A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

ON THE EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ADJUNCTS

by

Dawn Annette Bell

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

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Abstract

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of adjunct English as a second language (ESL) teachers in a collegiate setting in the Southwestern United States. The central research question was: What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings? The sub-questions explored the adjuncts' experiences with students, colleagues, and the institution. Purposeful criterion sampling was used to secure 14 participants. The setting was a community college in the Southwestern United States. The theory guiding this study was the social exchange theory (SET) since the study described teacher experiences related to students, colleagues, and the institution. Data collection sources for analysis were a questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. The analysis included the initial immersive pre-coding reading of the data followed by two cycles of coding from which themes and insights were gleaned. Major themes of the study included respect for students, appreciation for colleagues, a desire for parity, concerns about equitable working conditions, and love of the job. Insights included adjunct motivation, adjuncts as the backbone of academic institutions, and the desire for more than just financial parity. The findings corroborate and confirm the body of literature on the plight of adjuncts and the need for systemic change. This study contributes to the body of literature by giving voice to a particular set of adjuncts, thereby providing an expanded perspective as well as putting faces to a common yet complex phenomenon.

Keywords: adjunct, English as a second language, postsecondary education, phenomenology

Copyright

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Creator of all things good and true, the One who is holy and just, and the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Acknowledgments

I would like to respectfully acknowledge Dr. Breck Perry and Dr. Sarah Pannone for guiding me through the dissertation process.

I am deeply indebted to those who participated in this study. It could not have been completed without their willingness to share their time and expertise.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have so kindly supported my efforts through these past few years. Finally, I would especially like to thank my husband who has been my staunchest and most encouraging supporter.

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List of Abbreviations

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

American Psychological Association (APA)

Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)

Central research question (CRQ)

Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CELPA)

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

English as a second language (ESL)

English for academic purposes (EAP)

Institutional review board (IRB)

Noncredit English as a second language (NCESL)

Open educational resources (OER)

Social exchange theory (SET)

Sub-Question (SQ)

Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Zone of proximal development (ZDP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

A shift from the employment of full-time or tenured professors to the use of predominantly adjunct faculty has occurred over the last fifty years in postsecondary education (Asali, 2019; Danaei, 2019b; Gelman et al., 2022; Herbert, 2016). The demotion of postsecondary teachers has been decried in public forums and scholarly literature, and the effects of this shift continue to be a source of concern and contention. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of English as a second language (ESL) postsecondary adjunct instructors at a community college in the Southwestern United States. This chapter provides background information, including historical, social, and theoretical context. The problem and purpose statements are followed by the significance of the study, research questions, and definitions. A summary concludes the chapter.

Background

This section contains a summary of the most relevant literature, which provides historical, social, and theoretical context. The historical section gives a brief overview of English as a second language in the United States and how it is viewed in the world today. The social context describes current educational realities surrounding the problem, and the theoretical context provides concepts and principles on which the research is based.

Historical Context

The United States, from its inception, has been a nation of immigrants and has grappled with the questions surrounding language commonality and, thus, language acquisition (Cavanaugh, 1996). The formal study of language acquisition is a relatively newer concept. During the mid-twentieth century, Noam Chomsky, a linguist, philosopher, and cognitive

scientist, formalized the idea of modern linguistics (Barsky, 2007). The somewhat recent popularity of constructivism and active learning has caused educators in the field of English as a second language to think beyond the ideas of Chomsky (Heather, 2020). Additionally, as the world has changed and become more globalized, English has become the lingua franca (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Jenkins, 2019). With the desire to learn English growing globally and with a steady stream of newcomers joining the citizenry, English as a second language teaching in the United States is ever-increasing. Moreover, Raufman et al. (2019), referring specifically to community colleges, observed that postsecondary support for English learners continues to grow. The number of newcomers along with the need for support is especially prevalent in certain areas of the country, such as California, where a decade ago, one-fourth of community college students were not native English speakers (Llosa & Bunch, 2011). Currently, 19 percent of K-12 students in California are English learners, and each year tens of thousands of students enroll in ESL courses in California community colleges (Rodriguez et al., 2022).

Social Context

Institutions of higher education generally assume that teachers are experts in their fields and allow them the freedom to instruct without too much oversight (Miller et al., 2021; Reynolds & Kearns, 2017). Although there is a plethora of curriculum providers, ultimately it comes down to the teacher in the ESL classroom who makes curriculum choices by adapting, adopting, and creating curriculum (Shawer, 2010). The idea of teachers as curriculum designers is an area in which there is growing awareness (Li et al., 2022). Constructivism and the corresponding practice of active learning posit that learners need to be actively involved (Schunk, 2020). Active learning has emerged as a dominant philosophy and practice (Juvova et al., 2015). Previously teachers were considered transmitters of knowledge and students assumed a more passive role

(Juvova et al., 2015; Shawer, 2010). Second language learning best practices in ESL settings reflect constructivism and active learning as an effective and preferred way of facilitating learning (Dubiner, 2019). More significantly, while these teachers have been given the challenge and responsibility of providing quality education to students, many are being asked to do so as part-time employees with few benefits, lower pay, and less than ideal working conditions than their full-time counterparts (Anthony et al., 2020; Ott & Dippold, 2018a).

Theoretical Context

Constructivism, which is a major underlying theory of this study, originated from Piaget's and Vygotsky's cognitive and social cognitive theories (Piaget, 1952; Schunk, 2020; Vygotskiĭ & Kozulin, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). Constructivists believe that learners discover and build their own learning and that teachers act as facilitators of the learning process by providing active learning situations that include content, materials, and social interactions (Schunk, 2020). Knowledge is built on the unique and previous knowledge of the individual. It is an active process where people learn to learn as they learn (Western Governors University, 2020). Additionally, learning is a social construct set in context. Humans function and learn in social environments. In the classroom, the disposition of the teacher has an effect in addition to content choices. Gardner (2010) discussed aspects of positive relationships between teachers and students which in turn positively affects learning. The importance of positive relationships between students and teachers harkens back to Krashen's (1985) idea of the affective filter and the need for teachers to lower the emotional wall that may impede learning. Yet, learning also engages the mind of the learner and provides motivation since the learning process is student-driven. As a result, teachers are not simply delivering content; they are guiding groups of students as they go through the process of knowledge building. Learning is facilitated by

educators who share knowledge and who share authority with their students (Gregory, 2002). Through formative assessment, educators adjust their teaching to the needs of the students in order to meet their needs in the learning process. The process is dynamic, social, and student-centered.

Constructivist ideas are foundational in ESL settings. Teachers act as overseers, facilitating active, collaborative learning experiences with and between students in their classrooms. To truly learn a language, students must be active participants. Language is not something that can be given to a student; it must be built and earned by the learner. As such, teachers must constantly be making formative assessments and evaluations to adjust to the needs of their students in the learning process (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002). These assessments are followed by further planning and adjustments which assist the learner in continuing to build their unique understanding of the world. Related to these ideas, and relevant to ESL and teaching in higher education institutions today, are the still present ideas of John Dewey who advocated learning by doing (Ávila et al., 2021).

The theory, or framework of theories, that this study is built around is the social exchange theory (SET) which examines interactions and structures in the workplace and beyond (Cook et al., 2013). The social exchange theory is based on the premise of costs and benefits, or what a person gives compared to what they receive (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Adjunct teachers, as compared to full-time or tenured faculty, do not receive the compensation and benefits of their counterparts, even considering equivalent education and experience (Childress, 2019; D'Amico et al., 2020; Davis, 2017). Additionally, although noncredit education, which is primarily taught by adjuncts in postsecondary institutions, is prevalent, it is an overlooked and hidden sector (D'Amico et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

The problem is that ESL adjuncts are being asked to fill the majority of the teaching roles at postsecondary institutions without the compensation, benefits, job security, or working conditions and resources commensurate to that of full-time faculty (Childress, 2019; Davis, 2017; Ott & Dippold, 2018a; Tolley, 2018; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). An adjunct's pay is lower than their full-time counterparts, especially if time spent on preparation and grading is taken into consideration (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021). Moreover, benefits, such as insurance and retirement, are few (Gaudet, 2019; Ramirez, 2018; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Adjuncts are assigned courses on a term-by-term basis with no promise of future employment (Magruder, 2019; D. S. Murray, 2019; Ramirez, 2018). Guidance and tangible support for adjuncts are limited (Bolitzer, 2019b). Professional development for adjuncts is often overlooked due to time and financial constraints (Bolitzer, 2019a; Danaei, 2019a; Housel, 2022; Xu, 2019). Additionally, the situation of the adjunct may play a role in their ability to effectively curate, produce, and prepare curriculum since these teachers are often recreating their plans each semester to some extent (H. J. Lee, 2019). Curriculum and materials are core elements in language classrooms, but there is often little training for preservice teachers when it comes to language teaching materials (Carabantes & Paran, 2022; Richards, 2013). Moreover, planning is an essential part of teaching, but how teachers engage in planning for a class is not necessarily standardized or similarly prioritized in order to meet students' needs (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2018).

As schools change and evolve throughout the years, teachers are becoming curriculum designers as well as transmitters (Pang, 2019; Trinter & Hughes, 2021). The occurrence of teachers as curriculum designers is happening for many reasons, one being the need to use more online educational resources (OER). Across college campuses, teachers are turning to

alternatives such as OER in order to lower the cost of education by lowering or eliminating the cost of textbooks for students (Fisher, 2018; Soules, 2019). A high percentage of ESL teachers use open educational resources (Thoms et al., 2018). Using OER brings with it choices and decisions which impact both teaching and design. Additionally, active learning is touted as an effective way to learn (Lombardi & Shipley, 2021). Active learning plays on the connection between enjoyment and learning, which has also been connected to best practices (Seemiller et al., 2021). With the emphasis on active learning, however, other areas, such as learning objectives and assessments, may take a lesser or secondary role, especially if time and resources are limited due to employment status. De-emphasizing critical areas of teaching may be problematic, as pointed out by Wiggins and McTighe (2005).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of postsecondary adjunct English as a second language teachers at a collegiate site in the Southwestern United States. Noncredit students represent a high percentage of student populations, particularly in community colleges, yet the student population and their success rates remain hidden and understudied even though they play an important role in the community (D'Amico et al., 2020). In this study, I sought to document the experiences of teachers who serve an understudied demographic in order to give value and voice to the educators, which in turn can benefit other teachers and the students they serve, as well as institutions as a whole. Because of its influence in this context, an undergirding philosophy for this research is social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). The study is framed by the ideas of social exchange theory which is based on reciprocity (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Cook et al., 2013; Deauseault, 2018). More specifically, it is based on the inequity that adjuncts face in the exchange at their places of

employment (Jasso, 1980).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it contributes to the knowledge base from a theoretical, empirical, and practical perspective. The body of literature regarding constructivist theories and social exchange theories will be broadened and better understood because of the experiences shared by the participants. Existing empirical research will be expanded through the unique voices and contributions of the participants and researcher. The practical significance of this study is that it will enhance and develop knowledge of the experiences of a specific subgroup of adjuncts, which will not only contribute to the adjunct discussion as a whole but also to the conversation regarding adjuncts in community colleges and specifically to the adjunct issues at the specific research site.

Theoretical

The theoretical significance of the study is that it expands on the theory of constructivism (Schunk, 2020). It does so by exploring and describing the experiences of teachers with their students, colleagues, and institutions as they co-construct language learning experiences. Language acquisition is under continual development and research (Dubiner, 2019). Instructors are an integral part of the learning process; however, few studies have focused on the topic of teachers as curriculum designers and specifically on the experiences of these instructors (McAlpine et al., 2006; Pang, 2019; Shieh & Reynolds, 2021). The study also examines the perspectives of adjunct teachers through the lens of the social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Applying the social exchange theory to research on adjuncts will broaden the application of this theory to the relationships and exchanges occurring between adjuncts and their students, colleagues, and institutions.

Empirical

Many studies have been done and books have been written on adjuncts and contingent faculty in higher education and their working conditions (Anthony et al., 2020; Childress, 2019; Davis, 2017; Ott & Dippold, 2018a; Rhoades, 2020; Tolley, 2018; Xu, 2019; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). There has also been much written on topics surrounding teaching English as a second language, many of which are geared toward standards and the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Cox et al., 2018; Gamson et al., 2019; Turner & Windle, 2019; Umar, 2018). However, there is little literature on the experiences of adjunct English as a second language teachers in higher education settings.

Practical

The practical significance for the teachers, students, and institutions is that it gives voice to and centers research on an overlooked sector of education and, by extension, educators (D'Amico et al., 2020). The study not only provides an opportunity to give voice to the instructors but also can also provide validation for their work. The interviewees will be affected by the interview (Patton, 2015). My hope is that the instructors feel, as I did when I was interviewed for a dissertation many years ago, a sense of being heard. I viewed my experience as therapeutic, and I hope they do as well. Additionally, the interviews may reveal common and composite information that could be helpful to those who hire and manage adjuncts within the institution.

Research Questions

The research questions were derived from and crafted to align with the problem and purpose of this study. They were built around the framework of the social exchange theory with regard to teachers and their relationships with students, colleagues, and their institutions. These

research questions provided important insights, perspectives, and experiences gleaned from the data sources. Individual semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were based on the research questions and were intended to give voice to the instructors and provide accurate descriptions of their lived experiences (Patton, 2015; van Manen, 2016).

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings?

van Manen (2016) says that phenomenology is not simply looking to solve a problem but begins with and seeks to wonder and question deeply. Phenomenology seeks to explore, listen to and reflect on the lived experiences of those who are experiencing or have experienced a phenomenon (van Manen, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2018) state that "a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 75). The central research question for this study encapsulates the overarching purpose of the study through the philosophical lens of phenomenology.

Sub-Question One

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to students?

The guiding theory for this study is the social exchange theory which is based on the costs and benefits in relationships (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). This study is framed around the experiences of ESL adjuncts and their lived experiences with three groups of people. The first sub-question focuses on the teachers and their lived experiences related to their students.

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to colleagues?

The second sub-question seeks to elicit responses and descriptions that focus on the adjuncts and their lived experiences with colleagues. Although teachers interact with many groups of people, students and colleagues are common touchpoints for most teachers. Furthermore, teachers' lived experiences with colleagues may affect their experiences as adjuncts in very different ways than their experiences with students. Phenomenological practice seeks to discover what the participants experience and how they experience it (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Asking about lived experiences with colleagues provides a critical piece of the composite.

Sub-Question Three

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to their institutions?

The final sub-question focuses on experiences with a third relational component in the lives of adjuncts. Exploring the lived experiences of ESL adjuncts would be incomplete without inquiring about the relationships they have with their institutions. The central research question and three sub-questions were designed to explore the adjunct phenomenon through the lived experiences of a specific subset of teachers to address the problem and fulfill the purpose of the study using qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 2016) and the guiding framework of the social exchange theory (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018).

Definitions

Terms pertinent to the study are listed and defined in this section. All definitions are supported by the literature.

1. *Adjunct* – College faculty who are teaching part-time and receive no benefits or employment security (Ott & Dippold, 2018a).

2. *Contingent* – Faculty who work in part-time or even full-time positions but are not eligible for tenure or permanent employment (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 2014).
3. *Curriculum design* – The process or steps involved in curriculum development (Macalister & Nation, 2019).
4. *English as a second language (ESL)* – A generic term also referred to in the literature by other names such as second language learning, second language acquisition, and teaching English to speakers of other languages (Shieh & Reynolds, 2021; U.S. Department of Education, 2018).
5. *English as a second language (ESL) student* – Students who are taking ESL classes at a college in order to improve their English (Raufman et al., 2019).
6. *English for academic purposes (EAP)* – The teaching of English with the purpose of studying in an English-speaking country (Bhowmik & Kim, 2018).
7. *Gig* – Flexible, ad hoc employment (Burtch et al., 2018).
8. *Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL)* – A particular field of teachers (Martínez Agudo, 2019).

Summary

The problem is that ESL adjuncts are being asked to fill the majority of the teaching roles at postsecondary institutions without the compensation, benefits, job security, or working conditions and resources commensurate to that of full-time faculty (Childress, 2019; Davis, 2017; Ott & Dippold, 2018a; Tolley, 2018; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). They are carrying the teaching load in most colleges without the benefit of agency, stability, or parity in remuneration. The plight of the adjunct has recently been exacerbated by the call to use more open educational

resources rather than textbooks. As a result, adjunct teachers are developing materials on their own time and piecing together or creating curriculum and lesson plans (H. J. Lee, 2019; Litzenberg, 2020). Additionally, institutions of higher education do not closely monitor what is being taught or how it is being taught since the instructors are educated professionals in their field (Miller et al., 2021; Reynolds & Kearns, 2017). Without documentation of the experiences of these teachers through qualitative research, their experiences and their unique voices will go unheard. The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of postsecondary adjunct English as a second language instructors at a community college in the Southwestern United States. This study was conducted through the lens of the social exchange theory (Cook et al., 2013; Jasso, 1980). Ultimately, I hope to not only give voice to the adjuncts who teach ESL populations but also provide insights into their professional relationships and insights as to how those relationships can be improved (D'Amico et al., 2020).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In order to join the academic conversation and begin to understand the context and surrounding issues on the topic at hand, a systematic review of the literature was conducted to explore related research available on the lived experiences of postsecondary adjunct English as a second language (ESL) teachers. Much of the information is relevant to the larger conversation surrounding adjuncts in higher education even though this research is particularly focused on a specific set of adjuncts. This chapter includes the theoretical framework, which helps to guide and organize this study and is followed by relevant and related literature on the topic. The literature reviewed consists of the historical context, current circumstances, matters of equity, students, collegiality and research, institutions, professional development, curriculum, standards, English as a second language (ESL) instructors, job satisfaction, and unionization. In the end, a gap in the literature is identified, presenting a viable need for the current study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the social exchange theory (SET) first developed by George C. Homans (1958). Foundational ideas of SET can also be traced back to the writings of Emerson (1962) and Blau (2017), whose work was originally published in the 1960s. The social exchange theory is a prominent theory in the social sciences that is based on the idea of reciprocal interactions between parties over time which result in relationships, attachments, and obligations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Porter, 2018). A basic premise of SET is the idea of costs and benefits, or what a person gives compared to what they receive (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Waller and Lumadue (2013) outlined key ideas of the social exchange theory and explained that everyone is constantly conducting an internal cost-versus-

benefit analysis in every relationship whether it be personal, economic, business, or any other. They explained that the formula is benefit minus cost equals profit, with individuals looking to maximize benefits and minimize costs (Waller & Lumadue, 2013). The theory is based on the idea that people make rational decisions and choices which are affected by cultural norms. These decisions and choices may vary between individuals and may vary within an individual over time. The principles and propositions of the social exchange theory include the ideas that people are rational, social, and competitive, and that they will repeat behaviors that are successful or behaviors that are similar to those that have been successful. The more valuable the benefit, the more likely the behavior is to be repeated. On the other hand, expectations that are not met are likely to lead to aggression and anger (Waller & Lumadue, 2013). Three main areas of SET are rules of exchange, resources exchanged, and exchange relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Porter, 2018). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) stated that there are rules and expectations that accompany the exchange; there are standards by which participants should abide, and those standards or rules are negotiated and agreed upon to produce a fair exchange. The exchange is not limited to monetary transactions but can also include altruistic and communal considerations. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) identified specific resources that are exchanged, namely love, status, information, money, goods, and services. These categories are based on the work of Foa (1971) which established that socioemotional resources, such as respect, are valued in connection with their source. In contrast, more tangible resources, such as money, do not vary in value depending on who supplies them. As a result, different types of relationships are formed, which result in economic and social interactions as well as short-term and long-term rewards for investment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, these relationships can be fostered between supervisors, coworkers, organizations, or customers. The core idea of the social

exchange theory is that reciprocal relationships develop over time and continue based on mutually rewarding transactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Homans (1958) and Blau (2017) both included thoughts on fairness in social exchange. Jasso (1980) criticized and expanded on the ideas of fairness put forth by Homans (1958) and Blau (2017). A key idea from Jasso (1980) is that fairness is based on a standard or general expectation. Fairness is not just a feeling but is measurable and observable. Justice, by definition, is equality and is universally desirable (Jasso, 1980). Fairness and justice are key points for the study because there is certainly a standard or general expectation for the working conditions of professional teachers. The social exchange theory, or framework of theories, has been expanded and explored throughout the years (Cook et al., 2013). Although no theory can explain everything, the social exchange theory, along with its underlying principles and guiding propositions, provides some explanation for human behavior (Waller & Lumadue, 2013).

