

CONTINGENT EMPLOYMENT AT SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC:  
A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

A Thesis

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Thomas Guenter Janisch, candidate for the degree of Master of Human Resource Development, has presented a thesis titled, ***Contingent Employment at Saskatchewan Polytechnic: A Grounded Theory Study***, in an oral examination held on March 26, 2018. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated the experiences of five term contract employed instructors at Saskatchewan Polytechnic using the constructivist grounded theory methodology as discussed by Charmaz (2014). The theoretical framework for the study was informed by a review of theories pertaining to organizational behavior and contingent employment as well as the economic and professional development theoretical perspectives on contingent employment.

Five participants were interviewed individually using open-ended interviews to elicit their views regarding their contingent employment arrangements. Grounded theory was chosen in an attempt to derive a theory based on the experiences of these five participants rather than trying to fit the experiences into existing theories.

The findings showed six core theoretical concepts accounted for the experiences of the contingently employed staff: System Factors, Interaction With Others, Work Conditions, Internal Motivations and Assessments, Doing the Work, and Deriving Personal Benefit (Internal). Each of these core concepts consisted of a number of categories that interacted with each other in either a positive or a negative way, resulting in an overall impact on the participants' experiences of the work situation. This interaction was examined through the lens of system dynamics (Sterman, 2000). These core concepts and their substantive categories suggest that supervisors, managers, and other organizational figures may have points of intervention to support and even to enhance contingently employed people's work experiences. A number of possible recommendations for managers, organizations and employees were outlined. Suggestions for possible future research were also provided.

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## **CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **The Research Problem**

Research suggests that contingent workers are an increasingly important component of the workforce in many industrialized advanced countries, including Canada (De Cuyper, De Jong, De Witte, Isaksson, Rigotti, & Schalk, 2008). On October 22, 2016, Finance Minister, Bill Morneau, told a meeting of the federal Liberal party in Ontario that Canadians should get use to more “high turnover and short term contracts” (National Post, 2016; p#1). What the Minister appeared to be indicating was that the proportion of workers in contingent work arrangements, alternatively called fixed term contracts, precarious work arrangements, or non-standardized employment contracts, are likely to increase, because these types of contracts present several advantages to employers, including labour market flexibility and decreased organizational costs (Houseman, 2001; Standworth & Druker, 2006). The trend of using contingent workers has been increasing over the past several decades (OECD, 2014). However, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2014) has cautioned about the implications of contingent work arrangements for employees, including job insecurity, unstable financial circumstances, and a constantly changing work environment to which they must adapt. The OECD warns that contingent work arrangements might contribute to wealth inequality.

Several scholars argue that our understanding of, and knowledge about, contingent employment has been based primarily on research with full-time employees, with the result that the findings of these studies have been inconclusive (De Cuyper, de

Jong, De Witte, Isaksson, Rigotti, & Schalk, 2008). Further, Kezar and Sam (2011) indicate that research about contingent employment has been conducted primarily from an economic perspective, which holds that employees and their organizations are driven primarily by monetary gain and other incentives in matters relating to employment and the labour market. Kezar and Sam suggest a more productive approach to studying contingent employment, especially in post-secondary and higher education institutions is the professional development perspective. The perspective sees professions as: (i) a specialized and dynamic knowledge base or body of expertise, (ii) a distinctive array of rights and privileges accorded to members, and (iii) having an internal social structure based on shared goals and values (Anteby, Chan & DiBenigno, 2016; Kezar and Sam, 2011; Abbott, 1988; Evan 2002, 2008). These factors provide a helpful framework for understanding contingent employment in an academic setting, which is why the professional development perspective was chosen for this study. Early on in my studies, I had become aware by way of personal contact with teachers that many teachers were employed contingently, and that they had experienced various positive and negative consequences as a result of their contingent employment. I became curious to learn more about contingent employment among teachers in the public school system and in post-secondary institutions.

Some scholars argue that many benefits may accrue for workers in contingent work arrangements, although these benefits are not quite clear (Houseman, 2001; Standworth & Druker, 2006). Contingent workers who have the necessary skills and aptitude to work in such a variable environment may excel and they may seek out such work arrangements. However, the ideal set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities

that result in a positive experience for workers in contingent work arrangements remains unclear. How can the work environment be arranged so that workers are enabled to perform their work? What barriers and enablers affect contingent workers' ability to perform their work in contingent work situations?

The literature suggests contingent work arrangements can result in:

- Decreased trust between employer and contingent workers (Yang, 2012)
- Decreased trust between permanent workers and contingent workers (Yang, 2012; Ashford, George & Blatt, 2007)
- Decreased work commitment, productivity, engagement, and increased stress (Ashford, George & Blatt, 2007; De Cuyper, De Jong, De Witte, Isaksson, Rigotti, & Schalk, 2008)
- Decreased sense of job security (Ashford, George & Blatt, 2007; Pedulla, 2013; Zimmerman, Gavrilova-Aguilar & Cullum, 2013)

In the education system, one group of contingent workers are instructors who are employed into term contract positions such as those at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and these contingently employed instructors are the focus of my study.

### **The Research Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of instructors who are in contingent employment arrangements at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The study focused on developing an understanding of the ways the instructors perceived such contingent employment arrangements as influencing their ability to perform their work.

## **The Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. How do the instructors in contingent work arrangements describe their professional experiences at work?
2. What do the instructors perceive as the key benefits of being in a contingent employment arrangement?
3. What do the instructors view as the key challenges they face as contingent workers at Saskatchewan Polytechnic?
4. What suggestions might the instructors offer to improve their contingent work arrangements?

## **Researcher's Experience**

Charmaz (2017) advocates developing and using what she calls “methodological self-consciousness” (p. 35) during qualitative research. To achieve this, she says it is necessary to scrutinize not only the data obtained from research participants, but also our relationships with participants and our own positions and privileges. More generally, England (1994) states that the biography of the researcher affects research. Therefore, it is appropriate to comment on my own biography and positionality, and how that might have influenced my interpretation of the findings of the study. I must state that the problem of a changing workplace and the resulting increasing reliance of contingent workers is a personal matter for me because as I have observed and read about the increasing use of contingent employment, I have become increasingly concerned about what these changes would mean for my children as they enter the workforce. Through

this study, I hope to learn something that might contribute to my children's future well-being.

I identify as a male of German heritage, and an immigrant, having arrived in Canada as a child. My experiences as an immigrant were formative in many ways. For example, I observed discrimination and various types of abuse against my parents and I experienced discrimination as well. Even though my parents were well educated, work was difficult to obtain and for a number of years, financial poverty was our world. I observed my parents work hard to overcome these difficulties, and to become successful. Key values displayed during this period by my parents included a strong work ethic and compassion toward those less fortunate. In my nuclear family, I grew up hearing stories about how my parents had lived through World War II, what they and their families had lost, and what it had taken to survive. A dominant norm was the strength arising from family and community. Academic pursuits were strongly encouraged in my family. At home, the TV was rarely turned on, and so I read voraciously. I heard four languages spoken daily at home: two dialects of German, Russian, Romanian, and then English. My parents provided an enriched environment at home, and so I learned about European history, physics, biology, psychology, and other topics. The downside of this learning was that none of my peers was interested in, or even knew about diverse topics such as cryptography or Kurdistan.

I attended the University of British Columbia, where I obtained a Bachelor of Science in Zoology, and several years later, I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. As well, I studied Engineering for a year. I dabbled with learning various languages such as Turkish, Greek, Spanish, and Mandarin, learning enough to be able to

travel. Then, rather precipitously, I left academic pursuits to join the RCMP, much to the dismay of my parents. The role of police officer provided a certain status as a peace officer that came with certain powers and responsibilities based in law. In addition, the peace officer role also bestowed on me a sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the people in the communities where I worked. I occupied various roles as an RCMP officer, ranging from investigator, to supervisor and manager. I led large multijurisdictional investigations, and later on, I designed and implemented large training related initiatives in the Prairie region. During my time in the RCMP, I observed various situations in which powerful people exerted their influence over other people, sometimes to the point where negative situations resulted.

During my employment in the 1990s, I completed a Master of Arts degree in Applied Behavioral Science. This degree is rooted in what Creswell (2009) terms an advocacy or participatory approach to addressing organizational problems and it emphasizes using a systems approach. This experiential-based degree focused on using behavioral sciences to provide organizational improvement consulting services. Based on the T-Group methodology originated by Kurt Lewin and others at the NTL Institute (NTL Institute, 2017), and incorporating various aspects of systems thinking (Senge, 1990; Williamson, 1991; Friedman, 1985), many of the instructors were themselves family therapists and/or organization development practitioners. The experience of completing this degree was a significant event for me because the program was a deeply introspective process that was founded on the belief that as a practitioner, I was an instrument in the diagnosis of organizational problems. Further, the education made me become aware of who I was and what my place should be vis-à-vis the client

organization. The result of this education process was a kind of therapeutic experience in which I examined my culture of origin, my family of origin, and various aspects of my life experiences to become more fully conscious about my place in this world and how that affected my observations of, and work in, organizations.

After 26 years of public service, I retired in 2011. Thereafter, I worked briefly for a Saskatchewan Crown organization as a permanent full-time employee. I occupied various roles ranging from that of an individual contributor to that of a manager, supervising several teams of people. Although this organization was not paramilitary in nature as is the RCMP, I observed power being exerted over and on people. In fact, this happened to such an extent that I observed people getting ill, crying, taking leaves of absence, and quitting. Eventually I also quit this organization in early 2013. Since then, I have been working as a contingent employee for a non-profit organization in Regina that provides services and programs to people infected with HIV.

I became interested in contingent employment as a result of some of my previous work experiences combined with an experience I had in one of my courses for this Masters of Human Resource Development program. In a course on qualitative research methodology, I had the opportunity to interview a number of teachers. I learned that many of them were contingently employed. They talked to me about the various advantages and challenges they had experienced because of their contingent work arrangements. I compared what these teachers were telling me with what I had seen in my previous work settings, and with what I had read previously in the literature about contingent employment. I then became interested in exploring contingent employment among teachers. I had initially hoped to conduct my study using contingently employed

teachers, however, for various reasons that was not possible. Consequently, I chose to focus my study on contingently employed instructors at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

### **Operational Definitions of Key Terms**

For the purpose of clarification, the following terms are being operationally defined for use in this study:

**Instructors** – are defined as employees at Saskatchewan Polytechnic who are engaged in providing instruction to students.

**Contingent Employment** – For the purpose of this study, I defined contingent employment to include people who met the following three conditions. I relied on the definitions of employment categories used at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, as per the institution's collective agreement and institutional policies in use. First, contingent employees were instructors who were hired for a fixed term, or instructors who were hired to work full-time (37 hours per week) or instructors who were hired to work part-time (less than 37 hours per week). Secondly, contingent employees were instructors who were hired with a definite end date to their contract. Finally, contingent employees were instructors for whom such employment at Saskatchewan Polytechnic was the primary source of employment, which contrasted with those whose primary employment was outside Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The study acknowledged that some individuals, including some instructors at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, might seek out contingent employment while such employment arrangements might be forced upon others because of circumstances relating to the labour market.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is significant in that it contributes to the understanding of the experiences of instructors who were in contingent employment arrangements with a post-secondary educational institution in Saskatchewan. Thus, the findings of this study are likely to be most relevant for Saskatchewan Polytechnic where the study was conducted. In addition, it might be that the study would provide a useful contribution to the human resource development literature about contingent employment arrangements. Instructors working in contingent work arrangements and the organizations that utilized such work arrangements might find the results of this study useful. For example, these instructors would learn about what worked and what did not work, and they might be given a voice about their employment situations. As well, people who were considering working in contingent arrangements at Saskatchewan Polytechnic would be able to understand the study participants' experiences when working in contingent arrangements at the institution, and as a result, they would be able to make informed decisions about whether a contingent work arrangement would be suitable for them. Further, the study participants and other instructors in contingent work arrangements at Saskatchewan Polytechnic might use the insights gained from the study to raise critical questions about their employment arrangements with the institution.

