INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE CHOICES OF ADJUNCT HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTRUCTORS IN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

Lyda Costello Kiser

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Arts
Community College Education

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Date: April 12, 2017 ______ Spring Semester 2017
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

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DEDICATION

My grandmothers valued education above all things. One because she benefitted from a postsecondary education at a time when few women had that opportunity; the other because she was not permitted to go to school past the sixth grade. They raised my parents to share these beliefs, which they instilled in my brother, sisters, and me. I dedicate this work to my family – present and passed on – who have always supported me and believed in me, even when they didn't understand. My children, Stephanie, Caitlin, Hugh, and Jonathan will always be my most important work. I hope they are as proud of me as I am of them. Finally, I could not have done any of the components of this program without the help of my partner, Andrew D. Kiser. His encouragement made this possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is the result of assistance from a great many people. First, thanks to the participants in my study. I am in awe of their efforts for and dedication to community college students. Second, thanks to the many faculty at George Mason University who helped me, especially my chair, Dr. Kelly Schrum, for her guidance and support. I benefitted greatly from the assistance of other committee members, Dr. Jan Arminio and Dr. Amy Swan, as well as my original members Dr. Lesley Smith and Dr. Jaime Lester. Thanks also to my colleagues at LFCC, especially Dr. Cheryl Thomspon-Stacy, who leads by example, and everyone in the Office of Transition Programs. Specific mention of Dr. John Milam is necessary, as he helped me throughout this process.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Scholarship of Teaching..SoT
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning..SoTL
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.........SACSCOC
State Council of Higher Education in Virginia..SCHEV
Virginia Community College System..VCCS

ABSTRACT

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE CHOICES OF ADJUNCT HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTRUCTORS IN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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George Mason University, 2017

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Issues of instruction and assessment at community colleges are influenced by the high percentage of classes taught by adjunct faculty. In 2014 for the Virginia Community College System, part-time instructors comprised 70.3% of instructional faculty. This dissertation describes the instruction and assessment technique choices of adjunct instructors in humanities and social sciences at five Virginia community colleges, identified through survey, interview, and observation data, and what influences instructors in this study make choices about what techniques to use. Profiles of observed instructors provide examples of specific instructor experiences. Four themes are identified: 1) personal dedication of instructors; 2) instructors' practice of teaching how they learned; 3) constant revision of courses taught; and, 4) limited availability of collegial interaction or professional development opportunities. With the increasing importance that adjuncts play in providing undergraduate education, understanding how

these instructors teach and assess student learning informs college practices in decisions about using adjuncts, appropriate professional development, and processes for hiring and evaluation.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

For past two decades, many researchers and organizations expressed concerns about the use of part-time instructors in higher education. Profiles, meeting addresses, dedicated journals, and survey data indicated that the increasing number of adjunct instructors had an impact on post-secondary institutions and students that required further study. From the high percentage of instruction conducted by part-time faculty to pay equity issues to how institutions support adjuncts, the large number of contingent faculty and students taught by them supports the need to understand this aspect of higher education.

According to the National Survey of Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty, produced by the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) Higher Education Division (2010), that "almost three-quarters of the people employed today to teach undergraduate courses in the nation's colleges and universities are not full-time permanent professors" (p. 3). Further, in 2006, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Contingent Faculty Index (Curtis & Jacobe, 2006) determined that 79.6% of all faculty in Public Associate Degree Colleges are identified as "contingent" (p. 18) supports this. In Virginia, according to the AAUP Index, there are 6,608 part-time instructors in community colleges making up 81.6% of all instructors.

In 1999, the National Education Association (NEA) included a profile of part-time faculty at U.S. community colleges as part of their *Almanac of Higher Education* (Palmer, 1999). According to the NEA data, the Mid-East region (which includes Virginia) had the highest percentage of part-time instructors at 66.2%. Palmer also pointed out that community colleges with larger enrollments tended to hire more part-time faculty members and that these employees were most often found in the humanities and social sciences, including English (61.5%), history (54.3%), and communications (68.3%). The highest percentages for adjuncts in this 1999 report were in philosophy and religion (78%) (Palmer, 1999, p. 47). Palmer also identified how "academic labor market captivity" (p. 51) often resulted in reluctant adjunct faculty, who accepted positions because full-time work was unavailable. Adjuncts that preferred full-time positions were more likely found in the arts and sciences, where they gained teaching experience while waiting for a full-time position opening.

In 2001, Ann E. Austin gave the Presidential Address at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). Published in 2003 in *The Review of Higher Education*, Austin's comments were the opening piece of an issue entitled, "Creating a Bridge to the Future: Preparing New Faculty to Face Changing Expectations in a Shifting Context." Austin stated that higher education in the U S. is in a period of major transformation, with fiscal constraints and changing needs resulting in increasing numbers of part-time faculty, while institutions simultaneously place a greater emphasis on learning outcomes. According to Austin, all faculty (full- and part-time) must possess eight essential skills: research abilities and appreciations, understanding the

teaching and learning process, knowledge of uses of technology in education, communication skills appropriate for various audiences, expertise in working in diverse groups, appreciation of institutional citizenship and related skills, and appreciation of the core purposes and values of higher education. Of these eight skills, the first six related directly to the process of teaching and achieving student learning outcomes.

The demographics of these part-time instructors provide a dismal portrait. In the 2010 AFT Higher Education survey of part-time and adjunct faculty, 51% of part-time and adjunct faculty taught at a two-year institution and 41% had 11 or more years of experience. Among part-time faculty, 84% were White non-Hispanics and there was an almost even split of males to females (52% to 48%). Of particular interest was the data on multiple jobs, where just one in three (34%) part-time faculty had only one job while 66% had two or more jobs. Of those with more than one job, only 28% had another teaching job, with 77% of those teaching part-time at both jobs. For part-time faculty in the survey, 50% preferred teaching part-time to full-time and 47% indicated that they would have preferred a full-time position. Half of the respondents who prefer part-time teaching indicated that they already have a full-time job somewhere else. Among part-time faculty working in two-year institutions, 62% were very or mainly satisfied with their working conditions, while 37% were somewhat or not satisfied. This snapshot of part-time faculty indicates that the majority of those at two-year institutions are satisfied with their working conditions. Additionally, while 25% of those teaching part-time have full-time jobs elsewhere, almost half of these part-time instructors would prefer to teach full-time.

In the 2015-16 Almanac of Higher Education, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported on adjunct salaries per course for Virginia institutions. While this publication relied on self-reported earnings and included community colleges and four-year institutions, the averages represent some of the only information available on adjunct pay in the Commonwealth. Per course wages throughout Virginia in the humanities and social sciences ranged from $1,181 in speech communications to $2,954 in composition/Rhetoric/writing. When the Affordable Care Act placed limits on how many credits an adjunct could teach for a single institution before requiring the institution to pay for health insurance, institutions limited adjunct teaching loads (Lederman, 2014).

The high percentage of classes taught by adjunct faculty at community colleges may influence issues of instruction and assessment at these institutions. In the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), the 23 member colleges employ 2,352 individuals as full-time instructional faculty and 7,914 as part-time instructional faculty, making the ratio 29.7% full-time to 70.3% part-time (VCCS, 2016). This increase in part-time hiring "is part of the wider employment pattern of downsizing, subcontracting, and outsourcing" (Wyles, 1998, p. 90) that is seen throughout public and private business practice. In the 2014-15 academic year, the VCCS reported that the system's full-time instructors taught 107,614 credit hours for a total of 1,928,987 student credit hours (almost 18 students per credit hour taught). During the same period, the system's adjuncts taught 125,539 credit hours for 2,055,684 student credit hours – slightly more than 16 students per credit hour taught (VCCS, 2015). This information describes an educational environment in which adjunct instructors teach 53% of the credit hours in Virginia's community colleges.

These same adjuncts provide 51% of the student credit hours taught throughout in the VCCS system. While full-time faculty teach more courses (usually five or six per semester) and represent almost half of the teaching power, there are far fewer full-time faculty than part-time faculty in the VCCS. Combined with the information on full-time to part-time faculty ratios, students in Virginia's community colleges are likely to have contact with part-time faculty, and some may have more contact with adjuncts than full-time faculty depending upon the student's course choices.

In the introduction to her book, *Embracing Non-Tenure Track Faculty* (2012), Adrianna Kezar stated, "While the hiring of non-tenure track faculty began as a temporary solution to a set of problems, these positions have now become the new norm in hiring," (p. xi). Whether referred to as part-time, adjunct, contingent, non-tenure track, or a related title, these instructors provide a significant portion of the teaching activities on campuses and online throughout higher education (Cohen and Brawer, 2008; Kezar 2012). This is especially true for the nation's community colleges, where 25% of the faculty are tenured or tenure-track, while 75% are part-time. This marks a notable increase from 60% part-time faculty 10 years ago (Kezar, 2012). Kezar's concerns echo those of Gravois (2006), who stated, "The sweeping shift toward non-tenure-track academic labor has been one of the most worried-over trends in American higher education" (p. A8).

The growing prevalence of part-time faculty brings with it many questions. What is the impact on the ability of the community colleges to deliver instruction when the majority of faculty is in the part-time category? With fewer faculty members available to

serve as advisors and mentors for students, how do colleges provide these necessary services? How do community colleges ensure faculty participation in administrative processes when part-time faculty have no incentive to do so? Can administrators know whether part-time instructors are dedicated to the college's mission and philosophy and conduct themselves accordingly? How does the college implement activities to improve instruction, address student outcomes, or meet accreditation standards when it relies on the actions of part-time faculty?

Since several studies (Baron-Nixon, 2007; Eagan, 2007; Eagan & Jaeger, 2009, 2008; Jacoby, 2006; Kezar, 2012; Kezar & Sam, 2010a; Ronco & Cahill, 2006) indicate that part-time faculty will continue to provide the majority of instruction in higher education, institutions must learn how to address their inclusion in organizational operation and change, including areas related to pedagogy, use of effective instruction techniques, and professional development. Integrating part-time faculty into the institution is important to its ability to fulfill its mission since integration provides faculty with the knowledge and resources to respond to student questions and needs. According to Baron-Nixon (2007), "It is unlikely that issues related to part-time faculty will diminish or disappear in the foreseeable future" (103). Therefore, it is important for community colleges to have specific practices and policies in place to address the teaching needs of these instructors. As a personnel asset for the college, part-time faculty represent a resource that assists colleges in fulfilling their missions and it is imperative that colleges consider the teaching and assessment practices of part-time instructors and how these practices relate to positive outcomes for the college and its students.

To identify how teaching and assessment practices promote positive student outcomes, successful instructional techniques in the college classroom have been studied over time (Lei, 2007a, 2007b), leading to a generally held acceptance among scholars that certain identified teaching methods promote learning. There are many well-known examples of the relationship between teaching methods and student learning accepted by educators at the postsecondary level. In 1956, Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002) provided information on levels of thinking and learning activities, encouraging instructors to focus on moving from simple to complex thinking and from concrete to abstract learning activities (see Appendix A). While Bloom's Taxonomy has frequently been revised and applied to many situations since its first inception, Chickering and Gamson's "Seven Principles for Undergraduate Education" (1987) have provided an additional focus on learning in undergraduate education. For community colleges and their instructors, these works form a foundation of what is necessary to promote learning, and how instruction and assessment techniques improve student outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

With the majority of undergraduates taking at least some coursework at community colleges and with the majority of courses in community colleges being taught by part-time faculty (AFT, 2010; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Kezar, 2012), it is important to identify the instruction and assessment practices used by part-time faculty and to understand the ways in which these individuals choose which methods to utilize. Extensive research has been conducted on teaching methodologies (Bangert, 2004; Chickering & Gamson, 1987, 1991, 1999; Grieve, 2009; Greive & Lesko, 2011; Lei,

2007a) and, recently, on the employment experiences of part-time faculty in higher education (Baron-Nixon, 2007; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Kezar, 2012; Kezar, et al., 2005; Landrum, 2009; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Umbach, 2007a). Recent focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) has placed additional emphasis on identification of effective instruction and assessment in promoting learning (Wyles, 1998; McArthur, 1999; Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Landrum, 2009; Charlier & Williams, 2011). Lei (2007a, 2007b) examined the instruction and assessment techniques of community college instructors in Nevada, but his study did not address how instructors made choices in the techniques they employ. Further, assumptions abound about the quality of teaching provided by part-time faculty, but there is little data available on this topic. In this study, therefore, I explored part-time instructors' choices of instruction and assessment techniques. I did so by conducting a survey of the techniques they use followed by interviews with instructors regarding the preparation and support they receive for teaching obligations. I then reviewed syllabi and observed these same faculty in order to learn how often effective instruction and assessment techniques were utilized by this faculty group.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the instruction and assessment techniques used by adjunct humanities and social sciences faculty in Virginia community colleges and what influences instructors choices of which techniques to employ. Humanities and social science courses, which include literature, English, foreign languages, history, political science/government, sociology, and psychology, represent a

significant area of study for community college students who are seeking a degree or certification. All Virginia community colleges require humanities and social science course completion to satisfy degree requirements. Additionally, humanities and social sciences courses are an important component of transfer credits for students who plan to continue their postsecondary education at a four-year institution. This information has implications for student learning outcomes, as well as the strength of the connection between the community college and the adjunct in terms of support and guidance, professional development, and evaluation. This study combines a replication of the work of Lei (2007a, 2007b) and the work of Kezar and Sam (2010a, 2013) with a group of part-time Virginia community college instructors in the humanities and social sciences. Through an examination of teaching and assessment practices of a sample of part-time faculty in VCCS institutions and profiles of the experiences of a subset of these individuals, this study also identified themes relating to instructor perceptions of institutional environments, including perceptions of college support for part-time instructors.

Significance

This study provides information on the teaching and assessment practices utilized by humanities and social sciences adjunct instructors at community colleges. This data helps identify how often instructors engage in effective teaching and assessment techniques, and what challenges might exist to encouraging teaching practices that require students to use higher order thinking. Additionally, analysis of interviews and

observation data identify a relationship between techniques used and the instructor's perspective.

With the reliance on part-time instructors to fulfill the missions of community colleges, there is a need for reliable and ongoing data at the national, state, and college levels on how these instructors teach and assess, as well as more information on the connection between part-time faculty techniques and student persistence and achievement. This includes research, as suggested by Kezar (2102), to examine how colleges address the integration of part-time faculty and how integration supports improved coordination of instruction, positive outcomes for all involved (faculty, students and institutions), and the ability of colleges to maximize the productivity of part-time instructors while meeting institutional student persistence and completion goals. Findings from this study are a step towards effective integration, as they provide a foundation for identifying how these instructors teach and how they perceive their teaching roles.

While there has been other research related to the quality and effectiveness of adjunct teaching, this project is unique in that it identifies the use of effective pedagogical practice, compares it with instructor teaching perspectives, and determines factors that influence the technique choices. Further, this study adds to existing scholarship and advances work on teaching and assessment practice to improve teaching and learning in community college classrooms by identifying: 1) how often adjunct instructors engage in effective techniques; and 2) how instructors make decisions about instruction and assessment in the classroom.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the instructional practices utilized by Virginia community college part-time instructors in humanities and social sciences courses?

2. What are the assessment techniques utilized by Virginia community college part-time instructors in humanities and social sciences courses?

3. What influences Virginia community college part-time instructors to make choices about which instructional and assessment techniques to use?

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature, including undergraduate teaching and learning and issues related to the increasing number of part-time faculty in higher education. Chapter Three presents the methodology of the study, including participants and setting, measurement and research design, procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter Four includes the study's findings and results of data analyses for the survey, interviews, and observations. Chapter Five provides a summary of the entire study, discussion of the findings, implications of the findings for theory and practice, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

Definition of Terms

To avoid confusion and assist the reader, this study provides definitions and delineations for research components.

Active learning

Active learning refers to modes of instruction that place the responsibility of learning on the learner, where the learner is actively engaged in activity, discussion, presentation, or problem solving. Barkley and Major (2016) identified active learning as "an umbrella term for several pedagogical approaches," (p. 7) and is "based on the premise that learning is a dynamic process" (p. 7). Kuh (2008) referred to these practices as "Educationally Purposeful Activities" (p. 29). Students engaged in active learning are involved in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of subject matter.

Assessment

For this study, assessment refers to determination of student learning in the context of a course. According to Palumbo and Banta (1999), "Assessment is a process that focuses on student learning" (p.1). Barkley and Major (2016) stated, "Assessment is the way that we teachers gauge for ourselves and for others whether and how well learning has happened" (p. 9).

Part-time faculty

The term part-time faculty incorporates instructors who are not contracted, full-time instructors (VCCS, 2016). Other researchers use the term "adjunct" or "contingent" to describe this same population. In the VCCS, these individuals may hold the rank of Instructor, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, or Associate Professor.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

According to McKinney (2007), there is diversity in definitions or understandings of SoTL that vary by institution, discipline, and researcher. For this study, I use the

definition by Sperling (2003), that SoTL "encourages faculty to understand themselves both as practitioners who can utilize research to enhance practice and researchers who can contribute to their profession" (p. 593) and McKinney's (2007) definition that SoTL involves "some form of reflection on teaching and learning, and that this reflection or some product of the reflection is shared with peers" (p. 8). The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is thus the scholarly inquiry into student learning that advances the practice of teaching when this inquiry is made public. The goal of SoTL is to improve student learning.

Virginia Community College System (VCCS)

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is the state agency with oversight over all 23 community colleges in the Commonwealth of Virginia (VCCS, 2016). The VCCS is under the direction of the Chancellor and the Virginia Community College Board. The VCCS sets all personnel policy and defines the specific classifications for all instructors (part- and full-time) as well as evaluation processes for all instructors.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the rationale for conducting research on the instruction and assessment techniques of part-time humanities and social sciences faculty in the Virginia Community College System. According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), community colleges depend on part-time instructors more than universities because "They cost less; they may have special capabilities not available among the full-time instructors; and they can be employed, dismissed, and reemployed as needed" (p. 94). For administrators at community colleges, the ability to provide instructors with real-world knowledge who can share insight and networking related to employment is seen as an advantage (Adamowicz, 2007). These part-time instructors teach when there are sections to be filled, without guarantee of future employment (Baron-Nixon, 2007). They are instrumental in meeting the needs of students in high-demand courses so students can complete a program of study in a timely fashion (Adamowicz, 2007).

The literature review for this study examines both foundational and recent work related to the use of part-time faculty in higher education with specific focus on community colleges. It briefly addresses research on undergraduate teaching and learning since instruction and assessment techniques are a focus of this study. The review continues with research related to concerns about the increasing number of part-time

faculty in higher education as a whole, providing context for the role and experiences of Virginia's part-time community college faculty. Literature relevant to community colleges specifically is included in a separate section. Finally, this review identifies areas that indicate the need for additional research in order to answer the many questions associated with the use of part-time faculty.

Undergraduate Teaching and Learning

Instruction.

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, higher education research has increasingly focused on teaching and learning (Adamowicz, 2007; Alexander, Ulrich, Davis & Wade, 2012; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Galbraith & Shedd, 1990; Greive & Wordon, 2000; Hutchings & Ciccone, 2011; Kezar, 2012 & 2014a; Lynch & Chickering, 1985). Some of this research has focused on the broad category of adult learning, including both academic learning and employment training. Some has addressed general learning in terms of moving an individual from basic, or lower-order, thinking skills to more complex, or higher-order, thinking skills. Some of this research has focused specifically on improving student learning in the undergraduate environment of higher education.

Researchers have studied instructional techniques in the college classroom over time (Lei, 2007a, 2007b), leading to a generally held acceptance among scholars that certain teaching methods promote learning. Bloom's Taxonomy (see Appendix A) is a useful for descriptions of levels of learning. Bloom's taxonomy uses a pyramid format and focuses on the thinking skills that are needed for more complex demonstrations of

learning, and indicates that teaching techniques can impact the level of student learning. When instructors utilize teaching techniques such as discussion, practice, and teaching others – all of which require students to engage in higher order thinking skills – the assumption is that higher retention rates occur (Greive & Lesko, 2011). Therefore, identifying the percentage of time instructors spend on certain types of techniques and assessing learning outcomes can inform effort towards both student retention and teaching skills that involve more advanced levels of thinking.

While Bloom's Taxonomy provides some descriptions of promoting student learning, other work exists that defines good practices for teaching undergraduate learners. In 1987, Chickering and Gamson published "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," to encourage improvement in undergraduate education. These seven principles came out of work with the National Institute of Education, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). These principles include:

1. Encourage contact between students and faculty;
2. Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students;
3. Use active learning techniques;
4. Give prompt feedback;
5. Emphasize time on task;
6. Communicate high expectations;
7. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

The principles have been the basis for several lines of research related to academic disciplines, but most significant for this study is the positive effect of increased faculty-student interaction found by Kuh and Vesper (1997). These researchers found "that faculty-student contact, cooperation among students, and active learning were the best predictors of student educational gains in college" (p. 60).

These principles have been adapted to service learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1999), online learning (Bangert, 2004), and traditional college classroom learning environments for almost 30 years. They provide a guide for the evaluation of teaching and improving undergraduate education throughout an institution. According to Chickering and Gamson (1999), "Teachers and students hold the main responsibility for improving undergraduate education" (p. 5). However, to create an environment favorable to student success in higher education, the following qualities must be present: a strong sense of shared purpose; concrete support from administrators and faculty leaders; adequate funding policies and procedures consistent with the purposes of learning; and continuing examination of achievements (Chickering & Gamson, 1999).

In promoting a taxonomy for *Creating Significant Learning Experiences,* L. D. Fink (2013) encouraged instructors to move students beyond short-term memory of course content and understanding, and help students make connections between what was learned and their life outside the classroom. Fink's taxonomy identified six kinds of learning – foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn. The importance of creating significant learning experiences, according to Fink, was that these experiences could help with problems faced by

instructors. For example, a redesigned course with these learning experiences could give students a reason to complete readings when they otherwise might not be prepared for class. Fink believed that "Good teaching can be used to foster better learning," (p. 273) and that "high-quality learning is absolutely essential for high-quality living" (p. 277). Fink proposed the idea of an instructor as "Helmsman" whose "job is to steer and coordinate efforts of oarsmen" (p. 278) where the oarsmen are the students and the class is on a journey as a group.

There is also work available that provides examples for instructors to follow to improve student learning. Through a series of short texts to promote effective instruction by adjunct faculty, Greive (2009) and Greive and Lesko (2011) identified the basic characteristics of good teaching as knowing the subject, communicating effectively, knowing and liking students, and understanding the culture in which one is teaching. Greive and Lesko's (2011) description of teaching techniques include instructor-based (which the authors identify as lecture, discussion, question/answer, demonstration), student-based (which the authors identify as active learning, cooperative/collaborative learning), out-of-class activities, large group instruction, instructional aides, tests and assessments, and assigning grades. It is notable that Greive viewed evaluation and grading as components of effective instruction. However, most of the emphasis in his texts is on active learning, in line with Bloom's learning pyramid categories of apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. Greive (2009) strongly promoted the use of cooperative learning in college classrooms, noting that "students learn from each other as much as from their instructors" (2009, p. 12).

According to Kuh, Laird, and Umbach (2004), "That faculty matter to student learning is a widely accepted article of faith with substantial empirical support" (p. 1). Focusing on a desired outcome for an "invigorated liberal education" (p. 1), these researchers point out that colleges must offer "a coherent, academically rigorous curriculum," and use "active and collaborative pedagogies that engage learners with their peers around common intellectual work, creating opportunities for student-faculty interaction, and providing prompt feedback" (p.2). Since faculty expectations and priorities shape student performance, Kuh, et al., (2004) looked at the relationships between faculty use of effective educational practices and student engagement in these activities. This included assignment of academically challenging activities, design and facilitation of active and collaborative learning activities, emphasis on higher-order cognitive tasks in assignments and discussions, and presentation of diverse perspectives in the classroom. They compared these results to how much reading and writing students do, how often they report working with peers on collaborative activities, the extent to which students are analyzing and synthesizing ideas as opposed to memorization, and how often students encounter diverse perspectives in their classroom. The researchers found that full-time faculty are more likely than part-time faculty to emphasize academically challenging activities, but are less likely to engage in active and collaborative practices or to think that it is important for students to engage in "enriching educational experiences" such as internships, learning communities, or capstone projects (p.2). Of significant note is the statement by Kuh, et al., "A key next step is to discover

how institutions or groups of faculty cultivate and reinforce the attitudes and behaviors associated with using effective educational practices" (p.7).

In their effort to identify "Common Ground" (p. 481) in learning outcomes, Sharp, Komives, and Fincher (2011) conducted a qualitative content analysis of the evidence provided to 25 disciplinary accrediting bodies for learning outcomes from academic programs. The authors explored themes in learning outcomes and identified commonalities as well as how these outcomes "interface" with the outcomes promoted by student affairs educators. Eight key categories were identified as themes for learning outcomes, including management/collaborative leadership, critical thinking, professional skills, interpersonal relations with diverse others, life-long learning, knowledge bases, ethics, and intrapersonal attributes/competencies. In the area of critical thinking, the most prevalent expected skill was application of knowledge and theory to practice. For knowledge bases, expectations moved beyond discipline-specific knowledge to the importance of recognizing the context of this knowledge. The authors noted that "Assessment holds great promise for powerful partnerships" between academic and student affairs in measuring specific student learning and developmental outcomes (Sharp, Komives & Fincher, 2011, p.496). While use of evidence-based collaborations to research pedagogical practices in required courses could provide a foundation for further information, Sharp, et al., also advocated for intentional efforts to identify and promote shared learning outcomes.

Assessment.

In terms of assessment, the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Project of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), a focus has been on high-impact educational practices in post-secondary education. These practices connect directly with teaching and assessment strategies and techniques that relate college learning goals with twenty-first century needs. LEAP addresses the design of essential learning outcomes and how students achieve these outcomes (Kuh, 2009). In a paper for AAC&U on high-impact practices, Kuh (2009) asked, "How do we help students actually achieve the forms of learning that serve them best, in the economy, in civic society, and in their own personal and family lives?" (p.7) Moreover, Kuh (2009) listed 10 high-impact practices – first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning or community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects – and stated that every student should participate in at least two high-impact activities during their undergraduate program. Of particular importance, Kuh (2009) pointed out, is that "historically underserved students tend to benefit *more* from engaging in educational purposeful activities than majority students" (p. 17). Since many community college students are considered part of the historically underserved student population (ethnic and racial minorities, low income, or students with disabilities), availability of these practices would benefit many students at these institutions. Additionally, Kuh stated that faculty

play an important role "in creating a climate conducive to engagement and learning" (p. 21) and if faculty value these practices, students will as well.

