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# The Perceived Results of Feedback and Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness on Adjunct Faculty Professional Development and Growth

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ABSTRACT


THE PERCEIVED RESULTS OF FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION
OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS ON ADJUNCT FACULTY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH


by

Luda Vine


Chair: Anneris Coria-Navia

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation


Andrews University

College of Education and International Services


Title:   THE PERCEIVED RESULTS OF FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS ON ADJUNCT FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

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Date completed: June 2023


## Problem

While full-time faculty at any institution of higher learning undergo an established system of evaluation of teaching effectiveness, adjunct faculty members' experience varies greatly from institution to institution. There is little in the relevant academic literature about an effective feedback mechanism for evaluating teaching effectiveness among adjunct faculty members. Limited qualitative research has been done to understand the effects of teaching evaluations on the professional development and growth of individual adjunct faculty members. Developing an understanding of effective evaluation of teaching that will result in improved adjunct faculty professional development and growth will impact not only the faculty members' morale and retention but also student learning and student success.

Method

The researcher used a grounded theory approach based on the data collected from semi-structured interviews with eight adjunct faculty members to understand a) what type of feedback of their teaching effectiveness adjunct faculty currently receive; b) what types of feedback of their teaching effectiveness adjunct faculty find to be helpful for professional development and growth; c) how adjunct faculty use the feedback of their teaching to shape their professional development decisions; and d) how the feedback of teaching effectiveness is perceived by adjunct faculty.

Results

The results of the study led the researcher to form a substantive theory, *Feedback Mechanisms for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth*, which states that the feedback that leads to sustainable adjunct faculty growth is (a) inspiration-led through exhibiting inspirational leadership; (b) relationship-building through promoting collegial collaboration; (c) learning-centered through fostering student success; (d) instructor-oriented through upholding the instructor agency; and (e) support-imparting through nurturing a culture of support. This model includes the multiplicity of voices and processes of the effective assessment of teaching and is framed in the context of contributing not only to the advancement of each individual adjunct faculty but also to the greater good of the academic community.

Conclusions

The present study examined the results of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty professional development and growth. The findings

suggest that feedback that leads to sustainable adjunct faculty growth is inspiration-led, relationship-building, learning-centered, instructor-oriented, and support-imparting. The results have important implications for both teachers and administrators as they help adjunct faculty develop professionally, contribute towards a higher quality of teaching instruction, and improve student learning.

Andrews University

College of Education and International Services

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OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS ON ADJUNCT FACULTY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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_____
Member: Valery Keibler

_____          _____
External: Sharon Aka                       Date approved

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loving family, my husband and our two children, who have been pillars of strength during my graduate studies. They have encouraged, supported, and loved me unconditionally throughout my academic journey.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, there is an established practice of academic accountability

delivered by a variety of assessment instruments aimed at improvement and change.

Institutions, academic programs, students, and professors are surveyed continually,

reviewed, ranked, and assessed to determine how well something or someone has

performed. Most of these assessments are stand alone and unrelated while systematic

efforts to assess the effectiveness of a faculty member are relatively new (Banta, 2002;

Buller, 2012).

Until the 1960s, the assumption was that a faculty member was well-trained to

perform their job and knew far better than students the topic which they taught in

institutions of higher learning. If for some reason their performance was not acceptable, it

was the job of administrators to make sure that faculty taught courses effectively (Banta,

2002; Bowen, 1977; Buller, 2012).

During the 1960s and 1970s, three trends in American higher education emerged

that heralded the current culture of accountability: (a) the desire of universities to

increase their retention rates; (b) the student-centered model gave institutions a

mechanism for measuring their impact and demonstrating to parents, donors, and students

the benefits they provided; and (c) legislators who paid the bills for college education

began to ask for objective data for their return on investment (Banta, 2002; Bowen, 1977;

Buller, 2012; Hacker & Dreifus, 2010). As a result of these developments, supported by

contemporary research, most universities today have a formal office of institutional effectiveness and assessment with elaborate evaluation procedures in place (Berk, 2018; Benton & Ryalls, 2016; Buller, 2012). Reflecting on the shift in the culture of accountability from the late 1970s until the early 2000s, Buller (2012) further states that "Faculty members today thus have far greater responsibility for demonstrating to others the benefits of their programs that at any time before the late 1970s" (p. 10). Hence the culture of accountability has permeated U.S. institutions of higher learning increasingly since the late 1960s.

While the explanation of history about the practice of accountability in higher education is important for understanding the current trends in faculty evaluations, how can such practices help an adjunct faculty member become a better educator after having gone through the full gamut, or the lack thereof, of familiar tools for reviews, feedback, evaluations, and appraisals? What impact does such practice have or should have on the adjunct's professional development and growth?

Current research findings reveal the feedback on teaching effectiveness teachers receive is framed often within a fixed mind-set paradigm, leaving adjunct teachers demoralized, decreasing their confidence and self-efficacy, and having a negative impact on institutional ranking and student learning (Benton & Young, 2018; Braskamp & Ory 1994; Dweck, 2017; Lizzio et al., 2002; Logan et al., 2003; McGovern, 2006; Theall & Franklin, 2010). However, feedback received by adjunct faculty about their teaching effectiveness should facilitate a growth mind-set, where the challenge is seen not as a failure but as an essential component for professional development and growth (Dweck, 2017). Just as teaching can instill vision, broaden professional horizons, inspire students

to greater achievements, and provide a transformative influence, so the assessment and evaluation of teaching should also provide a transformative influence resulting in the adjunct faculty member's professional development and growth, heightened morale and retention, and student success.

## The Statement of the Problem

Feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a complex and multidimensional process which needs to include considerations of various voices, purposes, orientations, and procedures, and whose ultimate purpose is improved teaching and learning (Benton & Young, 2018; Hyle, 1999; Jarvis, 1991; Wilson & Beaton, 1993). Implementing all elements of assessment ensures that all of the relevant evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, is collected and that a multiplicity of mutually informing data can be used for determining the effectiveness of teaching (Berk, 2018; Benton & Ryalls, 2016).

While full-time faculty at any institution of higher learning undergo an established system of evaluation of their teaching effectiveness, adjunct faculty member experience varies greatly from institution to institution (Beaumont, 1993; Hutchinson, 1996b; Wilson & Beaton, 1993). I personally experienced a lack of consistency and continuity relating to receiving feedback of my teaching effectiveness when I worked as an adjunct faculty for many years. To date, there is little in the academic literature about an effective feedback mechanism for evaluating teaching effectiveness among adjunct faculty members. Limited qualitative research has been done to understand the effects of teaching evaluations on the professional development and growth of individual adjunct faculty members. To develop an understanding of effective evaluation of teaching that

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will result in improved adjunct faculty professional development and growth will impact not only faculty member moral and retention, but also student learning. Multiple studies showed that student success is impacted by developing and supporting faculty; hence investing in a key core of adjuncts should be a priority in institutions of higher learning (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Gappa et al., 2007).

This problem, the lack of an effective feedback mechanism for evaluating teaching effectiveness among adjunct faculty, is particularly acute as the trend of "adjunctification," meaning the increasing proportionate numbers of adjunct faculty in relation to tenured faculty, across US academia has been on the rise in the recent past (Churchill, 2019; Magness, 2016). Thus, research that highlights and informs the feedback and evaluation of the fastest growing segment of the teaching population in the U.S. higher education sector is critical to support their holistic development, retention, professional oversight, and flourishing (Culver et al., 2020).

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this grounded theory research study was to develop a general theory to explain the perceived results of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty professional development and growth as experienced by the adjunct faculty at a mid-size private university in the United States. Professional development and growth are defined as improved job performance and increased levels of personal satisfaction. I anticipated that this new grounded theory would uncover the actionable components of an effective feedback mechanism of teaching effectiveness for adjunct faculty, resulting not only in the advancement of each individual adjunct faculty member, but in the improvement of institutional practices of adjunct evaluation.

**The Research Questions**

In this study, the researcher sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What type of feedback of their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty receive currently?

2. What types of feedback of their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find to be helpful for professional development and growth?

3. How do adjunct faculty use the feedback of their teaching to shape their professional development decisions?

4. How is the feedback of teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty?

**Rationale of the Study**

The rationale for this study emanated from the researcher's desire to uncover the components of a feedback mechanism of teaching effectiveness for adjunct faculty members which would result in the faculty member's professional development and growth and would equip administrators better as they seek to provide the best support to their adjunct faculty. Developing an understanding of effective teaching feedback mechanisms would lead to improved adjunct faculty professional development and growth, impacting faculty members morale, retention, and student learning.

**Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is understood as "a number of related concepts to explain or predict a given event or give a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest" (Imenda, 2014, p. 5). An epistemological lens is provided through which to look at a particular problem, with the review of the literature, the researcher's own experience,

and the pilot stage of data collection together contributing to development of a conceptual framework for the study.

The critique of the literature suggests that effective instructor evaluation relies on multiple sources because "effective assessment is more like a scrapbook of mementos and pictures than a single snapshot" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 152). Implementing all elements of assessment ensures that all the relevant evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, is collected and a multiplicity of mutually informing data can be used for determining the effectiveness of teaching (Berk, 2018; Benton & Ryalls, 2016).

The current conceptual framework provides an outline through which to look at the effects of feedback about teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty professional development and growth. The model (see Figure 1) highlights the interplay of the primary factors impacting the feedback on teaching effectiveness for regular faculty, resulting in personnel management decisions and professional development and growth. This flow is characterized by three influences: student evaluations, peer and supervisor evaluations, and self-assessment. These influences are experienced in a cyclical rather than a linear manner.

**Figure 1**

*Framework for Professional Development and Growth through Feedback on Teaching Effectiveness (TE)*



Influence 1:
Student
Evaluations of TE*

Influence 2:
Peer & Supervisor
Evaluations of TE

Influence 3:
Self-Evaluations of
TE
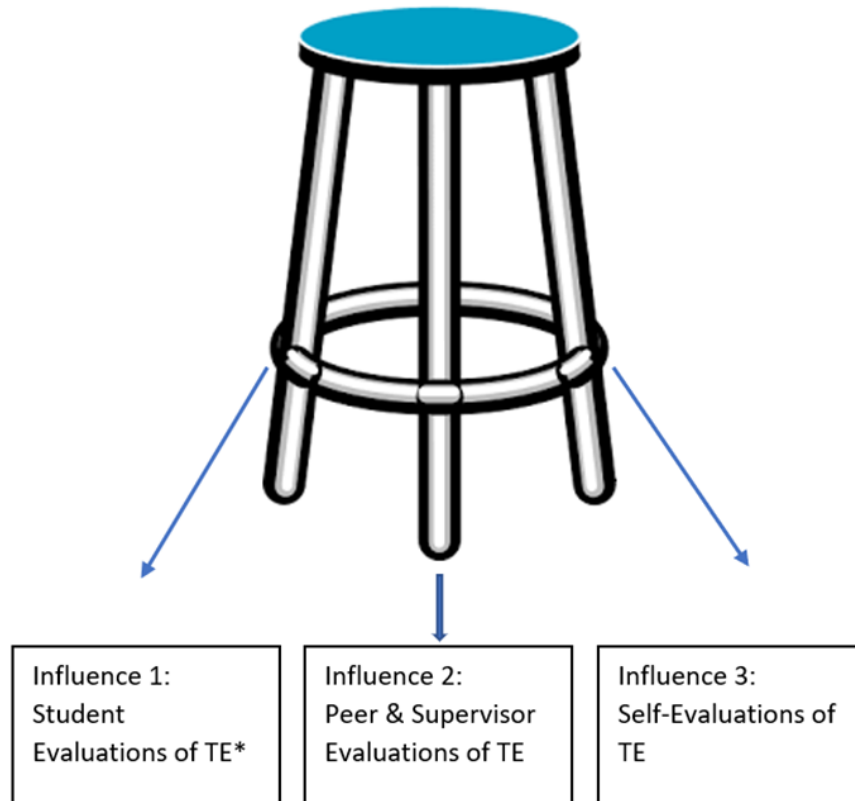
Note: TE = Teaching Effectiveness

*Student evaluations of teaching* are the most widely accepted tools for evaluation of faculty. About 98% of universities use student evaluation of faculty (Simpson & Siguaw, 2000). Despite the challenges associated with the validity of student ratings such as grade inflation, and gender, race, and ethnicity biases (Aruguete et al., 2017; Chávez & Mitchell, 2020), students offer unique perspectives on various aspects of the course such as student-teacher interactions, the instructor's expertise in the subject matter, and the perceived difficulty of the course including its overall quality. Moreover, student evaluations of teaching reveal the dimensions of learning that lead to student satisfaction and are thus considered to be an essential component of faculty teaching performance evaluation (Lizzio et al., 2002).

*Peer and supervisor evaluations* offer a competent, informed, and nuanced source of evidence of teaching effectiveness such as the instructor's contribution to research and scholarship, their professionalism when interacting with colleagues and students, and compliance with curriculum alignment (Arreola, 2007; Chism, 1999). Peer and supervisor evaluations represent an effective professional opportunity for faculty development, result in student achievement, and contribute to the greater good of the academic community (Cruz & Rosemond, 2017; Desimone, 2009; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Sailors & Price, 2010).

*Self-assessment* offers a valuable source of information which leads to reflection and the gaining of insight into an instructor's professional development (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; McGovern, 2006). In a creative and empowering practice, each individual faculty member reflects upon and recognizes their own strengths and weaknesses that can lead to a transformed teaching practice. Moreover, recognizing that feedback has inherent

weaknesses, developing internal capabilities for self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-direction is critical for personal and professional growth (Sanford, 2018). The current conceptual framework will provide a mechanism for understanding a methodological evaluation system of adjunct faculty.

## Significance of the Study

This qualitative study sought to understand the experiences of adjunct faculty members as they underwent various reviews and evaluations of teaching effectiveness and the impact this process had on their professional development and growth. The current study is significant because it synthesized both teachers' and administrators' best practices into their institutional culture of adjunct faculty evaluation so that instead of being demoralized by their evaluations, adjunct faculty and their supervisors can concentrate their efforts on helping teachers develop professionally and holistically, and thereby, contribute toward a higher quality of instruction. It also had personal significance for the researcher as she works in an academic department where most of her colleagues are adjunct faculty, who she hoped would be directly and positively impacted by the results of this study.

## Basic Assumptions

The researcher approached this study with a theistic interpretative framework as she sought to understand reality representing a complexity of views. This theistic lens was also shared by some of the adjunct professors who participated in the study. Additionally, the researcher employed a social constructivist approach to understand the specific contexts in which the study participants live and work, recognizing that multiple

realities are constructed and shaped through interactions with others. The researcher used

an inductive method of emergent ideas through interviews and their analysis.

## General Methodology

For the qualitative methodology choice, the researcher selected a constructivist

grounded theory to develop a unified theoretical explanation for adjunct faculty

professional development and growth (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher studied the

evaluation of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty members' professional

development and growth and developed a theory grounded in the views of study

participants. For primary data collection, the researcher used interviews with 8

individuals from a purposeful sample and then from a theoretical sample, which were

later analyzed through various types of open, axial, and selective coding until a saturation

point was reached to explain the results of feedback and evaluation of teaching

effectiveness of adjunct faculty professional development and growth.

## Delimitations

As a delimitation of this grounded theory, the researcher interviewed only adjunct

faculty members, excluding regular full-time teachers. These individuals were selected

because they represented a homogeneous sample of individuals with an adjunct-specific

faculty perspective.

## Limitations

A limitation of this research design is its generalizability. The researcher only

interviewed the adjunct faculty members at a mid-size private university in the United

States, which might present "difficulty of determining when categories are saturated or

when the theory is sufficiently detailed" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 88). To combat this limitation and move toward saturation, the researcher used discriminant sampling and included adjunct faculty at other departments to gain a more rounded understanding. Moreover, due to the nature of adjunct teaching, most of the participants held adjunct teaching positions at two different institutions at the time of the interview.

Another limitation related to the researcher's supervisory role of two of the research participants, who may have not shared certain aspects of their current adjunct experience. However, these two participants both had a rich history of teaching as adjuncts at the current institution, which dated long before the researcher's appointment to her current administrative role, and as a result were able to share comprehensive information about their relevant cumulative experience.

## Definitions of Terms

*Professional development and growth*: improved job performance and increased levels of personal satisfaction.

*Feedback on teaching effectiveness:* the formal evaluation or informal review of teacher performance and effectiveness in the classroom.

*Evaluation of teaching effectiveness*: a subset of the wider process of providing feedback, evaluation is the formal process a college or university uses to review and rate teacher performance and effectiveness in the classroom.

*Adjunct faculty*: a faculty member who teaches on a limited-term contract and is ineligible for tenure.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

**Introduction**

Evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a complex and multidimensional process

which includes considerations of various voices, purposes, orientations, and procedures.

Integrating all elements of effective evaluation requires an eclectic approach to

evaluation, which considers both institutional cultures and academic contexts. Such

evaluation results not only in retention and promotion of faculty, but also in teacher

professional improvement and growth.