The social exchange theory has played a significant role in examining interactions and structures in the workplace and beyond (Cook et al., 2013; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Through this study, I sought to illuminate and give voice to ESL adjuncts in higher education settings within the general framework of SET. The social exchange theory provided the framework for this study in that adjuncts, like all employees, engage in employment contracts based on the idea of fair exchange, whether social, economic, or other. In addition to satisfaction variables of the exchange based on monetary and social expectations and realities with their employers, it can also be based on their interactions with other stakeholders in their work environments, such as students, coworkers, and even the community at large.

This hermeneutic phenomenological study explored and described the experiences of a subset of adjuncts and their interactions with students, colleagues, and the institutions where they

served based on the social exchange theory (Homans, 1958). Research questions addressed interactions with students, colleagues, and institutions and the level of satisfaction with the exchange. The analysis revealed what experiences occurred and the perspectives of the participants concerning their work interactions as well as the level of satisfaction that existed regarding the exchanges.

Related Literature

The systemic use of adjunct or contingent teachers in higher institutions of learning, as well as their perceived plight, has been well documented. By definition, contingent faculty are full or part-time faculty not on a tenure track (AAUP, 2014). Adjunct faculty are a subset of contingent faculty who are temporary or part-time, at least at a single location, but who often put in full-time hours (Ramirez, 2018). Gaudet (2019) said that the definition of adjunct is something that is added rather than an integral part. The literature is replete with articles about the prevalence of adjuncts and the situation many adjuncts face, and there has been a constant call for more research on the adjunct situation. This chapter reviews existing knowledge in the literature concerning adjunct faculty and issues related to their experiences. Literature on English as a second language (ESL) is also explored since this study focuses on ESL teachers as a specific group of adjuncts.

History of Adjunct Labor

Tenure was the norm in postsecondary education before the mid-1970s (Asali, 2019; Danaei, 2019b; Gelman et al., 2022; Herbert, 2016). The reality of academic labor has changed from what was once a respected profession that provided a livable wage and a voice concerning work responsibilities, schedules, and direction to a low-paying, part-time, insecure job (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017). The use of contingent faculty in institutions of higher learning

has been on the rise since the 1970s, and contingent faculty now make up a significant majority of the teaching workforce (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017; Danaei, 2019a; Drake et al., 2019; Eagan et al., 2015; Figlio et al., 2015; Gaudet, 2019; Gelman et al., 2022; Haviland et al., 2020; Herbert, 2016; A. J. Kezar & Holcombe, 2017; Kirby & Donn, 2020; Manternach, 2020; D. S. Murray, 2019; Ott & Dippold, 2018a; Ryan et al., 2019; Schlaerth, 2022; Witt & Gearin, 2021; Yakoboski, 2019). Once tenure positions are eliminated, they are rarely restored (Ochoa, 2012). Academia now depends on adjunct faculty (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021). Moreover, community colleges, which tend to serve underserved communities more than 4-year colleges and universities, employ adjuncts at even higher levels (Xu, 2019).

The adjunct trend began on a smaller scale as a way for institutions to fill instructor roles and simultaneously curb expenditures (Witt & Gearin, 2021). Furthermore, Gaudet (2019) noted that early on and in many situations, adjuncts were employed by institutions in addition to their regular profession or during years of retirement with the purpose of bringing their professional and practical experience into the classroom. However, supplementary employment for particular purposes is no longer the case for the majority of adjuncts. What started as a way to bring specific expertise into the classroom while cutting costs has simply become a way to cut costs for the school by eliminating benefits and lowering monetary compensation for the instructors (Anthony et al., 2020; Witt & Gearin, 2021).

The traditional professorate was based on service, teaching, and research (Peterson, 2019). Presently, contingents have only one focus, teaching (Wheaton, 2020). Institutions ask adjuncts to fulfill the university's main function of teaching but do not provide what they need to best serve students (A. Kezar, 2018; A. Kezar & Bernstein, 2016; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Furthermore, a singular expectation may not translate into a positive and productive experience

for teachers because this singular expectation is not accompanied by job security, benefits, professional development, paid sabbaticals, and the like (Gaudet, 2019; D. S. Murray, 2019; Ott & Dippold, 2018a; Tolley, 2018). Colleges and universities were originally designed with tenure-track professors as the primary source of instruction, but the current adjunct situation leaves the majority of teachers, now adjuncts, unsupported (Culver et al., 2021; Danaei, 2019b; A. Kezar, 2018). Gaudet (2019) claimed that faculty have been relegated to something less than professional. Their positions have been diminished, systemically marginalized, and even exploited rather than being a steppingstone or a rite of passage (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018; Gaudet, 2019; Hill & Klocksiem, 2022). The result is that in higher education, in addition to the increased number of adjuncts, stress and burnout are on the rise (Talbot & Mercer, 2018). What may have constituted a fair exchange between institutions and their educators in the past is not what is currently happening.

Adjunct Circumstances

At the present time, adjuncts across the United States face varying yet similar circumstances (Wagoner, 2019). Adjuncts are expendable (Champlin & Knoedler, 2017; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Their courses can be canceled or changed at the last minute without compensation for work already done in preparation for the class (AAUP, 2014; Magruder, 2019; Ramirez, 2018). They can be hired and fired, even at the last minute, which creates job insecurity and a lack of stability (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018; Magruder, 2019; Ryan et al., 2019; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Instability can create not only financial hardship but also cause emotional and social consequences, which may include choices about where they live or how they will handle childcare needs (Peterson-Iyer, 2019). The precarious nature of their work is possibly one of their most significant stresses (Reevy & Deason, 2014).

Most adjuncts are paid hourly for time spent teaching in the classroom, but they are not necessarily paid for preparation or grading (Magruder, 2019). There is a lack of parity as adjuncts are paid at a lower rate than that of a tenured or even full-time teacher, especially if amortized to consider the unpaid preparation and grading hours (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021). Asali (2019) cited an increasing wage inequity between tenured and non-tenured teachers. The disparity is so significant that many live at what would be considered a poverty level (AAUP, 2014; Danaei, 2019a; Ramirez, 2018; Ryan et al., 2019; Schlaerth, 2022; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Similarly, adjuncts receive few, if any, benefits such as insurance or retirement (AAUP, 2014; Gaudet, 2019; Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017; Ramirez, 2018; Witt & Gearin, 2021). If colleges do offer retirement options, adjuncts are not usually automatically enrolled, and they are often unaware that the benefit exists (Yakoboski & DiCesare, 2020). Furthermore, no mandatory retirement age creates an aging faculty base (Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017), which combined with no retirement benefits, may compel adjuncts to continue teaching not only because they can but because they must.

Teaching at multiple sites is typical for adjuncts (Peterson, 2019; Wirrig, 2019). Since adjuncts are temporary, part-time workers, they are likely underemployed if they teach at only one school, so many teach at multiple schools to piece together full-time work (Gallant, 2018; Gaudet, 2019; Manternach, 2020; Ramirez, 2018; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Piecing together full-time employment takes more time for educators because teaching at more than one location requires participation in multiple operating systems, learning management platforms, human resource interactions, and meetings (Davis, 2017; H. J. Lee, 2019). Witt and Gearin (2021) asserted that teaching at more than one location is not always ideal and is usually more costly in terms of time, energy, and actual pay for the teachers because of the long commutes and long

working hours. Adjuncts working at multiple sites also affect institutional culture (Witt & Gearin, 2021). Although there are usually no service or research obligations, if they wish to work full-time, adjuncts must take on heavy teaching loads (Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017). In fact, many adjuncts teach more classes than full-time faculty (Witt & Gearin, 2021), and some even find it necessary to take on part-time jobs outside their profession to pay the bills. Danaei (2019a) reported that a quarter of adjunct faculty received public assistance, utilized food banks, and some were even in danger of losing housing. They are educated professionals caught in a cycle of underemployment (A. Kezar & Bernstein, 2016; Wheaton, 2020; Witt & Gearin, 2021; Zitko & Schultz, 2020).

In the workplace, adjuncts face poor working conditions, and many times they are given little guidance or support (Gelman et al., 2022; Magruder, 2019; Ryan et al., 2019; Schlaerth, 2022). There is often a lack of guidance in areas such as course development, including the creation of a syllabus, assignments, or exams (Bolitzer, 2019b). Not much tangible support is available, such as office space and resources (Bolitzer, 2019b; Gaudet, 2019; Witt & Gearin, 2021). For example, contingents may be left to find shared spaces to meet with students, purchase their own computers, and print their own business cards (Gaudet, 2019). As a result, they feel taken advantage of (Witt & Gearin, 2021).

Exclusion is another issue faced by part-time faculty (Burroughs, 2019; Gelman et al., 2022; Morrison, 2020; Wicks et al., 2020). Adjuncts often feel a sense of isolation, disconnectedness, and lack of inclusion (Buch et al., 2017; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Kimmel and Fairchild (2017) reported that the adjunct teachers they interviewed felt like they did not fit in and were not included in events held for full-time faculty. Ryan et al. (2019) studied the perceptions of part-time faculty regarding their sense of belonging. Most participants felt

disconnected; however, those who did feel connected felt so because of supportive work cultures rather than employment status. Adjuncts need to be engaged at both an academic level and a social level (Thirolf, 2017); however, many feel disengaged (Ott & Dippold, 2018a).

Gelman et al. (2022) posited that while pay and benefits may be out of departmental control, collegial support and inclusion are areas where positive changes can be made. Some schools are looking for creative ways, such as social media, to offer and instill feelings of connectedness (Wicks et al., 2020). There is an identified need to support adjunct faculty and to fold them into the mainstream of institutions (Bolitzer, 2019b; Gelman et al., 2022). Adjuncts want to be recognized and included (Eagan et al., 2015). A similar yet distinct issue is that adjuncts are not part of the decision-making processes and have a limited say in governance decisions or budgetary policies (Gelman et al., 2022; Ott & Dippold, 2018b; Wagoner, 2019). They are contributing to the institution and to the success of students (Anthony et al., 2020), but they do not have a voice or influence regarding decisions or direction.

Adjuncts also face different challenges than their tenured or even full-time counterparts regarding their teaching plans. Depending on the context, temporary part-time teachers may have to follow what a previous teacher has done or quickly cobble together their own plans (Burke, 2022; Magruder, 2019). Even though they may have expertise and education, they lack power and a permanent position that enables continuity. Furthermore, the situation can create tension with those holding stable, long-term positions (Burke, 2022; Champlin & Knoedler, 2017; Magruder, 2019; Ryan et al., 2019; Witt & Gearin, 2021).

In postsecondary institutions, student evaluations of teachers are often used to measure the success of adjunct teachers (Bolitzer, 2019b; Burroughs, 2019; Heller, 2012; Loiselle, 2018; McConnell, 2019; Simonson et al., 2021). However, the accuracy and usefulness of evaluations

have been called into question due to factors such as the timing of evaluations in the term, the amount of time given to complete evaluations, and the varying motivations of the students (Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017). Adjuncts are expected to have glowing student evaluations despite circumstances that are out of their control (Schenkewitz, 2019; Witt & Gearin, 2021). The evaluation of student learning and teacher efficacy in the ESL arena has also been based on student satisfaction. Like adjuncts in general, ESL teachers are at risk of being evaluated on things, such as program characteristics, which they do not determine (Martínez Agudo, 2019).

Equity

Inequity for specific groups is also documented in the literature (Wagoner, 2019). In addition to overall concerns regarding adjuncts, issues of racial diversity, gender, and marginalized identities are present in postsecondary educational settings (Burke, 2022; Graves, 2020; Loiselle, 2018; Zheng, 2018). Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) are generally underrepresented in the classroom (Espino & Zambrana, 2019; Ingersoll et al., 2019). Furthermore, a disproportionate number of contingents are women (Finley, 2009; Frontczak, 2020; A. Kezar & Acuña, 2020; McNaughtan et al., 2017; Peterson-Iyer, 2019; Zheng, 2018). Many factors may contribute to this reality, such as caretaking responsibilities; nevertheless, these factors cannot be the sole reason for the disparity. More importantly, when institutions limit voices by relegating disproportionate numbers of women to positions with less power and permanence, the situation goes beyond inequity; it damages the value that can only be had through the diversity of gender and experience (Peterson-Iyer, 2019). In other words, limited representation equals limited viewpoints. Peterson (2019) agreed with this idea and suggested that diversity is more than part of the hiring process. True diversity at every level affects perspectives and solutions in the culture of a school. Phillips (2014) added that diversity of all

kinds among workers of all kinds is better than homogeneity because it promotes creativity and causes people to be challenged in their thinking as well as providing new sources of information and perspective, which then produces better outcomes.

The increasing and systemic use of adjuncts in higher education, especially those in underrepresented groups, does not align with academic institutional values that espouse and aspire to equity (Gaudet, 2019; Loiselle, 2018). Reporting on a panel discussion of adjuncts in community colleges in California, Burke (2022) commented on the irony of adjuncts being asked to facilitate and contribute to the cause of helping impoverished students while the schools are not fairly compensating the workers themselves. Given the social exchange theory, the trade between teachers and their institutions could be perceived not only as inequitable but also ultimately detrimental to those on all sides of the equation.

Students and Adjuncts

Adjunct working conditions affect students (Rhoades, 2020). Like their tenured or full-time counterparts, the work of the contingent focuses on students and helping them construct their own learning, with teachers creating spaces for that learning to occur (Baumgart, 2019; Bhowmik & Kim, 2018). The growth and maturation of students are why education exists; they are paramount. In the field of ESL specifically, the ultimate goal is for students to learn the English language (Martínez Agudo, 2019). The primary conduit of collegiate education and a significant factor in student success is faculty (Talbot & Mercer, 2018; Thirolf, 2017; Umbach, 2007). In other words, quality education is facilitated by quality teachers (Coombe, 2019; Kelchtermans, 2009). A college's commitment to students logically follows and correlates directly to its commitment to faculty (Talbot & Mercer, 2018), and the quality of employment for teachers affects the quality of instruction for students (Buch et al., 2017; Burke, 2022). Thus,

there has been a call to ease the plight of the adjunct and increase the quality of instruction provided to students (Davis, 2017).

Commenting on some of the effects contingency teaching has had on students, Schenkewitz (2019) remarked that instructors are on the front lines of student interaction. However, research on the effectiveness of their teaching is mixed (Bolitzer, 2019b). Faculty employed at numerous institutions most likely do not have expertise in the systems at all of their colleges of employment (Ran & Sanders, 2020). The question remains as to whether or not the use of adjuncts provides students and the colleges they attend with quality teachers and instruction compared to full-time or tenured faculty. As a result, Bolitzer (2019a) has called for more research to be done in order to make that determination.

Time constraints placed on part-time faculty who are piecing together full-time employment may cause these teachers to be less likely to incorporate new research into their courses or improve assignments and learning experiences due to their divided commitments. A link has been established between contingents and the possibility of a decline in educational service quality to students (Gallant, 2018). Ran and Sanders (2020) showed that previous studies linked contingent faculty to lower student persistence and transfer rates and that faculty members reported a deficit in knowledge and time to advise students. Crookes (2019) claimed that the working conditions of language instructors hindered the delivery of quality education and that even though teachers may want to deliver their best to students, they are impeded by the lack of time, support, and continuity. The working conditions of faculty directly impact student learning conditions (Buch et al., 2017).

Ochoa (2012) acknowledged and lamented the predicament of institutions and their need to balance budgets but also admitted the inevitable depreciation of teaching as a result. On the

other hand, Bettinger and Long (2010) produced a study that delineated the possible positive effects of adjuncts on students, such as expertise and allowing more time for research for tenured professors. Another study by Figlio et al. (2015) found contingent faculty had positive and long-term effects on students. Furthermore, Martinez and Martinez (2019) stated that recent studies have concluded that there is no correlation between the success of students and the teacher's employment status. Whatever the case, while there may be useful benefits to students and institutions, they are still at the expense of the adjunct (Burroughs, 2019; Wagoner, 2019). Reevy and Deason (2014) argued that alleviating the stress that adjuncts face due to the precarity of their position would be beneficial not only for faculty but for students and institutions as well. All benefit from equity, including students (Graves, 2020).

There has also been concern regarding programs being driven by funding sources and the resulting disconnect with student needs that sometimes ensues (Gonzalves, 2017). The goals and needs identified by students and their instructors do not always match the requirements set by those who provide the monetary support for the programs. Additionally, student satisfaction and testing have been used to demonstrate the effectiveness and proficiency of teachers to funders (Martínez Agudo, 2019). Litzenberg (2020) acknowledged the presence of neoliberalism in postsecondary ESL scenarios, meaning the bottom line often drives programs. Institutions are embracing neoliberal ideas and running schools as businesses by focusing more on economics than intellectual pursuits (Ramirez, 2018). Thus, the exchange between students and institutions is also changing, with teachers being caught in the middle.

ESL adjuncts may teach in a variety of learning situations with a variety of learners, which may include students who are in the United States to study and pursue their education in English or immigrants who have moved to the United States permanently and need to learn the

language for survival and advancement (Parrish, 2019). Adults are considered to be nontraditional students (James, 2022). Among immigrant populations, there are some who are very new to the United States and are learning English for the first time as adults. They may also have children who may have been educated in the United States and are multilingual but still need some attention to English learning to reach the level of proficiency necessary for college success (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges [ASCCC], 2020). Student backgrounds are diverse, not only with regard to countries of origin but also in cultural as well as educational backgrounds (Raufman et al., 2019). Community colleges serve these students through noncredit ESL classes and other offerings (Osorio et al., 2022). Community colleges in California have a specific charge to serve ESL students (ASCCC, 2020), and it is an essential part of their role. However, a recent report by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (2020) stated that although English language learners are a significant part of the population served, identification of and support for these students is not clearly defined or evenly addressed, a problem which was identified well over a decade ago and still has not been sufficiently ameliorated. Additionally, many postsecondary institutions have a steady stream of international students seeking English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Bhowmik & Kim, 2018). EAP students, while they provide a stream of revenue for the college or university, also require resources that aid and assist them in having a positive and profitable academic and cultural experience (ASCCC, 2020). English learners from other countries come with different backgrounds, including but not limited to education levels, exposure to English and American culture, and study habit expectations. Culture plays a role in English learning (D. E. Murray & Christison, 2019). Students come with various goals and areas of academic interest, all of which must be accounted for by programs and in the classroom by the instructors (Parrish, 2019).