The LEAP Project and AAC&U also considered assessment, both of college students generally and underserved students specifically. A 2016 report for AAC&U, *Trends in Learning Outcomes Assessments* (Hart Research Associates), found that the majority of AAC&U member institutions assess learning outcomes for all students. These outcomes address specific skills and "the most commonly used approach to assessing outcomes is the use of rubrics" (p. 2), specifically the AAC&U's VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubrics. In another AAC&U publication, *Assessing College Student Learning* (2011), Sternberg, Penn, and Hawkins supported the close relationship between assessment, curricula, and instruction. According to Sternberg, et al., assessment data has "repercussions for how we teach, how we organize our classes, and how we are perceived by the broader public" (p. 3). Regarding assessment of underserved students, in 2013, Finley and McNair addressed how to assess these students' engagement in Kuh's (2008) high-impact practices as part of continuing LEAP research. Finley and McNair were concerned with the learning outcomes these students achieved, but found that their success was highly dependent upon the encouragement of the instructor who provided positive feedback and indicated an interest in student learning (p. 29).

In *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning,"* Astin, et al. (1996) identified considerations for creating or choosing assessments that meet the needs of the instructor, student, and institution. The authors saw assessment as not an end to

itself but a mechanism for improvement in teaching and student learning. Assessment, they wrote, should begin with educational values and reflect the complex process that is learning. Good assessment practices must be goal-oriented with explicit purpose and examine both outcomes and the experiences that lead to the outcomes. The authors supported assessment that is ongoing, since the purpose of assessment is to measure progress towards educational objectives. According to Astin, et al. (1996), assessment is most effective when it is part of a larger push to improve teaching and learning and when it is connected to questions or issues that matter. Assessment goes beyond determining students' grades – it is how educators continually improve and ensure that they meet their responsibility to students and the public. As Austin, et al., point out, good assessment practices are important for any instructor, including adjuncts.

Palomba and Banta (1999) also connected assessment to leaning objectives and instructor planning for class sessions. With the assumption that all college instructors "care about what we are doing and want to tap the potential of assessment to improve – that assessment is valuable and useful even if not required" (p. 346), they noted that educators typically identify course objectives in terms of cognitive, affective, and skill acquisition. These authors suggested that cognitive objectives can be written using Bloom's taxonomy because they relate to thinking skills, while affective objectives (those that relate to attitudes and values) can be written in terms of observable behavior. The skills objectives include performance of specific tasks and can be written based on criteria for demonstrating levels of expertise. Palomba and Banta's primary focus was on institutional assessment, but they noted that "Many teachers have developed informal

methods to assess whether students understand class materials" (p. 168). These authors recommend the use of ungraded classroom assessment techniques (CATs) between formalized testing events to gauge student learning. While Palomba and Banta noted the importance of assessments designed and implemented by the faculty, they also noted that faculty expertise is important in using the grading process for assessment purposes, particularly in developing criteria and standards for grading.

Assessment is also the focus of Suskie's 2009 text, *Assessing Student Leaning: A Common Sense Guide.* (2009). While Suskie discussed assessment for both courses and institutions, she differentiated between direct and indirect evidence of student learning. Direct evidence, she wrote, is "tangible, visible, self-explanatory, and compelling evidence of exactly what students have and have not learned" (p. 20) while indirect evidence consists of less clear indications that "students are probably learning" (p. 20). Suskie characterized test scores, student reflections, capstone experiences, written work, as direct evidence of student learning while grades for courses and assignments are classified as indirect evidence. Suskie also had a category of "Reaction" (p. 20) as evidence of learning, since student dissatisfaction may indicate that the student has not learned an important component of the course. According to Suskie, "the best assessments are those whose results are used to improve teaching and learning" (p. 36) as well as assist with planning and even budgeting. Suskie stated that students should have multiple opportunities to achieve learning goals and demonstrate this achievement, so it is important to have a variety of assessments. Good assessment occurs, according to Suskie, when the instructor (or institution, division or department) starts with clear goals

that can be supported as important to the course or institution goals. The instructor should then include a variety of assessments to acknowledge student differences and next choose and create unbiased and fair assessment strategies. To conduct assessments ethically, the instructor should explain how the assessment works and how it addresses learning goals, and provide students enough opportunities to learn the needed skills for the assessment. Suskie's requires the instructor to evaluate student work in a fair, equitable, and consistent manner. Finally, Suskie pointed out that all assessment should be viewed as "a perpetual work in progress" (p. 50) with the goal of understanding and improving teaching and learning.

In their promotion of learning assessment techniques (LATs), Barkley and Major (2016) stated, "Assessment is the way that we teachers gauge for ourselves and for others whether and how well learning has happened" (p.9). These authors used Fink's (2013) Taxonomy of Significant Learning as a basis for creating techniques that assess student learning in each of Fink's six domains. Barkley and Major considered the challenges to creating learning objectives and outcomes that represent more than just "hoped-for learning" (p. 18) but recognized that if something can be learned there must be a way to demonstrate that learning and measure that demonstration. These authors differentiated between learning objectives and learning outcomes, with outcomes being course-level statements of an observable, measurable behavior of a course goal while the objectives identify the steps students will take as they move towards a goal. Implementation of assessment techniques, according to Barkley and Major, is the first step of the LAT cycle and is the key to effectiveness. Beginning with a clear and significant learning goal,

instructors must "set up conditions that require [students] to be active participants in their own learning" (p. 7). This includes engaging students and motivating them to "spend the energy to do the work of learning" (p. 8). The next component of an effective LAT is to produce a learning artifact that can be assessed and evaluated for student achievement. Finally, an LAT must result in analysis and the reporting of learning outcomes to stakeholders, including the instructor, students, dean, department, college, and community. This analysis and reporting allows for changes and improvement at the classroom, course, department, and institutional levels. These authors also pointed out that assessment is different from grading, with grades being "symbols of relative achievement in a class section" (p. 25) and assessment a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of assignments and tests in a course to foster learning goals and improve student learning. Finally, Barkley and Major note that assessment of learning is important as it is a means through which "to improve our profession through the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)" (p.27). They continued that assessment addresses the ideal for evaluating and rewarding teaching excellence.

Concerns About Increasing Number of Part-time Faculty

The work of several researchers has addressed concerns about the increasing number of part-time faculty. A portion of these researchers have focused on identifying the distinct disadvantages of employing part-time faculty. Some have examined the human capital issues represented by this category of faculty, and others have addressed concerns specific to pedagogies employed by part-time faculty.

There has been concern about the impact that part-time faculty have on student outcomes. Ronco and Cahill (2006) examined the association between three outcomes of first-year and sophomore years in college (retention, academic achievement, and student rating of instruction) and the amount of the students' exposure to three types of instructors (regular full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistants). Their study "uncovered little evidence that instructor type has a widespread impact on student outcomes" (p. 11). Instead, Ronco and Cahill found that the link with outcomes has more to do with the instructor's ability to convey information effectively. In 2008, Eagan and Jaeger examined the persistence of students who had part-time instructors in early college coursework, and found that students' exposure to full-time teaching-track faculty (those not on a tenure track) "did not appear to significantly affect students' likelihood of persisting into their second year" (p. 48). In examining community college transfer students, these same researchers (Eagan and Jaeger, 2009) found that "neither the proportion of faculty employed in part-time appointments nor the proportion of instruction completed by part-time faculty had a significant relationship with students' likelihood of transferring to a four-year institution" (p.182). However, Eagan (2007) and Eagan and Jaeger (2008, 2009) pointed out that it is important for future research to address how pedagogical practices affect students' likelihood to persist in their chosen program. In other words, it is not enough to look at the employment status of the instructor – research must include the instruction and assessment techniques in the classroom of the instructor.

When the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) issued the paper, *An Examination of the Changing Faculty: Ensuring Institutional Quality and Achieving Desired Student Learning Outcomes* (Kezar, 2014), the work was predicated on the fact that there is a need to assure and improve quality in higher education. This research focused on the relationship between faculty composition and the support of institutions and programs for faculty and issues such as instructional quality, student learning outcomes, and achieving institutions' academic missions. In this publication, Kezar "document research that demonstrates that the changing faculty is having a negative effect on institutional and student outcomes," (p. 3) while specifically identifying the "changing faculty" being an area that needs to receive the attention of accreditors and higher education stakeholders. Pointing out that "part-time faculty have experienced the most significant rate growth over the last 30 to 40 years," (p. 4) this publication posited that community colleges were the first to rely heavily on part-time faculty, and continue to employ the highest percentages of adjunct faculty among non-profit institutions. Using fall 2011 data from IPEDS and NCES 2012, Kezar (2014) pointed out that approximately 69.2% of instructors at these institutions are part-time. These part-time instructors are responsible for teaching between half and two-thirds of all course sections at their institutions.

Of note for this study, Kezar (2014) cited data from the NEA that "the highest increases in part-time faculty occurred in composition, humanities, and social sciences courses. (p. 5) The authors' concern is that the cumulative impact of using part-time faculty - including last minute hiring, lack of access to activities that develop effective

pedagogy, exclusion from curriculum design and decision making, and lack of access to office space and other resources - "impede the ability of individual instructors to interact with students to apply their many talents," (p. 7). In other words, adjuncts do not have the resources or time to optimize their skills for the benefit of their students.

The growing use of adjuncts at community colleges has some distinct disadvantages. Kezar et al., (2005) stated that, "This change compromises many aspects of the public good from the quality of undergraduate education to the advancement of knowledge in this country" (p. 323). As Baron-Nixon (2007) pointed out, these instructors are not typically available to students beyond the time they conduct the class. Office hours are limited, and many community colleges do not provide office space for adjuncts. These instructors do not often add diversity to the community college teaching ranks – according to a report by the Association of American Universities report (2001), "80% of NTT [non-tenure-track] faculty are white U.S. citizens" (p. 6). If teaching online courses, the instructor may seldom (if ever) come to the campus and interact with other faculty, administrators, or students (Umbach, 2007a). These part-time instructors have limited orientation to the college and its mission, limited opportunity to participate in the life of the institution, and limited opportunity to take part in governance, as is part of the expectations in the full-time employment contract (Kezar & Sam, 2010b). This is largely due to the resource issue that would require additional pay to adjuncts for participation in non-teaching activities. Full-time faculty are contracted to provide advising and may receive release time or stipends to participate in governance activities or other special college activities (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Moreover, there is not usually funding

available to support opportunities for these part-time instructors to participate in professional development opportunities in order to improve their pedagogy (Kezar, 2012).

Part-time faculty in community colleges represent a conundrum in terms of human capital. According to Becker (1993), "The productivity of employees depends not only on their ability and the amount invested in them both on and off the job but also on their motivation or the intensity of their work" (p. 57). For part-time faculty, who receive far less pay and benefits than full-time faculty, the lack of investment by the college should result in less productivity. However, Becker's (1993) statement that, "The earnings of more educated people are almost always well above average" (p. 17) does not appear to hold true for part-time faculty. A 2012 study by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW) found that the median pay per three-credit course for part-time faculty at two-year colleges was $2,235 with little wage premium for part-time faculty based on credentials. According to the CAW data, 40% of the faculty surveyed had a personal income of below $25,000 annually, from all sources. This study also found that only 4.3% of these part-time faculty received benefits paid by the employer, while another 3.6% of part-time faculty had the option for the employee to pay the full amount of any chosen benefits.

Research has found additional problems related to the low pay and limited resources allocated to part-time faculty. Reevy and Deason (2014) found that part-time, temporary academic work "can be associated with hardship" (p. 2). Of the part-time faculty in their study, low pay or pay inequity was cited as a stressor by 26.5% of

respondents (p. 9). This study showed that low income levels and job insecurity experienced by part-time faculty negatively impacted the psychological well-being of these instructors. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) pointed out that, "Part-time faculty are by definition and by working conditions (e.g., no office space) less available to their students than are full-timers" (p. 332). This seems to indicate that the time and resource constraints inherent in working conditions of part-time faculty limit both the productivity of these instructors and their ability to meet the desired outcomes of persistence and completion for their students. Indeed, a study by Umbach (2007a) indicated that part-time faculty interact less frequently with students, use activities and collaborative techniques less, spend less time in preparation, and have lower academic expectations. In spite of this finding, Umbach found "little support" from institutions for the idea "that the percentage of contingent faculty on a campus" changes the context of the school's educational environment or has an influence "on the effectiveness of faculty in their delivery of undergraduate education" (p.110).

According to Kezar (2012), these part-time positions are often filled through a less rigorous selection process than the process used to hire full-time faculty. Additionally, part-time faculty are not typically part of either short- or long-range planning for the college, but result from an identified need when certain courses fill quickly and there is increased demand. Kezar (2012) referred to this as a problem of focus on short-term needs and institutional bottom line. Frequently, these positions are filled based upon personal relationships or simple availability combined with the proper educational credentials (Kezar, 2012). There is little required in terms of identification of

teaching ability, experience in student assessment or evaluation, or support for the college's mission, philosophy, or values (Baron-Nixon, 2007; Kezar & Sam, 2010b). While adjunct applicants must follow established hiring processes, the pressure to fill positions, sometimes quickly, may not always result in the best choices for postsecondary teaching and student learning.

Another facet of identifying the best investment for the community college in terms of part-time faculty is the consideration of the impact of instructors who hold multiple part-time positions at different institutions. This is one way that many individuals obtain a living wage from non-tenure-track postsecondary teaching (Adamowicz, 2007, Baron-Nixon, 2007, Kezar, 2012, Kezar and Sam, 2010c). The instructors themselves identify the difficulties inherent in this arrangement, as Adamowicz (2007) did when she pointed out that one semester she "taught a total of four writing-intensive courses at three different institutions…" and she "didn't create any new assignments" or "even ski[m] through one professional journal" (p. 1). In this example, Adamowicz pointed out her belief that no one benefitted from this arrangement – not the colleges, not the students, and not Adamowicz herself (2007). The researcher thus suggests that in terms of instructional outcomes, both students and the institution are affected when part-time faculty do not have the support for a faculty member to fully prepare and meet their contractual obligations.

Additionally, Kezar (2012) pointed out that administrators should consider the permanent underclass created by part-time faculty. Likewise, Cohen and Brawer (2008) noted, "Part-time instructors are to the community colleges what migrant workers are to

farms" (p. 95); this view of part-time faculty is a result of both the temporary status of part-time faculty and the lack of effective integration of these instructors. With funding limiting the time these instructors spend on campus through contracts that are specific to the courses to be taught, adjuncts are not paid for professional development, collegiate governance or departmental meeting participation. This places part-time faculty in a lower class tier within the system of faculty stratification (Kezar, 2012). Kezar encouraged college administrations to consider the role of part-time faculty in college operations. This includes the creation of intentional mechanisms to optimize the incorporation of these individuals to the college. Intentional mechanisms that address the role of part-time faculty also require reduction in the disparity that supports stratification within the faculty ranks. Kezar argued that this stratification inhibits collegiality, communication between faculty, and the ability of part-time faculty to have a voice in the institution.

When Diegel (2013) examined the perceptions of 15 adjunct faculty and three division chairs at one community college, she found the humanities chairperson was emphatic about supporting adjunct faculty, but felt time constraints prevented interaction. The humanities adjuncts felt they received important communication and were provided opportunities to enhance their teaching skills. Diegel found similar results in the English division of this same institution. This study contradicts other research that described the majority of adjunct faculty without teaching support, mentorship, or professional development opportunities. However, Diegel's focus on a single college and a small

participant pool makes this study most useful in providing an example of policies, activities, and attitudes that support adjuncts to help the college achieve its mission.

Existing studies have attempted to identify the differences between the instruction of full-time and part-time faculty. Landrum (2009) noted that the most significant difference between full-time and part-time faculty was in instructor availability outside of class time, with full-time personnel exhibiting much greater availability. Charlier and Williams (2011) focused on the difficulty faced by rural community colleges in obtaining qualified adjuncts. However, student evaluations and grade distributions in Landrum's study did not show a difference between full-time and part-time faculty. In regards to grading patterns, McArthur (1999) noted that the prevailing direction of the literature has been to focus on "strong feelings in academia concerning the use of part-time faculty" (p. 67) with only limited data to support or refute the belief that students do not receive the same quality education from adjuncts as from full-time faculty. Others have examined the challenges and barriers experienced by part-time faculty (Leslie & Gappa, 2002, Wyles, 1998), noting that they seldom are provided offices, professional development opportunities, or paid time to spend with students outside of the classroom.

Issues Specific to Community Colleges

Specific to community colleges, the work of Burgess and Samuels (1999), Fike and Fike (2007), Green (2007), Landrum (2009), Lei (2007a, 2007b), and Scheutz (2002) have all focused on the actual classroom practices of adjunct faculty compared to full-time faculty. Burgess and Samuels (1999) noted that many prior studies focused on a single college and few look at hard data in the form of student persistence, pass rates, and

subsequent success. Burgess and Samuels also examined sequential mathematics courses to see if student success correlated to instructor employment status. In this study, students who took the first course from a part-time instructor and the second from a full-time instructor had the poorest completion rate, but this study suggested that further research is needed to identify what components of instruction were different between the two types of instructors.

According to Townsend and Rosser (2009), "There is limited evidence about the relationship between scholarship and teaching in any sector, but particularly in the community college" (671). These authors examined the activities of community college faculty and compared time spent on instruction and office hours to that of what these instructors identified as scholarship or research. A comparison with information from the early 1990s (4,300 faculty) to the early twenty-first century (2,400 faculty) indicated that faculty members in 1993 spent 16.33 hours in the classroom and an average of 9.15 hours in office hours per week. For the 2004 faculty, the average time teaching was 18.27 hours with less time (7.15 hours) per week spent in office hours. In other words, full-time faculty spend less time in office hours – time available to interact with students outside the classroom – by two hours per week (about 60 hours during the course of the semester). With a decrease in time available to students outside of classrooms by full-time instructors and almost no time available by part-time instructors, community college students appear at a significant disadvantage in their ability – or lack of ability – to interact face-to-face with any faculty outside the classroom.

Huffman (2000) conducted his study of adjunct faculty in community colleges and their perception about what hinders and enhances their classroom teaching in order "to paint a portrait of adjuncts – not just the eyes, or the chin, but the whole body" (p. 26). Huffman identified that of the adjuncts surveyed, 51.3% always enjoyed their time in the classroom and only .2% reported never enjoying their classroom time. Huffman's research indicates that 96% of those surveyed clearly enjoy teaching (p. 75). These respondents identify students' "inadequate preparation to take the course and poor attitude and poor behavior" as the most significant factors that hindered their ability to achieve teaching goals. Enhancing factors include the academic community (supportive full-timers and chairs, a sense of community, and academic freedom) and their own experience, education, attitude, enthusiasm, pedagogy, and creativity. Huffman's work demonstrates that adjuncts see themselves as having agency in their classroom teaching and identify their individual ability as the most important factor in the quality of their teaching. The survey responses also indicated that adjuncts believed students themselves hindered the adjunct's ability to teach through lack of preparation, poor attitude and bad behavior. If most of these adjuncts saw students as the problem, this may explain why only 25% of those surveyed indicated an interest in engaging with peers to improve teaching.

In identifying the desire of community colleges to provide quality teaching through adjunct instructors, Green (2007) listed several challenges in measuring this quality: defining student outcomes, oversight of adjuncts, academic credentials of adjuncts, and instructional techniques. Green (2007) then noted that finding quality

adjuncts is a challenge for most community colleges, and identified areas critical to adjunct development, including: developing learning relationships with students, utilizing cooperative learning, ensuring material is presented in a relevant manner, ensuring appropriate pacing of instruction, learning how to engage students, exhibiting enthusiasm, and utilizing appropriate assessment and evaluation. As with other researchers, Green (2007) identified the difficulty of consistently defining and ensuring quality teaching in a system where adjuncts are provided little support. For many community college adjuncts, student evaluations provide the most consistent means to measure teaching quality. Landrum (2009) noted that this data does not show any significant difference between full-time and part-time instructors, except in the area of in-person availability outside of class. While student evaluations have been used for decades to evaluate college instructors, there is some question about both the appropriateness and effectiveness of this tool. In 1987, March and Roach found student evaluations useful but not as a sole criterion for evaluating effective teaching. Emery, Kramer, and Tian (2003) found that student evaluations do not capture an instructor's ability to foster learning and can be a disincentive to rigor in course design. Kulik (2001) pointed out that while institutions and individual instructors use student ratings for a variety of purposes including teaching improvement, there is no single criterion for measuring teaching effectiveness.

In terms of scholarly activities among community college faculty, including SoTL and other scholarship within one's discipline, Kelly-Kleese (2003) found that scholarship exists among faculty at these institutions although it may not easily fit into accepted

definitions of scholarship in higher education. After interviewing 25 faculty and administrators and conducting document analysis, Kelly-Kleese found that these individuals "typically saw their work as outcomes of their own professional development - classroom research, teaching portfolios, conference papers and presentations, and the like - not as examples of or potential points of intervention for engaging in the Scholarship of Teaching" (p.72). These faculty members saw their scholarship as a process, not necessarily always reduced to a work product. Kelly-Kleese recommended that community colleges create an institutional culture that supports and values scholarship by defining the term (scholarship) in an institutional context, promoting scholarship (through job descriptions and performance evaluations), supporting faculty and staff in a formal way, providing opportunities, sharing scholarship and accomplishments within the institution, rewarding those who engage in scholarship, evaluating policies and procedures to ensure they do not interfere with these activities, and committing to a culture that values scholarship, both in terms of SoTL and within a discipline.

This issue of how community colleges understand the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) was the focus of work by Sperling in 2003. Following the Carnegie Teaching Academy programs published by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) on "The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," Sperling (2003) examined how her community college might benefit from these practices. Sperling found that few instructors at his college were "accustomed to coming at teaching through a 'learning portal.'" (p. 596). The lack of theoretical framework for teaching at Sperling's

community college meant there was little intentionality to how knowledge of the teaching and learning process related to classroom practices. Sperling's suggestions for what community colleges can do to encourage SOTL included assuming that practice can always be improved and providing opportunities for instructors to learn new tools for teaching while relating this to student success.

In focusing on community college graduation rates, Jacoby (2006) found that rates decreased as the proportion of part-time faculty employed increased. However, Jacoby found variations in graduation rates that related to differences across states. According to Jacoby, "differences between part-time and full-time instructional practice may be explained as consequences of part-time contracts rather than as the consequence of lower faculty qualifications" (p. 1085). Jacoby observed that part-time faculty "tend to use instructional techniques that may be characterized as less time intensive" (p. 1085) and that professional development is important in improving the techniques part-time faculty employ in their classrooms.

Hiring of adjuncts presents another area of importance to community colleges. In *Adjunct Faculty in Community Colleges: An Academic Administrator's Guide to Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining Great Teachers* (2005), various contributors provided focus on the importance of adjunct faculty in supporting student success through an examination of understanding, recruiting, retaining, and supporting part-time faculty. Wallin (2005) noted that while "colleges have come to depend on low-cost labor to balance their budgets" community colleges nation-wide must now consider "providing part-time faculty with appropriate support and pedagogical assistance" (p. 4-5). There is

also a need for departments to have clear expectations for adjuncts, who often have less understanding of institutional goals and more limited communications with the institution. Ultimately, "learning should be the primary focus in the classroom. Hiring full-or part-time faculty who are qualified to facilitate learning must be the goal of academic leaders" (p. 76). This text encouraged community colleges to require a teaching demonstration during the interview, prepare careful position descriptions, and hire adjuncts who understand the professional competencies and requirements of part-time teaching.

Need for Additional Research

Regarding the additional research needed on pedagogies of part-time faculty, limited work exists that identifies whether their methods are similar to or different from those used by full-time faculty. There is also little work that identifies how often they engage in any of the areas Green (2007) identified as critical to adjunct success. Eagan (2007) and Jacoby (2006) both identified a need to explore the choices made by part-time instructors in terms of instruction and assessment techniques to analyze the potential differences within the larger category of part-time instructors. Schibik and Harrington (2004) pointed out that research on part-time faculty may be "the least expensive and most revealing research that an institution can undertake" (p. 5).

In terms of examining instructional practices of part-time faculty, the work of Lei (2007a, 2007b) and Scheutz (2002) provided specific information acquired through survey data. Both of these studies examined the use of lecture, class discussion/participation, multimedia presentation, lab teaching, online/distance

components, and the types of assessment. Scheutz (2002) used the 2000 Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) survey of more than 1,500 faculty respondents from more than 100 community colleges and identified their use of teaching methods in regard to time spent on lectures, guest lectures, students' verbal presentations, class discussion, media, simulation, quizzes and examinations, field trips, demonstrations, laboratory experiments, and use of computers. Scheutz (2002) identified that most part-time faculty seldom used guest lecturers, media, or laboratory experiments by students. According to Scheutz (2002), "students enrolled in classes taught by part-timers would be less likely to experience these kinds of instructional practices on average than students enrolled in full-times' [full-time instructors'] classes" (p. 41). Scheutz (2002) also noted that part-time faculty identified fewer opportunities to develop strong connections to students and their colleagues and had less total teaching experience.

Fike and Fike (2007) also examined mathematics course outcomes utilizing the students' final grades in courses and completion status to identify correlations between student success and instructor employment status. However, this study did not find that employment status was a factor in student outcomes in these courses. The authors pointed out that "faculty characteristics other than employment status (e.g., prior teaching experience, professional development, type of degree) may explain the difference between the findings of this study and those of other researchers who found faculty employment status statistically significant in relation to student outcomes" (p. 8). This study also suggested further research on these faculty characteristics to determine any

association between student success and faculty teaching experience, professional development, and degree(s) held.

In identifying the need to define skill sets for community college instructors, Alexander, et al., (2012) focused on the unique working conditions and challenges of community college instructors. The authors used three studies to build and validate a framework that defines the competencies for community college instructors into terms of core knowledge, skill, and attributes. The researchers noted that "community college teaching is complex, possibly more so than in other areas of higher education," where "instructors teach an exceptionally diverse student body" (p. 851). Demand for both internal and external accountability has resulted in an environment in which "institutional focus is placed on the changing role of the teacher and the creation of learning in the classroom, which brings about an emphasis on classroom and institutional assessment of learners" (p. 852).