Referring to the need for clear evaluative feedback mechanism of adjunct faculty

in higher education, Langen (2011) argued that the role of adjunct faculty in higher

education is changing constantly:

> No longer are part-time faculty used on an occasional basis at a few institutions.
> These individuals now play a critical role in the delivery of higher education to
> students . . . With the dramatic increase in the use of adjunct faculty in higher
> education classrooms, it is critical that we understand how these faculty are being
> evaluated, and how these evaluation results are utilized. (p. 185)

The need for clear feedback to adjunct faculty becomes critically important as the

ratio of adjunct faculty to full-time faculty in higher education is 50:50 and above

depending on the institution. Adjuncts are expected to deliver as high quality of

instruction as their full-time colleagues do, even though the former population is paid

significantly less than the latter one. Thus, nurturing the support and development of

adjunct faculty is crucial for their professional development, job satisfaction,

commitment to teaching, and student learning. The current literature review surveyed

research findings on the various practices of feedback and evaluation of teaching for

adjunct faculty to understand and assess critically the effectiveness and the contribution

to the holistic professional development and growth of adjunct teachers.

## The Purpose of Evaluation

The literature on teaching evaluation identified two major purposes of evaluation:

personnel management and personal development and growth (Benton & Young;

Braskamp & Ory, 1994). Various binary terms were used to describe these purposes, such

as summative evaluation and formative assessment, where summative evaluation

involves judgement about teacher's performance and formative assessment points to how

to improve (Benton & Young, 2018; Jarvis, 1991). Others used terms such as hard and

soft (Truss et al., 1997; Webb, 1994), judgmental and developmental (Goss, 1994),

managerialist and developmental (Hutchinson, 1995a), and institutional and individual

evaluation (Braskamp & Ory, 1994).

The first purpose of faculty evaluation is to gather information and document past

performance to support institutional decisions on promotion, tenure, and merit pay (i.e.,

summative evaluations), which are not likely to be part of an adjunct teacher's journey at

an institution. The central component of this practice is accountability (Wilson & Beaton,

1993). The second purpose of faculty evaluation is to help the institution and faculty

members identify strengths and weaknesses, promoting professional improvement and

growth through formative evaluations (Benton & Young, 2018).

The different purposes of evaluation, summative and formative, pointed to various

sources of evidence about individual performance and suggested a need for clear criteria

to support institutional decisions affecting potential wage increases and identification of a plan to promote continuing improvement and growth. Hyle (1999) stated that, "these conditions create different information needs and sources as well as conflicting expectations for how, when and to whom the results of reviews are reported" (p. 353), and argued further that while summative judgments are reported to higher level administrators, for the most part the results from formative evaluations remain with the faculty member for planning their own improvement projects.

Because conducting individual reviews can be time-consuming and highly emotive for both the evaluator and the evaluated, the adjunct faculty member and the administrator, many institutions reported combining the two types of evaluations, formative and summative, into one review. In this way, collegiality was preserved and potential confrontations with subordinates were avoided (Beaumont, 1993; Benton & Young, 2018; Berk, 2018; Hutchinson, 1996b; Wilson & Beaton, 1993).

Although summative and formative evaluations have different purposes, it would be unrealistic to keep them separate (Theall & Franklin, 2010). Ideally, an adjunct advancement model with corresponding compensation increases, akin to the parallel processes for full-time faculty, should be present at each higher education institution. For pragmatic reasons, however, adjunct faculty primarily receive summative evaluations in the form of student surveys, which factor into subsequent re-hiring decisions, and formative feedback via peer-to-peer dialogues, which are not actionable and are received primarily as informal advice (Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017; Langen, 2011; Simpson & Siguaw, 2000). However, the most fundamental reason for evaluating teaching is to ensure that students get the best teaching instruction possible (Blaskamp & Ory, 1994).

**Evaluation Data Sources**

Effective instructor evaluation and feedback rely on multiple sources, such as student ratings, peer and supervisor evaluations, coaching, and self-assessment. Implementing all these elements of assessment ensures that all relevant evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, are collected and a multiplicity of mutually informing data can be used to determine the effectiveness of teaching (Berk, 2018; Benton & Ryalls, 2016). In the same line of thought, Langen (2011) argued,

> If the assumption can be made that the decision-making process for evaluation of full-time tenure-track faculty involves a logical and thorough decision-making process (and if not, it at least provides a basis for comparison), the decision-making process for evaluation of part-time faculty should be just as logical and thorough. The evaluation process for full-time tenure-track faculty typically includes multiple sources of information including outside evaluations, a review committee and documentation of scholarship and service. If part-time instructors are to play a critical role in a higher education institution, the decision-making process should be as detailed, consistent, and thorough as for full-time instructors. (pp. 189-190)

Langen thus underlined the need for a methodical evaluation system of adjunct faculty akin to the multi-level decision-making evaluation process for full-time faculty because of the critical role they play in institutions of higher learning.

**Student Ratings**

Student evaluation tools are perhaps the most widely accepted protocol for the evaluation of adjunct faculty. According to Simpson and Siguaw (2000) approximately 98% of the universities they surveyed used student evaluation of faculty systematically, including for adjunct faculty. Studies that questioned the validity of student ratings of teaching effectiveness raised a common concern: ratings are heavily influenced by expected grades. Empirical studies showed that students gave much higher ratings to faculty members who gave easy grades (Langbein, 1994); as a result, both students and

faculty engaged in grade inflation for mutually beneficial purposes (Langbein, 2008). Furthermore, other factors, such as student interest in the subject matter, the personality of the instructor, class size, and the relative rigor of the course had a direct impact on student ratings of teaching effectiveness (Al-Issa & Sulieman, 2007). In addition, biases relating to gender, race, and ethnicity affected student ratings whereby instructors who were female and/or were persons of color received lower scores on student evaluations than other instructors (Aruguete et al., 2017; Chávez and Mitchell, 2020).

In their exploratory qualitative study, Kimmel and Fairchild (2017) examined the perspectives of adjunct faculty members at a public regional institution. They identified several themes related to the experiences of part-time faculty members, with one of the most significant themes being teaching evaluation. All seven participants confirmed that they received student evaluations of teaching for every course they taught, but their perceptions of the accuracy of these student evaluations were mixed. Most participants believed that student evaluations of their teaching effectiveness were accurate and helpful, but some expressed concerns about the practice.

Despite much controversy surrounding the validity of student ratings of instruction, student ratings maintain a high level of validity (Benton & Ryalls, 2016; McKeachie, 1997). Even though students are not qualified to judge the adjunct instructor's expertise or course management, they are well-positioned to judge different aspects of teaching and testify to how an instructor has influenced their learning and motivation to learn (Oermann, 2017). For instance, students offer unique perspectives on student-teacher interactions, the perceived difficulty of the course, the instructor's expertise in the subject matter, and the overall quality of the course.

Several studies revealed student perceptions about student ratings of teaching effectiveness. Students are generally happy to participate in evaluations but question their utility because they are not convinced that their opinions matter. Potentially, improving communication between the administration, faculty members, and students could improve the frequency of their participation in faculty evaluation and the quality of student responses to survey questions (Bhattacherjee & Ravishankar, 2016; Spencer & Schmelkin, 2002). Furthermore, student evaluation of teaching helps determine the dimensions of learning that lead to student satisfaction (Lizzio et al., 2002).

In Tang's study (1997), about 3,200 undergraduate and 300 graduate students in the College of Business of a regional state university evaluated 126 business faculty. The results of a multiple regression revealed twelve factors that predicted instructor teaching effectiveness. These were (a) clarity of instruction, (b) attendance to student questions, (c) professional treatment of students, (d) class preparedness, (e) student's expected grade for the course, (f) the clarity of grading criteria, (g) timely feedback, (h) accessibility outside of class, (i) relevant class sessions, (j) classes students have missed, (k) the clarity of course requirements, and (l) whether classes ended on time or not.

Most evidence suggests that student ratings are considered an essential component of adjunct faculty teaching performance evaluation. However, they are not the only source of information, but "one leg of a three-legged stool that includes instructor self-assessment and review of course materials by relevant other parties" (Benton & Young, 2018, p. 7).

**Peer and Supervisor Ratings**

In addition to student ratings of instruction, peers and supervisors can offer a competent source of evidence of teaching effectiveness, presenting a more informed and nuanced perspective on and understanding of the quality of course syllabus, objectives, materials, assessment tools, and the level of student achievement (Chism, 1999).

Peer observations and teacher coaching offer mutual exchange of ideas between teachers and lead to professional growth. However, as Brown and Lee (2015) noted, the practice of classroom observation is still one of the most neglected areas of professional development among educators. They stated,

> Too often, teachers tend to view observations as necessary while "in training" but unnecessary thereafter unless a supervisor is forced by regulations to visit their class in order to write up a recommendation for rehiring . . . . Fortunately, in an era of classroom-based research, the prevailing attitude toward observations is changing. (p. 548)

Teachers recognize that peer observations serve as a reliable quality check, offer another perspective, and thus present an indispensable tool for classroom experience and professional growth.

Supervisors and administrators can assess further the instructor's contribution to research and scholarship, their punctuality and professionalism when interacting with colleagues and students, and compliance with accreditation and curriculum alignment (Arreola, 2007).

However, a single snapshot of the class observed may not be representative of someone's normal teaching. Studies show that various faculty have disparate ideas of what constitutes good teaching, and therefore, the same instructor might get excellent feedback from one peer and poor feedback from another. To ensure a high level of inter-

rater reliability and minimize potential rater bias, a set of credible measures should be considered whereby all raters would be given the same set of instructions with checklists to rate instructional materials; there should be at least two class observations conducted independently before reconciling the peer ratings (Brent & Felder, 2004; Felder & Brent, 2004).

In a mixed methods study on the institutional supports and resources adjunct faculty need to be effective and the extent to which they are being provided, Hunnicutt (2018) reported that the majority of focus group adjunct participants stated that institutional supports and the availability of resources were either important or very important. Participants stated that adjunct supervision and evaluation were very important; however, they were not widely available.

In a study on how administrators evaluate their part-time faculty and what sources of information they use, Langen (2011) found that 27% of administrators do not require their adjunct faculty to undergo any formal evaluation while 63% have some kind of formal evaluative process. The sources of information for evaluating adjunct faculty included the following: student ratings, classroom observations, syllabus review, review of teaching material, informal faculty feedback, peer evaluation, grade review, informal student feedback, and instructor self-evaluation. A six-point scale was used to evaluate use of these sources of information, with a rating of six (highly relied upon) and a rating of one (rarely relied upon). Eighty-seven percent of the administrator respondents gave student ratings a strong rating as a source relied upon for evaluating adjunct faculty; 58% of respondents gave classroom observation a strong reliance rating. The least relied-upon tool turned out to be self-evaluations although developing internal capabilities for self-

reflection, self-assessment, and self-direction is critical for personal and professional growth (Sanford, 2018). This indicated a substantial preference for the use of student ratings by supervisors and administrators when evaluating adjunct faculty.

The literature supports the concept that as administrators become more knowledgeable about how they evaluate their part-time faculty, they become more proficient at establishing and consistently following institutional guidelines for adjunct faculty assessment and evaluation (Arreola, 2007; Brent & Felder, 2004; Felder & Brent, 2004; Hunnicutt, 2018; Langen, 2011).

**Teacher Coaching**

Teacher coaching, though a less evaluative form of peer and supervisor feedback, has gained in popularity as an effective professional opportunity for faculty development, which would then have a positive effect on student achievement, emphasizing active and sustained learning embedded in daily practice (Desimone, 2009; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009; Sailors & Price, 2010). A coach is someone who comes alongside to help others find their focus, think through their options, improve the map of their professional journey, and ultimately achieve impact for success (Logan et al., 2003).

Coaching can overlap with other activities such as professional advising, mentoring, or sponsorship, with all these designed to guide faculty toward professional development and growth. However, there are clear differences among coaching, advising, mentoring, and sponsorship, specifically in their goals and duration (Cruz & Rosemond, 2017).

Coaching differs from advising in that the goals of coaching are tailored to the context of the individual and not to meeting external formal requirements such as rubrics

and checklists against which faculty member progress is tracked. Coaching is more fluid, teacher-centered, and less evaluative (Cruz & Rosemond, 2017).

Unlike teacher mentoring, which typically results in general advice from a mentor to a mentee, teacher coaching focuses on a particular aspect of classroom practice which a faculty member selects to work and improve upon. The coach's role is often more bounded and context dependent that the mentor's role (Renton, 2009). While a faculty member may have the same mentor throughout his or her professional career, a coach typically works with an individual on a short-term basis to identify and reach specific goals such as tenure, promotion, or the improvement of skill.

Finally, coaching differs from sponsorship, whereby a person or a department promotes the participation of a colleague in specific professional development activities such as attending an academic conference or serving on a particular committee. Although a teacher coach might make similar recommendations, their advice does not typically result in endorsement (Cruz & Rosemond, 2017).

Some models of teacher coaching can be incorporated into any teacher development program. These include coaching consultation, peer coaching, and coaching circles (Knight et al., 2015). The coaching consultation focuses on deep listening, articulation of personal and professional goals combined with follow-up sessions related to monitoring and accountability. Peer coaching is a systematic collaboration of colleagues, whereby teachers observe each other's practice and provide nonevaluative constructive feedback (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Kinsella, 1994; McLeod & Steinert, 2009; Skinner & Welch, 1996). The coaching cycle encompasses empathic listening, the cultivation of rapport, reflective practice, and balancing inquiry with advocacy (Kenney,

2017; Peters & Armstrong, 1998). Any of the models above can offer a personalized opportunity for professional development and growth.

Experimental evidence on teacher coaching has been widely positive. Campbell and Malkus (2011) reported that two years of on-site coaching on pedagogy, curriculum, and mathematical content knowledge by trained coaches has impacted student achievement positively, between 0.14 and 0.19 standard deviations. Newman and Cunningham (2009) identified similar results whereby classroom-based support around literacy practices improved students' early literacy, reading and comprehension skills between 0.18 and 0.22 standard deviations.

Atteberry and Bryk (2011) suggested there is a threshold effect or a tipping point, whereby coaches who work with more than 12 teachers yield weaker implementation results due to the high demand. Blazar and Kraft (2015) explored how changes in the coaching model across two cohorts were related to program effects, using a blocked randomized trial. They reported that differential treatment effects might be attributed to differences in coach effectiveness, coach dosage, and the focus of coaching, namely, teacher-to-coach ratios, the duration of coaching in weeks, and the focus of coaching.

Teacher coaching is an empowering practice as it recognizes that each faculty member has their own context, areas of strength and weaknesses, and other such facets that influence their potential to transform their teaching practice (Oleson & Hora, 2014). Coaching can be transposed to different contexts and settings. Implicit within teacher coaching is the idea that teaching is a creative and intellectual journey, framed in the context of contributing not only to the advancement of each individual faculty member, but also to the greater good of the academic community (Cruz & Rosemond, 2017).

**Self-Assessment**

Beyond student, peer, supervisor ratings, and teacher coaching, instructor self-assessment is a valuable and crucial source of information; individual teachers can trace their personal growth from the planning, emergence, and implementation of the course to its consequent adjustments and fine-tuning (McGovern, 2006). In the context of professional development and growth, the integration of *heutagogical* principles of self-determined learning and high levels of teacher autonomy can enable adjunct faculty to take a more active role in the creation, delivery, and assessment of their courses and to have more control over their professional learning choices (Bali & Caines, 2018; Moore, 2020).

Different forms of formal self-assessment, such as evidence of their education-related activities, philosophies of teaching, the development and evaluation of new courses, advising students, mentoring other faculty colleagues, contributing to committee decisions, and carrying out educational research, can be used by a faculty member to document the strengths of their teaching and provide opportunities for reflection and examination (Little-Wienert & Mazziotti, 2018). To demonstrate the influence of their teaching on student learning and development, recordings of actual classroom instruction and various samples of student work should be documented as evidence of professional growth and development. A final piece to include would be self-appraisal, a checklist or a self-rating form about one's professional growth (Appling et al., 2001).

Effective informal methods of self-assessment resulting in faculty member self-knowledge and leading to improvements in teaching include (a) keeping a teaching journal, updating it after each class, (b) conducting informal class surveys about the student experience, (c) having individual and group sessions with students, and (d)

recording one's teaching for the purpose of reflection and improvement (Chan, 2010).

Although the validity of self-assessment can be jeopardized by instructor self-interest,

self-evaluation leads to reflection and gaining of insight into one's personal and

professional growth. By comparing their self-assessment of teaching with the evaluative

data collected from their peers and students, instructors not only become more aware of

their strengths and weaknesses but are more open to actionable improvement (Braskamp

& Ory, 1994; McGovern, 2006).

## Models of Effective Feedback Systems

Several models of teacher evaluation are available in K-12 schools and

institutions of higher learning. Because of the high turnover of new teachers across U.S.

K-12 schools, and the financial and educational costs associated with such turnover,

developing successful strategies for training and retaining teachers should become a

priority (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In reality, though, most of the feedback teachers receive

is not actionable, thus leaving teachers to question its utility and purpose, wondering

whether the feedback they received was meant for evaluation and improvement, or was

simply given as a piece of advice (Benton & Young, 2018). Taken together, these studies

support the insights that effective evaluative strategies will impact teacher quality, reduce

costs, and facilitate an equitable distribution of strong teachers across districts.

Park, Takahashi, and White (2014) at the *Carnegie Foundation for the*

*Advancement of Teaching* at Stanford, CA, evaluated a 90-day-cycle teacher-feedback

system adapted from the work of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, which

incorporated a set of interconnected drivers at the levels of individual classroom, local

school, and wider district to support effective feedback processes. Teachers in this K-12

model had quality feedback conversations with multiple providers such as coaches, principals, and peers. The purpose of such feedback varies from improvement to evaluation and is applicable in both schools and institutions of higher learning.

