as his daughter, Kennedi. Kemah also enjoys camping, gardening, and participating in various community service opportunities.

Kemah is a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated; having served on the executive board for the Raleigh Alumni Chapter and three years as a member of the Northeastern Province Board of Directors. Kemah also is a board member for One Barber’s Vision—a community development and empowerment group serving the greater-
Raleigh area, a member of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, 100 Black Men, and the Body of Christ Church Outreach Ministry.
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Thanks to all of you whom I know God has intentionally placed in my life. I learned a long time ago in Dr. Isacc Catt’s Communications: 201 class at Millersville University that there is no such thing as univocity (one voice). Rather, I am who I am as a result of all you’ve poured into me. You’ve given me the very best parts of yourselves so that I become the son, grandson, nephew, cousin, brother, husband, father, son-in-law, brother-in-law, entrepreneur, student, mentor, and friend you all claim I am. ;-)
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Author W. Norton Grubb (1999) in his book, *Honored but Invisible: An Inside Look at Teaching in Community College* notes in one community college, a new full-time instructor earned $44,850 per year (including benefits) for teaching ten classes, for a cost of $4,485 per class. Part-time instructors were paid $35.88 per contact hour without benefits, or $1,829.88 for a three-hour course over a seventeen-week semester (or only 40 percent as much as their full-time counterparts). “No efficiency-minded administrator can afford to take a principal position against using part-timers” when instructional costs account for nearly 49 percent of community college budgets (p. 332). When you consider numbers such as these, it is not surprising that so many institutions are using part-timers to meet teaching demands. It is less expensive to hire PTF, there is less of a fiscal commitment (i.e. health care benefits), and PTF offer more practical experience than most full-time faculty (Jacobs, 1998; Jacoby, 2006; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2005; Wagoner, 2007). While dated, the comments of one PTF member ring true today:

I think the key there is that they are by far the best resources for introducing new technology, new concepts, and practice into the educational process—because they bring with it not the academics of it, but the practical exposure and experiences that are currently out there in the industry. Two hours ago I was working on the cutting edge of new technology, stuff that’s not even sold to the public yet… I could be introducing that technology right here so that the students could be cutting into a new direction (Grubb, 1999, p. 331).
However, other studies suggest the use of part-time instructors is a good idea that has gone wrong because of fiscal motives (Jacoby, 2008; Levin, 2007). Similarly, Levin et. al. (2006) suggest the problem with PTF members does not center on the traditional use (i.e., taking advantage of PTF for their practical knowledge and real-world experiences) of part-timers. They point instead to the abuse of “convenient and expedient means to lower costs and increase flexibility” of colleges and universities (p. 83). Moreover, they purport this practice has increased dramatically in spite of evidence suggesting that in contrast with full-time faculty, PTF may be less skilled and trained in instruction, as well as less committed to their institutions.

Using data from the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC), Leslie and Gappa (2002) conducted research on the similarities and differences between full- and PTF members. The authors found that PTF members tend to have less than half the teaching experience of full-time faculty—five to six years versus 11 to 12 years, respectively. Additionally, the majority of PTF members (51%) were also found to be employed elsewhere in nonteaching jobs. This number was down from previous reports of about 70 percent (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Most significantly, the authors found that PTF members appeared less committed, accomplished, and creative in their teaching than full-time faculty. These findings support claims by other reports (Gappa, 1984; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Ronco & Cahill, 2006) that part-time instruction can negatively impact student persistence.

However, because PTF are paid to teach—not for office hours, staff development, coordination with other faculty, or to facilitate faculty- or student-student interaction—there is little incentive for their participation in activities which are known to facilitate persistence.
(Grubb, 1999). Additionally, many institutions do little in the way supporting their part-time teaching corps via policy and practice (Hudd, et. al., 2009; Murphy, 2009; Nutting, 2003; Wallin, 2007). The lack of investment in meaningful training for PTF, coupled with an absence of significant opportunities for professional development, further compound the problems outlined in literature. This poses a significant issue for community colleges in that PTF make up more than two-thirds (66.7%) of the faculty teaching corps (Cataldi, Fahimi, Bradburn, & Zimbler, 2005).

Community Colleges

Nearly one in every two students enrolled in American higher education attends a community college (AACC, 2008a). Simply stated community colleges are “any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree;” yet, they do more much than award degrees (AACC, 2001, p. 5). In fact, community colleges play an integral role in the delivery of postsecondary education. Enrolling an estimated 46% (11.5 million) of all students attending college in the United States, community colleges provide open access to postsecondary education, prepare students for transfer into four-year institutions, provide workforce training, and offer a number of noncredit programs (AACC, 2008a).

As issues of access and affordability continue to dominate the discussion of American higher education, the importance of community colleges has risen dramatically in the past ten years (Umbach, 2007). Perhaps best known for opening doors to low-income, minority, and non-traditional students, community colleges serve students who are left out of traditional higher education. Moreover, despite the fact that “community colleges have less respect, less
money, fewer resources, and overall less status than four-year colleges and universities,” these institutions offer our country’s best chance to remain competitive in today’s global knowledge economy (Outcalt, 2002, p. 3). For instance, Callan (2000) notes that the technology-based careers of tomorrow will require competencies that are not currently taught in high school. Community colleges, because of their open-access, are uniquely positioned to train non-traditional knowledge workers, which are vital to this country’s economic vitality.

PTF: The New Professoriate

Gappa and Leslie (1993) note that defining PTF is difficult because no one definition exists for such a heterogeneous group. In fact they suggest four types of part-timers, 1) aspiring academics; 2) professionals, specialists, and experts; 3) those transitioning into retirement; and 4) freelancers. However, for the purpose this study, PTF refers to anyone who 1) teaches less than the average full-time teaching load, or 2) has less than a full-time faculty assignment and range of duties, or 3) may have a temporary full-time assignment (Gappa, 1984, p. 5). These instructors are typically non-tenured and non-permanent; paid on a part-time contract outside of the regular faculty plan (Gappa, 1984; Ronco & Cahill, 2006).

PTF have long been a part of the community college structure. In the past, PTF were typically hired because they possessed technical skills and practical knowledge that was beneficial to students; their expertise and workplace experiences helped keep curricula fresh (AACC, 2008b; Levin et. al., 2006). But, as institutions of higher education find themselves being pressed to do even more, with even less funding, the hiring of PTF has become the latest strategy in the battle against rising costs (Bettinger & Long, n.d.; Ehrenberg, 2004; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2004; Wagoner, 2007). The use of PTF as a cost-cutting measure
enables institutions to offer a course at a fraction of the cost if the same course were taught by a full-time faculty member (Grubb, 1999; Jacoby, 2006; Leslie & Gappa, 2002). These cost-savings, coupled with declining state support for higher education in the 1990s have resulted in the recent hiring boom of PTF (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2004; Gappa, 2001).

Illustrating the growth in PTF over the past two decades, Anderson (2002) notes that from 1981 to 2002, the number of PTF employed by colleges and universities has risen by 79 percent. In another example, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) note in 1969, PTF made up just 27 percent of community college faculty, compared with 70 percent in 2006. Umbach (2007) suggests that this rise in numbers of PTF amongst the faculty ranks is attributed to increased labor costs, stifled faculty production, decreased ability of full-time faculty to adapt in a rapidly changing society, an aging faculty and surplus of aspiring academics.

Eagan (2007) suggests that PTF members demographically resemble their full-time counterparts, with educational attainment as the only significant difference between full-timers and part-timers (full-time faculty hold proportionately more master’s, professional, and doctoral degrees than PTF). Yet, Ronco and Cahill (2006) note PTF are often perceived as being underdeveloped and weak in scholarship; compromising the quality of higher education because they do not have a full-time commitment to their institutions; less likely to be integrated into campus life, lacking “sufficient knowledge about the institutional support services so critical to first-time-in-college students, and may be unprepared to identify at-risk behavior in students” (p. 3).
Statement of the Problem

Hiring more PTF may provide economic relief from rising full-time faculty costs and allow for a more agile faculty with respect to an ever-changing, global society, but the heavy reliance on PTF has come under major scrutiny in higher education literature (Bettinger & Long, 2006; Eagan & Jaeger, 2008a; Eagan & Jaeger, 2008b; Jacoby, 2006; Umbach, 2007). Moreover, because two-year institutions employ proportionately more part-timers than four-year institutions, the problem of PTF is exacerbated for community colleges (Levin, et. al, 2006). Yet, there are few studies which conceptually address issues associated with PTF within the specific and unique context of community colleges. In fact, most studies continue to view these issues primarily through the lens of traditional, four-year institutions and theory (Jacobs, 1998; Jager & Hinz, 2008; Ronco & Cahill, 2006; Umbach, 2007). Additionally, few studies exist that examine PTF at community colleges from a qualitative perspective. In failing to give voice to the experiences and stories of PTF as a valid means for understanding and addressing concerns with scholarship, commitment, integration, and performance, there is a major gap in the higher education literature base.

PTF & Student Learning

Because community colleges exist to educate and ultimately graduate students, I believe an examination of PTF (the majority of instructors at community colleges) will lead to breakthroughs in community college student persistence. It should be noted that for the purpose of this study, I refer to student retention, persistence, and graduation as student learning outcomes. That is, I assume any activity that causes students to be retained, persist, or graduate is the result of learning in the broadest of terms. Whether it is outstanding faculty
instruction, faculty-student interaction, or group-learning opportunities, each of these activities has been linked to student persistence, and ultimately higher graduation rates (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Gamson, 1987). With that in mind, it is safe to assume that by understanding how a PTF member views scholarship, commitment, and campus integration, an administrator may be able to develop training and professional development opportunities which lead to improved student learning outcomes. If the practice of teaching is improved, you could also assume that more students would persist and graduate faster (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In fact, it has been well documented in the literature that there is a direct relationship between good teaching practice, student learning, and ultimate persistence (Astin, 1993; Bean, 1990; Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Of particular importance to the discussion of PTF and student persistence is faculty-student interaction (Bettinger & Long, n.d.; Eagan & Jaeger, 2008a; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Kehrberg & Turpin, 2002; Umbach, 2005).

It has been shown that there is a direct relationship between the amount of time and effort faculty invest in their students and student learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). That is, meaningful academic and extra-curricular faculty interaction increase the likelihood of student persistence and graduation (Astin, 1985, 1993; Bean, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1975, 1993). For instance, working with students one-on-one outside of the classroom or mentoring a student on future class choice, demonstrates a level of commitment to student success. In fact, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) note, ‘there can be little doubt about the need for faculty members’ acceptance of their roles and
responsibilities for student learning and for their active involvement in students’ lives” (p. 611).

Because recent studies (Eagan & Jaeger, 2008; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008) have linked an overreliance on PTF at community colleges to negative student outcomes such as student attrition, a deeper understanding of PTF is necessary. More specifically, there needs to be an examination of how part-timers come to understand concepts such as faculty-student interaction, as well as the “roles and responsibilities” of the academy—let alone how these roles and responsibilities impact student learning.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose for this study is to offer the vantage point of the instructor as a valid means for examining the perceived roles and expectations part-timers have for themselves and the institutions at which they serve. I borrow conceptually from social constructivism to gain insight into community college challenges with PTF commitment, integration, scholarship, and performance. As such, I believe we must first seek to understand community college PTF before we can make sense of the issues associated with their employment. Through a micro-level understanding of how PTF define and make meaning of the environments in which they operate, we can then address larger, macro-level issues surrounding the roles and expectations of PTF.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) lend support to the idea that in constructivist studies “it is not the event itself that is the issue in [constructivist] studies, because each person experiences and gives meaning to events in light of his or her own biography or experiences, according to gender, time and place, cultural, political, religious, and professional
backgrounds” (p. 10). Rather than exploring the effects of hiring significant numbers of PTF, this study seeks to explore faculty members’ perceptions of their roles and expectations, along with their perceptions of the institutional environment (i.e., what institutionally driven norms and practices facilitate or hinder the understanding and fulfillment of PTF roles and expectation). This qualitative (constructivist) study delves deeper than mere outcomes, offering insight into the lives of PTF as they are critical to the ongoing practices of community colleges.

Research Questions

To develop the research questions below, I will draw primarily from three bodies of work. One, Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) discussion surrounding contingent faculty type lays the foundation for my study. I plan to use their PTF typology to highlight the heterogeneity amongst the PTF ranks. Moreover, their framework will help answer questions of whether certain sub-groups of PTF experience and make sense of employment at community colleges in similar ways. Second, Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) theory of faculty role performance and achievement will help to explain how PTF members may come to view and value the roles associated with instruction. Third, Fairweather’s (1996) research on faculty socialization will offer insight into the processes by which PTF are indoctrinated into instruction. My research questions are as follows:

1. How do PTF members come to understand what it means to be a faculty member?
2. What roles do PTF feel they play at the institutions at which they are employed?
3. What do PTF feel facilitate or hinder the fulfillment of these roles?
Significance of This Study

I believe that this study will have significance for community college policy, practice, and theory. Discussion surrounding PTF is especially important to community colleges as they enroll nearly half of all United States college students; with almost two-thirds of its faculty corps teaching part-time (CCSSE, 2008). This study addresses the literature gap with respect to PTF at community colleges and how they come to understand what it means to be faculty. Additionally, this exploration of the perceived roles and expectations of community college PTF will ultimately lead to better understanding of the PTF socialization process and offer more effective strategies for engaging, training, and preparing skilled PTF.

Significance for Policy & Practice

Giving voice to the stories and experiences of PTF members legitimizes issues, which may have been glossed over or previously ignored by scholars and administrators. For instance, is professional development aimed at PTF really increasing their capacity to serve and educate community college students? Are campus orientation programs effective in acclimating part-timers to campus culture and policies?

Additionally, this study may uncover unknown nuances regarding the socialization process of, and expectations held, by PTF members at this institution. Uncovering such nuances will allow administrators to design more effective training for the PTF members they employ.

Significance for Theory

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain that good research extends theory through the expansion of generalizations or more finely tuned theoretical propositions. Moreover, they
posit the development of theory takes place over time, in small, incremental advances. I believe that this study will contribute to the existing knowledgebase in that it situates both theories of faculty role development and socialization within the very different, very unique community college environment. By exploring the stories and lived experiences of PTF, this study is also significant in that it offers an inductive, rather than deductive framework for how we understand these theories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

To use another example based on my practitioner-oriented interest in student engagement theory, Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) lend support to my assumptions regarding this study’s significance for theory. In their summary remarks on Ewell’s (1997) *Organizing for Learning: A New Imperative*, the authors suggest that in order to improve student learning outcomes, research must examine how institutional and faculty engagement impact student learning. Moreover, Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) note that to “understand how the culture for student learning is created and supported, we must first describe faculty culture” (p. 157). While this study does not explicitly explore culture, by examining individual experiences, an implicit understanding of how PTF come to understand where they see themselves within an institution’s (and faculty) culture is possible. Situating Umbach and Wawrzynski’s (1995) observation within the constructivist context, Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that “concepts and theories are constructed by researchers out of stories that are constructed by research participants who are trying to explain and make sense out of their experiences and/or lives” (p. 10). Thus, through an examination and analysis of the stories and lived experiences of PTF at community colleges, this study breaks theoretical boundaries and reconceptualizes the *problem* of PTF (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).
Research Overview

To explore the research questions posed earlier, I will be conducting a qualitative case study of 12 community college PTF members at a North Carolina community college. The research participants will be purposefully sampled (Patton, 2008; Stake, 1994) to ensure representation from each of Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) four PTF category types: 1) aspiring academics; 2) professionals, specialists, and experts; 3) career enders; and 4) freelancers. I plan to conduct one-on-one interviews with each participant, as well as observe at least one class session for each participant. Document analysis will be used to triangulate the data. Documents such as website postings, policy and training manuals, job descriptions, and classroom syllabi, will help validate participant experiences and comments. Also, these documents will help me glean deeper understanding as to how PTF members come to understand how they are supported and rewarded at their institution.

Chapter Summary & Conclusion

PTF are less expensive than full-time faculty. Additionally, because they serve a variety of missions and offer a broad array of certificate and associate degree programs, community colleges uniquely employ a significant quantity of adjunct or PTF (Jacoby, 2006; Outcalt, 2002). With over 555,000 associate degrees and 295,000 certificates awarded annually at an estimated 1,195 community colleges (987 public institutions, 177 independent institutions, and 31 tribal institutions) community colleges rely heavily on PTF for their practical knowledge and expertise (AACC, 2008a).

Higher education literature speaks to several deficiencies associated with the employment of a significant number of PTF—e.g., lack of skill, motivation, engagement, and
teaching experience (Gappa, 1984; Grubb, 1999; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Levin et. al., 2006; Ronco & Cahill, 2006; Umbach, 2007). However, absent from community college discourse is an examination of where PTF see themselves as members of their institutions. Moreover, the research does not consider the degree to which socialization processes and faculty expectations impact these perceptions. This study is one such attempt to fill this literature gap.

The next chapter (Chapter 2) includes my synthesis and analysis of the literature pertaining to community colleges, PTF, theories of role performance and achievement, faculty socialization, and social reproduction. Chapter 3 is a description of my methods and methodology. Included in that chapter is an overview of qualitative research, my conceptual framework (social constructivism), and the case study approach to research. Additionally, I detail the study’s sample, research methods—interviews, observations, and document analysis—and my plan for data analysis.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Introduction

As I plan to conduct a qualitative study of PTF at community colleges, it will be necessary to conduct a review of the literature which appropriately sets the context for 1) how I understand and make sense of the unique nature of community colleges, 2) how I come to understand the roles and challenges of PTF, and 3) how I plan to use theories of role performance, faculty development and student persistence to lend understanding to my analysis of the data. Moreover, this chapter will provide a background on what is currently known about the nature of community colleges, PTF typologies, and various theoretical frameworks through which scholars attempt to understand faculty motives and behaviors.

Community Colleges

Community colleges are essential to higher education in the United States. Indeed they have been a driving force in meeting demands for access to higher learning, opening doors to underrepresented students (African Americans and Latino students in particular), and training our country’s blue-collar workforce. Since their beginnings “junior colleges” as they once were called, have been institutions that developed a “different type of curriculum suited to the larger and ever-changing civic, social, religious, and vocational needs” for the communities in which they were located (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 4). It was this commitment to serving the needs of local and regional communities that later led to the adoption of the term “community college.”

The first community colleges were established in the late 1800’s as a result of the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Land Grant Acts. These institutions were mainly agricultural and
normal (teaching) schools, which provided low-cost education as compared to their four-year, private school counterparts. Also, because these schools were established in every state, they were uniquely positioned to train the members of its communities on region-specific issues and occupations. For instance, a West Virginia institution may have several programs that trained its citizens for jobs related to the coal mining industry. On the contrary, an institution in rural North Carolina may have had several agricultural and livestock-related programs.

Today there are a total of 1,195 community colleges. Defined by Cohen and Brawer (2003) as any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree, these institutions account for more than half (6.5 million) of all US higher education enrollment (AACC, 2010). Grubb (1999) notes community colleges are attractive to a diverse body of students because their tuition and fees are dramatically lower than their four-year counterparts; they are generally commuter campuses, not requiring students to leave home; and they employ an “open door” policy with regard to academic qualifications. It is because of these factors that community colleges enroll significantly higher numbers of working class, minority, female and older students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb, 1999). With the current economic situation and a significant expected increase in student enrollment, these numbers continue to grow. For example, in 1993, 22% of community college students were minority—African American, Latino, Asian, and Native American (versus 18% of four-year institutions), 57% were female (versus 53%), 10% had family incomes below $15,000 (versus 6%), and 37% are over 30 years of age (versus 25%) (Dougherty, 1994). Data from the American Association of Community Colleges show that
today 35% of community college students are minorities, 61% are female, 39% are first-generation students, 58% are non-traditional (over the age of 22) (AACC, 2010).

Community College Faculty: The New Professoriate

Community college faculty have received little attention in higher education literature given that over 43% of all full- and PTF members in public, nonprofit institutions work at community colleges and teach 37% of all US undergraduates (“Almanac 2005). Twombly and Townsend (2008) explain that much of what we know about community college faculty is the result of small-scale studies conducted at the institutional or state levels. This makes sense given that community colleges vary greatly in terms of size, population served, and geographic location. However, the localized nature of the research makes it difficult to assume the transferability of findings” (p. 11).