The three studies used by Alexander et al., (2012) included a focus group study on Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) to identify the skills and knowledge needed for community college teaching and a survey on the reasons for teaching, core strategies for delivering content and teaching/assessing students, other essential skills and knowledge, use of technology, and advice for new community college instructors. This research found that "participants focused on how to teach, rather than what to teach," including the affective and human side of teaching. "When the participants spoke of assessment, it was less about traditional tests and measurements and more about using their instinct and listening skills to detect group learning and using classroom research to improve their

teaching" (p. 858). Alexander et al. asserted that "community college teaching is a complex and honorable profession requiring many skills and much knowledge beyond subject matter" (p. 860). These instructors must possess competencies in teaching content, facilitating learning, respecting learner diversity, leadership, reflecting on teaching practices, and communication and public speaking skills. Specifically, competent community college instructors must know how to make connections with and create relevance for students, engage students, use a variety of instruction and assessment techniques, and give meaningful feedback (p. 859).

Lei (2007a, 2007b) surveyed part-time and full-time faculty at two community colleges in a western state. This builds upon Scheutz's (2002) work by providing a survey developed specifically for this study on teaching practices and assessment techniques. Lei's (2007a, 2007b) study asked respondents to use a 5-point scale with estimated frequencies (1=<10%; 2=11-25%; 3=26-50%; 4+51-75%; 5=>75%) for rating their use of six common teaching techniques (lecture, discussion/participation, lab teaching, videos or simulations, slide/PowerPoint presentation, distance learning) and 10 assessment techniques (attendance/participation, quizzes, objective exams, essay exams, lab activities, cooperative learning, workbooks/worksheets, oral presentations, research reports, research projects). Lei (2007a) found that adjuncts placed more emphasis on objective exams, possibly because they are easy to score and can evaluate a broad scope of knowledge, and engaged more frequently in lecture instruction. Those who identified as adjuncts responded that they learned their teaching practices and assessment

techniques from colleagues, personal experience, and former instructors, with few having any opportunity for professional development on teaching.

As an important component in course delivery throughout postsecondary education, the establishment of appropriate policies and practices related to part-time faculty could benefit part-time faculty, students, and the community college. Umbach (2007a) indicated that "colleges and universities should develop a campus-wide plan for the use of contingent faculty" (p. 111) that addresses hiring, support and training, and allocation of resources, including supplies, office space, and technology. In this way, part-time faculty can be effectively integrated into the community college to improved productivity. Combining the work of Kezar (2012, 2013), Kezar and Eaton (2014), and Lei (2007a, 2007b) offers a unique opportunity to better understand the pedagogies employed by part-time faculty at Virginia's community colleges and the employment experiences of these instructors. This data could inform policies and practices, especially professional development and communication to improve the experiences of part-time faculty and the students they teach.

In a dissertation entitled, *The Scholarship of Teaching at Community Colleges*, Williams (2014) surveyed 39 community college faculty (both full-time and adjunct) across the country to determine if there was a relationship between engagement in the scholarship of teaching (SoT), teaching satisfaction, and institutional services. Williams pointed out that only a few research endeavors have sought to explore community college scholarship generally and SoT specifically. According to Williams, "The existing studies that deal specifically with university faculty populations cannot be applied to two-year

institutions, especially community colleges, because 1) community colleges have atypical institutional missions and 2) community college administrators convey different faculty expectations" (p. 6). The author included examples of SoT including activities such as remaining current in the field, curriculum development, presentations, pursuing advanced degrees, conducting research, and creating publications (p. 9). Williams found that instructors who voluntarily participate in SoT "become more knowledgeable in their subject area, taking on the role of learner, but also become better teachers and can, therefore, more efficiently and effectively convey to their students the knowledge they acquire" (p.43). While Williams found no statistically significant relationship between engagement in SoT and teaching satisfaction, there was a significant relationship with amount of institutional service. Respondents reported participating in face-to-face workshops at a higher frequency than other types of engagement. However, Williams points out that it would be important to conduct a similar study with part-time instructors since they are important to college success.

Kuh, Laird, and Umbach (2004) found a negative relationship between years of experience for faculty and effective teaching practices. According to these researchers, "the more years a faculty member has taught, the less likely he or she is to use active collaborative learning activities" (p. 29). While this research did not specify results for part-time community college instructors, such a negative relationship might exist with those individuals indicating the more years of teaching experience the less likely the instructor engages in active learning practices.

Babb (2012) conducted dissertation research on community college faculty funds of knowledge and student success, focusing on the perceptions and ideas of essential knowledge needed to be a community college instructor. In the funds of knowledge framework, Babb identified the ability to provide principal education functions of appropriate teaching and assessment to the students and provide an effective learning environment. Additionally, according to Babb, teachers learn how to teach at their school through exposure to the school's environment and through "everyday interactions with the college environment" (p. 9). Babb pointed out that the community college is "an environment in which knowledge is organically developed, refined and shared" (p. 19). Therefore, "exposure, or experience in the environment of the institution" (p. 58) - meaning the more years an instructor works for and interacts with the college - can affect the experience and perceptions of faculty. The themes and patterns from the community college instructors in Babb's work reveals "that while their ideas and perceptions of essential knowledge includes the ability to establish meaningful relationships with students, the ability to engage with students, there seems to be a distinct inability to do so" (p. 166). Faculty appeared to pay little attention to student engagement and there was only a small indication of change in pedagogy from exposure to students. Babb pointed out this could be because of institutional changes – colleges that introduced technological systems to alert students to problems of attendance or grades may actually reduce the personal contact of faculty with students (p. 170). It could also be because instructors "develop essential knowledge to perform meaningful activities, like teaching, by interacting with peers, by reading professional journals, articles, and other resources

related to teaching and learning" (p. 171). However, instructors who possess culturally relevant knowledge of students are more likely to integrate appropriate content, viewpoints and experiences (p. 173). Finally, since Babb indicated that essential knowledge for instructors appears to be developed in the context of the institution, adjuncts are at a disadvantage because they participate less in institutional activities such as faculty meetings, professional development, and governance. Additionally, "educators tend to find comfort in their own space, and therefore the environment is an important factor in their development of essential knowledge" (p. 183). For adjuncts, this may not be their classroom, but their full-time employment, home, or vehicle. Babb recommended that similar studies should be conducted focusing on adjuncts, since they represent the majority of community college instructors.

Because of the limitations of existing research, it is necessary to examine instructional and assessment practices of part-time faculty to identify how these methods correlate to the best practices identified by Chickering et al., (1987, 1991, 1999, 2006), and to identify how often they engage in any of the areas Green (2007) identified as critical to adjunct success. As stated previously, other researchers provided specific information on the use of instruction techniques acquired through survey data (Lei, 2007a, 2007b, Scheutz, 2002). These studies identified a majority use of lecture, class discussion, media (such as PowerPoint or videos), and quizzes and examinations with limited use of guest lectures, student verbal presentations, simulation, field trips, demonstrations, and in-class use of computers. Laboratory experiments were prevalent only in science courses.

Summary

All of the research presented here seeks to identify the extent to which student learning occurs in an adjunct's classroom and how administrators can ensure that students receive the appropriate quality of instruction regardless of the instructor's employment status. For Virginia's community colleges, which employ almost 8,000 adjuncts, this is an important issue for accountability in terms of student success and mission fulfillment.

For undergraduate teaching and learning, research provides a clear understanding of what techniques are effective, from examples using Bloom's Taxonomy to the work of Chickering and Gamson (1987, 1991, 1999), Kuh, Laird and Umbach (2004), and Sharp, Komives, and Fincer (2011), for principles of undergraduate teaching. Lei (200 a, 2007b), Grieve (2006, 2009), and Grieve and Lesko (2011) clearly support the use of active learning techniques with emphasis on synthesizing and problem solving over extensive time spent lecturing without discussion.

Concerns about the increasing number of part-time faculty include limited availability outside of class (Baron-Nixon, 2007), lack of office space (Baron-Nixon, 2007; Kezar, 2012), limited professional development opportunities (Kezar, 2012), and the fact that these employees do not often add to campus diversity (AAU, 2001). Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) and Kezar (2012) point out that part-time faculty are treated as an underclass of employees and provided limited resources, are hired in a less rigorous fashion, and represent a minimal investment by the institution. In terms of human resources, limited investment in part-time faculty impacts the product provided by part-time faculty, as Landrum (2009), Charlier and Williams (2011), and MacArthur

(1999) found when comparing the hiring practices and time spent on campus between part-time faculty and full-time faculty. The CHEA report (Kezar et al., 2014) identified concerns that adjuncts did not have the time or resources to optimize their abilities for the benefit of students while Diegel (2013) identified the benefits to students of adjunct faculty that are fully engaged in and supported by the institution.

Issues specific to community colleges have focused on the actual classroom practices of part-time faculty, as found in the work of Burges and Samuels (1999), Fike and Fike (2007), Green (2007), Huffman (2000), Landrum (2009), Lei (2007a, 2007b), and Scheutz (2002). This research includes information for specific academic subjects, comparison of completion and retention rates, and the perceptions of faculty about what enhances or hinders their classroom teaching. While this data does not show any significant differences in teaching ability between full-time and part-time faculty (beyond availability outside of class), it is clear that the perceptions of part-time faculty in terms of student involvement, institutional mission and functioning, and working conditions (including compensation) affect how these individuals manage their instruction and assessment duties.

Another issue specific to community colleges is that of scholarship and teaching. Townsend and Rosser (2009), Kelly-Kleese (2003), and Sperling (2010) found that faculty time is focused on scholarship as a process that is not necessarily reduced to a work product. Increased time spent teaching limits the time for what these instructors identified as scholarship.

With the foundation of the work cited in this chapter, and especially the work of Alexander et al., (2012), Babb (2012), Fike and Fike (2007), Kuh, Laird and Umbach (2004), Lei (2007a, 2007b), Scheutz (2002), and Williams (2014), there is a need for additional research into the techniques used by part-time faculty. A focus on community colleges in Virginia, where courses in the humanities and social sciences must meet system-wide learning objectives and be transferrable between VCCS institutions and public four-year institutions, allows for the implication of inquiry beyond the institutional level. The focus on humanities and social sciences instructors, who are more likely to have similar teaching and assessment practices as well as similar learning objectives, allows for comparisons within disciplines and courses that can also be interpreted at the institution and state levels. Understanding the processes and practices of part-time faculty about how they instruct and assess students, as well as how they view their positions within their colleges, provides important information on the efforts of a growing percentage of professionals involved in teaching and learning in higher education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The primary goal of this study was to explore the instruction and assessment technique choices of part-time humanities and social sciences faculty at Virginia community colleges, including how these instructors choose the techniques they implement. The methodology employed to address these research questions is presented in this chapter. The chapter is organized into four sections: (a) participants and setting, (b) measure and research design, (c) procedures, (d) data collection and analysis.

Participants and Setting

For this study, a purposive sample of part-time Virginia community college humanities and social sciences instructors were invited to participate in completion of: 1) the survey instrument based upon the instrument used by Lei (2007a, 2007b) in his study of instruction and assessment techniques used by community college instructors in Nevada; and 2) the interview format developed by Kezar (2012) to identify the use of active learning, service learning, educational innovations, and effective/ineffective instruction and assessment approaches. Emails with a survey link that included requests for follow-up interviews and observations were sent to part-time humanities and social sciences faculty at five Virginia institutions of the VCCS system. These institutions have combined service areas that include 25 counties and eight cities, described as a combination of suburban and rural jurisdictions. The service areas of these institutions represent 33 (24.8%) of Virginia's 95 counties and 38 independent cities. Table 1

provides setting information on the participant colleges, while Tables 2 and 3 provide information on the demographics of part-time faculty within the VCCS and within the participant colleges. Participants were identified by respective college employment data through their institution's appropriate research division, and contacted using their college email address. Surveys were completed online in the setting chosen by the respondent. Follow-up emails were sent prior to the survey completion deadline of three weeks.

Of the approximately 1,187 part-time faculty employees teaching at these five VCCS institutions, 348 were identified as instructors of humanities and social sciences courses. Emails with links to the survey with one reminder email resulted in 59 completed surveys, a 16.9% response rate. Returned surveys were divided by respondent classification, including level of part-time status, years of teaching experience, and discipline. Additionally, surveys collected demographic information including: institution, gender, level of academic achievement, current pursuit of formal advanced degree, teaching schedule (weekday, weekend, evening), teaching location, subject area, course level taught, number of students per class, where teaching techniques were learned, and where assessment techniques were learned.

Because this study builds on the work of researchers mentioned previously to identify the perspectives of adjunct instructors about their teaching environments, classroom practices, and student assessments, there was evidence (Huffman, 2000) of a need to limit participants in the study to those adjuncts with more than one year of classroom experience for the first interview and of three years for the observations. This criterion ensured that participants had experience from more than one or two classes to

consider when completing the survey and the inventory, and that the survey and inventory were completed based upon actual classroom experience, not anticipated practice.

Measure and Research Design

This research was a mixed methods design with a survey instrument, interviews, and observations. The survey (see Attachment B) was created using Survey Monkey and consisted of 19 items. While Lei (2007) provided a survey instrument for replication in this study, but Lei's (2007) surveys were administered through a paper submission process while this study utilized electronic administration. Lei's instrument also included many items similar to Huffman's (2000) indicating that these items are important to a study on perceptions of teaching and assessment. However, it was necessary to revise Lei's instrument to include common present-day instructional techniques not included in his survey, such as use of synchronous and asynchronous online instruction, use of computer simulation, and use of a learning management system (LMS) such as Blackboard.

The survey was comprised of four parts: respondent background, demographic information, instructional techniques used in the classroom, and assessment formats. The instructional techniques section included eight common techniques utilized in classroom instruction (Burgess & Samuels, 1999; Galbraith & Shedd, 1990; Green, 2007; Landrum, 2009; Lei, 2007a; Richardson, 1992; Scheutz, 2002). The assessment techniques section included nine common assessment techniques used by instructors. Respondents replied using a 5-point scale with the following estimated frequencies: 1= <10%; 2= 11 - 25%;

3=26-50%; 4=51-75%; and 5=>75%. An open-ended question of "Other, please specify" was included to capture any unique instruction and/or assessment practices. The survey was designed to take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Following receipt of surveys, initial one-on-one interviews, classroom observation, and follow-up one-on-one interviews with individual faculty took place to identify instruction methods utilized and obtain additional information on how faculty chose their instructional and assessment techniques and practices. (The Interview Questions for Interview one and Interview two are included as Appendix C and E, and Observation Instrument is included as Appendix D.) Participants for this phase of the study were chosen from survey responses of those who had at least three years' experience teaching at the college level and identified willingness to participate. They were also chosen in a ratio that reflects the survey responses in terms of employment location and subject taught. Interviews were conducted by phone with 10 individuals, at a time identified as convenient by the interviewee. Observations of four individuals included a minimum of 100 minutes for each instructor, conducted over one or two class meetings (depending upon teaching schedule). Instructors provided syllabi for the courses observed. A second interview after the observation occurred by telephone and focused in depth on the instructors' choices for instruction and assessment identified in the observation. The follow-up interviews were conducted either in person or by phone.

The first interview portion of the study followed the survey and participants were identified from survey responses. Instructor participation was dependent upon indicated willingness to participate and availability for interview. Fifteen instructors indicated a

willingness to be interviewed, and ten instructors (the goal of the study) completed the first interview. This interview format was based on the work of Kezar (2012) and the Teaching Perspectives Inventory. Interviews consisted of 14 questions, took approximately 40 minutes to complete, and asked about course session preparation, syllabus development, challenges and rewards of teaching part-time, effective techniques for instruction and assessment, achieving learning objectives, participation in college activities (meetings, professional development, other events, use of student evaluations), and any changes they would like in their job. These questions examined part-time instructor perceptions of the effectiveness of their instruction and assessment practices and whether their students met expected learning outcomes. The interview allowed instructors to expand on their survey responses and to identify teaching and assessment practices and issues in relation to the subject(s) taught. Instructors provided more detailed information on how they develop the techniques they utilize, and provided perspectives on their experiences as part-time instructors. Additionally, these interviews were used to identify instructors willing to participate in an observation and follow-up interview.

The observation portion of the study included four instructors and provided basic information on the course (title, level), topics covered, class facility (seating style, presence of technology, windows, and other factors), number of students attending, time for class beginning and ending (compared with scheduled beginning and ending), and which of the instructional and assessment techniques from the survey were observed, including the amount of time used. Each instructor was observed for at least 100 minutes

of class time. For all but one instructor, this was accomplished through the observation of a single class session. For the instructor observed in two class sessions, those class sessions were observed in different courses but on the same day. The observation also provided information on student engagement and instructor interaction with their students. Instructors discussed items related to the course, such as previous assignments, upcoming due dates, out of class activities, and general college information the instructor wanted to share with the class. Through the observations it was possible to identify evidence of instructor perceptions of techniques used, including amount of time spent with specific techniques and the frequency of changing techniques. This included the availability and use (or lack of use) of technology, such as videos, Internet, projected slides or other visuals, and Blackboard components. These observations combined with the survey and first and second interviews to create profiles of individual instructors to compare with the survey results. Total observation time per instructor depended upon individual class length. The minimum amount of time for observation was 100 minutes, and the maximum time was 120 minutes.

Following the observation, a second interview was conducted that included seven questions. These questions addressed techniques used, instructor pedagogical training, department requirements, and influences on choices of technique. This follow-up provided an opportunity to clarify instructor responses to previous questions and questions specific to the observation experience for that individual instructor. All observed instructors provided syllabi and examples of assignments with the follow-up interview. Responses from this second interview provided information for the profile

portion on how these instructors make choices for instruction and assessment, and how they perceived their choices were related to their interaction with their institution and their personal experience as a learner and as an instructor.

Procedures

Data for this study were collected in three phases using surveys, interviews, and observations. Before selected colleges were contacted, the researcher received Institutional Research Board approval including a Human Subject Exemption Letter from George Mason University (Appendix L). Five VCCS institutions were contacted requesting approval to survey, interview, and observe their adjunct faculty in the humanities and social sciences. Five institutions agreed to inclusion in this study.

Once the survey was approved by the appropriate offices of the participating colleges, Phase I of the research began with a cover email sent to humanities and social sciences part-time faculty of the approving institutions (approximately 348 individuals). Participants reached the survey via a link in the email, and completed the survey online at their convenience. To encourage return, incentives were offered in the form of an opportunity to win one of several gift cards to a variety of merchants. One week following the initial email, a follow-up email was sent to the entire survey group to encourage more responses.

The majority of surveys were returned in the three weeks after distribution. All responses were analyzed and tabulated within six weeks. The total number of surveys from humanities and social sciences part-time faculty completed and analyzed was 59, representing a return rate of 16.9%. Of those respondents, 10 individuals indicated they

were willing to participate in follow-up interviews and eight agreed to observation. The analysis of the survey data identified emerging themes for the study.

For Phase II of the data collection, the interview portion, surveys received identified 10 part-time faculty at three Virginia community colleges through self-selection (they indicated agreement to the interview, responded to the emailed request for interview, and completed the interview at the scheduled time). Of those who indicated agreement to participate in the interviews and observation, an intentional subset of instructors with three to seven years' experience in college teaching was identified. Interviews provided information on the faculty member's perception and decision making process for instruction and assessment practices, as well as supporting the themes identified in the survey analysis.

Phase III of data collection included the classroom observation and follow-up interviews. Four instructors at two institutions were observed to identify the use of instruction and assessment techniques. Observations occurred during one or two class sessions for a minimum of 100 total minutes observed. Notes for the observation were completed through the use of an observation instrument to organize field notes. The follow-up interview, conducted by phone, took approximately 30 minutes and was used to clarify components of the observation process. Instructors provided syllabi for the courses observed. Follow-up interview questions were based on questions previously asked and the researcher's experience during the observation. Participants were encouraged to add any information they believed pertinent that had not been mentioned previously. Both the observation and the second interview supported the themes

previously identified while providing information to complete the profiles of these instructors.

Data Analysis

This study employed a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. Analysis of survey responses utilized descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distributions, for the section on background and demographics. Differences in instructional techniques and assessment were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution, and then compared with the results from observations and demographic information on years of experience and degree attainment/level of education.

The appendices display study data divided among descriptive statistics survey responses (Appendix F), responses to survey question 19 on instruction techniques (Appendix G), and responses to survey question 20 on assessment techniques (Appendix H). Appendix I displays data on instructional techniques perceived and observed, while Appendix J displays data on assessment techniques perceived and observed. These tables allow for comparisons between part-time instructors on instructional and assessment techniques in terms of perceived and observed frequency of use.

The first interviews (Appendix C) provided additional information on how faculty chose techniques utilized in their courses, information on any pedagogical training, and information on instructor relationship to their institution. This information was an important step in building the profiles for individual faculty, as well as providing information on similarities and differences found in the survey information. Responses from the first interview indicated what practices were specifically related to the discipline

and course taught. Interviews were then reviewed, evaluated, and compared to provide emerging themes. To accomplish this, the interview notes were transcribed, then comments were color-coded according to the subject's references to instructor experience (including professional development), institutional requirements, student issues, and instructor planning activities.

Classroom observation notes were reviewed and evaluated to identify the techniques utilized using the items identified by both Lei (2007a, 2007b) and Kezar (2012). This included time spent on specific techniques and mention of additional techniques in activities taking place outside of the classroom setting such as assignments, assessments, and field trips. Observation notes used the form found in Appendix D, and were then transcribed into the tables on instruction and assessment techniques (Appendices I and J) under the "observed" data rows and columns. Other notes were transcribed and then color-coded to identify orientation statements and activities, transition statements and activities, responses to student questions, and references to additional instruction and assessment activities not directly observed (such as LMS work or previously submitted assignments).

Follow-up interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes provided more detail on the instructor's perceptions regarding the use of identified techniques for instruction and assessment, the effectiveness of chosen techniques, and the instructor's decision-making processes. These interviews used the instrument found in Appendix E. Second interviews were transcribed then evaluated using color-coding to note references to instructor experience, institutional requirements, student issues, and instructor planning

activities. The syllabi and assignment information collected from each of the four instructors were compared with the interview responses and observations to further identify commonalities and develop profiles. The syllabi and assignment information were also color-coded to note the techniques identified (both instruction and assessment), student learning objectives, references to online components, and if there was reference to how assessment techniques related to SLOs.

The process of evaluating the interviews, observations, and review of syllabi and assignments included the identification of emerging themes. When statements, responses, or observations were reviewed they were identified as fitting into the categories of influence (instructor experience, institutional requirements, student issues, and instructor activities). Statements also provided a basis to created profiles of the four observed instructors that included direct quotes from interviews and observations, as well as information from each individual's survey and interview responses. The profiles, presented in Chapter Four "Results," provide examples of the experiences of adjunct faculty and represent how the themes identified in this study play out with individual instructors in their classroom. The profiles also determined four themes, present in Chapter Four, common to all instructor experiences.

Researcher As Instrument Statement

Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003) identify the researcher as both the key individual in obtaining data and a threat to trustworthiness of a study. It is important to identify the researcher's role, particularly in qualitative research where the researcher is the primary data collection instrument. It is important to reflect on my background and

how this may shape my collection and interpretation of data. This includes my professional roles and experiences. I have taught at the secondary level, conducted professional training and workshops, and currently teach as an adjunct instructor at a community college while serving as a college administrator.

First, I hold a Master's Degree in Education and History and have been licensed in Virginia to teach secondary-level history and government. My experiences as a secondary teacher were limited and took place over two decades ago, but did provide insight into student engagement, learning objectives, and instruction and assessment techniques. Additionally, available technology in public schools during this time frame was significantly limited, and did not include internet options.

Second, my experience in conducting trainings and workshops has provided me with perspective on meeting learning objectives and creating engaging training opportunities with adults. However, instruction at a day-long or even a two-day training event differs from semester-long classes in both the amount of content and the opportunity to assess learning. In my experience, the only mechanisms for assessment at these types of professional events are identifying student engagement during activities and post-session evaluations completed by the student.

Third, I am familiar with the community college and its classrooms. As a community college administrator and adjunct instructor, I understand the education processes at Virginia's community colleges as well as the technology options available to instructors. I work with programs that require humanities and social science courses or include them as electives, including assisting faculty with converting these courses to

competency-based education. These courses are important foundational components for students who are planning on transfer to a four-year institution. Like the participants in my study, I have the opportunity to regularly revise the courses I teach, in terms of activities for instruction and assessment.

Finally, my program of study included coursework on research methods and SoTL. While this study did not utilize a formal statistical analysis tool (such as SPSS), I was prepared to conduct a mixed-methods study using the guidelines from Cresswell (2009, 2012) on philosophical, procedural, and participatory criteria for qualitative standards. For SoTL research such as my study, Hutchings, et. al, (2011) provide a summary of standards for valuing and evaluating teaching to mitigate researcher bias. This includes clear goals, adequate preparation, and appropriate methods. Both Cresswell's guidelines and Hutchings, et. al's standards were met through the development and implementation of my study. Demographic data from the surveys provided context for the results and discussion, while committee review and editing of my survey, interview, and observation instruments helped reduce the incidence of researcher bias and leading questions.

Limitations

While this study adds to existing scholarship on part-time instructors in higher education, the methodology and study population place some limitations on this research. This study includes components of a survey to part-time instructors in humanities and social sciences at five VCCS institutions, follow-up interviews with 10 survey

participants, observations of four participants, and follow-up interviews with the observed instructors. The study limitations are due to resource concerns (it was not possible to survey all VCCS part-time instructors), and institutional limitations in terms of facilities, courses offered, and technology available. Specifically, limitations of this study include the population examined, the applicability of individual profiles, and the instructional technologies available and employed by the participants.

First, the VCCS does not allow use of its contact information for personnel, including part-time faculty in the humanities and social sciences. I identified schools that agreed to participate within a reasonable geographic distance to conduct observations, obtained approval from those institutions, and received the email addresses of instructors. Therefore, participants in this study included participants from community colleges in Virginia who teach part-time for the identified institutions. My findings are thus specific to those individuals who chose to respond to my survey, so they may not be generalizable to the broader population of part-time community college instructors in Virginia.