In addition, this study is significant because it draws on the professional development perspective rather than an economic perspective on contingent employment. The use of the professional development perspective as well as contingent workers for the study was likely to further enrich readers' understanding of contingent employment arrangements. In addition, by using the professional development literature

as a framework, the study raised some critical questions affecting contingent workers in the workplace, such as issues relating to social justice, power, inequality and injustice. In addition, unlike most research that uses full-time employees in studies about contingent employment, my study used employees who were in contingent employment arrangements at the Saskatchewan Polytechnic. As well, supervisors, managers and human resource specialists at Saskatchewan Polytechnic and other organizations utilizing contingent employees may benefit from this study. Finally, external consultants working in the area of organizational performance improvement and capacity building may find useful information in this study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The findings represent the views of the research participants co-constructed with my interpretation of what I heard from the participants. As Merriam (2009) points out, in a qualitative study it is important to test how transferable the findings of a qualitative study are to the circumstances of the reader. To achieve this, sufficient descriptive information is required to enable readers to transfer the study's findings to their own particular circumstances. Consequently, transferability of the study's findings was supported by providing sufficient descriptive information about both the participants' responses, and the researcher's process of analysis and interpretation.

In addition, the study focused on understanding the experiences of only instructors who were in contingent work arrangements in one program area at the Regina campus of Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Thus, the views of other stakeholder groups, such as contingent workers at the other three Saskatchewan Polytechnic campuses, administrators, instructors in permanent employment, unions, students, parents, and

policy makers were not incorporated into the study. Further, the study was based on the experiences of five instructors from one program area who volunteered to participate in the research. Therefore, the views of instructors who decided to not participate for various reasons were not incorporated into this study. Finally, data for the study were collected through one-on-one in-depth interviews only; there were no extensive reviews of any documents such as the participants' employment documents and records because of issues of confidentiality.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The findings of this study were delimited by the researcher's decision to recruit participants from within one department at the Regina campus of Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The decision was driven primarily by resource constraints, especially time constraints, for fieldwork.

## **CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The literature review covers several broad areas that are relevant to my study. First, several theories pertaining to organizational behavior and contingent employment are reviewed. Secondly, the literature concerning contingent work arrangements is reviewed. Some general findings concerning contingent work are presented. Since the focus of my study is contingent employment in a post-secondary setting, I present a review of the literature regarding contingent employment in various education settings including contingent employment in public schools and universities in the United States of America. Finally, I present a review of the literature about professional development because in my study, I have chosen to use the professional development perspective as a framework for understanding the data collected for my study.

### **Theoretical Perspectives on Contingent Work Arrangements**

All organizations must conduct four essential functions to operate effectively. These functions are planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (Robbins & Stuart-Kotze, 1986). Each of these functions has a number of theories associated with it that attempt to explain and predict how these functions can and should be carried out by employees occupying roles in organizations. For example, leadership has been extensively studied from the individual and group perspectives giving rise to a number of theories. The Situational Leadership theory developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanshard (1993) is one example of a theory that provides suggestions on how leadership can be appropriately executed in organizations. Similarly, the question of how supervisors or other leaders can motivate their employees has been addressed by theories

such as Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs Theory" and Frederick Herzberg's "Motivation-Hygiene Theory", among others (Robbins & Stuart-Kotze, 1986). Robbins and Stuart-Kotze argue motivation has been studied from a number of different psychological perspectives such as cognitive psychology and a behavioristic or learning perspective. For example, the authors indicate that equity theory of motivation suggests that people are motivated based on their ongoing assessment of fairness in the workplace perspective. This assessment considers and compares what employees bring to their workplace (inputs) and what they receive as a result (outputs), and that employees make a comparison between their own inputs and outputs and those received by other employees. A perception of unfairness reduces motivation and productivity.

However, the relevance and applicability of these and other theories about how the four organizational functions are conducted in organizations have been questioned when dealing with contingent employees. For example, Gallagher and Sverke (2005) have questioned whether the various theories about organizational behavior are relevant for contingent employees. According to these authors, these theories were developed using full-time employees and they may not be applicable to people who are contingently employed. Further, Martinez, De Cuyper, and De Witte (2010) state no theoretical frameworks exist that can be used to study contingent employment in organizations. However, they contend that individual psychological theories provide a starting point, although these theories have been developed using permanent full-time employees.

De Cuyper, de Jong, De Witte, Isaksson, Rigotti, and Schalk (2008) review literature on psychological research that compare contingent workers and permanent

workers. The literature include research on the associations between contingent employment and variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, well-being, and behavior (job performance). Overall, the authors conclude that research findings were inconsistent. One barrier to precise study is the fact that no uniform definition of contingent employment among the European countries, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries does exist. De Cuyper, et al. argue the bulk of studies about contingent employment have no theoretical basis or they have been based on theories resulting from studies of permanent workers. According to De Cuyper et al., some studies have involved contingent workers, and these have resulted in support for various theories such as work stress theory, social comparison theory, and social exchange theory in an attempt to understand the impact of contingent work on individuals.

Regarding work stress theory, a body of research has found that work stressors negatively affect contingent workers. These stressors include being considered peripheral to the workforce and therefore being less likely to receive training opportunities, health and other benefits, promotional opportunities as well as poor job characteristics that result in job stress. In addition, work stressors may lead to employment strain resulting from a poor employment relationship among contingently employed workers.

The social comparison and social exchange theories hold that employees monitor how fair an employment arrangement is, and react accordingly (De Cuyper et al., 2008). In social comparison theory, the employees compare what is happening to them in comparison to their peers in their workplace or other reference points these employees might have. For example, where contingent workers believe they and permanent

employees should be receiving a particular outcome, and they do not receive this outcome, such a perceived imbalance may lead to a sense of deprivation. In addition, social exchange theory is concerned with the concept of reciprocity where outcomes are compared to inputs. Rousseau and Schalk (2000) use the term “psychological contract” to discuss the impact of contingent work on employees. De Cuyper et al. state that a poor psychological contract may contribute to reduced levels of trust between employer and employees, which may lead to poor employee behaviors and attitudes. The authors indicate that past research about contingent employment has produced findings that are inconsistent with the three theories discussed in the preceding paragraphs. As a result, De Cuyper et al. question the three theories in relation to their applicability to contingent work arrangements.

In an attempt to address the inconsistent finding, Martinez et al. (2010) discuss the findings in previous research and suggest that the “Stepping Stone Hypothesis” may explain some of the inconsistent findings. This hypothesis looks at whether or not unemployed people see any functionality in temporary employment in relation to permanent employment. For example, if a person is in a contingent work arrangement and has no desire to obtain a permanent position, then that person is less likely to exhibit a high degree of organizational citizenship behaviors, and is less likely to engage in impression management.

A US study by Marler and Milkovich (2000) looked at what influences employees’ decision to engage in contingent employment. They developed a multi-level model, which indicates that the following factors were involved in determining whether an employee engaged in contingent work. The factors include the opportunity cost of

contract work, the number of job opportunities, prior work experience, human and financial capital, access to health benefits and work-family factors. At a high level, they propose that the preference to engage in contingent work is a function of social context and norms, economic context, prior behavior, and personal capital available to the employee. Marler and Milkovich distinguish between independent contractors and temporary workers. They note that contractors are older, better educated as a group, and they possess more human as well as financial capital. As a result, contractors tend to prefer their contingent work arrangements. On the other hand, temporary workers tend to be younger, have less human and financial capital available, and are less educated. The authors conclude that temporary workers were at a competitive disadvantage and tend to be paid less.

Ajzen (2011) developed the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which, according to Huang (2011), can be used to explain the decision to seek or accept contingent employment. The theory holds that a person's intention to perform a behavior is an antecedent of that behavior. In turn, the intention depends on three factors: whether the behavior is evaluated as being positive or negative, the perceived social pressure to perform that behavior, and one's confidence in one's ability to perform that behavior. In his study, Huang applied TPB to college students' intentions to seek contingent employment. He found that attitude and subjective norms were both significant predictors of students' intention to seek contingent employment. However, behavioral control such as perceived confidence to perform was not a significant predictor.

Feldman and Turnley (2004) used relative deprivation theory to examine how contingently employed academic staff responded to their contingent employment. The

theory suggests the reaction to contingent employment depends on how the employees perceive the various benefits they receive from their employment in comparison to what their peers receive. Deprivation occurs when workers want an outcome, think they deserve that outcome, and yet they do not receive the outcome. The authors found that relative deprivation was negatively related to work attitudes and behavior.

Another model that can be used to assess employee work performance in organizations is the Behavior Engineering Model developed by Thomas Gilbert (Gilbert, 1978). The model provides a different way to examine employees' work performance and functioning in organizations by proposing that work performance is affected by six factors, which can be grouped into two categories of factors: environmental and individual factors. These six factors are information, resources, incentives, and knowledge, capacity, and motives. A deficit in one or more of these factors will lead to decreased job performance. To improve performance, one should look at environmental factors first because they typically result in the greatest performance gains. However, this model has not been tested using contingent employees.

So far, we have been concerned with examining the applicability of these theories as they relate to contingent employment from an individual or interpersonal perspective. However, contingent employment can also be seen to have large-scale societal consequences. Martinez et al. (2010) studied contingent employment in Latin America. Contingent employment was originally introduced in these countries as a temporary measure designed to ease the number of jobless people there. However, according to the authors, these arrangements became a permanent situation once companies learned they could save on costs by utilizing contingently employed staff. Saving money to improve

the bottom line has also been cited as an explanation for using contingently employed staff by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2014). The increasing incidence of contingently employed staff has resulted in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) expressing concern about the declining quality of jobs. The OECD defines quality as consisting of three key dimensions: earnings quality, labor market security, and quality of the work environment. According to the OECD, the job quality in all three dimensions is generally low for those workers in contingent work arrangements. This issue of job quality is also a concern in Canada where, for example, Statistics Canada reported that in 2016 out of about 214,000 jobs created; almost three quarters were part-time (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Job quality is a concern for policy makers and politicians because contingent employment is also related to wealth accumulation and wealth inequality. Piketty (2014) states that wealth consists of wealth derived from labor and wealth derived from capital, which includes business investments, ownership, stock investments, etc. He states that in the period from 1900 – 1910, almost all the wealth of European countries was owned by the richest 10% of the population. The wealthiest 1% owned more than 50% of all wealth in these countries. The other 90% of the population owned close to nothing. Gallagher and Sverke (2005) questioned whether permanent employment could be expected to last past the period of the Industrial Revolution. They suggest that we are simply returning to what was common prior to the industrial revolution: a situation where people generally worked temporary jobs and where few people had permanent jobs. The continuing and increasing occurrence of part-time work, which displaces full-time permanent jobs,

suggests that a large-scale change is occurring that will result in a return to a situation that existed in the 1800s.

Piketty (2014) has detailed the increasing wealth inequality that is occurring globally, and which will eventually lead to the disappearance of the middle class again. As Piketty points out, wealth inequality has led to social unrest in the past. If more people are only able to sustain themselves with contingent work, and if there is a return to a situation where wealth is concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer people, this then increases the likelihood of continued social upheaval such as the Occupy Wall Street movement, and various extremist movements. However, these are considerations beyond the scope of this study.

The question about whether previously developed theories about organizational behavior are applicable to contingently employed people makes this proposed study relevant. Next, the findings about contingent employment from previous researchers will be presented.

### **Contingent Work Arrangements in Organizations.**

The trend to use contingent workers has been reported by numerous authors. For example, Brewster, Mayne and Tregaskis (1997) review the literature on what they called flexible work in various European countries. The authors analyzed over 20,000 surveys sent out to companies in 14 European countries with 200 or more employees. The surveys were sent out to senior human resources personnel specialists between 1989 and 1995. The authors found that flexible work arrangements were increasing across Europe, and that flexibility included part-time work, short-term contracts, and shift work. Secondly, they indicated that part-time employment was playing an increasingly

important role in Europe. Further, they indicated that although in general, the flexible work arrangements were increasing across Europe, there was considerable variation in part time employment levels among countries. The variation was due, in part, to the influence of unions, differing governmental policies and legislation. For example, Brewster et al. reported that overall, in the European Union one out of seven employees was in a part time employment arrangement; however, in the Scandinavian countries and in the Netherlands 30% of the workforce was working part time; and 6 out of 10 women were working part time in these countries. In other countries such as Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland, part-time employment was below 10% of all employment.