The 90-day model places teacher improvement, retention, and growth as the central focus and emphasizes the interconnectedness of micro and macro drivers for providing an effective feedback mechanism, thus underlying the complex and multi-level process. Moreover, this model impacts not only individual teacher professional development, but helps schools and districts develop effective evaluative systems. Finally, the model encourages new teachers to set their own professional development conversations and fosters the building of trusting relationships through regular observations (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Another comprehensive faculty evaluation model was developed by Raoul Arreola (2007), consisting of eight steps; (a) determine the faculty role (i.e., the basic faculty responsibilities); (b) determine the faculty role parameter values (i.e., assign weights and priorities to the basic responsibilities); (c) define each responsibility in the faculty role model (i.e., observable and measurable behaviors within each basic responsibility); (d) determine role component weights (i.e., assign weights and priorities to each observable behavior); (e) determine appropriate sources of information (i.e., the means of measuring the observable behaviors); (f) determine information source weights (i.e., assign weights and priorities to the means for measuring the observable behaviors); (g) determine how information should be gathered (i.e., a procedure for obtaining the information from each source); and (h) complete the system (i.e., gather the information, analyze it, and report). The Areola model can be conceptualized within two categories:

(a) identification of the essential components of evaluation and (b) weighing and prioritizing the essential components.

The Arreola model provides a template that each institution can adapt according to their individual needs and cultures. Pointing to the model's practical value, Buller (2012) noted,

> It has great value in compelling disciplines and institutions to consider in depth how their missions affect what they regard as important among the various activities that define faculty responsibilities and which sources of information are most effective in providing those insights. (p. 211)

However, since the primary emphasis of the Arreola model is on quantifying information, the complexity of faculty experience in humanities and other disciplines may be distorted. Thus, this model may appeal to reviewers who prefer specific values instead of descriptive terms, and who are accustomed to numerical analysis of data.

The model developed by Peter Seldin and colleagues (2010) is qualitative and evidence-based in nature, encouraging a faculty member to document their achievement through developing a portfolio. Seldin et al. argue that quantitative review models lack context and fail to document, for instance, a significant change in the faculty member's life that affected their performance plus many other potential variables. Moreover, portfolios are selective and reflective as they engage faculty in documenting and reflecting on their professional growth, self-identifying which improvements seem necessary in the future. They provide flexibility as the faculty member focuses on the activities they find most important to document. Since portfolios are very subjective, it is beneficial to use them to enhance other methods of faculty evaluation rather than to use them as stand-alone methods.

## Summary and Conclusions

Effective evaluation of teaching is a complex process requiring the use of multiple measures. Integrating the complementary elements of a balanced evaluative system (e.g., student voice, the judgement of peers, supervisors, coaches, and instructor self-assessment) leads to improved teaching practice, enriched collegiality, and an overall positive perception of the practice of assessment. Such evaluation results in holistic professional development and growth.

While the most significant tool for evaluating teaching performance of adjunct faculty, as identified by both adjuncts and their supervisors, is student evaluation of teaching, it is unclear how adjunct faculty interpret those evaluations and how they affect their professional development and growth (Al-Issa & Sulieman, 2007; Benton & Ryalls, 2016; Hyle, 1999; Langbein, 1994; Langbein, 2008; McKeachie, 1997). The studies reviewed confirm that student ratings should be considered an essential component of adjunct faculty teaching performance evaluation, but they should not be used as the only feedback mechanism to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

Multiple studies confirmed that adjunct faculty consider peer and supervisor evaluations important; however, how much support and what kind of support they receive from peers and supervisors was unclear (Arreola, 2007; Brent & Felder, 2004a; Brent & Felder, 2004b; Brown & Lee, 2015; Langen, 2011). Studies are needed to determine what constitutes an effective peer or supervisor evaluation as perceived by adjunct faculty.

According to multiple research studies, coaching, as an extension of peer and supervisor evaluation, has a high rate of success as it relates to student achievement in the areas of mathematics, literacy, reading, and comprehension skills (Blazar & Kraft 2015; Campbell & Malkus 2011; Desimone, 2009; Knight et al., 2015; Neuman &

Cunningham, 2009; Sailors & Price, 2010). However, it is not clear what skill set translates into being a good coach or what specific conditions are necessary for a positive and effective adjunct teacher-coach relationship. More research is needed to identify effective modes of coaching (e.g., web-based vs. in-person) to enable coaches to reach a broad audience of adjunct teachers.

The importance of self-assessment was emphasized by some; individual teachers could trace their personal growth from the planning stages of the course, using multiple forms of evidence, such as their philosophy of teaching, development of new courses, their mentoring, and their research activities (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; McGovern, 2006). However, how self-assessment affects adjunct teacher professional development and growth is unclear and represents an area where further research is necessary.

The need to develop successful evaluative strategies was particularly salient in the context of retaining adjunct teachers (Arreola, 2007; Park et al., 2014; Seldin et al., 2010). A review of the literature indicated that further research was needed to develop a theory delineating an effective feedback mechanism for adjunct faculty members across different settings and contexts, exploring other venues through which adjunct teachers may receive feedback.

To date, multiple studies investigated various aspects of feedback and evaluation of adjunct faculty. However, the evidence from such studies identified the need for further research. Specifically, qualitative research was needed to explore (a) what types of feedback and evaluation result in professional development and growth among adjunct faculty and (b) what would be the components of an effective feedback mechanism to improve teaching effectiveness among adjunct faculty. With dramatic increases in the use

of adjunct faculty in institutions of higher learning, the need to understand how these

faculty are being evaluated and served is critical for development of an effective

feedback mechanism resulting in their professional development and growth. These

individuals play a critical role in the delivery of education to students (Churchill, 2019;

Culver et al., 2020; Magness, 2016).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

**Introduction and Overview**

The purpose of this study was to examine the results of the evaluation of teaching

effectiveness on adjunct faculty professional development and growth as experienced by

the adjunct faculty at a mid-size private university in the United States. Based on the

literature review, I believed that a better understanding of this phenomenon would lead to

improved adjunct faculty professional development and growth, impacting not only

faculty morale and retention, but also student learning. In seeking to understand this

phenomenon, the current study addressed the following four research questions:

1. What type of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty
   receive currently?

2. What types of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find
   to be helpful for professional development and growth?

3. How do adjunct faculty use the feedback on their teaching to shape their
   professional development decisions?

4. How is the feedback on teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty?

This chapter describes the research methodology and provides descriptions for the

following areas: rationale for qualitative design, data collection, selection of participants,

issues of trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

**Rationale for Qualitative Design**

This study sought to understand how the results of feedback and evaluation impact adjunct faculty professional development and growth through developing a unified theoretical explanation of the components of an effective feedback mechanism of teaching effectiveness grounded in the views of the study participants. I selected a qualitative research design for this study as it aimed to achieve a holistic understanding of the results of feedback and evaluation of adjunct faculty professional development and growth. A qualitative approach is rooted in a constructivist philosophical position, wherein complexities of sociocultural world are contextually positioned, understood, and interpreted (Charmaz, 2014). Moreover, qualitative research is inductive, evolving, and implies an emphasis on thick description and discovery (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The most suitable methodological choice to accomplish this research purpose was a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014). The foundational underpinnings of this method are rooted in constructivism, which seeks to understand and explain "social phenomena by working backwards—from data to theory" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 56). I followed the guidelines proposed by Charmaz (2014), based on the foundational work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). A constant comparative method of initial coding and subsequent focused coding were used to determine what the data represented. Data collection was followed by initial and focused coding, theoretical sampling, and the development of conceptual categories, until saturation was reached. In addition, memos were written throughout the process to stimulate thinking about coded data, capture the researcher's insights about the data, and provide a control mechanism for personal biases. Since little was known about the results of feedback of teaching effectiveness on adjunct

professional development and growth, this approach provided explanatory power in terms of knowledge formation and practical application, providing a framework for further research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In addition to a social constructivist approach to understand the specific contexts in which the study participants lived and worked; recognizing that multiple realities are constructed and shaped through interactions with others, the researcher approached the study with a theistic interpretative framework to understand reality. I used an inductive method of analyzing emergent ideas through interviews to represent and understand a complexity of views.

## Data Collection

Prior to data collection, the researcher developed and defended the dissertation proposal, subsequently obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that the study adheres to the standards for studying human subjects (see Appendix A). Both the central purpose of the study and any known risks associated with the participation in the study were explained to the participants before they signed the consent form. Once the consent form was signed, a homogenous purposeful sampling to identify and select participants for the study occurred. The researcher contacted each participant via email and scheduled an interview, which was the primary data collection method for obtaining a deep understanding of professional development and growth originating from various forms of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

While the interview is known to engender in-depth and rich descriptions, and for capturing the complexity of personal perspectives, the interview as a method has its weaknesses (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Interviews require strong researcher skills and

at times, represent "asymmetrical power relations" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 193). This was evidenced as two participants were direct supervisees of the researcher and may have not shared certain aspects of their current adjunct experience during the interview. However, the participants were assured that any information shared during the interview would have no bearing on their contractual agreement as per the signed consent form and applicable IRB guidelines. Moreover, the two participants appeared to have been sharing their stories without hesitation or any desire to terminate the discussion at any point during the interview.

Another potential weakness of the interview method is that not all participants cooperate or articulate their ideas well; therefore, designing high-quality interview questions is critical as they must correlate with the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To mitigate the potential weaknesses of the interview method, the researcher recognized the importance of co-regulation during the interview via maintaining a warm and calming presence and tone of voice, and provided a safe and supportive environment, critical in eliciting rich and relevant data as per the signed consent form and applicable IRB guidelines.

Finally, transcribing interviews is a value-laden task in which analytical judgments are made about the representation of data. The researcher chose to transcribe the interviews on their own as it helped with the processing, analysis, organization, and representation of data.

The researcher interviewed the participants in person in her office with the exception of one participant who preferred to meet in their office. Because of their varied teaching schedules, the researcher asked participants to select a time that worked best for

them. An interview protocol was used with approximately fifteen questions (see Appendix B). The interview proceeded from an open-ended inquiry serving as a prompt that did not constrain the natural exploration of the phenomenon under investigation followed by several pre-selected questions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and saved in a computer file for analysis to maintain its fidelity and structure.

The researcher used microanalysis of the interviews to make sure that important constructs were not overlooked (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews were then analyzed through various types of open and selective coding to explain the impact of evaluation of teaching effectiveness on professional development and growth. Conceptually similar codes were grouped together as concepts, which were later integrated to form a theoretical framework; finally, I developed a model or a theoretical proposition to advance a theory.

## Selection of Participants

### Research Site and Population

Research participants were adjunct faculty members from a private mid-size university in the United States. This university's total annual student enrollment, including both undergraduate and graduate students, is approximately 5,000 persons. It offers 94 undergraduate programs and 67 graduate programs. The total number of full-time faculty is 221 and the total number of adjunct faculty is 183. In addition, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) classes are offered at its Center for Intensive English Programs (IEP). Over the past two decades, this university has been ranked regularly in the top ten lists for campus ethnic diversity and a high percentage of international students. In addition to the richly diverse campus, this specific site was selected because a

high number of teaching faculty are adjunct faculty members, many of whom have taught there and at various other institutions for some time and who represent a rich source of information.

**Research Participants**

The researcher used a homogenous purposeful sampling strategy to identify and select the information-rich participants based on their membership in a pre-defined subgroup to understand deeply the results of the feedback on teaching effectiveness received on adjunct faculty professional development and growth. This strategy was the most suitable for the initial stage of this study because the selected individuals represented a relatively homogeneous sample with intimate experience of the phenomenon under investigation from the perspective of the specific group (Creswell, 2019; Patton, 2014).

After data collection had started and the theoretical framework began to emerge from the data analysis, the researcher employed a theoretical selection strategy to collect additional data and examine individuals who could contribute further to the emergent theory (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The selected strategy was the most suitable for this grounded theory study with its ongoing, evolving, and concept-forming characteristics.

Participants in this study were selected according to the following criteria: (a) all participants were current adjunct faculty members at the time of the interview, and (b) all participants reported having received feedback and evaluations of their teaching during their career as adjuncts. Due to the nature of adjunct teaching, most of the participants held adjunct teaching positions at two different institutions at the time of the interview.

Moreover, the researcher sought participants with whom she was personally acquainted to promote openness, sincerity, and collegial rapport during the interview and elicit optimal results; this is considered both a limitation and a strength.

Because the grounded study is inductive and evolving and theory emerges as the data are collected and analyzed, "establishing the precise sample size beforehand may be neither possible nor advisable" (Rudestam & Newton, 2015, p. 124). Therefore, the initial tentative research sample included 8-12 individuals, for saturation purposes, who had experienced professional development and growth as a result of evaluations of teaching effectiveness. I reached out via email to twelve individuals identified as adjunct faculty, inviting them to participate in the current study, per the IRB approved Participant Recruitment document (see Appendix C). Eight individuals responded positively, agreeing to participate in the study; two individuals declined the invitation to participate; the remaining two individuals never responded. Although participants represented a homogenous sample of adjunct faculty individuals, there were differences among them including (a) the years of adjunct teaching, ranging between 5 and 20 years of experience; (b) gender, 4 male and 4 female participants; and (c) educational and cultural background. Moreover, all the participants had experience teaching locally and internationally, in person and online. For the protection of anonymity, the researcher didn't describe each participant's unique personal identifiers such as gender, ethnicity, years of teaching, and the academic departments they worked for.

## Issues of Trustworthiness

One of the challenges a qualitative researcher must recognize and address is to set aside one's theoretical ideas, or to bracket oneself, to allow substantive theory to emerge

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). This could be difficult, particularly in the light of my extensive experience as an adjunct faculty member until the recent past. This, however, gave me insight into how individuals experience the results of feedback and evaluation on adjunct faculty professional development and growth. Moreover, I believe that theory development results "from a co-construction process dependent upon researcher interactions with participants and field" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 84). Thus, a conscious control of personal biases was present throughout all stages of this research study via a detailed research journal documenting my decisions and actions.

First, I conducted pilot testing of the research questions with a trusted colleague to make sure that they elicited responses directly related to the research questions and reflected on the interpretations derived from the interviews and made necessary adjustments to ensure fidelity.

To furthermore ensure the trustworthiness of this study, I scrupulously incorporated three perspectives of research validation for the purposes of triangulation: the researcher lens, the participant lens, and the reader lens. To check the accuracy of the qualitative account from the point of view of the researcher, the strategy of discovering negative case analysis or disconfirming evidence was utilized to provide a realistic assessment of the phenomenon. I looked for evidence that might be neither positive nor negative, but a combination of both, and was thus attentive to the points of intrigue to make sure that a realistic assessment of those phenomena, which didn't fit the broader pattern naturally, was provided (Saldaña, 2016).

Also, the research participants played an important role in member checking, a validation strategy, where the researcher "solicited participants' views of the credibility

of the findings and interpretations" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 261). I asked the study

participants for their input on the preliminary analysis without disclosing the raw data or

transcripts.

Finally, I asked another colleague to provide an honest external peer review of the

data and research process by exploring alternative ways of looking at data and examining

my assumptions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). So, to ensure the trustworthiness of this

research study, I controlled for potential personal biases, spent sufficient time with the

research participants to explore their experiences in detail, videotaped interviews for

comparison with the recorded data, clarified tentative findings with the participants and

trusted colleagues, and revisited the working "hypothesis" on an ongoing basis as

additional data became available.

## Ethical Considerations

Several potential field issues were anticipated to arise from different aspects of

data collection; therefore, as a researcher, I put in place an early thought-through plan

such as (a) obtaining IRB approval in a timely manner, (b) selecting individuals to

participate in the study, and (c) establishing positive dynamics between the interviewer

and interviewee. Still, even with thorough preliminary preparation, unforeseen nuances

surfaced at each stage of the study such as when uncomfortable information was shared

during interviews, affecting both researcher and participants as they needed to decide

internally what to disclose. For example, at one point, the participant mentioned certain

details about the work dynamic that made me uncomfortable since the information shared

related to people I know. However, I felt honored that the participant felt safe to trust me

with the sensitive information, and in turn, they were assured that no information that could potentially compromise the participant anonymity would be shared.

To minimize any potential ethical issues, I ensured that all three cardinal principles of ethics in research: (a) respect for persons, (b) concern for welfare, and (c) justice, were strictly applied and followed. Primary among the specific ethical issues was the challenge associated with studying one's own organization, and the potential inherent question of power imbalance between the researcher and the research participants. However, the challenge was mitigated by the researcher working on an ongoing basis with colleagues outside the parameters of the specific research project, where they were on an equal footing. Moreover, being personally acquainted with the participants with whom the researcher had established a professional rapport and trust was a pre-requisite for eliciting rich data and having an optimal interview experience.

Regarding data storage and security, backup copies of computer files were created; there was a master list of the types of information gathered, all of which was password protected. All participants were given a pseudonym to protect their anonymity; no information that could potentially compromise the participants' anonymity was shared; and the master list and any physical copies of information were kept in a locked fire-proof cabinet.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

**Introduction**

This research study sought to understand how the results of feedback and

evaluation impact adjunct faculty member professional development and growth through

developing a unified theoretical explanation of the components of an effective feedback

mechanism of teaching effectiveness grounded in the views of the study participants. I

chose a constructivist grounded theory as I believed it provided the most comprehensive

methodological choice to accomplish the study purpose and to form theory.