Instructors are called on to meet the needs of this diverse group of learners daily in the classroom even as those in the upper levels of the hierarchy continue to wrestle with the situation on a broader level. Moreover, because English as a second language is more than just the delivery of content, educators must have a heuristic approach toward their students and teaching (Bhowmik & Kim, 2018). ESL teachers need to be nimble as they prepare for and navigate the needs of this unique group of learners (Parrish, 2019).

Collegiality and Research

Another issue addressed in the literature that plays a role in evaluating the exchange is the divide between research and teaching. Research and teaching are often at odds, with research being valued over instruction (G. Hanson & Reyes, 2019; Mapes, 2019; McKinley, 2019). Haviland et al. (2017) examined and discussed the collegiality, or lack thereof, between full-time contingent faculty and tenure-track faculty. Haviland et al. (2017) observed that as research becomes more highly valued and what is considered excellent is research-based, the relationship between contingent and tenured faculty becomes more tenuous. According to Peterson (2019), collaboration and collegiality have become even more challenging with the rise of the adjunct population. Peterson (2019) explained that collegiality is vital to healthy academia and is more than just being nice. Instead, it involves collaboration over time on important issues involving students and faculty. As teachers are less valued and are sporadically and temporarily available, building teams and a positive culture requires creative solutions (Peterson, 2019). Efforts by administrators, chairs, and all faculty roles are needed to create healthy working environments within institutions of higher learning (Haviland et al., 2020). Healthy working environments are vital because on-the-job training and professional growth occur while interacting with colleagues (Bolitzer, 2019a). As adjuncts weigh the costs and benefits of their employment situations, the

structure of employment in their schools, the climate of their working relationships, and the value given to various workers will naturally need to be considered.

In their study, G. Hanson and Reyes (2019) described the adjunct situation among composition professors. They contended that just because research is not required of adjuncts does not mean that adjuncts do not conduct forms of research. G. Hanson and Reyes (2019) added that a broader definition of research needs to exist because teachers are often functionally involved in pedagogical pursuits that very much resemble research. In many ways, they are informally responding to their own experiences with students in the classroom and are using that information, or informal research, to meet the needs of their students. Wilks et al. (2018) promoted the idea of communication between administrators, departments, and various types of faculty to establish a positive culture that facilitates collaboration and, ultimately, student success.

Similarly, Gaudet (2019) claimed that meritocracy, which espouses that hard work will be rewarded, is a myth in the academic world. Hard work does not always equal opportunities for advancement. For the adjunct, time constraints may contribute to a lack of scholarship (Torshizi, 2018). However, Baumgart (2019) suggested that teachers, specifically ESL teachers, should have a research mindset and be actively involved in communities of practice throughout their professional careers. P. Hanson et al. (2018) found that adjuncts with a professional teaching degree have a higher level of self-perceived effectiveness. Hence, personal validation can come from within as well as from without. Research and education are two ways adjuncts and their researcher counterparts can lessen the divide between contingents and their full-time or tenured counterparts. There has been a call for blending the teacher and researcher roles or at least a collaboration between the two (McKinley, 2019; Rose, 2019; Torshizi, 2018). This holistic

approach can be achieved through avenues such as action research by teachers and research in real-world settings by the researchers themselves. Even though the teachers may not be paid for this type of involvement, the professional satisfaction resulting from teachers and researchers blurring the lines and finding equilibrium may boost the likelihood of a perceived benefit in the employment equation (Rose, 2019).

Academic Institutions

Frontczak (2020) claimed that public institutions of higher learning, by their very nature, exist to build knowledge and values with social good and change as their aim. Wheaton (2020) argued that education in its purest form teaches students to think, with the outcome being whole and thoughtful humans who can positively contribute to a healthy society. However, according to Wheaton (2020), a change in the purview of institutions has occurred, and there has been an authoritative shift in governance as well as the role of the student. Institutions of higher education have developed a more individualistic and capitalistic philosophy (Wheaton, 2020). Their choice to become more commercial has diminished their brand. Colleges and universities were meant to serve the common good rather than be focused on making a profit, but they have lost their first calling and are contradicting their own stated ideals (Schlaerth, 2022; Shulman, 2019). Reichman (2019) posited that with this shift toward a business model, academic freedom is at stake. In the case of the adjunct, academic freedom is hoped for but not a reality (Frontczak, 2020). More and more administrators are persons of authority and cater to the bottom line which is research money and student clients. Whereas freedom of thought and the pursuit of knowledge were once valued, these ideals have been replaced with meeting the needs of individual consumers based not on holistic education but on monetary concerns and priorities (Frye, 2017).

Public colleges face budgetary challenges, such as competition from for-profit institutions (Ochoa, 2012). As with all institutions, monetary constraints and decision-making power contribute to practices, policies, and procedures. The shift toward expediency and effectiveness has caused a shift in where funds for personnel are allocated, so to meet the demands of the clientele, administrative costs are rising while teacher pay is decreasing, using cheap labor and short-term contracts with no benefits while still charging students the same or more (Ramirez, 2018; Tolley, 2018; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Adjuncts can be hired to adjust to the staffing needs of the institution (Ingraham, 2021). Brennan and Magness (2018a, 2018b) pointed out that hiring adjuncts is a way for colleges to manage costs. They claimed that increasing pay and benefits for adjuncts is more challenging than it sounds and that there would be adverse effects or at least significant trade-offs. However, remuneration for college and university presidents is increasing exponentially over even the highest-paid professors in the institutional hierarchy (AAUP, 2018), and administrative growth has been on the rise (Brennan & Magness, 2018b). There are cases where administration costs have risen and overtaken the cost of teachers (Gaudet, 2019). On the other hand, budgets have been trimmed by hiring more part-time faculty. Although the trend of hiring part-time educators has decreased slightly, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2019), it is fractional compared to the serge that preceded it (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Additionally, public funding for higher education is decreasing, which causes more accountability to the individual customer (Gelman et al., 2022; Osorio et al., 2022).

The idea of budgetary demands is challenged by Frye (2017), who questioned whether the actual cost of contingent faculty and the use of part-time workers is the best economic option in the long run. Reevy and Deason (2014) propounded whether the increasing use of adjuncts in

postsecondary institutions is a true financial necessity. Childress (2019) stated that there must be a return to the original goals of higher education, which requires valuing the contributions of all teachers, demonstrated both in the way they are financially compensated and how they are treated. Seeking a middle ground, Asali (2019) contended that there is a need for both tenured professors and adjuncts in systems of higher education and pointed to the possibility of co-existence and equilibrium. Some schools are working to improve conditions for adjuncts, and they are doing the hard work required to redress the negative aspects of the adjunct role (Tugend, 2019; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Amidst the milieu, institutions need to understand the various needs of their adjuncts and the subgroups that exist (D. S. Murray, 2019; Richardson et al., 2019; Wagoner, 2019). Adjuncts are not all the same (Zitko & Schultz, 2020). They have different needs, yet postsecondary institutions do not understand the experiences of their tenure-ineligible faculty (Witt & Gearin, 2021). Institutions are quite aware of their own need (Anthony et al., 2020). Still, perhaps they need to be more aware of the needs of their teachers and the teacher perspective regarding the desirability of their employment status and whether continuing in the profession is worth it (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021). The benefits of the partnership between institutions of postsecondary education and those they employ on a part-time basis to directly serve the students are heavily weighted in favor of the schools, and more research is needed to explore the relationship between part-time faculty and their institutions (Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017).

Professional Development

Professional development is also a concern for adjuncts within their institutions and is part of the perceived costs and benefits to be considered in the teaching profession (Bolitzer, 2019b). A profession is more than a job (Martínez Agudo, 2019). A profession suggests the

possession of knowledge and skills which can be developed, adapted, and garnered over time to build expertise. When someone is a professional, they are recognized for their service, knowledge, and skills. They work at improving their skill set through avenues such as professional development to maintain and grow in the area of ethical and performance-related standards so as to continue using their knowledge and skills in the service to others (Martínez Agudo, 2019). Professional development is key to gaining and maintaining excellence in the field. Not only do teachers gain knowledge and skills, but they also learn and grow through interaction with their colleagues in the process (Adger et al., 2018; Bolitzer, 2019a). Packer (2019) conducted a study on adjunct faculty development and found that there was a need not only for professional development but for adjuncts to connect, interact, and network with their peers. In the world of ESL, there is much research in publications such as the *TESOL Journal* and *TESOL Quarterly*, demonstrating collaboration among researcher teachers. As teachers seek to better themselves and better serve their students, professional development is a necessary component. There is a desire for professionalism and quality in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (Martínez Agudo, 2019). However, many adjuncts, though they have the desire to include professional development in their schedules, may not be provided with or compensated for professional development by their institutions, or they may not have the ability to participate due to the unique time constraints of the adjunct (Bolitzer, 2019a; Danaei, 2019a; Housel, 2022; Xu, 2019). Literature on collaboration among and between adjuncts themselves, a component of professional development, is sparse at best, which could be attributed to the circumstances and lack of incentives previously noted. Whatever the reason, the apparent lack of professional development opportunities is yet another factor in the social exchange calculations made by adjuncts.

Curriculum

Teacher involvement is a common and critical element in curriculum development (Warr & Mishra, 2021). Research by Trinter and Hughes (2021) demonstrated the positive effects of teacher involvement in curriculum development. Gass et al. (2018) added that teachers, specifically ESL teachers, need to be part of the research and curriculum process to keep teachers and the curriculum fresh and relevant.

Curriculum design can be described as a plan for learning that is intentional and informed (Kostka & Bunning, 2017). Adjunct teachers are often asked to adapt and design curricula for their courses, which requires preparation time and expertise, yet there is little extrinsic motivation for them in this area as they are often spread so thin (Schenkewitz, 2019). Generally, ESL teachers are given much freedom when it comes to curriculum design and practical implementation (Shieh & Reynolds, 2021; Talbot & Mercer, 2018). Teachers, specifically ESL teachers, according to Shehadeh (2019), must constantly be making choices about methodology and curriculum. Cultural considerations also affect curriculum decisions in language teaching (Papaefthymiou-Lytra et al., 2019). Teachers are, in effect, curriculum designers (Warr & Mishra, 2021).

A newer trend in higher education is the use of open educational resources (OER) (Burrows et al., 2022; Guthrie et al., 2018). According to McGowan (2020), the use of OER is becoming more common and is receiving more support for implementation in higher education. In English language teaching, open online resources are commonly used, such as those provided by the U.S. Department of Education (2022). Research suggests that the use of OER is helpful to students, especially those in lower socio-economic situations because it provides no-cost textbooks or resources (Colvard et al., 2018; Hilton, 2020). While it is beneficial to the students,

this trend has the potential to create more unpaid work for adjuncts if they are required to search out and secure free online resources.

There is more to teaching than content. Teacher knowledge is essential and is dynamic and responsive to contexts (Christison & Murray, 2022; Mahler et al., 2018). Part of the body of knowledge of quality teachers is the ability to be attuned to student learning and the specific and evolving contexts in which they teach (Gupta, 2019). Teachers, specifically those teaching language learners, must be not only aware of but also intentionally attending to the diversity of their students in areas of language, culture, and development (Ouellette-Schramm, 2021; Sanczyk, 2021). Additionally, quality teaching requires the ability to lead students to and through the process of learning. Learning is an active student-centered endeavor (Crookes, 2019; Lane, 2018). The idea of student-centered active learning is based on the theory of constructivism. As the name implies, the concept of constructivism alludes to the fact that students are constructing their own learning. Piaget and Vygotsky both contributed early on to the foundational ideas behind constructivism (Schunk, 2020). Still, the ideas of Vygotsky and his zone of proximal development (ZPD), along with scaffolding, unlike Piaget, do not leave the student entirely on their own but provide help from a more knowledgeable other, making teachers a necessary and active component (McLeod, 2019). Teaching English as a second language is especially compatible with constructivism because skills are best learned in meaningful ways and in authentic situations (Gordon et al., 2019). When O'Connor (2022) addressed the movement toward constructivism in curriculum and practices in postsecondary education, he included a point of caution, stating that content cannot be compromised in the name of constructivism. Interestingly, Magruder (2019) noticed that adjuncts become experts in teaching practices rather than content because it is the stable factor they can control. Nevertheless, the curriculum is built

and brought to life by teachers as they collaborate with their students (Crabbe, 2019; Trent, 2019). Perhaps this collaboration could be viewed positively and negatively by adjuncts with the intrinsic satisfaction of working with students providing a favorable reward even though it requires more work and time on the part of the teacher.

Standards

In today's world, the quality of teaching is based on standards (American Institutes for Research, 2016; Commission on English Language Program Accreditation, 2022; Cox et al., 2018; Gamson et al., 2019; D. E. Murray & Christison, 2020). Students must meet, and teachers must cater to these standards rather than relying on the credentials of the professional teacher and their level of training, experience, and professionalism (Martínez Agudo, 2019). To keep pace with the teacher and student performance trend, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International developed standards for adult programs, instructors, and their students (TESOL International Association, 2002; TESOL International Association, 2008). Although standards are popular and perhaps necessary, Coombe (2019) stated that effective teaching and learning also encompass the qualities of the teachers, such as empathy, creativity, and communication skills. Teaching, particularly ESL teaching, is a relational endeavor (Crabbe, 2019).

In California ESL community college settings, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is commonly used as an assessment tool and standard for ESL students (ASCCC, 2020; CASAS, 2022). The assessment tools are designed to be used in adult basic education and English as a second language courses and programs. The testing is directly tied to funding and is approved for reporting for state-administered, federally-funded programs (CASAS, 2022). The CASAS organization directs teachers and programs toward adherence to

basic skills content standards and their testing, which are arranged by level (CASAS, 2022). Similarly, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), passed in 2014, also introduced requirements and standards for schools to meet to receive funding (CASAS, 2022).

K-12 teachers, depending on where in the United States they teach, have requirements and standards they must meet (O. Lee, 2018), and there has been concern about the overwhelming task that educators face to meet the expectations (Howlett & Penner-Williams, 2020). The requirements and standards present in higher education and the pressures on adjuncts responsible for executing them are no less daunting. However, there is limited literature on the perceptions and processes of teachers who instruct at the noncredit postsecondary or adult level. Thus, although teachers may not be the ones creating standards, they are the ones who are expected to design pathways for teaching and learning (McTighe & Brown, 2021). Keeping up to date and adhering to standards is another task that adjuncts face, even with their limited resources and compensation. According to Brevetti and Ford (2017), adjunct professors are doing the best they can under the circumstances.

English as a Second Language Teachers

Adjunct ESL teachers serve in both credit and noncredit departments. Since English is considered the lingua franca or international language, it is the language most often taught worldwide (Martínez Agudo, 2019; Papaefthymiou-Lytra et al., 2019; Shehadeh, 2019). Teachers of English to speakers of other languages are often adjuncts. They serve learners from many age groups and cultures in many different contexts with many goals or reasons for learning English (Martínez Agudo, 2019; D. E. Murray, 2020).

Online learning is a growing sector (Greenhow et al., 2022; Peterson, 2019; Yarbrough, 2018). More and more online teaching by contingents is occurring (Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017).

The wake of online learning has created new challenges for nontraditional student persistence (James, 2022). Hence, it also creates more challenges for adjunct teachers.

Though the profession of teaching English to speakers of other languages is in demand around the world, it does not garner the same respect as other similar professional situations; the lack of respect may be due in part to the perception that anyone who can speak English can teach it (Bell, 2021; Freeman, 2020). However, language proficiency is only one component of TESOL; teachers need to be proficient, but they also need to understand how language works and be able to communicate that knowledge to their students through effective pedagogy, all the while aligning their teaching with the needs and abilities of their students. TESOL International Association (2003) addressed the quality of those teaching in the United States and worldwide, beginning with dignifying the students receiving language instruction by acknowledging their right to a quality education by qualified teachers. The organization went on to say that quality teaching is accomplished through specialized and ongoing training and elaborated on training details by delineating specifics such as written and oral language proficiency, keeping abreast of trends and research across related disciplines, and maintaining currency in any required certification or licensing (TESOL International Association, 2003).

Teachers to speakers of other languages are generally certified, and in many cases, the position requires a post-graduate degree (Martínez Agudo, 2019). However, adjuncts who serve ESL students often feel they have a lower status than those who serve in other disciplines (Bell, 2021; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Exacerbating the issue, English learners at the college level, particularly in English programs at community colleges, remain overlooked and understudied (David & Kanno, 2021).

Job Satisfaction

While there is much literature, both scholarly and in the popular news (Gaudet, 2019), about the perils of adjunct life, Nelson et al. (2020) claimed that some adjunct workers view themselves and their place in the new gig economy as satisfactory. In other words, some adjunct workers are satisfied with their positions and roles in their institutions. These gig workers voluntarily choose their role and the freedom it affords (Brennan & Magness, 2018b; Burtch et al., 2018). However, while some adjuncts have happily chosen the gig path, most would prefer to be tenured or at least full-time professors (Finley, 2009; Gelman et al., 2022; Ott & Dippold, 2018a). Furthermore, though many may be willing to endure inequity in hopes of future gain, there is usually little or no opportunity for advancement (AAUP, 2014; Gaudet, 2019). Many adjuncts feel some sense of job dissatisfaction (Ott & Dippold, 2018b; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Some say they stay because it is better than nothing, and they have a passion for teaching (Bowen & McPherson, 2016; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Along with their love of teaching, they also persist and are motivated by altruistic reasons (Bolitzer, 2019b; Osorio et al., 2022; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Martinez and Martinez (2019) studied adjunct faculty at a non-traditional institution. They found that those who did not depend on their adjunct work for a living were not as concerned with low pay, but it did affect their attitudes toward the job and the institution. Nelson et al. (2020) concluded that some, although not necessarily all, adjuncts could be categorized as satisfied gig economy workers. In their research, Richardson et al. (2019) detailed varying degrees of satisfaction based on the circumstances of what they termed a sessional worker, acknowledging commonly stated concerns but concluding that both positive and negative experiences exist.

Colleges and universities have found that employing adjunct teachers is of great financial benefit to them (Packer, 2019). Adjuncts provide cheap and flexible labor (Schenkewitz, 2019; Vincente, 2018; Wagoner, 2019; Witt & Gearin, 2021). Wheaton (2020) questioned whether the bottom line should be a driving force of higher education. Nevertheless, it is part of the current scenario and equation even though many teachers are not satisfied with the exchange interactions and the status of adjuncts (Childress, 2019). They are weighing the costs and benefits and finding that the outcome is less profitable than they had expected (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018). Teachers interact with various stakeholders in the educational process, some more rewarding than others. Vincente (2018) drew connections based on the social exchange between contingent faculty and their students as well as contingent faculty and their institutions, with differing levels of satisfaction attributed to the various exchanges. Institutions need adjuncts (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021). However, Vincente (2018) pointed out that although contingent faculty are expected to provide the same quality of service to their students as full-time or tenured instructors, there is little reciprocity from the institutions in the form of adequate support, benefits, or compensation. These deficits in salary and benefits translate into lower job satisfaction (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021).