Just as community colleges themselves are unique in terms of the students they serve, they too employ a distinctive group of faculty. Perhaps most telling of all the community college faculty data are the statistics on PTF—most notably the fact that of the entire community college faculty corps, 66.7 percent are part-time instructors (Cataldi et. al, 2005). In fact, PTF as an entity are such a large, distinctive group, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reports separate statistics for full- and PTF across a number of categories. This distinction, in-and-of-itself points to a trend which has been on the rise in response to fiscal constraints amongst state budgets for higher education.

PTF Literature

Since 1960, the use of PTF has increased 86% at institutions of higher learning (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). The relative proportion of part-time to full-time faculty is
even more dramatic within community colleges—65 percent compared to 40 percent for higher education as a whole (Altbach, 2002). While they provide greater economic efficiency, PTF continue to be criticized in the literature as they are seen as threats to the quality of education (Grubb, 1999, Leslie & Gappa, 1993). However, I believe much of this criticism to be misplaced as institutions do not adequately support their part-time workforce (Eagan, 2007; Nutting, 2003). Below is an examination of the literature relating to PTF, how institutions define this group, and the strengths and challenges with employing PTF.

PTF: Who They Are

Monk (2009) concludes that there is no “typical” PTF member. He is not alone (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, Grubb, 1999). In fact, PTF come from all different backgrounds (i.e., academic, and professional tracks) and have very diverse motivations for pursuing instructional positions (Christensen, 2008). As such, I believe the best definition of PTF is given by Gappa (1984) who explains PTF refers to anyone who 1) teaches less than the average full-time teaching load, or 2) has less than a full-time faculty assignment and range of duties, or 3) may have a temporary full-time assignment (p. 5). Additionally, I would add that these instructors are typically non-tenured and non-permanent, paid on a part-time contract outside of the regular faculty plan (Gappa, 1984; Ronco & Cahill, 2006).

Education

PTF as a group have less formal education than their full-time counterparts (Eagan, 2007; Monks, 2009). According to the 2003 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF), nearly 60% of all full-time respondents, as compared with 18% of part-time respondents, reported having a doctorate or professional degree (i.e., MD or JD). Anderson
(2002) reported similar findings in his analysis of faculty nationwide, noting less than 20% of PTF had earned a doctorate compared to 65% of full-time faculty. At community colleges, the difference is more striking. Only 9% of PTF had doctorates, 51% had master’s degrees, and 22% had bachelor’s degrees (NSOPF, 2003). In his analysis of community college faculty characteristics, Eagan (2007) documented that in 2004, 8.6% of PTF and 17.9% of full-time faculty teaching at community colleges in 2004 earned a doctoral degree.

“Other” Employment

Leslie and Gappa (2002) utilized 1992-1993 data from the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) and NSOPF in their analysis of PTF. The researchers report more than half of PTF were employed at a full-time job outside of the academy—51% and 78.2%, according to CSCC and NSOPF data, respectively. They also report that 61% of these faculty worked more than 30 hours a week at those jobs according to CSCC data.

Compensation

The 1999 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) yields several interesting statistics regarding community college PTF pay. For instance, the survey found that while part-timers have a teaching load equivalent to 48% of their full-time counterparts (8.4 hours a week, compared to 17.2 hours for full-time faculty), they were paid only a fifth (21% or $9,782) of the average full-time annual salary of $46,636. In addition to being hired at lower rates, part-timers are also generally ineligible to participate in college benefit plans (Jacoby, 2006).

While Gappa (1993) found that 74% of all PTF members were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their jobs, inequities with respect to salary and benefits are causing
discontent amongst the part-time faculty ranks. A more recent report issued by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) echoes these concerns. While 62 percent of PTF reported being very or mainly satisfied with their jobs, this same group reported concerns with salary, benefits and professional development opportunities (AFT, 2010). As one faculty member put it, “being paid salary that is significantly lower than my full-time colleagues for the same contract and associated teaching hours is degrading, demeaning, and produces a lifestyle of insecurity and uncertainty of employment” (Hollowell, 1998, p. 3). Eagan (2007) also noted low levels of satisfaction with job security, lack of benefits, and short-term contracts.

**Obstacles Facing PTF**

Many scholars argue that the use of PTF is a good idea gone bad (Grubb, 1999; Jacobs, 1998; Levin, 2007; Levin et. al., 2006). While PTF were traditionally hired because they possessed real-world, practical knowledge and skills, PTF have become the consequence of temporary labor force dynamics of the new (higher education) economy:

PTF are clearly at a lower stratum of professional labor when compared to full-time faculty in the new economy...part-timers have also become central to the strategic plan...community colleges are willing to accept the continuing exploitations of PTF. (Levin et. al., 2006, p. 86)

Jacoby (2008) explains that adverse contracts and poor working conditions create a system whereby PTF are seen only for their economic benefits, rather than their expertise, proximity to “real-world” issues, or teaching credentials. The result of a system that largely considers PTF as an expendable and invisible entity has led to claims by the literature that PTF are less committed employees, less effective teachers, and are a less informed constituency (Jacobs,
1998; Jacoby, 2006; Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Ronco & Cahill, 2004; Umbach, 2007; Wyles, 1998).

In fact, most institutions perpetuate the marginalization—intentionally or unintentionally—of PTF (Wyles, 1998). They offer part-timers very little voice in the development of curriculum, in textbook selection, in the work of their respective divisions, or generally, in the governance of the institution. The resulting “credentialing without credibility, responsibility without authority, and expectations without rewards means that PTF are asked to serve with loyalty and dedication without enjoying reciprocal trust and professional respect from their institutions” (p. 90).

The influx of PTF has also garnered much attention as of late with respect to the impact this group of faculty has on student learning outcomes. Again, it should be noted that for the purpose of this study, I refer to student retention, persistence and graduation as student learning outcomes, with the assumption that any activity that causes students’ to be retained, persist, or graduate is the result of learning in the broadest of terms. Numerous studies have focused on the importance of faculty roles in the facilitation of activities that encourage student-student, as well as faculty-student interaction, active learning, and the communication of high expectations (Astin, 1985; Bean, 1990; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Tinto, 1975, 1993). Yet, despite the increasingly significant roles PTF play at community colleges, relatively little is known about the impact they have on student learning (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Umbach, 2007). A review of the literature examines PTF impact on student learning yields that overall, contingent faculty negatively impact student learning (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Jaeger & Eagan, 2007;
Umbach, 2007; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Two themes are evident in this literature on PTF—the lack of student-faculty interaction and the quality of PTF instruction.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) offer that student-faculty interactions promote learning amongst students. CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) backs this claim noting that in general, the more students interact with their instructors, the more likely they are to learn effectively and persist toward achievement of their educational goals:

Personal interaction with faculty members strengthens students’ connections to the college and helps them focus on their academic progress. Working with an instructor on a project or serving with faculty members on a college committee lets students see first-hand how experts identify and solve practical problems. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning. (CCSSE, 2008, pp. 1)

Their claim is built on the work of Astin (1993) who found that student-faculty interaction has a positive impact on learning and student satisfaction; Bean (1984) who provided evidence that “well-prepared” students were more likely to interact with faculty; and Hu and Kuh (2001) who suggest that all types of involvement with faculty (namely substantive interaction, out of class contact, and contact related to writing improvement) correlated with students spending more time and energy on schoolwork.

Because such a large number of PTF are employed full-time at institutions outside of the colleges in which they work (46% according to 2004 NSOPF data), they tend to only be on campus during the times that they are slotted to teach. This limits time spent in the halls
before and after class conversing with students or the development of meaningful mentee-mentor relationships and is another issue the literature mentions regarding PTF (Banachowski, 1996; Burgess & Samuels, 1999). For instance in 2007, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) conducted a longitudinal survey of engagement and found that only 8% of students reported having worked with instructors on activities outside of the classroom. The same study found that almost half of these students (47%) reported that they had never discussed coursework with an instructor outside of the classroom. Nutting (2003) notes this problem is compounded by the fact that PTF rarely have a place to meet on campus, leading to even fewer opportunities for students to engage instructors outside of the classroom.

Another claim by the literature suggests that PTF negatively impact student learning because they are less skilled instructors than their full-time counterparts (Benjamin, 2003; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Levin et. al, 2007). Some studies report this is due in part to PTF spending less time preparing for the courses they teach (Hudd et. al., 2009, Middaugh, 2002, Umbach, 2008). Other studies point to different socialization processes, which is how PTF come to understand what “good” instruction consists of (Nutting, 2003). Murphy (2009) argues that issues like this highlight the importance of qualitative research to address the experiences of PTF and how their time is being spent. For instance, she explains that while PTF may not spend as much time preparing for courses as full-time faculty, it may be due to the fact that PTF teach multiple sections of the same course.

Moreover, student learning discourse is often based within the context of traditional, four-year institutions. While no learned scholar of higher education would suggest that four-
year institutions are the same as their two-year, community college counterparts, the literature often uses Astin’s (1985) *Theory of Student Involvement*, Tinto’s *Theory of Student Departure* (1975, 1993), Bean’s (1990) *Conceptual Model of Student Attrition*, and Pascarella and Terenzini’s (1991, 2005) work on student persistence and engagement to explain (part-time) faculty impact on student learning outcomes at community colleges.

While claims of PTF’s negative impact on student learning may be valid, I offer, in the words of Daniel Jacoby, that “differences between part-time and full-time instructional practice may be explained as consequences of part-time contracts rather than as the consequence of lower faculty qualifications” (Jacoby, 2006, p. 1085). Liu & Zhang (2007) add that PTF are expected to perform at the same level of their full-time counterparts even though they tend to work under less favorable conditions—that is they are asked to teach the “leftover” courses full-time faculty do not want, they are rarely given the same share of institutional resources (physical space, professional development opportunities, etc.), and they are generally not included in university affairs outside the classroom.

Ultimately, students suffer when PTF are not given the necessary support they deserve. Perhaps if institutions were to begin examining potential solutions to issues with part-timers access to the same resources—real and intangible—as full-time faculty, changes that lead to students learning, persisting, and graduating at increased rates could be realized. To this point, Murphy (2009) used data from the 2004-2005 Higher Education Research Institution (HERI) and found that as job satisfaction for PTF increased, commitment to students and years of service increased. In other words, when PTF feel valued and supported
by their institutions, they are more likely to commit to student success and the institutions they serve.

**Conceptual Framework Theorists**

The previous section outlined community colleges and the faculty that serve these unique institutions. Also reviewed in the previous section were PTF— their strengths, assumed weaknesses, and their impact on community college instruction and persistence. The next section offers details in the theoretical concepts I plan to use to frame this study’s research questions, data collection, and analysis of the data (that is, PTF role perception and what part-timers believe facilitates or hinders those perceptions).

*Blackburn and Lawrence*

While previous studies focused on individual or environmental factors that affect faculty motivation and performance, Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) theoretical framework expanded the literature by considering individual and environmental properties both separately and collectively. The authors identified four properties of individuals: sociodemographic characteristics, career, self-knowledge, and social knowledge. Sociodemographic characteristics, or fixed characteristics such as age, race, and sex, influence the behavior of faculty members by “limiting or enhancing” access to resources and opportunities (Blackburn & Lawrence 1995, p. 16).

*Properties of Individuals.* Career, or the socialization experiences, of a faculty member impact preparation in teaching, as well as how faculty come to understand what it means to be “faculty.” Also included in this concept are academic discipline, the normative structures associated with the discipline and institution, and career age—the number of years
employed as faculty. The notion of career is of particular interest when considering
differences between the behaviors and products of part- versus full-time faculty. Take for
instance these cases: a full-time Ph.D. holding faculty member teaching computer science at
a four-year institution; and two, a bachelor’s degree-holding lab technician teaching part-time
at a community college. One could justifiably argue that the former, having attended eight to
10 years (four years of undergraduate education, two years at the master’s level, and 2-4
years at the doctorate level) of post-secondary education has a deeper, richer understanding
of the roles and behaviors associated with being a “good” or “engaged” faculty member than
the latter. Along the same lines, career age “serves as a surrogate for the skills and
knowledge“ an individual acquires as an instructor (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995, p. 16).

Self-knowledge as described by Blackburn and Lawrence, is a measure of self-image
and self-assessed competence. It includes personal attitudes and values, along with ambition,
persistence, and supportiveness. Social knowledge on the other hand considers one’s
understanding of subjective norms (how others expect them to behave). Additionally, social
knowledge includes the concept of social climate—what faculty members believe about the
institutional environment and other players within the environment (i.e., administrators,
coworkers, students).

Properties of the Environment. Defined as the “objective characteristics of the work
setting that exists, separate and apart from individual faculty perceptions,” environmental
properties compose the second major component to Blackburn and Lawrence’s theoretical
framework of faculty motivation (p. 15). The authors propose that factors such as
institutional norms, physical space, or access to technology have direct and indirect effects
on faculty—that is, they impede or facilitate faculty motivation and behaviors. For instance, an institution located in a county which is in need of nurse practitioners may receive more funding for its nursing program. In this case, more funding may translate into higher salaries for instructors or better classroom equipment/technology. Other examples of environmental conditions—structural and normative features of an institution—include organizational structure, student- and faculty-body composition, the fiscal well-being of an institution, and instructional resources.

Also important to the discussion of PTF motivation and behavior are what Blackburn and Lawrence also term “environment responses.” Environmental responses are the formal or informal channels of feedback at an institution. For instance, as it relates to my study, how do PTF receive feedback on their performance? Does this feedback come from students? Faculty? Administrators? Is this feedback informal, such as a casual hallway conversation? Or, are faculty subject to formal in-class peer reviews? Perhaps more importantly, is this feedback accompanied by suggestions or opportunities for growth (referral to articles such as Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, lunch with a seasoned faculty member, or professional development seminars)?

Lastly, Blackburn and Lawrence discuss the notion of social contingencies. Having both short- and long-term impacts, happenings such as getting married, the unfortunate death of a close friend, or health problems, can influence faculty behavior.

It is important to consider what background characteristics, experiences, and environments motivate faculty to behave or perform in one way or another. In fact, it is my contention that an understanding of the underlying factors discussed in Blackburn and
Lawrence’s study are of more importance than the behaviors themselves. A deeper understanding of these individual and environmental properties will pave the way for institutions to adopt proactive, rather than reactive policies regarding the hiring and training of PTF.

_Gappa and Leslie_  

Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) book _The Invisible Faculty: Improving the Status of Part-Timers in Higher Education_ provides the analytical base for my study. Of particular interest for my study are the author’s discussion on PTF type. While their work is key to my study, they were not the first to address stratification within the PTF ranks. Tuckman and Tuckman (1981) developed a six-tier categorization of PTF: semi-retired; graduate student teachers (at institutions other than their home institutions); hopeful full-timers; “full mooners,” faculty who work at another institution or within industry full-time, but teach on the side; “part mooners,” faculty who teach part-time at multiple institutions; and “home workers,” who teach part-time because they have full-time duties at home (e.g., young children). Vaughn (1986) continued the discussion, noting two types of PTF—dependents and independents. Dependents are those faculty who teach part-time in hopes of securing full-time contracts. On the contrary, independents are faculty who teach part-time because they have full-time positions elsewhere or simply do not wish to teach full-time.

Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) work is however the most extensive study to date of the PTF ranks (although Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) build on both the work of Tuckman and Tuckman, and Gappa and Leslie). The authors sought to explain differentiating factors between full- and part-timers by conducting interviews with college administrators, full- and
PTF at 18 (public and private) North American institutions. Defining PTF as “those individuals who are temporary, nontenure-track faculty employed less than full-time,” (pg.3) the authors identified four types of part-timers: 1) aspiring academics; 2) professionals, specialists, and experts; 3) those transitioning into retirement; and 4) freelancers. As will my study, the authors examined motivating factors, coupled with the experiences of their research participants to develop the aforementioned groupings.

Aspiring academics are PTF who wish to teach full-time. They may be graduate students seeking to enter the professoriate or community college faculty lacking the publications to be considered for a position at a major research-I institution. Lyons et. al. (1999) note that these individuals are “building their credentials and teaching skills while making professional contacts” (p. 4).

Professionals, specialists, and experts are PTF who are employed full-time in industry. Such individuals include nurse practitioners, lab technicians, graphic designers, computer technicians, and business executives. Gappa and Leslie (1993) note these individuals are highly sought after by institutions of higher education for their proximity to industry practice and on-the-job expertise. PTF in this group tend to also have “advanced training and rich experiences in fields critical to the mission” of an institution (Lyons et. al., 2005, p. 4).

The third type of PTF identified by Gappa and Leslie include what Tuckman and Tuckman (1981) dubbed as “semi-retired” individuals. Career enders are PTF who are currently retired, as well as those transitioning into retirement. These individuals seek part-
time positions either for their love of teaching or of financial need. They are often Ph.D. holders and tend to be published (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

*Freelancers* comprise the final PTF group indentified by Gappa and Leslie. These instructors make full-time careers of teaching part-time. Lyons et. al. (1999) offer that:

Some freelancers own their own business and view their part-time teaching as an opportunity to develop their business contacts. Others are homemakers or have primary care responsibility for family members. Some, including many artists and musicians, choose to build their careers around a series of part-time jobs that are interrelated. (p. 4).

Eagan (2007) notes freelancers are often negatively portrayed in the literature as “freeway flyers”—part-timers that seek constant employment at community colleges primarily for financial gain. However, many institutions cap the number of hours a part-timer can teach on campus, which is one main reason why some freelancers are forced to teach at two, three or four institutions.

*Fairweather*

Also important to may analysis will be the work of Fairweather (1996). In his book, *Faculty Work and Public Trust: Restoring the Value of Teaching and Public Service in America Academic Life*, Fairweather explains that higher education is charged with a duty to fulfill traditional functions of its universities, as well as meet new challenges posed by the global knowledge economy. Moreover, he suggests that these opposing forces have led to a degradation of the interrelatedness of faculty and institution. I would argue that such a dynamic also exists within the PTF ranks at community colleges—that is, they are charged
with filling the role of traditional (full-time) faculty, while facing challenges associated with lack of resources, training, and pay.

With PTF, the chasm between faculty and institution manifests itself in many ways. One, PTF are often not supported adequately by their institutions (i.e., faculty orientations, trainings, opportunities for professional development). Two, PTF are treated as hired help; they are often underpaid (as compared to their full-time counterparts), have very little say in course development, and rarely play a role in departmental decisions. Three, PTF themselves have come to view academic instruction as many other “nine to five” professionals—get in, get out, and get paid. Fairweather suggests that in order to bridge the gap between “value” and “quality” in higher education, academia needs to center discussion around faculty—what motivates them, who hires them, and the policies that govern them. Of particular interest for my study is Fairweather’s discussion of faculty motivation and “reward structures.”

Fairweather (1996) offers that at large, four-year institutions, reward structures tend to favor research over teaching. He notes, “from this viewpoint, the faculty reward structure acts as a mechanism to ensure continuation of research norms across institutions and disciplines” (p. 45). Borrowing from Fairweather, I would suggest that by failing to adequately train and support PTF members, treating PTF as institution outsiders, and underpaying (as compared to their full-time counterparts) part-timers, (community) colleges have instituted a set of norms which devalue PTF and their expertise. Moreover, the lack of faculty reward structures such as compensation, promotion, or recognition further exacerbates the disconnect between PTF and the institutions at they serve.
Faculty Development & Socialization

Also important to my discussion of faculty perceived roles and expectations are the concepts of development and socialization. It is my belief that the extent to which one becomes familiar with the cultural, instructional, and organizational norms of an institution and their profession, directly impact how they view their organizations and the roles they play within them. Riegle (1987) suggests that faculty development is crucial to the betterment of higher education given declining resources and changing social attitudes. He also notes that “to the extent that faculty development thrives, colleges and universities will have more to offer the public, and professors will at the same time find greater satisfaction in their work” (p. 59).

However, when it comes to defining faculty development there is much ambiguity in the literature. For one, the terminology itself is vague. In his review of the literature, Riegle (1987) offers that faculty development is actually a combination of five components of development that have been lumped together in higher education literature: instructional, professional, organizational, career, and personal development. The first, instructional development—the development of skills relating to teaching, teaching technology, courses, or curricula—is what we typically think of when it comes to faculty development. Also commonly used to describe faculty development is the term professional development. It emphasizes growth and development of faculty in their professional roles. Attending professional conferences such as CETL (Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning) or ASHE (Association for the Study of Higher Education) are examples of professional development. Organizational development relates to the needs, priorities, and organization of
the institution. For instance, faculty members in an organizational development workshop may learn more about their institutions’ missions or about the origin of popular (or disliked) campus policies. Career development, Riegle (1987) notes, has not gained much attention as instructional, professional, or organizational development. While it is closely related to professional development, career development is distinctive in that it is centered on the notion of upward mobility within an institution, or at another institution that a faculty member perceives as more prestigious. The last component—personal development, deals with personal skills such as, communication, life-planning, and holistic life skills.