In addition, Ashford, George and Blatt (2007) reviewed the literature regarding contingent employment in the United States and they reported an increasing trend of contingent employment arrangements across the country. They argued the traditional organizations that employed workers in typical long-term work arrangements were changing to increasingly use “nonstandard workers” (p. 66). These nonstandard workers included people working as independent contractors, on-call workers, workers who obtained work through temporary help agencies, and workers who obtained work via contract work. Drawing from data of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Ashford et al. stated that nonstandard work appeared to make up about 10.7% of the workforce in general, although the incidence of nonstandard work arrangements occurred for about 39.9% of people working as managers and professionals. Thus, the incidence of nonstandard work arrangements was increasing among people working as managers and professionals. The authors argued that as a result, many of the organizational theories

based on the typical bureaucratic organizations employing traditional workers were no longer valid.

Ashford et al. (2007) discussed some definitional issues about contingent employment that have arisen in previous studies. They proposed that rather than using the standard classification system of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, these nonstandard workers should be studied from the perspective of relationships between workers and organizations as proposed by Pfeffer and Baron (1988). These relationships are conceptualized along the dimensions of temporal attachment, administrative attachment, and physical attachment. Ashford et al. argue the use of this conceptual framework helps researchers understand how workers understand and experience their work.

A number of studies (Ashford et al., 2007; Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles & Konig, 2010; Yang, 2012) have found a variety of effects resulting from contingent work arrangements. Increased job insecurity was noted by De Cuyper, de Jong, De Witte, Isaksson, Rigotti, and Schalk (2008). In their review of literature and research regarding the psychological impact on workers of being temporarily employed, the authors note that an increase in the use of temporary workers led to an increase in job insecurity among permanent workers, which was proportional to the use of temporary workers. The increased sense of job insecurity arose from perceived organizational injustice and inconsistent HR and management practices. These findings fit into the framework proposed by the “Relative Deprivation Theory” as proposed by Feldman and Turnley (2004), or alternatively they could also be understood within the framework of social exchange theory (De Cuyper, et al. 2008). Reisel, et al. (2010) reviewed the responses of

320 managers in the United States that related job insecurity to three outcomes namely: job attitudes, work behaviors, and negative emotions. They found that as job insecurity developed among permanent workers, there was a negative effect on job satisfaction, decrease in the occurrence of organizational citizenship behaviors, and an increase of what they called “deviant behavior”, such as being late for a shift, working slower as well as taking more or longer breaks than allowed. The quantitative study by Riesel et al. involved using a survey that asked respondents to provide responses using a five-point Likert-type scale. In this study, however, I was interested in gathering more detailed information about the participants’ experiences, which was not possible to obtain in a survey style methodology.

In addition, Yang (2012) looked at workers in a knowledge-based public sector organization. Through direct observation and structured interviews conducted with five nonstandard workers and five standard workers, he examined the effects of perceived trust on knowledge sharing, performance evaluation, and task distribution. He reported that decreased levels of trust among the standard workers resulted in those workers being reluctant to share key information with the contingent or nonstandard workers. This information would be required by the nonstandard workers to effectively perform their jobs. Again, the origin of the decreased level of trust was found to be the increase in job insecurity among the standard workers as nonstandard workers were introduced into a workplace. These findings were not related to any particular theoretical framework by the author.

Pedulla (2013) reported similar findings. He conducted an analysis of survey data from 338 firms in the United States. These firms ranged in size from two to 10,000

employees. He looked at the employers' use of contingent workers and the standard workers' pride in their organization, their level of organizational trust, and the relationships between managers and the subordinate contingent and standard workers. In conducting the analysis, Pedulla distinguished between temporary workers, independent contractors, and on-call workers, arguing that each type of contingent worker produces different consequences on permanent employees' attitudes and outcomes. The author found that the use of temporary workers was negatively related to permanent workers' pride in working for their organization and the level of trust in their employer. Pedulla also found there was a negative impact on the relationships permanent workers had with their managers and coworkers. One of the chief reasons for the negative impact was the perceived decrease in job security among the permanent workers. Pedulla argued a threat process was in play whereby permanent workers perceived the temporary workers as a source of new competition. He also indicated that in the face of temporary workers working with permanent workers, there was likely to be a decreased effort among the permanent workers to negotiate for higher wages, resulting in lower wages for permanent workers in organizations that used temporary workers. The decreased effort was because the permanent workers saw the temporary workers as a source of competition. Pedulla stated the permanent workers were less likely to bargain for higher wages because of their perceived increased job security. While Pedulla studied contingent workers across a broad group of organizations in the US, it is not known to what extent (if any) these findings might apply to instructors who were in contingent work arrangements in an educational setting.

### **Contingent Employment in Education Settings**

Research regarding contingent work arrangements in the field of education involves a variety of settings including colleges and universities as well as primary and secondary schools. Kezar and Sam (2013) looked at college faculties in the United States to examine how such institutions could provide more supporting environments to their contingent faculty members. They interviewed 45 individuals at 30 colleges in the US. They looked at the challenges and issues that existed for creating inclusive policies and practices for contingent faculty members. Kezar and Sam found an increase in contingent faculty members in colleges and a general lack of supporting policies and practices that resulted in negative working environments. They noted that contingent faculty members tended to experience isolation due to a lack of inclusion by full time staff, and the contingent faculty were reluctant to become involved in college administration due to heavy workloads, isolation, and apathy.

Further, Seifert, Messing, Riel and Chatigny (2007) examined how short-term contracts affected work performance among three types of contingent workers: adult education instructors, instructor aides, and workers in women's shelters. They conducted work observation and interviews among adult education instructors in Quebec. They found that among adult education instructors hired on short-term contracts, there was hostility between teachers and, in general, the conditions under which the contract instructors worked were less favorable. The result was a decreased level of trust among teachers. Seifert et al. found there was distrust and hostility both among colleagues and between workers and management. For example, teaching materials were withheld from

the contract instructors, and in one instance that was observed by the researchers, there was an overt attempt to disrupt a class activity being conducted by another teacher.

Feather and Rauter (2004) reported on a study from Australia. Studying the organizational citizenship behaviours among schoolteachers in remote locations in Western Australia, the authors found that organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) increased among teachers employed on fixed-term contracts. They assessed OCBs using an adaptation of a scale devised by Wittig-Berman and Lang (1990). The scale assessed such behaviors as helping coworkers who were experiencing difficulty, postponing days off to finish work, and talking about work during lunch. They argued the OCBs were carried out by the fixed-term contract teachers in an attempt to impress the school leaders to gain full time employment. Feather and Rauter also reported greater feelings of insecurity among the group of contract teachers. However, as a group, the contract workers' average age was 28.67 years whereas the permanent teachers' average age was 41.75 years. There was also a difference in work experience. The contract workers had been employed for only 2.06 years while the permanent workers had been employed for an average period of 11.14 years. The authors noted that insecurity was negatively related to opportunities for skill utilization and influence; however, it was possible that the age and years of experience would have also affected the opportunities for skill utilization and influence by the contract workers. It is therefore, in my opinion, not possible to ascertain a clear relationship between job insecurity and the variables of influence and opportunities for skill utilization.

Lierich and O'Connor (2009) also studied fixed term contracts among secondary school rural teachers in Australia. Like Feather and Rauter (2004), Lierich and O'Connor

examined OCBs among teachers working on fixed-term contracts and permanent contracts. They used the same instrument used by Feather and Rauter to assess the OCBs. They found that while there was also a degree of job insecurity among the fixed-term contract teachers, there was no increase in OCBs carried out by these teachers as had been reported by Feather and Rauter. Lierich and O'Connor argued that the lack of OCBs was because the teachers in rural Australia were aware of the difficulties in staffing these remote locations, and therefore, they did not feel the need to impress the school leaders to try to maintain their employment in the schools.

Kezar and Sam (2011) challenged a fundamental underlying assumption about the Non-Tenured Teaching Faculty (NTTF); namely, the application of a deficit perspective when examining aspects of NTTF. They defined a deficit perspective regarding NTTF as consisting of underlying assumptions about these faculty members that they were less productive, less motivated, have less commitment, and less engagement. In general, a deficit perspective sees NTTF as being a poor fit for the organizations. Kezar and Sam argue that a deficit perspective fundamentally influences how and what research examines and how data are interpreted. Furthermore, they argue that past studies of NTTF have been based on economic and business perspectives and that a better basis for study of NTTF staff should be the professionalization and managed professional perspectives. According to Kezar and Sam, economic and business perspectives frame academic faculty essentially as workers for whom job performance, job satisfaction and commitment are linked to external and monetary rewards as drivers. They argue that business and economic perspective look at the relationship between employees and their organization in terms of commitment, satisfaction, level of

performance, and relate these to the level of job security. The economic and business perspectives see employees as being driven primarily by monetary gain and other external incentives. However, academic faculty can be seen through a different lens of professional development perspectives since academic faculty have lengthy training and work according to different principles and standards than laborers.

The approach to using the professional development perspective in this study raises the question: what does it mean to be professional? Abbott (1988) contends that early on in the 1930s, occupations were analysed in terms of traits or job characteristics. More recently, the view of what constitutes a profession gave way to the view that a profession has the following characteristics: a) there exists an internal tension between the freedom of the profession to determine its conditions and standards of practice, and b) the accountability of the members of that profession to adhere to certain norms of practice. Abbott (1988) proposed a different theory. Whereas previous theories of professions had looked at task and associated traits, and stages of development to conduct those tasks, Abbott proposed that professions exist in a system in which various occupations interact and compete by making jurisdictional claims. A defining characteristic of a profession within Abbott's conceptualization is that a profession possesses a defined set of abstract knowledge through which the occupational group exerts a sole and unique authority and jurisdictional control of the occupational domain.

Evans (2008) discusses professionalism saying that professionalism can be thought of as a professional culture. This is the idea that a profession is defined by its values, viewpoints, and ideology, and the homogeneity of these aspects defines a profession. As such, Evans argues, this definition of professionalism is actually about the

behaviors and actions of the people belonging to a particular occupational group. Therefore, she argues, professionalism is determined by the sum of the values and behaviors of the members of an occupational group. She says the establishment of the boundaries as to what constitutes a profession is in effect a sort of service level agreement regarding the status, importance and potential authority that a job has, and that these boundaries are imposed by people in power. Evans (2002) identifies two components of professional development: functional development and attitudinal development. Attitudinal development is composed of intellectual and motivational features. Functional development is composed of two features: procedural (procedures used at work) and productive (what people do at work).

According to Park, Sine and Tolbert (2011), sociological theories of professions have generally said that there are two competing bases of authority: the occupational principles and the administrative principles. The occupational principles assert that those people who possess specialized knowledge for the functioning of an organization should be able to exert key control over an organization. On the other hand, the administrative principles assert that the control is tied to a hierarchical position within an organization, and the resulting managerial expertise that presumably results from the position within an organization. According to Park et al., the administrative principles are therefore, mostly concerned with matters of efficiency and productivity. These authors indicate the trend toward greater use of contingent employment challenges an assumption that employment is long-term. In the case of a tenure system such as at universities and colleges, the increasing use of contingently employed instructors challenges this assumption more directly and overtly by challenging the existing tenure system. The

main reason for this change since the 1970s has been a desire to reduce costs in response to declining government funding.

More recently, Anteby, Chan and DiBenigno (2016) have discussed the nature of professions and professionalization. These authors suggest that occupational and professional affiliations have become a source of stability for employees as the stability of employment with organizations has decreased. They review the general characteristics of how a profession is defined. Summarizing previous literature, the authors state that professions are a sub-type of occupations that a) have some type of abstract or specialized knowledge, b) include autonomy by members of a profession to determine conditions and standards of practice, c) include authority over clients, and d) include a certain amount of altruism. In addition, Anteby et al. review a framework for analysing occupations, including professions. The framework consists of three lenses that can be used to examine occupations. The first is becoming – that is, how people learn to become part of an occupational group. Secondly, there is doing – that is, how people learn to do the work particular to an occupation. Finally, there is relating – that is, how people relate to people outside their occupational group; in particular, this lens is used to examine how members of occupational groups cooperate and collaborate with other occupations interdependently. The authors describe how this framework can be used to distinguish between and categorize various research efforts conducted about occupations. They describe that the “relating lens” is a newer way of examining occupational groups and they suggest this lens may provide different understanding of how occupations interact. Rather than focussing on competitiveness among occupational groups, this lens focusses on positive collaborative aspects of a larger “ecosystem of stakeholders” (Anteby et al.,

p. 212), which may include actors such as various occupational groups, clients, laypersons, and technology. In fact, the authors state that this relational lens addresses what Abbott (1988) was calling for, namely that occupations should be analysed within the broader system in which they exist, and on multiple levels. Anteby et al. state that during the past few decades, there has been a change in research toward a more relational-based type of research.