Additionally, the structure of the VCCS and the manner in which it governs the 23 member institutions is unique to the Commonwealth of Virginia. This may limit the applicability of findings to part-time community college instructors in other states. The VCCS has universal requirements for certain subjects, as identified in the System's Master Course Files (VCCS, 2016). This means some courses are highly prescribed in content, while others are not. The experiences of participants in my study may be significantly different from those of part-time instructors in other state community

college systems, other institutions of higher education, or part-time instructors outside of humanities and social sciences.

Another limitation is the 16.9% response rates for the survey, upon which sampling was based for interviews and observations. While this low rate of response limits the data available, the mixed method nature of this study placed more emphasis on the information from interviews and observations. Since study participants volunteered to take part in interviews and observations, their practices may not be representative of other part-time instructors. Indeed, it is possible that those who volunteered to take part in interviews and observations are more secure in their use of active learning instructional techniques and appropriate assessment.

For the instructor profiles, data is limited to the individuals who volunteered to be interviewed and observed. While I made an effort to recruit participants with a broad range of experience and education from diverse subject areas, all participants teach humanities or social sciences courses in Virginia at the community college level. The purposive sampling limited the observations to instructors with three to seven years of teaching experience. Other results might be found with broader interview and observation samples. Additionally, participants' subject areas of instruction could have an impact on the instruction and assessment techniques I observed, since certain instruction and assessment activities may be considered specific to certain courses (e.g., an in-class or recorded speech to public speaking or a persuasive essay to English composition).

A final limitation of this study was based on the instructional technology available to part-time instructors. While all had access to the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) as this is a contracted, mandated VCCS LMS, whether the instructor had access to computer simulations, lecture-capture software, or in-class computers depended upon the facilities and access provided by the individual college campuses where they taught. In addition, this availability of technology does not merely mean the presence of technology, but the ability of an instructor to access and utilize it as well as to develop proficiency. Because technology availability and instructor training in available technology is unique to each facility, institution, and the VCCS as a system, my findings on the use of technology in instruction and assessment are limited.

Summary

This chapter restated the purpose of this research, discussed study participants and setting, and described the study data collection and analysis procedures used. Data obtained from this study provided information about the perceptions and actual instruction and assessment techniques utilized by part-time humanities and social sciences faculty at five VCCS institutions. This data provides descriptive statistical information on the use of various instruction and assessment techniques and demographic information such as instructor education and number of classes taught for all survey participants. Survey responses also provide qualitative information about how these instructors make choices about instructional and assessment techniques, their educational background (including any training in teaching), their experiences as instructors, and their relationship to the employing institution. Information from the surveys of all

participants, interviews of 10 instructors, and second interviews with four instructors was compared with qualitative data from the observations and syllabi and assignment information to develop profiles for an in-depth look at individual practices. The following chapter presents results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

This study explored the instruction and assessment techniques of part-time humanities and social sciences faculty at Virginia community colleges, including how these instructors choose the techniques they implement. The study was conducted in three phases: 1) a survey of a purposive sample of adjunct faculty at five institutions; 2) interviews with a subset of 10 respondents; and 3) observations and follow-up interviews with a subset of four interview participants. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis for the stated research questions:

1. What are the instructional practices utilized by Virginia community college part-time instructors in humanities and social sciences courses?

2. What are the assessment techniques utilized by Virginia community college part-time instructors in humanities and social sciences courses?

3. What influences Virginia community college part-time instructors to make choices about which instructional and assessment techniques to use?

The descriptive statistics for this study include information on the institutions that employ the participants, demographic variables (including times and locations for teaching), teaching subject variables, and instruction/experience variables. The presentation of the findings from the survey responses, interviews, and observations are used to answer the three research questions. Profile examples are provided in each

section of this chapter to illustrate an example of a specific instructor's experience, with a cross-profile analysis and identification of themes provided in the summary.

Descriptive Statistics

Institutions. Adjunct instructors from five member institutions of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) participated in this study. Four of these institutions are identified by the National Council for Educational Statistics (NCES) as "Rural: Fringe" and one as "Suburb: Large," using the Census Bureau's degree of urbanization classifications. The campus setting information and other information related to each college at which respondents were employed is found in Table 1, along with information on credit student enrollment, full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment, total faculty, breakdown of part-time and full-time faculty, breakdown by percentage of part-time and full-time faculty, and total hours taught by part-time and full-time faculty. This data was compiled from the VCCS and the IPEDS data system.

Additionally, as divisions of state government and VCCS member institutions, each of these colleges is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and follows policies and practices enacted and approved by the VCCS, the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV), and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Accreditation under SACSCOC requires certain instructor-to-student ratios, policies about minimum credential requirements for part-time and full-time instructors, policies about required instructional time per credit hour, and procedures for annual evaluation of all instructors, including the use of student evaluations. The VCCS is legislatively required to oversee the operation of all Virginia

community colleges according to state standards, ensuring appropriate educational activities occur at each member institution. SCHEV provides oversight according to the Code of Virginia and sets standards for all higher education institutions in the Commonwealth (Code of Virginia, Title 23.1 Chapter 1, Chapter 9, Chapter 29; SACSCOC Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation).

Demographic variables. Demographic variables in this study provide information related to the type of individuals who are serving as part-time faculty in the humanities and social sciences at these institutions. These include highest degree earned, whether an individual is currently pursuing a formal advanced degree or has recently attained an advanced degree, and times and location for courses taught.

Nationally, demographic information on community college part-time instructors can be difficult to separate from data on all community college faculty. For example, according to the special supplement on community colleges published by the Institute of Education Sciences of the National Center for Education Statistics in 2008, 55% of all community college faculty possess a master's degree, 12% a doctorate, and 12% a bachelor's degree. Fewer than 16% of community college faculty represent a non-white minority group, with 7% identifying as Black, 5% as Hispanic, 3% as Asian, and 1% as Native American. This report also indicates that "at community colleges, there is relative parity in the percentage of male and female faculty" (9) where males makeup about 60% of faculty members. Data from the NEA Almanac of Higher Education's section on part-time faculty at community colleges (Palmer, 1999) found that 14.9% of these instructors are racial minorities and 50.7% are male. Additionally, Palmer indicates that 20.6% of

part-time community college instructors hold no other job outside of their role as a part-time instructor, 34.2% hold a full-time nonteaching job outside the college, while the remaining 45.2% either work in another capacity for the college or hold a teaching job at another institution (including K-12 education).

Diversity. For all VCCS institutions in Academic Year 2014-15, the majority of part-time faculty were White women as noted in Table 2. Of the 2,669 part-time faculty throughout the system, 1,625 were White with Black or African American as the second-highest race represented. According to the Report of the Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity (2015), 20% of part-time faculty in Virginia's community colleges identified as racial minorities in 2013. This compared with 18% of full-time faculty, 37% of classified staff, 28% of administrators/managers, and 39% of students. Finally, there is no data for the VCCS on the highest degree earned for part-time faculty. This information is maintained by the human resources offices of the individual colleges, but they are not required to report this information except as individual information for accreditation purposes during site visits.

For the five colleges in this study, the IPEDS data system provided information on part-time faculty from the 2014 data set. As seen in Table 3, these institutions closely resemble the VCCS as a whole. All the categories are represented, but not at all colleges. Only one institution, CC4, had part-time faculty who identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and only two had faculty identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native. As a whole, the largest number of part-time VCCS faculty were White women, followed by White men. Black or African American women are the third

most numerous category, followed by men in that group. However, while Black or African American part-time faculty make up 21.2% of all VCCS adjuncts, in this study they made up only 9.5% of the part-time faculty at these five institutions. This information indicates that there is limited diversity, specifically related to Black or African American part-time faculty, at the VCCS institutions for this study.

Highest degree earned. For this study, 52 participants provided information on their highest degree earned. Among this group, 81.3% (*n=43)* possessed a master's degree while 11.3% (*n=6*) possessed a doctorate and 5.7% (*n=3*) possessed a bachelor's degree. Only one instructor identified as possessing "Less than Bachelor's degree." When asked if they are pursuing a formal advanced degree, 84.9% (*n=45*) responded "No" while 15.1% (*n=8*) responded "Yes." Among the eight individuals who identified that they are pursuing an advanced degree, "For professional development in my current field" was the most common response (75%, *n=6*0), "To increase salary" and "To teach in a different academic field" were each chosen by one individual. When asked if they had earned a new academic degree or certificate in the past 12 months, 83% (*n=44*) responded "No" and 17% (*n=9)* responded "Yes."

Teaching location. The survey also asked respondents to identify whether they taught online or at an off-campus site, and whether they taught during weekends and/or evening hours. Regarding where and when they taught, the majority of respondents (66%, *n=35*) teach during evening and/or weekend hours. One-third (34%, *n=18)* taught during the weekday. Regarding teaching location, 73.6% (*n=39)* taught on a campus while 26% (*n=14)* taught at an off-campus site. When it comes to teaching online courses, 40% of

respondents (*n=21*) taught at least one online course and 60% *(n=32*) did not teach any online courses. While there is not information available about how typical these assignments are compared with all Virginia's community colleges, national information (Christensen 2008, Eagan 2007, Kezar 2012) indicated that part-time faculty generally teach in the evenings when community colleges are accommodating the schedules of working adults. However, there is no metadata available for this specific information.

Subject variables. Subject variable information includes the subjects taught by each respondent, the level of courses taught, and the average number of students in each class. Of the 52 individuals who identified the main subject they taught, 38.5% (*n*=20) indicated English, 25% (*n*=13) chose social science, 25% (*n*=13) chose areas of humanities besides English, and 11.5% (*n*=6) chose fine arts. Because English is required of all VCCS degrees, and includes developmental education, composition, and literature courses, this discipline makes up a significant portion of humanities offerings throughout the VCCS. All the instructors in this study taught English 111 or 112, the foundational composition courses found across all VCCS institutions.

In terms of level of classes taught, 17.3% (*n*=9) taught remedial or developmental classes below the 100 level. Seventy-seven percent (*n*=40) taught 100-level classes and 44.2% (*n*=23) taught 200-level classes. Finally, respondents were asked to provide information on their average class size. Only three respondents (5.8%) said their average class size was fewer than 10. Twenty-two (42.3%) reported an average class size of 11 to 20 individuals, while 24 (46.2%) reported an average size of 21 to 30 individuals. Only

three instructors (5.8%) reported an average class size of 31 to 40 people, and no instructors had an average class size above 40.

Instructional experience and training variables. Participants provided additional information related to their instructional experience. This included the use of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and where the instructor obtained SLOs, where the instructor learned about instruction and assessment techniques, and the overall number of years of teaching experience held by each participant.

The vast majority (88.5%, n=46) base their courses on SLOs, while only six (11.5%) did not. Almost the same number (79%, n=41) were provided SLOs by the college or department while 21.1% (n=11) are not provided SLOs for the course. In other words, only five of the instructors who base their courses on SLOs (9.5%) created their own SLOs for the courses they taught. These instructors were not provided with a pre-existing course file that includes SLOs or required assignments. Instead, these instructors create their course using SLOs, activities, and assessments they develop. While instructors were required to submit syllabi to deans for approval, they are not limited to only the SLOs developed by the department, division, college, or the VCCS.

The survey asked participating instructors to identify how they learned about teaching techniques, allowing them to identify more than one source. The most common response, chosen by 49 individuals (94.2%, all but seven participants) was "Through personal experience." "From colleagues" represented the next most common response (67.3%, n=35), followed by "From former teachers" (59.6%, n=31). This indicates that the majority of participants used their experiences as a learner, including observations of

colleagues and former teachers, to inform their instruction techniques. Fewer participants identified experiences specific to professional development – either formal or informal – as a source to inform their teaching techniques. Twenty-nine participants (55.8%) chose "Through a formal educational course or program" while 46.1% (*n*=24) chose the option "Through seminars or workshops." Eight participants (15.4%) chose "Other" and 9.6% (=5) chose "Through a teaching and learning center on campus."

Regarding how participants learned about assessment techniques, the online survey did not operate as planned for this question. While it was my intention to allow respondents to choose all applicable for this question ("Where did you learn about assessment techniques? Select all that apply/multiple choices accepted") the functionality did not allow this. Many participants included more information about how they learned assessment techniques in the "Other" category, with additional information, making "Other" the most frequently selected category, with 32.7% (*n*=17). The next most common response was "Through personal experience" with 19.2% (*n*=10). The categories "From Colleagues" and "From former teachers" both were chosen by 13.46% (*n*=7) of respondents, while "Through a teaching and learning center on campus" was identified by only 3.85% (*n*=2) respondents and "Through seminars or workshops" identified by one individual (1.9%).

The years of overall teaching experience for respondents indicated only six individuals (11.5%) had less than three years of experience. The highest number – 18 individuals, 34.6% - had three to seven years of experience. Another 15 (28.8%) had eight to 15 years of experience, while 13 (25%) had more than 15 years of teaching.

With 88.4% of all respondents holding more than three years of teaching experience and 53.8% with more than eight years experience, study participants were not new to teaching, either at the community college or in another capacity. The responses, therefore, were informed by more than just an anecdotal experience of one or two classes taught. Additionally, the fact that these individuals had continued employment as instructors indicates that they had enough success in the classroom to receive future course assignments.

In summary, considering representativeness Black or African American part-time instructors were under-represented while the representation of other racial groups was aligned with the demographics of the VCCS. The respondents in this study come from institutions that are categorized as rural or suburban where the majority of faculty (71.3-84%) are part-time. These schools were small to midsized VCCS institutions, with student FTEs ranging from about 1,850 to 13,800. The majority of respondents possess at least a master's degree and taught on a campus in the evenings. The vast majority of respondents base their courses on SLOs provided by the college or department, learned about instruction and assessment techniques through personal experience, and had between three and 15 years of teaching experience.

Profiles – Descriptive information.

From the respondents interviewed, four instructors self-identified to participate in observations and follow-up interviews. The individual background and experiences of each instructor are important components of the profiles compiled from the survey, first

interview, observation, and second interview. The instructors are identified by pseudonyms (Sara, Cara, Anna, and Jay).

The first instructor, Sara, originally comes from 10 years in the speech pathology profession and holds a master's degree in that field. When Sara became interested in issues of communication, she went back to school for a second master's degree in communication then began teaching three introductory public speaking and communication courses at a four-year research university. When another instructor left the community college, Sara took an additional adjunct position in that environment in order to increase her income. This instructor believes she teaches "a lot" with five classes and 120 students each semester at two different institutions. Sara admits this is an extensive workload with many challenges, and is concerned about identification as a teacher in a "niche area" experiencing a repeated cycle of the same thing each semester. According to this instructor,

> "It is difficult to keep my own energy teaching the same thing over and over – some days it is five classes in a row and there is not a lot of new information in the field of public speaking/speech communications. It's also hard to expand as an adjunct – hard to not be siloed."

Sara would like the opportunity to teach other courses, including in speech pathology or human services, in order to share her knowledge and experience of both that field and human services work. She maintains her credentialing in that area to keep her employment options open and occasionally does contract work with speech therapy

providers. Like other adjunct instructors interviewed for this study, Sara appreciates how adjunct work allows for flexibility to be available for family activities and needs.

The second instructor, Cara, is an adjunct instructor of English with six years of experience teaching at the college level. A community college alumnus, Cara was very intentional about receiving a master's degree in order to teach college-level English. Cara was also intentional about teaching in the community college environment and prefers teaching in these institutions, although she has found it necessary to teach at four-year institutions in order to have a sustainable income. Currently serving as an adjunct at two institutions, Cara identifies a desire to focus on instruction that is student-oriented while meeting the institution's requirements for the course and student learning. "I base my teaching on my own experiences, and I like to use pop culture – I am constantly working to make it relevant." Cara feels comfortable using technology throughout teaching (both in and outside the classroom), and believes doing so improves both teaching and communication. To help improve courses, a question on the last quiz for each course asks students to share their most favorite and least favorite part of the course. Cara uses this information to identify potential changes for the next semester. Cara is clear that she wants a full-time position at a community college as part of her long-range career plan, and is exploring doctoral programs to improve marketability and increase income.

Anna, the third instructor, is in her fourth year teaching at the community college level and holds a master's degree in English with the intention of teaching at some level, preferably college. Anna also has prior college teaching experience at a small private

institution in another Virginia city. Although being a part-time instructor is a negative for some, this instructor sees it as an advantage as the parent of a pre-school child. Being an adjunct means "I get to decide my schedule and I have flexibility," Anna stated. Each semester, Anna teaches three or four sections of English 111 or 112 at a single community college depending upon need and her choice for level of workload. However, she notes challenges in being an adjunct instructor, "It can be difficult to find connection and inclusion in the college. It has a lot to do with what you decide to do as an adjunct, but it often means not always knowing what is going on and the first semester was really difficult."

The final instructor is Jay, an adjunct instructor of history whose full-time job is with the federal government in the IT field. Jay holds both B.A. and M.A. degrees in history. He obtained the Master's degree specifically hoping it would help him get work in academia. Jay has been an instructor at two different two-year institutions – a residential college and the community college. This instructor has also considered obtaining a doctorate in order to be more marketable as a full-time instructor in higher education. Extensive personal travel is currently a priority for this instructor, who believes this experience provides him with insights and practical knowledge to apply in his classes. In an average semester, Jay teaches two survey courses - one world history and one U.S. history, typically the courses that cover modern history. Jay incorporates field trips, book reviews, and film reviews in each course taught, hoping to encourage students to see history throughout their world. In describing the rewards of being a part-time instructor, Jay said, "It gives me something – I can work during the day to earn a

living and then teaching gives me satisfaction. I feel like I've accomplished something, like I'm self-actualized."

In summary, these individual instructor profiles are similar to the majority of the respondents from the survey. All instructors profiled have master's degrees and three to seven years of teaching experience. Only one of the profiled instructors has a full-time job outside of teaching. Two of the profiled instructors combine teaching part-time at more than one institution to maximize income, while the fourth instructor prefers part-time work. All instructors indicated teaching at the community college gives them personal satisfaction.

Instructional practices

Of the 59 survey respondents, three did not answer the question on use of instructional techniques. (See Appendix E for survey questions of instructional techniques.) For each technique, respondents were asked to identify whether they used the technique frequently, infrequently, or not at all. Because instructor perception is the basis for this area of the study, respondents were not provided a measure or definition for these terms, but made that determination on their own. Results related to this research question are divided into information on frequency of techniques used according to the survey, frequency of techniques used according to observations, and analyses of survey and observation data as compared to information obtained from interviews and syllabi.

Instructional techniques surveyed. According to the 56 instructors who responded to this question on the survey, discussion was the technique most frequently used with 93% (*n*=52) responding that they used this frequently and 7% (*n*=4) responding

they used this infrequently. No instructors claimed they did not use discussion at all. Forty-six respondents (84%) claimed to use lecture frequently (11%, *n*=6, infrequently) while three (5.5%) claimed to never use lecture. The third most common technique used was Slides/PowerPoint presentations with 74.5% (*n*=41) using them frequently and 18% (*n*=10) using infrequently. Only four instructors (7.3%) did not use slides at all.

The next three most commonly used techniques were interactive group work, videos/DVDs, and workshops. A total of 45 instructors responded that they use interactive group work either frequently or infrequently (69.8% frequently, *n*=37; 15% infrequently, *n*=8). Eight instructors (15.1%) reported not using this technique at all. Regarding the use of videos/DVDs, 53 instructors claimed frequent or infrequent use (62.5% frequently, *n*=35; 32.1% infrequently, *n*=18) while three instructors (5.4%) never used videos/DVDs. Workshop settings, including hands-on activities, were used by 36 instructors (56.3% frequently, *n*=27; 18.8% infrequently, *n*=9) while 12 instructors (25%) never used this technique.

For the respondents to this survey, the use of online or computer-based instruction techniques were the least used, including asynchronous online components, synchronous online components, and computer games or simulations (see Table 4 and Appendix G). While participants were allowed to select all 10 techniques listed, one skipped this question entirely and only 51 provided answers to the asynchronous category, 52 to synchronous, and 50 to computer games/simulations. Of those responding, more instructors (20) used asynchronous online components more frequently than the other online/computer-based techniques. Thirteen participants used synchronous online

components frequently, while only five used computer games/simulation frequently. It was actually more common for participants to report using synchronous online and computer games/simulation techniques infrequently, among those who used these techniques. Sixteen instructors reported no use of asynchronous online components and 17 instructors reported no use of synchronous online components. Use of computer games/simulation received the highest number of respondents reporting they did not use it at all, with 30 (70%) – more than twice the next highest technique category under the "Not at all" choice (synchronous online components).

Finally, eight instructors chose the "Other" category for frequent (46.2%, *n*=6) or infrequent (15.4% or *n*=2) use. Respondents identified "Other" techniques as including field trips, guest speakers, class critiques, and whiteboard demonstrations.

Instructional techniques observed. Observations of four instructors provide additional data on instructional techniques used compared to the instructors' survey responses (see Appendix I). Each instructor was observed for a minimum of 100 minutes. Only one instructor observation, for Sara, required more than one class session to meet the 100 minutes criteria; a single class session comprised each of the other three observations. It is important to note that these observations provide examples of classroom instruction at a specific moment in time. This study did not follow instructors throughout a semester; it compared data from observations with survey and interview statements. These observations do, however, provide information on how these instructors engage their students, their use of instruction and assessment techniques, and the environments for instruction.

While all four instructors claimed to use discussion frequently, one instructor was observed using discussion for less than 10 minutes of class time, amounting to 9% of time in that class session. Three instructors (Sara, Cara, and Anna) were observed using discussion more than 30 minutes of the 100-minute observation, accounting for 32% or more of total class time. Three observed instructors (Sara, Cara, and Jay) responded on the survey that they used lecture, interactive group work, and slides/PowerPoint presentations with lectures frequently. In observations, each of these techniques was used in varying amounts, with Sara and Anna using interactive group work for more than 10 minutes (10%) of instruction time. Anna, who responded that she used slide/PowerPoint presentations with lecture frequently was not observed either using lecture or using slide/PowerPoint presentations. Sara, Cara, and Jay, who responded that they used lecture frequently, were accurate in their perception – one used lecture for more than 20% of instruction time, another for more than 30% and another for more than half of instruction time.

With only Cara stating she used asynchronous online components frequently, the observation indicated that she spent little time in class on these components. Instead, she used class time to describe how students should access the content and clarify expectations for use of this material that was available through the learning management system. The instructor who used asynchronous online components the most – almost 20% of time – was Anna, who indicated she did not use this component at all.

Only two instructors stated they used workshop settings, with Sara claiming frequent use and Cara claiming infrequent use. However, neither instructor was observed using any type of a workshop setting, including hands-on or individual activities.

The only instructor who reported using synchronous online components had information on this in the syllabus to provide evidence that this technique was utilized. This included assignment listings, web site information, and references to Blackboard activities. One instructor who reported not using this technique spent 19 minutes (19% of time) in class discussing how students were to complete their synchronous online presentations and discussions. There was also syllabus and observation evidence that Jay used frequent online slides/PowerPoint presentations as a student aid, identified by references to Blackboard items on the syllabus and the instructor display of the course Blackboard site.

Finally, all four observed instructors responded that they did not user computer games or simulations at all in their instruction. No evidence was found in observations or review of syllabi that these techniques were used.

Relationship of techniques used to interviews. Interviews with a subset of 10 respondents indicated that they spent a significant amount of time in class preparation identifying what instructional techniques they used. All instructors interviewed noted how they constantly revised and refined their instruction by identifying and implementing new activities. One English instructor stated, "I use my experience to begin, then I try to incorporate pop culture to connect with students and improve learning and engagement." Student engagement was referenced in all instructor interviews, with one instructor

stating, "I try to adopt/acknowledge the culture of students – texting, phones, social media – and look for how to make the subject relevant and connected to what they know."

All instructors interviewed prepared for class sessions by identifying resources, activities, and materials for use, including readings, videos, and group work. This was especially important for English instructors who changed writing prompts on a regular basis and speech communications instructors who identified examples of different types of communication to coincide with assignments from popular culture. Six instructors talked about keeping successful techniques in subsequent semesters, and changing techniques they identified as either not successful or having limited success. This information was sometimes obtained from student evaluations, including two instructors who ask on quizzes or exams questions what activities students found most beneficial and what were least beneficial. All 10 instructors indicated they changed their courses from semester to semester, with one history instructor indicating that he sometimes found videos to use during the semester and incorporates them immediately.

Finally, interviews showed that instructors differed on the use of demonstrations as an effective instruction technique. While two English instructors stated that modeling/demonstration was effective in showing students how work is graded, two art instructors did not believe they were effective as an instruction technique. For these instructors, students learned more when they did the work themselves.

Profiles – Instructional practices. During observation of A.H.'s teaching, the class group was small but very interactive. The classroom itself was newly-renovated

and appealing with technology easily available. The class started on time, and Sara was aware of why students who were not in attendance were absent (work schedules, illness, etc.) indicating good communication between this instructor and students. Throughout the class session, there were smooth transitions between activities through instructor directions and explanations, and the longest lecture time was spent explaining the next assignment students would complete, including the written requirements. The instructor integrated video viewing (infomercials, ads), discussion, interactive group work, and lecture in 12 separate sections of instruction. The instructor referenced to the syllabus, assignment templates and information on the course Blackboard site, and reviewed items due and topics to be covered over the next three weeks to orient students to the progress towards completing the course. The syllabus for the course was clear and covered all the information also found on Blackboard. In this way, the instructor clearly delineated the topics to be covered each session and how class sessions align with assignments and student learning outcomes.

Observation of Cara showed use of lecture with associated PowerPoint presentations, combined with student discussion and interactive question and answer sections. During both classes, Cara was energetic and the students were involved and attentive. Student understanding of class session structure was observed through student behaviors, as they knew when was their opportunity to ask questions about the previous class, when to share information, and when to move into group activities. This instructor also frequently referenced the syllabus and the Blackboard site and noted how each class session related to the expected student learning outcomes, assignments, and topics

required. The syllabi for Cara's two classes were similar to each other and to the syllabus for the other English class observed. (This indicated that Cara and Anna organize their courses and the related syllabi in close accordance with college and department guidance.) Additionally, the similarities between Cara's syllabus for English 111 and English 112 would be helpful to students who take both courses with this instructor. When they enroll in 112, the syllabus would be familiar to them and assist in a timely orientation for these students to the course and its expectations and requirements.