What is interesting about Riegle’s (1987) framework is that it outlines four sub-categories of development: improvement, remediation, retraining, and rejuvenation. While Reigle offers that each of these categories exist as an extension of the four major themes (or 20 possible combinations), for the purpose of my study I consider them independently. I do this primarily because I am interested in macro-level themes with respect to faculty development.

Programs aimed at improvement, emphasize general skill enhancement “even when there is no evidence or allegation of incompetence or need to change” (Riegle, 1987, p. 54). This can take the form of workshops on instruction, technology training webinars, and teaching (peer) evaluations. Remediation refers to programs which rectify “incompetence or updating the outdated.” (pg.56). Development that takes this form is often viewed negatively by faculty who participate in these programs. Because of the temporary nature of PTF, retraining or emphasis on programmatic modification for outdated fields or technologies will probably not be a factor in this study. However, programs that seek to overcome stagnation
and burnout or *rejuvenation*, may hold significance for PTF. Because such an overwhelming majority of PTF teach in conjunction to holding full-time employment at other institutions, it may be worthwhile to understand ways in which PTF feel their institutions can keep them more engaged and boost morale.

I believe that each of these sub-categories will provide significant insight into how PTF perceive planned and attempted opportunities for development on their campuses. For instance, if an institution requires a workshop on instruction as part of its PTF orientation, but does not require this of their full-time counterparts, it may be inadvertently labeling PTF as incompetent. In fact, I think this study may yield several programs currently in place at community colleges that target PTF and are perceived as remedial, forced, and consequences of stereotypes associated with PTF. Moreover, I believe that part-timers will feel there is a need for more development opportunities geared towards improvement and rejuvenation.

**CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

This study employs the use of qualitative case study to explore how PTF members come to understand their roles at a North Carolina community college. More specifically, this is an instrumental qualitative case study of 12 community college PTF members at a North Carolina community college. One-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant. In addition, I employed the use of participant observation and document analysis to triangulate the data. A more detailed discussion of my methods and methodology follows this introduction.
Rationale for Qualitative Research

This study examines the perceptions of PTF with respect to how they come to view their roles as faculty, as well as examine the expectations part-timers have for themselves and the institution at which they serve. A qualitative study is more appropriate than a quantitative study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 2002) to address my research questions for three primary reasons.

First, Nasser (2001) notes that qualitative research formulates a holistic construct from the exploration of a process of inquiry that seeks to understand a social or human problem. While quantitative research seeks explanations and predictions that can be generalized to a larger population, qualitative research seeks to interpret and to understand. My study seeks to do just that—interpret and understand how PTF members at a community college make sense of their roles and expectations within higher education.

Second, my study required that I explore multiple realities of my research participants—participant as individual, participant as student (i.e., instructing part-time to gain teaching experience), participant as instructor, participant as advisor, and participant as employee. Qualitative research “deals with multiple, socially constructed realities or qualities that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6). In order to gain access to these multiple realities, the study’s design involved in-depth, long-term interaction with participants who had experience working, instructing, and advising at a North Carolina community college. Qualitative research is better situated to address such “in-depth, long-term” inquires; it allows for richer description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation of phenomena than quantitative research (Peshkin, 1993). Lincoln and Guba
(1985) lend support to Peshkin’s claims, noting that qualitative studies are indeed more effective in presenting multiple perspectives and experiences than quantitative research.

Third, Morse (1991) explains that using a qualitative research approach is most appropriate when you are dealing with an immature concept(s) due to a visible lack of theory and/or previous research; a notion that available theory may be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect, or biased; a need to explore and describe the phenomena and develop theory; or a phenomenon that may not be suited to quantitative measures. It is my contention that the current literature offers a conceptual framework for understanding PTF primarily through the lens of four-year institutions. Also, the existing literature makes several claims regarding PTF and the negative impacts for institutions that employ high percentages of part-timers. Yet, when speaking on this linkage, the literature treats part-timers as a homogenous population; failing to consider the intricacies and unique experiences of the individual (faculty) as a valid means for understanding issues associated with PTF.

Rationale for Research Approach

The methodological approach for this study is an instrumental case study (Stake, 1994). Instrumental case study is appropriate for my study because according to Stake, it involves a particular case—PTF at a North Carolina community college—being examined to “provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory” (p. 237). Such studies play a supportive role in that they help facilitate our understanding of something else (Creswell, 1998). In my study, I use instrumental case study not as a tool for describing the relationship of PTF to student learning outcomes; rather, I use it to investigate how and why perceived roles and the development of PTF expectations ultimately shape the manifestation of such
outcomes. Additionally, I use multiple instrumental case studies for describing and comparing insights within the PTF typology as suggested by Gappa and Leslie (1993).

Case Study

Case study is not a methodological choice; rather, it is an object to be studied (Stake, 1994). Bounded with defined beginnings and endings, case studies are limited to a specific location, person, or event (Stake, 1994; Yin, 1994). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that designing case study research is similar to looking through a funnel. The start of the study is the wide end of the funnel. It involves determining the subjects and sources of data—people and places. For me, this includes PTF at a specific North Carolina community college, within three specified academic disciplines. As researchers begin to consider the collection of data, they narrow in, or focus on the phenomenon under study. This process included reviewing and exploring the data collection methods to determine which methods were most appropriate for the collection of rich, thick data. In my case study, interviews, observation, and document analysis were the primary forms of data collection as outlined in the literature (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Yin, 1994). Moving further down the funnel, the researcher then formulates research questions that are holistic and context sensitive (Stake, 1994). This is especially important when conducting qualitative research. As Patton (2002) notes, meaning is distorted when critical context is omitted. Unlike recent studies, I address this concern in my study through the generation of research questions that seek to understand PTF at community colleges through the experiences of PTF at community colleges. Finally, Bogdan and Biklen note that researchers move from broad exploratory concepts to “more directed
data collection and analysis” (p. 59). What then emerges from the other end of the funnel is a well-crafted, focused research study.

Sample Selection

To investigate how community college PTF come to understand their roles and the subsequent development of expectations, I purposefully sampled for 12 research participants—from each of Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) four categories of PTF (aspiring academics; professionals, specialists, and experts; career enders; and freelancers). According to Merriam (1998), purposeful sampling enables researchers to discover, understand, and gain insight from a sample that will offer the greatest yield of understanding regarding a particular phenomenon. Patton (2002) lends support to Merriam’s claims noting that the “logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding” through the selection of information-rich cases (p. 46).

Further bounding my study, I also used a criterion-based selection scheme to enhance the selection of research information-rich participants (Merriam, 2002). For instance, purposefully sampled to ensure that each participant had a minimum of one semester of teaching experience. This is especially important to ensure that each participant has had adequate time to develop a working understanding of themselves as educators. This is in line with Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1996) four theoretical constructs of self-knowledge, social-knowledge, environmental conditions, and environmental responses.

Also, I sought out participants who were representative of three academic disciplines—arts and humanities, computer sciences, and health sciences. These three disciplines were chosen as they represent three of the largest academic disciplines within the
North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS, 2009). By choosing heavily populated disciplines, I was able to draw from a larger pool of faculty members for my study. This aided in the selection of participants, as well as helped ensure confidentiality of my research participants. Additionally, it was my hope that in choosing three different disciplines to investigate, I would be able to gain insight into how PTF members from different academic disciplines come to understand their roles as faculty, as well as the expectations they hold for themselves and the institution they serve.

I obtained research participants using my academic and professional circles (see below discussion on site selection) as a source for the initial nomination of participants. From there, I used snowball sampling to identify additional research participants. In snowball sampling, you begin by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in your study. Once this has been accomplished, you then ask them to recommend others who they may know who also meet the criteria (Patton, 2002).

Of the 12 research participants involved in this study, 10 were women. Half of the participants sampled were new instructors (having less than three years of teaching experience). The other participants ranged from three to 30 years of experience. It should also be noted that of the 12 participants, five have aspirations of teaching full-time, nine have other jobs (full- or part-time) outside of NCCC, and one recently resigned from her teaching position. There were five aspiring academics, four professionals, specialists, and experts, two freeway flyers, and one careerender.
Site Selection

As a matter of access, I conducted my case study at a large community college within the North Carolina Community College System. To protect my research participants and ensure confidentiality, I do not name the institution studied. Rather, I use the pseudonym, NC Community College (NCCC). I chose to conduct my study at NCCC to aid in the nomination of research participants as I have a number of colleagues who serve as faculty, staff, and administrators. These colleagues were able to identify participants that met the criteria for this study, helping me to more readily nominate research participants.

NCCC is also unique in that its PTF serve a demographically diverse student body with respect to ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status. As one of the largest institutions in the North Carolina Community College System—the third largest system in the United States, its seven campuses are spread across 832 square miles, serving over 65,000 students. Additionally, NCCC has well-established programs in each of the three program areas with which this study is concerned.

Data Collection

To collect data for my instrumental qualitative case study, I used three methods: interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The use of these three methods coincides with what the literature tells us about data collection in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002). I discuss each method below in more detail.
Interviews

To investigate PTF and how they come to understand the roles of faculty within community colleges, I used interviews as my primary data source. Interviews involve the “meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic” (Janesick, 1998, p. 30). Kvale (1996) describes qualitative interviews as attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. Because such experiences and innermost thoughts are often guarded, Lindolf (1995) adds that the use of interviews enables qualitative researchers to gain an insider perspective of the phenomenon under study. This is particularly important for my study in that I was potentially asking PTF members to revisit sensitive past experiences (i.e., not being awarded tenure at a four-year institution or taking on an instructor position to make ends meet financially). Also, because I wanted to know ways the community college environment impacts a part-timer’s understanding of what it means to be a faculty member, it was not unreasonable to assume that some part-timers would have negative feelings toward their institution that they would only share confidentially. Through the use of interviews, I was able to develop a sense of trust amongst research participants. This enabled me to gain a better understanding of sensitive and intimate experiences (Lindolf, 1995, p. 5).

Patton (2002) identifies three basic types of qualitative interviews: the informal conversational interview, the interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview. The informal conversational interview is also known as unstructured interviewing.
In this type of interview, the researcher purposefully structures the interview to allow for “maximum flexibility to pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate” (p. 343). While this method produces thicker descriptions (previous responses can be revisited and expanded upon), it often requires a significant amount of time to collect data on the specified phenomenon as researchers are forced to “go with the flow.” Because PTF members tend to be on campus for a short period of time and often have additional daytime commitments (Leslie & Gappa, 2002), this method was not ideal for my study. Additionally, Patton notes that data from unstructured interviews can be difficult to analyze because different questions may yield very different responses amongst research participants. As a novice researcher, a more systematic and standardized interview enhanced the quality of my data analysis. The same limitations are encountered with the use of standardized open-ended interviews.

An alternative mode of interviewing is the structured interview. In this type of interview, the interviewer asks a participant series of scripted questions with a limited set of response categories. Fontana and Frey (1994) note that in such interviews, the interview session is treated “as if it were a theatrical script to be followed in a standardized and straightforward manner” (p. 363). This allows the researcher to control the pace of the interview. However, because each interview is treated in such a rigid way, there is little room for flexibility or follow-up. It is my contention that such an interview would not produce the rich and thick data I was interested in. Additionally, I believe that a structured interview would cause me to miss or discredit themes that my research participants deemed important to their conceptualization of role(s).
In addition to the issues outlined above, I used a hybrid approach to interviewing—the semi-structured or interview guide approach. There were also three additional reasons for using the interview guide approach. One, it is the most widely used format for qualitative interviewing. Two, the emphasis on the use of open-ended questions provides the researcher with “quotations which reveal the respondents’ levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions” (Patton, 2002). And three, it simultaneously provides both structure and flexibility to the interviewing process. In what I believe to be the major advantage of this interview style, interview guides allow the researcher to vary the wording and order of the questions; enabling the researcher to elicit more thick and rich responses. But, interview guides also ensure that data collection is still systematic and comprehensive as with the standardized interview.

Triangulation of the Data

Participant observation and document analysis were used as a means of data triangulation. In qualitative research, triangulation adds depth and rigor to research as multiple perspectives contribute to more comprehensive findings (Baker, 1996). Triangulation also lends credibility to the accuracy of the precise nature of the reality explored in that it can be used to verify statements collected during the interview process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Participant Observation. Marshall and Rossman (2006) note that observation is fundamental and highly important to all types of qualitative inquiry. According to the authors, it is used to uncover “complex interactions in natural social settings” (p. 99). My
study is built on the premise of being able to tell the story of PTF members’ understanding of roles, development of expectations, and socialization processes through the lens of the individual. Participant observation positioned me to better “describe what goes on, who or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why” from the standpoint of my research participants (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 12).

Additionally, observation or prolonged engagement in a setting or social situation, was appropriate for my study because

1) the nature of the research question to be answered is focused on answering a how- or what-type question;

2) the topic is relatively unexplored and little is known about the experiences of PTF in the community college setting;

3) understanding the classroom dynamics of courses taught by PTF in a detailed way is valuable; and

4) it is important to study the impact of institutional characteristics on PTF within the community college setting. (Patton, 2002)

Participant observation ultimately leads to deeper understandings than interviews alone, because it provides knowledge of the context in which events occur, and may enable the researcher to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss (Patton, 2002).

Employing the use of field notes, I observed at least one classroom experience with eight of the 12 research participants (two participants opted out of the observation session, one recently resigned her teaching position, and one health sciences participant could not
participate because of patient-provider confidentiality issues). In addition, for each classroom observation, I shadowed my research participants from the time they arrived on campus to the time they left campus. Paying close attention to their interactions with other faculty, staff and students, I hoped to glean understanding of the availability of campus resources, interactions with students, staff, and other faculty, institutional culture, practices, and norms.

Document Analysis. Document analysis was the third method of data collection supplemented data gathered during the faculty interviews and participant observation. Documents such as institutional policies, job descriptions, teaching contracts, student handbooks, training materials, evaluation forms, and teaching schedules lent support to themes identified in the analysis of the primary data source—interviews. As Lindolf (1995) notes, documents are important because they are the “paper trail” left by events and processes. Among other things, documents shed light on what NCCC produces, how it certifies certain kinds of activities, categorizes events or people, codifies procedures or policies, explains past or future actions, and tracks its own activities (p. 208).

Documents were also important to me as they served as an unobtrusive source of information that was accessible throughout the course of the study. Additionally, they were able to save me time because as written evidence, they did not need to be recorded and transcribed (Cresswell, 2003).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is arguably the most difficult and tedious aspect of conducting qualitative research. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), data analysis “involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have
learned” (p. 127). Merriam (1998) speaks to the notion of organizing, or constructing reality in qualitative data analysis. She notes that qualitative research is based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. As such, identifying and interpreting the reality of the research participants is my primary job as a researcher.

One process crucial to interpreting data collected via qualitative methods of inquiry is *coding*—the progressive procedure of sorting and defining data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Coding allows researchers to glean knowledge from “like-minded pieces of data” in a self-reflective manner unique to his or her own understanding. Coding can also help answer questions such as: What are the major themes? How do participants make sense of the world they live in? What are the key happenings or events? How is a particular phenomenon manifested for those interviewed or observed?

For the purpose of this study, data obtained via participant interviews was open-coded in accordance to Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) suggestions for developing a coding system. The authors suggest three steps for the proper coding of data: 1) search through the data to uncover regularities and patterns; 2) write down words and phrases which represent these patterns; and 3) organize these patterns into categories for coding. Additionally, this study relied on the literature—more specifically, PTF, faculty socialization, faculty identity, and faculty development theories—to inform themes uncovered during the coding process.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to the design of this study. In particular, this research was limited to the experiences of 12 PTF members, at NCCC, which is a community college located in one particular region of the United States. As such, the findings of this study could
at best be used to inform others on the particular experiences of these 12 participants at
NCCC. However, as British author Lisa Baker (2006) explains in her paper,

10 Pitfalls to Avoid in Qualitative Research:

In qualitative research, it is not so much the quantity that is important, it is the quality
of the data; best quality data is in-depth and explains not only how the participant
feels about a certain issue but more importantly, why they feel like that. Rich,
profound and exhaustive data is invaluable and illuminating and a small number of
subjects can generate vast amounts of data. (p. 530)

Along the same lines, the very nature of case study limits my research. Because case
study is by definition bounded, my study ignores experiences of PTF that lie outside my case.
For instance, I give no consideration to ways of understanding amongst or PTF who teach
outside of my three academic disciplines. However, for the purpose of this case study I was
concerned with the collection of data from a very specific subset of NCCC’s PTF corps.

The time spent with research participants can be viewed as a limitation of this study.
Bernard (1998) suggests that true understanding is best learned in the field through an
extended and systematic data collection approach in which researchers use all of their senses
to examine people in natural settings or naturally occurring situations. While a few hours out
of one day is hardly enough time to gain true insight into the lived experiences of PTF and
how they understand, engage with, and navigate NCCC, the choice to conduct one interview
and one classroom observation was appropriate for the nature of this exploratory study.
Researcher Subjectivity Statement

Stake (1994) explains that subjectivity is ever present. It creates compelling and persuasive arguments as to how we write ourselves into our research and legitimate forms of scientific inquiry. Additionally, many would argue (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Peshkin, 1998) that subjective inquiry allows the researcher to conduct more accurate, more descriptive and more useful research.

However, those who subscribe to empirically-based (quantitative) research methods tend to view qualitative research as lacking credibility, rigor, or trustworthiness. Yet, much can be gained from the reflexive nature of subjective inquiry. Subjectivity allows for critical reflection and examination of who we are and who we become in relation to our research process and product; without it we cannot provide accurate analysis or representation of our research (Pillow, 2003). In other words, by taking into account one’s subjectivity it allows the researcher to answer questions of “what do I know?” and “how do I know it?”.

At the same time Peshkin (1998) notes “subjectivity is not a badge of honor, and paraded around on special occasions for all to see.” Rather, “whatever the stance of one’s persuasion at a given point, one’s subjectivity is like a garment and cannot be removed” (p. 17). Rather than hide behind the veil of my own being, I play close attention to how my subjectivity informs the construction and production of knowledge as put forth in this paper.

As a researcher engaging in the qualitative study of PTF at NC Community College, I have many life experiences that have shaped my view of PTF at community colleges. One, I have never attended a community college. My concept of “faculty role” is viewed through the lens of my experiences as a student of four-year institutions. Moreover, I have always
been enrolled in very small, closely-bound learning cohorts that were taught by tenure-track, full-time faculty. As an undergraduate, I was a member of Millersville University’s Honor College. Typical class size was between seven and 12 students which afforded a more personal, student-centered learning experience. The same can be said of my graduate study experiences; class size was rarely more than 15 or so students. Also, many of the core classes were taught by the same two or three tenure-track faculty members.

Secondly, I have studied higher education in the United States for the past seven years as part of my graduate program at North Carolina State University. More than what higher education is as an institution, I have become ultimately concerned with the how of higher education in the US—that is, how it is funded, carried out and perceived by its various constituents. Thirdly, in the past year I have taken a particular interest in the efficiency (or lack thereof) in higher education. As part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at North Carolina State University, I began exploring the use of PTF as a cost-cutting measure. As such, I have thoroughly researched and explored the literature regarding student-faculty interaction, its impact on student persistence, the overwhelming use of PTF in two-year institutions, and their perceived negative impact on student learning outcomes.

In addition to these, there are other personal life experiences that are noteworthy. For instance, as a business owner, I know all too well that when measures are taken to cut costs, there are ultimately reductions in the quality of the generated output(s). This too, influences my perception of PTF and what I perceive to be the role of faculty members.
Validity and Reliability

The terms *validity* and *reliability* are generally discussed in quantitative work as factors which can add to, or take away from the generalizability of a study. According to Joppe (2000), reliability is described as the “extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology” (p. 1). Validity on the other hand, determines whether the research truly measures what it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Joppe, 2000).

Some qualitative researchers reject the notions of validity and reliability as generalizability is not the goal of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). However, Patton (1987) states that validity and reliability are two factors which all qualitative researchers should be concerned with when designing a study and analyzing the results. Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit in the absence of discussions of validity and reliability, “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?” (p. 290). To that extent, Mason (1996) suggests that a researcher must convey “how well matched is the logic of the method to the kinds of research questions you are asking and the kind of social explanation you are intending to develop” (p. 147).