The current study addressed the following four research questions:

1. What type of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty
   receive currently?

2. What types of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find
   to be helpful for professional development and growth?

3. How do adjunct faculty use the feedback on their teaching to shape their
   professional development decisions?

4. How is the feedback on teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty?

**Data Analysis and Results**

For data analysis, I followed the guidelines proposed by Charmaz (2014), based

on the foundational work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The process included a constant

comparative method of initial coding and subsequent focused coding to determine what

the data represented, and then cycled between data collection, coding, theoretical

sampling, and the development of conceptual categories, until theoretical saturation was

reached. In addition to the iterative nature of data analysis, I wrote memos throughout the

process, which are critical for grounded theory research as they stimulate thinking about

coded data and concepts, capture the researcher's insights about the data, and provide a

control mechanism for personal biases throughout the data analysis process.

This chapter describes the data gained from the participant interviews which

focused on adjunct faculty member perceptions of feedback and evaluation of their

teaching effectiveness on the adjunct faculty member's professional development and

growth in the mid-size private university in the United States.

## Findings

This chapter presents the findings of my grounded theory research, with a goal of

developing a general theory explaining the perceived results of feedback and evaluation

of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty members' professional development and

growth as experienced at a mid-size private university in the United States.

### Initial Coding

Initial coding was the process of organizing the raw research data into codes. I

chose to use In Vivo coding for this stage of data analysis as I sought to reflect

participant responses in their own words. The initial coding used a line-by-line analysis

of data in the participants' own words. Table 1 represents the collection of participant

responses as they pertained to the first research question "What type of feedback on their

teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty receive currently?"

**Table 1**

*Research Question 1 Initial Coding*

| What type of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty receive currently? | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Participant | Student Feedback | Supervisory Feedback | Collegial Feedback |
| 1 | Student surveys | Supervisor's eval at the beginning of hiring | |
| 2 | Feedback from students | Feedback from my bosses | Colleague's observation during practicum |
| 3 | Student responses | | Informal feedback from colleagues |
| 4 | Student surveys; student informal feedback | My current director's observation and feedback | Informal feedback from professors |
| 5 | Student surveys | Formal and informal feedback from my supervisor | Informal exchange of ideas with my colleagues |
| 6 | Directly from students | Limited feedback from my supervisors | |
| 7 | Occasional student feedback | Observations from my current director | Share and exchange ideas with colleagues |
| 8 | From students | From my supervisor when I was a Grad Assistant | From my colleagues when I was a Grad Assistant |

The participant responses to Research Question 1 "What type of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty receive currently?" were recorded in Table 1, revealing the main three sources of feedback adjunct faculty have received to date: student surveys, supervisor evaluations, and peer feedback. All participants had received evaluations of their teaching effectiveness, formal and informal, from their students. Some reported regular student feedback at the end of each term or semester, while others experienced occasional or limited student feedback. Except for Participant 3, seven adjunct faculty members reported they had been evaluated by their direct supervisors at some point during their adjunct career, although timing of the supervisor evaluation did not seem to have been consistent in their teaching experience. Most of the supervisory evaluations happened at the beginning of their adjunct career.

Similar results were reported regarding peer observation; Participants 1 and 5 had never received any feedback on their teaching effectiveness from a colleague, and the other six adjunct participants had experienced informal feedback primarily, such as an exchange of ideas during faculty meetings or lunch breaks.

The initial codes of participant responses to the second research question "What types of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find to be helpful for professional development and growth?" are recorded in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Research Question 2 Initial Coding*

| | | What types of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find to be helpful for professional development and growth? | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | Constructive feedback, both positive and negative.<br><br>Civil feedback. | Suggestions from students – I take them seriously and make necessary adjustments. They prompt me to listen to lectures online.<br><br>Student performance - Am I getting through? Are students learning? Test scores I pay attention to – if an average is low, I know that I didn't do that great job. I need to improve. | If I feel that the university cares for me, shows simple recognition, and makes me feel that I am an integral part of the institution, I will continue investing and growing. |
| Participant 2 | Objective evaluations with the right attitude provide motivation for growth.<br><br>Contextual and specific feedback. | Student learning - my constant source for improvement.<br><br>Feedback about the content and delivery, but the delivery is the one that drives my learning about cultural awareness, methodologies . . . | Motivation – internal and external. If I like what I am doing, I keep updating myself.<br><br>If I feel that I am appreciated, I will do my best.<br><br>I value relationships, which play a greater role for my growth than the formal feedback. |

**Table 2, continued**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What types of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find to be helpful for professional development and growth? | | | |
| Participant 3 | Specific feedback.<br><br>Peer observations and informal conversations with colleagues | Student learning - I pay attention to what has helped them learn.<br><br>In addition to the institutional surveys - my own brief surveys. Students are taking the risk – I pay careful attention. | Getting to know people who are here making great sacrifices and have dreams; I can be an agent to achieve their dreams – one of the main things that keeps me motivated to keep growing.<br><br>Supervisor's inspiration enhances everyone's commitment and growth |
| Participant 4 | Specific feedback.<br><br>Affective feedback I pay the most attention to.<br><br>Picking up my colleague's brains and sharing ideas have been superb for learning.<br><br>Specific feedback - I act on it and try to improve. | Student performance - How many people failing the test, how many times they make the same mistake chapter after chapter. I try to see if this is one off or a pattern. Where do I need to improve?<br><br>Challenges make me grow. How can I get through to students individually and together efficiently. | I appreciate affirmation – it gives me courage to continue to grow.<br><br>My supervisor impresses me with their own research and best practices. I listen carefully and am receptive to their feedback. |
| Participant 5 | Constructive feedback. I find it difficult processing negative feedback.<br><br>Informal feedback from my colleagues. | Student learning - Did I help them achieve their goals for my class? | My supervisor's feedback and suggestions about available training. |

**Table 2, continued**

What types of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find to be helpful for professional development and growth?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 6 | Students' feedback matters to me, but it is more subjective and filtered.<br><br>I value the feedback from a fellow professional. | Balanced feedback – Eval usually focus on your areas of weakness, not balanced.<br><br>Specific feedback that recognizes the context of a person.<br><br>Student learning - You want them to succeed. What do I need to improve to help them succeed? | Whatever comes from the supervisor matters most.<br><br>Ultimately, it is really about individual interest.<br><br>Non-evaluative feedback that is not tied to hiring/firing. |
| Participant 7 | Specific feedback.<br><br>Informal feedback from students, both verbal and non-verbal. | Self-monitoring in the areas where I need to grow or the class I am teaching.<br><br>Student improvement – I want them to excel and that motivates me to grow.<br><br>Balanced – affirming what I am doing well and pointing to the areas that I need to improve in. | The most valuable feedback came from my current supervisor who observed my class and gave me their professional feedback for improvement. |
| Participant 8 | Constructive feedback read in the right mood.<br><br>Positive and specific evaluations. I have a hard time dealing with negativity. | Student success - actions speak louder than words. Those are the signals to me that what I was teaching was effective or not, and what should I do about that. | Collegial non-supervisory feedback. If somehow that collegiality could become part of our culture, that would be helpful. |

Participants' responses to the second research question "What types of feedback on their teaching effectiveness do the adjunct faculty find to be helpful for professional development and growth?" were captured and translated into multiple initial codes. The most common types of feedback that resulted in the adjunct faculty member professional development and growth were specific, constructive, positive, civil, affirming, encouraging, balanced, professional, formal, informal, and non-evaluative. Participants listed feedback from the following sources: students, colleagues, supervisors, and their own self-directed sense of excellence. Feedback from their supervisors and other professionals, followed by student input, was the most impactful for their pursuit of professional development and growth opportunities. Student learning, student improvement, student performance, and student success were reported to be the primary motivating factors and the central foci for continual professional development and growth among the adjunct faculty.

The responses to the third research question "How do adjunct faculty use the feedback on their teaching to shape their professional development decisions" are reflected in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Research Question 3 Initial Coding*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| How do adjunct faculty use the feedback on their teaching to shape their professional development decisions? | | | |
| Participant 1 | Adjust my methodology and assessment practices.<br><br>Make syllabus adjustments and rewrite my lesson plans. | Take classes – I recently enrolled in the Assessment of Learning course. | Take notes of the feedback.<br><br>Keep up with the development of the field.<br><br>Participate in online and on-campus workshops |
| Participant 2 | Update my tests and assessment practices.<br><br>Carefully adjust my teaching methodologies. | Learn new technologies.<br><br>Work on my time-management and organization skills. | I never feel the same after each class – regular feedback keeps our pencils sharp.<br><br>Select new reading materials. |
| Participant 3 | Explore new trends and ideas<br><br>Reflect in journals. | Connect with colleagues who teach in the same field. | Establish reading habits – 30 min/twice a week from professional journals.<br><br>Participate in academic book clubs. |

**Table 3, continued**

How do adjunct faculty use the feedback on their teaching to shape their professional development decisions?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 4 | Become aware of my weaknesses to avoid blind spots. | Attend workshops about new technologies. | Sign-up for one-on-one customized sessions – One-on-one sessions are much more useful than group training. |
| | Brainstorm ideas with colleagues. | Attend professional conferences. | |
| Participant 5 | Helps with the alignment of all course components. | Helps with the selection of training. | Encourages collegial collaboration. |
| | Adjust and update my teaching methodologies. | Learn about innovative technologies. | |
| Participant 6 | Reflect. | Update and expand my repertoire of teaching materials – look for new worksheets, videos, and other resources. | |
| Participant 7 | Participate in seminars. | Ask and solicit advice from my colleagues. | Reassess my teaching practices on an ongoing basis. |
| | Consult academic literature pertaining to my area of teaching. | Attend conferences. | |
| Participant 8 | Helps learn to read evaluations in a constructive way. | Participate in workshops. | Ask a colleague for professional input. |

Participant data regarding the third research question "How do adjunct faculty use the feedback on their teaching to shape their professional development decisions?" contained rich information and revealed the overwhelmingly positive results of feedback on adjunct faculty professional development decisions. Seven participants stated that the feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness served as an impetus for their selection and participation in professional development workshops, seminars, lectures, classes, and academic conferences. Six participants reported that the feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness resulted in ongoing revision of their teaching methodologies, assessment practices, syllabi, lesson planning, and other components of course design, planning, and delivery. Six participants reported that the feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness improved their collegial collaboration. Five participants reported that the feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness resulted in further development of their personal skills and practices such as reflective journaling, regular reading of academic literature, time management and organization, heightened awareness of their professional blind spots, and the constructive reading of evaluations.

The fourth and final research question "How is the feedback on teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty?" explored the overall perceptions adjunct faculty hold about the feedback on their teaching effectiveness and are listed in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Research Question 4 Initial Coding*

| How is the feedback on teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | I listen to feedback and take it seriously, except for personal attacks; I don't take those seriously. | University can treat adjuncts better – no benefits but simple recognition. | When it comes to feedback, there needs to be a balance between deep involvement and freedom for adjuncts. |
| | Valuable advice; anything and everything – every class is an opportunity to grow. | For me, informal feedback is very important. | |
| Participant 2 | Humility factor - we can be experts in our fields, but we can lack elsewhere. Feedback is needed for growth. | Due to my cultural background, informal relationships matter the most. The personality of the supervisor plays a greater role than the formal feedback. Build relationships. | I prefer interviews to surveys; you don't want to kill the scores by numbers. I would supplement the formal assessment with an informal conversation. |
| Participant 3 | I pay careful attention to feedback. You have to keep growing. I always try new ideas and that what the feedback motivates me to do. | I really appreciate my current supervisor's efforts. There was a divide - the salaried and the adjuncts. Now, we are all on the same level. | I regularly supplement the formal surveys with my own brief surveys. |

**Table 4, continued**

How is the feedback on teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 4 | Feedback is very important. I have been teaching for many years – teaching is breathing, but I am human and make mistakes. | I don't change easily. However, when you have somebody who is the best professional they can be, but not in a self-righteous way, when they ask me to look at things from a different perspective, I listen carefully and am much more receptive to their advice. | I look for interpersonal interactions. If my students come back and are really happy to see me, and are still doing work, also are motivated – I am doing well. |
| Participant 5 | Feedback is very important for me - it prompts me to explore new things and perspectives. | Feedback is like a mirror in which I see myself. It reveals what I need to improve. | |
| Participant 6 | Evals usually focus on your areas of weakness, not balanced. Part of my professional life there was always that sense it was tied to hiring and firing.<br><br>Whoever evaluates should evaluate you as a whole person, not raw and meaningless. | Supervisors' feedback impacts how I shape and think about the kind of teacher I want to be. | Feedback is valuable if it comes in the context of the relationship - to envision how I can help my teachers or supervisor or students better and the feedback that allows me to preserve those relationships. |

**Table 4, continued**

| How is the feedback on teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 7 | Depends on who is giving me the feedback. From the supervisor – yes, I respect and value and try to become a better teacher. From students – I take it with the grain of salt. | Feedback for adjuncts is so limited. Perhaps it's the nature of adjuncts and a more hands-off approach at higher ed about feedback.<br><br>Mostly, it has been my own self-monitoring in the areas where I need to grow. | I want to see more feedback from colleagues; however, I realize that adjuncts have limited time available.<br><br>It would be great to have feedback supervisor, colleagues and students every semester. |
| Participant 8 | I've never liked teaching evaluations because, at least for me, they don't serve the purpose they're intended to serve - they're more of a popularity contest than really an evaluation of teaching. | People tend to be very superficial - the students tend to be superficially negative, and then the colleagues tend to be superficially positive. I have become a bit cynical about feedback. | I think I know when I've done a good job and when I haven't.<br><br>I think that at every level of experience, people get stuck. If we could create that culture of openness where we are learning from each other to grow, it would be valuable. |

The participant responses to the fourth research question "How is the feedback on teaching effectiveness perceived by adjunct faculty?" revealed rich and informative data. All eight participants stated that feedback on their teaching effectiveness was a critical factor for their professional development and growth; although for Participant 8, the afore-mentioned outcome of feedback is a theoretical reality possible only in a culture of openness. Despite the limited amount of feedback the adjunct faculty had received regarding their teaching effectiveness, all eight participants emphasized the importance of feedback for their professional development and growth. Six participants pointed to the relational aspect of feedback; feedback which is framed in the context of preserving and maintaining good professional relationships results in their professional development and growth. Three participants underlined the importance of a balanced and holistic assessment, which focuses not only on the evaluative and quantitative components of teaching effectiveness but consists of non-evaluative and qualitative conversations with an individual, reflecting their strengths and weaknesses.

**Focused Coding**

Upon the completion of detailed initial coding for all eight interviews, I began looking for concepts and trying to combine codes into conceptual categories. At first it felt like hiking in complete darkness or walking a tightrope. Transitioning from the first cycle of initial coding to the second cycle of focused coding was exciting yet onerous as I cycled through the raw data, the initial coding, my memos, and back to the data to determine which codes were dominant and which were not, and what constituted the properties and dimensions of any category of data. Like the two hemispheres of the human brain, the first cycle of initial coding seemed to be representative of the left side

of the brain, which is more concrete and observable, whereas the second cycle was illustrative of the right side of the brain, which requires a more analytic and creative approach, leading to theory building.

As I continued the process of data analysis, I kept in mind the two common errors associated with coding, which Saldaña (2016) cautioned about. The first error involves using descriptive coding as a default method to generate subtopics. Topic generation, however, doesn't reveal much about the richness of the human condition; therefore, I used it sparingly. The second error refers to code proliferation (i.e., random stacking of data until it gets out of control). As I analyzed the data, I tried to minimize both errors by determining how detailed my coding needed to be and which datum required coding, as it might be simply insignificant and inconsequential. As I moved from coding to theming the data, I was careful not to allow themes to emerge from the participant data; rather, themes came from my interpretative stance.

I narrowed the list of initial codes to the following set of five focused codes or critical properties:

- Exhibiting Inspirational Leadership
- Promoting Collegial Collaboration
- Fostering Student Success
- Upholding Instructor Agency
- Nurturing a Culture of Support

Each of these five codes and their critical properties will be discussed in the following section on Axial Coding.

**Axial Coding**

       Axial coding is the analytical process used to build relationships between categories. It can be viewed as an extension of focused coding where related categories are formed into sub-categories, while the one open coding category, the core phenomenon, is identified (Saldaña, 2016). As I progressed through this this stage of data analysis, a new axial code emerged, motivation for growth. The motivation for growth became an axis, or a core category, upon which the other five critical properties identified during the focused coding depended: (a) exhibiting inspirational leadership, (b) promoting collegial collaboration, (c) fostering student success, (d) upholding instructor agency, and (e) nurturing a culture of support. The axial coding served as a springboard for making connections between the critical properties and the corresponding experiences of adjunct faculty. The axial code and the related categories are recorded in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Axial Coding for Motivation to Grow*

As I examined each of the critical properties and the related categories, I applied the framework of the contexts, conditions, interactions, and consequences of the processes that influence the central phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I deliberately chose not to list the numeric frequency of codes and their categories from the gathered data as they do not necessarily serve as a "valid indicator of a central/core category" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 253). For example, the code *instructor agency* only appeared twice in my data analysis; however, it held summative power for other categories in the study. Instead, I used graphs and figures to illustrate each category's dimensions and properties.