In Anna's class, multiple instructional modalities were used and there was extensive student participation through interactive group work to review a published article, to review for an exam (scheduled for the next class), and to evaluate a video on a topic relevant to the next writing assignment. This included playing a game and use of laptops with partners to complete a reading assignment. Energy was high in this class, which took place on a rainy weekday evening and had students arriving late and leaving early without any disruption in class flow. Students appeared familiar with the activities the instructor used, and knew when to discuss assignment issues or ask questions. Later, the instructor explained that students shared when they had conflicts and had to leave early or arrive late – and Anna identified this as the reality of the community college population and something that must be accommodated. The fact that there were smooth transitions between activities and topics with students coming and going implied the session being observed was typical for this course and instructor. Additionally, the instructor frequently referred students to the syllabus and Blackboard site for the class. The syllabus was almost identical in structure to that of Cara, who instructs the same

course at a different institution. The syllabus clearly stated the format and expectations of the course, and the student learning outcomes were clearly identified.

During observation, Jay used lecture for the majority of class time, interspersed with online videos related to the scheduled topics. Jay included slides with the lecture that had personal photos from his travels. There was some discussion of a recent field trip and discussion from those who attended an extra-credit trip to a 1980s sing-along event. In addition to instruction, Jay discussed upcoming assessments including an exam, film analysis, and an optional extra-credit oral exam on the afore-mentioned films and sing-along. The class of eight students was mostly engaged, asking and responding to questions. Jay used a timeline to move between topics, clearly a technique used throughout the semester that students understood. It was clear that this instructor uses a didactic pedagogy, such as asking open-ended questions in class and providing information verbally and visually. Class sessions are organized thematically and lectures are interspersed with digressions into related information from other fields. The syllabus for this course, according to Jay, included the required components provided by the college (in the form of a template) specific to class meeting information, instructor contact information, college policies, the description of the course and student learning outcomes, and a calendar of activities and assessments. It was clear from the syllabus that Jay uses a variety of opportunities outside of class sessions to help students achieve the learning outcomes. Based on the observation, Jay did not rely heavily on Blackboard for instruction, but uses the site as a repository of information for students.

For this first research question, surveys, interviews, and observations supported instructors' statements related to the use of lecture, discussion, and slides/PowerPoint presentations. It should be noted that every instructor participant indicated the use of discussion, either frequently or infrequently. Since all the classes taught by observed instructors were classified as "lecture" format in course catalogues, it was expected that use of lecture and discussion would be prevalent. All instructors interviewed and observed indicated they change the activities and examples used in their courses each semester, with some locating items for use and implementing within the same semester. Finally, most instructor survey responses about frequency of technique use were evident in their observations. One notable example is an instructor who did not identify the use of asynchronous online learning techniques yet spent time in class explaining how students were to complete a component on the LMS. It is not clear whether this disconnect was one of terminology, or represented the instructor's view that this was an activity and not a teaching technique.

Assessment practices

Of the 59 survey respondents, three did not answer the question on use of assessment techniques. (See Appendix G for the table of assessment technique survey responses.) For each technique, respondents were asked to identify whether they used the technique frequently, infrequently, or not at all. As with instruction techniques, instructor perception is the basis of the analysis so respondents were not given a measure or definition for the frequency of use terms. Terminology for types of assessment used was identified from prior studies referenced in Chapter 2, as well as information across

disciplines obtained from VCCS master course file information. Results related to this research question can be divided into information on frequency of techniques used according to the survey, frequency of techniques used according to observations, and a comparison of survey data to information obtained from interviews and syllabi.

Assessment techniques surveyed. The most frequently used assessment techniques reported by respondents were attendance/participation, research assignments, and quizzes. Of the 56 respondents, 55 reported that they used attendance and participation as a technique to assess student engagement and understanding. Of the 55 in this group, 51 (91%) used this technique frequently and four (7.1%) used it infrequently. Fifty-one respondents reported using quizzes frequently (63.6%, *n*=35) or infrequently (29.1%, *n*=16) while 37 reported frequently using research assignments (68.5%) and 11 (20.4%) used this technique infrequently.

In terms of the types of exams utilized, 32 respondents (59.6%) used multiple choice exam questions frequently, while 13 instructors (24.1%) reported infrequently using this type of exam question. Twenty-eight (51.9%) respondents used essay exam questions frequently while 15 instructors (27.8%) used essay exam questions infrequently. The use of peer evaluation as an assessment technique was reported by 35 respondents – 26 frequently and nine infrequently (17 responded they did not use this technique at all).

When reporting assessment technique choices, respondents also used oral presentations, portfolios, and a variety of methods they identified as "Other." Twenty-four instructors reported frequent use of oral presentations (46%) while 15 (28%)

reported infrequent use. Portfolios were identified as frequently used by 15 (30%) of instructors, with eight instructors (16.33%) reporting infrequent use and 26 (53.06%) reporting no use at all. Respondents identified "Other" methods as projects, online discussion forums, short papers, and online presentations of process and design, with seven (35%) reporting using these methods frequently and two (10%) infrequently.

Finally, the least used assessment technique was a workbook, which only received responses from 51 participants. Of those responding, the workbook technique was used frequently by only seven instructors (13.73%), infrequently by 11 instructors (21.57%), and not at all by 33 instructors (64.71%). Instructors were not provided with a definition for a workbook, so each individual determined whether their technique was a workbook based on their own identification.

Assessment techniques observed. During observations of the four instructors, assessments were identified either by witnessing the actual assessment being conducted, references made by the instructor during class, or references in the syllabi (see Appendix J). All instructors perceived the frequent use of attendance/participation as an assessment technique and this was observed. Although there was no observed evidence of quiz usage, three instructors reported using quizzes either frequently or infrequently. All four observed instructors reported using multiple-choice exam questions (two frequently, two infrequently) and research assignments (three frequently, one infrequently). While there was evidence of the use of multiple-choice exam questions in two observations from references in-class and on syllabi, there was none in the other two observations or supporting materials. In terms of the use of essay questions on exams, three instructors

reported use with observation or syllabi evidence found in two instructor courses. For the technique "Research Assignments," three instructors reported using this technique with observations verifying the use of this technique. Regarding the "Other" category, three instructors reported using short papers with observed usage in two of these instructors' classes. Three instructors reported using oral presentations, with observation of use by one instructor. Finally, two instructors reported using peer evaluation frequently, with observation evidence found in only one instructor's course.

Across techniques, when observed instructors did not use a technique, observation supported this lack of use. This includes portfolios and workbooks, which all instructors rated as "Not at all" and observations and syllabi indicated no use. While reported lack of use varied by instructor, there was never a technique an individual reported "Not at all" that was evidenced in observation or syllabi review.

Regarding types of assessment used and observed, there was similarity among the instructors (see Appendix J for assessment techniques perceived and observed). All instructors were observed using attendance/participation in each class. Sara reported the use of five additional techniques frequently or infrequently (quizzes, multiple choice exam questions, peer evaluation, oral presentations, and research assignments) with evidence of only attendance/participation, oral presentations, and research assignments during the class observation. The second instructor observed (Cara), reported the use of six additional techniques (quizzes, multiple choice exam questions, essay exam questions, oral presentations, and research assignments) with no observation of oral presentations and the observation of an additional technique – short papers. For Anna,

the only techniques not reported as used frequently or infrequently were workshop settings and portfolios. During the observation, the assessment techniques present were attendance/participation, multiple choice and essay exam questions, and research assignments. Finally, for Jay, four techniques in addition to attendance/participation were identified (quizzes, multiple choice exam questions, essay exam questions, peer evaluation, and short papers) and two were observed (essay exam questions and short papers). This is not inconsistent with the survey data, as instructors responded on the use of techniques over an entire semester, not within a single class session. Information from course syllabi indicated the use of assessment techniques in addition to those observed, such as the syllabi for Anna and Jay that stated the instructor may give unannounced quizzes during the semester.

Relationship of techniques used to interviews. In interviews, all instructors indicated they used a variety of assessment techniques. Three instructors identified the need to give students different ways to show their knowledge using a combination of tests, quizzes, papers, and projects. Five instructors specified that students' assessment of other peers was part of an individual's own assessment. One instructor specifically noted the technique of "building [individual] exercises into projects or papers in order to break the information into manageable chunks" to assess throughout the semester. Using a variety of assessment techniques, according to this instructor, "allows even those who do poorly on tests to still do well in the class; the overall grade at the end is a good indication of their effort and learning."

For some instructors, assessments were prescribed by the college for specific courses. This was true for instructors in English and Public Speaking, each of which requires students to demonstrate certain techniques in writing or presentation. These instructors still varied their assessments, though, seeing the requirements as a minimum and adding additional assessments such as quizzes, peer evaluation, and in-class activities.

From the interviews, two things were clear about the use of assessments by these instructors. First, their perceptions of how much they used different assessment techniques appeared to be somewhat accurate based on observations and syllabi review. Because they have to provide grading information in their syllabi, their techniques are set at the beginning of the semester and their class is built around these assessments. According to one instructor, "I need multiple ways of assessing to really know what students are learning, and so I can support a broad range of learners."

Second, these instructors did not use assessments merely as a formal process to determine numerical grade or points awarded. They engaged in many activities in class that assessed student learning, such as peer reviews, games, and content reviews. While these techniques may have counted toward a point value for attendance/participation, instructors used them as barometers to assess student progress and identify areas for additional instruction. As one instructor stated, "Things like small group activities and close review of a text help students think through the concepts and teach them how to find the answers themselves, then I know what they have learned."

Profiles – assessment techniques. When describing how to assess student learning, A.H. said, "I want to see a progression of skills, since this is a skills-based topic and I set grading expectations based on skill acquisition." Assessments for the class are clearly stated in the syllabus, and A.H.'s observation showed review of past assessment and discussion of upcoming assessment as part of the class session. While assessments are somewhat prescribed by the college and department, Sara determines how to orient and prepare students for each assessment and the rubrics for grading. This instructor also offers additional opportunities for assessment that allow students to improve their grades. For instance, the course grade is not based only on the speeches delivered but also on quizzes, writing about speeches viewed, and constructive critiques of classmates. In this way, Sara believes students are graded on their total understanding of speech communication, not just their public speaking ability.

While Cara identifies interactive techniques such as peer review and class discussion as the most effective forms of assessment, teaching English composition means that assessments are almost entirely through written assignments and quizzes on terms. Cara acknowledges that college expectations of course design limits the types of assessments she includes, and that she looks for adherence to instructions and student improvement throughout the course. The syllabus is clear on assessments required and the point structure for course grading. Cara also noted that for both English 111 and 112, there are specific types of assessment required by the college and department, but she offers opportunities for students to be assessed in additional ways. This includes opportunities to improve their grades through participation in peer reviews and in-class

activities. Cara also drops a student's lowest quiz grade to prevent a student from "giving up because of one low grade" or receiving a zero grade because of an absence. Assessment policies such as penalties for late work or missed classes are clearly delineated on the syllabus and Cara stated that few students ask for exceptions because she emphasizes these policies on the first day of the course and throughout the semester.

Anna includes quizzes and attendance along with the components of larger writing assignments for student assessment. Expectations for the course and all assessments are clearly delineated in the syllabus. This instructor has students bring the last paper completed to class when working on the next paper so students can apply feedback for improvement. Anna believes that using rubrics provides clear information on expectations for the assignment prior to submission and helpful feedback to students after grading. Rubrics for each assignment are available to students on Blackboard, and the instructor spends time reviewing the rubric when discussing the assignment, during the pre-writing activities, when the paper is returned to the student, and in reviewing with the entire class before moving on to the next assignment. Anna also sits down one-on-one with students to evaluate their work and "help them learn how to fix problems." This instructor makes it clear that students will build on each type of assessment as they move through the course to achieve student learning objectives.

Jay includes four grade types in assessing his history students. This includes exams, quizzes, movie reviews, and attendance/participation. This instructor no longer includes a research paper for any 100-level courses, because if students have not had English 111/112 Jay believes they struggle with this type of assessment. This instructor

likes using open-ended questions because they allow "students to show what they know." Jay also allows students opportunities to earn extra points by attending special events or going on field trips (some during the weekday, some in the evening, and some on weekends). While these activities are not required, Jay believes they allow students an alternative learning opportunities and a way to apply their course knowledge to other situations. Jay also believes this helps students who may do poorly on tests get more out of the class and exposes students to new environments. This is also part of the instructor's focus on "the big picture" of how history has created the current world. While Jay admits that it can be difficult to assess whether students are making connections between the history they are studying and the world around them, this instructor believes these activities and the connected discussions and writings promote critical thinking.

Therefore, for this second research question, results indicated that instructors used a variety of assessment techniques with 91% using quizzes, 83% using multiple choice exams, 79% using essay exams and 60% using peer evaluation. Almost all instructors used attendance/participation as a form of assessment to evaluate student engagement. For observed participants, when an instructor indicated they did not use a specific assessment technique it was not evident in the observation or syllabus. When interviewed, however, observed instructors indicated that attendance/participation was also a mechanism to add to students' point accumulations for the course. Finally, these instructors did not use assessment techniques merely as a formal process to determine numerical grade or points awarded, but also as a method to identify whether students

were meeting learning objectives and identify areas where for additional support or instruction.

Influences on Instructor Technique Choice

The data to answer this research question primarily came from interviews and observations. According to the survey, while the majority of instructors based their course organization on student learning objectives (88.5%, *n*=46), most had these objectives provided by the college or department (78.8%, *n*=41). This supports the idea that instructors choose techniques for instruction and assessment according to the course SLOs, with significant influence from the college or department. Additional information from interviews and observations indicate that choice of instruction and assessment techniques is influenced by four significant factors - the institution, personal experience as a learner, individual research by the instructor, and feedback from students.

Information from institution. While the majority of instructors used student learning objectives (SLOs) provided by their institution and based their courses on these objectives, these same instructors also based their syllabi on a template provided by the institution. Nine of the instructors interviewed indicated they also used an example from another instructor to create their syllabi. Of the 10 individuals interviewed, only one developed the course without an example provided by another instructor. This was because the course was a specialized fine arts course that had not been taught at the institution before. All instructors indicated that they were expected to use the college's syllabus template when creating their own, with specific information required (i.e., office hours, instructor contact information, SLOs, important dates, how grades are determined,

and specific college policies). However, requirements about specific types of assignments for assessment were most evident in English composition classes and public speaking classes. All instructors interviewed who teach in these areas reported that they were required to have students cover specific information and produce a specific number of papers or speeches per department and division expectations for these courses.

Since almost all of the courses taught by participating instructors were identified by the college and VCCS catalogues as "lecture" format, it is not surprising that discussion and lecture were the most frequently used teaching techniques. By identifying these classes in this way, instructors understand that the use of lecture is expected. However, several instructors noted that they found the use of discussion, interactive group work, and use of various media a necessary addition to improve student engagement and help themselves maintain the energy they needed for the class. Six of the instructors interviewed identified participation in workshops at their colleges as places they learned about techniques to improve student engagement, with four specifically identifying learning how to use their learning management system (LMS) – Blackboard – to improve student learning. These instructors used the LMS to communicate with students, provide additional resources, receive assignments and provide feedback, keep grading records, and track student access to course materials. These instructors also used the LMS to share PowerPoint from class, provide access to videos shown and websites accessed in class, and offer links to resources related to the material.

Personal experience as a learner. Every instructor interviewed identified that their experience as a learner affected their choices as an instructor. This included

choosing techniques that engaged them as a learner and avoiding those that did not. Four instructors specifically mentioned using a variety of techniques to meet students' learning needs. Three of the instructors said they try to avoid situations where they are "bored" because they believe that means students are feeling the same. Six instructors specifically referred to emulating the work of their instructors when they were students where the learning experience was engaging and positive.

When discussing their teaching philosophy, all instructors tied their philosophy directly to their experiences as a learner. This included association of their teaching philosophy to promoting student learning with a focus on the techniques that helped them learn. One instructor pointed out,

> "I think every subject is different, but at the college level we are teaching principals, foundations, theories – the basis of the field. Students need to know how the field evolves. For me, that means hands-on and experimenting and peer work. That is a good learning environment."

Several instructors referred to class activities that help students learn, as well as the importance of humor. According to one instructor, "It has to be fun, like in play theory. Class can't be rigid. Students should be laughing and having fun so they can learn. They can't learn if it's tedious."

For assessment technique choices, several instructors identified multiple modalities to be able to identify what the students have learned and the need to provide students with information on how a specific assessment accomplishes this. Some instructors pointed out that they use assessments they found useful as students

themselves. Six instructors specifically identified project-based assessments as a preferred method of measuring student learning. This was true across disciplines, with one instructor stating, "With projects, students can show what they can do and what they have learned; even those who do poorly on tests still do well in the class when there is a project piece." One instructor stated, "I really hate tests – I hated them as a student – but it is the only way to get at students who are expecting tests and want to see a grade." All instructors talked about showing students how they were moving towards completion of course objectives with assessments, such as the instructor who said, "I show them where they are going and how they are progressing – that they are acquiring the goals."

Individual research of instructor. All 10 instructors discussed their practice of constant research on their subject for information and techniques to include in course design. While the type of research varied by discipline – writing prompts for English instructors, videos of types of speeches or other communications for public speaking instructors, videos and new scholarly work for history and art history instructors, new works or techniques for graphic design and art courses – all of these instructors reported spending time to make the course content more relevant to students. As one instructor stated, "I take an entire day a week to prepare for my classes and I constantly revise because there are always new resources." Another instructor responded, "Reading, researching essays for examples, conducting analysis of what's out there and is useful – I do that all the time."

Some instructors identified changes in their fields as the impetus to conduct research on subject matter and potential instruction and assessment techniques throughout

the academic year. According to one arts instructor who addressed the changes in available technologies in their field, "The field [design] is changing but there is not an instant effect – there is a five-year time window by the time something new trickles down to be useful to the average student and becomes affordable." For some instructors, this research is one of the things they like about their work. "I like the creative outlet of researching ways to teach, compared to what I do full-time," said one. Another pointed out, "I always come across things that are useful, and I enjoy looking." Finally, one instructor pointed out, "I am constantly learning myself and researching; it's all about the students, keeping them up to date."

Feedback from students. All 10 instructors interviewed used feedback from students to revise future courses. However, only three identified that they use this information to remove assignments or instruction techniques. All instructors used student feedback as affirmation to continue the use of a specific technique for instruction or assessment, referring to the need to promote student learning and student feedback identifying where students believed they had learned. As one instructor stated, "I use trial and error, keep what works and get rid of what didn't; the students' evaluations help me identify what to keep and what to get rid of."

Profiles – technique choice. While Sara. is always interested in improving her instruction techniques, she does not engage with the community college except through the beginning of the semester events. This instructor's teaching schedule at two institutions limits the potential to take professional development courses offered by the community college and Sara cited experiences setting goals and activities as a speech

therapist with an understanding of setting learning objectives and planning class activities. Similar to this instructor's work with clients in speech therapy, this instructor believes in using a variety of approaches to achieve goals and to help students master the subject matter. "I am always willing to try new things and either keep or ditch them, depending upon their success," Sara responded when asked about using new techniques or changing techniques. This instructor uses required learning objectives from the college that are outlined in the syllabus, and all assignments are clearly tied to these objectives. Sara revises parts of the course regularly in order to improve both student experience and performance, usually between semesters. However, this instructor notes that teaching is only part of the process for achieving learning outcomes. According to Sara, "The challenging piece is managing student issues – dealing with how to communicate when there are problems and making students see the consequences of when they don't do the work."

When asked about a teaching philosophy, Sara said, "I know this [public speaking] is an uncomfortable topic for most students and I acknowledge that they don't want to be there. I believe in meeting them where they are and building from that point."

Cara does not believe that part-time employment impedes identifying and/or employing new instruction or assessment techniques. Rather, this instructor finds that while there is considerable opportunity to try new instruction techniques, there are few choices in assessment techniques because of college and department requirements. When discussing the role of a part-time instructor, Cara stated, "I see it as teaching, not part-time teaching. I like the flexibility I have and the opportunity to teach different places."

Cara has taught English at four different institutions over the past six years, but always at this specific community college where she first encountered the professors she claims as the inspiration to become a teacher. While this instructor identified a stigma associated with adjuncts that implies they are sub-standard compared to full-time faculty, Cara believes the biggest issue related to adjunct instruction is the limitations of a part-time schedule and lack of space to meet with students. "Students don't understand what an adjunct is," Cara added. Citing schedule limitations, Cara does not participate in many faculty meetings and does not serve on any committees – even though the institution issues many invitations and works frequently to include part-time faculty. This instructor, however, does act as an advisor to a college honor society.

Personal experience has shaped both Cara's career goals and teaching philosophy. This instructor hopes to find a full-time teaching position at a community college and, specifically, at the institution where Cara received an Associate's Degree. Cara describes her teaching philosophy in these terms: "I love the learning process, applying what I learned, and adjusting my teaching to new opportunities. I think when you love your subject and share that passion, it makes for a fun learning experience and students get more out of it."

When Anna makes choices in English course instruction and assessment techniques, and inclusion of new written works, techniques, and activities, from the instructor's experience (including pop culture references) they are selected to promote connection with students and to enhance their learning and engagement. Anna describes the importance of experiences as a teacher and a learner: "I think what has helped me the

most with my teaching is my experience with other teachers and good instructors, seeing what they do, getting ideas and incorporating their good techniques." Anna has had little professional development related to pedagogy or formal assessment, but does make use of information available from the college, department, peers, and a variety of online resources when choosing instruction and assessment techniques. In terms of making choices, Anna indicates a willingness to keep techniques that work in terms of SLOs and try new techniques each semester, evaluating technique effectiveness to determine what to use again.

When first teaching, Jay was given a template for a syllabus that included learning objectives. Since then, this instructor has made numerous changes to the techniques for instruction and assessment, stating, "I am making constant adjustments to my courses, trying to improve student engagement and make things more interactive." Jay incorporates techniques such as guest speakers, films, and field trips; the instructor also includes information on the environment, economics, and philosophy throughout every history course. This inclusion of other disciplines demonstrates how these areas participation in college professional development or other events is limited by time available but does not see that as a major issue saying, "It can be nice to be left alone." This instructor stated, "I probably do teach the way I was taught. I like the big questions. Like, 'is geography destiny?'" and acknowledges no formal training in instruction and assessment techniques. Jay stated, "I would like to participate in more professional development, but it's difficult with a full-time job." This instructor also looks for personal opportunities to learn, saying, "I also try to make myself competent by exposing

myself to different things – I volunteer at the Woodrow Wilson Library, I travel, I have volunteered at archeology sites." Most importantly, according to Jay, "I do this [teaching and learning] because I find it rewarding. It adds to my quality of life, gives purpose and meaning." While Jay relies on techniques used for several years, this instructor no longer requires a research paper because students who had not completed English 112 (which teaches how to complete a research assignment) struggled with that assignment. In this way, Jay uses personal experience of what techniques were successful in engaging students and meeting SLOs to determine what techniques to employ each semester.

For this third research question on technique choice influences, then, most of the data came from the interviews and observations where instructors were able to share detail about what influences their technique choices. While some assessment choices are prescribed by colleges, divisions, or departments, instructors reported they still had some choice about the details of any assessment they used. While SLOs influenced 88.5% of instructors in creating and implementing assessments, instructors were also concerned with accurate reflections of student achievements. In addition, every instructor identified their personal experience as a learner as an influence on their choices, especially techniques that engaged these instructors when they were learners. Technique choices were also influenced by teaching philosophy, which instructors related to their learning experiences and to their desire to promote student engagement and thereby student learning. In their efforts to keep students focused on course objectives, all instructors interviewed indicated that they show students how activities and assessments move the students through SLOs. To identify potential technique choices, these instructors

conducted individual research and reviewed feedback from students as they worked to improve their courses to promote student learning and meet institutional and student objectives.

Additional Analysis

In addition to analysis focused on the three research questions, it is important to address issues identified through the instructor profiles. This allowed for a more detailed image of these instructors' experiences. The profile analysis also allowed for a clear definition of the four themes that developed from all the research.

Cross-profile analysis. The four profiles in this chapter possess features that are similar and dissimilar. All the instructors referred to their intentional choice to enter the teaching field as a part-time instructor at a community college, although one acknowledged the positive flexibility of part-time work. All expressed an interest in full-time work teaching at the college level. Each of these instructors demonstrated personal dedication to teaching by spending time outside of class preparing and finding activities and related content for use in teaching. They indicated that they work to constantly keep their class session material relevant, incorporating current events and culture to keep students engaged. Each instructor mentioned their own schedule limitations that affect participation in professional development or college activities, while also identifying as a positive the autonomy they had as part-time instructors with no requirements to participate in governance or college events.

The area of most significant contrast among these instructors is found in their perceived use of instruction techniques (see Appendix I). Reported levels of use for

lecture were observed with all four instructors, with two instructors spending the majority of class time lecturing. While all four instructors responded that they used discussion "Frequently," two of them had observed discussion components that comprised 11% and 8% of total instruction time. Three of the instructors responded that they used interactive group work "Frequently," yet two of them were observed to use this technique 11% and 8% of total instruction time. When instructors reported their usage of videos or DVDs, "Frequently" was the choice of three instructors, and all three included videos in the observed class sessions. Two instructors reported using Slide/PowerPoint presentations with their lectures "Frequently" and this was reflected in the observation. One who reported frequent use was not observed using slides/PowerPoint at all and one that reported infrequent use did employ PowerPoint throughout the lecture portion of the observed class. One instructor who reported the frequent use of online PowerPoint presentations provided no evidence of this in the observation or syllabus. Regarding asynchronous online components, one instructor reported using this technique "not at all" yet spent several minutes demonstrating to students how to access a Blackboard instruction component. Finally, one instructor who identified frequent use of Workshop settings (through hands on or individual activity) did not have any use of this technique observed. This could be due to the nuances of the specific class session observed, or the course being taught that particular semester.

Regarding assessment techniques perceived and observed, instructors' perceptions were usually accurate compared to observed use. For the observations, "Frequently" was defined as evidence of three or more instances, "Infrequently" as one or two instances,

and “Not at all” as no instances observed. In the use of quizzes, however, two instructors claimed to use this technique “Frequently” and one “Infrequently” when there was no evidence of quiz usage. One of the instructors claimed to use short papers “Frequently” as an assessment tool, but exhibited no evidence of use in the observed class or syllabus (See Appendix H).

Observations did support the information provided related to instructor focus on the student experience, specifically instructor focus on achievement of student learning outcomes and the use of multiple modalities for instruction and assessment to achieve these objectives. Even in cases where the college or department required specific forms of assessment (such as in English and public speaking courses), instructors did not limit types of assessment to solely those required. The instructors added opportunities for students to demonstrate learning and achievement of course objectives through a variety of activities.