To ensure the validity of this study’s findings, I incorporated member checks, peer debriefing, and tag cloud analysis. Member checks allow each of the research participants to review and *sign-off* on the accuracy of their interview transcripts (Lindolf, 1995). In my study, each of the research participants was given a copy of the interview transcripts and
subsequent themes that emerged from the collection of data. While participants were not given an opportunity to strike statements from the interview transcripts, they were given the opportunity to corroborate or disapprove of my interpretations.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain peer debriefing as the use of a research partner or colleague who critically and thoughtfully considers a researcher’s analyses. Lincoln and Guba (1985) note the four ways in which peer debriefing can increase a study’s validity:

1. through analytical probing a debriefer can help uncover taken for granted biases, perspectives and assumptions on the researcher’s part;
2. through this process the researcher can become aware of his/her posture toward data and analysis;
3. this is an opportunity to test and defend emergent hypotheses and see if they seem reasonable and plausible to a disinterested debriefer;
4. provide the researcher with an opportunity for catharsis.

Tag cloud analysis is a fairly new tool for analysis of qualitative data. Tag or word clouds use computer software to offer a visual depiction of the word content of a document. Tags are usually single words and the importance of a tag is shown with font size or color (Wikipedia, 2009). This visual representation of the data allowed me to identify key words and themes from my transcript data. These analyses were reviewed independently and collectively to determine if they coincided with the general themes uncovered during primary data analysis. Terms that were too big or small, as it related to my initial analysis, were reviewed more closely to ensure that themes were not exaggerated or ignored (C. A. Wiessner, EAC 790 lecture, April 7, 2009).
Because reliability is concerned with how accurately my research methods and techniques produce data, I used multiple methods (as discussed above in my conversation regarding data triangulation) to corroborate data sources.
CHAPTER 4: HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGE PART-TIME FACULTY COME TO UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLES AS FACULTY: AN EXAMINATION OF SOCIALIZATION, PERCEPTIONS, AND EXPECTATIONS

Introduction

Nearly one in every two students enrolled in American higher education attends a community college (AACC, 2008a). Simply stated, community colleges are “any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree;” yet, they do more much than award degrees (AACC, 2001, p. 5). In fact, community colleges play an integral role in the delivery of postsecondary education. Enrolling an estimated 46% (11.5 million) of all students attending college in the United States, community colleges provide open access to postsecondary education, prepare students for transfer into four-year institutions, provide workforce training, and offer a number of noncredit programs (AACC, 2008a). As issues of access and affordability continue to plague higher education in the United States, community colleges perhaps are best known for opening doors to low-income, minority and non-traditional students.

Just as community colleges themselves are unique in terms of the students they serve, they too employ a distinctive group of faculty. Most telling of all the community college faculty data are the statistics on part-time faculty (PTF)—most notably the fact that of the entire community college faculty corps, 66.7 percent are part-time instructors (Cataldi et. al, 2005). Despite the vital role community college PTF play in the American system of higher education, this group has received minimal attention in the literature (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Amongst the literature that does exist, the majority speaks to deficiencies, which
become apparent for institutions that employ significant numbers of PTF—e.g., lack of skill, motivation, engagement, and teaching experience (Gappa, 1984; Grubb, 1999; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Kezar & Sam, 2011; Levin et. al., 2006; Ronco & Cahill, 2006; Umbach, 2007). Also absent from community college discourse is an examination of where PTF see themselves as members of their institutions. Such research does not consider the degree to which socialization processes and faculty expectations impact these perceptions, nor the stratification in the PTF ranks.

This research seeks to fill this gap drawing primarily from Riegle’s (1987) research on faculty development and socialization and Gappa & Leslie’s (1993) PTF typology. In particular, this study investigates how PTF at North Carolina Community College (NCCC) come to understand what it means to be a faculty member. Exploring this question qualitatively takes into account the lived experiences of PTF and offers insight into socialization processes that hinder or facilitate perception and fulfillment of faculty roles.

Analytical Framework

Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) book The Invisible Faculty: Improving the Status of Part-Timers in Higher Education provides the analytical base for my study. The authors sought to explain differentiating factors between full- and part-timers by conducting interviews with college administrators, full- and PTF at 18 (public and private) North American institutions. Defining PTF as “those individuals who are temporary, nontenure-track faculty employed less than full-time,” (pg.3) the authors identified four types of part-timers: 1) aspiring academics; 2) professionals, specialists, and experts; 3) those transitioning into retirement; and 4) freelancers.
Aspiring academics are PTF who wish to teach full-time. They may be graduate students seeking to enter the professoriate or community college faculty lacking the publications to be considered for a position at a major research-I institution. Lyons et. al. (1999) note that these individuals are “building their credentials and teaching skills while making professional contacts” (p. 4).

Professionals, specialists, and experts (PSE) are PTF who are employed full-time in industry. Such individuals include nurse practitioners, lab technicians, graphic designers, computer technicians, and business executives. Gappa and Leslie (1993) note these individuals are highly sought after by institutions of higher education for their proximity to industry practice and on-the-job expertise. PTF in this group tend to also have “advanced training and rich experiences in fields critical to the mission” of an institution (Lyons et. al., 2005, p. 4).

The third type of PTF identified by Gappa and Leslie include what Tuckman and Tuckman (1981) dubbed as “semi-retired” individuals. Career enders are PTF who are currently retired, as well as those transitioning into retirement. These individuals seek part-time positions either for their love of teaching or of financial need. They are often Ph.D. holders and tend to be published (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

Freelancers comprise the final PTF group indentified by Gappa and Leslie. Eagan (2007) notes freelancers are often negatively portrayed in the literature as “freeway flyers”—part-timers who seek constant employment at community colleges primarily for financial gain. However, many institutions cap the number of hours a part-timer can teach on campus,
which is one main reason why some freelancers are forced to teach at two, three or four institutions.

Also important to my analysis will be theories of faculty development. I draw primarily on the work of Riegle (1987) with respect to faculty and professional development, but also consider Peter Blau’s (1964) social exchange theory to inform my understanding of PTF socialization at NCCC.

Riegle (1987) suggests that the extent to which one becomes familiar with the cultural, instructional, and organizational norms of an institution and their profession, directly impacts how they view their organizations and the roles they play within them. Riegle (1987) suggests that faculty development is crucial to the betterment of higher education given declining resources and changing social attitudes. He also notes “to the extent that faculty development thrives, colleges and universities will have more to offer the public and professors will at the same time find greater satisfaction in their work” (p. 59).

However, when it comes to defining faculty development there is much ambiguity in the literature. For one, the terminology itself is vague. In his review of the literature, Riegle (1987) offers that faculty development is actually a combination of five components of development that have been lumped together in higher education literature: instructional, professional, organizational, career, and personal development. The first, instructional development —the development of skills relating to teaching, teaching technology, courses, or curricula—is what we typically think of when it comes to faculty development. Also commonly used to describe faculty development is the term professional development. It emphasizes growth and development of faculty in their professional roles. Attending
professional conferences such as CETL (Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning) or ASHE (Association for the Study of Higher Education) are examples of professional development. *Organizational development* relates to the needs, priorities, and organization of the institution. For instance, faculty members in an organizational development workshop may learn more about their institution’s missions or about the origin of popular (or disliked) campus policies. *Career development*, Riegle (1987) notes, has not gained much attention as instructional, professional, or organizational development. While it is closely related to professional development, career development is distinctive in that it is centered on the notion of upward mobility within an institution, or at another institution that a faculty member perceives as more prestigious. The last component *personal development*, deals with personal skills such as, communication, life-planning, and holistic life skills.

Riegle’s (1987) framework outlines four sub-categories of development: improvement, remediation, retraining, and rejuvenation. While Reigle offers that each of these categories exist as an extension of the four major themes (or 20 possible combinations), for the purpose of this study I consider them independently. I do this primarily because I am interested in macro-level themes with respect to faculty development.

Programs aimed at *improvement*, emphasize general skill enhancement “even when there is no evidence or allegation of incompetence or need to change” (Riegle, 1987, p. 54). This can take the form of workshops on instruction, technology training webinars, and teaching (peer) evaluations. *Remediation* refers to programs which rectify “incompetence or updating the outdated.” (pg.56). Development that takes this form is often viewed negatively by faculty who participate in these programs. Because of the temporary nature of PTF,
retraining or emphasis on programmatic modification for outdated fields or technologies may not be relevant to this study. However, programs that seek to overcome stagnation and burnout or rejuvenation, hold significance for PTF. Because such an overwhelming majority of PTF teach in conjunction to holding full-time employment at other institutions, it is worthwhile to understand ways in which PTF feel their institutions can keep them more engaged and boost morale.

Blau’s (1964) social exchange theory also informs my understanding of how PTF come to understand what it means to be a faculty member at NCCC. In particular, Blau offers a macro-dynamic view through which I frame PTF socialization at NCCC. He suggests that we cannot begin to understand PTF social interactions if we do not consider the context of the social structure the interactions occur in. Moreover, Blau contends that in order for these interactions or social exchanges to occur, the various NCCC constituencies must have something its PTF want; likewise PTF must be willing to work to secure these resources. In the context of this study, one would expect PTF to develop positive relationships with entities they perceive as offering the greatest support and rewards.

Framing this research and subsequent analyses through the lens of faculty development and socialization theories, while also considering PTF typology, allows for micro-level examination of PTF perceptions and expectations. This moves beyond the surface-level reporting of outcomes as reported in the current literature. This type of framework also informs the underlying social processes that may hinder or facilitate positive role conceptualization and ultimately, the fulfilling of these roles.
Methods

This research employs the use of qualitative case study to explore how PTF members come to understand their roles as PTF. More specifically, this is an instrumental qualitative case study of 12 community college PTF members at a North Carolina community college. To ensure confidentiality and foster anonymity, pseudonyms are used for each of my research participants, as well as the name of the institution—NC Community College (NCCC). One-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant. In addition, the uses of participant observation and document analysis were employed to triangulate primary data.

Rationale

A qualitative research design was more appropriate for this study than quantitative inquiry (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 2002). Nasser (2001) notes that qualitative research formulates a holistic construct from the exploration of a process of inquiry that seeks to understand a social or human problem. While quantitative research seeks explanations and predictions that can be generalized to a larger population, qualitative research seeks to interpret and to understand. This study sought to do that—interpret and understand how PTF members at a community college make sense of their roles and expectations within higher education.

Additionally qualitative research “deals with multiple, socially constructed realities or qualities that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6). This study was concerned with 12 PTF, within three academic disciplines, at one community college. Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that qualitative studies are indeed more effective in presenting multiple perspectives and experiences than quantitative research.
Finally, Morse (1991) explains that using a qualitative research approach is most appropriate when you are dealing with an immature concept(s) due to a visible lack of theory and/or previous research, or a notion that available theory may be inaccurate. The existing literature offers an conceptual framework for understanding PTF primarily through the lens of research-intensive, four-year institutions and is less applicable to community colleges (Levin et al., 2006). The literature also treats PTF as a homogenous population—failing to consider the intricacies and unique experiences of the individual (faculty member) as a valid means for understanding issues associated with employing significant numbers of PTF (Twombly & Townsend, 2008).

Because this study examined how PTF come to understand what it means to be a faculty member at NCCC, instrumental case study was an appropriate methodological approach (Stake, 1994). Instrumental case study involves a particular case being examined to “provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory” (p. 237). Such studies play a supportive role in that they help facilitate our understanding of other phenomena (Creswell, 1998). For this research, instrumental case study was used not as a tool for reporting of PTF perceptions of roles; rather, it was used to investigate how and why perceived roles and the development of PTF expectations ultimately shaped the manifestation of such outcomes. Additionally, multiple instrumental case studies were used to compare differences amongst Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) PTF typology: 1) aspiring academics; 2) PSEs; 3) career enders; and 4) freelancers.
Site & Sample Selection

To investigate how community college PTF come to understand their roles as faculty, I purposefully sampled for 12 research participants across all four PTF typologies. Using Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) framework, I was able to categorize five participants as aspiring academics, four as PSEs, two as freeway flyers, and one as a career ender. Participants were also purposefully sampled from three specific disciplines—Health Sciences, Computer Sciences and Arts & Humanities. These three disciplines were chosen as they represent three of the largest academic disciplines within the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS, 2009). Of the twelve research participants, ten were women. Six of the participants sampled were new instructors (having less than two years of teaching experience).

According to Merriam (1998), purposeful sampling enables researchers to discover, understand, and gain insight from a sample that will offer the greatest yield of understanding regarding a particular phenomenon. Patton (2002) lends support to Merriam’s claims noting that the “logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding” through the selection of information rich cases (p. 46).

The case study was conducted at a large community college within the North Carolina Community College System. NCCC is unique in that its PTF serve a demographically diverse student body with respect to ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status. As one of the largest institutions in the North Carolina Community College System—the third largest system in the United States, its seven campuses are spread across 832 square miles, serving over 65,000 students. Additionally, NCCC has well-established programs in each of the three program areas with which this study is concerned.
Data Collection

In accordance with the literature on qualitative data collection, this study employed the use of interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002). Participant interviews served as the primary source of data, while participant observation and document analysis were used to triangulate the data—using multiple perspectives to contribute to the depth and rigor of the research (Baker, 1996).

Interviews enable researchers to understand phenomena from the participants’ points of view, “unfolding the meanings of peoples’ experiences and uncovering their lived worlds” (Lincoln & Guba, 1995, p. 5). Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant as the primary means of data collection. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to two hours in length and was conducted in spaces participants deemed as “safe and convenient.” Questions centered on the perception of roles, PTF socialization, and participant experiences at NCCC. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and were offered to the participants for review and comment.

Participant observation is important when attempting to uncover “complex interactions within a natural social setting” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 99). This study was built on the premise of being able to understand and interpret PTF members’ understanding and perceptions of roles. Thus, the use of participant observation adds valuable insight into “what went on, who or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occurred, and why” (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 12). Participant observation also adds to a deeper understanding and analysis of the primary data source by providing a context by which to situate participant stories and experiences (Patton, 2002).
Participants were shadowed from the time they arrived on campus until the time they left campus. Field notes were used to document interactions with other faculty, administrators, staff and students, as well as classroom techniques, rapport with students and how PTF navigated campus.

Document analysis also supplemented data obtained from the participant interviews. Documents such as website postings, policy and training manuals, job descriptions, classroom syllabi, orientation packets and training handouts helped validate participant experiences and comments.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, data were interpreted in accordance to Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) open-coding system. Interview transcripts, field notes and documents obtained from the research participants and NCCC website were scanned, read and then reviewed to uncover regularities and patterns. Key words and phrases that represented these patterns were then grouped into categories or themes. Finally, these categories were reviewed alongside the literature (that is, discussion centered on PTF, faculty socialization, and faculty development theories) to inform themes uncovered during the coding process. Peer debriefing was also employed to ensure validity of the analyses.

Findings & Discussion

Socialization is the process by which PTF come to understand the culture, norms and expectations of the workplace (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999). Bogler and Kremer-Hayon (1999) further argue that socialization contributes to how faculty feel about their departments and institutions, as well as how invested faculty are in the fulfillment of the roles they play at
their institutions. The findings of this study suggest that PTF are socialized through their graduate school experiences, interactions with other NCCC faculty, interactions with their department heads, and through exposure to NCCC programs, policy and practice.

Graduate School Experiences

Ann Austin’s (2002) Preparing the Next Generation of Faculty explored graduate school as a means of socialization to life as a faculty member. In particular, Austin’s work examined the extent to which 79 graduate students learned about the culture, values, attitudes, and expectations of the professoriate at two doctoral-granting institutions. Defining, socialization as the process by which an “individual becomes part of a group, organization, or community, Austin found that many graduate students were not offered significant opportunities to develop the skills and abilities they needed succeed as faculty (p. 96). Despite this, she contends graduate school offers the first real opportunities for aspiring academics to engage in the “dialectical process through which newcomers construct their particular roles as they interact [with] and engage” life as faculty (p. 97).

For instance, when considering how PTF came to understand what it means to be a faculty member, participants overwhelmingly pointed to positive experiences with faculty as graduate students or to their experiences with working as teaching assistants (TAs). In general, the more positive the experiences with their graduate school professors, the more likely they were to emulate techniques they considered informative or exciting in their classrooms. These two statements were shared as two PTF reflected on their beginning class routines:
I had this really good teacher when I was in school. She used to print out handouts of stuff that was going on around campus, or sometime even jobs or just things that she thought we’d be interested in. So I guess that’s where I get it from… I just want my students to be aware of what’s going on in education and the resources and opportunities available to them. (Hanna, freeway flyer)

So much of what they learn in here, they deal with on the outside. So I don’t mind spending the first few minutes of class looking at what’s going on in current events. I mean, it was one of the ways I learned when I was in school. It makes a lot of sense when you [apply course theory] issues that hit close to home. (Faye, aspiring academic)

Austin (2002) also suggests that anticipatory socialization plays an integral role in the development of perceptions and expectations of the professoriate. In general, anticipatory socialization involves the adoption of values and attitudes of the group or organization which one intends to join, prior to joining the group or organization. In this study, several aspiring academics referenced what Austin terms “preparatory experiences for the faculty career,” as a means of understanding their current roles as NCCC faculty (p. 96). In particular teaching assistantships offered at many of the large, research institutions were a trial-by-fire training ground for PTF. For instance, Norma (aspiring academic) reported that much of her teaching style was developed and refined while teaching an Introduction to Sociology course during graduate school:
Well, I remember being a TA... It was a night class and I was just trying to find a way to break the ice in front of 60-some students. [I started using YouTube] videos help because it gives them something that they can relate to. It’s something that they’ve heard or seen before, growing up, so they can instantly talk about it… I mean a lot of it you just try. Sometimes it works. When it does you use it again. When it doesn’t you toss that one out. Students will let you know real quick when they aren’t interested in what you have to say.

Teaching Experience

PTF reported that previous years of teaching also informed their perceptions of what it means to be a faculty member at NCCC. For instance, Erica (career ender) points to past experiences during her 30 year teaching career that have helped her acclimate to the cultural, instructional and organizational norms she associates with teaching at NCCC. Sam (PSE), who has taught part-time for 12 years at three different institutions, shared that his experience as a high school teacher and minister, influence the techniques he uses to “know what’s going on in young people’s minds and get them to where I see the light bulbs going on over their heads.” Additionally, participants noted prior community college teaching experience (such as, working under a lead instructor), developing quizzes, grading exams, and preparing lectures as being beneficial to their current roles as NCCC PTF.

Interaction with Other NCCC Faculty

Another method of socialization for the PTF interviewed for this study was interactions with other NCCC faculty. Of the 12 participants interviewed, all but one (Wanda, an aspiring academic who disenfranchised with her department, resigned from her
faculty position), referenced other NCCC faculty when considering how they came to understand their roles as NCCC faculty members. Faye commented that she relied on “older people… people who have been here longer than me [for help with the BlackBoard software].” In another example, Hanna noted:

   Everybody here was super helpful and supportive. Because not only was I one of the youngest, but it was my first time teaching… I would say, “Where is this place?” or “What do I do in this situation?” and [they helped me succeed].

*Interaction and Communication with Department Heads*

   The data show interactions with department heads are also important for PTF socialization. These interactions affirm or disaffirm PTF expectations, provide a filter for what is considered appropriate PTF behavior at NCCC, and contribute to how valued and respected PTF feel in their roles. For instance, participants shared:

   My department head has an open-door policy. You don’t feel like you’re bothering her with silly things. She never makes you feel that way. So, she’s really supportive and helpful and a lot times I go straight to her and ask; “What do I do in this situation?” “I wanted to discus this with you first.” Can you confirm if I’m doing this right or not?” (Hanna, freeway flyer)

   Even though I teach at night and she’s typically around during the day, my department head is really good about keeping in touch via email. So if I have questions or need to know how to do something, I can shoot her an email for help.
She also sends us the minutes from the faculty meetings, which helps sometimes when big deadlines are coming up. (William, PSE)

Also, because department heads are often the first contact PTF have with NCCC via the hiring interview and process, they are in a unique position to set initial guidelines and expectations. Norma (aspiring academic) shared that from day one, she felt like a valued and respected member of her department because of her “wonderful department head.” She noted that her department has taken a deliberate approach to making PTF feel like part of the team and ensuring that PTF have the resources to be as effective as possible:

The day I was hired my department head took me a walking tour of campus. He showed me the room I was going to be teaching in and even asked if the room would be comfortable for me. He gave me a stack of resources and psychology CDs. He even walked me through BlackBoard.