However, additional factors that lead to job satisfaction and a feeling of fair exchange are a part of the adjunct employment discussion as well. Nelson et al. (2020) shared possible intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Extrinsic factors may include what some refer to as hygiene factors, such as earned wages, benefits, job security, and working conditions (Martinez & Martinez, 2019). In contrast, intrinsic motivation may include the positive experiences associated with teaching a specific subject of interest, positive experiences in working with students and colleagues, and even flexibility of employment (Nelson et al., 2020). Martinez and Martinez

(2019) affirmed the call for improved working conditions for non-tenure-track teachers and made the distinction between intrinsic factors which motivate and extrinsic factors which may simply keep dissatisfaction at bay. Adjuncts have been found to be generally enthusiastic and passionate about working with and helping students in higher education settings (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021; Danaei, 2019a). Osorio et al. (2022) surveyed community college teachers and found that many find their job satisfying because of the demographic they serve, especially the underrepresented and nontraditional students. Bolitzer (2019b) concluded that satisfaction experienced by adjuncts was due to the love of teaching, not to the circumstances in their institutions.

The reality of adjuncts teaching most college classes is not likely to change soon, but the realities of their working conditions can (Jolley et al., 2014; McNaughtan et al., 2017; Packer, 2019). Since the contribution of adjuncts in postsecondary education is vital and accounts for the bulk of teaching in many institutions of higher learning, further study on adjunct satisfaction and retention is needed (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021). Following their research on sessional academics, Richardson et al. (2019) expressed a need for more qualitative studies on the experiences and motivations of these workers.

Unionization

Almost thirty years ago, Gappa and Leslie (1993) wrote about adjunct faculty and their work situation. The issues they wrote about are quite similar to discussions still being held today, such as low status, few benefits, and meager support. However, adjuncts are beginning to unionize, and better working conditions for part-time educators are improving (Kirby & Donn, 2020; D. S. Murray, 2019; Ramirez, 2018; Ryan et al., 2019; Schlaerth, 2022; Tolley, 2018). Benefits such as health care and retirement are often provided by unionized public institutions

(Rhoades, 2017, 2020). While the progress is encouraging, it misses the point that most adjuncts do not want to be part-time employees (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018; Yakoboski, 2019).

Ochoa (2012) suggested further research into the idea that small changes, such as providing professional development, may be enough. However, the solution still rides on the backs of the contingent instructors since it will not lessen one of the greatest burdens, which is time. Offering more ways for underemployed faculty to improve their instruction requires them to put in even more time without improving security or rank. Moreover, Bolitzer (2019a) noted that offering more development opportunities is a noble goal but one which is often left unattained. Educators who are thinking about the security of their employment and juggling multiple jobs may not be able to focus entirely on their primary goal which is providing the best learning experience that they can. Steps need to be taken to not only improve the lot of the adjunct but to provide more full-time positions (Davis, 2017; Tolley, 2018).

Summary

Historically, the majority of adjuncts were not employed to fill the role that they now predominately fill or in the way that they are currently asked to fill it. While adjuncts were employed sparingly for reasons such as bringing their expertise to the classroom (Gaudet, 2019), the dominant use of adjuncts has become a way to cut costs and manage the demand or lack thereof of teachers in accordance with student enrollment and institutional budgetary pressures at the expense of the temporary, part-time employee (Anthony et al., 2020; Witt & Gearin, 2021). As a result, the new way of employing most postsecondary instructors as adjuncts has created an inequitable situation and dissatisfaction among this large sector of workers (Zitko & Schultz, 2020). The literature incants a constant refrain regarding the low status of the adjunct (Anthony et al., 2020; Davis, 2017; Graves, 2020; H. J. Lee, 2019; Tolley, 2018; Zitko & Schultz, 2020).

Despite the rising awareness of their plight, disparity still exists and little has changed to ameliorate the situation that adjuncts face (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018; Danaei, 2019b). Inequity continues to exist in many areas such as working conditions, pay, benefits, and job security. Additionally, areas of dissatisfaction among adjuncts reach beyond the basic hygiene needs of remuneration and stability to include less tangible needs such as inclusion and respect. Furthermore, it has been noted that these part-time educators are not the only ones affected by their working conditions (Childress, 2019; Wheaton, 2020; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Students, colleagues, institutions, and academia as a whole are also affected by the current trend (Crookes, 2019; Gallant, 2018; Ochoa, 2012; Ran & Sanders, 2020; Rhoades, 2020; Wheaton, 2020). Unionization for and among adjuncts is developing in response to the need for ethical standards to protect instructors, yet inequity and dissatisfaction persist.

How adjuncts perceive their experience is directly related to the satisfaction level or perception of the quality of the social exchange which exists between them and those with whom they interact. While there has been research in the area of adjunct employment in higher education, there is a call for more and a particular need to give voice to those who serve hidden populations and who are often overlooked themselves (Anthony et al., 2020; D'Amico et al., 2020; Richardson et al., 2019). Moreover, not all adjunct faculty situations are the same (Martinez & Martinez, 2019; Wagoner, 2019; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Research, specifically on language teachers, is scant (Crookes, 2019). For example, the number of English language learners in community colleges is growing and will most likely continue to grow, yet there is little research on this population (Raufman et al., 2019). By extension, there is also little research on those who instruct them. Although adjuncts constitute the majority of ESL teachers, there is little research on adjunct experiences, and further research is necessary (David & Kanno, 2021;

Gelman et al., 2022; Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017; Ryan et al., 2019; Sanczyk, 2021; Witt & Gearin, 2021). This gap in the literature is the area to which my study seeks to contribute. In the pursuit of documenting the experiences of adjuncts, Rudick and Dannels (2019) suggested that a good place to start is by asking the teachers themselves. Through this study, I hope to prompt questions and answers that can contribute to enlightening the particular institutions where the teachers are employed. Additionally, the understandings, interpretations, and viewpoints gathered may serve to add to the valuable pool of information needed to guide, promote, and strengthen positive interactions between all adjunct teachers and those with whom they partner. It can bring the element of humanity to current topics regarding public policy and professional practice. Research needs to continue, and new models need to be developed that challenge and reward the educator while also stimulating and contributing to the growth of the student, ultimately promoting the integrity of postsecondary educational institutions. This study allowed me to listen to and describe the experiences of adjunct English as a second language teachers at a community college in the Southwestern United States.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of English as a second language postsecondary adjunct instructors at a community college in the Southwestern United States. This chapter begins with the research design, research questions, settings, and participants. Then researcher positionality is covered and includes the interpretive framework and philosophical assumptions, specifically ontological, epistemological, and axiological, followed by the researcher's role. Next, procedures, which include permissions and a recruitment plan, are outlined. This is followed by the data collection plan, which specifies the data collection approaches used along with subsequent analysis and synthesis. Finally, trustworthiness is addressed, covering credibility, transferability, dependability, and ethical considerations. A brief summary concludes the chapter.

Research Design

Gathering and analyzing numerical data to explain a phenomenon is a very basic definition of quantitative research (Babbie, 1989). Qualitative research, on the other hand, is a scientific process that focuses on interpretation and meaning in order to investigate human problems (Sale & Thielke, 2018). It focuses on a problem holistically, searching for the meaning rather than measurement of a phenomenon that is of interest to the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). A qualitative approach positions the researcher in the real world in order to discover, describe, and interpret phenomena and those who experience them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative studies are a way for researchers to explore an issue that is not easily measured and to give voice to those experiencing the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is best for this study because I am seeking to investigate and describe the lived experiences of a certain

population in a shared context rather than collect numeric data about the participants or the context.

One qualitative research design, phenomenology, documents the lived experiences of people in the context of their world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). van Manen's (2016, p. 34) use of the phrase "lived experiences" may seem redundant; however, he explained that gathering lived experiences conveys the idea of pre-reflective or rather immediate, uncritical responses. The philosophical backdrop of phenomenology is based on the ideas of Edmund Husserl (1970) and does not separate outside reality and inner reality; it seeks to understand the outside world through the inner life. Husserl (1970) thought reality should be understood through intentionality which focuses on the descriptions of experiential realities. Based on the works of Husserl (1970), van Manen (2016) developed his ideas on hermeneutic phenomenology.

van Manen (2016) explained that phenomenology was founded in philosophy, a search for meaning and reflectivity rather than a search for hard facts. At the same time, this type of study is not simply pondering the idea of phenomenology but actually doing research. However, phenomenology calls not so much for a hard and fast plan of action but rather a wondering search for meaning. Although there must be a method and plan for executing a phenomenological study, true phenomenology should not be reduced to a set of procedures. The heart of phenomenology is not in the finding of answers but rather the asking of meaningful questions which may produce insights, understandings, and new pathways. In other words, thoughtfulness and reflectivity, which are the foundational elements philosophy evokes, are the subtext and motif of phenomenology. The attitude surrounding the phenomenological approach focuses on finding meaning in the world inside and outside of self through the documentation of encounters that may provide unexpected and significant insights and then reflecting on the

experiences and bringing new insights or reviving old insights that have been lost or buried. Phenomenology helps the researcher and participants stop and reflect on common experiences, gathering pre-reflective thoughts upon which to then reflect. Day to day, people do not usually stop to think about that which is considered mundane, but phenomenology tends toward finding meaning in common experiences. It wonders about the meaning and significance that can be found in not only extraordinary experiences but also the ordinariness of daily experiences (van Manen, 2016).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is best for this study because it focuses on descriptions of the participants' experiences and their views on those experiences. It is specifically hermeneutic in that the research is looking for meaning but in a way that maintains the integrity of the pre-reflective or lived experiences gathered (van Manen, 2016). Since I have similar experiences to the participants, it is not realistic to try and bracket myself out as in a transcendental study (Moustakas, 1994). Nevertheless, I have worked to understand the experiences of the participants as described by them and not insert my own thoughts in order to guard against overlaying my own preconceived ideas and experiences. van Manen (2016) described this idea as abstemious reflection because although I cannot practically bracket myself out of a situation that envelopes me, I can try to abstain from focusing on myself. I must allow the teachers to speak for themselves and reveal thoughts and ideas about their situation apart from what I think they might say or what I think they should say. However, my experience will be helpful in that I may have insights into the context which may help me to ask pertinent, guiding, open-ended questions. A reflexive journal will be used to track decisions and personal reflections about the study. A qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study is the best type of inquiry for this research because I am seeking to describe and understand the experiences of adjunct English as a second

language teachers.

Research Questions

The research questions were derived from and crafted to align with the problem and purpose of this study as well as the philosophical framework. These research questions provided important insights, perspectives, and experiences gleaned from the data sources. Responses to these questions and their analysis served to fill the gap in the literature regarding adjunct experiences, specifically those of ESL educators.

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings?

Sub-Question One

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to students?

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to colleagues?

Sub-Question Three

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to their institution?

Setting and Participants

The settings and participants, or co-researchers, for this study were chosen because they are a typical representation of programs and adjunct English as a second language teachers in collegiate settings. The participants are in many ways co-researchers because they are colleagues, and they are vital to the success of the study (Moustakas, 1994). The setting

represents a typical context for adjunct instructors. Although the location has full-time faculty, the teachers are predominantly adjuncts. The school requires instructors to have a master's degree in teaching English as a second language or a related field. According to the selection criteria, a purposeful, convenience sample of 14 participants was recruited from the pool of adjunct English as a second language instructors at a community college in the Southwestern United States (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Setting

The site for this study was chosen not only for convenience but also because it is a setting in which the phenomenon is occurring. This community college is one of the locations where I am currently employed. Although there may be risks associated with studying my own workplace (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), care was taken and strategies were employed to ensure that the study is trustworthy and accounts are not only insightful but also accurate (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The site was an English as a second language program in a community college in the Southwestern United States which serves a predominantly immigrant population. At the time, there were 41 instructors in the noncredit ESL department. However, this number is constantly in flux due to expanding or decreasing student registration. Courses are offered during the day and evening, six days a week. The department is funded by grants from the state, and classes are free to students. The students range in age from high school to senior adults. They have varied goals and reasons for taking English courses. The program offers seven levels of instruction that prepare students for moving into credit courses or advancing their personal goals. The leveled classes combine reading, writing, listening, and speaking into one class. Classes vary depending on need; leveled classes offer instruction for approximately 13 hours per week over the course of four days. Instruction may be offered synchronously, asynchronously, or via HyFlex. Other

classes, such as conversation, are also offered with fewer hours per week. Organizational leadership is structured much like the credit side of the college. There is a dean, full-time staff who teach and rotate as department chair, and adjunct instructors.

Participants

The participants were chosen specifically from the aforementioned site because they are the best candidates to provide information about the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). These adjunct teachers are contracted and assigned to teach one or more classes per semester, which consists of two eight-week terms. They all have education and experience specifically related to teaching English as a second language. The minimum level of education for the position is a master's degree or a waiver for equivalent experience. The instructors focus on teaching the basic skills of English which include reading, writing, listening, and speaking in leveled classes. Since the instructors are adjuncts and are only permitted to work a certain number of hours per week, this often means that they are only teaching one class. At the time, there were 41 English as a second language instructors in the sample pool. There were also additional adjuncts who had been employed over the course of the last year at the site but were not working at the site during that particular term. They were still accessible through their school email. The teachers were mostly women, but there were a few male teachers. A broad age range was represented.

Recruitment Plan

After IRB permission was granted, I recruited 14 adjunct teachers to participate in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A formal standardized invitation to participate was sent through school email to each prospective participant (see Appendix D). Follow-up calls, texts, or emails were used when necessary. The sample pool consisted of adjunct ESL teachers employed at the

site over the course of the last year. The number fluctuated a bit since teachers are hired based on need. At the time, there were approximately 41 teachers. A purposeful sample using a criterion sampling strategy was used to procure 14 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This type of sample and strategy was used because teachers can provide first-hand experience and responses that provide answers to the research questions. A letter of consent was provided (see Appendix E) and received from each participant.

Researcher's Positionality

As I consider my positionality as a researcher, I would say that my theoretical paradigm is social constructivism. Creswell and Poth (2018) described social constructivists as those seeking to understand the environment in which they live while acknowledging its complexity. Social constructivists are listeners who take into consideration their own experiences and the experiences of others as they try to make sense of the world around them. This is not to say that there is no absolute truth, but that the full understanding of truth is not wholly possessed by me. I can learn and grow from considering the perspectives of others whether I adhere to them or not. Thoughtful and discerning interaction with others and their unique personal, cultural and historical experiences produces growth and broadens my perspective.

Interpretive Framework

Constructivism is my interpretive framework or paradigm, and it is mainly based on my spiritual beliefs. I believe the world is ultimately under the sovereign reign of a good, all-powerful, all-knowing God, so I am free to love and learn from others who are made in his image and who reflect different facets of his character (*New International Bible,* 1978/2011, Genesis 1:27). I can do so without fear because of the salvation and eternal safety he provides to those who follow him (*New International Bible,* 1978/2011, 1 John 4:18,19). I would say that I fall

into the social constructivist category because although I believe in absolute truth, I am aware of the fact that I do not possess a perfect knowledge of all truth and that the idea of truth is complex (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Learning from others does not always mean agreement or that everything is good, but it does necessitate humility as well as discernment on my part. God's standards are not negotiable; all truth is God's truth, and there is no truth outside of God. All ideas and interpretations of experiences must be weighed in light of Scripture. I am called and equipped to live for his glory, my good, and the good of others in all areas of life (*New International Bible,* 1978/2011, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 13:21).

Philosophical Assumptions

In this section, I describe my philosophical position as a researcher and as a human being. I share values that I have held throughout my life, and thus the worldview with which I approach research. Specifically, I have articulated my positionality in the areas of ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

Ontological Assumption

Ontology refers to the nature and characteristics of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My ontological position as a Christian is that there is one truth or one reality, and Jesus and his Word are the basis of that truth. Jesus stated that he is the truth, not just one possible version of truth (*New International Bible,* 1978/2011, John 14:6). Thus, I ultimately believe there is only one reality, and it is not of my own making. I do believe, though, that people can perceive reality in different ways. They can have different perspectives, and these perspectives may evolve throughout the course of life with exposure to the different ideas and life experiences of others. However, even perspectives must be weighed against Scripture (*New International Bible,* 1978/2011, Proverbs 14:12).

Epistemological Assumption

The epistemological assumption involves the definition and defense of knowledge claims, and in research, this includes the relationship between the researcher and the participants. In qualitative research, what is known is based on the subjective experiences of others (Patton, 2015). While it is necessary to understand context deeply, I must take care to bracket myself and my own experiences out of the study or at least be aware of possible conflict or bias and take measures to guard against it (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). I think it is important to point out that, as a qualitative researcher using a phenomenological approach, I am not necessarily trying to find evidence for absolute truth (Patton, 2015). I am instead collecting perspectives and looking for themes in order to explore or explain a phenomenon. To this end, I am free to report the views of others which may not be my own.

Axiological Assumption

The axiological assumption in qualitative research reflects the need to acknowledge beliefs and biases without having them interfere with the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I am an older White female who was raised in a Christian and military family. As a result, I am rather conservative in my views. I value hard work, dependability, honesty, and justice, as well as open and respectful communication. That being said, as much as possible, the collection and reporting of perspectives should not be influenced by my personal values, beliefs, or opinions which often stem from my social position and personal experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative phenomenological research dictates that I collect the evidence surrounding a phenomenon as impartially as possible. Identifying my own beliefs can prompt awareness and avoidance of wording that may sway participants one way or another. Also, in order to guard against any possible conveyance of questionable motives, I must be truthful and transparent with those who

will read my work. In sum, I want to represent Christ well (*New International Bible,* 1978/2011, Matthew 5:16).

Researcher's Role

This is a qualitative study, so I acted as the human instrument for understanding and analyzing the data (Patton, 2015). I have much experience at the site and with many of the participants. I have been teaching at the location for ten years. Due to prolonged engagement, I believe I have insights into the phenomenon being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That being said, I do not hold a position of power over any of the participants. In fact, my hope is that the interviews and focus groups will be collaborative in nature, resulting in a meaningful and positive experience for the participants (Friedman, 2020). Even so, I knew that I needed to be aware and to work to ensure that I did not bring any bias or assumptions which might jeopardize the study. This was accomplished through member checking and triangulation of multiple sources of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Procedures

Many steps were taken to conduct this study, all of which could be replicated in future studies. These steps included securing Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix A), IRB site approval at the school (see Appendix B), solicitation of participants, data collection and analysis, and the execution of triangulation. A request was sent in the form of an online application for IRB approval to both Liberty University as well as the college site in the study. IRB approval was necessary for both legal and ethical reasons (Stake, 2010). Participants were solicited from the pool of adjunct English as a second language teachers at the site through email and personal communication. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Triangulation was achieved by the evaluation of

multiple data sources (Patton, 2015). Data was stored on a secured computer and backed up on two separate storage devices.