**Categories of Motivation to Grow**

*Exhibiting Inspirational Leadership*

During the interviews, all eight adjunct participants stated that feedback on their teaching effectiveness was the critical factor for their professional development and growth. They all welcomed feedback from relevant sources. However, the feedback that mattered the most for their learning and growth was feedback from their supervisors and colleagues. In this section, I focus on the frequency, intensity, impact, and quality of the supervisory feedback that results in professional development and growth as perceived by the adjunct faculty members. The axial code for *exhibiting inspirational leadership* and its related categories is displayed in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Axial Coding for Exhibiting Inspirational Leadership*
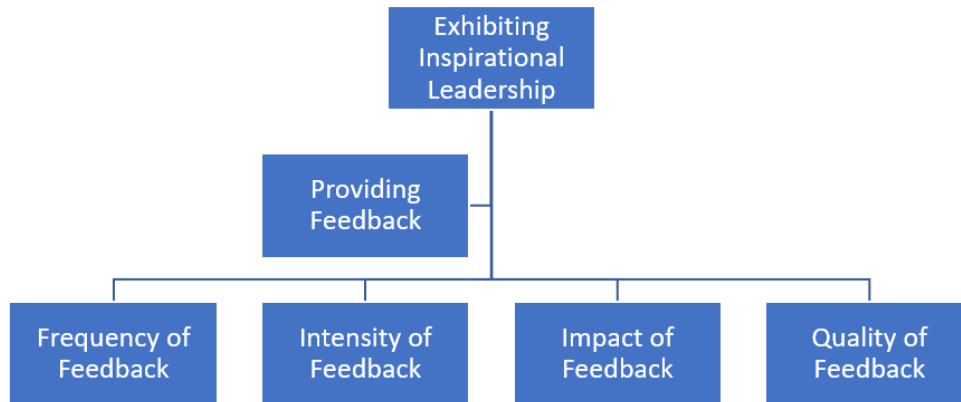


**Frequency and Intensity of Feedback.** All eight participants stated that feedback from their supervisor was the most important factor for their professional growth, yet only three participants, 2, 4, and 7, reported on recent formal or informal feedback conducted by the supervisor regarding their teaching effectiveness. They shared that their current supervisors visited their classes during the semester and offered constructive and specific feedback on their teaching effectiveness, which was very valuable. Participant 4 stated that apart from their current supervisor, "Most of the supervisors have not stepped foot into my classroom. As long as I produced students who mastered the topics, I was left alone."

Five participants mentioned receiving evaluations of their teaching at the beginning of their careers as adjuncts or during the initial trial period of employment at institutions of higher learning and confirmed its importance and value. For example,

Participant 1 noted that in their 9-year career as an adjunct, they " . . . had the supervisor's class observation once at the beginning of hiring. It was in a community college. My supervisor attended classes the first semester I taught and followed up. That was the only time. In other places, they just made me feel welcome and good." Similarly, Participant 5 and 8 stated that they had had regular feedback at the beginning of their careers, where their supervisors observed their respective classes before issuing a new teaching contract, while Participant 6 described their supervisory feedback as occasional and sporadic.

Participant 2 offered further insight as they differentiated between two teaching modalities: online and in person. For the asynchronous online classes, "I had four different supervisors, and their involvement was more than I would want or expect. It felt less than feedback and more like the orders by the bosses asking me to change this or that." For the in-person classes, however, they never experienced a supervisor evaluation. Participant 2 said, "I had almost full freedom to develop and manage classes as I want." They also inserted that, "there needs to be a balance between deep, demanding involvement and freedom for adjuncts."

Thus, the supervisory feedback that the adjunct faculty receive from their supervisors varies greatly in their *frequency*, from regular to occasional, and *intensity*, from deep involvement to complete freedom, depending on different contexts and locales.

**Impact and Quality of Feedback.** In this section, I report on participant responses regarding the impact and quality of their supervisor's feedback on their professional development and growth. Participant 4 shared that,

My current supervisor impresses me with their own research and best practices. The fact that my supervisor works on process improvement gives me courage and great hope. When you have somebody who is the best professional they can be, but not in a self-righteous way, when they ask me to look at things from a different perspective, I listen carefully and I am much more receptive to their advice. It is hard to change my way of things – when the supervisor has an extremely real and collegial manner and lives by example leadership you can trust, and without fear of reprisal, that kind of feedback is so valuable – I take it at face value.

Participant 6, on the other hand, described the reality of their supervisory feedback and evaluation differently. They said,

I was rarely observed. You know, you are on your own, no man's land. Whenever I was [observed], I often felt it was to check the box . . . . Unfortunately, part of my professional life there was always that sense it was tied to hiring and firing. That's not the most effective way to shape one's professional growth.

While the reality of the supervisory evaluation was different for most of the participants, their expectations for what the supervisory feedback should look like was consistent. Participant 6 expressed their desire for the supervisor to evaluate them as "a whole person, not raw and meaningless and within the context of preserving relationships." They further shared that,

There is a lot that we are asked to do to help students' mental health and there is not much left for us teachers. Evaluations should be professionally specific and recognize the context of a person. In the ideal world, the supervisor's feedback impacts how I shape and think about the kind of teacher I want to be.

This idea of the supervisor whose feedback should be enabling and impactful for the faculty's professional development and growth resonated with Participant 7, who reported that the most valuable feedback they had received came from their current supervisor, who regularly observes their classes, connects with them informally, and offers professional feedback and recommendations. Participant 7 stated,

Supervisors have a great opportunity to be a source of encouragement, suggest resources, and give constructive criticisms, which I welcome. I respect and value

my current supervisor, who is caring and open-minded. I listen, act upon their feedback, and try to become a better teacher.

In a similar train of thought, Participant 2 emphasized the importance of their supervisor's feedback on their professional growth through inspirational leadership when they said,

> The personality of the supervisor plays a greater role than the formal feedback. Build relationships. I had excellent people to work with. I value when I have informal supervision – my cultural background – informal relationships matter the most. Also, appreciation. If I feel that I am appreciated, I will do my best. Some people know how to express their appreciation and others have less skills.

Consistent with the reports from the other faculty, for Participant 8, the impact of their supervisor's evaluation, even though it was done at the beginning of their adjunct career, was long-lasting. The following poem that I composed as I was analyzing the data from the interview captures the lessons that Participant 8 learned from their supervisory feedback experience:

He gave what I still remember,
This is like 15 or 20 years ago,
But he gave advice
I still remember that has helped me actually read evaluations,
Think about them in a constructive way.
He said:
Don't open them right away,
Don't look at them right away,
Set an appointment for yourself for when you're gonna look at them
Because it's important to look at them in the right mood.
Then take the two highest ones and the two lowest ones
And just throw them out the window and don't even pay attention to them.
That's gonna give you a more accurate picture of your teaching.
Truly,
This experience gave me the tools to read evaluations
in a constructive way.

This poem reveals valuable information about the impact of the supervisory feedback on this adjunct faculty member's professional development and growth. After

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that experience, Participant 8 never received any personal observations or evaluation of their teaching effectiveness conducted by their supervisor.

This resonated with Participant 3, who had never had a supervisory evaluation before, yet they commented on their current supervisor's impact as follows,

> My supervisor provides an inspiration as they invest in our students and faculty. It enhances everyone's commitment. Connects us all. I think that has really helped to bring us all as a team into a level of unity that we didn't have before. There was a divide between the salaried and the adjuncts. Here we are all on the same level.

The impact and quality of the supervisory feedback, whether real or imaginary, as experienced by the adjunct participants can be summarized as regular, constructive, both formal and informal, affirming, encouraging, motivational, and in the context of preserving relationships. While the responses of the adjunct faculty were varied, yet they were consistent with the need and expectation for inspirational leadership, whose valuable feedback will result in adjunct faculty professional development and growth.

### *Promoting Collegial Collaboration*

Collegial feedback has been identified by all adjuncts as one of the main factors, second after supervisor evaluations, contributing to adjunct faculty professional development and growth, yet only two participants experienced a formal non-evaluative peer review. The other six participants were never observed by a peer even though they wished they were. They had various other forms and degrees of collegial feedback and collaboration, though, such as exchanges of ideas in both formal and informal professional settings. The axial code for *promoting collegial collaboration through feedback* and its related categories are recorded in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Axial Coding for Promoting Collegial Collaboration through Feedback*
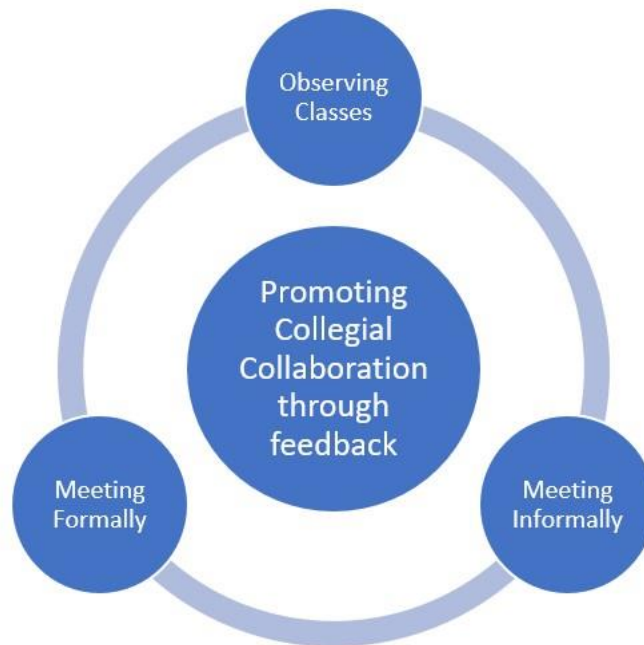
Describing their experience with peer-to-peer class observations, Participant 2 reported,

> The only time I had the class observation is when I did my teaching practicum and I appreciated that. I had a couple of times when my colleague needed to take my class and we would have a short briefing afterwards. I would always appreciate that.

They further continued,

> I would like to have my colleagues come and observe my class and give me valuable feedback. Also, I would supplement the formal assessment with the supervisor or a colleague, with an informal conversation - have a pizza party – we would naturally discuss, reassess, talk about the most memorable things, we laugh . . . . The learning continues.

Correspondingly, the need for both formal and informal peer observation and collaboration was shared by other participants. For example, Participant 3 stated,

> Class observations are great! As long as we are all understanding. There is always a whole spectrum of class – one day it is great and the other it is not. What we see on one day is not the reflection of what happens daily. To have observations of experienced teachers to meet and ask what they saw worked well and what can be done differently would be helpful. We need more interaction with each other as colleagues.

Similarly, Participant 5 underlined the need for peer interactions when they said, "[I] learn a lot from my colleagues as they share their success stories. Also, I learn a lot from the exchange of ideas during our faculty meetings. That gives me insight and new perspectives."

Reminiscing on the positive effects of the indirect peer review, Participant 4 shared a story of when they taught an MA class and a student with a learning disability requested that their lectures be recorded. The professor later learned that the student took the class recordings to the Office of Student Success, and they helped to transcribe the lectures. Participant 4 further commented,

Later, the Student Success coordinator, who is also a college professor, invited me to teach elsewhere as she complemented me on teaching based on what she heard in those recordings. You never know who is listening and how it affects others. I appreciate affirmation – it gives me courage to continue.

Commenting on their experience with the collegial collaboration and feedback, Participant 7 shared,

No colleague ever observed my classes. Mostly from the conversations – share and exchange of ideas. I often ask about the students we teach and solicit their suggestions, mostly at the student level than at the teaching methodology level. I want to see more. However, I realize that adjuncts have limited time available. It would be great to have feedback from the supervisor, colleagues, and students every semester.

Correspondingly, Participant 8, who also never experienced an observation by any peer, elaborated on its value as follows,

It is important that there needs to be a culture where people are observing each other and not from a supervisory perspective, where we grow in a linear relationship. If that could get to the point where there is some kind of openness that is generated, because it would be valuable for someone who is feeling stuck about something, to go and say, *I don't know how to approach this particular . . .*, and then feel the security to ask that, and have someone answer. Many times people don't because they think that it looks like they don't know what they are doing, but I think that at every level of experience, people get stuck, and that culture of collegiality, where I don't have to worry about being valued, peer-to-peer observations and conversations, maybe like teachers teaching the same class, meeting regularly and sharing assignment ideas, I think that could help a lot. But if the culture is wrong, it can do a lot of damage. If there is already resentment and doubt, that could be turned into even more hurt. So, it is delicate. In any institution I have been part of, it is people on their own doing their own thing. If somehow that collegiality could become part of our culture, that would be helpful.

As participants shared their varied experiences regarding the peer feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness, they confirmed that collegial feedback was one of the main factors contributing to their professional development and growth, and yet, it was limited. It has become increasingly clear that adjunct faculty not only understood the importance of regular peer-to-peer feedback, but also yearned for a culture of openness

and increased collegial collaboration in which peer feedback is offered and received regularly.

### *Fostering Student Success*

All eight participants reported having received student evaluations of their teaching effectiveness and considered their student feedback to be impactful on their professional development and growth, which affects the quality of their teaching and student learning. In the hierarchy of influence and importance, student feedback was placed third, after the supervisor (first and the most important) and colleague (second and very important) evaluations. This section reports on the frequency, quality, manner, and impact of student feedback and evaluations of teaching effectiveness that the adjunct faculty perceived to be the most instrumental for their professional development and growth. The axial code for *fostering student success* and its related categories is diagrammed in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Axial Coding for Fostering Student Success*
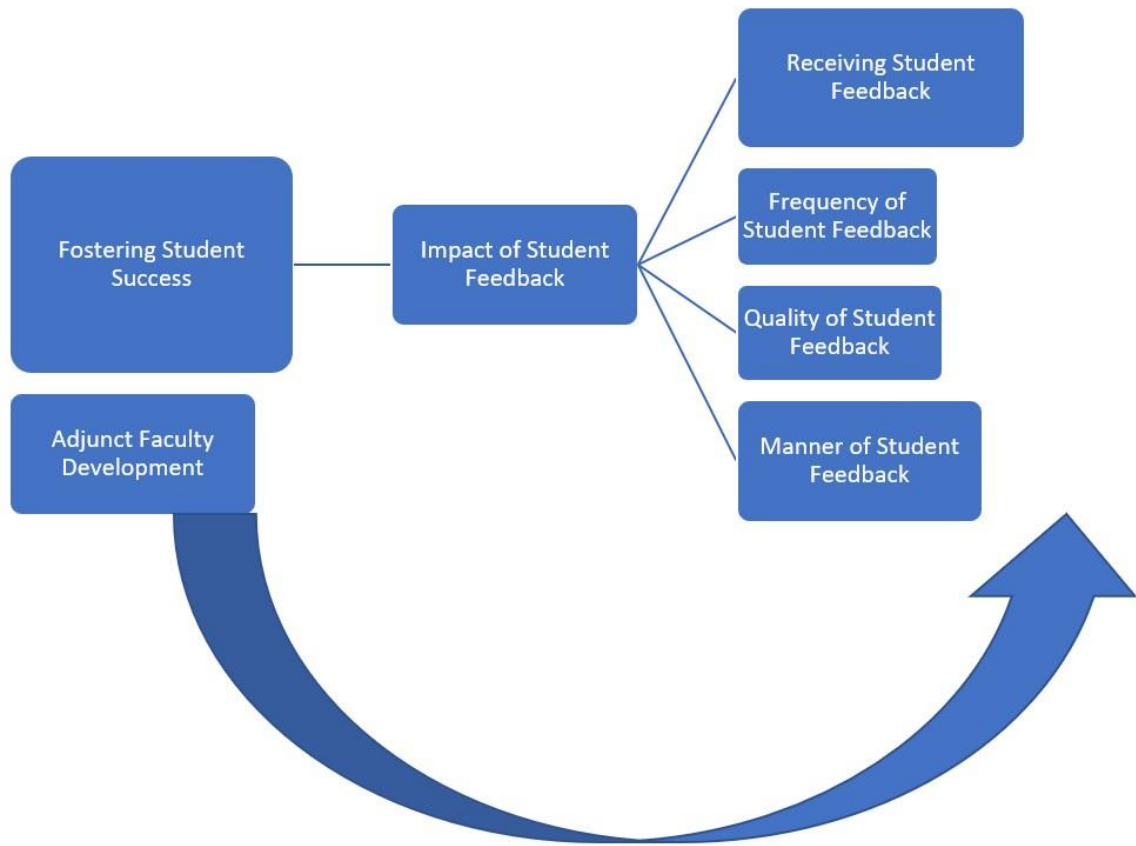
**Frequency, Quality, and Manner of Student Feedback**. Regarding the

frequency, quality, and manner of student feedback that adjunct faculty find the most

helpful for their professional development and growth, they reported it as being regular,

on an ongoing basis, specific, constructive, formal, informal, positive, civil, and with the

right attitude. For example, Participant 1 said,

> Constructive feedback, negative or positive, matters. For example, in my recent
> survey, students mentioned the timeliness of my assignments feedback and the
> methods of teaching – they wanted more discussion than lecture. I listen. I write
> down their suggestions. I take them seriously! But they have to be civil. Other
> than the written comments, I try to make sure their informal suggestions are
> welcomed. I do it on an ongoing basis. Helpful feedback.