The profiles indicated that while instructors may not be using instructional techniques with the frequency they perceive, they accurately perceive the use of assessment techniques. Because assessment techniques are listed in syllabi – a requirement of each college – and are often course content requirements, it is expected that instructors with three to seven years’ experience would have an accurate awareness of techniques used. Additionally, these instructors indicated that they frequently try new instruction techniques but do not alter their assessment methods with the same frequency. In other words, they experiment more with instructional techniques than assessment techniques, possibly due to college-prescribed assessment requirements for some courses

that limit instructor autonomy in assessment technique choice or individual instructor's lack of experience with assessment.

Finally, the only instructor that expressed frustration about their subject matter was a communications instructor teaching five sections of public speaking per semester at two institutions. This instructor specifically expressed concern about the limitations of teaching the subject area and the difficulty in maintaining the energy necessary to promote student engagement. All four instructors identified a relationship between not only their instruction technique choices and student engagement, but also a relationship between their own attitude and student engagement. These instructors clearly focused on promoting student learning, not merely working through the pieces of a syllabus or meeting the minimum criteria in a college or department checklist.

Identification of themes. Through the evaluation of data, four themes were identified from the survey comments, interviews, and observations that divide findings across the three research questions. These themes explore the experience of study participants and include: 1) personal dedication of instructors; 2) instructors' practice of teaching how they learned; 3) constant revision of courses taught; and 4) limited availability of collegial interaction or professional development opportunities.

Theme #1 – "I like the work."

The first theme identified through comments from the survey, interviews, and observations was the personal dedication of these part-time instructors both to their teaching and to student learning. This was evident in comments about why they began teaching at community college, the satisfaction they express in the role of a part-time

instructor, the frequency with which they express a desire to teach full-time, and the time they spend on preparation and research for teaching. One of the most unique areas of response from the 10 interviews was information on how and why these individuals became part-time community college instructors. Only one interview participant stated, "I sort of fell into teaching art at the community college," when an administrator came into the studio where she worked and expressed the need for an instructor. It should be noted this instructor is currently in her fourth year of part-time teaching at the community college. All other instructors stated that they wanted to teach at the college level specifically, and five indicated the community college as an intentional choice.

Satisfaction in the role of being an instructor was another element found in the majority of those interviewed. According to one respondent, "Adjunct work can be good if you are a professional who wants to share your experience." All but one individual indicated satisfaction in the role of instructor, including the instructor who said, "Teaching gives me satisfaction. I feel like I've accomplished something, it is self-actualizing. I do it because I find it rewarding, it adds to my quality of life, it gives me purpose and meaning." One instructor took exception to the emphasis on identifying as a part-time instructor, stating, "I see what I do as teaching, not part-time teaching."

However, many responses indicated some of the difficulties inherent in contingent faculty membership. For example, one instructor stated, "I teach a lot of classes – five a semester – and have a lot of students – 120 per semester – and it's a huge workload." The same instructor went on to say, "Teaching the same thing over and over again it is a struggle to keep energy. Some Wednesdays it is five classes in a row." Another said,

when describing what was necessary to earn a living wage teaching part-time at the college level, "At one point, I was teaching seven classes in three states." Another instructor with teaching experience in multiple states believed Virginia's pay structure made it difficult to earn a living wage teaching part-time, stating, "Virginia pays very little, but I like the work."

Any discussion of the satisfaction of part-time community college instructors must include the presence of the desire to teach full-time, since this desire indicates that many of these instructors do not consider part-time teaching their professional ideal. This was seen in the statement of one respondent, "I will still be teaching in five years. I just hope it is full-time." Another said, "I took this job to get my foot in the door." A different perspective was the description by a respondent that most part-time community college instructors are "trapped in the adjunct cycle" where "It's untenable because of the commute and pay." Among the faculty responding to this study, 77% had more than three years of experience while 29% had eight to 15 years of experience and 25% had more than 15 years of experience. This indicates both dedication to work, satisfaction in their jobs, and a continuing hope for future full-time employment.

Another area that exhibits personal dedication to teaching at the community college is the time spent by instructors in preparing for courses and class sessions, fulfilling their teaching obligations, and furthering their own education. While this study did not specifically ask instructors about the amount of time they spent in preparation for courses and class sessions, instructors interviewed mentioned that they regularly research information, look for new ways to include current culture, find writing prompts, create

outlines and notes, and look for examples to share in class. This includes, as one instructor stated, "Looking for new ways to teach the same concepts." The instructor who referred to teaching five classes and 120 students per semester said, "It takes a lot of time to manage this many classes and students," while citing that in her subject area, "There is not a lot of new information…I have to find freshness in examples and new technologies." While the majority (88%) of survey respondents based their courses on learning objectives and 79% had learning objectives provided to them by their college or department, it is apparent from interviews that part-time instructors take time to make these objectives clear to students. According to one instructor, "I like to show the students where they are going and how they are going to get there – the value of the tasks they complete."

Additionally, some instructors take the time to improve both their teaching and their job prospects by acquiring advanced degrees. While 81% of participants in this study possess a Master's degree, 15% are currently pursuing a formal advanced degree and 17% received a new academic degree in the past 12 months. The majority of respondents (six of eight) stated their pursuit of a degree was for professional development in their current field, while one respondent chose increase in salary and another indicated the ability to teach in a different academic field. As one instructor stated, "I enjoy the work and want to get my Master's so I can be full-time."

Finally, observations supported information from the interviews related to the personal dedication of these instructors. The amount of preparation by instructors for each class was observed both in the teaching and in the interaction with students.

Specifically, each instructor was observed discussing issues one-on-one with students related to the course. This included time before class, during breaks, or after class. In addition, each instructor could look at their classroom, identify who was missing, and comment about whether this absence was expected or unusual. This is an indicator that these instructors take the time to know their students. One instructor was even aware of her students' work schedules and knew when one would arrive late and another had to leave early. Additionally, other indicators of teacher preparation were the smooth transitions between activities and the guided discussions. These indicators represented instructor organization and preparation to present a class session that engaged students and provided opportunities for learning that meet SLOs.

When considered in the context of the research questions for this study, this theme focuses on how instructors make choices in instruction and assessment techniques. The personal dedication of these instructors is evident in activities such as taking time to know their students, working to understand the SLOs for each course taught, and choosing instruction and assessment techniques that support student learning. As instructors make choices, they are considering who their students are and what these students need to meet course objectives. The instructors interviewed and observed are dedicated to promoting student success, and this dedication is a component of how they choose their instruction and assessment techniques.

Theme #2 – "I teach how I learned."

The second theme identified through participant comments was their reliance on personal learning experiences when making choices as instructors. This was evident in

data about the time spent on specific techniques in terms of survey responses and observations, including the use of lecture and discussion or hands-on activities as well as specific assessments. When an instructor experienced learning success through a certain format, they preferred to teach in the same way.

In my study, 94.2% of survey respondents indicated that they learned about teaching techniques from personal experience. The next most common response was from colleagues (67.3%) and from former teachers (59.6%). These responses indicated that their own learning experiences, including through colleagues and former teachers, were significant influences in providing teaching technique options. Continuing with this theme of learning about techniques from their own experience, 55.8% of respondents stated that they learned about teaching techniques from a formal educational course or program, indicating that more than half of respondents had received some sort of training in pedagogy.

According to one instructor, "I do what I liked as a student – I don't teach the way I was taught, but the way I learned." An art instructor said, "What I do is based off experiences as a student; I took a lot from academic teachers, not just art teachers. Some of my exercises and projects are exact copies of assignments I felt I learned from the most." Another put it succinctly, "I teach how I learned," while a fourth responded, "I teach based on my own experiences." Interestingly, for one instructor this included a familial example: "I watched my parents teach, and I model my teaching after them and others who do it well." These statements are evidence of awareness for these instructors

about the distinction between the act of teaching and actual student learning, specifically their association between how they were taught and how they learned.

When it came to what techniques participants preferred, almost all (93%) used discussion frequently. This supports the statements by instructors that they wanted student interaction in class. As one instructor stated, "I try to make things interactive; I digress a lot." Another pointed out her belief that "Students get more out of it with more interaction." Without using any language that quotes Bloom's taxonomy (see Appendix A), instructors still identified the use of discussion, practice, and teaching others as the best ways for students to learn. This aligns with Bloom's higher-order thinking skill verbs, such as "defend," "explain," "demonstrate," and "tell."

If these instructors teach the way they learned, then it is likely that techniques observed provided insight to the instructor's learning experience. Instruction techniques observed closely aligned with what each instructor reported in the survey. While not exact alignment, only one instructor used lecture much more than reported. However, it was clear in this observation that this was due to the necessity of covering a specific topic in order to progress to a required assignment. Additionally, in some classes instructors attempted to engage in discussion but students were not cooperative. In this case, the instructor immediately changed to a small group (three students discussed the topic) then shared with the entire class.

The traditional technique of lecture, often accompanied by slides or PowerPoint presentations, was chosen as "frequently" used by 84% of respondents and "infrequently" by 11%. This aligns with both these instructors' experiences as learners and supports

their consistent use of discussion through providing discussion points or prompts through lecture. According to one history instructor, "I focus on letting them see the importance of the issues and when talking about issues, I make a point to include controversy and explain different viewpoints. We discuss multiple perspectives and how we are products of our own environment, economics and philosophy."

In terms of types of learning techniques, a majority of instructors employed active learning techniques, many frequently. For example, 69.8% of instructors reported that they used interactive group work frequently with 15% using this technique infrequently. One instructor explained why she uses interactive group work, stating that, "including small group activities helps students find the answers." In one observation of a single class session, an instructor had students engage in three separate interactive group activities. Hands-on workshop settings were used by 56.3% of instructors frequently and 32.1% infrequently. "Students have to learn how to learn, especially through hands-on experimenting," said one instructor, while another identified the use of "empowering through doing" in her class.

For this study, 55 of 56 respondents reported that they used attendance and participation as assessment techniques to measure student engagement. Fifty-one reported using quizzes, and 48 reported using research assignments. However, of the types of exams used, 45 reported using multiple-choice questions and 43 reported using essay exams. These results differ from Lei's, possibly because of the focus on humanities and social sciences instructors where Lei surveyed all faculty at two colleges. It may be that instructors in areas such as math, science, computer science, or applied sciences use

objective exams to test student knowledge while students in English composition and history classes would be expected to write to demonstrate learning.

While some instructors had assessment prescribed by the department or college (e.g., the Department/Division of English is clear about a minimum number of assessments and what type for certain courses), most instructors identified that they choose techniques based on their teaching philosophy and to meet students' expectations. For this study, one instructor used quizzes specifically to appease student expectations. She stated, "I really hate tests, but they are the only way to get at [meet expectations of] students who are expecting tests. I use quizzes, mostly, because students want to see a grade." According to another instructor, "I focus on critical thinking and writing. I want students to show what they know, so I use open-ended assessments."

Participants in this study also identified assessment as including more than traditional measures, such as tests. Thirty-nine instructors in this study used oral presentations for assessment, and 23 reported use of portfolios. "Other" assessment methods identified by instructors included projects, online discussion forums, online presentations, and short papers (not considered "research papers"). However, all instructors interviewed and observed reported looking for other evidence of student learning during each class session. This includes the awareness of instructors about student learning styles and taxonomies. Most instructors recognized that they teach foundation-level courses. As one instructor stated, "I need multiple ways of assessing to really know what students are learning. I need to support a broad range of learners."

Another stated, "I try to adopt and acknowledge the culture of students. Sometimes I use the same assessment, sometimes different."

Another feature of assessment choices for instructors in this study involved the focus on the student's responsibility for their own learning. Another feature of assessment choices for instructors in this study involved the focus on the student's responsibility for their own learning. Another feature of assessment choices for instructors in this study involved the focus on the student's responsibility for their own learning.

While none of the instructors in this study referred to poor attitude or behavior on students as the sole reason for lack of student success, instructors interviewed and observed did refer to student responsibility. This focus on student responsibility for their own learning was found in several statements by interviewees. According to one, "I try to get students to teach themselves." Another said, "Students have to learn how to learn. That's what I did." This is also supported by the appearance of the term "empowerment" or the phrase "students have to show what they know" or a similar comment in each of the interviews conducted.

While there was limited opportunity for assessment technique evidence in the observations, each instructor provided a variety of assessment techniques for each class as found in syllabi, mentioned during observed classes, and referenced in interviews. Instructor perception of assessment techniques were closely aligned with observation of these techniques, probably because they use assessments to identify student grades and this is information that must be delineated in the syllabus. Because of the concrete nature

of grading and assessments, instructors have a clear idea of what will be done and how it counts towards student grades, and were able to articulate this to the researcher and to students in the classroom. The fact that three of the four instructors observed mentioned their own learning experiences in relation to instruction and assessment technique activities when discussing items with students is another example of how important these experiences are to instructor choices.

Theme #3 – "I am always revising."

The third theme present in the interviews was one of ongoing revision of the courses by the participant instructors in their choices for presentations, student activities, materials used, and grading practices. Evidence of ongoing revision was found in comments such as, "I change things slightly every course," "I am always making constant adjustments," "I am always revising – especially for advanced class that relates more to innovations and current events," and "I revise all the time – sometimes in the middle, sometimes in planning, sometimes a small tweak." While six instructors specifically said they revise before each semester, four commented they revise regularly during the semester. Comments included, "A lot of revisions happen during the semester," "I usually revise by session (week by week), not a total course overhaul," and, "I take an entire day a week to prepare [for each class session]." This information represents an aspect of community college teaching not clearly addressed in the research identified for this study, except studies related to scholarship by faculty.

For the instructors in this study the alignment between frequent revision and positive student outcomes was evidenced in statements such as "when there is connection

to a popular text the students connect more," "I look for how to make it relevant and connect to what they like now," "I try to adopt/acknowledge the culture of students," and "I take into account what the class responds to and find news stories they will be interested in." In interviews, all respondents indicated a focus on student engagement and achieving learning objectives and the fact that they revise frequently. One instructor's commented that "I am always looking for engaging activities and seek interactive techniques," and another's statement of, "I need multiple ways of assessing to really know what students are learning," are evidence of why these instructors revise their courses. Statements such as "I constantly revise," "I change things slightly every course," "I revise pieces of my class regularly," "I am always revising," and "I take into account what the class responds to," indicate not just the frequency of revision but the focus on student engagement and outcomes.

Also in my study, the repeated use of specific materials and techniques and how they determine the effectiveness of techniques used is related to observation of student engagement, appropriateness to student abilities, and evidence of student progress. Every instructor interviewed in this study mentioned considering students' responses and using trial and error to determine technique effectiveness. While no instructors mentioned the use of statistical data to determine effectiveness, every instructor referred to student evaluations of what they found useful (or not) as a component in whether to retain a technique, but combined it with whether students were actively engaged in activities and were progressing through the course requirements. Additionally, no instructors identified

their observations of student engagement and progress as research or scholarship – they reserved those words for when they were searching for materials to use in class.

Theme #4 – "I don't always know what's going on."

The final theme identified in this study involved the participants' limited access to formal learning related to instruction and assessment techniques at the same time they sought an appropriate learning environment for students. Most instructors interviewed acknowledged the importance of effective teaching and its relationship to student attainment of learning objectives, retention, achievement, and completion. Even when instructors did not specifically refer to formal terms related to pedagogical formats, they indicated an idea of what they should be doing to achieve course objectives. However, the issue of limited opportunity for interaction with their institution, department, and professional development programs represent a challenge for these part-time instructors as found in other research.

For this study, participants were asked in the survey where they learned about the techniques they use for instruction and assessment. The most common response for teaching techniques was personal experience, colleagues, and former teachers. While 29 respondents identified that they had participated in a formal education course or program and 24 reported that they had learned techniques through seminars or workshops, only five indicated they had learned instruction techniques through an on-campus teaching and learning center. When responding about where the part-time instructors in this study learned about assessment techniques, most indicated multiple resources, with personal experience and colleagues as the most common responses. Only two participants

indicated they learned about assessment techniques at an on-campus center. As one instructor stated, "I need multiple ways of assessing to really know what students are learning." She identified her experience as a student as being most instructive in learning about assessment.

Regarding interaction within their institutions, several instructors mentioned limited communications with their departments, divisions, colleges, or other faculty as problematic. One instructor said, "It can be difficult to find connection/inclusion in the college and it has a lot to do with what you decide to do as an adjunct. I don't always know what is going on." This instructor cited practical issues, such as knowing where and how to make copies and how to find supplies including pens, as being particularly difficult during the first semester of teaching. Another instructor stated, "There is a lack of collegial relationships – I have to reach out and schedule interactions." The importance of connection within the college was identified by one instructor in this current study who said, "I think what helped me the most is my experience with other teachers and good instructors here, seeing what they do and getting ideas and incorporating their good techniques."

When asked about professional development opportunities available through their institutions, almost every instructor mentioned how they were limited from participating because of scheduling issues. Every instructor interviewed for this study mentioned the time constraints limiting their participation in college activities. One stated, "I went to a conference on campus two years ago." Another reported, "I haven't been able to do anything, though, since the birth of my daughter." Another responded, "I don't attend

department meetings or participate on committees," while a third said, "I don't participate much – I signed up for an online Blackboard class, but I am limited by the time I have available. But it can be nice to be left alone." All instructors said they were aware of various offerings at their institutions and of peer group conferences offered by the VCCS for their discipline. Three had attended peer group conferences. Five of these instructors identified offerings of online professional development as more flexible options that facilitated their participation.

Finally, the fact that all these instructors stated a desire to participate in professional development indicates they place value on learning new ways to facilitate and assess learning in their classrooms. While it might be difficult to participate in formal professional development offered by their employing institution, these instructors were able to find ways to expand their teaching and assessment competencies through formal education programs, researching topics relevant to their courses, and acquiring information and ideas from their peers either in groups or individual communication.

These four themes, identified through the information obtained from the surveys, interviews, and observations, provide extensive insight into the work experiences of these instructors. Additionally, organizing responses into these four themes shows the multiple influences on the choices of these instructors for teaching and assessment techniques. Understanding these influences and the resulting choices could be important considerations in identifying how instructors are meeting student learning outcomes.

Summary

In this chapter, an introduction was given regarding the presentation of descriptive statistics, findings from the interviews and observations, and profile examples. To address the study's first two research questions, I used the frequency of use for instruction and assessment techniques as reported in the survey and I identified these techniques during the observations and syllabi review. Survey, interview, and observation information provided data on what influenced instructor choice of the techniques they employ (Research Question #3). Additionally, I provided a cross-profile analysis to compare and contrast the features in the profiles.

Results from the first research question revealed that instructors utilized lecture, discussion, and slides/PowerPoint presentations more than other techniques. This was supported by observations, where lecture, discussion, and the use of slides/PowerPoint presentations were evident – although one instructor was observed only using discussion. The use of interactive group work, videos/DVDs, and workshop settings with hands-on activities were the next most frequently used techniques and were observed in all four classes. While few instructors reported the use of asynchronous online components, synchronous online components, or computer games/simulations, there were some references to online work in observations and syllabi. Additionally, few instructors identified a technique in the "Other" category, indicating that the nine categories provided in the survey adequately described most of the instruction techniques used by the majority of respondents. Finally, interviews indicated that respondents spend a

significant amount of time contemplating what instructional techniques they intend to use, with constant revision and adaptation before (and sometimes during) each semester.

Results from the second research question indicated that the most used assessment techniques were attendance/participation, research assignments, and quizzes. While 45 instructors used multiple choice exam questions, 43 used essay exam questions, and 35 respondents used peer evaluation as an assessment technique. The next most frequent assessment techniques were found in the "Other" category with oral presentations and short papers, followed by portfolios. The least used assessment technique was a workbook, which was not used at all by 33 instructors, and may be more common in mathematics, science, or applied science classes. Observations and syllabi reviews supported instructors' perceptions of frequency of use with all these techniques as reported in surveys and interviews. However, instructors utilized a variety of techniques to assess student learning and not just to provide a specific grade. In other words, instructors used assessment techniques to gauge student progress and identify areas for additional work, both informally and formally.

Results from the third research question came primarily from interviews and observations. Instructors used student learning objectives (SLOs) from the college or department for organizing their course, and some had requirements to include specific assessments. These required elements served as a framework, but individual instructors took time to choose techniques that they believed would help students meet the objectives and accurately reflect student achievements. Additionally, the information from interviews and observations indicates that choice of instruction and assessment

techniques is influenced by four significant factors – the institution, personal experience as a learner, individual research by the instructor, and feedback from students.

The next chapter discusses the findings and the themes identified through the survey, interviews, and observations in terms of the literature. It focuses on qualitative data to address the implications for practice and policy of this study, including the need for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the presentation and analysis of data were reported. This chapter consists of a brief summary of the study, discussion of the findings in comparison to the literature, implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusions. The purpose of the last three sections is to expand upon the concepts of this study to provide a further understanding of its possible influence on instruction and assessment technique choices of part-time instructors in community colleges, and present suggestions for additional research targeting how part-time community college instructors choose and implement pedagogical techniques. Additionally, this chapter addresses larger implications for part-time faculty and administrators in terms of hiring, training, and support of part-time faculty. Finally, a statement synthesizing this study addresses the substance and scope of what was attempted with this research.

Summary of Study

This study intended to explore the instruction and assessment techniques of part-time humanities and social sciences faculty at Virginia community colleges, including how these instructors choose the techniques they implement. The purpose of this study was achieved through a survey of a purposive sample of adjunct faculty at five

institutions, followed by interviews with a subset of ten respondents. Finally, observations and follow-up interviews were completed with four instructors of the subset. The study included three research questions:

1. What are the instructional practices utilized by Virginia community college part time instructors in humanities and social sciences courses?

2. What are the assessment techniques utilized by Virginia community college part time instructors in humanities and social sciences courses?

3. What influences Virginia community college part-time instructors to make choices about which instructional and assessment techniques to use?

Answers to the three research questions came from the findings from the survey responses, interviews, and observations. Profile examples were created from the findings and used to illustrate examples of specific instructors' experiences with choosing and utilizing instruction and assessment techniques.

Discussion of Findings

Previous research provides a clear understanding of principles of effective undergraduate teaching (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, 1991, 1999; Kuh, 2008; Kuh, Lair, & Umbach, 2004; Sharp, Komives, & Fincher, 2011). Other researchers (Barkley & Major, 2016; Fink, 2013; Lei, 2007 a, 2007b; Grieve, 2009; Grieve & Lesko, 2011) provide support for the use of active learning techniques. Addressing concerns about institutional support for and investment in part-time faculty, previous research (Baron-Nixon, 2007; Charlier & Williams, 2011; Kezar, 2012; Landrum, 2009) identified issues such as lack of office space and professional development opportunities, as well as last

minute hiring practices. The work of Alexander, et al., (2012) used focus groups and surveys to identify the skills and knowledge needed for community college teaching. Alexander, et al.'s study also identified the complexity of skills and knowledge required when teaching at these institutions. Babb's (2012) funds of knowledge frameworks and the research from AAC&U and the LEAP Project (Finley & McNair, 2013; Hart Associates, 2016; Kuh, 2008; Sternberg, et al. 2011) reflect the complex teaching and assessment skills and knowledge required. Existing research, however, provided little information on the processes and practices of part-time faculty in terms of how they instruct and assess students and how they make the choices regarding which techniques to implement.

As noted in Chapter Four, for this study, the survey responses provided frequency information on the use and origination of student learning objectives (SLOs), why instructors pursued or were pursuing additional education, where they learned about instruction and assessment techniques, and instructors' perception of their use of specific instruction and assessment techniques. Interviews and observations clarified what techniques instructors used and with what frequency, as well as more in-depth information on what influences instructor choice of the techniques they employ. Four themes were identified from the interviews and observations that divide findings implications across the three research questions: 1) personal dedication of instructors; 2) instructors' practice of teaching how they learned; 3) constant revision of courses taught; and 4) limited availability of collegial interaction or professional development opportunities. It is important to examine these themes in relation to the literature on

undergraduate teaching and learning to gain a deeper understanding of how these instructors' experience fit in the wider framework.

"I like the work." The first theme identified through comments from the survey, interviews, and observations was "I like the work." This theme indicated the personal dedication of these part-time instructors both to their teaching and to student learning, evident in comments about why they began teaching at the community college, the satisfaction they express in the role of a part-time instructor, the frequency with which they express a desire to teach full-time, and the time they spend on preparation and research for teaching. As Kuh, et al., (2004) stated, "That faculty matter to student learning is a widely accepted article of faith with substantial empirical support" (p.1). Other researchers, including Finley and McNair (2013), Kuh (2008), and Fink (2013) supported the importance of instructors who are supportive of student goals and focused on student achievement. Faculty who like their work likely view their role positively, and those that exhibit personal dedication to their students regarding teaching are likely to be focused on student achievement.

Related to the issue of how instructors began their teaching careers, some research (Kezar et al., 2014; Kezar, 2005; Green, 2007) indicated that community colleges have been intentional about using part-time faculty to meet student needs, part-time faculty in this study showed a similar intentionality in choosing to apply for this work. This seems to fit the experiences of instructors in my study, where only one did not actively seek a community college teaching position. However, the findings of this study that faculty like their work suggests a positive outcome – job satisfaction – from what Kezar (20005) and

others identified as a negative situation – a career that begins with community colleges planning to use less costly part-time faculty to fill classrooms.

In terms of satisfaction in the role of being an instructor, survey and interview data supported the work of Huffman (2000), who reported that 96% of adjunct community college instructors in his study clearly enjoyed teaching and 51.3% always enjoyed their time in the classroom (p. 75).

However, despite this intentionality on the part of the instructor in seeking teaching positions at community colleges, there is concern in the existing research about those who hold multiple part-time positions at different institutions. The instructors in this study mirrored those in other studies (Adamowicz, 2007; Baron-Nixon, 2007; Kezar, 2012; Kezar and Sam, 2010b) in identifying the difficulties inherent in this arrangement. The experience of the instructor in this study who teaches five classes per semester with 120 students on the same topic, and the instructor who said that it was necessary to teach seven classes in three states in order to make a living wage is consistent with the literature. The reality of the difficulties of making a living from part-time teaching corresponds to 2012 research from the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW) that found the median pay per three-credit course for part-time faculty at two-year colleges was $2,235 and 40% of faculty surveyed had a personal income of below $25,000 annually. However, it should also be noted that some of the 10 faculty interviewed in my study indicated they preferred teaching part-time, although not the 50% found by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in their Humanities Indicators for 2008 (see Appendix K).