**Institutional Culture, Policy and Practice**

Participants of this study also point to NCCC culture, policy, and practice as indicators role and faculty expectations. However, themes uncovered from the data suggest PTF view roles, duties, and expectations conveyed by NCCC in a negative light. For instance, there were several references to participants feeling like “police” when it came to the emphasis NCCC places on attendance and its drop/add policies:

This [department head] was asking me: “Where are your attendance sheets?” And I’m like, “What are you talking about? Where do I get that? How do I do it?” I felt like [my department] threw me out there without the right instruction. (Faye, aspiring academic)
I’m easier on them than what [NCCC] expects of me. I like to treat students more as adults than like little kids. The whole attendance policy really bugs me. I mean these are adults. People with jobs and kids who can’t get here in all the traffic. Or, maybe their kids got sick and they miss a class. If you don’t show up to class, but can do the work… I don’t have a problem with that… but I’m in the minority here, so I’ll just keep my mouth shut about those kinds of policies. (Barbara, aspiring academic)

In a more positive example of how NCCC policy factors into its PTF’s perceptions of roles, Fredi (PSE) shared that she has bought into NCCC’s policies regarding student retention: “they’re really big into student retention. So you hear a lot about that… Retention is a big thing [for NCCC], so I try to do my part [when teaching students].”

When asked to consider the term adjunct, participants also shared negative perceptions when considering NCCC’s usage of the term:

It means you’re not a faculty member. You’re an hourly instructor; a contracted hourly instructor. That’s what it means… You got a 3-hour class, so we pay you for 3 hours. (Barbara, aspiring academic)

In this context participants felt “second-class” to “regular faculty.” Across all academic disciplines sampled in this study and PTF typologies, participants point to sparse communication, not being invited to full-time faculty events, and lack of institutional incentives (e.g., paid prep time, office space, etc.) as indicators of the value and respect NCCC ascribes to PTF. Along these lines, PTF come to understand their roles as insignificant and adopt an employee, rather than educator, mindset when labeled “adjunct.” Holly (an aspiring academic teaching the maximum PTF course load) reported that she
notices a difference in how institutional policies impact PTF perceptions at NCCC. She reported that another community college she works at is being “more intentional at involving part-timers in regular faculty development and it makes a difference.” In an example of good policy, Holly explained:

One of the things [this institution] wanted to deal with was the fact that part-timers never talk to people about teaching and learning. So we had a Saturday workshop and part-timers actually came out. I mean it was unbelievable the stuff they were saying: “You know we appreciate this.” “Thank God somebody finally did this. I have been teaching here part-time for 8 years and no one’s ever actually invited us to stuff.” Part-timers…they were just excited to be invited, let alone participating in a dialogue. So you know learning took place.

Differences Amongst PTF Typologies

The analyses of data revealed only one area in which differences amongst PTF typology was noticeable. Among the participants of this study, aspiring academics appear to be socialized in much more traditional ways than the PSEs interviewed. When considering how they come to know what it means to be a faculty member, aspiring academics point to positive experiences with graduate school faculty and advisors, teaching as graduate students, and having a deep understanding academia (via six plus years of higher education experiences as students). These participants appeared to have a more holistic view of who they are, and who they are expected to be within the context of NCCC as an institution. Conversely, data obtained from PSEs suggests a more corporate socialization experience. With their backgrounds based in industry, as opposed to the classroom, PSEs framed their
perceptions and expectations in terms of what “students need to know.” Moreover, when considering their positions as faculty, the PSE data in aggregate suggest a more pointed teacher-student understanding of roles—that is, PSEs experience a disconnect with duties they feel are not directly oriented to student learning (e.g., enforcing attendance policies).

In fact, there was more noticeable stratification between PTF teaching heavy course loads (three or more classes) than those teaching only one or two classes. For instance, of the four research participants teaching heavy course loads (aspiring academics Holly, Norma, and Faye; and Nicole, freeway flyer), all cite their graduate school experiences as being the single most influential factor how they understand what it means to be a faculty member. This same group also reported being more connected to and with other department faculty, their department heads, and in two cases (Norma and Holly) were involved in NCCC activities other than teaching.

Limitations

The focus on one North Carolina community college is both a strength and limitation of this study. Consistent with the rhetoric of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2006), this study explored 12 unique case studies to provide in-depth and detailed analyses of PTF perceptions of roles. While this study’s strength is that its design addresses gaps in the existing literature that discuss only the outcomes of PTF behavior, the inductive nature of this study limits its generalizability to other PTF and institutions.

The stratification within the PTF ranks should be a chief concern for those seeking to generalize the findings of this research. Because this study purposefully sampled for research participants, I gave no consideration to disciplines outside of the health sciences, arts and
humanities, and computer sciences. Thus these findings and subsequent discussion may not accurately capture the experiences and processes of socialization for other PTF. Also along these lines, this research did not fully consider the extent to which intrapersonal characteristics impact the socialization of PTF. For instance, one could assume that highly motivated PTF within the same discipline and PTF-subgroup, may come to understand the cultural norms and practices of academia differently than less motivated PTF.

Relatedly, the differences amongst community colleges and the communities they serve may also be a point of concern when attempting to generalize the results of this research. The missions of community colleges are dictated by the regions in which they exist and operate. As such, it is not unlikely to imagine that a large, urban community college may value particular faculty skill-sets and experiences differently than a small, rural institution.

Implications

Again, the goal of this research is not to generalize its findings across all PTF, at all community colleges. However, this research and the resulting discussion does offer insight into the lived experiences of community college PTF via the 12 cases explored for this study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In particular, the analyses of data warrants further discussion regarding: 1) reinforcing an educator, rather than adjunct mentality for PTF, 2) development of policy that facilitates the development of skilled and committed PTF, 3) future research that considers PTF within the context of community colleges, and 4) the refinement of faculty development and socialization theory.
Implications for Policy & Practice

Many scholars argue that the use of PTF is a good idea gone bad (Grubb, 1999; Jacobs, 1998; Levin, 2007; Levin et. al., 2006). While PTF were traditionally hired because they possessed real-world, practical knowledge and skills, PTF have become the consequence of temporary labor force dynamics of the new (higher education) economy. Jacoby (2008) explains that adverse contracts and poor working conditions create a system whereby PTF are seen only for their economic benefits, rather than their expertise, proximity to real-world issues, or teaching credentials. The result is a system that largely considers PTF as an expendable and invisible entity.

Consider Blau’s (1964) notion of social exchange. Based on the concept of reciprocity, such a mentality perpetuates a cycle whereby PTF are perceived to have little to value; thus community colleges offer them little in the way of respect and resources. Wyles (1998) notes this phenomenon—intentionally or unintentionally—manifests itself through giving part-timers very little voice in the development of curriculum, in text book selection, in the work of their respective divisions, or generally, in the governance of the institution. The resulting “credentialing without credibility, responsibility without authority, and expectations without rewards means that PTF are asked to serve with loyalty and dedication without enjoying reciprocal trust and professional respect from their institutions” (p. 90).

Also, given that PTF are hired and ultimately evaluated based on policies in place at NCCC, the institution should not take for granted that PTF understand the reasoning behind existing policy. For instance, PTF know that NCCC’s attendance is a “big deal,” but they
may not understand why in terms of FTE, funding and program vitality. Relatedly, PTF need to be included and considered in the development of NCCC policy. For example, Wanda (aspiring academic) eventually resigned from her part-time after being “harassed over checking [her] NCCC email account.” She noted her department should be more flexible for part-timers who hold full-time positions in corporate America. In her eyes had her department been more conscious of PTF’s, such as Wanda’s, inability to strictly adhere to its email policy, “They could have easily forwarded my NCCC email to my personal email. I don’t have the luxury of stopping what I am doing to log into NCCC webmail four or five times a day. I’m a consultant; I’m not always in front of a computer. But, my personal and work email comes straight to my Blackberry.”

The findings of this study suggest that by reinforcing an educator as opposed to adjunct mentality amongst its PTF, NCCC can facilitate the socialization of more skilled, more engaged, and more committed PTF. When PTF feel valued and respected, as evidenced through the dissemination of resources and positive interactions with administrators and other faculty members, PTF learn more, and at faster rates.

**Implications for Future Research**

There are several ways future research can address limitations with this study’s design, as well as expand the discussion of PTF socialization and role perception. One, to address limitations of this study with respect to sample, future research needs to examine the perceptions of a wider variety of PTF disciplines. Because of how this study was bounded, I may have ignored significant differences in how for instance, PTF teaching automobile mechanics, conceptualize their roles. Relatedly, while I did consider some participant-level
characteristics (i.e., sex, years of teaching, PTF typology), I did not explicitly consider demographics such as race, ethnicity, or age (it should be noted that as a qualitative research I do not deny that I subconsciously considered these demographics when analyzing and coding the data). Two, because the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other community colleges that differ from the cultural and demographic makeup of NCCC, the literature would also benefit from analyses of PTF at other two-year institutions. Lastly, the results of this study suggest future research is needed to explore the refinement of faculty development and socialization theory to consider the unique nature of PTF employed at community colleges.

Implications for Theory

As Twombly and Townsend (2008) suggest too much of what we know about faculty development and socialization is written by full-time “individuals at research universities as part of their quest for tenure, promotion, or merit pay. [They] tend to focus on the world they now—the research university—and not on the world they may never have experienced” (p. 8). As evidenced by this research, while some PTF are socialized in traditional ways (e.g., graduate school), there are others—namely those whom this research categorizes as PSEs who are not. At best, current faculty development and socialization theories force researchers to ignore or make generalized assumptions about PTF sub-groups like PSEs. Additionally, because current theories are grounded within the context of four-year institutions, they are inadequate for when considering community colleges. For instance, community colleges are very different in that they have industry- as opposed to research-focused charters. This has a direct impact on the policies and practices put in place at institutions like NCCC;
subsequently affecting the roles PTF play and the duties PTF are expected to perform. Also because community colleges service a non-traditional student population, many PTF teach courses at night when their institutions are closed. This limits the ability of PTF to build relationships with other faculty in their departments or to take part professional development opportunities offered to full-time faculty.

One conclusion of this study is that as PTF continue to play an even greater role in the delivery of post-secondary education, scholars must develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which PTF come to understand the duties and expectations associated with employment at their institutions. From these findings, I present a different view of how PTF are typically portrayed in the literature. Instead of being disenfranchised with the roles they play, this study suggests PTF perceive their roles in accordance with how they have been socialized prior to, and while employed at community colleges.
CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY COLLEGE PART-TIME FACULTY: WHEN STEREOTYPES & SELF-PERCEPTIONS COLLIDE

Introduction

Amid growing economic concerns, community colleges are hiring fewer full-time faculty and turning increasingly to part-time faculty (PTF) to fill the void. Illustrating the rise in PTF numbers during the past two decades, Anderson (2002) notes that from 1981 to 2002, the number of PTF employed by colleges and universities has risen by 79 percent. In another example, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) note in 1969, PTF made up just 27 percent of community college faculty, as compared to 70 percent in 2006. The literature suggests the rise in numbers of PTF is attributed to stifled faculty production, decreased ability of full-time faculty to adapt in a rapidly changing society, an aging faculty corps, a surplus of aspiring academics, increased labor costs, and shrinking budgets (Bettinger & Long, 2010; Umbach, 2007).

While PTF may reduce instructional costs at community colleges—by nearly 80 percent in some cases (Jacoby, 2006)—many argue that a proliferation of PTF in academia is a good idea gone bad (Jacoby, 2006; Levin, 2007). Levin et al. (2006) suggests the problem with PTF does not center on their traditional use (that is, taking advantage of PTF for their practical knowledge and real-world experiences). Rather they point to the abuse of “convenient and expedient means to lower costs and increase flexibility” of colleges and universities. In a system where PTF are valued only for their economic benefit, PTF become expendable—often ignored and under-supported. I would offer that this ultimately leads to, as Ronco and Cahill (2006) note, PTF being criticized as being scholarly weak, less
committed to their institutions, less likely to be integrated into campus life, and lacking “sufficient knowledge about the institutional support services so critical to first-time-in-college students” (p. 3).

Relatedly, more recent research (Bettinger & Long, 2006; Eagan & Jaeger, 2008a; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008) has linked an overreliance on PTF at community colleges to negative student outcomes, such as student attrition. Just as it is well documented in student development literature that students suffer when they do not get the support they need (Astin, 1985, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1975, 1993), I suggest that the same is true for PTF. Indeed, if there is a direct relationship between the amount of time and effort faculty invest in their students and student success, as suggested by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), then again I suggest there is a direct relationship between the extent to which community colleges invest in PTF and how they identify with and perform in their roles as educators.

Despite that nearly one of every two students enrolled in American higher education attends a community college (AAAC, 2008a) and with more than 66 percent of community college faculty employed part-time, community college PTF continue to be an understudied, misunderstood subset of the American higher education teaching corps.

In fact, research has yet to examine PTF identity and role perception within the context of community colleges. Using interviews from 12 PTF at North Carolina Community College (NCCC), as well as classroom observations and document analysis, this research introduces the notion of stereotype threat (Croziot & Claire, 1998; Sinclair et al., 2006; Steele, 1997) to PTF discourse. I build on the 2010 research of John Levin and Genevieve Shaker
titled *The Hybrid and Dualistic Identity of Full-Time Nontenure-Track Faculty*, as well as the work of Washington and Jaeger (2010), which examined the processes by which community college PTF are socialized. It should be noted that for the purpose of this study, I use PTF and *adjunct*—the terminology NCCC PTF use most often when referring to their status within the institution—interchangeably.

**Analytical & Theoretical Framework**

This study builds upon Levin and Shaker’s (2010) investigation of full-time, non-tenured faculty identity by expanding the discussion to community college PTF. This study also considers previous research by Washington & Jaeger (2010), moving beyond the socialization of PTF to identity development and role performance.

Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner and Cain (1998) provide the conceptual lens through which I define and analyze identity and perception of PTF roles and duties. Additionally, I employ self-stereotype and stereotype threat literature (Sinclair, Hardin, & Lowery, 2006; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronso, 1995) to illustrate how PTF self-authoring, coupled with membership in low-status social groups, can ultimately impact PTF behavior and role performance.

**Identity Theory**

In their *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland et al. (1998) consider two themes in their theory of self and identity: culturalism and constructivism. Culturalism is described as viewing the actor as one who, “seeks to conduct herself so as to do right by a preconstituted, culturally given, and moral world” (Holland, et al. 1998, p. 13). In other words, the culturalist actor relies on culture to frame and give meaning to a given situation.
Constructivism on the other hand is the positioning of one’s self in relation to “whatever powerful discourses they happen to encounter” (Holland, et al. 1998, p. 27). In other words, constructivism argues that when PTF interact with the world around them, the meanings of those experiences are co-assembled along with the development of identity.

Another important discussion from *Identity and Agency*, is the concept of figured worlds. Figured worlds, are “socially produced, culturally structured activities” through which meaning is given to particular acts or outcomes (Holland et. al, 1998, p. 41). The authors offer four points for understanding the development of PTF identity in relation to figured worlds. First, they suggest figured worlds are historically based. They are contextualized “processes or traditions of apprehension which gather us up and give us form as our lives intersect them” (p. 41). Second, where participants see themselves in a figured world (positionality) matters. Third, “figured worlds are socially organized and reproduced,” meaning that in order for a figured world to perpetuate through history, actors must continue to interact within its frames. Fourth, figured worlds are characteristics of humans and societies giving “voice and tone” to the landscape of our lives. This final consideration was especially important to my analysis of the PTF interviewed. Not only do PTF operate within their figured worlds, but these worlds shape PTF perceptions and their roles as instructors.

Finally, Holland’s et al. (1998) concept of identity considers the act of self-authoring. Self-authoring, based on the work of Bakhtin (1981), is the telling of one’s story through an account of where one stands in relation to their figured worlds. It is this authoring that characterizes agency, “the ways that [faculty] represent their actions and engagement with or relationship to their figured worlds” (Levin & Shaker, 2010, p. 9). Agency then lies
in the process of authoring the self, given the constraints and tools available to the PTF while positioned and participating in figured worlds.

*Stereotype Threat*

Self-concepts are formed and regulated by situationally adopting others’ perspectives of the self (Mead, 1934). In other words, one’s self-understanding—and to some extent, one’s self-authoring—is influenced by interpersonal relationships with others. For example, college standout athletes constantly praised by coaches, fans and the media (i.e., adopting of others’ perspectives; interpersonal relationships), often report a change in attitude, self-perception and self-esteem upon becoming *low-man-on-the-totem-pole* having made it into professional sports.

One such consequence of this phenomenon is the application of cultural stereotypes and prejudices to the self, or *self-stereotyping* (Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990; Hinkley & Andersen, 1996; Sinclair, Hardin, & Lowery, 2006; Steele, 1997; Vaes, 2008). *Stereotype threat* occurs when an individual’s behavior can be interpreted in terms of a stereotype, thus substantiating the stereotype (Steele, 1997). Moreover, Latrofa et al. (2010) suggest that the status of one’s social group is a key variable in this process, arguing that self-stereotyping and stereotype threat is most common amongst low-status group members (as in the case of PTF).

Steele and Aronson (1995) in their research on the academic performance of African American students found that the possibility of substantiating a stereotype was “threatening enough to have disruptive effects on its own” (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797). For instance, when PTF teach in college classrooms, they are subject to the threat of if they fail,
their behavior may reinforce stereotypes found in the literature that links PTF to high rates of student attrition (Jaeger & Eagan, 2008). Along these lines, Croziet and Claire (1998) note “depending on the situation of threat, several mechanisms may singly or simultaneously contribute” to distractions from the task at hand: interfering self-consciousness (e.g., second guessing departures from traditional teaching techniques), evaluation apprehension (e.g., befriending instead of challenging students to improve end-of-semester evaluations), performance anxiety (e.g., job insecurity), and loss of motivation (e.g., doing the minimum to get by) (p. 589).

Exploring NCCC PTF using an analytical framework that considers identity development and stereotype literature, presents a valid and unique means by which we as researchers can begin to understand PTF perceptions of roles. Without an approach that seeks to understand the underlying forces that impact the development of PTF identity and how they come to understand themselves as instructors, we would at best find ourselves in yet another surface-level discussion of PTF behavior and outcomes.

Methods

Because this research was concerned with perceptions of roles for NCCC PTF, the methodological approach for this exploration was qualitative case study. In particular instrumental case study was utilized as this research involves a particular case—PTF at NCCC—being examined to “provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory” (Stake, 1994, p. 237). Moreover, case study is appropriate considering the constructivist concepts of identity and agency offered by Holland et al. (1998). Data for this study were obtained via the use of semi-structured interviews conducted with 12 PTF at NCCC. Participant
observation (note: observations were only done with eight of the 12 participants. One health science participant was unable to accommodate observation due to patient-provider confidentiality concerns; one participant opted out of the observation; and two participants had either moved or left their departments prior to observation scheduling). Document analysis were also used to triangulate the data.

Sample & Site Selection

Participants were purposefully sampled to include representation from the three largest fields in the North Carolina Community College System: arts and humanities, computer sciences, and health sciences (NCCCS, 2009). Of the 12 research participants, 10 were women. Half of the participants sampled were new instructors (having less than three years of teaching experience). The other participants ranged from three to 30 years of experience. It should also be noted that of the 12 participants, five have aspirations of teaching full-time, nine have other jobs (full- or part-time) outside of NCCC, and one recently left her position after becoming fed up with “being harassed about checking [her] NCCC email account.”

NCCC was selected as a matter of access and for its uniqueness. As one of the largest institutions in the North Carolina Community College System, NCCC serves a demographically diverse population of 65,000-plus students. NCCC also has well-established programs in the fields of study for which this research was concerned.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data for this study involved three methods: semi-structured interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Lindolf (1997) offers that through the use of multiple
data sources, researchers are able to develop an insider perspective of the phenomenon under study. Relatedly, Baker (1996) suggests *triangulation* adds depth and rigor to research as multiple perspectives contribute to more comprehensive findings. To ensure the confidentiality of the research participants and maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were used for each participant.