> Similarly, Participant 2 expressed their appreciation for "objective evaluations

with the right attitude [which] provide motivation for growth. Even if the feedback is

negative but done with the right attitude, it is helpful." Participant 2 continued,

> Negative feedback can be positive. For example, time management – this
> application is not installed in me. I tell stories; lots of examples. Sometimes
> students want more time spent on the material. What can I do? I ask students to
> give me a hint or send me a personal message; I don't have an inner organ for that
> – I need help from the outside. The spirit in which feedback is given is important.
> Are they expressing genuine concern?

> Similarly, regarding the manner and quality of feedback, Participant 8 said,

> I have a really hard time with negativity, and that is probably my own weakness,
> but when I see something negative, my brain just shuts off, but if it is just positive
> alone, it doesn't do much [either]. But if it is positive, and specifically references
> a specific assignment or point in the class, that is very helpful. It is when the
> student gets specific, that is how I take them seriously, even the negative ones. I
> would probably not get upset about a negative comment if it were referencing
> something specific. That is not something I will ignore.

> Participant 5 also confirmed the importance of feedback that is positive, specific,

and constructive when they said,

Student surveys and daily feedback help me a lot. They are like a mirror in which I see myself. Sometimes the image I see doesn't require much change, and at other times I need to change. I constantly adjust and update. Generally, I find negative evaluations not a positive force for learning while positive feedback has always caused me to want to do more and to improve on.

**Impact of Student Feedback**. In addition to the quality of student feedback that is conducive to adjunct faculty professional development and growth, the participants underlined its impact. Participant 6 described the impact of student feedback and evaluations as follows,

What matters most to me – I am getting feedback from other professionals more than from students. Students matter to me, but it is more subjective and filtered. Whatever comes from the supervisor matters most. I am serving a student. I listen to them . . . . Often, they are more concerned with content – take with a grain of salt; they don't always know the whys. I value the feedback from a fellow professional.

In a similar way, Participant 7 stated, "It depends on who is giving me the feedback. From the supervisor – yes, I respect and value. From students – I take it with the grain of salt."

The rest of the adjunct participants, on the other hand, expressed a less cautious perspective on student feedback and evaluations which they described as being important and valuable for their growth. Participant 3 stated, "Students are taking the risk – I pay careful attention. How can I improve? You have to keep growing. I always try new ideas and that what the feedback motivates me to do."

Similarly, Participant 2 said, "Student learning [is] my constant source for improvement." In the same vein of thought, Participant 8 stated,

Are they able to move on and be successful somewhere else? Do I see them using something I have taught them in some other context? Those are the signals to me that what I was teaching was effective or not, and what should I do about that.

Sharing similar sentiments about the impact of student feedback, Participant 4 stated,

> We are not robots. If my students come back and are really happy to see me, when they come and are smiling when they come back to my class and are still doing work, also are motivated – I am doing well. Certain students – challenging problems, make me stop and think and figure out how I can get through to these people individually and together efficiently. That keeps me growing.

In a similar way, Participant 7 said, "Student improvement – I want them to excel and that motivates me to grow." And Participant 3 summarized the motivational factor of student feedback on the adjunct professional growth as follows, "Getting to know people who are here making great sacrifices and have dreams; I can be an agent to achieve their dreams – one of the main things that keeps me motivated to keep growing."

The interviews with the participants revealed that adjunct faculty value student feedback and place it third in the hierarchy of influence and importance, after supervisor (first - the most important) and colleague (second- very important) evaluations. The types of student feedback on their teaching effectiveness that the adjunct faculty value the most and which provide them with motivation to grow professionally are regular, specific, constructive, formal, informal, civil, and with the right attitude. This is critically important as the quality of student feedback increases the motivation of adjunct faculty to keep growing professionally, which in turn optimizes student learning. Hence, making sure that the adjunct faculty receive regular quality student feedback through formal institutional surveys and ongoing informal feedback in the classroom will lead to increased student success and professional growth among the adjunct faculty.

***Upholding Instructor Agency***

In the context of professional development and growth, teacher agency is

. . . the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues. Rather than responding passively to learning opportunities, teachers who have agency are aware of their part in their professional growth and make learning choices to achieve their goals (Calvert, 2016, p. 52).

The axial code for *upholding instructor agency* and its related categories is

demonstrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**

*Axial Coding for Upholding Instructor Agency*
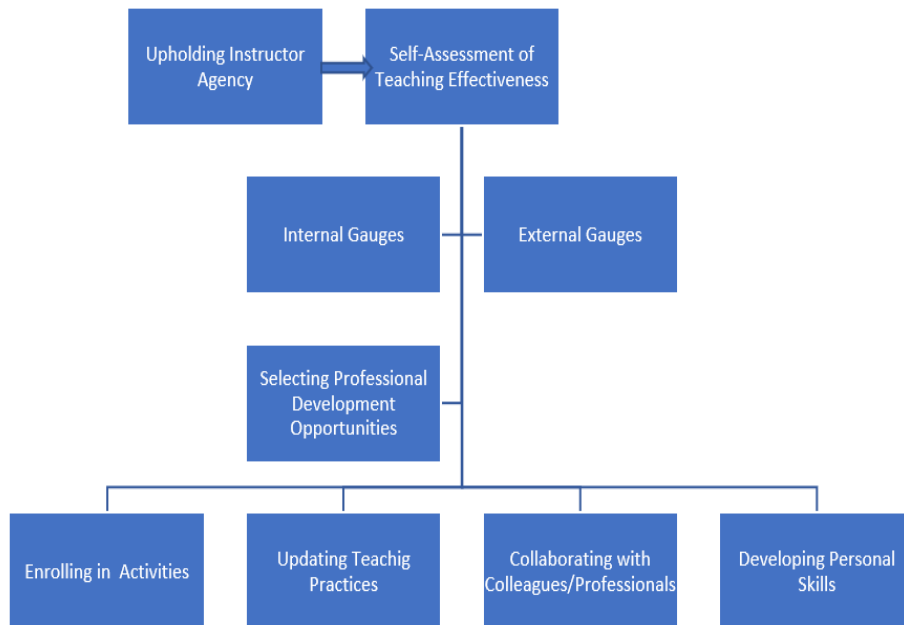
During the interviews, all participants confirmed that receiving quality feedback from various sources provides adjunct teachers with the motivation they need to grow professionally. Also, independent of others, the participants shed light on how they gauge their teaching effectiveness, which affects their professional development choices.

**Internal and External Gauges of Teaching Effectiveness.** All participants reported on the external and internal gauges of their teaching effectiveness. Among the external indicators of their teaching effectiveness, adjunct faculty listed the student grades and their overall performance and interpersonal interactions, including the use of humor. Among the internal gauges, the participants reported their intuition and their own sense of excellence as being the main indicators of their teaching effectiveness.

Referring to the external gauges of their teaching effectiveness, Participant 1 said,

> I pay attention to their scores. If they are not doing well – my messaging might be not clear. Test scores I pay attention to – if an average score is low, I know that I didn't do that great job.

In addition to the student scores, Participant 4 shared that they "look for interpersonal interactions; if there is somebody who is not happy, I check out to see they are doing personally; a lot of interpersonal things go on." For participant 2, "humor and regular questions for understanding are great ways to elicit students' feedback and gauge their understanding."

Along with the external gauges, Participant 6 indicated that they mostly use the internal gauges of their teaching effectiveness,

> For the most part, probably, intuition. I know when students are happy or not, or when I need to do this and this to adjust. Students' feelings are not always the best – sometimes you get certain vibes from students that have nothing to do with you. Intuitive sense for the most time.

Furthermore, the other participants shared that they regularly engage both internal and external gauges of their teaching effectiveness. Participant 7 expressed,

> The most regular gauge is my students' feedback. Informal feedback from students – frustration, clarity, confusion on their faces, the laughter. What is working and what isn't. Do I need to go over the concepts again? I am doing that all the time on an ongoing basis. The other gauge is the years of doing that – my own sense of excellence – expectations based on my training and experience. I try not to use students' grades as the main source of my success based on my experience. Grade do not always represent the students or the instructor's failure or success. Grade may be failing but students may still show signs of improvement and growth. You want them to excel, so to a certain extent grades factor, but mostly my own sense of personal excellence.

So, the adjunct participants reported that they engage both the internal and external gauges of their teaching effectiveness such as the student grades and performance, interpersonal interactions, humor, intuition, and their personal sense of excellence to further their personal development and growth. The section below describes how the adjunct faculty use the feedback that they receive to shape their professional development decisions.

**Impact of Feedback on Professional Development Decisions.** Seven participants confirmed that as a result of feedback on their teaching effectiveness, they decided to engage in various professional development opportunities such as attending seminars, workshops, and conferences to explore new trends in the field and to learn new and innovative technologies. For example, Participant 1 reported that after receiving feedback on their teaching effectiveness, they took the "Testing and Evaluation course – a very useful class for professional development. Very practical. I learned a lot and revised my assessment practices." In a similar way, Participant 4 stated, "I decided to attend the TESOL conference and the National Teachers Convention, which was fun, educational, and hanging out with colleagues and friends was the best."

Six participants reported that the feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness resulted in ongoing updates of their teaching methodologies, assessment practices, syllabus, lesson planning, and the other components of course design, planning, and delivery. Participant 3 confirmed, "The feedback I receive from students gives me a lot of motivation. How can I improve? You have to keep growing. I always try new ideas and that what the feedback motivates me to do."

Participant 5 also shared, "I do act on feedback and try to improve. It helps to select the professional development options available at our university, adjust and update my teaching methodologies, and align all of the course components."

Six participants reported that the feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness improved their collegial collaboration. Participant 8 reported that feedback on their teaching effectiveness prompted them to "ask a colleague for their professional input." Similarly, Participants 3, 4, and 5 said that they connect with colleagues who teach in the same field to solicit their advice and brainstorm ideas.

Five participants reported that the feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness resulted in the further development of their personal skills and practices such as reflective journaling, regular reading of academic literature, time management and organization, heightened awareness of their professional blind spots, and the constructive reading of evaluations. Participant 2 stated,

> At the beginning of class I am an expert; at the end of the class, I felt that these guys know what I don't. I declare that both of us are learning. I challenge myself to read a book/s; we must be honest and sincere, even in our own area of expertise we lack knowledge.

Participant 2 added that due to feedback from students, they have paid more attention to personal practices of time management and organization. Similarly,

Participant 4 shared that feedback relating to their teaching effectiveness served as an impetus for their personal and professional growth. They said, "I have been teaching for 40 years – teaching is breathing, but I am human and make mistakes. [Feedback] helps me become aware of my weaknesses to avoid blind spots."

In summary, the adjunct participants reported that they gauge their teaching effectiveness via the internal and external sources such as student grades, the student-teacher interpersonal interactions, humor, intuition, and the teacher's personal sense of excellence. The feedback the adjunct faculty receive impacts their professional development and growth in the following ways: They enroll in professional development activities and programs, adjust their teaching methodologies and practices, strengthen collegiality and professional collaborations, and further the development of their personal skills and practices. Therefore, upholding instructor agency is critical for adjunct faculty development and growth.

### Nurturing a Culture of Support

This section includes a report on how to ensure the continuity of professional development and growth among adjunct faculty based on the views of the participants. What can be done to ensure that the adjunct faculty continue growing professionally? While the feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness from various sources (e.g., the supervisor, colleagues, students, and the instructor's self-assessment) play a crucial role in motivating adjunct faculty professional development and growth, some specific strategies can be employed to maximize their effect through nurturing a culture of support. The axial code for *nurturing a culture of support* and its related categories is demonstrated in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Axial Coding for Fostering a Culture of Support*
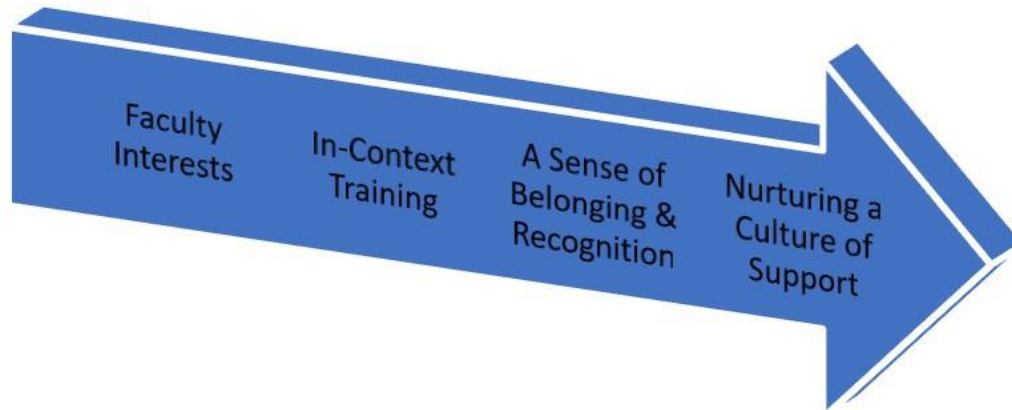


The first strategy toward ensuring the continuity of professional development and growth is to take into account the instructor's personal and professional interests when offering them a class to teach. Participants 1 and 2 reported that they can do immeasurably more if they teach a class they enjoy. They will invest more time and energy not only into teaching the class but also into related professional development opportunities. Participant 1 said, "Encourage adjuncts. Offer contract classes that adjuncts enjoy teaching. If I enjoy the subject, I will keep growing. Do not take on a class you don't enjoy. Thanks, but no thanks!" In the same vein of thought, Participant 2 shared, "If you like what you are doing, you keep updating yourself. You are passionate about your class – that keeps you motivated. And when your paycheck comes, you are not working, you are doing what you like the most." Participant 6, also said,

> Ultimately, it's about individual interest. We are rarely given a choice about the classes we teach. The classes are just being assigned to us. But what is most effective for my professional engagement and growth is my own personal interest.

In addition to the personal and professional interests of adjunct faculty members, a second strategy adjunct faculty found effective for their professional growth was to provide faculty with in-context training and helpful resources within their respective departments. Participant 5 shared, "It would be great to have workshops geared toward our own field. Maybe some ongoing training that relate to my classroom. More course professional development activities – a crash course, workshop for my field." Expanding on the importance of in-context training, Participant 4 stated,

> We had someone come and speak to us – totally useless. He doesn't know what we are doing in the department. Somebody from our department could create training that we actually need. Show us in small enough bites that we can digest, practice within a short period of time. Practical, useful, applicable, step-by-step, in bite-size pieces for already busy and overwhelmed people.

Similarly, Participant 7 shared their perspective and personal experience with in-context training and resources when they said,

> I would love to have a categorized list of training available in the areas that I teach. I like how we have a professional development nugget at the end of our faculty meeting – it has been great to have those conversations together whenever possible. Also, create a list of professional development activities, books, resources that are helpful and apply. I know that in other fields the funds are provided to attend conferences. Maybe each meeting a faculty or two can share tips and things they do. It will be incredibly useful.

Echoing the sentiments of the other adjuncts, Participant 3 added, "Even if we met a couple of times a semester to share an article or a book we read to keep growing together, [that would be helpful!] [Maybe a] reading club? Thematic months for the faculty?" The participants also shared that while the training and resources available at their institutions through the Centers of Teaching Excellence are very helpful for their professional development, they need to be supplemented with departmental field-specific in-context training and resources.

The third strategy that the adjunct faculty found helpful for ensuring their

continual professional development and growth is a sense of belonging and recognition.

Participant 1 shared,

> University could treat adjuncts better – not benefits but simple recognition. For example, at the end of the semester they cut me off the computer access. I understand the security concerns, but it saves them no money; perhaps we sign the form together with the chair for one year. The other thing they don't give me the computer/printer access until the semester begins. The Admin Assistant is asked to do my printing. No need for that! This is a way of letting me know that they care – make us feel part of the University. Also, at [College Name] they call everyone faculty – no benefits – but simple recognition. At my current University, I do not feel I am an employee.

Similarly, Participant 4 described their experiences that were captured in the

form of a poem as,

> When I log on to "my" office computer,
> The screen welcomes me with the words: "Other User."
> I am an adjunct instructor,
> Not eligible for tenure,
> Not eligible for benefits,
> Not eligible for retirement.
> For ten years I have been working for this institution,
> But I am not recognized for my years of service.
> Do I teach differently than a tenured professor?
> Maybe.
> Maybe I put in more effort because I worry that I am expendable.
> Would any university survive without adjuncts and graduate assistants?
> I doubt it.
> So, why do we do it?
> Passion for teaching?
> No other work in our field?
> Maybe God put the willingness in our hearts?
> We are "other" here -
> Because we belong there – with Him.

This poem with the participant's shared words reveals valuable information about

the institutional hierarchical systems of distinct demarcation between adjuncts and

regular faculty, and the impact they exert on adjunct faculty members' sense of

belonging, recognition, and personal career plight.

On the other hand, Participant 3 shared their experience related to a sense of

belonging and recognition at their current place of employment when they shared,

> [My current supervisor] connects us all. I think that has really helped to bring us all as a team into a level of unity that we didn't have before. There was a divide - the salaried and the adjuncts. The salaried met and we were not part of those meetings. Here we are all on the same level.

> What the adjunct faculty consider instrumental in sustaining their professional development and growth is the culture of support combined with the quality feedback from various sources. According to the adjunct faculty, the culture of support comprises being attuned to individual faculty member's interests, providing the faculty with in-context training and resources, and fostering their sense of belonging and professional recognition.