A number of authors have stated that the definition of a profession has changed over the years (Beck & Young, 2005; Servage, 2009; Evans, 2008). Evans (2008) claims there has been a shift in power regarding who defines and controls the concept and nature of professionalism. She points out that autonomy appears to have given away to accountability in education related professions, as in other fields, in the pursuit of profit and fiscal performance, and she says as a result, the definition of what constitutes educational professionalism has changed over time. She states that professionalism is not a defined concept, but a constantly changing and socially constructed concept that depends on the context of the social environment. These changes have in part been driven by the implementation of neo-liberal policies that prioritize profits and efficiency and accountability above other goals (Beck & Young, 2005; Servage, 2009; Evans, 2008). The pressures on academic institutions such as colleges and universities resulting from decreased public funding have been responsible for the increased use of contingently employed staff at these institutions. The tenure system is no longer supported by these neo-liberal policies (Park et al., 2011). In fact, according to Bernstein (2000), the result over the decades of the implementation of neo-liberal policies has been a “genericism” of knowledge that threatens the definition of education itself. This

genericism attempts to provide skills that can be useful across many fields. Their introduction is a response to an increasingly globalised world in which workers change jobs many times throughout their lives. He argues that the result of the alignment with this neo-liberal perspective is that knowledge has become divorced from an inwardness and inner dedication. According to Bernstein, the definition of knowledge and professions has changed, and as a result, the concept of education itself is at stake.

Carroll (2010) supports this reasoning in his analysis of Canadian corporate power and globalization. He describes the infiltration of corporate power and influence into institutions of higher learning. He indicates that this infiltration is happening because research and knowledge are seen as ways to ensure competitive advantage in a globally competitive world. University campuses are seen as “sites of capital accumulation, a place for creating or enhancing the profit-making capacity of individuals, businesses or the country itself” (Carroll, p. 181). According to Carroll, universities are behaving like capitalist entities as they compete for investment funds. One result of this marketization of higher education institutions is the increasing use of contingently employed instructors (Park et al., 2011).

As indicated elsewhere in this thesis, Kezar and Sam (2011) indicate that research about contingent employment has been conducted primarily from an economic and business perspective, which argues that employees and their organizations are driven primarily by monetary gain and other incentives in matters relating to employment and the labour market. When applied to an academic setting, the business and economic perspective views academic faculty essentially as workers for whom job performance, job satisfaction and commitment are linked to external and monetary rewards as drivers.

Kezar and Sam argue the economic and business perspective looks at the relationship between employees and their organization in terms of commitment, satisfaction, level of performance, and relate these to the level of job security. However, academic faculty can be seen through a different lens of the professional development perspective since academic faculty have lengthy training and their work is based on different principles and standards than workers in private sector organizations. The professional development perspective sees professions as: (i) a specialized and dynamic knowledge-base or body of expertise, (ii) a distinctive array of rights and privileges accorded to members, and (iii) an internal social structure based on shared goals and values (Anteby, Chan & DiBenigno, 2016; Kezar & Sam, 2011; Abbott, 1988; Evan 2002, 2008). These factors provide a helpful framework for understanding contingent employment in an academic setting, which is why I chose the professional development perspective as the most appropriate for my study.

## **CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology used in this study. I discuss the theoretical underpinnings regarding why a qualitative approach was used, and why constructivist grounded theory was chosen as the methodology for this study.

### **The Qualitative Research Approach**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, using grounded theory methodology, to explore the experiences of contingently employed instructors at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Qualitative research attempts to understand phenomena based on the views and interpretations of people existing in a situation. The qualitative approach rejects the idea that human experience can be reduced to a set of rules that result in a cause and effect relationship (Creswell, 2009). Rather, the subjective experiences combined with the interpretation of the researcher constitute research findings. Qualitative research is underpinned by a worldview that holds multiple interpretations exist, phenomena are fluid and changeable as opposed to fixed and static, and that people construct their reality (Creswell, 2009). Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that incorporates these underlying beliefs.

### **Grounded Theory Methodology**

In this study, the particular qualitative research methodology I used was Grounded Theory (GT). GT is a qualitative strategy in which a researcher attempts to come up with a theory about a phenomenon, and that theory is based on the views of the participants (Creswell, 2009). As was originally described by Glasser and Strauss (1967), GT is an inductive method of generating a theory from data that are collected during the

research process. Since its first description by Glaser and Strauss, GT has been revised by various researchers (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Wuest, 1995; Charmaz, 2006). A number of authors have described various types of grounded theory. For example, Evans (2013) describes four streams of grounded theory as discussed by Fernandez (2012). These streams are classical grounded theory (Glaser, 1967), the Straus and Corbin (1990) qualitative data analysis, the feminist grounded theory of Wuest (1995), and the constructivist grounded theory of Charmaz (2006). Evans (2013) suggests the choice of grounded theory variant to be used in research depends on the researcher's own view of the world and on the nature of the research topic.

The original variant of GT as written by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was essentially objectivist (Charmaz, 2006). The data were to be collected, analysed, and a theory would be revealed. This approach has a foundational assumption that a reality exists and it is through the efforts of the researcher using GT that the reality pertaining to the phenomenon being studied will be revealed. This Classical Grounded Theory (CGT) approach held that a literature review was not to be undertaken until after data collection and analysis so as not to introduce bias into the data collection and analysis (Evans, 2013). Rather, the literature review is only conducted after the theory has been generated, and it is then used as additional data to further develop the theory being generated.

A later development of grounded theory was introduced by Strauss and Corbin (1990). In this "Straussian grounded theory" variant (Evans, 2013), a key difference is that the literature review is performed early on during the research. The early literature review has the effect of developing theoretical sensitivity and the generation of

hypotheses. According to Christiansen (2008), the Strauss and Corbin (1990) version of GT is rooted in qualitative methodologies and the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. Evans (2013) argues that while the terminology in the original CGT and the Straussian GT may sound similar, the philosophical differences underlying each approach are critical to understanding the differences between these two variants. The former looks at the data to inductively generate a theory while the latter holds that the conceptualizing and categorizing to eventually generate a theory may come from the data and from the researcher. Further, the conceptualization and categorization may be predetermined.

Wuest's (1995) version of GT overlays a feminist perspective over GT and it does not particularly prefer one or another version of GT, and in fact methodological elements of Straussian CGT and Constructivist GT are utilized. This perspective is rooted in a postmodern feminist epistemology in which multiple explanations of reality can be seen (Evans, 2013). Wuest used this methodology to research the field of nursing. According to Wuest, there is an androcentric bias in the scientific method. Therefore, a feminist perspective using grounded theory gives voice to women. Wuest indicates that GT is consistent with the post-modern feminist epistemology because of the acceptance of multiple explanations of reality.

According to Christiansen (2008), the Charmaz (2006) version of GT is based on social interactionism. Evans (2013) indicates that this version of GT is founded in constructivist theory and therefore, it holds that concepts are constructed and not revealed as originally posited by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This difference also expresses itself in how the research problem is stated. Evans (2013) explains that a

researcher operating from a constructivist perspective will have a set of questions about an area of inquiry. On the other hand, the CGT approach does not start with any questions. The CGT approach begins with a desire to learn more about an area of inquiry. Through the process of gathering data, the researcher will discover the problem, as well as how the participants deal with the problem, and this process of discovery will result in the inductive generation of a theory relating to the problem and the area of inquiry.

Birks and Mills (2011) sum up the applicability of grounded theory by saying that it is an appropriate methodology to use in settings where little is known about a particular topic, and where a desired outcome of the research is to derive a theory with explanatory power. A grounded theory methodology was suited for this study because I wanted to explore and explain the contingent instructors' experiences about their work.

According to Creswell (2013), grounded theory is a methodology that seeks to go beyond description and attempts to discover a theory. He indicates the theory arises out of the data where participants have all experienced a common process or action. In my study, the relevant process or action was the process of instruction that exists in a contingent employment arrangement. The use of grounded theory methodology enables a theory to be derived from the data that are generated and derived from the related experiences of the participants.

In my study, I concluded a constructivist worldview was applicable to the research setting. Instructors perform complex actions to provide instruction in the classroom. The individual nature of this work means that the subjective understanding and interpretation by each instructor is not likely to be easily quantifiable. According to

Creswell (2009), such a worldview involves using open-ended questions to allow participants to share their views and experiences. Further, interpretation by the researcher is essential, and is shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background.

### **Recruitment of Participants**

In my study, I selected participants, used guiding questions to gather data, and then analyzed the data according to the constructivist grounded theory methodology as outlined by Charmaz (2006). Saskatchewan Polytechnic has many different program types, including full time study, part time study, as well as programs leading to academic or trade related credentials. Some programs have been in existence for many years while others are newer. At the time this study was conducted the broad categories of staff at Saskatchewan Polytechnic were academic staff, professional services (admin support in the academic units), out-of-scope staff (including human resources staff, finance, information technology), and Continuing Education program area staff.

Given the diversity of programs available, participants for my study were sought from only one particular program area at the Regina campus of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The policies in place at Saskatchewan Polytechnic resulted in the existence of five categories of employees within this one department. The types were: casual (brand new hires working up to 29 times, any number of hours per week), part-time (employees working more than 29 times, and working less than 37 hours per week – had an end date to their employment), full-time (working 37 hours per week), and employee service contracts (people hired but working only on call to provide specific limited services on an as-needed basis). The participants in my study were all hired on employee

service contracts. By choosing participants from within this one category (staff hired on service contracts), I attempted to align my study with the employment practices in place at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Consequently, I narrowed the potential participant pool for my study. Initially, contact was made with the person in charge of the one program area to obtain permission to post a notice that solicited participant instructors for the study (Appendix “B”). Through this supervisory contact, an email solicitation was also sent out to the permanent staff coordinating their respective contingently employed workers. Three of these coordinators consented to forward the email solicitations and one coordinator refused outright, citing being afraid that the study would negatively affect the workers during a time of tremendous organizational flux and uncertainty.

For my study, the criteria for research participants were broad. The participants for the study with the following general criteria were sought. First, an equal number of male and female instructors who were currently working in contingent environment arrangements in one program area at the Regina campus of Saskatchewan Polytechnic were sought to participate in the study. Secondly, the participants should have been working in a contingent work arrangement in the program area for at least one semester. In addition, the participants were to be only working contingently as instructors, and not have other full-time jobs either at Saskatchewan Polytechnic or at another organization. My goal in limiting the participants in this way was to avoid potentially obtaining data that actually had to do with other employment in which study participants were engaged. In my experience, full-time employment often results in various pressures (organizational and/ or political) which I thought might confound my data in some way if I were to include participants who had full-time employment elsewhere. However, I

judged that there would be less risk of such outside influences if participants worked contingently elsewhere.

My plan was to use snowball sampling if less than six participants expressed an interest in participating in the study. In snowball sampling, the initial participants are asked to identify other possible participants who meet the study criteria. Each of these individuals is then asked to further identify possible participants for the study. This process is continued until the required number of participants is recruited for a study. In my study, I received six responses, but one was excluded because she had a full-time job elsewhere and the work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic was a way to make more income in addition to her full-time job. Only five people remained to participate in my study. As described in the section below on findings of the study, the snowball sampling method was not successful because none of the participants interacted with any other instructors; they all worked in isolation from one another.

### **Participant Characteristics**

In total, five participants responded to the solicitation to participate in this study. Of the five participants who were recruited for this study, all were between the ages of 55-70 years old. Four participants (Leslie, Robin, Lindsay, and Lee) had worked previously in either provincial or federal government jobs and had pension incomes. Two participants were male and three were female instructors. Each participant provides highly specialized training, and, according to the participants, there are no other instructors who provide this type of training. All participants are highly skilled in their respective fields and are experienced, competent adult educators. All participants were generally very positive about their work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. To maintain the

confidentiality of all the participants, I have removed their names from all the transcripts. In this thesis, I refer to each participant only by a pseudonym and I have taken care to eliminate any information or specific references that might reveal the identity of the participants.

Leslie has been teaching at Saskatchewan Polytechnic for more than 15 years. Leslie also has more than one other part-time job in addition to the work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Leslie is retired from a government job. He is not originally a teacher, but in his previous employment moved into adult learning positions over a period of years. After he retired, he started teaching the same materials at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Leslie teaches several highly specialized courses for which professional certification is required to be maintained. He teaches these courses in several locations in Saskatchewan, including in Regina.