Semi-structured interviews were the primary source of data. The interviews with each participant lasted approximately 45 to 120 minutes and were conducted in areas deemed *safe* by the participants. Each interview was digitally recorded, transcribed and submitted to the research participants to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts (participants could corroborate or disapprove interpretations, but could not strike statements from the interview transcripts). Participant observations were also conducted with each participant. These observations lasted from the time participants arrived on campus until the time they left in a given day. I recorded using field notes, interactions with other faculty, department heads, and students, as well as classroom teaching techniques and how PTF navigated the NCCC campus. Finally, document analysis was used to investigate the *paper trail* left by events and processes (Lindolf, 1995). Documents such as institutional policies, job descriptions, teaching contracts, student handbooks, training materials, evaluation forms, and teaching schedules were collected and analyzed.

Data obtained via participant interviews was open-coded—a progressive procedure of sorting and defining data—to identify major themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). For this study, I searched through data to uncover regularities and patterns. After writing down words and phrases that represented these patterns, I then organized the patterns into categories for
coding. I also relied on the identity and stereotype literature to inform themes uncovered during this process. To ensure the validity of this study’s findings, I incorporated member checks, peer debriefing, and tag cloud analysis.

Findings & Discussions

As evidenced in the work of Levin and Shafer (2010), PTF exhibited dualistic identities. As employees of NCCC, PTF identify themselves as being “undervalued,” “second-class,” exploited laborers. Yet, when considering their personal roles as faculty, PTF view themselves as skilled instructors, dedicated educators, and caring mentors.

Self-Authoring of Roles

Whereas Levin and Shaker (2010) found dualistic self-representations with respect to FTNT identity as teachers and members of the professoriate, an unexpected finding of this study were the distinctions PTF made between their roles as adjuncts and their roles as college instructors. When asked, “Can you describe the term PTF?” participants used terms and phrases like “adjunct,” “someone who teaches part-time,” “less than faculty,” and “cheap labor.” However, when asked, “Can you describe what it means to you to be a faculty member at NCCC?” most participants (nine of 12) self-described as instructors, educators and conveyers of real knowledge. For instance, Hanna (FF, Arts & Humanities, 5th year, teaches at 2 CCs) and Fredi (PSE, Arts & Humanities, 2nd year) commented:

What does it mean to be a faculty member? To teach courses. To try to get the students to think… So instead of just the retention [of test material], I want them to be able to use these skills for the rest of their lives. So, not only to teach students, but teach them skills for life.
I give 100%. I feel that I’m giving my students not only their money’s worth, but I’m helping to make learning fun.

*Roles and duties* were also segmented along these lines. That is, participants positioned duties within the figured world of NCCC (closely aligning duties with adherence to policy and regulations. Faye (AA, Arts & Humanities, 3rd year) reported her duties as “filling out attendance sheets,” “checking my NCCC email account,” “ensuring that all my prep work is done,” “going to the BlackBoard trainings,” and “checking my mailbox.” Yet, when asked to describe how she views her role at NCCC, she positioned her role within the figured world of an educator and instructor, “… [my role] is to ensure that I’m teaching and that students are learning… Even if that means going beyond what an adjunct is supposed to do.” In another example, Erica (CE, Health Sciences, 30th year) offered that her primary duties were to “supervise clinic hours and make sure that no one dies.” But when describing how she perceives herself as a NCCC faculty member, Erica self-authors that she is not only a teacher but “a mentor, advocate, role-model, and evaluator. I expect to make a difference and contribute to [students’] education in a meaningful way.”

The analyses of field notes obtained during participant observations and NCCC documents collected for analysis support the positionality Faye and Erica adopt when considering themselves as adjuncts. For example, in five of the eight participant observations when walking through campus participants were not greeted, nor did they initiate conversations, with any other faculty members or students. In three cases, participants had mailboxes without names that simply read “Business Law Adjunct,” for example.
In another example, an examination of a NCCC adjunct orientation manual contained 15 documents related to NCCC policy, student records, and campus information (i.e., permanent records change forms, emergency response guide, campus map, academic calendar, etc.). However, this same manual contained no resources for facilitating PTF orientation to campus culture, no examples of best-practice regarding instruction and communication with students, and no information on professional development opportunities available for NCCC faculty. Finally, a 2009 *Professional Development and Orientation for Adjuncts* agenda from Health Sciences covers departmental policies (e.g. email, mailboxes, instructor absences, etc.), NCCC housekeeping items (e.g. records change forms, registration guide, academic calendar, campus map, etc.), and student records (e.g. attendance policy, WebAdvisor, and the withdrawal policy). But again, nowhere in this agenda are any discussions or resources relating to the facilitation of PTF instruction or familiarization with the social norms and practices at NCCC.

**Self-Stereotyping of Roles**

As noted earlier, it is widely suggested in the literature that as a group, PTF are less skilled teachers, scholarly weak, and are less committed to their institutions than their full-time counterparts (Grubb, 1999; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Levin et. al., 2006; Ronco & Cahill, 2006; Umbach, 2007). Not surprisingly, the results of this inquiry yield PTF themselves buy into the notion of stereotypical adjunct. Of the themes that emerged from the data, PTF believe that “doing the minimum” to get by, not interacting with students, and spending inadequate time preparing for class are behaviors associated with most adjuncts.
Participants also commented that typical adjuncts are one, full-time workers who teach to supplement their salaries:

“I know a lot of folks work full-time and they will teach maybe one or two classes. It’s more of the typical adjunct way. It’s a part-time job and a way for people to make some extra money.” (Norma, AA, Arts & Humanities, 1st year) Two, they are second-class faculty:

“It’s apparent that there is that dichotomy… that there are the full-time folks and then there are the adjuncts” (Norma)

“It’s kind of mean what they do. Like, ‘Oh, she’s just an adjunct.’ ‘I’m not a real teacher?’ I’m like, that’s OK. My students love me more than they love you [laughs]. (Nicole, FF, Arts & Humanities, 5th year)

Third, participants in this study believe that PTF are not expected to be knowledgeable of campus life:

“There’s very little communication with what’s going on…what to expect or how things work. If you want to know something you have to find it out because they aren’t going to sit and tell you. I didn’t even get a handbook until two weeks ago [laughs]. You’d think that would be part of the…let’s do an orientation. Let’s take them on a tour of the campus so that [we] could speak intelligently to our students instead of saying ‘I don’t know.’” (Barbara)

“I’ve been here three years and I couldn’t even tell you where the library is.” (Faye)
“There are a lot of things NCCC requires of their teachers as a whole…including adjuncts… that the adjuncts don’t get training on…. I delay doing some things because I have to figure it out for myself.” (Barbara)

Finally, participants (Norma and Hanna being exceptions to this) offer that adjuncts do not have roles outside of the classroom:

“I don’t feel clued in or knowledgeable about the campus. I don’t get to go to “faculty” meetings. I don’t even know if there’s been a meeting unless meeting minutes have been sent out… I feel 50% a faculty member.” (Barbara)

“I have no control over the books I use. Even though I’ve taught this class like 10 times. I hate this book.” (Nicole)

What is surprising is how often the stereotyped perceptions of one’s self clash with who PTF believe they are. In one example, Faye struggles with reconciling who she (stereotypically) is professionally with who she believes she is personally:

At least that was my experience, even at law school. I can remember adjuncts, you know a couple of people who taught a specific class that was based on their expertise. I’d see them come in and they’d teach and then they’d leave. I never saw any interaction with others —with the faculty, with students. It was all that I’ve seen. Even here [at NCCC]. I didn’t expect anything more than that… And so I think I’m probably doing more, more than other adjuncts [who don’t put in the time and effort].

In another example, Barbara (AA, Computer Sciences, 1st year) echoed similar feelings:
I don’t want to be seen that way… You know, “Ms. B is an adjunct and you don’t want to take her class because you can never see her”… I don’t want that reputation as the person who just shows up and leaves.

*PTF Stereotype Threat*

“I would spend a lot more time on my class than what was required, you know. I have spent a lot of time as you can see getting prepared for class, making sure [students] had a good learning experience... I get paid for three hours a week; it takes me at least a minimum 10 hours a week. I got to the point you know, [where I said] to hell with it, I’m not doing this” Wanda (AA, Health Sciences, 7th year)

The literature offers that stereotypes about the groups to which one belongs represent commonly shared perspectives of the self (Allport, 1954; Sinclair et al., 2006). These perspectives of the self shape self-evaluation and ultimately can affect behavior causing what is known as stereotype threat (Steele, 1997). I found a number of themes amongst the data that lend themselves to stereotype threat: 1) PTF report being underpaid; thus PTF underperform to levels they perceive as being comparable to their salaries; 2) PTF report a lack of orientation to the campus NCCC and cultural norms; thus PTF make few, if any attempts to become knowledgeable of campus buildings, resources and extracurricular activities; 3) PTF report being mis- or under-informed of the policies and regulations NCCC and their respective departments; thus PTF adopt a reactive rather than proactive approach to understanding, implementing and enforcing policy; 4) PTF report their departments rarely involve them in departmental communications, decisions, and meetings; thus PTF withdraw from any activity, communication or duty not associated with the classroom; 5) PTF report a lack of commitment from NCCC; thus PTF fail to commit to NCCC; and 6) PTF report
feeling undervalued and invisible; thus PTF develop a “doing the minimum to get by” approach to instruction.

These findings are cause for concern at NCCC. The data analyzed for this study suggest there is indeed a relationship between negative stereotypes associated with PTF and PTF perceptions of self and fulfillment of roles. If NCCC (and I would argue community colleges at large) desires to move PTF toward being *better* instructors and *more* dedicated employees, they must first consider and confront the roles administrators, faculty, and students play in the perpetuation of these stereotypes.

**Conclusions**

The 12 PTF interviewed for this study struggled with who they believe they were in relation to who others say they were. As in some cases presented here, when PTF evaluate themselves along lines defined by negative stereotypes, these expectations, perceptions and roles often became part of the participants’ lived world. In other words, the findings of this study suggest that some NCCC PTF have a propensity to live *down* to the expectations of their peers and institution, while simultaneously aspiring to live up to being great instructors and progressive educators.

It should be noted that there are PTF who do their very best regardless of the situations in which they find themselves. In fact, several of the participants in this study do all they can despite inadequate support and resources to make a difference in the lives of their students. The discussion below is not meant to devalue or disregard their stories; rather, it is an attempt to address how the understanding and performance of roles of even the most enthusiastic, qualified, and skilled PTF can be impacted by others’ ad self-perceptions.
Understanding PTF Role Perception

In the figured world of NCCC, PTF are positioned by others as “invisible,” cheap labor. As such, they self-author in terms of the duties and responsibilities associated with being adjunct faculty, as opposed to their roles as instructors, mentors and educators. Why do PTF perceive their roles in these ways? To what extent is role perception impacted by cultural stereotypes? By institutional culture? To answer this we must consider how our participants define PTF. But as suggested by Holland et al. (1998), we must first consider within what context of meaning we are asking. Consider first the context of NCCC. What is it about NCCC that causes PTF to define themselves as invisible or cheap labor?

While PTF have traditionally been hired because of their real world, practical knowledge and skills, the reality is that as a result of temporary labor force dynamics, PTF are clearly a cheaper, lower stratum of professional labor when compared to their full-time counterparts (Levin et. al, 2006, p. 86). Jacoby (2006) offers that adverse contracts and poor working conditions create a system whereby PTF are only valued for their economic benefit. When Barbara expresses her discomfit with feeling that she is an illegitimate, second-class faculty member, she does so because the system—the cultural norms and practices that exist at NCCC—largely position PTF as expendable and invisible. Wyles (1998) adds that the marginalization of PTF is exacerbated by a “credentialing without credibility, responsibility without authority, and expectation without reward” (p. 90). This was evidenced through comments such as “I’m not expected to do this…unless I toot my own horn [the time and effort I put in] is not acknowledged. I mean if you are not going to pay us for the time we
actually spend preparing and teaching, at least throw us a bone” (Barbara, AA, Arts & Humanities, 1st year).

Keeping this mind I suggest the problem of PTF is not PTF members’ burden to bear. Why do we as scholars question PTF commitment, loyalty and effectiveness as teachers when in their figured worlds—socially and culturally constructed realms of interpretation, in which significance is assigned to certain acts and outcomes—a bottom dollar theology impacts everything from salaries to classroom space to cafeteria menus (Holland et al., 1998)? As evidenced by the data received from participant interviews and collected via observation and document analysis, NCCC continues to cut costs by hiring adjunct faculty, but is doing very little in the way of orientating, training and educating its PTF. That being said, is the literature (Jacobs, 1998; Jacoby, 2006; Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Ronco & Cahill, 2004; Umbach, 2007, Wyles, 1998) justified in suggesting PTF should be more committed, more informed, or more qualified instructors? Or, are scholars failing to record and consider how institutions like NCCC are not committing to, not informing, and not qualifying [training and supporting] their PTF?

Now consider the context of PTF as educators. In this context PTF see themselves as knowledgeable instructors, capable educators, and willing mentors. It is important to remember, as suggested by Holland et al. (1998) that people tell others who they are, “but even more importantly, they tell themselves and they try to act as though they are who they say they are” (p. 3). The data suggest that when considering identity in relation to the self (as opposed to the figured world of NCCC), PTF consciously and subconsciously align themselves with the more positively stereotyped role of educator or instructor. For these
participants, and arguably other PTF, the label *adjunct* or *part-time* faculty carries with it a stigma; it suggests *less than, second-class, or under-skilled*.

*When Self-Authoring Collides with Self-Stereotyping*

Steele (1997) suggests when a widely known negative stereotype (i.e., lack of commitment, scholarly weak) exists about a social group like PTF, it creates for its members a burden of suspicion that acts as a threat. As suggested by this research, PTF define their adjunct status in relation to negative stereotypes offered in the literature. Moreover, when positioning themselves within the context of the institution at which they teach, PTF appear to have a propensity for the realization of these stereotypes.

As Levin and Shaker (2010) note, this “troubled and indistinct” view PTF have of themselves as professionals is troubling not only for PTF, but the students they serve, and the institutions at which they serve. Moreover, uncertainty with respect to identity and positionality, coupled with “do more with less” dynamics of the new economy, only exacerbate the situation. As community colleges continue to hire more PTF, they have a duty and responsibility to educate, train and support those whom they have entrusted to teach the leaders, executives and professionals of tomorrow.

**Limitations**

This research is limited in three areas. First, this study’s design (case study) limits its generalizability to larger populations of adjunct faculty. For instance, the experiences of PTF outside of the three academic disciplines sampled for this research were not explored. Along these lines, demographic differences were not fully considered in the analyses of data (i.e., differences between PTF sex, age, race, or socioeconomic status). Additionally, further
probes such as the detailed exploration of the origins of negative stereotypes, academic socialization processes (i.e., graduate school), and reasons for teaching, were not used that may have been able to tease out additional data points.

Second, the time spent with research participants can be viewed as a limitation of this study. Bernard (1998) suggests that true understanding is best learned in the field through an extended and systematic data collection approach in which researchers use all of their senses to examine people in natural settings or naturally occurring situations. While a few hours out of one day is hardly enough time to gain true insight into the lived experiences of PTF and how they understand, engage with, and navigate NCCC, the choice to conduct one interview and one classroom observation was appropriate for the nature of this exploratory study.

Third, Steele and Aronson’s (1995) work lists anxiety as a precursor of stereotype threat. In their research, African American students internalized and worried about negative stereotypes regarding academic performance to the extent that this worrying itself negatively impacted performance. This correlation was not as explicit with the PTF who participated in this research, and some may consider this a limitation to the conclusions presented in this paper. However, I would argue that a great deal of anxiety is present amongst the PTF ranks at NCCC. In fact, the tension and uneasiness reported by this study’s participants as a result of the lack of resources offered and commitment displayed towards adjunct faculty is very real and well documented in PTF literature (Burnstad & Hoss, 2010; Christensen, 2006; Gappa & Leslie, 2002; Grubb, 1999; Jacoby, 2006; Levin & Shaker, 2010; Tarr, 2010; Wallin, 2007; Wyles, 1998). For instance, Wanda noted departmental policy and practice at NCCC unfairly forces adjuncts to maintain and frequently check NCCC email accounts. The
stress induced from this policy caused Wanda to “shut down” and eventually resign from her teaching position. In her words, “I got tired of worrying about the damn email policy. I wasn’t going to keep stressing myself out just because my department head didn’t get that it was too much to manage with my full-time job and other responsibilities.” Faye reported that as a new adjunct she did not feel comfortable asking for help with NCCC’s attendance policy. Faye’s fear of “being looked at like I didn’t know anything,” would ultimately lead to “having a meeting with my department head for turning in incomplete paperwork.”

Implications

When considering PTF and the figured worlds in which they live, operate and work, community colleges should do more to impact PTF positionality. Namely, by fostering an educator as opposed to laborer mindset, community colleges can shift PTF perceptions from that of second-class faculty to a mindset in which PTF are valued as highly skilled, committed and credible instructors. I offer the following suggestions for community college policy, practice, and future research.

Implications for Policy & Practice

For a variety of reasons (i.e., funding, accreditation) institutional policy and the enforcement thereof is arguably as important as instruction itself. However, when an institution such as NCCC places more value on—to use the words of my participants “policing policy”—than it does on the developing and empowering of productive, engaged, well-prepared faculty, it reinforces an employee rather than educator mindset. It should be noted that NCCC does require 12 (paid) professional development hours for its adjunct faculty. However, as evidenced through documents obtained from past development
seminars, NCCC’s professional development policy for adjuncts offers primarily reactive programming. Workshops and seminars that are aimed at rectifying inappropriate behavior or addressing issues with record keeping do little to improve the skill-set of PTF or help PTF overcome burnout and stagnation. Rielge (1987) suggests that a focus on organizational development (i.e., the needs and priorities of NCCC) is not faculty development. A true adjunct faculty development policy should offer training that addresses not only organizational issues, but instructional development (the developing of skills relating to teaching); professional development (i.e., funding for attendance of professional conferences); career development (training that is centered on for instance transitioning from part-time to full-time employment); and personal development (i.e., personal skills such as communication and holistic life-planning).

In the absence of financial (i.e., higher salaries or paying PTF for prep time) or other tangible incentives (office space, paid parking passes, etc.), the findings of this study also suggest PTF would benefit from improved collegiality. A fostering of respect and better communication from NCCC, its departments, and amongst the full- and part-time faculty ranks, facilitate an environment where PTF feel valued. While small, commonsense solutions such as addressing PTF by first name, personalizing mailboxes, inviting PTF to participate in faculty meetings, and recognizing PTF contributions above and beyond the norm, go a long way in eliminating a second-class mentality amongst adjuncts.

Implications for Research

This research is only the beginning to understanding community college PTF as a sub-group of higher education. To address the limitations as a result of this study’s design
and to expand upon the findings of this study, I offer three suggestions for future research. One, as mentioned earlier, this study was limited to 12 PTF in only three academic disciplines at one community college. To further explore the themes and findings suggested by this study, research should be done that takes into account a greater number and variety of PTF, as well as different institutional types. Two, the findings of my research suggest a relationship between role perception and PTF behavior. Future research should expand on the strength of this relationship. For instance, is one’s satisfaction with salary a greater predictor of adjunct success than feeling respected by peers? Lastly, future research should consider the ways in which community colleges can impact PTF identity development. If this study suggests role perception and positionality directly impact role performance, community colleges would benefit from in-depth knowledge of what factors hinder and facilitate role development, and subsequently role performance. These suggestions may not fix issues of PTF identity and role performance, but they provide a base on which community colleges can build long lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with the PTF they employ.
CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY COLLEGE PART-TIME FACULTY: HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES IMPACT ROLE PERFORMANCE

Introduction

Part-time faculty (PTF) have become increasingly important to the success of community colleges. Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) estimate that 67 percent of faculty employed at two-year institutions are part-time. Hired not only for their practical, real-world experience, PTF allow institutions flexibility with respect to enrollment, courses offered, and budgeting—saving as much as 49 percent in instructional costs compared to hiring full-time faculty (Grubb, 1999). Given the fiscal constraints plaguing American higher education, coupled with an estimated 30-44 percent of full-time faculty at community colleges expected to retire within the next five to 10 years, it is likely that the hiring of PTF will escalate (Twombly, 2005). Although the increased use of PTF is warranted for these reasons, the literature suggests it comes at the expense of educational outcomes (Eagan & Jaeger, 2008; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Ronco & Cahill, 2006; Umbach, 2007). According to this research, while possessing the technical knowledge and skill needed for instruction at community colleges, PTF may employ less effective teaching methods (Bettinger & Long, 2010; Umbach, 2007), be unfamiliar with institutional policy and procedures (Jacobs, 1998), and lack in commitment (Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Umbach, 2007).