Other evidence that correlates to instructors liking their work is their personal dedication to teaching at the community college as seen in the time spent by instructors in preparing for courses and class sessions, fulfilling their teaching obligations, and furthering their own education. The 15% of participants currently pursuing a formal advanced degree and the 17% who received a new academic degree in the past 12 months supports represents a significant time commitment, and is one aspect of what Townsend and Rosser (2009) referred to as "the relationship between scholarship and teaching" (p. 671). These instructors were observed taking time to know their students, working to understand the SLOs for each course taught, and choosing instruction and assessment techniques that support student learning. This aligns with Barkley and Major (2016), Fink (2013), and Kuh (2008) all of whom make a point that significant learning happens when instructors take the time to know their students, their subject, and their course objectives and ensure instruction and assessment techniques support course goals while providing students a variety of ways to show achievement. As stated previously, instructors interviewed and observed are dedicated to promoting student success, and this dedication is a component of how they choose their instruction and assessment techniques.

"I teach how I learned." The second theme, "I teach how I learned," is aligned with other studies of community college faculty (Burgess & Samuels; 1999, Fike & Fike, 2007; Green, 2007; Kelly-Kleese, 2003; Landrum, 2009, Lei, 2007a &2007b; Scheutz, 2002) which explores the prevalence of techniques with which instructors had more experience as a learner. As stated previously, when an instructor experienced learning

success through a certain format, they preferred to teach in the same way. The evidence of alignment of these choices with generally accepted best practices to promote learning, such as Bloom's Taxonomy and Chickering and Gamson's Seven Principles, supports instructors' focus on student learning and prompting student responsibility for their own learning.

Some studies have found that an instructor's personal experience is linked to that same instructor's technique choices. In Lei's study (2007a, 2007b), adjuncts responded that they learned their teaching techniques and assessment practices from colleagues, personal experience, and former instructors. Babb (2012) found that exposure to the community college environment provided instructors with opportunities to learn how to teach. Additionally, there is some evidence (Kelly-Kleese, 2003; Green, 2007) that reflective practices on teaching do exist with community college instructors, often informally through use of variety of techniques and evaluating outcomes.

Without using using any language that quotes Bloom's taxonomy (see Appendix A) or Fink's (2013) Taxonomy of Significant Learning, instructors still identified the use of discussion, practice, and teaching others as the best ways for students to learn. This aligns with Bloom's higher-order thinking skill verbs, such as "defend," "explain," "demonstrate," and "tell." Additionally, this emphasis on discussion aligns with the work of Chickering and Gamson (1987) and their "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" where they emphasize contact between students and faculty and the development of reciprocity and cooperation among students – all of which are part of active class discussion. That all respondents in this study used discussion as

indicated in their survey responses, interviews, and observations is an indicator of the importance these instructors place on this teaching technique.

The frequent use of the traditional technique of lecture, often accompanied by slides or PowerPoint presentations, aligns with the work of Greive (2009) and Greive and Lesko (2011) who supported the basic characteristics of good teaching as knowing the subject and communicating effectively. Lei (2007 a, 2007b) also found that adjuncts in his study engaged most frequently in lecture. Using lecture as a primary means of communicating subject knowledge, these instructors are also in alignment with Huffman's (2000) findings, in which community college adjunct faculty saw themselves, their individual ability as an instructor, and their subject knowledge as important to the quality of their teaching. The instructors in Huffman's study indicated their belief that the use of lecture and discussion was necessary because the inadequate preparation and poor attitude and behavior of students prevented these students from taking responsibility for their own learning. This extensive use of discussion and lecture is also found in the work of Scheutz (2002), Lei (2007a, 2007b), and Green (2007). Alexander, et al., (2012) pointed out the need for competent community college teachers to make connections with and create relevance for students with a focus on student engagement, which instructors interviewed for this study indicated as their goal in using discussion and lecture. Finally, Scheutz (2002) looked specifically at part-time faculty and identified that most part-time faculty seldom used guest lecturers, media, or laboratory experiments. Scheutz also found that these faculty were less likely to develop strong connections with students because of limited time on campus. The findings from this study, however, show

instructors used a variety of media and were aware of their on-campus time limitations and identified ways to be available to students.

Other techniques used by instructors in my survey are also aligned with Bloom's taxonomy and Chickering and Gamson's Seven Principles – specifically, interactive group work and workshop settings that use hands-on activities. These techniques require students to apply, analyze, evaluate and create – levels in Bloom's taxonomy while interactive group work address Chickering and Gamson's Principles through encouraging contact and cooperation between students, utilizing active learning techniques, and focusing on time on task. A majority of instructors in my study employed these active learning techniques, many frequently. These findings somewhat contradict Scheutz (2002) who found "students enrolled in classes taught by part-timers would be less likely to experience these kinds of instructional practices on average than students enrolled in full-times' [instructors'] classes" (p. 41).

Regarding preferred assessment techniques, Lei (2007a, 2007b) found that adjuncts in his studies placed the most emphasis on objective exams (defined as those with a single answer to a question, not essay) with attendance/participation and quizzes used frequently by half of the instructors. While some instructors in my study had assessment prescribed by the department or college (e.g., the Department/Division of English is clear about a minimum number of assessments and what type for certain courses), most instructors identified that they choose techniques based on their experience as a learner, teaching philosophy, and to meet students' expectations.

In regards to the definition of assessment, instructors in this study were similar to those in the work of Alexander, et al., (2012) that identified the skills and knowledge needed for community college teaching. Alexander et.al, found that "When participants spoke of assessment, it was less about traditional tests and measurements and more about using their instinct and listening skills to detect group learning" (p. 858). Instructor use of a variety of techniques aligned with Barkely and Major (2016), Fink (2013), Palomba and Banta (1999), and Suskie (2009). Use of multiple techniques also aligns with Alexander (2012) and information from Chickering and Gamson (1987) on best practices. These instructors are focused on learning outcomes, while respecting diverse ways of learning – something Fink (20013) identifies as a need in addressing non-cognitive factors that are related to retention, persistence, and completion. In other words, instructors following examples like Bloom's Taxonomy or Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning to align with mastery of a topic need to consider how their choices affect student behaviors, attitudes, skills, and learning strategies. However, when instructors had an example from their own experience as a learner that they found valuable, they sought to replicate it in their own classroom.

Another feature of assessment choices for instructors in this study involved the focus on the student's responsibility for their own learning. While no instructor specifically mentioned the term of personal responsibility in their own learning experience, student responsibility was clear in their syllabus language and course expectations. Sperling (2010) examined how community colleges understand the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) and found that few instructors at his college

were "accustomed to coming at teaching through a 'learning portal'"(p. 596). This lack of intentionality can also be found in Huffman (2000) whose study found that most adjuncts saw the problem as the students' "inadequate preparation to take the course and poor attitude and poor behavior" (p. 75) as what keeps students from learning. Some instructors stated that, as in their own learning experiences, one of their goals was for students to teach themselves or learn how to learn – both examples of outcomes supported by Fink (2013) and Kuh (2008).

" I am always revising." This theme was an area not specifically mentioned in the literature. However, Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seventh principle referred to respect for diverse ways of learning and thus implied the need for instructors to revise instruction and assessment to reach learners in different ways to promote learning. Ronco and Cahill (2006) found that positive student outcomes were linked with the instructor's ability to convey information effectively and assist students' learning objective achievement. Palomba and Banta (1999) saw assessment, specifically as a work in progress that requires constant revision, while Barkley and Major (2016) noted that instructors must constantly evaluate and modify or create learning assessment techniques.

Decisions on revisions to instruction or assessment techniques were based on the instructor's personal experience and their constant scanning of techniques and student learning to determine effectiveness. This is evidence of instructors' commitment to using techniques that promote learning, as identified by Adamowicz (2007), Chickering and Gamson (1987), Fike and Fike (2007), Greive (2009), Greive and Lesko (2011), Lei

(2007a, 2007b), and Scheutz (2002). It indicates that instructors made revisions based on student outcomes, even if they simply identified if students are engaged in an activity in order to identify whether to revise that activity.

However, this finding that instructors revise their techniques to improve student engagement and outcomes contrasts with Huffman (2000) who found that instructors in his study of adjunct community college faculty identified student lack of preparation, poor attitude, and poor behavior as the primary reasons students do not meet learning objectives. A striking finding of Huffman's (2000) is that the adjuncts in his study see the problem with everything in the classroom as the students, including that student behaviors hinder instructors' ability to teach (p. 93). With only 25% of Huffman's adjuncts interested in engaging with peers to improve their teaching (p. 111), these findings indicate that Huffman's instructors are not focused on a need to revise their teaching techniques to improve student outcomes.

Additionally, the repeated use of specific materials and techniques and how instructors in my study determine the effectiveness of techniques used is related to observation of student engagement, appropriateness to student abilities, and evidence of student progress. Kelly-Kleese (2003) would identify this as the scholarship of teaching at community college – a focus on what works for students that benefits both the students and the college. Using observations of student engagement, appropriateness, and progress also align with Alexander et al., (2012), who stated that, "When participants spoke of assessment, it was less about traditional tests and measurements and more about using their instinct and listening skills to detect group learning and using classroom

research to improve their teaching" (p.858). While all instructors interviewed in this study mentioned considering students' responses and using trial and error to determine technique effectiveness, no instructors mentioned the use of mean statistical data to determine effectiveness. Additionally, every instructor referred to student evaluations of what they found useful (or not) as a component in whether to retain a technique, but combined it with whether students were actively engaged in activities and were progressing through the course requirements. However, no instructors identified these observations as research or scholarship – they reserved those words for when they were searching for materials to use in class – although researchers such as Williams (2014) would identify this activity as part of the scholarship of teaching (SoT).

Finally, while the literature provides multiple examples of various components of effective teaching, it also shows that the teaching of part-time faculty is not significantly different from full-time faculty. The most significant difference found by Baron-Nixon (2007), Kezar (2102), Landrum (2009), McArthur (1999), and Umbach (2007a) was the limited time on-campus that part-time instructors were available for meeting with students. Despite the time constraints, these faculty regularly engage in revisions to their classes in terms of instruction and assessment in order to improve student outcomes and meet learning objectives. This information indicates that the instruction and assessment technique choices of part-time faculty are likely similar to the same choices by full-time faculty, and that part-time faculty use student outcomes and learning objectives to inform these choices.

"I don't always know what's going on." The final theme identified in this study, "I don't always know what's going on," involved the participants' limited access to formal learning related to instruction and assessment techniques and their limited contact with the individuals and entities at their teaching institutions. These findings are similar to the experiences of Sperling (2010) who found that few instructors at his community college had any theoretical framework for teaching and Adamowicz (2007) who had no time for any professional development activities when she taught at three institutions. Wallin (2005) pointed out that institutions hire part-time faculty for their knowledge of the subject matter more than for their teaching ability and understanding of learning in the classroom.

When the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) issued its paper, *An Examination of the Changing Faculty: Ensuring Institutional Quality and Achieving Desired Student Learning Outcomes* (Kezar et al., 2014), the authors expressed concern that the use of part-time faculty created problems for both students and the instructors. Specifically, this study cited that the lack of access to activities that improve pedagogy was an impediment to "the ability of individual instructors to interact with students and apply their many talents" (7). The lack of professional development is sometimes part of limited support for scholarship and teaching, as identified by Townsend and Rosser (2009), while Kelly-Kleese (2003) noted that faculty in her study saw scholarship as a process of their professional development that improved their teaching. Jacoby (2006) identified professional development for part-time faculty as an important aspect of improving the instruction techniques part-time faculty use in their classrooms. Each of

these researchers noted the importance of professional development in improving teaching and assessment techniques of college instructors, and many noted that connection between the classroom experience and graduation and retention rates.

When speaking about teaching and assessment techniques in the interviews, few participants made specific references to the items in Bloom's taxonomy, Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning, or Chickering and Gamson's Principles. However, each instructor mentioned terms similar to those used by Bloom, Fink, Chickering, and Gamson – active learning, engagement, critical thinking, higher order thinking skills, and learning outcomes such as understanding, applying, and analyzing.

Several instructors mentioned the problematic nature of limited communications with their departments, divisions, colleges, or other faculty. CHEA identified this lack of connection in their 2014 study, finding that adjuncts do not have the resources necessary to optimize their abilities for the benefit of their students. Kezar and Sam (2010b) identified the limited orientation provided for adjuncts to the institution and its mission and access to basic resources as realities that have a negative impact on the part-time faculty work experience. In contrast, Diegel (2013) provided an example of a single college where humanities and English adjuncts were emphatically supported by chairpersons, focusing on policies that supported communication and opportunities.

When asked about professional development opportunities available through their institutions, almost every instructor mentioned how they were limited from participating because of scheduling issues. Adamowicz (2007), Baron-Nixon (2007), Kezar (2012), Kezar and Sam (2010a, 2010b), and Reevy and Deason (2014) identified evidence of

these time limitations and mentioned that part-time faculty typically have limited time on campus for any activity outside of teaching (including participation in governance, meetings, and development activities) and limited time in the rest of their day because of other employment. There was also evidence in the survey and interviews of these instructors' own efforts to improve their teaching and assessment and expanding what Babb (2012) identified as funds of knowledge – the essential knowledge needed to be a community college instructor.

Finally, whether it is formal professional development opportunities or other informal work, instructors in this study were dedicated to what Alexander, et al., (2012) identified as core competencies for community college instructors including terms of core knowledge, skill, and attributes. These instructors had a clear awareness of the complexity of their task in community college teaching, in which they are expected to teach what Alexander identified as "an exceptionally diverse student body," (851) and respond to demands for both internal and external accountability. The fact that all these instructors stated a desire to participate in professional development indicates they place value on learning new ways to facilitate and assess learning in their classrooms. While it might be difficult to participate in formal professional development offered by their employing institution, these instructors were able to find ways to expand their teaching competencies through formal education programs, researching topics relevant to their courses, and acquiring information and ideas from their peers either in groups or individual communication.

Implications for Practice and Policy

With the majority of undergraduate students in the United States taking some of their coursework at community colleges and the majority of courses in community colleges being taught by part-time instructors (AFT 2010; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Kezar, 2012), it is important to identify the instruction and assessment techniques used by these instructors and to understand how they choose which techniques to utilize. It is equally important to address assumptions about the quality of teaching provided by part-time faculty and how colleges can best support these part-time instructors. The findings of this study have several implications for those interested in instruction by part-time faculty in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and beyond. This study identified several themes that were prevalent in the experiences of respondents which, when combined with survey data, apply to decisions community colleges make about using part-time instructors, the importance of the availability of new techniques and materials, the availability of appropriate professional development, and processes for hiring and evaluation of part-time instructors.

In regards to the use of part-time instructors, this study indicates that these faculty members provide an appropriate, dedicated resource as community college instructors in the humanities and social sciences. In research questions one and two, the techniques used for instruction and assessment demonstrated that these instructors utilized techniques that promoted student engagement and addressed course learning objectives. Two of the three most frequently used instruction techniques - discussion and interactive group work - encouraged student participation and created an environment where students learned from each other. Every instructor used attendance/participation as one

form of assessment, which measures and supports the importance of student engagement. Interviews and observations demonstrated that the part-time faculty who participated in this study constantly assessed the effectiveness of techniques and made decisions on revisions when necessary. These instructors considered student engagement, focused on identifying the achievement of learning objectives, and demonstrated willingness to make revisions. This implies that they currently provide an appropriate, dedicated resource for community college instruction.

However, it is important to note that the fact that these instructors liked teaching and received personal satisfaction from teaching may contribute to the types of negative treatment identified in the literature. Because these individuals are willing to work when asked, need to teach as often as possible to earn a living wage, and acknowledge that they have limited status at their institution they are vulnerable. In a state like Virginia, with no collective bargaining for part-time faculty, the instructor has few options if the institution does not treat them fairly.

An implication of this study relates to the availability of new techniques and materials. For these instructors – and for any instructor – good choices come from good options. Part-time instructors need access to information on techniques and materials that apply to the courses they teach so they can identify new opportunities to promote learning. Instructors in this study indicated a willingness to incorporate new techniques and materials, and provided evidence of time devoted to research to enhance their class sessions. However, these instructors also identified time and accessibility limitations as challenges to learning about and implementing new techniques. Making information on

instruction and assessment techniques readily available to part-time instructors would minimize the time necessary to locate these materials. Colleges could use learning management systems (such as Blackboard, the system used by the VCCS) to set up repositories for information sharing specific to courses or disciplines. However, it is important for colleges to focus on both availability and appropriateness of information to ensure accessibility by part-time instructors. Discipline-specific online repositories of information would meet this requirement and allow for part-time instructors' optimal participation.

Another implication of this study involves the availability of professional development opportunities for part-time instructors that are appropriate for the classes they teach. For part-time instructors in the VCCS, participation in peer group conferences is a way to discover and discuss instruction and assessment techniques, and several instructors in this study had participated in these annual events. However, the VCCS limits the number of peer group conferences held annually, thereby limiting the opportunity for attendance. Additionally, depending upon timing and location, however, these conferences can involve travel and overnight stays that are difficult to manage with a part-time instructor's salary and time limitations. Additional funding through the VCCS could assist with more opportunities and greater access for part-time instructors. Online professional development, in contrast, allows part-time instructors to participate when and where they are able. Additionally, online department meetings could improve participation by part-time instructors. Financial compensation for meeting attendance, offered by some colleges, could have a similar effect.

Finally, the findings in this study implicate the importance of: 1) hiring part-time instructors based on their ability to use teaching and assessment techniques that promote student learning and help the institution achieve its mission; and 2) evaluating part-time faculty on evidence of this use. None of the instructors in this study were required to provide a teaching demonstration as part of the hiring process. Hiring (from the instructors' perspective) focused on credentials, availability, and interest in teaching. College hiring policy should include opportunities to understand a potential instructor's ability to incorporate techniques that promote learning. Interview questions that address instruction and assessment techniques, active learning principles, and student engagement would provide information on the potential instructor's understanding and likelihood of use. For VCCS institutions, uniform policies on hiring that include more than a transcript review and interview with a single administrator could also ensure instructors hired are capable of promoting student learning. The colleges and the VCCS require some evaluation of part-time instructors, but there is currently no prescribed format for this evaluation, as exists for full-time faculty. If these evaluations include consideration of instruction and assessment techniques, evaluations could provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. Since instructors in this study indicated that they regularly sought out ways to improve their teaching and student learning, an evaluation policy for part-time instructors that incorporates feedback on positive techniques and ways to improve could be helpful to instructors, students, and the college in meeting learning objectives.

Recommendations for Further Research

The goal of this study was to explore the instruction and assessment techniques of part-time humanities and social sciences faculty at Virginia community colleges, including how these instructors choose the techniques they implement. Data was collected to answer three research questions related to this goal through a survey, interviews, and observations. The information was studied and findings resulted from the examination of the data. As stated previously, the findings do have some limitations. As a mixed methods study, the findings are applicable to specific participants and do not have statistical significance. Further research along these lines should use a variety of data collection methods. Quantitative analysis of a larger sample could provide statistically significant data on demographics and instructor perceptions of the use of instruction and assessment techniques.

Future research into this subject should also include a representative sample of humanities and social science adjuncts in the VCCS to identify trends and provide comparisons with the larger group of adjuncts. Using this work as a foundation, a study of a representative sample of part-time faculty in the VCCS would identify commonalities and difference across colleges and disciplines. Using this same data, a study that compares VCCS adjuncts with adjuncts at four-year colleges could identify whether techniques used and issues reported by instructors are similar or different depending upon the type of institution. These studies could also be analyzed to provide data on the prevalence of effective instruction and assessment techniques and relate these findings to student learning data.

Additional research could examine the difference between perceived and observed instructional and assessment techniques. Because the observations in this study were limited, techniques observed may be more related to that session's topic than instructor preference. For many reasons, one class may not include a technique that the instructor utilizes frequently, so a more thorough examination of perception and observation would provide additional data on what instructors do in their classroom over the course of a semester.

Another area of research could focus on more detailed information on the hours part-time community college instructors spend in preparation for courses and individual class sessions. This would not only provide data on the work load of these part-time instructors, it would provide additional information about where they learn instruction and assessment techniques. Research that includes questions more specific to the value the instructor places on different resources for learning instruction and assessment techniques could identify effective mechanisms for professional development of part-time instructors.

In terms of the survey instrument, additional research should consider improving the instrument by including questions on the use of textbooks, digital learning resources, and open educational resources. These student resources are important components of meeting SLOs and are additional techniques that should be considered. Information on whether an instructor even has choice in which text or format to use is an important component to the learning environment that instructor develops in their classroom. It

would also be useful to learn about the influence of the use of a required text on instruction and assessment technique choices.

Finally, quantitative and qualitative data on ineffective techniques identified by instructors would be useful information for understanding teaching and learning in community colleges. Specifically, information on why an instructor found a technique ineffective, the steps for making this determination, and how they identified a resolution in terms of new technique implementation could address the findings in this study, which indicated that many faculty revised techniques used according to their perceived success or failure. This would provide additional information on influences on instructor technique choices.

Conclusions

The findings of this study expanded the work of previous researchers in the area of instruction and assessment techniques and choices of part-time community college instructors. This investigation revealed that part-time humanities and social sciences instructors at certain Virginia community colleges involved in this study focus on student learning objectives and plan their classes to utilize techniques that promote student engagement, include relevant connections and references, and provide assessments that allow students to show what they know. As they do throughout higher education and specifically in community colleges, these instructors play an important role in providing undergraduate education. According to Wallin (2005), "Learning should be the primary focus in the classroom. Hiring full- or part-time faculty who are qualified to facilitate learning must be the goal of academic leaders" (p. 76). The instructors in this study

indicated an understanding of that role, a dedication to constant improvement, and strong personal satisfaction in their role as an educator.

Additionally, this study showed instructors utilizing a variety of pedagogical choices for instruction and assessment. While some techniques were required by the institution or department (such as the number and type of papers in an English composition course, a requirement to include at least three different assessments for history, and the accreditation requirement for classroom contact hours), instructors in this study indicated a willingness to use a variety of techniques. These instructors regularly revised their courses and class sessions, sometimes making changes during the semester and sometime during actual class sessions. They devoted significant time to revisions between semesters, and sometimes between class sessions. However, there was limited professional development related to pedagogy available to these instructors given their time constraints, workloads, and lack of incentive structure.

While this study did not attempt to identify the qualifications of instructors, the data presented here supports their dedication to the profession of teaching. Braxton (2008) stated, "The scholarship of teaching is a process through which the profession of teaching advances" (p. 2). The work of these instructors to advance their teaching, and thereby student learning, is evidence of engaging in this scholarship. Although none used the term "scholarship of teaching" or "SOTL," each instructor indicated that they worked to maintain or expand knowledge in their area of expertise and to fulfill their teaching obligations in the best possible way. This included efforts to meet student learning

objectives, to keep the class interesting for students, to maintain their own teaching energy, to meet the needs of students, and to constantly improve their courses.