Kelly has been teaching at Saskatchewan Polytechnic for more than 10 years. Kelly also has more than one other part-time job in addition to the work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Kelly has taught several different courses at Saskatchewan Polytechnic over the years. He is not a teacher by training. However, he thoroughly enjoys teaching adults and wants to continue teaching as much as possible. Kelly does not have pension income, and in that way is different from the other four participants. Of the five participants, Kelly is the only participant who belongs to a union. This is because of the course he teaches. The courses are primarily taught at night, although he has on occasion also taught day-time courses. Kelly also has a specialized skill set which requires professional certification.

Robin has been teaching at Saskatchewan Polytechnic between 5-10 years. Robin does not have any additional work to the work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. She teaches one course, but this course is taught at several locations in Saskatchewan. Robin is a retired teacher. She has taught all levels from kindergarten to university level courses.

Lindsay has been teaching at Saskatchewan Polytechnic between 5-10 years.

Lindsay does not have any additional work to the work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

Lindsay teaches several courses and provides instruction in several locations throughout Saskatchewan, including Regina. Lindsay is a retired teacher. Although she has pension income after retiring, her circumstances are such that she wants to work to earn extra money.

Lee has been teaching at Saskatchewan Polytechnic between 5-10 years. Lee provides instruction at several locations throughout Saskatchewan, including Regina. Lee is also a retired teacher. She has taught a variety of subjects in high school and middle years. Lee does not have any additional work to the work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

The recruitment of participants was problematic because, as described in Chapter Four, there was a considerable amount of fear expressed by one of the coordinators. This fear was in relation to what might happen if people participated in this study during a time of turmoil resulting from the ongoing organizational transformation at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. As a result, despite repeated efforts, only six people responded to the call for participants, and one of those was deemed unsuitable for this study, leaving only five participants. This sixth person was deemed to be unsuitable because she was employed full-time in another organization and only occasionally

worked contingently at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. I therefore concluded that her circumstances did not meet my requirements for participants in this study.

### **Data Collection Methods**

In my study, the interviews occurred between April and July 2017. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the resulting transcripts were then analyzed according to the constructivist grounded theory methodology of Charmaz (2006). As Charmaz (2006) states, the initial sampling criteria present an initial starting point in data collection. The process of theoretical sampling then informs the researcher about what to do next to gather more information that is relevant. During this process of gathering data and conducting concurrent analysis, it is important to obtain rich, detailed information (Charmaz, 2008). Rich data are described as “detailed, focused, and full. They review participants’ views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives” (Charmaz, 2006 p. 14). Research goals are therefore derived from these conditions.

To adequately obtain rich information about the participants’ experiences while existing within these conditions, it was necessary to conduct interviews face-to-face rather than using some other method of data gathering. Charmaz (2006) points explicitly to intensive interviewing as the method of choice for many grounded theory research projects because intensive interviewing allows an in-depth exploration of the research topic. Charmaz (2006) suggests that the researcher create a list of open-ended questions ahead of time, and the list should be as short as possible. Appendix “C” contains a list of guiding questions used in this study. These questions are open-ended and they were used

as a starting point for getting more in-depth data through detailed interviewing. The guiding questions for the interviews were developed from the review of the literature. The interviews were digitally recorded and overall, the questions were guided by the research questions and purpose of the study. The guiding questions for the interviews were provided to the participants in advance of the interview date to enable them to review the questions in advance and to organize their responses. While the guiding questions for the interviews were provided to each participant before the interviews, the guiding questions were used only to keep the interviews on track. I did not follow the order and format of the questions, and each interview proceeded in a slightly different order.

The participants and I jointly agreed upon the interview time and location. We met at the University of Regina library so that we could conduct the interview in private and without any distraction. The interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the research, the research approach and method, and the nature of the participants' involvement in the study. Before the interviews started, the participants were assured about their confidentiality and, as required in the University of Regina REB guidelines, they were invited to sign a consent form (Appendix "A"). To protect their confidentiality, the participants were assured that their real names would not be included in the thesis.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures**

Data analysis and interpretation for my study followed the constructivist grounded theory methodology as outlined by Charmaz (2006). She indicates that data

analysis proceeds inductively to produce general themes with the researcher making interpretations about the meaning of the data. The involvement of the researcher in making interpretations about the data means that his or her worldview becomes a significant factor in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, throughout this study, I carefully examined the way in which I collected data as well as the process of conducting the analysis in relation to my own positionality.

Further, Birks and Mills (2011) also point out that data collection (through interviews for example) is accompanied by data generation (through the interaction of the researcher with the data). Thus, in GT, data collection, coding, ongoing memoing, data generation, and theoretical sampling combine in an ongoing process to result in creation of categories, and finally concepts. Charmaz (2006) cautions that the process of data analysis and interpretation in GT is different from that occurring in a quantitative process, which attempts to fit the data into preconceived categories.

In my study, the digitally recorded interviews were transcribed, and each transcript was sent to the corresponding participant for review. The idea behind the transcript review process was to get the participants to check their transcripts to confirm accuracy and to make any desired additions or deletions. I emailed each participant their transcript, asking each one to confirm whether their transcript accurately covered the issues that we discussed during the interview. I also suggested to each participant that they could add any additional material they considered relevant to the interview discussions. Each participant signed a transcript release form (Appendix “E”).

Once the accuracy of the transcripts was confirmed, the transcripts were subjected to line-by-line coding. This was followed by focused coding as described by

Charmaz (2014). The process of initial coding involved examining data and trying to code it as actions. This coding process is open ended, but it still acknowledges that I, as an involved actor in this process, have previous experiences and ideas that may influence what I see in the data. The purpose of coding is to code according to what is suggested by the data rather than coding in an attempt to accurately reflect the data (Charmaz, 2014). Thus, in my study, I coded using the terms provided by the participants. The coding resulted in a representation of the meaning of the actions or processes described by the participants rather than a simple description of circumstances or observations. As much as possible, I used the words of the participants to create the codes. In practical terms, this coding process involved using an open source program called Open Code (Umea University, 2017) to conduct the line-by-line analysis of the transcripts. This program was designed to be used in qualitative studies, and was particularly designed to be used for studies that adopt grounded theory methodologies. I also used excel to examine and analyze codes and categories.

In GT, an essential method is what is called theoretical sampling (Birks & Mills, 2011). Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe theoretical sampling as a data collection process in which the researcher collects and analyzes data while also deciding what data to sample or collect next. As defined by Charmaz (2006), sampling in the context of grounded theory methodology is not about obtaining a subset of a certain population from which data are gathered. Rather, the purpose of theoretical sampling is to obtain more data about categories and the emerging theory being developed by the researcher. Charmaz (2008) states theoretical sampling is performed only once tentative categories have been developed. The researcher engages in an interactive process whereby these

tentative categories are further refined and developed by collection and analysis of further data by the researcher. Therefore, in this study, an iterative process was used in which categories were tentatively defined, and further details were sought about those categories from subsequently collected data and ongoing analysis. During this process, some categories that initially were indicated during the interviews of Leslie and Kelly were not substantiated by subsequent interviews, and the codes were instead grouped subsequently into different categories. During the interviews and the associated ongoing analyses, the focus was to try to obtain sufficient details until theoretical saturation occurred – that is, no new categories were found and no new properties of the categories were found. The analysis of data was an on-going activity; some data analysis was done immediately after the interviews. However, the bulk of the analysis was delayed until after data collection, and was conducted after the interviews were transcribed and released by the participants. The importance of the early analysis strategy was that it helped provide some preliminary search for patterns of processes and actions arising or emerging from the data.

The constructivist grounded theory variant of Charmaz (2006) understands that meaning and reality, as elucidated by the creation of concepts, are created or constructed, not discovered as posited by the classical grounded theory variant. The latter is rooted in a post positivist worldview while the constructivist grounded theory variant is rooted in a postmodernist worldview. The postmodernist worldview is one where multiple realities exist, based on interaction between individuals and their experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). When the researcher interacts with the participants, the constructivist grounded theory approach holds that the researcher as author constructs the meaning and

experience of the participants (Mills et al., 2006). According to Creswell (2013), this variant of grounded theory employs flexible guidelines and the theory created includes the views and perspective of the researcher.

### **Quality Considerations**

Birks and Mills (2011) state quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research are addressed by looking at researcher expertise, methodological congruence, and procedural precision. Researcher expertise includes such characteristics as self-awareness and clarity of purpose. Methodological congruence is achieved when there is agreement between the personal philosophical position, the purpose of the research, and the methodological approach. Procedural precision occurs when a researcher uses memos to ensure an audit trail is produced, the data are managed, and when the researcher demonstrates procedural logic. Procedural precision leads to transparent accountability. In my study I have addressed quality and trustworthiness by writing about researcher expertise, and ensuring methodological congruence and procedural precision are present in this thesis.

Yin (2011) also discusses transparency and accountability as contributing to quality. He calls transparency the “first objective” to ensuring trustworthiness and credibility are achieved by qualitative researchers. He explains that transparency means that researchers must adequately describe their procedures so that someone else can read and understand them. In my study I have provided a precise description of the procedure I used to conduct this study.

Merriam (2009) says trustworthiness depends on the degree of rigor, which has been demonstrated in the study. Therefore, trustworthiness requires a carefully designed

study to be able to demonstrate trustworthiness. This includes careful sample selection, data collection, and an analysis conducted in a methodical manner. According to Merriam, credibility is the degree to which research findings match reality. However, since the interpretation of the data partly depends on the perspective of the researcher, the interpretations are likely to be a construction based on the researcher's perspective. Consequently, Merriam indicates the actual test of credibility is the extent to which findings are supported by the data given the perspective of the researcher.

Therefore, it is important to articulate my own perspective in the study, and how my perspective was relevant to the interpretation of the study's findings. This means that the consistent production of memos was important in this study, and in fact, I produced memos throughout the study. Writing memos helped me examine my own positioning and my relationship with the participants and the data, which thus contributed to quality. Finally, Merriam (2009) indicates that transferability is achieved by providing sufficient descriptive data in the written report to allow readers to attempt to transfer the findings to their own circumstances and settings. Transferability is important because it addresses the question of why a study might be significant for readers. In this study, transferability was addressed by providing detailed excerpts from the data in chapter four so that readers may construct a meaning relevant to their own circumstances.

### **Research Ethics Approval**

Given that this study was conducted with instructors from Saskatchewan Polytechnic, ethics approval was sought from both the University of Regina Research Ethics Board (REB) and from the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Ethics Review Board. An application for ethics review was submitted to the University of Regina REB and ethics

approval was provide on March 21, 2017 (Appendix “F”). The harmonized ethics approval process between the two institutions meant that fieldwork for my study was allowed to proceed as of that date.

## CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS

### Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings of my study. I begin by briefly describing the various ways I approached the analysis, and what resulted from the analyses. I will then present the categories and core theoretical concepts that were noted through the analysis.

In this study, five participants were interviewed which resulted in a total of about 7.5 hours of interviews. These interviews were transcribed verbatim using an online transcription service. Each participant was asked to review their respective transcript for accuracy and each was asked to sign a transcript release form (Appendix “E”). The transcripts were then analyzed using an open source program called Open Code (Umea University, 2017). This is an open source program that has the capability to code qualitative text-based data using grounded theory methodology.

### General Findings and Preliminary Observations

The five transcripts generated 7,685 lines of text that were analyzed in Open Code. The analysis resulted in the production of 141 codes (Appendix “G”), which were apparent in these five interviews. The codes were further grouped into 27 categories. Only 135 codes were grouped into categories, because six codes were deemed irrelevant. These categories were further grouped into six core theoretical concepts.

### Codes, Categories, and Core Theoretical Concepts

I examined the 141 codes that were generated in Open Code to determine how these codes might be related to each other, and to see if any could be grouped together. As a result, I was able to create 27 categories. The creation of categories was based on

what the participants said, and my understanding of their comments about the coded ideas, actions, or processes. The 27 categories were then grouped to produce six core theoretical concepts as described by Birks and Mills (2011). The categories were grouped together based on what the participants stated, and on my analysis, which suggested that certain categories were linked together in some way.