Data Collection Plan

Multiple sources of evidence are needed for triangulation in order to increase the overall quality of the study (Denzin, 1978). Further, Noble and Heale (2019) stated that methodological triangulation enriches research by providing more perspective and balance. The first source of evidence was a brief questionnaire to glean information (see Appendix F). Then individual interviews were conducted, followed by focus groups. There was a convergence of evidence corroborating and contributing to the findings, yet each participant shared their personal reality, so triangulation also served to ensure that each participant's perspective was represented accurately. A secured computer was used for storage and Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word were used as tools for managing the data as it was analyzed. Transcription was initially captured by Zoom and then edited and interpreted by the researcher by comparing the text to the audio.

Data from each method of collection was analyzed according to the process set forth by Saldaña (2021). The process included the collection of data from participants, coding of the data, categorizing the data, and finally putting forth themes and concepts found in the data. Inductive coding was predominately employed since it is data-driven and more open-minded (Saldaña, 2021). However, in reality, the coding was a combination of both inductive and deductive because the experience of the researcher and the literature provide possible a priori codes. For the sake of organization, a codebook was kept (Saldaña, 2021). Prior to the first cycle of coding, I read through the interviews and clarified any discrepancies between the audio and the transcripts; this also provided the opportunity to be holistically immersed in the scripts. After this, I began the cycles of coding. Eclectic coding was used for both cycles since I was using two

types of coding for each cycle (Saldaña, 2021). I used descriptive and in vivo coding for the first cycle for all three data sources. Descriptive coding is useful for beginning researchers who are learning how to code and are using a variety of data forms (Saldaña, 2021). In vivo coding uses and honors the voices of the participants and their choice of phrasing (Saldaña, 2021). The second cycle of coding employed structural and pattern coding. Structural coding is good for categorizing semi-structured interview data and is good for studies with multiple participants (Saldaña, 2021). Pattern coding is good for identifying similarly coded data (Saldaña, 2021). After the cycles of coding were complete, I then moved into finding themes and insights (van Manen, 2016). While Saldaña (2021) provided the practical elements of data collection and analysis, van Manen's (2016) work provided a strong philosophical lens and perspective for the researcher and the study.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire (see Appendix F) was used to collect responses that provided basic information about the participants in the study and answers to questions that only required a brief reply concerning identity, circumstances, or preferences. Response to the questionnaire was requested by email and delivered to each participant and contained a link to a secured Google form. In the end, the information gathered was presented in table form and used pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Table 1

Questionnaire

1. What is your first and last name?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your age?

4. What is your race or ethnic identity?
5. What is your highest completed degree of education?
6. What employment positions have you held over the last school year?
7. How long have you worked as an adjunct ESL teacher in your current position?
8. What is the total length of time that you have worked as an adjunct ESL teacher?
9. Do you hold a full-time position at any single place of employment?
10. If you do not hold a full-time position, is it an option you would you prefer?
11. What do you find the most satisfying about being an ESL adjunct teacher?
12. What do you find the least satisfying about being an ESL adjunct teacher?
13. What compels you to continue working as an ESL adjunct teacher?
14. Thank you for your time! I will contact you in the next few days to schedule an interview. What is the best non-work email or phone (text) for me to reach you?

Questionnaires are used in qualitative research to collect data about inner experiences, interests, and opinions that may not be directly observable (Gall et al., 2007). All questions in the questionnaire for this study were directly related to the central research question and sub-questions. The questions were exactly the same for each participant and, unlike the interview, were delivered in a form where they could be answered by the respondents at their convenience and without time constraints (Gall et al., 2007). Questions one through 10 were designed to establish rapport and began with a general introduction to the central research question and topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). They also were useful in gathering information that can generally be answered in short form, acting as a valuable precursor to the interview process. Questions 11 through 14 addressed the sub-questions in the study with a focus

on the social exchange theory, specifically instructor job satisfaction. Experts in the field reviewed all questions before the study began.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were the primary source of data collection. The interviews were conversational but semi-structured and open-ended, with general standardized questions to provide each interviewee with the same information with which to respond (Patton, 2015). Interviews are a way for the researcher to gather the experiences of others for analysis (van Manen, 2016). For this data source, 14 individual interviews were conducted with adjunct teachers from the school, which is within the numerical parameters stated by Creswell and Poth (2018). Interviews were most appropriate and beneficial for this study because they are the best way to gather firsthand experiences and explanations which provide deep and rich data collection in order to build thick descriptions (Merriam, 1985). Furthermore, this form of data collection allowed for follow-up questions to be asked to glean further information and for clarification. The interview questions for this study (see Appendix G) were generated from the central research question (CRQ) and the sub-questions (SQ#). Interviews began with greetings and icebreaker questions based on the central research question in order to set the tone and establish rapport (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Clarification was given to the participants on the idea of experiences in that this study was looking to describe experiences that the participant had lived rather than academic experience such as what would be included in a resume, although there may be crossover. Additional follow-up questions were asked as needed. Interviews were conducted over Zoom as the participating teachers are well versed in this platform since they have been using this tool to teach their courses over the last few years. These interviews took no longer than 1.5 hours. With the permission of the interviewees, Zoom

recordings and transcriptions were saved on a secured computer and backed up on a separate secured storage device.

Table 2

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your general experience throughout your years of teaching as an adjunct English teacher. CRQ
2. Please describe how your previous experiences with students influence your current teaching experience. SQ1
3. Please describe how your beliefs about students influence your teaching experience. SQ1
4. Please describe how your beliefs about what students need to know influence your teaching experience. SQ1
5. Please describe how what you believe about how students learn influences your teaching experience. SQ1
6. Please describe how your employment status influences your service to students. SQ1
7. What else would you like to add to the discussion about students and your teaching experience? SQ1
8. Please describe your general experiences with colleagues. SQ2
9. Please describe your experiences with colleagues with regard to teaching. SQ2
10. Please describe your opportunities for interactive reflection with colleagues. SQ2
11. Please describe how your employment status affects your interaction with colleagues. SQ2
12. What else would you like to add to the discussion about your teaching experiences related to your colleagues? SQ2

13. Please describe your experiences with your institution. SQ3
14. Please describe how employment status influences your teaching experience. SQ3
15. Please describe how compensation influences your teaching experience. SQ3
16. Please describe how available material resources influence your teaching experience. SQ3
17. Please describe how institutional support (e.g., professional development) influences your teaching experience. SQ3
18. What else would you like to add to the discussion about your experience with the institution? SQ3
19. What additional thoughts would you like to add about our discussion overall? CRQ

All questions were directly related to the central research question and sub-questions. Question one was designed to establish rapport and began with a general introduction to the central research question and topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). It was important to set a tone that did not make the interviewees feel as though they were being judged but rather that they were simply sharing their experiences. Questions two through seven addressed sub-question one regarding instructors' experiences with regard to students. Questions eight through 12 addressed sub-question two which brought the conversation to instructors' experiences with regard to colleagues. Questions 13 through 18 gave the teachers an opportunity to share their experiences with regard to the institution, which correlated to research sub-question three. The final question returned to the central research question and allowed the teachers to share any additional thoughts. Experts in the field reviewed all questions before the study began. In lieu of a pilot, minor changes were made to the interview questions after the first interview but did not change the substance of the subsequent interviews.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were the final source of data collection. Focus groups are interviews with small groups of people, which serve to confirm and enhance information collected through individual interviews (Patton, 2015). The focus groups for this study were composed of two groups with four people in each group. Interviews helped participants to think about topics that they had not yet considered or to consider the topics in ways they had not previously considered them. The mental process of contemplating ideas may continue beyond the interview itself. Thus, the participants had the opportunity in focus groups to expound on or explore any thoughts they may have had post-interview as well as discuss questions with others that were generated from the interviews and discovered by the researcher. The focus groups also provided an element of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Focus groups were composed of people who had completed the interview process and took no more than 1.5 hours. Like the interviews, focus groups were conducted on Zoom, recorded, and transcribed. The focus groups were categorized as internet focus groups and convergence-focused groups since they were on Zoom and they were with participants who shared relatively similar experiences from which to identify shared patterns (Patton, 2015). Transcripts were reviewed and compared to the recordings for accuracy. The data was saved on a secured computer and backed up on two separate secured storage devices. Final focus group discussion questions (see Appendix H) were decided upon after all interviews had been completed. One question asked of the first focus group was removed for the sake of time.

Table 3

Focus Group Questions

1. Referencing your experience as an adjunct, please discuss essential components of job satisfaction.
2. Please discuss what your expectations were when you first began working as an adjunct.
3. Please discuss how being an adjunct currently affects your personal day-to-day life.
4. Please discuss how being an adjunct affects retirement for you.
5. With regard to weighing the costs and benefits of being an adjunct, please discuss what you have learned that you would pass on to someone who is going into the profession or choosing this job.
6. Based on your experience as an adjunct, what does equity, equilibrium, or balance, look like in this profession for you?
7. How have your experiences as an adjunct shaped your views on higher education in general?
8. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussions overall, either from the interview or the focus group?

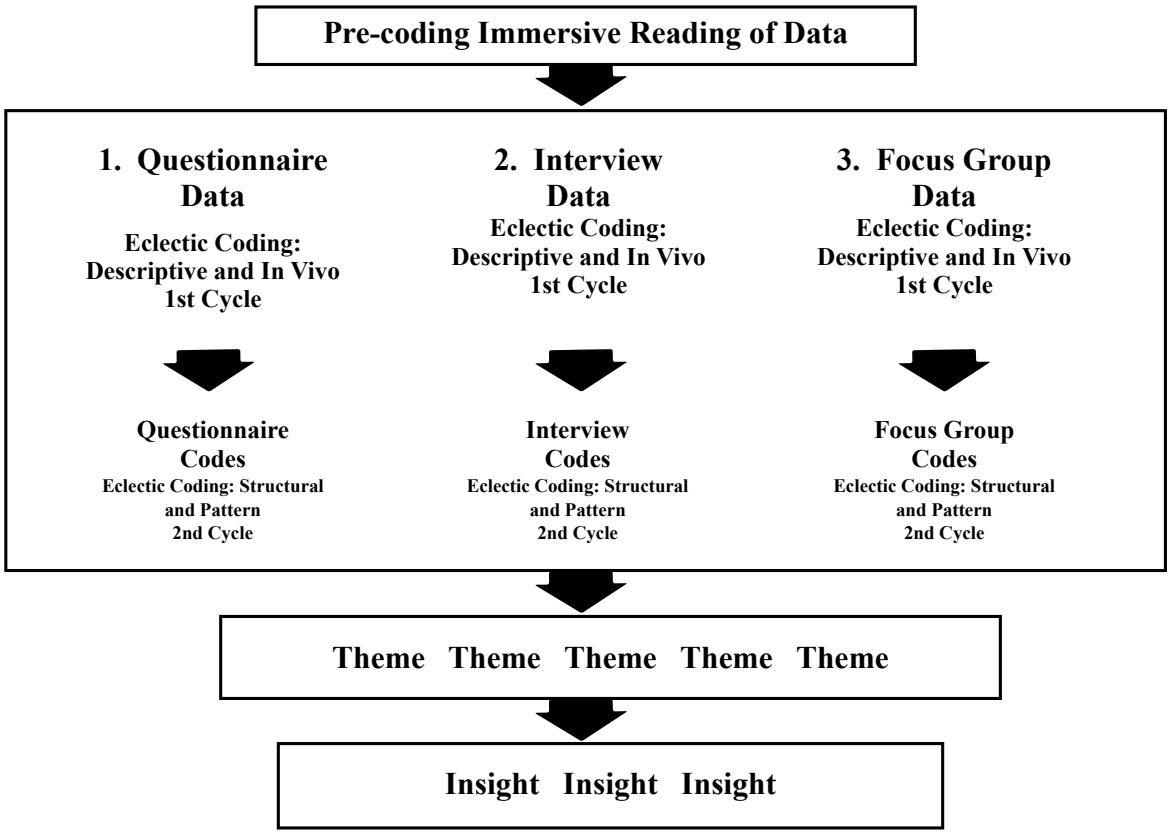
Data Analysis

Data was analyzed from the questionnaire, the interviews, and the focus groups. van Manen (2016) posited that material documenting lived experiences can be found anywhere and that researchers can use this data to inform and enrich the experiences gathered. Similarly, Moustakas (1994) stated that phenomenological data is gathered from unique individuals and their life experiences. Therefore, data obtained from the questionnaire contributed to the composite picture. After gathering data, the process continued according to the cycles of coding set forth by Saldaña (2021), which included descriptive, in vivo, structural, and pattern coding

and categorizing. Descriptive and in vivo coding was used in the first cycle, and structural and pattern coding was used in the second cycle. Themes and insights were derived from this process (van Manen, 2016). A secured computer and backup devices were used to house data for the entirety of the research project.

Figure 1

Data Analysis and Synthesis



Note. Figure created by author.

For the interviews, all Zoom recordings were reviewed, with transcripts edited and corrected as necessary. Participants were given access to review and verify the accuracy of the transcripts. This was done with links to the Zoom recordings and transcripts through email to the participants. Preliminary interview data analysis began as data was collected by jotting down

ideas in the research journal in order to avoid losing any thoughts for analytic consideration (Patton, 2015). Additionally, any changes made in questions were noted in the researcher's journal in order to contribute to the audit trail (Carcary, 2020). After gathering data, the process continued according to the cycles of coding set forth by Saldaña (2021), which included descriptive, in vivo, structural, and pattern coding and categorizing. Descriptive and in vivo coding were used in the first cycle, and structural and pattern coding were used in the second cycle. Themes and insights were derived from this process (van Manen, 2016).

As with the interviews, focus group data was collected and analyzed in accordance with the method set forth by Saldaña (2021), which included coding, categorizing, and finally arriving at themes and insights. Both Zoom focus group recordings and their corresponding transcripts were stored on a secured computer and backed up on two separate secured storage devices. All recordings were reviewed, with transcripts edited and corrected as necessary. Through email, participants were given links to access the Zoom recordings and transcripts in order to review and verify accuracy. Preliminary focus group data analysis began as data was collected by jotting down ideas in the research journal in order to avoid losing any thoughts for analytic consideration (Patton, 2015). Additionally, any changes made in questions were noted in the researcher's journal in order to contribute to the audit trail (Carcary, 2020). After gathering data, the process continued according to the cycles of coding set forth by Saldaña (2021) which included coding, categorizing, and finally arriving at themes and insights (van Manen, 2016).

Trustworthiness

It is essential to demonstrate the rigor and quality of qualitative research in order to prove and defend its place in the world of research. Proof must be delineated in such a way that satisfies positivist doubts while maintaining a naturalistic paradigm (Shenton, 2004). Qualitative

research is sometimes viewed as supportive or complementary to quantitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, qualitative research has emerged as a valuable form of research in its own right. Quantitative research is well-suited to the study of the physical world, but qualitative study is more appropriate when studying people (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Qualitative research acknowledges the complexity of humanity and seeks to understand rather than determine (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although the kinds of data gathered and the reasons for gathering may be different, there is still a need and a call for integrity. The trustworthiness of this study was affirmed through credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical considerations as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Credibility

Credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. It confirms that the data and interpretations represent and reflect the participant's views. For this study, credibility was based on prolonged engagement, member-checking, and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Prolonged engagement requires spending time in the field in order to understand the culture and develop trusted relationships so that the researcher and the participants can co-construct meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I have worked at the site for 10 years, and I have been able to build rapport with the teachers as well as the staff and administration. I am very familiar with the culture. While I appreciated and understood the context of the situation, I also realized the need to set aside my own preconceived ideas.

Member checking is when data and interpretations are verified by the participants. This can be done formally and informally and may occur during the interview conversations. Each of the interviewees was encouraged to review the transcript of their interview and had access to the

video recording of their interview. The focus groups also provided an opportunity for the interviewees to provide additional information, which is a component of member checking as well (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Denzin (1978) and Patton (2015) delineated four types of triangulation, one of which is data triangulation. For this study, data triangulation was used. Triangulation occurred by analyzing and synthesizing all data sources and comparing and contrasting the different viewpoints of the participants.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the findings can be transferred to other settings and contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The transferrable applications of this study were ensured by thick and rich descriptions of the data provided by participant interviews and other data sources. There are many other scenarios that are similar to the context at this school; however, the ability to transfer findings will need to be determined by the reader.

Dependability

Dependability demonstrates that the findings are stable over time and can be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The context of this study is common across colleges in the United States, especially the adjunct situation (H. J. Lee, 2019). Thus, this study could easily be repeated in similar settings. Descriptions of procedures are comprehensive and easy to repeat.

Confirmability

Confirmability is similar to dependability. Other researchers should confirm the data and findings which establishes neutrality and negates researcher bias or fabrication (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A detailed audit trail was created throughout the study so that procedures and findings could be easily tracked. The aforementioned practice of triangulation also contributes to

confirmability. Lastly, reflections were documented through researcher journaling about methodological decisions, logistics, and personal reflections.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations and implications were addressed. Initially, IRB approval was given by Liberty University. Data was then collected after obtaining IRB approval from the research site. Ethical considerations were also given with regard to participants.

Permissions

Permission was granted by both Liberty University and the research site. Documentation for approval from Liberty University can be found in Appendix A. Documentation for approval from the research site can be found in Appendix B. A recruitment letter was sent to individuals who met the criteria of being an adjunct ESL teacher at the site over the course of the last year. The letter was sent from the researcher's Liberty email per the request of the research site. The recruitment letter can be found in Appendix D. The consent form preceded the questionnaire in the Google document, and submission of the consent form and questionnaire signaled consent by the participants. No interviews were scheduled until consent was officially given. The consent form can be found in Appendix E.

Other Participant Protections

Though I work at the site, I have no position of authority over any of the participants nor the ability to coerce them to participate. No participants were harmed during this study, and they were fully informed of all data collection and sources, as well as their right to withdraw without ill will or negative repercussions. This was done through a letter of consent. All data from the participants will be kept confidential and secured with password protection. Any hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet that is in a locked office. All site and participant names were replaced

with pseudonyms. Data will be destroyed after three years per the American Psychological Association's (2020) guidelines.

Summary

The topic of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was the lived experiences of adjunct English as a second language teachers in a postsecondary institutional setting in the Southwestern United States. The problem is that ESL adjuncts are being asked to fill the majority of the teaching roles at postsecondary institutions without the compensation, benefits, job security, or working conditions and resources commensurate to that of full-time faculty (Childress, 2019; Davis, 2017; Ott & Dippold, 2018a; Tolley, 2018; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Little research has been done on the experiences of adjunct English as a second language teachers in collegiate settings who are teaching term by term with little support or promise of permanent, full-time work. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of postsecondary adjunct English as a second language instructors at a community college site in the Southwestern United States in order to give voice to the teachers and to contribute to theory and best practices in the field. An additional benefit was giving adjuncts a chance to be heard, not just giving voice to their thoughts and sharing them with the public at large but also the chance to be listened to as individuals without judgment (Bakley & Brodersen, 2018).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of English as a second language postsecondary adjunct instructors at a community college in the Southwestern United States. The problem is that ESL adjuncts are being asked to fill the majority of the teaching roles at postsecondary institutions without the compensation, benefits, job security, or working conditions and resources commensurate to that of full-time faculty (Childress, 2019; Davis, 2017; Ott & Dippold, 2018a; Tolley, 2018; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). This chapter includes participant descriptions, narrative themes and subthemes, and research question responses. A summary concludes the chapter.