With all the attention given to PTF and educational outcomes in recent years, still little is known of the underlying causes of these phenomena within the context of community colleges. Building on the work of Washington (2011) that examined PTF role at North Carolina Community College (NCCC), this paper offers insight into factors NCCC PTF
believe facilitate or hinder the performance of duties associated with community college instruction. Framed by prior research on the community college context, PTF characteristics, PTF perceptions of roles, and faculty motivation and performance theory, the analyses employs qualitative case study and Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) open-coding scheme to examine data obtained from 12 participant interviews, participant observations, and document analysis.

Analytical Framework

To understand what factors affect PTF performance at NCCC, this research draws primarily from three bodies of work. One, Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) discussion surrounding PTF typology provides a base for understanding PTF sub-group characteristics. Their framework is also used to identify whether certain PTF sub-groups experience and make sense of employment at NCCC in similar ways. Second, Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) theory of faculty role performance and achievement is used to inform the roles individuals and environment properties (e.g., institutional culture, organizational structure, etc.) play in motivating faculty and impacting performance. Third, Fairweather’s (1996) conceptualization of faculty reward structures explains the interrelatedness of institutional policy and practice with faculty performance.

Community Colleges and the New Professoriate

Today, there are a total of 1,195 community colleges (AACC, 2010). Defined by Cohen and Brawer (2003) as any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree, these institutions account for more than half (6.5 million) of all US higher education enrollment (AACC, 2010). Grubb (1999) notes
Community colleges are attractive to a diverse body of students because their tuition and fees are dramatically lower than their four-year counterparts; they are generally commuter campuses not requiring students to leave home; and they employ an “open door” policy with regard to academic qualifications. It is because of these factors that community colleges enroll significantly higher numbers of working class, minority, female and older students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb, 1999). With the current economic situation and a significant increase in student enrollment, these numbers continue to grow. For example, in 1993, 22% of community college students were minority—African American, Latino, Asian, and Native American (versus 18% of four-year institutions), 57% were female (versus 53%), 10% had family incomes below $15,000 (versus 6%), and 37% were over 30 years of age (versus 25%) (Dougherty, 1994). Data from the American Association of Community Colleges show that today 35% of community college students are minorities, 61% are female, 39% are first-generation students, 58% are non-traditional (over the age of 22) (AACC, 2010).

As community colleges grow, so do their faculty ranks. Yet, community college faculty have received little attention in higher education literature given that over 43% of all full- and PTF members in public, nonprofit institutions work at community colleges and teach 37% of all US undergraduates (“Almanac” 2005). The literature on community college part-time faculty is even more scarce (Twombly & Townsend, 2008).

Gappa and Leslie (1993) note that defining PTF is difficult because no one definition exists for such a heterogeneous group. In fact, they suggest four types of part-timers, 1) aspiring academics; 2) professionals, specialists, and experts; 3) those transitioning into retirement; and 4) freelancers. However, for the purpose of this study, PTF refers to anyone
who 1) teaches less than the average full-time load, or 2) has less than a full-time faculty assignment and range of duties, or 3) may have a temporary full-time assignment. These instructors are typically non-tenured and non-permanent; paid on a part-time contract outside of the regular faculty plan (Gappa, 1984; Ronco & Cahill, 2006).

PTF have long been a part of the community college structure. In the past, PTF were typically hired because they possessed technical skills and practical knowledge that was beneficial to students; their expertise and workplace experiences helped keep curricula fresh (AACC, 2008b; Levin et al., 2006). But, as institutions of higher education find themselves being pressed to do even more with even less funding, the hiring of PTF has become the latest strategy in the battle against rising costs (Bettinger & Long, 2010; Ehrenberg, 2004; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2004; Wagoner, 2007). The use of PTF as a cost-cutting measure enables institutions to offer a course at a fraction of the cost compared to the same course taught by a full-time faculty member (Grubb, 1999; Jacoby, 2006; Leslie & Gappa, 2002). These cost-savings, coupled with declining state support for higher education in the 1990s have resulted in the recent hiring boom of PTF (Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2004; Gappa, 2001).

When compared to their full-time counterparts, Eagan (2007) notes there are few demographical differences. In fact, he lists educational attainment as the only significant difference between full-timers and part-timers, with full-time faculty holding proportionately more master’s, professional, and doctoral degrees than PTF. While this difference may explain myths that PTF are underdeveloped and weak in scholarship, it does not explain negative stereotypes of PTF such as compromising the quality of higher education (Benjamin, 2002), lacking commitment to their institutions (Jaeger & Eagan, 2008); being
less likely to be integrated into campus life (Jacobs, 1998; Jaeger, 2008; Umbach, 2007), lacking “sufficient knowledge about the institutional support services so critical to first-time-in-college students,” or being unprepared “to identify at-risk behavior in students” (Ronco & Cahill, 2006, p. 3). Washington (2011) found that many of these stereotypes were perpetuated not only by institutional culture, but that these stereotypes were self-perpetuated by PTF themselves. To develop an in-depth understanding of the origins and underlying facilitators of these claims, we must first consider personal and environmental factors that affect PTF motivation and performance.

**Faculty Motivation & Performance**

While previous studies focused on individual or environmental factors that affect faculty motivation and performance, Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) theoretical framework expanded the literature by considering individual and environmental properties both separately and collectively. The authors identified four properties of individuals: sociodemographic characteristics, career, self-knowledge, and social knowledge. These properties explain the extent to which the self impacts motivation and performance.

Relatedly, Blackburn and Lawrence suggest environmental properties such as norms, physical space, and technology affect motivation and performance.

*Properties of Individuals.* Sociodemographic characteristics, or fixed characteristics such as age, race, and sex, influence the behavior of faculty members by “limiting or enhancing” access to resources and opportunities (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995, p. 16). A faculty member’s career experiences impact preparation in teaching, as well as how faculty come to understand what it means to be “faculty.” Also included in this concept are academic
discipline, the normative structures associated with the discipline and institution, and career age—the number of years employed as faculty. The notion of career is of particular interest when considering presumed differences between the behaviors and products of part- versus full-time faculty. For instance the case of one, a full-time Ph.D. holding faculty member teaching computer science at a four-year institution; and two, a bachelor’s degree-holding lab technician teaching part-time at a community college. One could justifiably argue that the former, having attended eight to 10 years (four years of undergraduate education, two years at the master’s level, and two to four years at the doctorate level) of post-secondary education has a deeper, richer understanding of the roles and behaviors associated with being a “good” or “engaged” faculty member than the latter. Along the same lines, career age “serves as a surrogate for the skills and knowledge” an individual acquires as an instructor (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995, p. 16).

Self-knowledge as described by Blackburn and Lawrence, is a measure of self-image and self-assessed competence. It includes personal attitudes and values, along with ambition, persistence, and supportiveness. Social knowledge on the other hand considers one’s understanding of subjective norms, which is how others expect them to behave. Additionally, social knowledge includes the concept of social climate – what faculty members believe about the institutional environment and how they perceive other players (e.g., administrators, other faculty, students, etc.) within this environment.

*Properties of the Environment.* Defined as the “objective characteristics of the work setting that exist, separate and apart from individual faculty perceptions,” environmental properties compose the second major component to Blackburn and Lawrence’s theoretical
framework of faculty motivation (p. 15). The author’s propose that factors such as institutional norms, physical space, or access to technology have direct and indirect effects on faculty—that is, they impede or facilitate faculty motivation and behaviors. For instance, an institution located in a county in need of nurse practitioners, may receive more funding for its nursing program. In this case, more funding may translate into higher salaries for instructors or better classroom equipment/technology. Other examples of environmental conditions—structural and normative features on an institution—include organizational structure, student- and faculty-body composition, the fiscal well-being of an institution, and instructional resources.

Also important to the discussion of PTF motivation and behavior are what Blackburn and Lawrence term “environment responses.” Environmental responses are the formal or informal channels of feedback at an institution. For instance, as it relates to this study, how do PTF receive feedback on their performance? Does this feedback come from students? Faculty? Administrators? Is this feedback informal, such as a casual hallway conversation? Or, are faculty subject to formal in-class peer reviews? Perhaps more importantly, is this feedback accompanied by suggestions or opportunities for growth (e.g., referring PTF to articles such as Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, lunch with a seasoned faculty member, or professional development seminars)?

Lastly, Blackburn and Lawrence discuss the notion of social contingencies. Having both short- and long-term impacts, happenings such as getting married, the unfortunate death of a close friend, or health problems, can influence the way in which faculty behave.
It is important to consider what background characteristics, experiences, and environments motivate faculty to behave or perform in one way or another. In fact, Washington (2011) suggests the underlying factors discussed in Blackburn and Lawrence’s study are of more importance than the behaviors themselves; that is to fully understand behavior, you must first consider its contributing factors. His work identified the ways in which PTF come to understand (i.e., background characteristics, socialization and personal experiences) and define their roles as NCCC faculty. This research expands Washington’s discussion taking into account environmental motivators as outlined by Blackburn and Lawrence. A deeper understanding of not only individual, but also environmental properties will pave the way for institutions to adopt proactive, rather than reactive policies regarding the hiring and training of PTF.

Understanding Faculty Reward Structures

Also important to my analyses is the work of Fairweather (1996). In his book, *Faculty Work and Public Trust: Restoring the Value of Teaching and Public Service in America Academic Life*, Fairweather explains that higher education is charged with a duty to fulfill traditional functions of its universities, as well as meet new challenges posed by the global knowledge economy. Moreover, he suggests that these opposing forces have led to a degradation of the interrelatedness of faculty and institution. I would argue that such a dynamic also exists within the PTF ranks at community colleges—that is, they are charged with filling the role of traditional (full-time) faculty, while facing challenges associated with lack of resources, training, and pay (Christensen, 2006; Washington, 2011).
Fairweather (1996) offers that at large, four-year institutions, reward structures tend to favor research over teaching. He notes, “from this viewpoint, the faculty reward structure acts as a mechanism to ensure continuation of research norms across institutions and disciplines” (p. 45) Borrowing from Fairweather and considering the context of community colleges, failing to adequately train and support PTF members, treating PTF as institution outsiders, and underpaying (as compared to their full-time counterparts) part-timers, community colleges have instituted a set of norms which devalue PTF and their expertise. Moreover, the lack of faculty reward structures such as compensation, promotion, or recognition further exacerbates the disconnect between PTF and the community colleges at which they serve. Wallin (2007) notes, faculty are just as, if not more motivated by internal factors (i.e., being recognized by their institutions or feeling like they are in a position to add value to the lives of their students) than external environmental properties. Research such as this study, which examines in what ways, and to what extent faculty are motivated by internal and external properties is needed to inform our understanding of PTF and role performance.

Methodology

To gain an understanding of the factors PTF believe facilitate or hinder role performance at NCCC, this study employs the use of qualitative case study. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) offer “qualitative research deals with multiple, socially constructed realities or qualities that are complex and indivisible into discreet variables” (p. 6). As such, multiple case studies were used to describe and compare insights amongst 12 PTF members. Data
were obtained via the use of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis.

**Qualitative Case Study**

Bounded with defined beginnings and ends, case studies are limited to a specific location, person, or event (Stake, 1994; Yin, 1994). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that designing case study research is similar to looking through a funnel. The start of the study is the wide end of the funnel. It involves determining the subjects and sources of data—people and places. This research design included 12 PTF members at a specific community college, within three specified academic disciplines. As researchers begin to consider the collection of data, they narrow in, or focus on the phenomenon under study. This process includes reviewing and exploring the data collection methods to determine which methods are most appropriate for the collection of rich, thick data. In this case, participant interviews, observation, and document analysis provided the data, as outlined in the literature (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Yin, 1994). Moving further down the funnel, the researcher formulates questions that are holistic and context sensitive (Stake, 1994). As Patton (2002) notes, meaning is distorted when critical context is omitted. Unlike recent work that inadequately considers the context of community college PTF, this study was designed to elicit the “front-line” perspectives and experiences of NCCC faculty. Finally, Bogdan and Biklen note that researchers move from broad exploratory concepts to “more directed data collection and analysis” (p. 59). What then emerges from the other end of the funnel is a well-crafted, focused research study.
Site Selection

To understand what PTF believe contribute or hinder to their ability to succeed as adjunct faculty, I purposefully sampled for 12 research participants at a large, North Carolina community college. NCCC was chose as a matter of researcher access and for its uniqueness. As one of the largest community colleges in the North Carolina Community College System, NCCC services more than 65,000 students from urban and rural areas. Additionally, NCCC has established programs in each of the three academic areas with which this study was concerned.

This study purposefully sampled 12 PTF members teaching at least one course at NCCC. Purposeful sampling enables researchers to discover, understand, and gain insight from a sample that will offer the greatest yield of understanding regarding a particular phenomenon through the selection of information rich cases (Merriam, 1998). Further bounding my study, I also used a criterion-based selection scheme to enhance the selection of research information-rich participants (Merriam, 2002). For instance, purposefully sampled to ensure that each participant had a minimum of one semester of teaching experience. This was especially important to ensure that each participant had adequate time to develop a working understanding of themselves as NCCC PTF members. This is in line with Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1996) four theoretical constructs of self-knowledge, social-knowledge, environmental conditions, and environmental responses.

Also, I sought out participants who were representative of three academic disciplines—arts and humanities, computer sciences, and health sciences. These three disciplines were chosen as they represent three of the largest academic disciplines within the
North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS, 2009). By choosing heavily populated disciplines, I was able to draw from a larger pool of faculty members for my study. This aided in the selection of participants, as well as helped ensure confidentiality of my research participants. Additionally, it was my hope that in choosing three different disciplines to investigate, I would be able to gain insight into how PTF members from different academic disciplines come to understand their roles as faculty, as well as the expectations they hold for themselves and the institution at which they serve.

I obtained research participants using my academic and professional circles as a source for the initial nomination of participants. From there, I used snowball sampling to identify additional research participants. Of the 12 research participants involved in this study, 10 were women. Half of the participants sampled were new instructors (having less than three years of teaching experience). The other participants ranged from three to 30 years of experience. It should also be noted that of the 12 participants, five have aspirations of teaching full-time, nine have other jobs (full- or part-time) outside of NCCC, and 1 recently resigned from her teaching position. There were five aspiring academics, four professionals, specialists, and experts, two freeway flyers, and one career ender.

Data Collection

Participant interviews were the primary source of data for this research. Participant observation and document analysis were used as secondary data sources for the purpose of triangulation. Triangulation lends credibility and accuracy to the precise nature of the reality explored in that it can be used to verify statements collected during the interview process.
(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Relatedly, triangulation adds depth and rigor to this study’s findings via the use of multiple forms of data collection (Baker, 1996).

Kvale (1996) describes qualitative interviews as attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. Because such experiences and innermost thoughts are often guarded, Lindolf (1995) adds that the use of interviews enables qualitative researchers to gain an insider perspective of the phenomenon under study. I used a hybrid approach to interviewing—the semi-structured or interview guide approach. Patton (2002) offers that the semi-structured approach is the most widely used format for qualitative interviewing as it offers both structure and flexibility to the process of interviewing. Its emphasis on the use of open-ended questions provides the researcher with quotations that reveal the respondents’ levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions (Patton, 2002). Each interview lasted approximately 45-120 minutes in areas the participants deemed safe. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and submitted to the study’s participants to ensure accuracy in each transcript. Participants were not able to remove comments from the transcripts, but could corroborate or disapprove of interpretations.

Employing the use of field notes, I observed and documented a typical day with eight of the 12 research participants (two participants opted out of the observation session, one recently resigned her teaching position and 1 health sciences participant could not participate because of patient-provider confidentiality issues). In addition, each observation involved the shadowing of research participants from the time they arrived on campus to the time they
left. Close attention was given to PTF members’ interactions with other faculty, staff, and students in hopes of gleaning a more detailed understanding of available campus resources, institutional culture, practices, and norms.

Document analysis, the third method of data collection supplemented data gathered during the faculty interviews and participant observation. Documents such as institutional policies, job descriptions, teaching contracts, student handbooks, training materials, evaluation forms, and teaching schedules lended support to themes identified in the analysis of the primary data source (Washington, 2011). An analysis of NCCC documents was important because the “paper trail” left by events and processes shed light on what NCCC produces, how it certifies certain kinds of activities, categorizes events or people, codifies procedures or policies, explains past or future actions, and tracks its own activities (Lindolf, 1995, p. 208).

Analysis of Data

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), data analysis “involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned” (p. 127). Merriam (1998) also speaks to the notion of organizing, or constructing reality in qualitative data analysis, noting qualitative research is based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. As such, this research open-coded data as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) to identify and interpret the reality of the research participants. Interview transcripts, field notes, and documents were read, re-read, and then reviewed to uncover patterns amongst the data. Key words and phrases that were representative of these patterns were then grouped into categories or themes. Additionally,
the themes identified were reviewed alongside the literature to further inform themes found during the coding process.

Validity and Reliability

The terms *validity* and *reliability* are generally discussed in quantitative work as factors that can add to, or take away from the generalizability of a study. According to Joppe (2000), reliability is described as the “extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology” (p. 1). Validity on the other hand, determines whether the research truly measures what it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Joppe, 2000).

Some qualitative researchers reject the notions of validity and reliability as generalizability is not the goal of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit in the absence of discussions of validity and reliability, “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to.” (p. 290). To that extent, Mason (1996) suggests that a researcher must convey “how well matched is the logic of the method to the kinds of research questions you are asking and the kind of social explanation you are intending to develop” (p. 147). To ensure the validity of this study’s findings, I incorporated member checks, peer debriefing, and tag cloud analysis.

Member checks allow each of the research participants to review and *sign-off* on the accuracy of their interview transcripts (Lindolf, 1995). In my study, each of the research participants was given a copy of the interview transcripts and subsequent themes that
emerged from the collection of data. While participants were not given an opportunity to strike statements from the interview transcripts, they were given the opportunity to corroborate or disapprove of my interpretations.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain peer debriefing as the use of a research partner or colleague who critically and thoughtfully considers a researcher’s analyses. Lincoln and Guba (1985) note the four ways in which peer debriefing can increase a study’s validity:

1. through analytical probing a debriefer can help uncover taken for granted biases, perspectives and assumptions on the researcher’s part;
2. through this process the researcher can become aware of his/her posture toward data and analysis;
3. this is an opportunity to test and defend emergent hypotheses and see if they seem reasonable and plausible to a disinterested debriefer;
4. provide the researcher with an opportunity for catharsis.

Tag cloud analysis is a fairly new tool for analysis of qualitative data. Tag or word clouds use computer software to offer a visual depiction of the word content of a document. Tags are usually single words and the importance of a tag is shown with font size or color (Wikipedia, 2009). This visual representation of the data allowed me to identify key words and themes from my transcript data. These analyses were reviewed independently and collectively to determine if they coincided with the general themes uncovered during primary data analysis. Terms that were too big or small, as it related to my initial analysis, were reviewed more closely to ensure that themes were not exaggerated or ignored (C. A. Wiessner, EAC 790 lecture, April 7, 2009).
Because reliability is concerned with how accurately my research methods and techniques produce data, I used multiple methods (as discussed above in my conversation regarding data triangulation) to corroborate data sources.

Findings & Discussion

Fairweather (1996) suggests that in order to bridge the gap between value and quality in higher education, we must move beyond surface level outcomes and begin discussing what motivates faculty, who hires them, and the policies that govern them. The analyses of data suggest the chasm between faculty performance and NCCC (environmental properties) manifests itself in three ways: the hiring, training, motivating of PTF. First, the ways in which PTF were hired presented challenges for some of this study’s participants. Second, some PTF do not feel adequately supported by their institutions (i.e., faculty orientations, trainings, opportunities for professional development). Third, nine of the 12 participants interviewed feel they are treated to some degree as hired help by NCCC; they are underpaid, have sporadic at best communication with their departments, and rarely play a role in departmental decisions.