The analysis began with the initial coding process that was conducted in a manner consistent with the account provided by Charmaz (2014). The coding at this stage focused on gerunds as stressed by Charmaz (2014) because, as she stated, using gerunds brings the researcher closer to the data and focuses on processes and actions. Consequently, the 141 codes resulted from focusing on actions and processes. The interview transcripts were reviewed line by line in the Open Code program and codes were recorded accordingly. As I was reviewing each transcript to produce codes, I compared the current data I was examining and coding with previously produced codes in other transcripts. I checked to ensure I was consistently coding data. I was also questioning my reasons for why I coded data a certain way. I came to realize that my choice of code depended, to some extent, on my perspective and previous experiences. For example, Leslie related that other people in the past had expressed a concern about him “double dipping”. I recognized this term as I had also heard it in one of my previous work environments. I coded this statement as “Double Dipping Concern” and paid attention to whether or not it was mentioned by other participants. However, none of the other participants mentioned this term or anything remotely like it.

Next, I conducted focused coding. This approach involved attempting to produce groupings of codes where they appeared to fit together in some way. Even the distillation

of a “cloud” of 141 codes from the transcripts was still a large amount of data. It was challenging to obtain any meaning out of this large number of codes. Consequently, I used a number of different ways to analyse the data.

One method I used was to see which codes appeared most frequently in each interview and among all five interviews combined. Looking at the frequency of codes in this way provided a very crude indication of which codes appeared to be more significant than the other codes. Figures #1-5 show the codes appearing five or more times in each participant’s interview.

Figure 1 - Codes Appearing  $\geq 5$  In Leslie's Interview

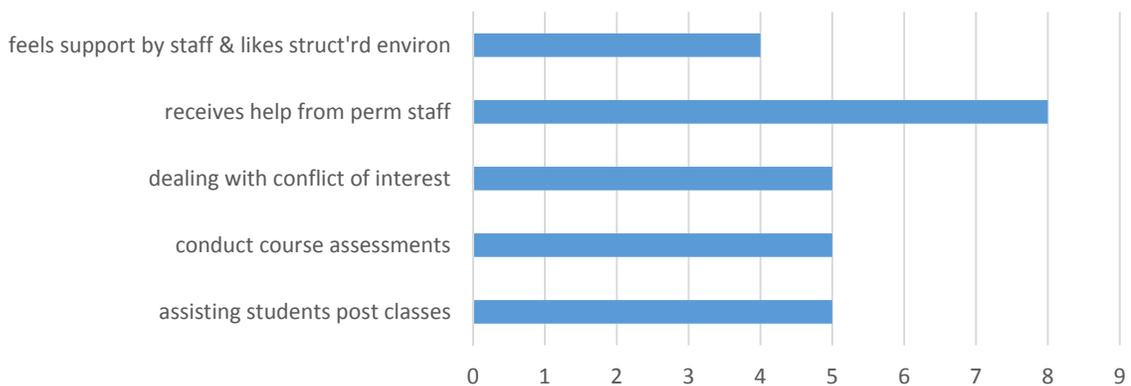


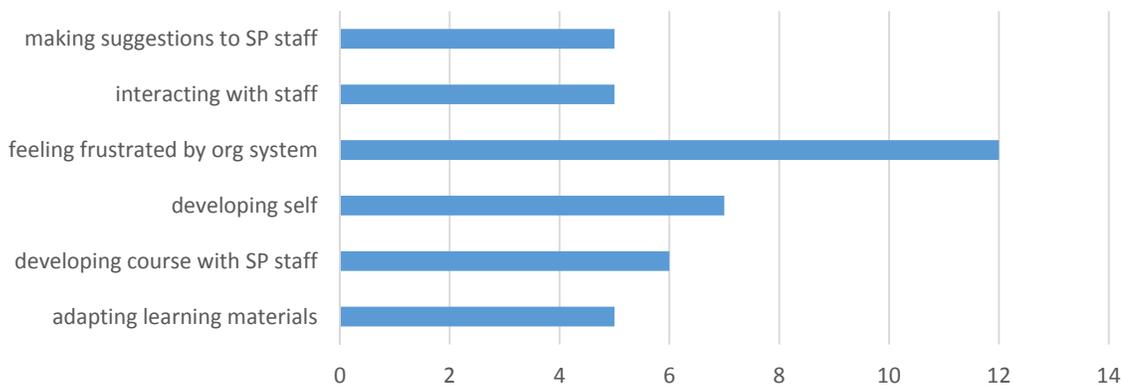
Figure 2 - Codes Appearing  $\geq 5$  In Kelly's InterviewFigure 3 - Codes Appearing  $\geq 5$  In Robin's Interview

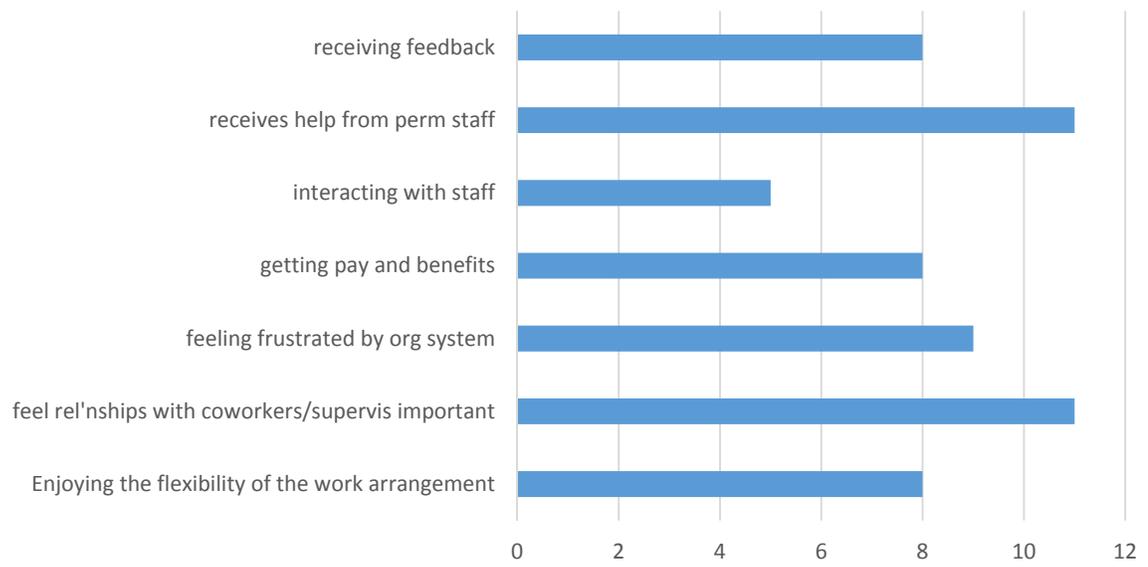
Figure 4 - Codes Appearing  $\geq 5$  In Lindsay's Interview

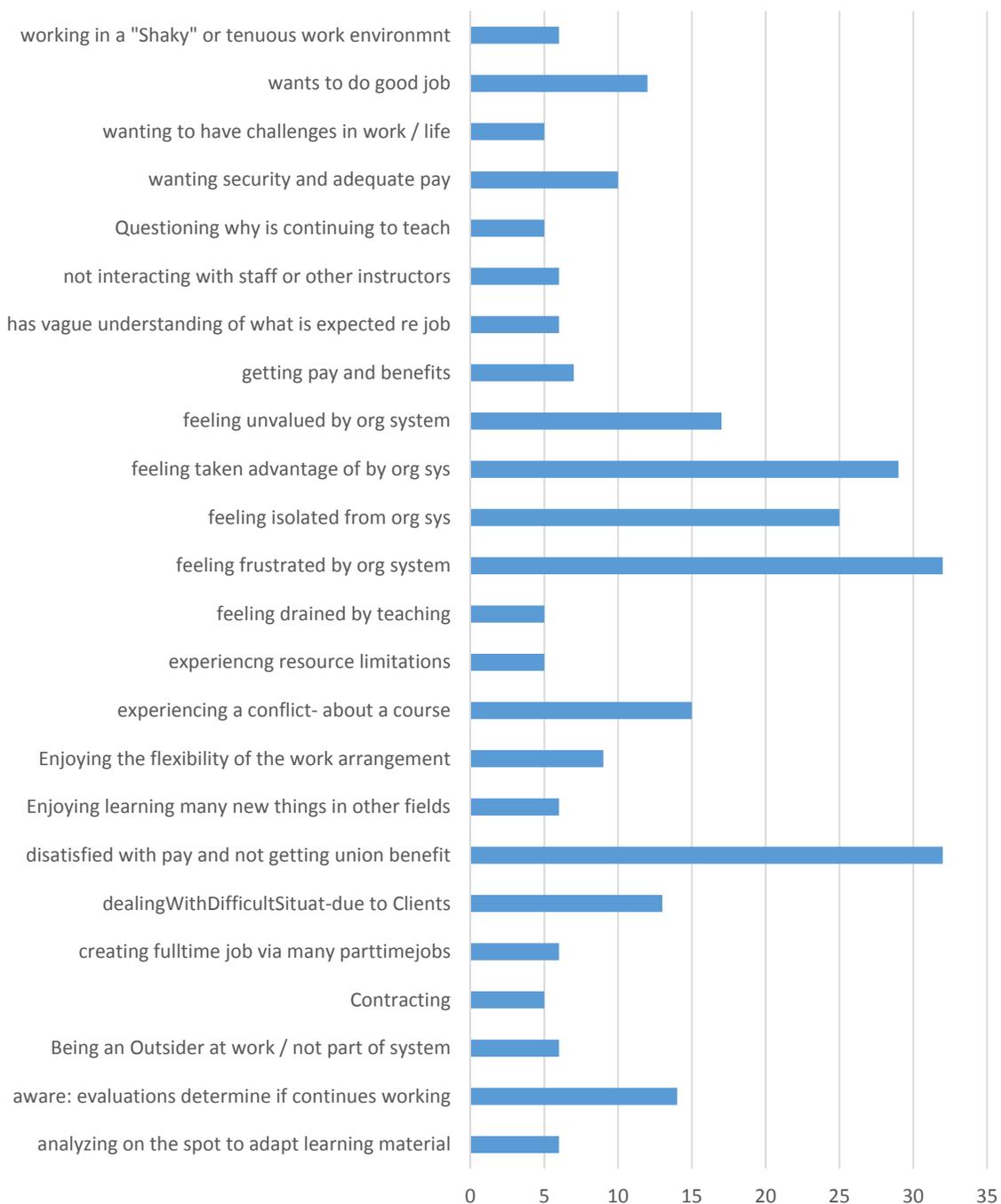
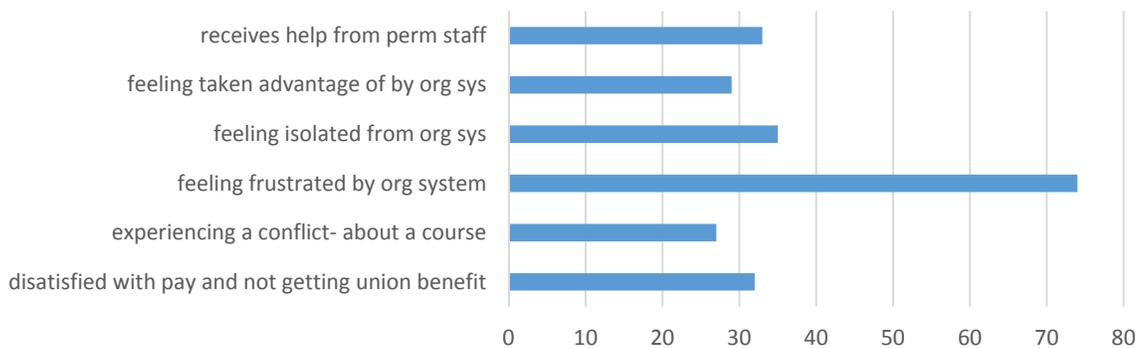
Figure 5 - Codes Appearing  $\geq 5$  In Lee's Interview

Figure 6 - Codes Appearing  $\geq 10$  In All Participants

Figure 6 shows the codes appearing ten or more times in the five combined interviews. However, this lengthy list could be shortened if only those codes appearing 25 or more times in the five combined interviews are shown (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 - Codes Appearing  $\geq 25$  In All Participants



The choice of cut-off for the frequency with which a code showed up in interviews (5, 10 or 25) was somewhat arbitrary, and was merely a way of reducing information.

However, some codes, including codes that appeared relatively infrequently, were combined with others to generate categories of codes. These categories were seen to represent a broader meaning that was common to a number of participants.