**Theoretical Coding**

Theoretical coding, also known as selective coding, is the final step in grounded

theory data analysis. It synthesizes, blends, integrates, merges all the codes and categories

in order to create a grounded theory. A theoretical code is "a keyword or key phrase that

triggers a discussion of the theory itself" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 250). It "specifies the

possible relationships between categories and moves the analytic story in a theoretical

direction" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 150).

As I was completing the analysis of the axial codes and their dimensions and

properties, it felt as if the curtain of uncertainty was being pulled back, and a theoretical

code of *Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth* naturally emerged. All through the data

analysis process I was gaining understanding of the complexity, intricacy, and

sophistication behind the types of feedback on teaching effectiveness that result in

adjunct faculty development and growth, and now it all started to come together through

data saturation and theoretical coding. Saturation is "a state in which the researcher makes the subjective determination that new data will not provide any new information or insights for the developing categories" (Creswell, 2019, p. 445). Through data saturation and analysis, the theoretical code of *sustainable adjunct faculty growth* emerged, which encapsulates all the codes and categories of data analysis, captures the essence of the study, and explains what the current research is all about. The theoretical code of *Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth* and the emergent theory of *Feedback Mechanisms for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth* are recorded in Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

*Theoretical Code for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth and Emergent Theory*
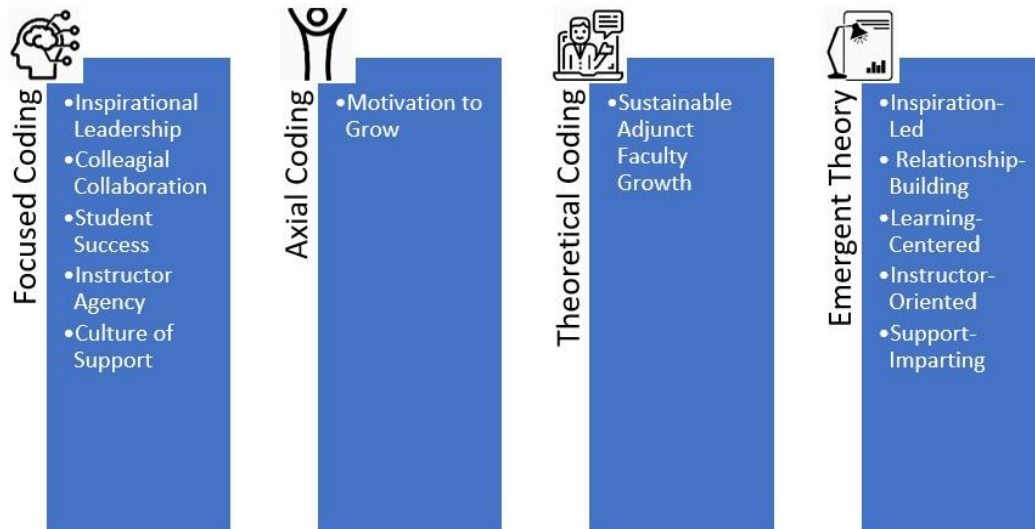
Figure 8 encompasses the global view of the process of ensuring sustainable adjunct faculty development and growth resulting from various sources of feedback on their teaching effectiveness, the overall institutional culture of support, and the motivation for growth provided. The sources of feedback on teaching effectiveness are (a) supervisory evaluations within a broader framework of inspirational leadership, (b) peer feedback through promoting collegial collaborations, (c) student feedback through fostering student success, and (d) self-assessment in the context of upholding the instructor agency.

## Summary

The findings of this grounded theory research indicate that feedback and evaluation of adjunct faculty teaching effectiveness is a complex process and requires intentionality on the part of the hiring institution, individual departments, supervisors, and faculty. Specifically, the type of feedback that results in sustainable adjunct faculty professional development and growth, as perceived by adjunct faculty, is

- Inspiration-led

- Relationship-building

- Learning-centered

- Instructor-oriented

- Support-imparting

Even though each participant shared their unique and varied experiences, there was enough commonality in their responses that resulted in the development of theory. The interpretations and discussion of the current research findings and the associated grounded theory will follow next in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

**Introduction**

Teaching is an art and a science. It is a tapestry, and it is an algorithm. It is "where the interplay of the teacher's competence, experience, faith, intuition, professionalism, and tact is put to test" (Vine, 2020, p. 200). Assessing and evaluating teaching effectiveness is also part art and part science, whose ultimate purpose is to improve teaching and learning. This requires a multiplicity of voices, considerations, purposes, and processes. Since there is little in the relevant academic literature about an effective feedback mechanism for evaluating teaching effectiveness among adjunct faculty members, and very limited qualitative research has been done to understand the effects of teaching evaluations on the professional development and growth of individual adjunct faculty members, the current study sought to generate new understanding of this important phenomenon.

The need for such research is particularly acute as the trend of *adjunctification* across U.S. academia has been rising; increasingly becoming the norm in the recent past (Churchill, 2019; Magness, 2016). Research that highlights and informs the feedback and evaluation of the fastest growing segment of the teaching population in the U.S. higher education sector is critical to support their holistic development, retention, professional oversight, and flourishing (Culver et al., 2020).

In this chapter I summarize the research findings from Chapter 4, present the interpretations of findings, discuss the limitations of the study, offer recommendations for further research, and close with a summary.

**Summary of the Findings**

The findings of this research study were recorded in detail in Chapter 4 and can be represented by the following five categories:

- Inspiration-led feedback

- Relationship-building feedback

- Learning-centered feedback

- Instructor-oriented feedback

- Support-imparting feedback

Grounded in the views of the participants, the five recuring themes encompassing the global view of sustainable adjunct faculty development and growth are (a) inspirational leadership, (b) collegial collaboration, (c) student success, (d) instructor agency, and (e) a culture of support. Based on the summary of these findings, I developed a substantive theory: *Feedback Mechanisms for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth,* which is diagramed in Figure 9.

**Figure 9**

*The Feedback Mechanisms for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth*



| **Conditions** | **Context** | **Strategies** | **Consequences** |
|---|---|---|---|
| -Internal Gauges of TE* | -Supervisor Feedback | -Culture of Support | -Enroll in PD** |
| -External Gauges of TE | -Peer Feedback | -Faculty Interests | Activities |
| -Types of Feedback | -Student Feedback | -In-Context Training | -Update Practice |
| -Quality, Manner, & | -Self-Assessment | -A Sense of Belonging & | -Further Develop |
| Intensity of Feedback | | Recognition | Personal Skills |
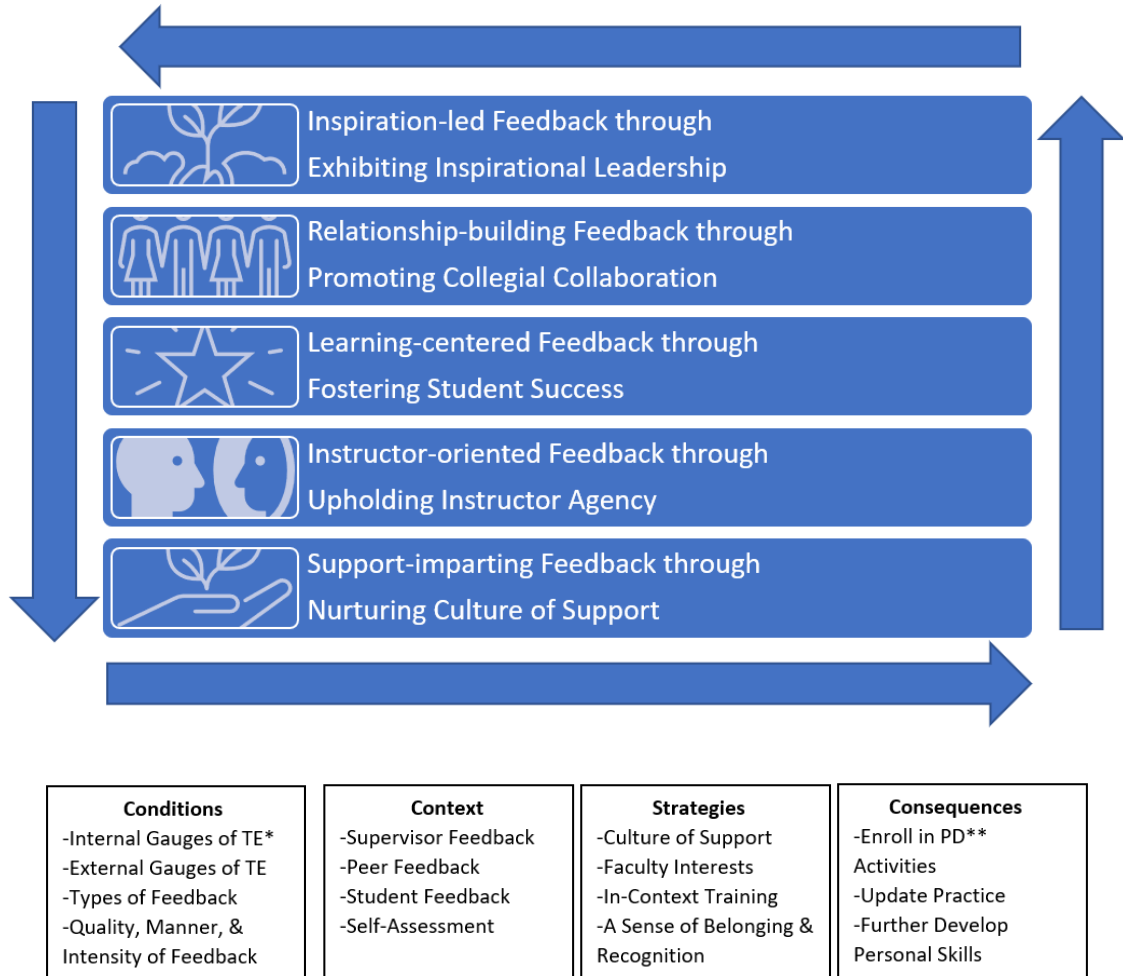
Note: *Teaching Effectiveness; **Professional Development

The substantive theory: *Feedback Mechanisms for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth* states that feedback leading to sustainable adjunct faculty growth is (a) inspiration-led through exhibiting inspirational leadership, (b) relationship-building through promoting collegial collaboration, (c) learning-centered through fostering student success. (d) instructor-oriented through upholding the instructor agency. and (e) support-imparting through nurturing a culture of support. The following section will present interpretations of the findings and discuss how the substantive grounded theory, *Feedback Mechanisms for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth*, confirmed, refuted, and extended knowledge in the discipline by comparing the findings to the literature featured in Chapter 2, and listing implications for current practice.

**Inspiration-Led Feedback**

During the interviews, and as presented in Chapter 4, all adjunct participants stated that one of the most critical factors resulting in their professional development and growth was supervisor feedback. In other words, the feedback that was most influential for adjunct faculty professional growth was the feedback from their supervisors. Interestingly, only three participants reported receiving feedback from their current supervisors, while the other five participants had received it at the beginning of their adjunct career or during the initial trial period of their employment. Regardless of whether the adjuncts were supervised recently and regularly or only at the beginning of their adjunct career or during the initial trial period of their employment, all described their supervisory feedback as being constructive and valuable.

Referring to their supervisory evaluations, participants shared, " . . . When the supervisor has an extremely real and collegial manner and lives by example leadership

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you can trust, and without fear of reprisal, that kind of feedback is so valuable – I take it at face value" (Participant 4). Also, "The supervisor's feedback impacts how I shape and think about the kind of teacher I want to be" (Participant 6). Similarly, " . . . this is like 15 or 20 years ago, but he gave advice I still remember." Moreover, "The personality of the supervisor plays a greater role . . . . If I feel that I am appreciated, I will do my best" (Participant 2). Also, "I respect and value my current supervisor, who is caring and open-minded. I listen, act upon their feedback, and try to become a better teacher." And "My supervisor provides an inspiration as they invest in our students and faculty. It enhances everyone's commitment. Connects us all" (Participant 3). Hence, the impact and quality of supervisory feedback, whether real or imaginary, as experienced by the adjunct participants, were consistent with the need and expectation for inspirational leadership, whose valuable feedback will contribute to adjunct faculty professional development and growth.

The importance of direct supervisory feedback in contributing to the professional growth of adjunct faculty demonstrated in this study contrasts with current thinking and practice for adjunct faculty. Previous studies reported that to be effective, adjunct faculty need institutional support and resources, coupled with supervision and evaluation (Arelola, 2007; Hunnicutt, 2018). The literature also stated that administrators rely mostly on student surveys of teaching effectiveness followed by class observations for adjunct faculty evaluation (Langen, 2011). However, the current study revealed that adjunct faculty value supervisory feedback and evaluations of their teaching effectiveness more than other methods of evaluation, thus pointing to a clear disconnect between the reality and the expectations of adjunct faculty. The reality of using and relying on student

surveys of teaching effectiveness as a primary source of feedback for adjunct faculty and their administrators is in clear contradiction with the expectations of adjunct faculty for supervisory feedback to be the primary source of feedback that increases their ongoing professional growth.

These findings have direct implications for the current practice of feedback and evaluation of adjunct faculty teaching effectiveness at institutions of higher learning. First, supervisors need to be aware of the expectations of adjunct faculty about the importance of supervisory feedback and the impact it can have on their ongoing professional development and growth. Second, supervisors need to develop an actionable strategy for providing adjunct faculty with regular feedback by visiting their classes and having formal and informal follow-up conversations. Ideally, supervisors should schedule adjunct class visitations once a semester/term, but no less than once a year.

Moreover, this study has implications for higher-level administrators responsible for setting workloads for full-time faculty and departmental chairs. Adding an extra responsibility to already busy and overwhelmed supervisors cannot be accomplished without making alternative provisions for meeting their workload in the areas of *Service* and/or *Teaching*. This will help adjunct teachers develop professionally, contribute towards a higher quality of teaching instruction, and improve student learning.

**Relationship-Building Feedback**

As noted in Chapter 4, participants identified collegial collaboration as one of the main factors, after supervisory evaluation, contributing to adjunct faculty professional development and growth, yet only two participants reported receiving a formal non-evaluative peer review. The other six participants reported receiving various other forms

and degrees of collegial feedback and collaboration, primarily through exchanging ideas in both formal and informal settings, but were never observed by a peer.

The adjunct faculty shared, "The only time I had the class observation is when I did my teaching practicum and I appreciated that. I would like to have my colleagues come and observe my class and give me valuable feedback" (Participant 2). "It would be great to have feedback from the supervisor, colleagues, and students every semester" (Participant 7). Also, "Picking up my colleague's brains and sharing ideas have been superb for learning" (Participant 4). Correspondingly, "[I] learn a lot from my colleagues as they share their success stories. That gives me insight and new perspectives" (Participant 5). Similarly, "It is important that there needs to be a culture where people are observing each other . . ., where we grow in a linear relationship . . . . If somehow that collegiality could become part of our culture, that would be helpful" (Participant 8). And "I value the feedback from a fellow professional" (Participant 6). Furthermore, "To have observations of experienced teachers to meet and ask what they saw worked well and what can be done differently would be helpful. We need more interaction with each other as colleagues" (Participant 3).

As participants shared their varied experiences regarding peer feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness, they clearly identified collegial feedback as one of the main factors contributing to their professional development and growth. The adjunct faculty stated the importance of regular peer-to-peer feedback within a culture of openness and increased collegial collaboration. Even though the participants didn't use the term *coaching*, an extension of peer feedback and evaluation, they said that colleagues had helped them to find their focus, think through their options, improve their

professional journey, and ultimately impacted student learning, all of which constitute different aspects of coaching (Logan et al., 2003).

These findings confirmed that the practice of classroom observations is still among one of the most neglected areas of professional development among educators, yet adjunct faculty consider it to be important for their professional development and growth (Arreola, 2007; Brent & Felder, 2004; Brown & Lee, 2015; Chism, 1999; Felder & Brent, 2004; Langen, 2011). These findings also revealed that the types of peer feedback adjunct faculty value are both formal observations and informal collegial collaborations where faculty exchange ideas, "pick up each other's brains," help each other cope with negative evaluations, and build and strengthen relationships.

These findings have important implications for institutional cultures of higher education. Those who envision and facilitate adjunct faculty activities within their respective departments could consider including annual peer observations as part of their expectations for adjunct faculty within the parameters of the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) guidelines for service hours (per week) to credit hours. These activities can culminate in an annual celebration of learning where colleagues gather together informally to enjoy a meal, build relationships, and share their most meaningful learning experiences.

In addition to establishing a culture of peer-to-peer class observations, departmental chairs could incorporate professional learning nuggets into their regular faculty meetings (e.g., a 10-minute informal presentation by a faculty member). They can also schedule thematic *Learn & Share* events once a semester or more, depending on interest, where faculty identify and agree on the common topic of interest, explore it

independently by reading academic literature, and then get together to share their

discoveries in an informal setting. Additionally, departmental chairs can encourage one-

on-one peer-coach interactions among faculty. These will contribute greatly toward

facilitating ongoing professional development and growth among all faculty, improve

collegial collaboration, contribute toward a higher quality of teaching instruction, create

community, and inevitably impact student learning and success.

**Learning-Centered Feedback**

During their interviews, participants confirmed they had received student

evaluations of their teaching effectiveness and considered them to be impactful on their

professional development and growth, teaching quality, and student success. As

evidenced by participant responses, the following quote aligns with the rest of the

responses and offers summative power: "Student surveys and daily feedback help me a

lot. They are like a mirror in which I see myself . . . . I constantly adjust and update"

(Participant 5). Even though two participants expressed their skepticism about the

objectivity of student evaluations, they nonetheless confirmed their value. "What matters

most to me – I am getting feedback from other professionals more than from students.