Hiring PTF

The results of the data regarding hiring practices at NCCC yielded opposing perspectives. On one hand, participants like Norma (aspiring academic) and Heidi (freeway flyer) report positive experiences with being actively recruited to teach in their departments:

The day I was hired my department head took me a walking tour of campus. He showed me the room I was going to be teaching in and even asked if the room
would be comfortable for me. He gave me a stack of resources and psychology CDs. He even walked me through Blackboard. (Norma)

A recruiter came to my college and said she was looking for bilingual adjuncts for various areas at NCCC. She was very helpful in getting me in. When I walked through that door, I felt like I had a Ph.D. or something because everybody across campus, not just my department, but throughout the system were respectful and helpful. (Heidi)

Both Norma and Heidi revealed that being treated well, along with feeling valued and respected made a difference in how they approached their first, and subsequent semesters of teaching. They felt that they had “advocates in [their] corner” and that they “brought something worthwhile to the table.” Yet, these participants feel they were “atypical” with respect to the hiring of PTF. Norma commented, “I’ll probably skew your results. I don’t feel like I was treated as most adjuncts here.” She later added, “I was lucky. I know a lot of adjuncts are hired last minute and its like, ‘Here. Here’s your syllabus and the book. Your mailbox is over there.’”

The majority of participants, such as Barbara, report different experiences with being hired. She recalled feeling as though she was an “afterthought” of her department noting the unpredictable nature and availability of PTF contracts:

I didn’t know I was going to be teaching this semester until like four days before the semester started. I know it has to do with enrollment and all, but it was crazy. I went on my interview earlier in the summer but didn’t hear anything back for a while. I had
been calling and calling trying to get into the [department]. It’s like I had given up on the hopes of teaching and then all of sudden you get a call saying you’ve been hired, pick up the book and syllabus, sign a contract, and bam, you’re teaching a class…I didn’t even meet the lead instructor until a two weeks later.

William shared that his initial interactions with NCCC as a newly hired PTF were “short and sweet.” He recalled that his interview lasted less than 20 minutes and once he was hired, he was given a “binder that had my syllabus, classroom time and all, the book, and that was about it.” When asked if he left his interview and subsequent hiring meeting feeling informed of his roles and responsibilities as an adjunct, he commented, “Kind of. I had to go to an orientation, but that wasn’t until later.” William ultimately felt NCCC should do more to help adjuncts get to know their departments, the campus, and what NCCC expects of them. Faye and Wanda shared similar stories suggesting that they had expected more from their departments during their interviews. Faye offered that she left campus feeling “anxious and lost,” and would have benefited from a tour of campus or being introduced to other faculty.

These findings suggest institutional norms associated with the hiring of PTF play a role in the motivation and performance of faculty. Informal channels of feedback (e.g., messages sent and received during interviewing and hiring) It also appears environmental conditions, such as policy and practice may also affect PTF self-knowledge. As Blackburn & Lawrence’s (1995) suggest, the concept of self-knowledge is a measure of self-image and self-competence. In the cases of Norma and Heidi, positive hiring experiences left them feeling sure of themselves with respect to their value, competencies, and abilities. However,
negative experiences during the hiring process leave PTF with feelings of anxiousness, and a sense of being unprepared and under-informed.

*Training PTF*

Wallin (2007) believes it is imperative that administrators meet the needs of PTF and ensures they “have access to the same information and resources as full-time faculty” (p. 68) to as successful as community colleges expect them to be. As she notes, adjuncts themselves are adult learners who perhaps have the most to benefit from the same coaching and development offered to full-timers. Professional development offers opportunities for PTF growth, as well as encourages collegiality. One might assume that an institution that demands the very best of its PTF would offer the very best opportunities for development of its part-time teaching corps. Yet, participants overwhelmingly feel NCCC need to do more to train and facilitate PTF success. While there were no noticeable differences amongst PTF sub-group or academic discipline, in example after example participants point to not only a lack of resources, but not knowing all of the resources available to PTF members. For instance, Erica noted that even though she’s taught at NCCC for 30 years, she still attends professional conferences to “stay on top of the new technology and what’s going on” in nursing. She expressed dissatisfaction that her department does not pay for adjuncts to attend conferences, noting that it impacts her ability to stay relevant and share new technology with her students. William offered that he struggled during his first year because he was expected to “jump right into it.” He felt that if he had had an opportunity to get “some type of training, it would have helped me, especially when you have to teach night classes with people who don’t even want to be there sometimes.” Norma, while extremely happy with her department’s
commitment to her development as a NCCC faculty member, commented, “there’s all this uncertainty about what really is professional development.” She added, “Not every one needs to sit through a 2-hour workshop on Blackboard. Some people just want help being better teachers.” In another example, Sheila and Wanda echoed concerns also voiced by Faye, Sam, William, and Fredi regarding NCCC’s peer observation policy:

There’s a disconnect when [my department] talk about the end-of-semester classroom observations. I’ve been here for eight years, but I don’t think I’ve ever had someone observe the class. (Shelia, computer sciences)

Well, they have a full-time faculty member come in and sit in on your class. But that’s it. They sit in the back take some notes and you never get to see what they wrote. I mean, sometimes the department head might call you in to say your doing a good job, but that’s it… Nope. They don’t say, “You did a good job at this.” Or, “You could have done that better.” I never got any resources or formal feedback from those observations. (Wanda)

Finally, Faye shared frustrations with not knowing that she could use her department’s printer until her third year of employment:

I went to speak with my department head because I was trying to find an empty room to prep for a test. So she took me into a back room in the office. She gave me a smaller office that was partly empty that I could use if I need to, you know, get some work done for class. I was like, “Oh! There’s a computer? There’s a printer?” I mean, I had been lugging my laptop around, trying to figure out how to print off of NCCC’s
network and I was just finding this out. I’ve been there three years and never utilized a thing; never knew this was available to me. So, these are I guess, examples of the lack of orientation that disconnects and prevents me [from doing more] you know.

While participants offer that NCCC is not “as supportive as they could be,” seven participants acknowledged recent attempts by NCCC to offer professional development opportunities to PTF. Fredi noted that all NCCC adjunct faculty are now required to complete six hours of paid professional development. Norma spoke of her department’s contribution to her expenses for a national conference she wanted to attend (it should be noted that Norma is an aspiring academic seeking full-time enrollment at NCCC).

Documents obtained for analysis confirm this trend. For instance, an agenda from an adjunct professional development conference (offered in the evening over fall break so that PTF could attend) lists 11 different workshops for adjunct faculty including sessions on FERPA, Blackboard instruction, understanding course syllabi, peer observation, handling threatening situations, and classroom management.

These findings suggest NCCC’s new focus on the creation of opportunities for PTF professional development is welcomed and appreciated by PTF. Participants report that these opportunities enable them to be better teachers, interact with other faculty, and develop a clearer understanding of campus policies. However, it appears positive effects of these opportunities are overshadowed by feelings of inadequacy with respect to communication, training. In particular, participants report NCCC’s environmental conditions (e.g., NCCC’s professional development policies, the lack of resources available to PTF, etc.) and environmental responses (e.g., lack of departmental feedback from end-of-semester
observations) negatively impact PTF willingness and ability to perform (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Kezar & Sam, 2011; Wallin, 1995).

Motivating PTF

Nearly all (10 of 12) PTF interviewed feel that outside of teaching because they “love to teach,” there are few incentives at NCCC for adjuncts to do more. As suggested by Blackburn and Lawrence (1996), environmental conditions—institutional norms, physical space, or access to technology have direct and indirect effects on faculty. For instance, Norma and Nicole commented that they were “lucky” to have an office on campus (it should be noted that these were the only two participants with dedicated office space). Both noted that having an office made them feel valuable and legitimized their positions as faculty members. Moreover, they thought that having an office on campus enabled them to be better prepared for class, increased their interactions with other faculty and students, and kept them “in the loop” with their departments. In another example, Heidi explained that because her department head intentionally invites PTF to faculty meetings and includes PTF in departmental email, she feels connected and informed on departmental and institutional happenings.

Conversely, the choice by some departments to not include PTF in “regular faculty” activities can hinder performance of roles. In two examples, PTF members such as Barbara and Faye felt undervalued and under-rewarded to the point that they “understand why most adjuncts just do what they need to do to get by.” Faye commented on her discontent with the lack of inclusivity she feels as a NCCC faculty member saying, “the fact that I’m not even
invited to our department’s *faculty* meetings; what does that tell you? And they wonder why people are disconnected.” Sharing similar feelings, Barbara explained:

Well, I mean there are so many things that I think can be better, but I think if there could be some overall, like top down [commitment], to include faculty members. Don’t make it mandatory, but say, “Hey. We want you to feel included and these are some things we offer. We want you to participate as much as you can.”

Jacobs (1998) offers that there are simple solutions to complex issues presented in the form of environmental conditions. In his article titled *Using Part-Time Faculty More Effectively*, Jacobs offers several low- or no-cost strategies to enhance PTF efficiency and effectiveness such as: adding PTF to institution mailing lists, providing access to services such as the library and computer centers, provide an “environmental scan” that describes norms, contexts, and standards for the college, and provide feedback on performance.

Along these lines, Christensen (2006) suggests when it comes to policy regarding the dissemination of resources, wages are only part of the problem. Quite frankly, the participants of this study have accepted the fact that they were paid unequally as compared to full-time faculty. As such, they look to other institutional incentives such as, being assigned office space, getting “first dibbs” on teaching future courses, and recognition from their departments as motivators for performance. In two examples from two very different PTF sub-groups and disciplines, Barbara and Nicole echo similar concerns:

I feel like if you work 12 hours prepping for class in addition to the three classroom hours, you should be paid for at least… I’d even be happy with getting three hours of paid prep time. And I mean really, if you are not going to pay us. Just give us some
type of recognition. At least throw us a bone. Like, “Hey. I see the work you’ve been putting in.” I really think that would go a long way with part-timers. Some recognition. (Barbara)

The fact that I have an office is huge! It really helps to have a place that is mine. I mean, I can come here and get settled before class, use the computer, print off materials. Plus I get to interact with the other faculty in here. That’s been great too. Sometimes it’s good to bounce ideas off of one another. Other times it’s good just to have someone to talk to when you’re dealing with a difficult student or just having a bad day. (Nicole)

Jacobs (1998) offers while the major obstacle to establishing more effective policy and practice is budgetary, “if institutions cannot provide the fundamental changes some PTF advocate, then, at minimum, they should endeavor to reduce dissatisfaction and dysfunction. For some PTF recognition of service alone is a key motivator of performance. Erica, a nursing adjunct who having retired after 26 years of teaching, recently returned to teach part-time at NCCC. She shared her motivations for going back to teach when her department head called her four years ago:

My students went over to main campus and requested me. It was so bad that my department head asked me to come back. When I got to thinking about it, I realized how much I love teaching and working with students. Plus, I have a lot of time on my hands now… the money isn’t really a factor, but I do get to pick my own schedule now… So, yes. I drive two hours each way to teach one class. But I really
love it. It’s an honor really that these kids look up to me as a mentor, educator and role model.

The lack of support for PTF on so many fronts reinforces an institutional-backed notion of PTF as *faculty of convenience*. As evidenced by the data, NCCC does not invest in the development of its PTF to the extent it expects them to be skilled teachers, knowledgeable of policies and procedures, and aware of campus resources. The reality is that whether they are overachievers such as the participants of this study (as evidenced through participant interviews and observations) or stereotypically under-skilled, PTF benefit and are motivated by feeling part of the team, valued for their skills, and recognized for their service (Jacobs, 1998; Kezar & Sam, 2011; Wallin, 2007).

**Limitations**

Despite the use of multiple data sources and the attention given to validity and reliability, this study’s design is not without limitation. In particular, this research was limited to the experiences of 12 PTF members at NCCC, which is a community college located in one particular region of the United States. As such, the findings of this study could at best be used to inform others on the particular experiences of these 12 participants, at NCCC. However, as British author Lisa Baker (2006) explains in her paper, *10 Pitfalls to Avoid in Qualitative Research*, it is not so much the quantity that is important, it is the quality of the data” (p. 530). The best data she posits, is “rich, profound and exhaustive” and “a small number of subjects can generate vast amounts of data.” (p. 530). Along the same lines, the very nature of case study limits my research. Because case study is by definition bounded, my study ignores experiences of PTF that lie outside my case. For instance, I give
no consideration to ways of understanding amongst or PTF who teach outside of my three academic disciplines.

Additionally,

**Implications**

I suggest that policies related to part-time faculty all too often pursue consistency and regularity when the problems these policies addressing are rooted in inconsistency and irregularity. My major premise is that better policy and improved practice would result if they were based on conscious disaggregation of the circumstances under which part-time faculty are hired and under which they work (Jacobs, 1998, p. 9).

The findings of this study suggest faculty dissatisfaction, as a result of environmental properties at NCCC (culture, practice and policy), impact the extent to which faculty feel supported and valued; thus affecting behavior and the performance of roles. In an extreme example of the effect environmental properties can have on PTF behavior, Wanda, a seven year NCCC adjunct faculty member with 21 years of teaching experience, resigned from her annual appointment teaching in the Health Sciences department over dissatisfaction with her department’s email policy. The data tell us that as faculty disenfranchisement increases, the more likely they are to adopt negative behaviors associated with negative educational outcomes (i.e., showing up to campus for class and leaving immediately after, limiting opportunities for meaningful faculty-student interactions or spending inadequate time preparing for class lectures) (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1996; Washington, 2011, Washington & Jaeger, 2010). I offer several implications for policy, practice, and future research that address concerns outlined by this study’s participants.
Implications for Policy & Practice

To ensure the success of its PTF community colleges like NCCC, must invest in the PTF teaching corps. While it seems unlikely that this investment will come in the form of salary increases, community colleges can creatively reward and motivate PTF through other means. I offer four suggestions for policy and practice at NCCC: 1) create shared office space for PTF to prepare for class; 2) increase the use of evening liaisons to support PTF; and 3) invite adjuncts to participate in the same activities and trainings available to full-time faculty.

Holly offered an example from an institution she once taught at that created shared office spaces for adjuncts to use at their convenience: “It was just a regular room and they put a desk in each corner to create stations for us to work out of.” While it was just a room, Holly recalled that the shared workspace was helpful in a number of ways. She felt that the adjunct office helped her to be better prepared for class, increased her interaction with other faculty, and made her feel “like a regular faculty” because she was working out of “an office and not a Starbucks.” Were NCCC to in Barbara’s words create “top-down policy” that emphasized dedicated working spaces for PTF, both PTF performance and the quality thereof, may increase (Wallin, 2007).

While some NCCC departments employ department or “evening liaisons” to help support its adjuncts, there is no institution-wide policy regarding their usage. As reported by Wanda, these staff members typically work in the evenings to assist PTF with everything from opening doors to setting up smart classrooms to serving as liaisons between the day-only faculty and adjuncts who teach night courses. I believe that NCCC and its PTF would
benefit greatly from making the use of evening liaisons common practice. Going a step further, NCCC should consider integrating shared office space with dedicated adjunct assistants. Adjunct assistants could take a number forms depending on budget constraints. For instance, these assistants could play the role of administrative assistant for a department’s PTF—assisting with departmental forms and serving as points-of-contact for students. Or, a low-cost strategy might involve full-time faculty who rotate throughout the week to serve as points of reference and as a knowledgebase for adjuncts.

Several participants of this study reported feeling like institutional outsiders within their own departments citing lack of communication and being treated like “stepchildren.” To combat these feelings, NCCC should invite PTF to the same activities and trainings it offers its full-time faculty (i.e., faculty meetings, workshops, etc.). While it may present a challenge (i.e., time of programs), PTF deserve a chance to better themselves through professional development opportunities and be as knowledgeable of departmental happenings as their full-time counterparts (Jacobs, 1998; Wallin, 2007).

**Implications for Future Research**

While this study does advance knowledge of the motivating factors behind community college PTF performance, future research is needed to address the limitations of the study’s design. For instance, research with a larger sample size may offer greater disparities amongst PTF type and discipline. Moreover, research with a larger sample size would warrant greater generalizations to be made across PTF sub-groups and disciplines. Also, when considering the importance of institutional and situational context, research that examines PTF from other disciplines and institutions is warranted.
Implications for Theory

The use of Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) theory of faculty role performance and Fairweather’s (1996) conceptualization of faculty reward structures was sufficient for this examination of the motivating factors behind PTF performance. However, research that takes into account the current challenges and issues facing community colleges (i.e., the stress placed on economic resources while attempting to satisfy increasing enrollments with less funding), may reveal new conceptualizations for what institutions and their faculty members regard rewarding. As evidenced in this study, PTF having accepted that their salaries would not increase, placed just as much of an emphasis on internal motivators for performance (e.g., feeling like part of the team, knowing that department heads recognized their efforts) as they did external motivators.

In conclusion, overcoming obstacles faced by community college PTF presents a challenge for scholars and administrators alike. As Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) suggest, not only must we consider the individual properties of faculty, we must consider the roles institutions play in motivating faculty performance. Environmental properties, such as institutional culture, policy, and practice play a large role in driving an individual’s perception of self and subsequent performance. Clearly, part-timers are committed, but they are not receiving the support they feel they need to succeed from the institutions that employ them (Gappa and Leslie, 2002, Wallin, 2007; Washington, 2011).
CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Research

This research study fills a gap in the current literature base by investigating how community college PTF come to know, understand, and live out the perceptions and expectations they have of the institutions at which they work. More specifically, this study explored the vantage point of the instructor as a means for examining perceived roles and expectations through data collected from twelve participant interviews, as well as participant observation, and document analysis. Additionally, data were analyzed in conjunction with literature on PTF typology (Gappa & Leslie, 1993), faculty socialization and development (Austin, 2002; Riegle, 1984), identity and (Holland, et al., 1998; Levin & Shaker, 2010), self-stereotype and stereotype threat (Sinclair, Hardin, & Lowery, 2006; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Vaes, 2008), and faculty motivation literature (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1996; Blau, 1964). The data revealed a number of findings.

One, PTF appear to be socialized through graduate school experiences, previous teaching experience, interactions with other NCCC faculty, interactions with their department heads, and exposure to NCCC programs, policy. Two, when considering what it means to be faculty, PTF exhibited dualistic identities. As employees of NCCC, PTF identify themselves as being “undervalued,” “second-class,” exploited laborers. Yet, when considering their personal roles as faculty, PTF view themselves as skilled instructors, dedicated educators, and caring mentors. Three, PTF appear to internalize to the expectations of others (self-stereotype); subsequently living down to these expectations (stereotype threat). Four, PTF are
committed, yet their NCCC does not appear to be supporting PTF in ways commensurate to the roles PTF are expected to play within the institution.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that PTF view themselves as skilled instructors, dedicated educators, and caring mentors. However, they believe their institution treats them as second-class faculty; that is, NCCC does not adequately support and train PTF for success in the classroom. In order to facilitate the success of its PTF, NCCC must invest more time and resources in PTF. Along these lines, NCCC must also foster an environment of respect and collegiality. When PTF feel valued and respected, rather than second-class, PTF are likely to become more engaged and committed faculty.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A: Interview Guide

PTF: Interview Guide

Introduction

1. Please describe a typical day at NCCC.

How do PTF members come to understand what it means to be a faculty member?

1. What do you feel it means to be a faculty member at NCCC?

2. What expectations do you have of yourself as a faculty member? Your institution? Your students?
   a. What expectations do you feel your institution has of you?
   b. Please describe a situation or experience in which your expectations were met. Describe an incident when they were not met?

What roles do PTF feel they play at the institutions at which they are employed?

1. Please describe what you feel your role(s) is as a faculty member at NCCC?
   a. Can you describe the actions or duties that you feel are most associated with being a faculty member at NCCC?

2. How did you come to understand this role(s) as a faculty member?
   a. Please describe an experience or “a-ha” moment you have had which you believe confirmed a role or duty as a faculty member.

What do PTF feel facilitate or hinder the fulfillment of these roles?

1. In what ways do you feel you have been prepared to teach at NCCC?

2. At what moment during your time on campus do you feel most engaged with NCCC?

3. At what moment during your time on campus do you feel most distanced from NCCC?

4. In what ways do you feel your institution could better support you?

5. Please describe a recent experience in which you have felt supported by your institution?
   a. What would be an example of a time you felt hindered by your institution?
Appendix B: Typology Questionnaire

PTF: Typology Questionnaire

1) How many years experience do you have as a(n) ____________ instructor?

2) Are you currently employed as a faculty member at an institution other than NCCC?

3) Are you currently, or have you recently been employed full-time in an industry related to your area of instruction?

4) Do you have aspirations to become a full-time faculty member at a four-year college/university?

5) Are you currently retired (or planning retirement) from a 4-year college/university?
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