Examining the codes in various ways was a way for me to gain greater familiarity with the codes and the relationships between them. I compared data from the participants with various codes and I compared codes with other codes. This allowed me to determine which codes might be grouped together, which did not appear to be related, and to check if statements were coded correctly. This process of examining the data and codes also allowed me to examine my thoughts and reasons for why I had coded certain statements in certain ways and why I grouped some codes into some categories but not

into other categories. For example, I found myself asking frequently why I identified certain statements as particular codes. I also was aware of how my own previous experiences could have influenced the coding and category creation process. I went about grouping codes into groupings that seemed to fit together because of similarity of meaning. The resulting intermediate codes subsumed a number of codes and as a result, 27 categories were formed from the original 141 codes. Of the 141 codes created in analysing the transcripts, 135 codes could be placed into these categories. The remaining six codes appeared to be one-off comments made by individual participants that could not be easily included into any categories. In the end, I was confident that I was able to be aware of the extent to which previous experiences influenced the meaning I constructed out of the data provided by the participants. In addition, in this study, when I conducted an analysis of the codes and derived categories, I attempted to do so without reference to existing models. However, I do acknowledge that there might have still been some measure of influence arising from my previous experiences that might have affected the creation of codes, categories, and any conclusions I might have made during the process.

After the focused coding attempts to sort and examine codes into categories as noted above, I switched to examining the codes and categories for what they meant and I tried to see which categories appeared to be related in some way. There came a moment that may possibly be called abduction (Birks & Mills, 2010; Charmaz, 2014) where I suddenly saw groupings appear fairly rapidly. I tested the groupings tentatively and tried to fit codes and categories together. My analysis, thus, resulted in six core theoretical

concepts: System Factors, Interaction With Others, Work Conditions, Internal Motivations & Assessments, Doing the Work, and Deriving Personal Benefit (Internal).

The core theoretical concept that contained the most codes was the category of “Doing The Work”. This should not be surprising perhaps, since this was after all the “raison-d’être” for why the participants were part of Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The categories identified by the participants as being part of this core category include: Contracting, Creating/Modifying Courses, Delivering Courses, Evaluating Courses, Helping Students, Offer Value To Organization, Preparing Courses, and Promoting Courses. All participants spoke with passion about doing the work of teaching. In some way or another, all the categories contributed to the ability to carry out teaching. However, Doing the Work was the outcome that was either supported or inhibited by the other core theoretical concept as follows.

The core theoretical concept that contained the second highest number of codes was “System Factors”. The six categories that constituted the System Factors core theoretical concept were: Being An Outsider At Work, Bullying – Protect Self or Avoid It, Flexibility, Having Outside (Other) Work, Needing Outside Work, and Noticing / Feeling Bullied. These six categories were themselves made up of 96 of the 141 codes identified in the five transcripts. While some codes were descriptive of what it was like to work in the organization, other codes clearly had either a positive or a negative influence on how the participants worked at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. For example, the category “Being An Outsider At Work” contained the code “Dissatisfied With Pay and Not Getting Union Benefits” that several participants described as a negative influence. Lee stated: “How does it go that you go for [many] years or however long I could do this

job without wage increases to meet as the criteria, when our minimum wage changes”... “That bothers me”. Lee went on to say in a tone of resignation: “I am just somebody who shows up once in a while, and teaches”. Lee was the only one who discussed the matter of pay. Lee was also the only one who spoke explicitly and at length about “Questioning About Why Is Continuing To Teach”. However, both Lindsay and Lee were discontinuing teaching at Saskatchewan Polytechnic in the near future. Lee stated very curtly “I’ve had enough” when talking about her work environment.

Kelly discussed “Being An Outsider At Work” as well. In this case, Kelly talked about being severely restricted as to what one was allowed to teach because of a seniority type system imposed by the organization on its employees. Kelly summarized the restrictions as follows: “I teach when I can, when I’m allowed to teach.” For the role occupied by Kelly the organizational system required that employees were chosen based on the number of teaching hours they had accumulated. Kelly was the only contract instructor to discuss this seniority system. The work conditions of Kelly were unique and none of the other contract-employed participants was subjected to this seniority-based system. Kelly was actually in a union whereas none of the other instructors was in a union.

The core theoretical concept System Factors also contained the categories that I labelled “Bullying – Protect Self or Avoid It” and “Noticing / Feeling Bullied”. All five participants talked at length about noticing bullying type behavior and taking some action to protect themselves in some way. The category “Bullying – Protect Self or Avoid It” contained a number of codes that I considered to be related to bullying type behavior, including: feeling frustrated by the organizational system, feeling frustrated by

students' behavior, feeling isolated from the organizational system, feeling undervalued by the organizational system, and feels support by staff and likes structured environment. For example, Robin and Lee talked about feeling frustrated by some students' behavior, which, to them, came across as demanding, manipulative and even degrading. At one point, Lee said, "I seriously felt like disciplining some of them". I considered the code "feels support by staff and likes structured environment" as one that positively counteracted the effects of negative behavior, and therefore, I included it in the category "Bullying – Protect Self or Avoid It". It is also important to consider that bullying was described as both carried out by individuals as well as by organizational units, as perceived and interpreted by the participants. For example, Kelly in talking about the work environment said at one point: "Kelsey is the bully. It's not fun being a second class citizen in the system. It's not fun." Kelly further elaborated, "This is the Kelsey way. This is the way we're doing it. There's no sugar coating to it. [...] They're bullies, from my perspective." In another example, Lee recounted a personally observed instance of someone else being bullied, actually scapegoated, and the impact that had on the interpretations Lee made about the immediate work circumstances. Lee said:

Like the [person in an organizational role] the other day who said I've been scapegoated for the failures that are being perceived [in a work area]"... "... I mean if you want to blame me for the failure of a business transaction, go ahead, but the failure is deeper than that.

In this example, the redesign of a course had failed to produce the desired results and the person who had redesigned the course was being scapegoated even though a number of factors beyond that person's control had contributed to the failure. Because of the conflict that existed in the work environment, everyone had the implicit understanding

that they were not to have any contact with the scapegoated person. Lee said "...There is that sense. I can't speak to this [person]. I can't speak to the other people who do this work" and she continued "... it really did bother me when I saw what happened with this [other person]". As a result of this experience, Lee said, "We are the faces, all of us, of our organization... You certainly feel more cautious about what you do and don't do, and say. How much ownership you take, in the program that you deliver."

Another category that was part of the System Factors was the category of Flexibility. This category referred to flexibility of work environment, flexibility of the worker in responding to some issue or circumstance, or even the flexibility to decide whether to work at all, whether at Saskatchewan Polytechnic or anywhere else. As with the other categories, Flexibility had either a negative or a positive aspect to it. For example, Kelly described how lack of flexibility caused limitations "...I teach when I can, when I'm allowed to teach..." Kelly also described the importance of being flexible in responding to various work situations. This could include being flexible to the needs of students and adapting what materials were taught and how they were taught; it could also mean being flexible personally in that one chooses not to complain about how one was being treated. For example, Kelly stated he did not want to appear militant because he was concerned perceived militancy could perhaps have negative repercussions. Lindsay also spoke about flexibility being important because courses might be cancelled at the last moment. However, the need to be flexible due to cancellations was also seen as a negative experience by Robin, Lindsay, and Lee because it interfered with their non-work lives. The strong presence and action provided by the supervising coordinator was an ameliorating factor in that regard.

Two other categories, “Having Outside (other) Work” and “Needing Outside Work” were also part of the System Factors core theoretical concept. They are slightly different in terms of the factors to which they pertained. The category “Having Outside (other) Work” included such concerns as how the work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic affected (either potentially or actually) the ability to work elsewhere. This could take the form of either a positive or a negative aspect. This also had the effect of influencing the perception of flexibility because participants had the perception that they did not have to depend on Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and could leave if they so wished. On the negative side, this category also included a concern expressed by one participant about the perception by some people that Leslie was double dipping. Where the concern about double dipping had happened, the participant said other people had behaved in a way that resulted in failure or difficulties of some kind. Further, the participant said other people were experiencing “schadenfreude”, that is, deriving pleasure from sabotaging someone and seeing their resulting failure. On the other hand, the category “Needing Outside Work” was about how participants derived some benefit from having outside work. For example, several participants talked about creating the equivalent of a fulltime employment situation by working many part-time jobs. Only Kelly was doing this successfully and by choice. Three other participants spoke about this being very difficult to do. Lee related the circumstances of another co-worker. She said this other co-worker was “piece-mealing” a fulltime job together out of several part-time jobs. Lee said it would be very difficult when one is in their 20’s, but even tougher when one is in their 50’s.

The next core theoretical concept that became evident from the analysis was “Interaction with Others (Staff/Clients)”. Again, the categories and the codes that constituted this core theoretical concept had either a positive or a negative effect on how participants experienced their work situations. According to all five participants, one of the most valued interactions was the interactions they had with their coordinators at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. These interactions tended to result in feeling shielded from various organizational concerns, enabled the instructors to do their work more effectively, and made the participants feel more included and valued. In those few instances where participants recounted a lack of such interaction, negative effects resulted. Such negative effects included feelings of isolation from the organization, feeling frustrated by the organization, feeling unvalued by the organization, and questioning why one would continue to work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic instead of spending one’s time working somewhere else. The interactions with the coordinators, who were the immediate supervisors of the participants, were key to determining the work experience of the participants, although other staff also contributed to this work experience but to a lesser degree.

The core theoretical concept that I called “Work Conditions” dealt specifically with the conditions in which the participants conducted their day-to-day instructional activities. Only two categories were included in the core theoretical concept: “Creating Boundaries” and “Teaching /Working Conditions”. Four of the five participants spoke at length about how they paid attention to carefully creating boundaries in various ways. For example, Leslie recounted the way in which work at Saskatchewan Polytechnic was separated from several other work environments, and the problems that had arisen when

that work was done carefully. Creating boundaries was also something that coordinators did to shield the participants in several instances. In these cases, some courses had to be modified in some way. The coordinators obtained the information from the instructors on how to do this, and the coordinators then dealt with the clients, thus shielding the instructors from contentious situations. As mentioned above in the section on bullying, when there were contentious situations and the instructors became aware of any degree of hostility toward another instructor, the participants felt a decrease of ownership in courses and did not like the behaviors, which they interpreted as bullying.

The second category that was placed into the core theoretical concept of “Work Conditions” was Teaching /Working Conditions”. This category included the conditions in which participants went about their instructional duties. On the positive side were such codes as enjoying the variety of work, enjoying the flexibility of the work arrangement and receiving help from various staff. For example, Lindsay spoke glowingly about how the security staff provided assistance that made the instructor’s work experiences much better. On the other hand, Lee recounted how the classroom was locked repeatedly even though the schedule was clearly marked that the classroom was in use. For some reason, the security staff did not seem to know about that, and when it was brought to their attention, they did not seem to be in too much of a hurry to open the classroom. Another “Work Condition” that had a negative impact was resource limitations. For example, Kelly recounted how over a lengthy period the projector did not have a functioning lightbulb and no one seemed to be checking. When the instructor brought it to the attention of someone, the bulb was quickly replaced. That participant speculated that due to cutbacks, a maintenance position had been eliminated and there was no one to check if

various equipment was functioning correctly. The organization appeared to be relying on someone (anyone?) to report trouble. If correct, then this speculation was an example of how a system change could have an indirect effect far removed from the decision makers because the instructor was unable to do the work effectively without a functioning projector.

The core theoretical concept “Internal Motivations and Assessments” was concerned with an assessment carried out by the participants about their work environment. In response to what the participants were experiencing about their work situation, I found that four categories became apparent: “Bullying – Stand Up Against (for others)”, “Feeling Like an Outsider”, “Feeling Unvalued at Work”, and “Questioning Why Continuing to Stay”.