Participants

Participants in this study were teachers from an English as a second language program in a community college in the Southwestern United States which serves a predominantly immigrant population. A purposeful sample using criterion sampling was used to recruit 14 participants who had experienced the adjunct phenomenon (Patton, 2015). All participants responded to the questionnaire and met for the interview; the two focus groups consisted of eight out of the 14 participants. The participants were diverse, representing a range of ages and multiple ethnicities. The identities of the participants in this study were protected by using pseudonyms. Descriptions of the participants were limited to the information they provided about themselves. However, the refrain that the descriptions create provides deep and relevant nuance to the study. The site was described but unnamed. IRB approval from both Liberty and the school site was granted for the recruitment of the participants.

Anita

Anita has been in her current position for six years. She has been an ESL teacher for 17 years. She has her master's degree. At the time of the interviews, she was not sure if she wanted full-time employment.

Connie

Connie has been in her current position for eight years. She has been an ESL teacher for 34 years. She has her master's degree. She does not currently desire a full-time position.

Diana

Diana has been in her current position for less than a year. She has been an ESL teacher for two years. She has a master's degree and would like to have a full-time position.

Eva

Eva has been in her current position for seven years. She did not provide her total number of years in the profession. She has her bachelor's degree and would like to have a full-time position.

Joanna

Joanna has been in her current position for 20 years, and she has been an ESL teacher for 20 years. She has her master's degree and would like a full-time position.

Lauren

Lauren has been in her current position for a year and a half. She has been an ESL teacher for two years. She has her master's degree and would like a full-time position.

Maddy

Maddy has been in her current position for seven years, and she has been an ESL teacher for seven years. She does not currently desire full-time work.

Margaret

Margaret has been in her current position for seven years. She has been an ESL teacher for 15 years. She has a master's degree. She does not currently desire a full-time position, but she would have in the past.

Max

Max has been in his current position for seven years and has worked specifically as an ESL instructor for the same amount of time. He shared that he has been in this profession for many years. He is not currently interested in a full-time position.

Melanie

Melanie has been in her current position for seven years. She has been an ESL teacher for eight years. She has a master's degree and would like a full-time position.

Nicole

Nicole has been in her current position for eight years and has been an ESL teacher for eight years. She has a master's degree and would like a full-time position.

Pam

Pam has been in her current position for eight years and has been an ESL teacher for eight years. She has her master's degree and would like a full-time position.

Sasha

Sasha has been in her current position for 24 years and has been an ESL teacher for 24 years. She has a master's degree and would like a full-time position.

Theresa

Theresa has been in her current position for 22 years and has been an ESL instructor for 22 years. She has her master's degree and would like a full-time position.

Table 4

Adjunct Participants

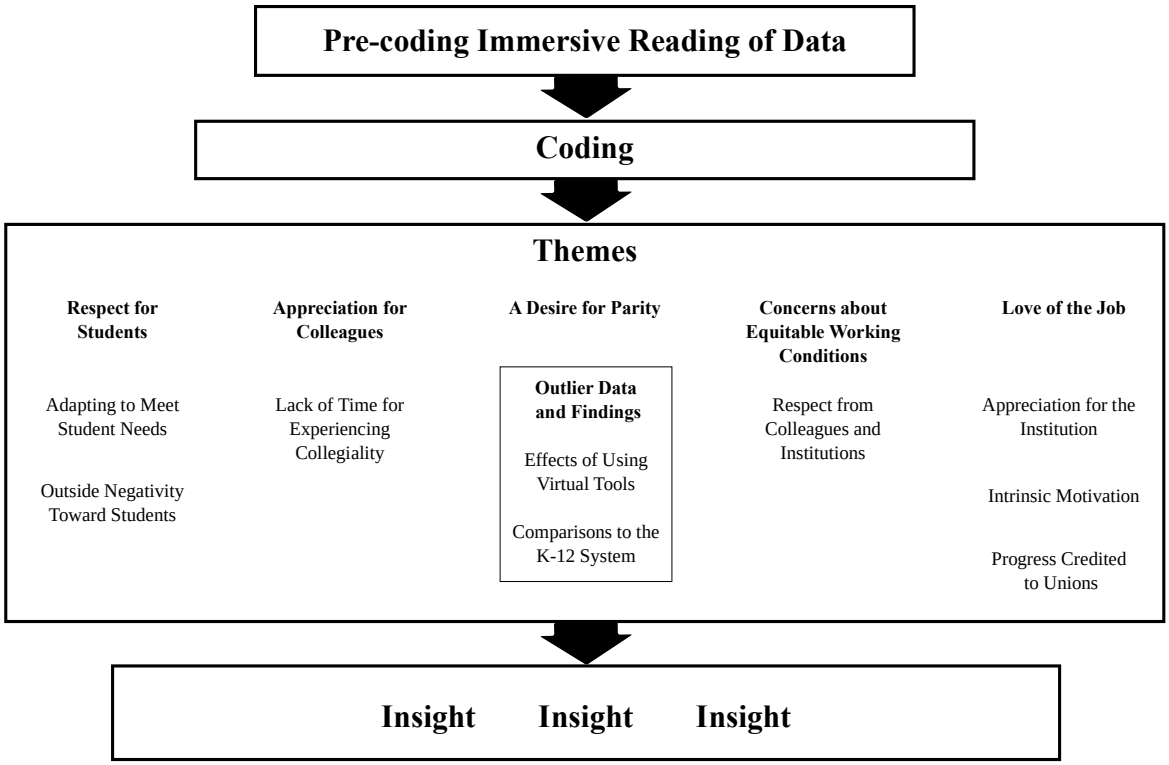
Adjunct Participant	Years in Current Position	Total Years as an ESL Instructor	Highest Completed Degree of Education	Desire for Full-Time Position
Anita	6	17	Master's Degree	Maybe
Connie	8	34	Master's Degree	Not currently
Diana	<1	2	Master's Degree	Yes
Eva	7	Not provided	Bachelor's Degree	Yes
Joanna	20	20	Master's Degree	Yes
Lauren	1.5	2	Master's Degree	Yes
Maddy	7	7	Master's Degree	Not currently
Margaret	7	15	Master's Degree	Not anymore
Max	7	7	Master's Degree	No
Melanie	7	8	Master's Degree	Yes
Nicole	8	8	Master's Degree	Yes
Pam	8	8	Master's Degree	Yes
Sasha	24	24	Master's Degree	Yes
Theresa	22	22	Master's Degree	Yes

Results

This section describes the themes generated in this study. The themes and subthemes were distilled from the analysis and synthesis of the three points of data collection: the questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. Throughout the analysis process, 47 codes were produced, resulting in a total of 843 total coded responses. Deferring to the voices of the teachers, in vivo quotes were used extensively since the teachers are the experts on their experiences and giving them a voice was an aim of this study. Paraphrases were used to summarize longer conversational chunks, accompanied by contextual explanations for the sake of clarity. Representing the teachers accurately and well while offering insights into the phenomenon was of the highest priority (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Figure 2

Themes and Subthemes



Note. Figure created by author.

Respect for Students

All of the participants were ESL teachers of adult learners. A love for the students and a desire to see them succeed was clearly the driving force behind continuing in their occupation. This theme was represented across all three sources of data and by all participants. This care and respect for students was conveyed through 154 coded responses. Maddy said that the job was rewarding because "I just love the students." Respect for the students, especially the particular population of immigrant students at the site, was a constant refrain, and each teacher voiced this respect in some form. The instructors commented on the students' resilience, determination, dedication, sincerity, work ethic, enthusiasm, sacrifice, and value. Nicole said she felt very fortunate to work with these students. Connie said, "I have a huge respect and love for my students." Melanie summed up the feelings of the teachers when she said, "Students are amazing. They're wonderful. They're the whole reason why we do it, why we do this work."

The instructors viewed their students as individuals who have goals and dreams rather than simply en masse. Pam said, "I am very interested in who they are and how I can help them and serve them." The teachers wanted to help the students in the process of reaching their goal of learning English and ultimately the goals that learning English would help them achieve. As Theresa said, "Well, these are just great people. They are students who want to better their lives, so it becomes a privilege to help them on their pathways."

The students come from many different places and cultures around the world. The teachers loved and appreciated the diversity and looked for ways to find common ground and highlight the beauty found in the differences. Nicole summarized, "I have enjoyed working with people and meeting people from all over the world." The instructors saw their role as bigger than just teaching English. Melanie shared, "I want to really help them, not just with the English, but

with welcoming them to this new life and this new community."

The instructors also acknowledged the variety of life experiences that the students brought to the classroom and the community. Sasha noted that because the students were from all over the world there was so much to learn from one another. She said, "I feel like humanity is really represented in the classroom." For these teachers, learning was viewed as a partnership between the student and the teacher, with both benefiting. Nicole stated, "I believe that every student is in my class because they have something that they want to do…they are in my class because they are going somewhere. They want to do something, and they need a little support to do that." Moreover, the instructors realized that the students were not the only ones growing and learning. The partnership functioned as the students and teachers co-constructed knowledge. Pam reflected, "I realized that I didn't always feel like the teacher. We're all just people," and as Margaret shared, "I always have something to learn from my students."

The instructors believed in their students and their potential. As Diana said, "I always believe that people can learn." Lauren similarly expressed that her underlying belief was that "everyone can learn, and everyone has potential." Anita shared, "They can do so much more than I expect…I try to challenge them…push them one little step extra than what they can do." The teacher participants not only believed in their students, but they also wanted their students to believe in themselves, and they strove to encourage their students and instill confidence. As Margaret expressed, "I believe that students need to know that they are valued and heard." To that end, the teachers endeavored to create a classroom environment where, as Margaret went on to say, "Students know they are important, that they are an important part of the class, that their voice is important and their ideas are important." While the instructors worked to set their students up for success and wanted to impart useful knowledge, there was also the recognition of

student responsibility. Margaret said, “The students have a level of responsibility for their own growth and for their learning.” That being said, this same teacher qualified the statement by saying, “It’s part of my responsibility to structure my teaching in a way that…fosters that growth.”

Because of the confidence they had in their students and their desire to see the students succeed, the teachers tried to create a pleasurable, engaging, comfortable, and welcoming learning environment that helped students learn and reach their goals. Pam expressed this idea as creating a safe place, and she added, “I’m just here to be a bridge for them, a conduit, and I really want to help them find a way to feel that they are being successful.” Trust, comfort, and safety for the students in the classroom were ideas communicated in some form by the instructors. All teachers shared that they established a culture of trust in the classroom where students were welcomed and respected, a place where they belonged.

Adapting to Meet Student Needs

The teachers’ belief in the value and uniqueness of their students and of each class that they taught caused them to be constantly adapting, assessing, learning, and growing in order to meet student needs. Adapting to meet student needs was mentioned by all of the teachers with 37 coded responses specifically addressing this sub-theme in the interviews. Because students learn in different ways and come with different strengths, the instructors also expressed a need to differentiate teaching and learning, which requires getting to know the students. “I modify materials or modify the pacing of things and modify how much support I give them depending on what I see or what I think they’re struggling with,” said Nicole. Sasha added, “Every student learns differently…so I try to create my lesson…to make sure that they’re getting what they need.” Eva said that she believed every student is different and unique, so she spends time

getting to know them, to know their stories, so that she can better serve them. Eva went on to say, “My students are capable, are resilient, are smart.” Because of this, she created achievable but rigorous lessons for her students. She believed that everyone can learn, and her job was to create the right materials and the right conditions.

The teachers believed that if students are to flourish, the classroom should be a place where students are encouraged to actively participate. “I believe it’s very important for the students to be engaged,” Diana stated. The teachers agreed that the students learn through active interaction, so they were always looking to make it authentic, engaging, and participatory. When speaking of the students, Theresa said, “They should not be lectured to, they should be *doing*.” Additionally, the instructors sought to provide accessible material that was relevant to their students’ lives, helping them to learn the language so they could communicate their ideas and needs. To that end, Joanna used feedback from her students to guide her lessons, and both Joanna and Diana said that they used games to keep things fun and interesting. The teachers also adapted their schedules for their students. Margaret said that she made herself available to students outside of class time. Maddy arrived early and stayed after class to help students, and Max said he dedicates as much time as he can to help his students progress.

Outside Negativity Toward Students

A few of the teachers expressed a dislike for how students are sometimes stigmatized or looked down upon. This sentiment was directly stated nine times and appeared in the questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. Referring to the students, Connie said, “I just have boundless respect, and sometimes I feel sad when that isn’t shared by others.” Margaret added that many of the students “have been treated as if they’re stupid merely because they don’t speak the language…[or] somehow lack intelligence because they have not had a strong academic

background." Joanna summarized the idea of respect and equality when she said that all students should be "equally treated, have the same opportunities." Eva valued her work because it included "empowering and helping…these amazing people," many of whom are "marginalized and poverty impacted."

Appreciation for Colleagues

The resounding response when asked about colleagues was very positive, using words such as appreciation, respect, and inspiration. This theme garnered 111 responses from a combination of five codes. It was expressed by all of the participants and appeared across all data sources. Sasha described her colleagues as amazing, professional, educated, and trustworthy. Theresa commented that the teachers were very positive and supportive of one another. The teachers described their colleagues as caring and giving people who sought to serve their students and support their colleagues. Margaret said, "There are some exceptions, but in general, the people that I teach with and have taught with want to do well by their students, want to help their students improve their English." Melanie described her experience with her colleagues when she came to this institution as a "wonderful cohort of teachers" and a place where she felt she "fit." Eva said, "I love all my colleagues. I absolutely love their skills. I respect them. I admire them. They inspire me." Nicole expressed her respect for her colleagues and stated, "I'm a better teacher because of my colleagues."

The adjuncts also felt that their colleagues were generous in sharing resources, collaborating, and exchanging ideas. Maddy characterized it as "a very sharing community." Several of the respondents mentioned that it did not always feel this way in the past, but through the years they have noticed a distinct positive shift, at least at this particular institution. In reference to the perceived shift toward sharing and generosity, Connie said, "I think there's

greater collaboration these days." Maddy credited her colleagues with keeping her from burning out and felt that this particular institution had a lot of respect between colleagues, which she thought may be rare.

The teachers at the site felt strongly connected to their colleagues. Pam said she felt like she was being "welcomed into a family." Maddy appreciated the fact that she could ask questions freely; there were no stupid questions, and there was no sense of annoyance. Rather, there was a feeling of appreciation expressed to her for taking the initiative to reach out. Diana said that she had a very good relationship with her co-workers and that she has had positive experiences with collaboration and camaraderie. Max summed up the experiences of the teachers when he said, "I have found it very rewarding to be connected to my colleagues."

Several of the instructors mentioned a feeling of bonding between adjuncts because of their similar circumstances. Maddy shared that adjuncts may feel like they "are in the same boat" with other adjuncts when they face situations such as one of their classes being canceled. Margaret described it this way, "My general experience with colleagues is that we're all in this together." Some of the adjuncts also voiced their feelings about perceived barriers between the two tiers of faculty, adjunct and full-time. They said they sometimes felt like they were on a different, lower level. Anita described it as feeling like "you're down there and they're up here," but the teachers worked to see beyond the negative aspects of the hierarchy. Commenting on her feelings about adjuncts and full-time faculty, Sasha said, "They're human beings. I'm a human being. We're beyond this job." Similarly, Margaret stated, "I enjoy all of my colleagues as human beings."

Lack of Time for Experiencing Collegiality

For various reasons associated with being an adjunct, the teachers did not get to spend as

much time with colleagues as they would like. This sub-theme elicited 23 responses in the interviews and the focus groups. Although a culture of collaboration may exist, it was hindered by the system. Many of the teachers worked at multiple locations, and this cut down on their ability to meet and collaborate because they were so busy and had conflicting schedules. Connie felt that there was little time to interact with colleagues without a lot of effort, and even at the available meetings, there was not a lot of time for actual interaction. Furthermore, time for collaboration was mostly left up to the adjuncts. In response to the question about opportunities for interactive reflection, Maddy said she felt that "you kinda have to seek it out." Since they were not together at work as a full-time person might be, they had to be intentional about and committed to getting together with their colleagues. Margaret said, "I find there is less structured time for reflection and feedback in our current environment perhaps because of being associate faculty and not having regular meetings." She also noted that there was some time to reflect with colleagues about what worked or what did not work in meetings after certain projects, but it was not necessarily a deep dive. Eva said that while collaborating was satisfying, pleasant, rewarding, and valuable, finding the time to meet made it a little challenging. Overall, the teachers agreed that they enjoyed meeting with colleagues, learning from and supporting one another. Melanie said that while interactive reflection was something that teachers had to search out on their own, it was necessary because teachers are "on the frontlines."

A Desire for Parity

The desire for parity was expressed by all of the participants with a total of 133 coded responses represented in all three data sources. Many of the teachers felt that satisfaction with the school and the system could not be achieved until pay and benefits were fair and consistent. Most of the teachers expressed some level of frustration regarding compensation and lamented

the lack of parity and equity for adjuncts compared to full-time faculty and administrators. Pam said, “Unfortunately, it’s the accepted norm of this occupation and industry.” Nicole guessed it was “a common story.” Overall, they did not feel that their pay and benefits were commensurate to their workload based on the earnings and benefits of full-time employees. Margaret said, “I believe I am as effective a teacher as those who get paid a whole lot more.” The instructors realized that their lower pay and lack of benefits was a way for schools to cut costs. Connie pointed out that “it’s much cheaper to have adjuncts.”

At the institution where this study was conducted, several teachers said that the pay was good compared to other places where they worked or where their peers worked, but it was still not on par with what full-time teachers were getting for doing the same job. Committee work and office hours for adjuncts were often at a lower rate than their pay if it was paid at all. Furthermore, the way that pay was calculated was not straightforward, forthright, or transparent. Connie said, “I feel like there needs to be greater transparency.” Additionally, while the pay may have seemed generous at first glance, when class preparation, grading, and meetings were considered, the actual number was much less. The teachers also expressed frustration with the things they ended up volunteering to do while full-time workers were paid well for the same work.

Regarding retirement, the teachers felt that what they received was also not commensurate to full-time workers, even for adjuncts who had been employed at the institution for much longer than many of the full-time workers. Connie said, “I never imagined that I would be working this long. Of course, I can’t afford to quit either.” Moreover, the retirement system was viewed as complicated and confusing, causing many adjuncts to miss out on benefits or to receive lesser benefits due to the lack of information provided. They felt the system also worked

against them because the retirement plans, if available, conflicted with other forms of retirement they may receive from the jobs they had done or were doing to supplement their adjunct status.

Additional comments about the lack of benefits included the paucity of basic benefits such as health insurance, vacation time, and maternity leave, as well as additional full-time perks such as sabbaticals; these were documented from the interviews and focus groups. Maddy recalled the stress of not having maternity leave. Noting the cap on hours required to qualify as a full-time teacher, they felt that school systems keep most of their teachers at the adjunct level to avoid offering benefits. Furthermore, between teaching contracts, the instructors needed to find other work or apply for unemployment, which was even less than their teaching pay.