Students matter to me, but it is more subjective and filtered" (Participant 6), and "It

depends on who is giving me the feedback. From the supervisor – yes, I respect and

value. From students – I take it with the grain of salt" (Participant 7). The participant

responses in the current study aligned with previous research which reported that student

surveys are a significant tool for evaluating the teaching performance of adjunct faculty

(Al-Issa & Sulieman, 2007; Benton & Ryalls, 2016; Hyle, 1999; Langbein, 1994;

Langbein, 2008; McKeachie, 1997). Moreover, the current findings reflect the

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conclusions of Kimmel and Fairchild (2017) on adjunct perceptions about the accuracy of student evaluations, in which most of the participants believed that student evaluations of their teaching effectiveness were accurate and helpful, but some expressed concerns with how much such evaluations were implemented.

The current study also revealed that in the hierarchy of influence and importance, all eight adjunct faculty members placed student feedback third, after supervisor and colleague evaluations. Most importantly, the current study shed light on the frequency, quality, and manner of student feedback which adjunct faculty found the most impactful for their professional development and growth. The student feedback that adjunct faculty valued the most for their professional growth was regular, on an ongoing basis, specific, constructive, formal, informal, positive, civil, and with the right attitude. "Even if the feedback is negative but done with the right attitude, it is helpful" (Participant 2). Similarly, "I write down their suggestions. I take them seriously! But they have to be civil" (Participant 1). Also, "Generally, I find negative evaluations not a positive force for learning while positive feedback has always caused me to want to do more and to improve on" (Participant 5). This resonated with Participant 8, "It is when the student gets specific, that is how I take them seriously, even the negative ones . . . . That is not something I will ignore." Moreover, the adjunct faculty commented on the motivational factor that student feedback and evaluations present.

> Students are taking the risk – I pay careful attention. How can I improve? I always try new ideas and that what the feedback motivates me to do… I can be an agent to achieve their dreams – one of the main things that keeps me motivated to keep growing (Participant 3).

There are a few implications for practice suggested by the current study findings. First, adjunct faculty may question the accuracy and relevance of student feedback, and

such concerns may be mitigated by allowing individual departments to construct their field-specific questions that can be added to the institutional survey instrument to increase relevance and accuracy of student responses. Second, relating to the continuity of receiving student survey results at the end of each semester, adjunct faculty reported that often they do not get the survey results due to low student enrollment or low student response. Since the student survey results are distributed to the faculty after the final grades are published, it would be helpful to release the results regardless of class enrollment. What matters most is that the valuable information shared in the survey reaches the faculty member for whom it was intended to impact and improve teaching and learning.

The current findings also point to the need for having regular conversations with faculty on how to read and interpret information from student surveys because as the data revealed, the adjunct faculty "have a hard time dealing with negativity," and that negative information in student surveys causes their "brains to shut off." Moreover, "People tend to be very superficial - the students tend to be superficially negative, and then the colleagues tend to be superficially positive. I have become a bit cynical about feedback" (Participant 8). The conversations about how to read and interpret student evaluations can take the form of formal institution-wide faculty training or an informal departmental gathering where the faculty share their personal experiences and learn together. Similar conversations should take place with students to help them understand how their feedback is perceived if expressed in negative terms and how to turn it into being constructive and effective. Ensuring the continuity, quality, and manner of student feedback is critically important not only for adjunct faculty development and growth but

also for student learning and their overall educational experience. It is important to note that learning-centered feedback placed in the middle of the *Feedback Mechanisms of Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth* model catalyzes other components of faculty professional development and growth. The learning-centered feedback explicitly mentions students as direct and ultimate beneficiaries of the teacher evaluation, thus pointing to the most fundamental reason for providing feedback of teaching effectiveness – to improve student learning.

**Instructor-Oriented Feedback**

During the interviews, and as described in Chapter 4, the participants shared how they exercise their teacher *autonomy*, the degree of independence in their decision making, and their teacher *agency*, the capacity to direct their own professional development and growth to achieve their learning goals. In other words, the adjunct faculty described how they assess their own teaching effectiveness independent of others. Based on the data, all participants reported on external and internal gauges of their teaching effectiveness. Among the leading external indicators of their teaching effectiveness, adjunct faculty identified student grades or student performance and the teacher-student interactions. "Test scores I pay attention to – if an average score is low, I know that I didn't do that great job" (Participant 1), and "The most regular gauge is my students' feedback. Informal feedback from students – frustration, clarity, confusion on their faces, the laughter. What is working and what isn't" (Participant 7). Among the leading internal indicators of their teaching effectiveness, adjunct faculty listed the intuition and their own sense of excellence. "For the most part, probably, intuition. I know when students are happy or not, or when I need to do this and this to adjust.

Intuitive sense for the most time" (Participant 6), and "The other gauge is the years of doing that – my own sense of excellence – expectations based on my training and experience" (Participant 7).

The current study confirmed previous research that reported on the reliance of faculty on student grades for assessing their own teaching effectiveness and how reflecting on their teaching methodologies improve teaching practice (Chan, 2010; Little-Wienert & Mazziotti, 2018) Similarly, other studies have emphasized the importance of self-assessment as individual teachers can trace their personal growth from the planning stages of the course, and various forms of evidence relating to their education-related activities (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; McGovern, 2006). However, it was still unclear how self-assessment affects adjunct teacher professional development and growth.

The current study helped to shed light on the impact of self-assessment on adjunct faculty professional development decisions. Based on the collected data, the adjunct faculty reported that feedback prompted them to (a) engage in professional development activities and programs such as such as attending seminars, workshops and conferences; (b) adjust their teaching methodologies and practices; (c) strengthen collegiality and professional collaborations; and (d) further develop their personal skills and practices such as reflective journaling, regular reading of academic literature, time management and organization, heightened awareness of their professional blind spots, and the constructive reading of evaluations. These activities upheld instructor agency and fostered their professional autonomy, which is critical for adjunct faculty development and growth.

These findings have important implications for practice. Specifically, upholding the instructor agency is neither giving the adjuncts a full degree of independence in work-related practices and decision-making nor turning the practice of self-assessment into a requirement that stunts teacher creativity and adds stress. "When it comes to feedback, there needs to be a balance between deep involvement and freedom for adjuncts" (Participant 2). Based on the data, teachers wish to have a healthy balance between their independence, as it relates to owning their professional development decisions and ensuring that their voices are heard, and professional accountability provided through inspirational leadership, collegial collaboration, and institutional support. Institutions of higher learning have a responsibility to provide adjunct faculty the space to grow professionally to reach their potential and help increase their job satisfaction, which in turn will impact the quality of instruction for students. More specific strategies on how to maximize a culture of support for adjunct faculty follow in the next section.

**Support-Imparting Feedback**

All participants in this study said that receiving feedback and evaluation of their teaching effectiveness from various sources such as their supervisors, colleagues, students, and their own self-assessment played a crucial role in motivating them to grow professionally. As their stories were unfolding, specific strategies relating to supporting adjunct faculty member ongoing professional development and growth emerged. Among them were (a) taking into account adjunct faculty member personal and professional interests when offering them a class to teach, (b) providing faculty with in-context training and helpful resources within their respective departments, and (c) nurturing a sense of belonging and recognition. "If I enjoy the subject, I will keep growing . . . . You

are passionate about your class – that keeps you motivated. And when your paycheck comes, you are not working, you are doing what you like the most" (Participant 2). Unfortunately, "We are rarely given a choice about the classes we teach. The classes are just being assigned to us. But what is most effective for my professional engagement and growth is my own personal interest" (Participant 6). For training, "It would be great to have workshops geared toward our own field. Maybe some ongoing training that relates to my classroom" (Participant 5). "Somebody from our department could create training that we actually need . . . Practical, useful, applicable, step-by-step, in bite-size pieces for already busy and overwhelmed people" (Participant 4). Similarly,

> I would love to have a categorized list of training available in the areas that I teach. I like how we have a professional development nugget at the end of our faculty meeting – it has been great to have those conversations together whenever possible (Participant 7).

Additionally, the university could treat adjuncts better – not benefits but simple recognition . . . . At my current university, I do not feel I am an employee" (Participant 1). "I am an adjunct instructor, not eligible for tenure, not eligible for benefits, not eligible for retirement . . . . I am not recognized for my years of service" (Participant 4). Thankfully, "[My current supervisor] connects us all. There was a divide - the salaried and the adjuncts. Here we are all on the same level" (Participant 3).

These research findings have important implications for institutional cultures and practices. There needs to be a critical examination of the institutional hierarchical systems of distinct demarcation between adjuncts and regular faculty and the impact they often exert on adjunct faculty member sense of belonging, recognition, and personal career plight. Based on the data analysis, the adjunct participants revealed that nurturing the culture of support through being attuned to individual faculty member interests,

providing the faculty with in-context training and resources, and fostering their sense of belonging and professional recognition was instrumental in sustaining their professional development and growth. Administrators thus have a solemn responsibility!

## Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this research design was its generalizability as I only interviewed adjunct faculty members at a mid-size private university in the United States. However, to combat this limitation and move toward saturation, I used discriminant sampling and included adjunct faculty from various departments to gain a more rounded understanding. In addition, most of the adjunct faculty I interviewed had at least one more adjunct position at another institution.

Both a strength and limitation of the study was my extensive experience as an adjunct faculty member. I had to recognize my own theoretical ideas and control my personal biases in order for substantive theory to emerge. At the same time, my experience as an adjunct instructor gave me an insight into how individuals experience the phenomenon of investigation. Another limitation relates to my supervisory role: two of the research participants were my supervisees and may have minimized criticisms of the program and not shared certain aspects of their current adjunct experience. However, they both have a rich history of teaching as adjuncts at the current institution, which dates long before my appointment, and were able to share comprehensive information about their relevant cumulative experience.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Throughout the data collection and analysis, I was reflecting constantly on possible alternative ways of pursuing my research. The more information emerged from

the analysis, the more ideas for further research kept coming to mind. To better understand the multiple nuanced details that came to light through my current study, I have compiled the following list of future research possibilities.

1. Explore the perceptions of supervisors on adjunct faculty class visitations.

2. Study the strategies adjunct faculty use for reading and interpreting negative information in student surveys of their teaching effectiveness before and after training.

3. Explore the effects of supervisory class observations on the adjunct faculty member's sense of agency.

4. Compare the expectations of adjunct faculty and full-time faculty regarding the optimal feedback mechanisms of their teaching effectiveness.

5. Explore the impact of using customized survey instruments on the accuracy, quality, frequency, and manner of student feedback on teaching effectiveness.

6. Survey the strategies that adjunct faculty use for obtaining informal feedback from students.

7. Replicate the current study with different populations.

8. Examine what constitutes a particular skill set that translates into being a good coach and the specific conditions that are necessary for a positive and impactful adjunct teacher-coach relationship.

9. Identify an effective modality of coaching that will enable coaches to reach a broader audience of adjunct teachers.

**Summary**

The rationale for this study emanated from my desire to uncover the components of a feedback mechanism of teaching effectiveness for adjunct faculty members which would result in adjunct faculty professional development and growth, impact faculty members morale and retention, and improve student learning. Using a grounded theory approach, I collected and analyzed the data from eight semi-structured interviews to explore the perceived results of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty professional development and growth.

Based on the data analysis results, I was able to construct a substantive theory, *Feedback Mechanisms for Sustainable Adjunct Faculty Growth,* which states that feedback that leads to sustainable adjunct faculty growth is (a) inspiration-led through exhibiting inspirational leadership, (b) relationship-building through promoting collegial collaboration, (c) learning-centered through fostering student success, (d) instructor-oriented through upholding the instructor agency, and (e) support-imparting through nurturing a culture of support. This model includes the multiplicity of voices and processes and sheds new light on the effective assessment of teaching that results in sustainable growth for adjunct faculty.

Moreover, teaching is a creative journey, framed in the context of contributing not only to the advancement of each individual adjunct faculty member, but also to the greater good of the academic community, including students. Correspondingly, assessing and evaluating teaching effectiveness is also a creative process, whose ultimate purpose is improved teaching and learning, and therefore, "cutting corners" is not an option.

APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

Andrews ◊ University
Office of Research & Creative Scholarship

June 21, 2022

Luda Vine
Tel. 218-849-7255
Email: luda@andrews.edu

**RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**
**IRB Protocol #:**22-097 **Application Type:** Original **Dept.:** Curriculum & Instruction
**Review Category:** Exempt **Action Taken:** Approved **Advisor:** Anneris Coria-Navia
**Title:** The perceived results of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty's professional development and growth.

Your IRB application for approval of research involving human subjects entitled: "*The perceived results of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty's professional development and growth*" IRB protocol # 22-097 has been evaluated and determined Exempt from IRB review under regulation CFR 46.104 (2)(i): Research that include survey procedures and in which information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject. You may now proceed with your research.

Please note that any future changes made to the study design and/or informed consent form require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Incase you need to make changes please use the attached report form.

While there appears to be no more than minimum risks with your study, should an incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction and or physical injury, this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any research-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University Physician, Dr. Katherine, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We ask that you reference the protocol number in any future correspondence regarding this study for easy retrieval of information.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,

Mordekai Ongo, PhD.
Research Integrity and Compliance Officer

Institutional Review Board – 8488 E Campus Circle Dr Room 234 - Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355
Tel: (269) 471-6361 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The following Interview Protocol was used for Luda Vine's research interview entitled, *The Perceived Results of Feedback and Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness on Adjunct Faculty's Professional Development and Growth*.

**Description of Research Study:**

In this grounded theory study, I will examine the perceived results of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness on adjunct faculty professional development and growth. Based on the findings of the study, I will develop a general theory to explain the perceived components of an effective feedback mechanism of teaching effectiveness for adjunct faculty.

**Interviewee Identification**

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Luda Vine

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee: adjunct faculty

**Questions:**

1. What types of feedback concerning your teaching effectiveness have you received during your teaching career as an adjunct faculty?

2. What information from your teaching feedback has stood out to you the most? Why?

3. What specific items in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness do you pay the most attention to, and why?

4. What do you do with the negative information (if any) from feedback and evaluation of your teaching?

5. How does feedback concerning your teaching effectiveness inform your decisions about professional development choices?

6. Can you recall specific incidents when the evaluation of teaching was a positive force for your professional development and growth? If so, please describe.

7. What types of feedback and evaluation do you find the least helpful? Why?

8. What role has your Supervisor played in evaluating your teaching effectiveness?

9. What impact does your Supervisor's influence have on your professional development and growth?

10. What types of feedback of your teaching effectiveness have you received from your colleagues?

11. How did your colleagues impact your professional development and growth?

12. What role have your students played in your professional development and growth?

13. Independent of others, how do your gauge your own teaching effectiveness?

14. What would an ideal feedback and evaluation mechanism of your teaching effectiveness look like?

15. What can be done to ensure your continued professional development and

growth?

I thanked each individual for participating in this interview and assured the

participants of the confidentiality of their responses.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT DOCUMENT

Dear Name,

The trend of *adjunctification* across US academia, the increasing proportionate numbers of adjunct faculty in relation to tenured faculty, has been on the rise in the recent past (Churchill, 2019; Magness, 2016). At [Name] University, the total number of full-time faculty is 221 and the total number of adjunct faculty is 183. With the dramatic increase in the use of adjunct faculty in higher education, it is critical that we understand how these adjunct faculty are being served and evaluated to develop an effective feedback mechanism that results in their professional development and growth to support their critical role in the delivery of education to students.

As a faculty member of the Center for Intensive English Programs (CIEP), I would like to ask for your participation in a semi-structured one-on-one research interview which will contribute to better clarity and understanding of this topic and further the holistic development, retention, professional oversight, and flourishing of the fastest growing segment of the teaching population in the US higher education sector – the adjunct faculty. Your input into this deepening understanding of what adjunct faculty perceptions are on this topic would be much appreciated. The duration of the interview and your total involvement in this research project is anticipated to take a maximum of one (1) hour. Thank you for considering participating in this study.

Cordially,

Luda Vine

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VITA

Luda Vine

## EDUCATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Andrews University<br>Berrien Springs, MI, US | June, 2023 | Ph.D., Curriculum and Instruction,<br>Higher Education |
| Andrews University | May 2014 | M.A. English (TESOL emphasis) |
| Azerbaijan State University<br>of Languages<br>Baku, Azerbaijan | June 1998 | B.A., Philology and Linguistics |

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Center for Intensive English Programs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Andrews University | May 2020 to present | Director |
| Berrien Springs, MI, US | 2019-2020 | Faculty & Programs Coordinator |
| Andrews University | 2012-2019 | Adjunct Faculty |

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Vine, L. (2020). WD 40: Historical insights of Ellen White and John Dewey into three dualistic concerns: Implications for current practice. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 29*(2), 187-202.

Vine, L. (2019, March 26). The popular distinction between native English speakers and non-native English speakers. *Teaching and Learning Conference, Andrews* University, Berrien Springs, MI.

Vine, L. (2019, March 26). Survey of writing instruction methods for deaf students. *Teaching and Learning Conference,* Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

Vine, L. (2019, March 26). Creating an interactive classroom. *Teaching and Learning Conference,* Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.