Table 1 - Academic Year 14-15 Data on participant colleges

	CC1	CC2	CC3	CC4	CC5
Number of Jurisdictions in Service Area*	3 counties 3 cities	4 counties 3 cities	7 counties 1 city	7 counties 3 cities	6 counties 1 city
Campus Setting	Rural: Fringe	Rural: Fringe	Rural: Fringe	Suburb: Large	Rural: Fringe
Total Credit Students	6,039	1,848	10,012	13,753	9,427
Full-time Equivalent Students	2,837	723	4,503	5,543	4,012
Total # of Faculty	258	82	285	454	470
# Part-time faculty	184	60	200	347	396
# Full-time faculty	74	22	85	107	74
Percentage Part-time faculty	71.3%	73%	70%	76.4%	84%
Percentage Full-time faculty	28.6%	26%	30%	23.5%	15%
Credit hours taught Part-time/Full-time**	2,064	1,209	5,473	6,048	6,261
Credit hours taught Full-time**	3,582	1,205	3,374	3,759	3,473

Source: www.vccs.edu*, IPEDS data system, and VCCS** Office of Institutional Research

Table 2 - Academic Year 2014-15 VCCS Part-time Faculty by Race and Gender

Race	Men	Women	Total
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	15	21	**36**
Asian	122	155	**277**
Black or African American	196	372	**568**
Hispanic or Latino	32	64	**96**
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	3	1	**5**
White	768	857	**1625**
2 or more	21	38	**59**
Unknown	3	1	**4**
TOTAL:	**1160**	**1509**	**2669**

Source: IPEDS Data System, Spring 2015

Table 3 - Part-time faculty in study colleges by race and gender

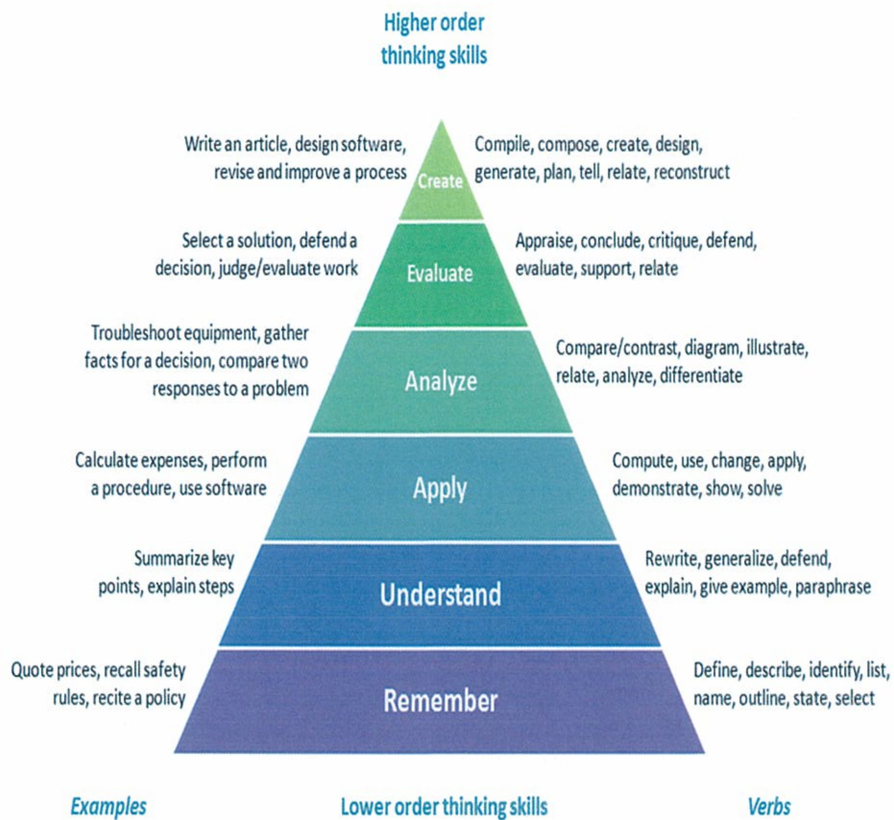
Race/Gender	CC1	CC2	CC3	CC4	CC5	TOTAL
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0 0-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	1 1-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	2 1-M 1-W	3 2-M 1-W
Asian	3 3-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	4 1-M 3-W	15 5-M 10-W	5 2-M 3-W	27 11-M 16-W
Black or African American	1 0-M 1-W	1 1-M 0-W	16 7-M 9-W	44 13-M 41-F	11 5-M 6-W	73 26-M 57-W
Hispanic or Latino	0 0-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	2 2-M 0-W	3 2-M 1-W	4 2-M 2-W	9 6-M 3-W
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0 0-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	1 0-M 1-W	0 0-M 0-W	1 0-M 1-W
White	175 83-M 92-W	54 28-M 26-W	153 71-M 82-W	277 121-M 156-W	364 153-M 211-W	1023 456-M 567-W
2 or more	1 1-M 0-W	2 2-M 0-W	4 3-M 1-W	3 2-M 1-W	5 0-M 5-W	15 8-M 7-W
Unknown	0 0-M 0-W	2 2-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	0 0-M 0-W	2 2-M 0-W

Source: IPEDS Data System

Table 4. Use of online/computer-based instruction techniques

	Frequently	**Infrequently**	**Not at all**
Asynchronous online *(51 responding)*	39.22% (20)	29.41% (15)	31.37% (16)
Synchronous online *(52 responding)*	25% (13)	42.31% (22)	32.69% (17)
Computer games/simulation *(50 responding)*	10% (5)	20% (10)	70% (35)

APPENDIX A



Bloom's Taxonomy (http://psychlearningjournal.wordpress.com/2013/04/)

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT (consent section will be the first part)

SURVEY ON INSTRUCTIONAL AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

I. Background and Demographic Information

1) What is the name of your current institution? [Drop down selection, all that apply]

2) What is your faculty status? [Drop down – full-time, part-time]

3) What is your current level of academic achievement? [Drop-down: Less than Bachelors, Bachelors, Master, Doctorate, Other]

4) Are you currently pursuing a formal advanced degree? [Drop-down: Y/N]

5) If responding "Yes," why are you pursuing this academic degree? [Drop-down: To increase salary; For professional development in current field; To teach in a different academic field; Other (with comment box activated)]

6) Have you earned any new academic degree in the past 12 months? [Drop-down: Y/N]

7) Do you teach during weekends and/or evening hours? [Drop-down: Y/N]

8) Do you teach at an off-campus site? [Drop-down: Y/N]

9) Do you teach online courses? [Drop-down: Y/N]

10) Which subject area do you mainly teach? [Drop-down: Math; Science; IT/Computer Science; Social Science; English; Humanities; Fine Arts; PE/Health

; Business; Health Sciences; Career/Technical Education; Other (with comment box activated)]

11) What level of classes do you currently teach (mark all that apply)? [Drop-down: Remedial (below 100's); 100's; 200's]

12) On the average, how many students do you teach per class? [Drop-down: under 10; 11 to 20; 21 to 30; 31 to 40; 41 to 50; Over 50]

13) Do you base your course organization on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)? [Drop-down: Y/N]

14) Are SLOs provided for you by your college/department? [Drop-down: Y/N]

15) Where did you learn about teaching techniques? [Select all that apply/multiple choices accepted: Through a teaching and learning center on campus; Through personal experience; Through a formal educational course or program; Through seminars or workshops; From colleagues; From former teachers; Other, please specify (with comment box activated)]

16) Where did you learn about testing techniques? [Select all that apply/multiple choices accepted: Through a teaching and learning center on campus; Through personal experience; Through a formal educational course or program; Through seminars or workshops; From colleagues; From former teachers; Other, please specify (with comment box activated)]

17) Years of teaching experience (overall): [Drop-down: Less than 3; 3-7; 8-15; More than 15

II. Instructional Techniques Used in Classes

18) Thinking of one of your typical classes, what percentage of time do you spend using each of the techniques listed:

	<10 %	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	>75 %
a)Lecture					
b)Discussion					
c)Lab Teaching					
d)Videos/DVS's/Computer Simulation					
e)Slide/PowerPoint presentations					
f)Asynchronous online components					
g)Synchronous online components					
g)Learning management system, such as Blackboard					
h)Other					

(Other opens a content box to describe)

III. Assessment Formats

19) On average, what percentage of your course grade do you base on each of the techniques listed below?

	<10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	>75 %
a)Attendance/Participation					
b)Quizzes					
c)Multiple Choice exams					
d) Essay exams					
e)Lab practicals					
f)Workbook					
g) Oral presentations					
h) Research assignments					
i)Portfolios					
j)Other					

(Other opens a content box to describe)

Are you interested in being placed in the drawing for a gift card incentive? [Yes/No choice]

If yes, participant will be requested to provide Name, email, phone.

Are you willing to participate in a follow-up interview? This interview will take approximately 1 hour, and a gift card incentive will be provided. [Yes/No choice]

If yes, participant will be requested to provide contact information: Name, email, phone

Are you willing to participant in an observation of your teaching as part of this study? This observation will be for at least two class sessions, no less than a total of 100 minutes of class time. [Yes/No choice]

If yes, participant will be requested to provide contact information: Name, email, phone

Thank you for completing this survey.

APPENDIX C

Interview #1 Questions
Doctoral Dissertation
Lyda Costello Kiser
GMU DA in Higher Education

1) Describe how you prepare for your course sessions.

2) Do you use your own syllabus or one provided by the department/college?

3) Describe the challenges in fulfilling your instructor obligations.

4) Describe the rewards of being a part-time instructor.

5) What do you believe are the most effective instructional techniques you use? Why?

6) What do you believe are the most effective assessment techniques you use? Why?

7) Do you believe students meet learning objectives in your course? Why?

8) Do you participate in department/college meetings, professional development, or other events? Please describe.

9) Do you use student evaluations of your courses to make changes?

10) If you could change one thing about your job as a part-time instructor, what would it be?

APPENDIX D

Observation Protocol
Doctoral Dissertation
Lyda Costello Kiser
GMU DA in Higher Education

Course Title/Level:

Time scheduled:

Topics covered:

Describe the facility for the class session:

Time class began:
Time class ended:
Number of students in attendance:

Instructional techniques observed:	**Present (Y/N)**	**Amount of Time used** (minutes)	**Absent (Y/N)**
a)Lecture			
b)Discussion			
c)Lab Teaching			
d)Videos/DVDs/Computer Simulation			
e)Slide/PowerPoint presentations			
f)Asynchronous online components			
g)Synchronous online components			
g)Learning management system, such as Blackboard			
h)Other			

Assessment Techniques Observed:	**Present (Y/N)**	**Amount of time Used (minutes**	**Present (Y/N)**
a)Attendance/Participation			
b)Quizzes			
c)Multiple Choice exams			
d) Essay exams			
e)Lab practicals			
f)Workbook			
g) Oral presentations			
h) Research assignments			
i)Portfolios			
j)Other			

APPENDIX E: Interview #2 Questions

Doctoral Dissertation
Lyda Costello Kiser
GMU DA in Higher Education

1) When attending your course, I observed you using the following techniques (from observation instrument). How did you choose these techniques? (Every class? This time only?)

a)Lecture

b)Discussion

c)Interactive group work

d)Videos/DVD

e)Computer Simulation

f)Slide/PowerPoint presentations (either with lecture, provided online, or as an aid for students)

g)Asynchronous online components

h)Synchronous online components

i)Workshop settings (hands on, individual activity)

j)Other (Explain)

2) How do you choose the techniques you use? When do you use specific techniques? Do you have a preference for any technique(s)? Why?

3) Does your department require you to use specific techniques? Please describe.

4) Does your college provide professional development opportunities in instruction? Do you participate in these opportunities? Please describe.

5) Does your college provide professional development opportunities in assessment? Do you participate in these opportunities? Please describe.

6) Have you had formal training in instruction techniques outside of your college? Please describe.

7) Have you had formal training in assessment techniques outside your college? Please describe.

8) Do student evaluations have an impact on your choices for instruction and/or assessment techniques? Please describe.

9) Are you interested in using new techniques/changing your techniques?

10) How comfortable are you in using new techniques/changing your techniques?

APPENDIX F: Descriptive Statistics Survey Responses

Q3 What is your faculty status?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices		Responses
full-time	5.08%	
part-time	94.92%	
Total		59

Q4 What is your highest degree earned?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices		Responses
Less than Bachelors degree	1.69%	1
Bachelors degree	5.08%	3
Master's degree	81.36%	48
Doctorate	11.86%	7
Total		59

Q5 Are you currently pursuing a formal advanced degree?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices		Responses
Yes	13.56%	
No	86.44%	
Total		59

Answer Choices	Responses	
To increase salary	12.50%	1
For professional development in my current field	75.00%	6
To teach in a different academic field	12.50%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total		8

Q6 If "yes", why are you pursuing this academic degree?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 51

Q7 Have you earned a new academic degree or certificate in the past 12 months?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	15.25%	9
No	84.75%	50
Total		59

#	If so, please explain
1	I graduated with my M.A. less than a year ago.
2	I earned a certificate for an introductory course for the study of emergent complexity and dynamical systems, as offered by the Santa Fe Institute for Complexity Studies.
3	Masters of Theological Studies which is not my employed discipline
4	Masters in TESOL
5	Certification for online teaching
6	I have 2 Master's degrees
7	n/a
8	Online Teaching Certification
9	LFCC cert for teaching online and hybrid classes.
10	Online Professorship and Associate Adjunct status

Q8 Do you teach during weekends and/or evening hours?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices		Responses
Yes	64.41%	38
No	35.59%	21
Total		59

Q9 Do you teach at an off-campus site?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	23.73%	1
No	76.27%	4
Total		59

Q10 Do you teach any online courses?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	40.68%	[illegible]
No	59.32%	[illegible]
Total		**59**

Q11 What subject area do you mainly teach?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	
Social Science	24.14%	14
English	34.48%	20
Humanities	24.14%	14
Fine Arts	17.24%	10
Total		**58**

#	Other (please specify)
1	Museum Studies
2	Visual Arts - Graphic Design, Typography, Adobe Creative Suite
3	Sustainable Agriculture
4	Medicine-EMS Program
5	ESL and developmental English
6	Humanities plus Fine Arts: Art History, and Drawing
7	also art history
8	French
9	American Sign Language
10	Communication Studies
11	Graphic Art
12	Specifically, Religion and Philosophy

Q12 What level of classes to you currently teach (choose all that apply)?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices		Responses
Remedial (below 100)	15.52%	9
100's	75.86%	44
200'2	43.10%	25
Total Respondents: 58		

Q13 On the average, how many students do you teach per class?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices		Responses
Under 10	5.17%	3
11 to 20	44.83%	26
21 to 30	44.83%	26
31 to 40	5.17%	3
41 to 50	0.00%	0
Over 50	0.00%	0
Total		**58**

Q14 Do you base your course organization on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices		Responses
Yes	84.48%	[illegible]
No	15.52%	[illegible]
Total		**58**

Q15 Are SLOs provided for you by your college/department?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices		Responses
Yes	74.14%	[illegible]
No	25.86%	[illegible]
Total		58

Q16 Where did you learn about teaching techniques? (Select all that apply/multiple choices accepted)

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	
Through a teaching and learning center on campus	8.62%	5
Through personal experience	94.83%	55
Through a formal educational course or program	53.45%	31
Through seminars or workshops	43.10%	25
From colleagues	67.24%	39
From former teachers	58.62%	34
Other (please specify)	13.79%	8
Total Respondents: 58		

#	Other (please specify)
1	When I started teaching, the school required that I be guided by a mentor during the first semester. While I was nervous, she was amazing, and I learned a great deal. We now bounce ideas off each other, and I was subsequently asked to mentor another new instructor.
2	The Learning Company DVD's that I purchased to learn from, and to model my teaching based on a broad selection of professors; and books on college-level instruction
3	I am a secondary teacher as my main job, including Dual Enrollment courses for LFCC. I have an M.Ed and an MFA
4	Graduate assistant in my MA program where I taught ENGL 100 level course (College Composition) -- where I learned a majority of my teaching techniques
5	I have a M.Ed. in early childhood education and am a certified teacher in addition to a MS in psychology. Good teaching is good teaching no matter the age of the student.
6	Literature (books and articles on teaching techniques)
7	I have been teaching and coaching (sports have had their instructive value) since 1997, and graduate school was a unique experience.
8	I have been teaching for sixty years and have learned from a number of sources

Q17 Where did you learn about assessment techniques? (Select all that apply/multiple choices accepted)

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	
Through a teaching and learning center on campus	3.45%	2
Through personal experience	24.14%	14
Through a formal educational course or program	15.52%	9
Through seminars or workshops	1.72%	1
From colleagues	13.79%	8
From former teachers	12.07%	7
Other (please specify)	29.31%	17
Total		**58**

#	Other (please specify)
1	Not accepting multiple choices; here are my responses: personal experiences, formal educational course, from colleagues and former teachers
2	The answer selection will not allow for multiple selections: personal experience, colleagues, and former teachers
3	cannot check all that apply. It is most.
4	This only allows one answer. But, I would say personal experience, formal education, seminars, colleagues and former teachers - and anything I can find through TESOL International.
5	all the above
6	This will not allow more than one answer -- through my M.Ed program (at Mason) and in professional practice
7	Multiple answers were not accepted on this question. I learned about about assessment techniques through all of the items listed above except the first.
8	Dept requires assessments done a particular way; my own personal assessments I've learned from experience, other teachers, and my own personal research.
9	It will not allow me to select multiple choices. I have formal education in assessment, personal experience and former teachers.
10	Literature (books and articles on teaching techniques)
11	From all but the survey won't allow me to select more than one.
12	I could only pick one, but I wanted to pick the same answers as number 14
13	This question did not allow me to selct more than one answer. I chose all. . Through a teaching and learning center on campus Through personal experience Through a formal educational course or program Through seminars or workshops From colleagues From former teachers
14	I have conducted communication research and have a Ph.D. in that area of study
15	This question allows for only one choice.
16	Only allowed me to check one box????
17	It will only let you check one but all apply to me.

Q18 How many years of teaching experience do you have (overall)?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices		Responses
Less than 3 years	**10.34%**	6
3-7 years	**37.93%**	22
8-15 years	**27.59%**	16
More than 15 years	**24.14%**	14
Total		**58**

Q19 Thinking of one of your typical classes, how often do you use the techniques listed below?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 3

	Frequently	Infrequently	Not at all	Total
Lecture	**83.64%** 46	**10.91%** 6	**5.45%** 3	55
Discussion	**92.86%** 52	**7.14%** 4	**0.00%** 0	56
Interactive group work	**69.81%** 37	**15.09%** 8	**15.09%** 8	53
Videos/DVD	**62.50%** 35	**32.14%** 18	**5.36%** 3	56
Computer Game or Simulation	**10.00%** 5	**20.00%** 10	**70.00%** 35	50
Slides/PowerPoint presentations (Either with lecture, provided online, or as a study aid for students)	**74.55%** 41	**18.18%** 10	**7.27%** 4	55
Asynchronous online components	**39.22%** 20	**29.41%** 15	**31.37%** 16	51
Synchronous online components	**25.00%** 13	**42.31%** 22	**32.69%** 17	52
Workshop settings (hands on, individual activity)	**56.25%** 27	**18.75%** 9	**25.00%** 12	48
Other	**46.15%** 6	**15.38%** 2	**38.46%** 5	13

#	Other (please specify)
1	Hands-on, individual studio-homework (sketchbooks, unit assignments and journals) for art studio courses. Extensive reading-journal assignment with a follow-up Reading Quiz component for lecture courses
2	Guest speaker, field trips
3	Bring in a subject matter expert. (guest speaker) to highlight a topic / study from the text book.
4	I use Blackboard for assignments and grading
5	I am not familiar with the terms asynchonous and synchronous online components.
6	Class critiques
7	I teach all online art and art history and humanities courses. I consider my "lectures" in the form of modules that contain my words, links, videos, e-text ancillaries. I utilize art projects, online projects, online group work and online discussion.

Q20 On average, how frequently do you include the following techniques in your course(s)?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 3

	Frequently	Infrequently	Not at all	Total
Attendance/Participation	**91.07%** 51	**7.14%** 4	**1.79%** 1	56
Quizzes	**63.64%** 35	**29.09%** 16	**7.27%** 4	55
Multiple Choice exam questions	**59.26%** 32	**24.07%** 13	**16.67%** 9	54
Essay exam questions	**51.85%** 28	**27.78%** 15	**20.37%** 11	54
Peer Evaluation	**50.00%** 26	**17.31%** 9	**32.69%** 17	52
Workbook	**13.73%** 7	**21.57%** 11	**64.71%** 33	51
Oral presentations	**46.15%** 24	**28.85%** 15	**25.00%** 13	52
Research assignments	**68.52%** 37	**20.37%** 11	**11.11%** 6	54
Portfolios	**30.61%** 15	**16.33%** 8	**53.06%** 26	49
Other	**35.00%** 7	**10.00%** 2	**55.00%** 11	20

#	Other (please specify)
1	Projects (I teach studio classes)
2	Discussion forum posts are graded (online) as well as short applied "research" assignments
3	Group discussion questions, journals
4	My classes are both lectures with interwoven videos and two to three papers of increasing length and complexity Attendance is mandatory.
5	Papers
6	Short papers (movie review)
7	Writing Assignments
8	Speech preparation and presentations
9	Online presentation of process and design

APPENDIX G: Survey Responses for Q 19 "Thinking of one of your typical classes, how often do you use the techniques listed below?

Technique	Frequently (1)	Infrequently (2)	Not at all (3)	Total
Lecture	**83.64%** 46	**10.91%** 6	**5.45%** 3	55
Discussion	**92.86%** 52	**7.14%** 4	**0.00%** 0	56
Interactive group work	**69.81%** 37	**15.09%** 8	**15.09%** 8	53
Videos/DVD	**62.50%** 35	**32.14%** 18	**5.36%** 3	56
Computer Game or Simulation	**10.00%** 5	**20.00%** 10	**70.00%** 35	50
Slides/PowerPoint presentations (Either with lecture, provided online, or as a study aid for students)	**74.55%** 41	**18.18%** 10	**7.27%** 4	55
Asynchronous online components	**39.22%** 20	**29.41%** 15	**31.37%** 16	51
Synchronous online components	**25.00%** 13	**42.31%** 22	**32.69%** 17	52
Workshop settings (hands on, individual activity)	**56.25%** 27	**18.75%** 9	**25.00%** 12	48
Other	**46.15%** 6	**15.38%** 2	**38.46%** 5	13

APPENDIX H: Q 20 "On average, how frequently do you include the following techniques in your course(s)?

Technique	Frequently	Infrequently	Not at all	Total
Attendance/Participation	**91.07%** 51	**7.14%** 4	**1.79%** 1	56
Quizzes	**63.64%** 35	**29.09%** 16	**7.27%** 4	55
Multiple Choice exam questions	**59.26%** 32	**24.07%** 13	**16.67%** 9	54
Essay exam questions	**51.85%** 28	**27.78%** 15	**20.37%** 11	54
Peer Evaluation	**50.00%** 26	**17.31%** 9	**32.69%** 17	52
Workbook	**13.73%** 7	**21.57%** 11	**64.71%** 33	51
Oral presentations	**46.15%** 24	**28.85%** 15	**25.00%** 13	52
Research assignments	**68.52%** 37	**20.37%** 11	**11.11%** 6	54
Portfolios	**30.61%** 15	**16.33%** 8	**53.06%** 26	49
Other	**35.00%** 7	**10.00%** 2	**55.00%** 11	20

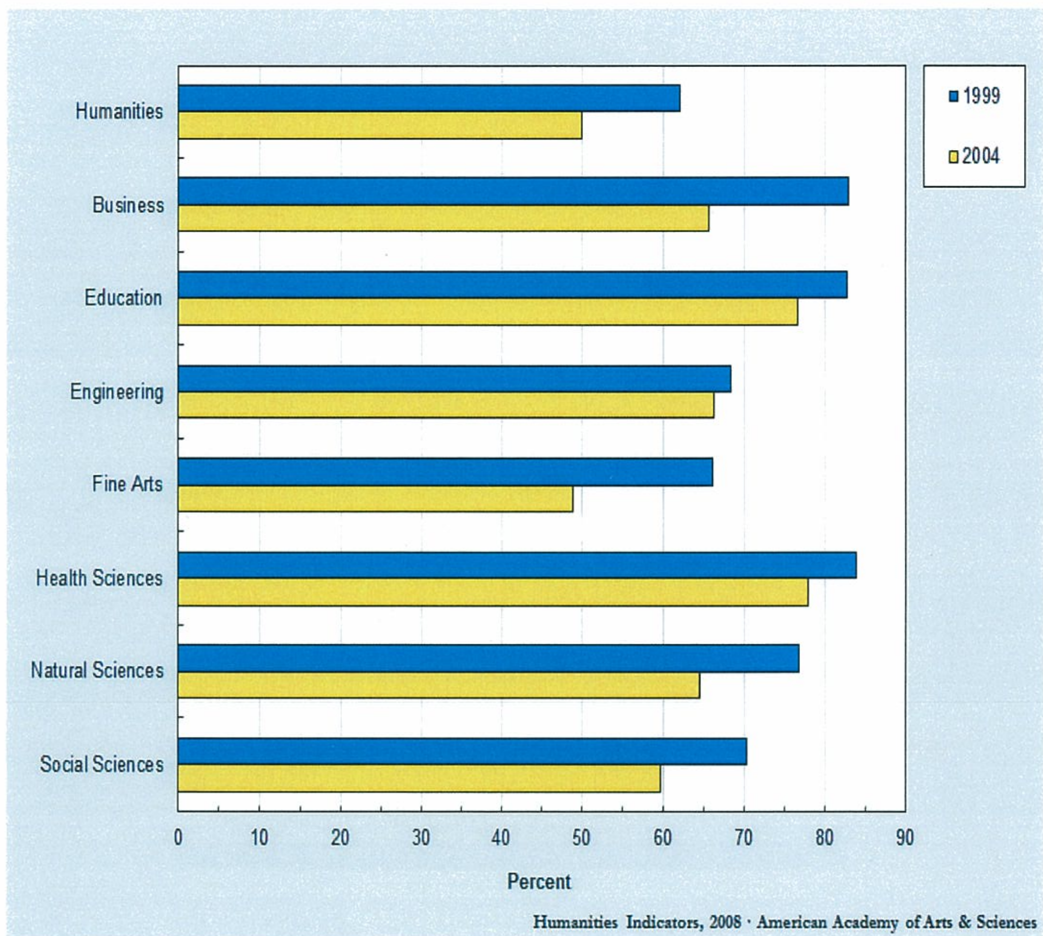
APPENDIX I: Instructional Techniques Perceived and Observed (observations are in minutes:seconds)

	Sara		Cara		Anna		Jay	
	Perceived	*Observed*	*Perceived*	*Observed*	*Perceived*	*Observed*	*Perceived*	*Observed*
Lecture	Frequently	21:58	Infrequently	Not at all	Frequently	32:12	Frequently	57:03
Discussion	Frequently	44:08	Frequently	32:12	Frequently	48:49	Frequently	9:50
Interactive group work	Frequently	10:20	Frequently	48:49	Frequently	8:40	Not at all	Not at all
Videos/DVDs	Frequently	11:55	Frequently	8:40	Not at all	Not at all	Frequently	11:39
Computer Game or Simulation	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Frequently	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all
Slide/PowerPoint Presentation – with lecture	Infrequently	21:58	Frequently	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Frequently	57:03
Slide/PowerPoint Presentation - online	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all
Slide/PowerPoint Presentation – as student aid	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	3:05 (Blackboard demo)	Not at all	Not at all
Asynchronous online components	Frequently	4:30 (Blackboard template)	Not at all	3:05 (Blackboard demo)	Not at all	19:48	Not at all	Not at all
Synchronous online components	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	19:48	Frequently	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all
Workshop settings (hands on, individual activity)	Infrequently	Not at all	Frequently	Not at all	Not at all		Not at all	Not at all
Other	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all					
Guest speaker							Infrequent	Not at all
Field trips							Infrequent	5:32
Use of whiteboard			4:08					

APPENDIX J: Assessment techniques perceived and observed (observations are in minutes:second)

Technique	*Sara*		*Cara*		*Anna*		*Jay*	
	Perceived	***Observed***	***Perceived***	***Observed***	***Perceived***	***Observed***	***Perceived***	***Observed***
Attendance/ Participation	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*
Quizzes	*Frequently*	*Not at all*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Not at all*	*Infrequently*	*Not at all*
Multiple choice exam questions	*Infrequently*	*Not at all*	*Infrequently*	*Infrequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Not at all*
Essay exam questions	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Infrequently*	*Infrequently*	*Infrequently*	*Not at all*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*
Peer evaluation	*Frequently*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*
Workbook	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*
Oral presentations	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Infrequently*	*Not at all*	*Infrequently*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*
Research assignments	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*
Portfolios	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Not at all*
Other:								
Short papers	*Not at all*	*Not at all*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Frequently*	*Not at all*	*Infrequently*	*Infrequently*

APPENDIX K: Table of Part-time Faculty who Prefer Current Employment Status



Source: http://humanitiesindicators.org

APPENDIX L: George Mason University Institutional Review Board Documentation

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE:	October 30, 2014
TO:	Kelly Schrum, PhD
FROM:	George Mason University IRB
Project Title:	[649717-1] Community College Adjunct Personnel Instruction and Assessment Techniques
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE:	October 30, 2014
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Exemption categories 1, 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Office of Research Integrity
& Assurance (ORIA) has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be submitted to the ORIA prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Bess Dieffenbach at 703-993-4121 or edieffen@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

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