Concerns about Equitable Working Conditions

Related to compensation, the teachers expressed concerns about the equity of working conditions. This theme also existed among all participants. Because of the multiple ways that inequity is manifested, this theme was derived from 13 related codes with a total of 230 coded responses and was expressed in the questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. Max said, “I feel that we are not being treated equally with full-time professors, so I feel this is a very unfair business.” The most common comment was about the insecurity of the position. Adjuncts are usually hired on a semester-to-semester basis. This means that they do not know if they will have a job from term to term. As Max stated, “We don’t have a promise of a job each term.” Their classes can be canceled at any time with no warning or reason given. This can occur even if they have already spent hours in preparation for a class. Connie said that people can prepare for a class that they don’t even get to teach. Joanna summed up the idea with the word “disposable” and the word “expendable” was used in one of the focus groups. Alternatively, adjuncts may be

hired for a class at the last minute and have little or no time to prepare. Lauren related her experience of scrambling to prepare for a class she was given at the last minute.

The instability of the position caused worry and stress. Pam called it "unstable" and "uncertain" and noted that there was "always a background of stress." Maddy said that even though she loved the job, at one point she considered leaving the profession because she was afraid she could not count on getting enough work and health care was so expensive. Sasha said that she starts thinking about what she will do in future classes even though she does not even know which class she will get or if she will get a class at all. She said, "…the challenging or the scary part is just knowing…if I have a job." Pam said she never expected to be so reliant on unemployment or the need to find another job. However, the teachers remained committed to their work even with instability always looming.

The teachers realized that there are limited full-time positions available at schools but a need for many more instructors, so the problem is solved by using mostly associate faculty. Noting the high percentage of adjuncts used at colleges, Connie conceded, "It makes good economic sense." However, for many adjuncts, working part-time at one school is not enough to cover the cost of living. To make a living they must work at more than one school or get some other kind of job. Connie described her experience as well as the experience of her colleagues when she said, "I spent more hours driving between different schools than I did actually on one campus in an office where I could interact with students and meet with them." The negative impact on students was not missed by the adjuncts, hard as they may try to overcome it. Connie went on the say, "Having adjuncts go from site to site and school to school, that does take away from the quality of instruction and the quality of time that we can give to our students."

Furthermore, some of the teachers said they were working or have worked more than what would be considered a full load if they were at a single school. They also said that although the hourly pay at some schools may seem good, at many schools or in many departments within a school, it was often meager. Eva described the level of compensation as survival pay which caused the teachers to live paycheck to paycheck at best, with no savings or emergency funds. Pam worked at different schools to make ends meet and noted that when you add up her hours, it is more than a full-time job.

Having to work multiple jobs affected the job experience itself as well. The adjuncts related that driving from school to school was costly and time-consuming and that all job sites were not the same, so working at multiple job sites required knowledge of the different policies and procedures for each place. It also meant that while trying to keep up with the various systems, things can fall through the cracks. Many of the teachers described feeling exhausted and torn because of having to work at more than one institution. Melanie noted that working at multiple locations does "affect how much you can give to the students" and how much you can interact with colleagues because when you are working at multiple locations "you have less time to participate." It also affected the adjuncts' personal lives as they tried to juggle all of their jobs in addition to family and personal life. Pam noted that the demands of the job caused her life to be shaped differently, adjusting her life from having personal time to just working a lot. A couple of the teachers viewed working at multiple institutions in a positive light since it allowed them to glean ideas from different places.

During the interviews and focus groups, the teachers acknowledged that adjuncts all have different needs. Theresa said, "We're all at different places in our lives." Flexibility was noted as a positive aspect of the adjunct position. This was especially helpful if they were not the primary

wage earner in their family, wanted to work part-time to meet the needs of their family, or were retired from a previous profession. However, for those who did not fit those descriptions and desired full-time work, there were limited full-time jobs at the institutions and a lack of potential for upward mobility. Anita said she did not feel there was much chance for advancement and that it would be difficult to achieve full-time status.

The adjuncts also felt strongly that they did not have a real voice in decisions about the classes they taught or the departments in which they worked. Margaret said, “I believe, as associates we understand that we have little decision-making authority or even opportunity, and sometimes not even opportunity for feedback into the decisions or input into decisions." The adjuncts also felt that their participation was limited by their status. This was considered detrimental to them as well as to the schools. Melanie related that the adjunct system stifles the voices of adjuncts and stated that “you are not part of the decision making. You are just a teacher.” She went on to state, “We are so much more than that.” The teachers felt they had so much more to offer than what they were allowed to contribute. Max felt that everyone should be invited to take part in the process of decision making and that if they were, it would make for a much better institution; he felt the institution was not using all the talent that exists. Margaret said that she felt respected as an educator even though she did not believe that her voice or input was necessarily sought after or validated. She added that the lack of voice in decision making can “lead to some distancing between full-time and adjunct faculty.” Eva noted that while her status as an adjunct did not negatively affect the service she provided to her students, her status as an adjunct did limit her influence and ability to advocate for her students. She said that adjuncts did not have the ability to participate in important decisions, so it did not allow her to advocate for her students, which she viewed as a limitation. Thus, the adjuncts felt that their lack

of voice was not only detrimental to them but also to the students and the institution as a whole.

Respect from Colleagues and Institutions

When relating experiences associated with respect, there were mixed reviews. Some felt respected and treated as equals by all of their colleagues, including those who were full-time. Max said that he did not feel that any of the full-time colleagues looked down on adjuncts, however, he did wonder why they did not seem to be working toward parity for the adjuncts. Maddy expressed that "everyone is pretty approachable" and that she felt she did not talk to full-time and part-time teachers differently.

Some teachers felt disrespected when they were referred to as adjuncts in a negative way. This was voiced in both interviews and focus groups. Connie recalled being reminded that she was [just] an adjunct when she tried to advocate for herself and her peers. The adjuncts also felt disrespected for the reasons associated with parity and equity. None of the instructors, though, reported a lack of respect for themselves.

The teachers also mentioned that even though adjunct teachers carried out the primary mission of the school, which is teaching, more and more well-paid full-time positions were being given to administrative and other ancillary positions. Connie noted that adjuncts "are the largest of the employee groups. We teach the majority of the classes." She went on to say, "I love this field. I love my colleagues. I love the students. But I would like to see greater respect given to my colleagues."

Love of the Job

Even though it did not diminish the adjuncts' struggle for parity in pay and benefits and the desire for equality and equity in working conditions, love for the work outweighed the frustration and negative aspects of their situation. In some way, 13 out of the 14 participants

expressed a positive overall experience and love for the work of teaching adult English language learners. The data consisted of 175 responses from a combination of 12 related codes across all data sources. The teachers described the profession as fulfilling, rewarding, fun, exciting, and even awesome. As Diana said, “I really love teaching.”

The adjuncts also described their job as challenging. The idea that the work was challenging was voiced in both senses of the word. They acknowledged that the work was hard and had its highs and lows, but overall, the tone of the word was a positive one. Sasha said that she viewed teaching as an art and that she loved the challenge of creating learning experiences for her students, and Melanie said that she loved the creativity of “finding ways to get a concept across, and then, of course seeing the aha moments.” Margaret related, “My experience is and has been that I love teaching and that I love the challenges that teaching provides.” Pam succinctly stated, “I truly love the work,” and Theresa exuberantly expressed, “Some, most days, if not all days, I wake up, and it’s not even a job. It just makes you feel good to be a part of it.”

Because the teachers cared about the students, the teachers found satisfaction and joy in teaching. “I love seeing them progress,” said Joanna. Diana echoed that sentiment; when speaking of seeing student progress, she said that is what “motivates me to continue.” Finally, Connie pointed to this dominant theme in the data when she said, “I have been in this field for over 30 years, and I still love it. And a lot of it is, of course, the students.”

Appreciation for the Institution

Even with the concerns that most of the adjuncts shared, they also expressed an appreciation for their institutions, especially the site of this study. Maddy said, “It really depends on the school you work for” and she went on to say that she felt this institution was good. “At the end of the day, I’m pretty satisfied with it. It works well for me,” she said. Theresa specified her

appreciation for what she considered an open-door policy, especially by the dean. Concerning the ability to be creative and meet student needs, Anita liked the freedom she felt and the ability to teach "as you want and what you want."

Several of the teachers voiced favorable sentiments during the interviews and focus groups toward the way the institution took care of and sought to serve the students beyond academics. Margaret said, "I appreciate the amount of resources that our institution sets aside for the academic, personal, physical, financial, and emotional well-being of our students. In that way, I am proud to be a representative of this institution." Although they commended the way that the institution treated the students, they also noted the discrepancy between service to students and the way adjuncts were treated. Max shared that he liked the way the institution treated the students, but he wished they would treat the adjuncts well, too. Overall, the teachers were happy to be working at this site. Pam said she felt fortunate to work for this particular institution. Her general feeling was, "Wow! What a great place to work. I'm very pleased and proud to be a part of this."

Intrinsic Motivation

The idea of intrinsic motivation was alluded to or voiced by 10 of the 14 teachers, producing 48 responses on the topic in the questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. When asked if being an adjunct affected their work, Max said, "Well, fortunately, it does not influence my service because, had it been true, I would not work as hard as I work." Similarly, Diana said that her employment status or title did not influence her service to students at all because, above all, she was a teacher, and the amount she earned did not affect the way she taught. "I give it 100%, even if I'm an adjunct…because that's the kind of person or the way that I am…I offer the best of myself," explained Sasha. Eva contributed, "My status as an adjunct doesn't really

influence my teaching or how I serve my students." She went on to say that she gave them "the best, the quality education they deserve." She did the best she could to give them the best class she could. Connie said, "I would say people in our field are very intrinsically motivated. We're proud of what we do."

Progress Credited to Unions

Several respondents said they felt that progress was being made at some schools because of unions. During the interviews and focus groups, the value of unions generated 21 responses. Margaret voiced appreciation for the support she felt from the union. The feeling was that the union at this particular school had made advances in many areas, but commensurate benefits and pay parity with full-time teachers had not yet been achieved. A few of the teachers mentioned that they were glad for gains made by unions for the sake of the younger teachers, but it was too little too late for them. Furthermore, they expressed that they would likely be working far past the traditional retirement age because of the pay and benefits structure in place for most adjuncts over the past decades. When asked at the end of the interview if there was anything she would like to add, Margaret reiterated the importance of having a union to represent her. Pam also said that she was "grateful when there are gains that our union representation gains for us." She and others felt like things were slowly moving in the right direction due to the collective advantage of unions.

Outlier Data and Findings

Outlier data surfaced in two areas which included the experiences of teaching on Zoom and comparisons to the K-12 system. Since COVID-19 so recently impacted the modes of learning across the world, it was not surprising that this continued to impact the experiences of the teachers. It was also not unusual for instructors to compare their experiences not only to the

experiences of those within their sphere but also to those in similar contexts.

Effects of Using Virtual Tools

In addition to experiences of isolation due to the traveling life of an adjunct, the use of virtual tools for communication seemed to have exacerbated feelings of isolation experienced by adjuncts. Technology such as Zoom and YouTube has replaced live interaction in many cases. Concern over this point was specifically addressed by four of the participants. The teachers felt a lack of connection with students when teaching remotely as well as a less authentic connection with colleagues. Margaret explained, “It’s much easier when you’re face to face with human beings who develop relationships, to share ideas, to lift up when we’re downtrodden, to encourage others, to inspire others than it is when you’re teaching online.” With the advent and popularity of Zoom and other technological tools, meetings can be attended virtually whether that be synchronously or asynchronously. While these options offered flexibility, they did not provide the same level of collegiality. Lauren commented on her experiences of watching videos of meetings that she was not able to attend. While the information presented at meetings or in the classroom may have been valuable, the personal connection between people was reduced.

Comparisons to the K-12 System

A few of the teachers had experience or were acquainted with someone who worked in the K-12 system. The comparisons produced both positive and negative feelings compared to the teachers’ current employment. Lauren expounded on the topic. On the positive side, she was glad to have adult students who were attending class voluntarily and with a purpose. Lauren felt that ESL students “are a very special group…they just want to learn.” Negatively, she felt like she knew her colleagues in the K-12 system better because she was with them all day.

Research Question Responses

Through the questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups, the participants shared their experiences as ESL adjuncts in a higher education setting, providing a picture of and insights into the adjunct phenomenon. The teachers revealed a dichotomy of feelings and varying levels of satisfaction based on their experiences. On the one hand, they loved their jobs because of the students and colleagues they felt privileged to serve and work alongside, but the adjunct position itself created many frustrations and points of dissatisfaction. The research questions were answered by the themes which were generated from the participant data.

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings? Five central themes were identified: respect for students, appreciation for colleagues, the desire for parity, concerns about equitable working conditions, and a love of the job. The essence of the central themes was that while the teachers love their jobs, they would like to be compensated and treated in ways that fairly reflect their contributions. The majority of the respondents expressed many reasons for their great love of the job but also expressed their frustration with a system that they feel stifles and shortchanges the largest group of educators in postsecondary education. Melanie's reactions represent the dichotomy of adjunct feelings and experiences when at the beginning of her interview she enthusiastically referred to her teaching experience and stated, "I've loved every minute of it," and at the end of the interview she concluded with the need for systemic change which allows all teachers to enjoy parity and equity so that they can contribute in meaningful ways.

Sub-Question One

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with

regard to students? The adjunct noncredit ESL instructors interviewed in this study had nothing but positive things to say about their students. Respect for the students garnered the most mentions in the interviews followed by the teachers' service to and care for their students. Clearly, the students were a main driver in why the teachers felt their job was worth doing. They said that they designed and adapted what and how they taught to meet the needs of their students. They also found satisfaction in helping students meet their goals in learning English, ultimately helping them on the way to other goals in their lives. Eva said, "The students really make it worth going to work. [We] serve them and help them as much as we can."

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to colleagues? The adjuncts reported that their experiences with colleagues were mostly very positive. Most answered the first general question in this section of the interview with a very strong affirmation of their coworkers and felt they had good working relationships. Referencing her colleagues, Pam stated, "My general experience is great." Several mentioned the familial or community atmosphere that they felt especially at this particular institution and most felt a camaraderie with their colleagues. After expressing a general appreciation, the highest mentions regarding their fellow teachers were in the areas of care for students and the generosity of their coworkers toward one another. However, frustrations were voiced regarding the barriers and disconnect they felt between full-time and part-time faculty as well as limitations they faced, such as time, due to their adjunct status.

Sub-Question Three

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to their institutions? The instructors were grateful for their institutions and jobs and

especially for the way they felt their institutions serviced their students in general. While several were glad for the flexibility the position offered and the creativity it allowed, experiences within the institution concerning the lack of parity and limitations due to their adjunct status were expressed by many of the participants.

Summary

The participants in this study shared about experiences with their students, colleagues, and institutions, particularly with regard to their adjunct status. They expressed a strong commitment to the population that they teach, and they shared an appreciation for their colleagues. The love of teaching and serving students alongside a capable community of colleagues resulted in genial experiences for the instructors. Even though they had positive things to say about their institutions, issues surrounding parity and equitable working conditions were the greatest areas of concern. While some institutions were viewed as better than others, there was an overarching sense that systemic improvements still needed to be realized for experiences with their institutions to reach a sustainable and satisfactory point for all.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of English as a second language postsecondary adjunct instructors at a community college in the Southwestern United States. This chapter consists of five discussion subsections. First, interpretations of the findings are discussed. Next, implications for policy and practice are covered, followed by theoretical and methodological implications. Finally, limitations and delimitations are identified. Recommendations for future research conclude the chapter.

Discussion

The central research question for this study was, "What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings?" This question was formulated after reviewing the literature on the topic and finding a gap in and a need for documentation of voices from those experiencing the adjunct phenomenon. Adjuncts each have their own story to tell (Zitko & Schultz, 2020); hence, hearing voices from specific groups of adjuncts in specific settings is necessary. The findings revealed many commonalities with the existing literature, yet the perspectives of the participants in this study not only confirmed the existing literature, but they also brought new insights from their unique experiences. The more voices that are heard, the more complete the picture of the phenomenon will be. The hope is that clarity will lead to change; being heard is just the first step.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Several themes emerged through the data collection and analysis periods of this study which reflected ideas found in the literature but also gave additional insights into the phenomenon. The themes included the adjuncts' respect for their students and appreciation for

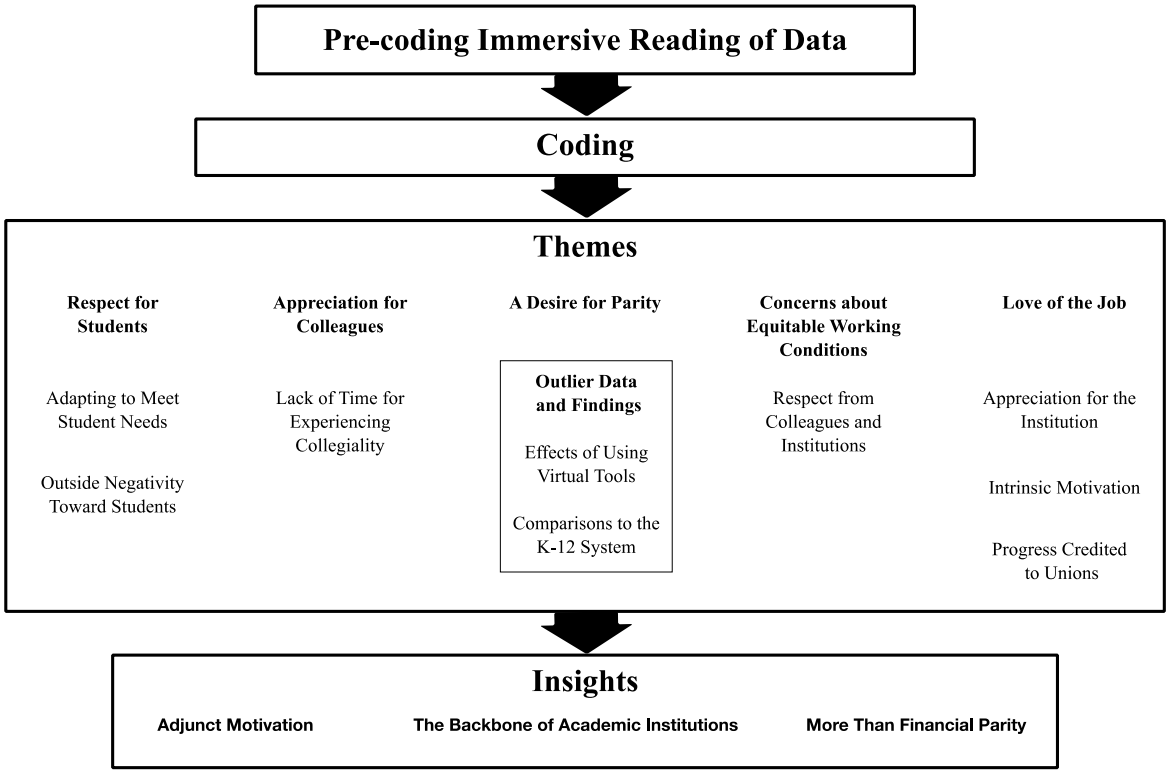
colleagues. However, frustration with the system remained.

Interpretation of Findings

After carefully reviewing and then coding the data, several themes were discovered. From these themes, I was able to glean three insights. These insights are unique to this population of teachers yet also have a common thread throughout the postsecondary adjunct experience overall.

Figure 3

Themes, Subthemes, and Insights



Note. Figure created by author.

Adjunct Motivation

The adjuncts in this study were not ultimately motivated by money or prominence. One of the participants mentioned that if those things were important to them, they certainly would

not be in this profession. This correlated to the existing literature in that teachers persist for intrinsic and altruistic reasons; they love teaching (Bolitzer, 2019b; Osorio et al., 2022; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Interactions with students and colleagues, paired with intrinsic motivation, were highlighted and highly regarded by the participants in this study; in terms of the social exchange theory, these factors tipped the scale toward satisfaction and persistence.

Students were the main reason that the teachers felt that their job was worth doing, even when compensation was not considered adequate and opportunities were lacking. The particular demographic of students that these teachers work with included mostly immigrants, and the teachers felt that the opportunity to help someone else on their path to a better life was what brought meaning to their job. There was a unique passion and compassion embodied by this particular subset of teachers. Interactions and a sense of collegiately with their co-workers, especially other adjuncts, also contributed to the participants' favorable responses. The teachers at this site felt welcomed and supported by their colleagues, and they also appreciated the commitment to professionalism by their colleagues.

However, while positive experiences with students and colleagues may be rewarding, those experiences alone cannot make up for the lack of parity that adjuncts face. Just because adjuncts continue to work in situations that are internally rewarding does not mean they should not or will not seek fair compensation, better working conditions, and more opportunities.

The Backbone of Academic Institutions

Teachers are the backbone of academic institutions (Talbot & Mercer, 2018; Thirolf, 2017; Umbach, 2007). Moreover, as Schenkewitz (2019) documented regarding teachers, and as Melanie confirmed, "We are on the front lines." Yet, according to many of the adjuncts interviewed, those who are on the front lines are not given equitable compensation, are not

offered stable employment at a single site, and do not have their contributions valued at the level of full-time professionals who have the same qualifications.

Academic instruction, traditionally the main function of any academic institution, is delivered by teachers. They have insights and experience that no other position can offer. Teachers deserve parity, stability, and a voice. When any teachers are slighted or left out of the discussion, all lose; when all are included, all benefit (Rhoades, 2020).

While administrative and ancillary positions are necessary, they have become the hiring priority over classroom teachers. At this study site, a healthy focus on meeting the needs of the whole student was reported. The school has embraced the ideas put forth by Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. The teachers were glad and proud that the institution was supporting students. The frustration was in the hypocrisy of taking care of the students while systemically slighting adjuncts. Providing for the academic needs of students has been relegated to those holding part-time positions while full-time positions are being filled by those supporting needs other than direct education. Supportive roles and secondary goals and objectives of the institution have become primary. The system has lost its balance.

More Than Financial Parity

A lack of financial parity is part of the lived experience of adjuncts (Barnes & Fredericks, 2021). Adjuncts are classified as part-time even though they often work full-time or more than full-time when the hours they work at all of their jobs are combined. Most adjuncts at the site felt that the pay was good compared to other schools and that access to benefits was improving due to the work of the union. However, while the pay was deemed as good, it was not commensurate with those doing the same job with secure full-time employment status. Additionally, the desire for parity was not limited to compensation. Rhoades (2020) explained how parity, or lack

thereof, regarding adjunct involvement in the academic realm, affects not only the adjunct but all aspects of the collegiate community. Similarly, the adjuncts interviewed for my study felt the barriers imposed by their adjunct status and wanted more than just parity in remuneration, they wanted to have the opportunity to contribute and the ability to advance in the profession.

There will always be teachers who would prefer to work part-time, but as documented by the individuals in this study as well as the literature, it is not the majority. The majority of adjuncts want to work full-time at one location (Finley, 2009; Gelman et al., 2022; Ott & Dippold, 2018a). Academia has room for both; there is room for those who would prefer to work full-time and those who choose part-time work. The point is that there needs to be a choice to work full-time, and it should not be an insurmountable or unlikely possibility. Furthermore, a part-time position need not mean that the teachers do not have parity, good working conditions, or an equal voice. Part-time teachers are still professional contributing members of the team. Unions will continue to fight for equal pay, benefits, working conditions, and a participatory voice for all workers. It is interesting to note that as gains are achieved, the logic of hiring predominantly part-time workers will make less and less sense, financially and otherwise.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In this section, implications for policy and practice are addressed. Policy and practice are necessarily addressed by different divisions of academia. Policy needs to be addressed at the institutional and state level. Practice can be addressed at the institutional and departmental levels. There is room and a need for improvements at every level.

Implications for Policy

The need for systemic policy changes is clear. At the state and institutional level, parity in the area of compensation is needed as well as requirements that address hiring practices that

systematically put adjuncts in the majority (Davis, 2017). Full-time work needs to be the norm rather than contract work which requires teachers to find other work between terms or habitually seek unemployment. Schools need to implement policies that support their teachers rather than circumventing laws that attempt to rectify unjust situations such as removing caps on the number of hours an employee can work just to reduce benefit costs (Childress, 2019). These are systemic changes that generally must occur at higher decision-making levels.

Implications for Practice

Practices at school and department levels are more quickly and easily implemented compared to major policy changes. Until more balance is achieved through policy changes, practices can be implemented to mitigate unsatisfactory situations and work environments (Gelman et al., 2022). Anytime there is a distinction created by full and part-time status, barriers will naturally exist. The respondents in this study mentioned the camaraderie they felt at this particular institution and the efforts made by those in senior positions to establish an open-door policy. This is helpful for those who are comfortable with and make the effort to avail themselves of this opportunity. However, an open-door policy requires proactivity on the part of the teachers rather than an approach that provides regular opportunities for agency and meaningful input into decisions that directly affect them and their students. This perspective and practice would be helpful not just in this setting but is a concept that could be implemented in other similar situations.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

This section addresses the theoretical and empirical implications of the study. The similarities between the literature and the responses of the participants were many. Due to the nature of the work done by this subset of teachers, there were also distinctions. This study

confirms and corroborates previous research but also provides an expanded adjunct perspective. The distinctions and perspectives found from this particular subset of educators add to an awareness of the commonality yet complexity of the adjunct situation, adding depth and personality to a problem that while massive, can become faceless. The methods used in this study allowed me to collect data through several avenues of response, providing opportunities for participants to respond in written form in the questionnaire, to respond singularly and privately through the interview, and to interact communally in the focus groups. While a different theoretical framework could have been used to focus a study such as this, the social exchange theory worked well to guide the researcher and participants through relevant discussions at the heart of the adjunct phenomenon.

Empirical Implications

While listening to the participants, I was struck by how their experiences caused my mind to ring with remembrance of the circumstances and perspectives presented in the literature. As they shared, the teachers' experiences aligned with the frustrations documented in the literature. Overall, the adjuncts interviewed strived to express themselves in positive tones. However, issues mentioned in the literature did surface. A major issue was the parity of pay and benefits (Asali, 2019) which aligned with the frustrations voiced by many of the teachers. The adjuncts felt that the pay was relatively good at this particular institution as compared to others, but they still did not feel that parity with full-time staff teaching the same classes had been reached. Working conditions which were documented extensively in the literature (Gelman et al., 2022; Magruder, 2019; Ryan et al., 2019; Schlaerth, 2022) also came up in our discussions. Conversations with the teachers confirmed and corroborated the myriad hardships that were mentioned in the literature. Lack of stability and expendability and the accompanying

consequences were predominant issues in the literature as well as for the teachers (Magruder, 2019; Ryan et al., 2019; Witt & Gearin, 2021; Zitko & Schultz, 2020). Possibility of advancement (AAUP, 2014; Gaudet, 2019), as well as agency and the ability to make meaningful contributions, also aligned with what the adjuncts described (Gelman et al., 2022; Ott & Dippold, 2018b; Wagoner, 2019). Documentation in the literature mentioned that the purpose of teaching was to serve students (Baumgart, 2019). For the group of educators interviewed in this study, service to students was paramount; it was the heartbeat of their mission. This could have only been discovered by talking to this specific subset of teachers.

The methodology used for this study affected the kind of data gathered. A qualitative rather than a quantitative approach allowed for a more complex, detailed, and nuanced understanding of the issue, empowering the individuals and allowing their voices to be heard (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The hermeneutic element of the phenomenological study method was key as there was an understanding of terminology and experiences that were shared by the researcher and the participants. Additionally, for experiences to be documented and described by a researcher, methods of data collection that lend themselves to interaction such as interviews and focus groups led to the collection of richer and deeper data. Interactive data collection prompted and provided space for thoughtful consideration to occur during the process.

Theoretical Implications

As language acquisition is continually developed and researched (Dubiner, 2019), theories are expanded and explored. The use of the theory of constructivism as explained by Schunk (2020) surfaced in the discussions with the teachers in this study and confirmed the relevancy of the theory. The educators alluded to this theory as they explained how they viewed their relationships with students. They referred to the respect they had for their students and the

symbiotic relationship that they experienced as each learned from the other. Students were not simply receptacles but active contributing participants in the learning process.

The theory used as a framework for this study was the social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This study provided an example of how the social exchange theory is relevant in various situations and interactions within the academic workplace, as well as how positive exchanges in one area of work can override negative experiences or unfulfilled expectations to create a level of satisfaction which allows for perseverance but not necessarily unquestioned satisfaction. The participants stayed in their role as adjunct educators for the love of their students and the job itself along with the camaraderie they felt among their peers. These positive aspects, though, did not negate the need for significant improvement in their circumstances and remuneration based on their expectations.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations or potential weaknesses of this study as well as the delimitations or constraints of this study imposed by the researcher are delineated in this section. Limitations included a lack of longitudinal perspective and possible reservations on the part of the respondents. Delimitations included choices by the researcher to focus on a single site with a small sample size within a specific demographic.

Limitations

At least two limitations of this study were identified: lack of longitudinal perspective and respondent reservation. First, the study was conducted during a specific period of a constant yet ever-evolving phenomenon. It was a snapshot of the lived experiences surrounding this phenomenon provided by the participants up to this point in their careers. Second, due to the precarious nature of adjunct employment, the participants may have felt they could not express

any negativity about their experiences.

Delimitations

This study was influenced by choices of method, scope, and aim. It focused on a specific group of adjuncts serving a specific demographic of students at a single site. The use of purposeful, criterion, and convenience sampling as well as a small sample size also created delimitations. This was a hermeneutic phenomenological study. Although every attempt was made to remain unbiased, qualifying for the sample myself not only increased my understanding of the responses but inevitably influenced how comments by participants were received and perceived. Choosing to limit the scope of the study enabled a group of teachers to be heard in the vast sea of the broader phenomenon. The questions asked of the participants and the time allotted for their answers were also constraints imposed by the researcher. All studies must impose delimitations to reach their aim and goals which means that there will always be room for more research.

Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the study's findings, limitations, and delimitations placed on the study, there are several recommendations for future research. This study only represented the lived experiences of adjuncts. The adjunct phenomenon in higher education does not affect adjuncts alone. Future studies could be conducted using a case study approach, listening to the experiences of others in the academic community who are also impacted by the phenomenon. Participants could include full-time teachers, non-teaching staff, those further up in the academic hierarchy, and students.

Different theoretical frameworks could also produce different perspectives on the topic. The SET theory used in this study provided data on the experiences and satisfaction of ESL

adjuncts regarding their interactions with students, colleagues, and institutions. However, using a different theory, and thereby providing a different frame of reference, could reveal additional themes and new insights.

Further research should also be done in other scenarios. Since teaching English as a second language is done among so many different types of academic populations, other teaching situations should be explored. For example, programs where funding is primarily from the tuition paid by students, which often results in lower pay for teachers, could be researched.

Other locations that reflect smaller or larger programs or are in different geographical locations could also provide broader insights into the phenomenon. The size of a program would likely affect the adjunct experience. This would be true of programs in different states or regions of the country as well. Listening to as many voices as possible of those who are affected by the adjunct phenomenon will bring awareness and insight into this complex issue.

Finally, quantitative studies could be done on this topic. By posing the questions and ideas in forms that could be collected quantitatively, larger groups of adjuncts could be surveyed and the data quantitatively analyzed.

Conclusion

This hermeneutic phenomenological study described the experiences of postsecondary adjunct English as a second language teachers in the Southwestern United States. Specifically, the study sought to describe teacher experiences related to students, colleagues, and the institution. The theoretical framework was the social exchange theory (SET). After an extensive review of existing work, a gap in the literature was determined. The central research question was: What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings? The sub-questions concentrated on the adjuncts' experiences with students, colleagues, and the institution.

The setting was a community college in the Southwestern United States. Purposeful criterion sampling was used to secure 14 participants. Data collection sources included a questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. Analysis was guided by the work of van Manen (2016) and Saldaña (2021) and included eclectic coding with descriptive and in vivo coding used in cycle one, and structural and pattern coding in the second cycle. From these codes, themes were distilled and insights were gleaned.

This study revealed the depth of integrity and commitment to the practice of teaching embodied in the participating adjuncts. It corroborated, confirmed, and expanded on the body of literature that has documented the plight of the adjunct and the need for systemic change in the way teachers are hired and handled in postsecondary institutions. Hence, the biggest takeaway was that for the sake of their students and the love of their profession, adjuncts persist, but they will never stop striving for parity, equity, and agency.

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Appendix A

Liberty IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 24, 2023

Dawn Bell
Breck Perry

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1722 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ADJUNCTS

Dear Dawn Bell, Breck Perry,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

IRB Site Approval

Re: Research Request

[redacted]

Mon 8/14/2023 4:50 PM

To:Dawn Bell [redacted]

Hi Dawn -

I was able to track everyone down, and you're good to move forward with the project. The only requirement requested by the VP is that you use your own email address rather than your [redacted] one. We just want to make sure that people know that this is your doctoral project and not something from the college.

Good luck.

[redacted]

Appendix C

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings?

Sub-Question One

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to students?

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to colleagues?

Sub-Question Three

What are the experiences of adjunct ESL instructors in higher education settings with regard to their institution?

Appendix D

Recruitment Letter

Dear Respected Colleague,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Education.

The purpose of my research is to describe the experiences of adjunct English as a second language teachers. I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be currently working as an ESL adjunct teacher or have worked as an ESL adjunct within the last school year. Participants will be asked to complete a brief online questionnaire, participate in an audio and video-recorded interview on Zoom with the researcher taking no more than 1.5 hours, and participate in an audio and video-recorded focus group on Zoom with the researcher and other study participants taking no more than 1.5 hours. Participants will also be asked to participate in the transcript review process by reviewing the accuracy of the information provided by the participant; a unique link to the interview and a link to their focus group transcripts will be sent to each participant. It should take no more than 3.5 hours to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please email me at [redacted]

[redacted] this link to access the consent form and questionnaire.

The consent document is provided in the first section of the Google form. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please proceed to the questionnaire. Submission of the consent form and questionnaire indicates that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Sincerely,

Dawn Bell

Doctoral Candidate

[redacted]

Appendix E

Consent Form

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study on the Experiences of English as a Second Language Adjuncts

Principal Investigator: Dawn Annette Bell, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be currently working as an ESL adjunct teacher or have worked as an ESL adjunct within the last school year. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to describe the experiences of adjunct English as a second language teachers.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

- Complete a brief online questionnaire (20 minutes).
- Participate in an audio and video-recorded interview on Zoom with the researcher that will take no more than 1.5 hours.
- Participate in an audio and video-recorded focus group on Zoom with the researcher and other study participants that will take no more than 1.5 hours.
- Participate in the member-checking process by reviewing the accuracy of the information provided by you.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society, education, and the literature include voice being given to adjuncts, adjunct voices being documented in the literature, and adjunct voices being heard by institutions.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer, and hard copies will be stored in a locked file cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. The researcher and members of her doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or [redacted] if you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Dawn Bell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [redacted] or [redacted]You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Breck Perry, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

By submitting this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you proceed. You may make a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you submit this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my

participation in this study.

Appendix F

Questionnaire

[This form was filled out via Google Forms.]

The purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers at a college in the Southwest United States described their experiences as adjunct teachers for English as a second language learners. This questionnaire was intended to collect data that only required a short answer.

1. What is your first and last name and today's date?

2. What is your gender?

3. What is your age?

4. What is your race or ethnic identity?

5. What is your highest completed degree of education?

6. What employment positions have you held over the last school year?

7. How long have you worked as an adjunct ESL teacher in your current position?

8. What is the total length of time that you have worked as an adjunct ESL teacher?

9. Do you hold a full-time position at any single place of employment?

10. If you do not hold a full-time position, is it an option you would you prefer?

11. What do you find the most satisfying about being an ESL adjunct teacher?

12. What do you find the least satisfying about being an ESL adjunct teacher?

13. What compels you to continue working as an ESL adjunct teacher?

14. Thank you for your time! I will contact you in the next few days to schedule an interview. What is the best non-work email or phone (text) for me to reach you?

Appendix G

Interview Questions

1. Please describe your general experience throughout your years of teaching as an adjunct English teacher. CRQ
2. Please describe how your previous experiences with students influence your current teaching experience. SQ1
3. Please describe how your beliefs about students influence your teaching experience. SQ1
4. Please describe how your beliefs about what students need to know influence your teaching experience. SQ1
5. Please describe how what you believe about how students learn influences your teaching experience. SQ1
6. Please describe how your employment status influences your service to students. SQ1
7. What else would you like to add to the discussion about students and your teaching experience? SQ1
8. Please describe your general experiences with colleagues. SQ2
9. Please describe your experiences with colleagues with regard to teaching. SQ2
10. Please describe your opportunities for interactive reflection with colleagues. SQ2
11. Please describe how your employment status affects your interaction with colleagues. SQ2
12. What else would you like to add to the discussion about your teaching experiences related to your colleagues? SQ2
13. Please describe your experiences with your institution. SQ3
14. Please describe how employment status influences your teaching experience. SQ3
15. Please describe how compensation influences your teaching experience. SQ3

16. Please describe how available material resources influence your teaching experience. SQ3
17. Please describe how institutional support (e.g., professional development) influences your teaching experience. SQ3
18. What else would you like to add to the discussion about your experience with the institution? SQ3
19. What additional thoughts would you like to add about our discussion overall? CRQ

Appendix H

Focus Group Questions

1. Referencing your experience as an adjunct, please discuss essential components of job satisfaction.
2. Please discuss what your expectations were when you first began working as an adjunct.
3. Please discuss how being an adjunct currently affects your personal day-to-day life.
4. Please discuss how being an adjunct affects retirement for you.
5. With regard to weighing the costs and benefits of being an adjunct, please discuss what you have learned that you would pass on to someone who is going into the profession or choosing this job.
6. Based on your experience as an adjunct, what does equity, equilibrium, or balance, look like in this profession for you?
7. How have your experiences as an adjunct shaped your views on higher education in general?
8. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussions overall, either from the interview or the focus group?