The category “Feeling Like an Outsider” was described by all five participants. In several ways, the participants described how they were made to feel like an outsider. Sometimes that feeling resulted in a benefit to the participant. For example Leslie said “...It doesn’t matter whether I like the new administration, or have a viewpoint about the administration. It’s really inconsequential, and I kind of like it that way”. Leslie found that as an outsider, there was a benefit because one did not have to be concerned with the politics present in the organization. Leslie’s position was that instructors were there to teach a course, and after that, they had to leave. A less positive example regarding how teaching a particular course started was provided by Kelly: “...They gave me a box [...] there was a perceived request, ‘Can we have some sort of textbook?’ So, I went and found one, a very, very basic [subject material] manual, and taught...” In this case, Kelly was brought in to teach and was provided with very little guidance. Kelly went on to say,

“Well, I mean, there was a period of time where I felt cut off. I have just come to accept it ... I accept I’m by myself. There was a time I used to struggle with that.” Lee stated it like this: “Coming from [many] years of being a part of an institution I was okay with it at first, but then you get the sense of being cast adrift. I don’t have any say, there’s no connection with the people other than when they need me...” At its worst, this category included sentiments such as feeling isolated from the organization or even feeling taken advantage of by the organization. A solution was provided by several participants to counter the feeling of isolation: by involving instructors in various ways they could be made to feel more “part of it”, meaning the organization. As Lindsay put it, “The way it comes across to me is that by including you and involving you in the development you feel more a part of it and feel more ownership and responsibility”. In this case, Lindsay was talking about being asked to help modify and adapt a course for a unique purpose, such as customizing a course for in-house delivery to a corporate client.

The category I labelled as “Feeling Unvalued At Work” was also part of this core theoretical concept, “Internal Motivations and Assessments”. When this category was experienced in a negative way, the participants talked about such experiences as feeling bullied, being dissatisfied with pay and/or union benefits (if any were being received), with the per diems provided when the instructors travelled for work, or feeling being taken advantage of in some way. On the positive side, the participants spoke about how they felt valued by their coordinators. The strength of the relationship between coordinators and participants countered the negative effects of other experiences.

The final category in this core theoretical concept was one that I labelled as “Questioning Why Continuing to Stay”. The participants spoke of a number of

experiences that contributed to this questioning. For example, Lee talked about feeling drained by the work of teaching. Teaching itself was not difficult, but rather, it was the nature of work conditions faced by the participant that contributed to this questioning. Other comments included comments about feeling bullied, feeling frustrated by the organizational system, experiencing resource limitations, perceiving lack of opportunity due to the organizational system, having a vague understanding of what was expected of an instructor in a particular job, and experiencing the work environment as a shaky or tenuous work environment. Regarding this last idea of a tenuous workplace, Lee said:

It's a very uncertain world when I do this, as opposed to before. It's always uncertain, you can't... There are always things that happen, but in this case just simply as a contract worker, I don't even know if that's the term they use for me. You really are an outsider.

Lee went on to say, "Well, nobody's going to take care of you. They don't see you as anything other than someone filling a need that they have. That sounds cold, and that's just the objective, I think..."

The sixth core theoretical concept I developed from the data was "Deriving Personal Benefit (Internal)". Three categories formed this core theoretical concept: "Deriving Personal Benefit From Working", "Receiving Enjoyment From Teaching", and "Want To Develop Self and Be Challenged By Work". This core theoretical concept was about how the participants obtained some internal and personal benefit from working contingently at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. All the participants described various benefits. For example, some talked about being able to bridge from a previous career to retirement and supplementing income through this part-time work. All participants talked about enjoying the activity of teaching, being able to influence and

help students, and they described feeling valued by being able to share their knowledge and experience with students. Practically, the benefits experienced by the participants also included a flexible work schedule, the ability to choose when and even if they wanted to work, and the ability to use the Saskatchewan Polytechnic facilities (classrooms, registration systems, equipment) to teach. Having facilities available meant that the participants could teach without having to purchase equipment or create various systems (registration, advertising).

All participants spoke about the enjoyment they received from teaching. The category “Receiving Enjoyment From Teaching” had some overlap with the category “Deriving Personal Benefit From Working” in that regard. The enjoyment was intrinsic and varied slightly from participant to participant. For example, Kelly said simply “Well, the primary motivation is I enjoy teaching. Every opportunity I can have to teach, I take up that opportunity. I try and create opportunities to teach as much as I can.” This joy was so strong that Kelly elaborated, “I’ll always be improved and I’m constantly working to improve it. This was okay, this is better. That worked better than last [time], but this needs work. To me that’s part of the fun. I enjoy that and you get measurable outcomes with the percentages of the students in terms of their GPA.” and “Just getting better at what I’m doing. As I said, I look at it... my reward is: Am I improving the grade point average in my courses?”. Robin described feeling fulfilled by teaching:

I think for me personally there is a self-fulfillment to doing something like that, to seeing that I can give people something that they felt they needed or felt they wanted and maybe change things around so that it helps them more. There’s that personal aspect to it that I could do that.

Robin described this feeling as a “personal high point” of teaching. Robin said it felt good to teach and to do a good job. The participants also discussed checking themselves to see if they were competent, in their own assessment. They did not want to risk doing a poor job, which would presumably result in feeling bad about the quality of teaching.

Lindsay put it like this:

One of the challenges when I think about the next [course] is how long has it been since I’ve done it. Yep, I would say it is. If I did this once a year I would be like, ‘Oh.’ I’d feel like I was starting over every time.

The final category that was part of the core theoretical concept “Deriving Personal Benefit (Internal)” was “Want to Develop Self and Be Challenged by Work”. In this category, Leslie described the need to stay abreast of changes in a specialized field in order to maintain professional accreditation. This aspect was, however, the exception. All participants spoke about a more intrinsic desire to continue to learn and to develop themselves, and that in some way that was achieved through working contingently at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. For example, Lee said:

I still felt the need to push forward in my life. Try something different. Oh, well, having been in one field all of my working life, all of a sudden veering into this, and realizing how other people operate. I’ve taken a wealth of information from that. I really appreciated the experiences I’ve had with the students I’ve had in these courses.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed how I analyzed the transcripts to produce 141 codes that represented actions and processes apparent in the transcripts. This initial coding process was followed by a focused coding process whereby categories or groupings were produced from the 141 codes. The result was that 27 categories were created. Out of the 27 categories, six core theoretical concepts were produced that

subsumed the categories. In the next chapter, I discuss the dynamic interactions between these six core theoretical concepts and their constituent categories. Although some of the findings in this study have been previously found in other studies, this study provided some new insights. The new insights are discussed with resulting implications for managers and organizations.

## CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings. I begin by making some general comments about the study and the data that were obtained. I then discuss the core theoretical concepts and the categories constituting these concepts. This discussion leads to a discussion of how the research questions posed in this study were answered by the findings, and to a discussion of how the findings of my study relate to the findings of previous studies about contingent work arrangements. Next, I use a systems dynamics lens to show how the 27 categories and the six core theoretical concepts interacted with one another. I conclude the chapter by discussing some of the implications and recommendations for managers, organizations, and for employees that became evident from the data. I have included comments from the participants in some instances to illustrate particular points about categories and core concepts.

Very early on in the participant solicitation process, I became aware of a sense of turmoil, fear, and conflict existing at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The refusal by one coordinator to forward my solicitation for participants contained references to fear and uncertainty, as well as an organization that was in a state of transformation. Although I calmly tried to allay this coordinator's fears, no participants were forthcoming from this coordinator. Based on my own experiences with change management and organization change processes, I guessed what some staff might be experiencing. Certainly, all the participants made references to re-organization, change, and uncertainty. It is therefore, I think, important to consider that the organizational context in which these participants worked was likely to have influenced what the participants chose to discuss. Trite as it

may sound, I think that to some extent in organizations, change is constant and in my experience, many organizations are changing, adapting and evolving on an ongoing basis. Therefore, the topics discussed by the participants did not surprise me all that much. For example, codes such as bullying, lack of clarity of roles, feeling isolated from an organization and feeling unvalued were ideas I have seen before in various organizations.

### **The Research Questions**

The findings of this study provided answers to the research questions as follows.

Question 1. How did the instructors in contingent work arrangements describe their professional experiences at work?

The six core theoretical concepts developed, and their constituent categories showed what the work experiences of these five participants were like. The six core concepts were: System Factors, Interaction With Others, Work Conditions, Internal Motivations & Assessments, Doing the Work, and Deriving Personal Benefit (Internal). I found that these concepts interacted with one another to affect the overall experiences of the participants. This interaction occurred through the underlying categories contained within each concept. More discussion about how the concepts interacted with each other is provided elsewhere in this chapter.

Question 2. What did the instructors perceive as the key benefits of being in a contingent employment arrangement?

Several key benefits became apparent from this study. All participants described obtaining some type of personal benefits from working contingently. This could be in the form of bridging from a previous career to full retirement, enabling them to stay up-to-

date in a particular field, or enabling them to continue to learn, develop themselves, and to be challenged personally. A key benefit was the enjoyment obtained when participants perceived that they were helping students to learn, and to cope better with some organizational matters (through the learning event), and thereby obtaining a sense of value from their instructional activities. The participants also spoke about the flexibility of the work arrangement and the variety provided by their contingent employment as being positive factors.

Question 3. What did the instructors view as the key challenges they face as contingent workers at Saskatchewan Polytechnic?

All participants discussed a sense of isolation from Saskatchewan Polytechnic. This feeling had a negative impact on the participants: they did not like this feeling. To varying extents, they had learned to deal with this sense of isolation, but one participant openly discussed questioning why that participant is continuing to work in this arrangement. The participants in this study said the pay they received was not enough to live on, and that other work would be required, or at least some other source of income. Four participants had had previous careers and therefore, had pension income. However, several participants knew other term employed instructors who were younger and were creating the equivalent of a full-time income through several part-time jobs. Several participants spoke about this arrangement as a negative aspect because they could not see how a young person could make a living to support a family through such multiple contingent work arrangements.

The issue of bullying was also raised by the participants. This could either take the form of individuals bullying people, or behavior by organizational units within Saskatchewan Polytechnic that was labelled as bullying behavior by participants.

Question 4. What suggestions might the instructors offer to improve their contingent work arrangements?

A key enabling effect occurred when the immediate supervisor, the coordinators, interacted with the participants. This interaction, when it occurred, was experienced in a very positive way, and when it did not occur the lack of interaction was experienced by the participants as an undesirable occurrence. Interaction with the coordinators not only facilitated the work of teaching, but it also made the participants feel more included and less isolated from the organization.

Several participants spoke about the importance of clearly defining what was expected from a course early on in the contracting and/or course creation phases. In one case, a lack of clarity about goals and desired outcomes resulted in scapegoating behavior toward an instructor.

### **Discussion of Findings In Relation to the Literature**

Previous studies of contingently employed people have resulted in a variety of findings that would now be reviewed in light of the findings of my study.

As discussed by De Cuyper et al. (2008), Work Stress theory suggests that contingent workers are negatively affected by such stressors as being considered peripheral to the workforce, which may result in those workers being less likely to receive training, experiencing decreased health and promotional opportunities, as well as having to put up with poor job characteristics. In my study, the category “Feeling

Isolated From Organization” was discussed at length by participants, which would appear to be similar to what De Cuyper et al. refer to as “being considered peripheral to the workforce”. However, the participants in my study did not talk about decreased health or training opportunities as was discussed by De Cuyper et al. Some participants in my study did talk about having decreased work opportunities as a result of being contingently employed, and about generally feeling frustrated by the organizational system. Feelings of isolation were also found by Kezar and Sam (2013) when they looked at contingently employed staff at colleges in the US.

De Cuyper et al. (2008) also discuss social comparison theory in relation to contingently employed workers. According to this theory workers engage in a comparison between what they are receiving (pay or some other benefit) in comparison with what their peers are receiving. A perceived imbalance may result in a sense of deprivation. In my study, there was only one possible time where anything like that sort of comparison could be said to be happening. Robin recounted resentfully that per diems were well below what either provincial or federal governments pay, and that was considered unfair. Robin also talked about how the pay had not changed for many years even though the cost of living had changed over that same period. Again, this was seen as unfair. The comparison conducted by this participant was not with other peers, but with what was known to be happening in other workplaces. It should however, be pointed out that the work situations of all five participants were such that there was no contact with any other peers. All five participants talked about working in isolation from any peers, and that their only contact was with the coordinator who hired them and who contacted them for work assignments. This lack of interaction with other instructors also

meant that it was not possible to examine these findings in light of relative deprivation theory, which was discussed by Feldman and Turnley (2004). The relative deprivation theory requires that a comparison with peers be also conducted.

There was however, some support for the behavioral engineering model of Gilbert (1978). This model holds that work environments can be examined regarding individual and environmental factors. Of the six factors included in this model “information”, “resources”, and motives were discussed by the participants. For example, projectors or computers (resources) that did not work were considered barriers by the participants. When the staff responsible for providing these resources did or did not provide them, the participants described having difficulty doing their work, or feeling frustrated. Motivation was discussed at length by participants, and it is what I called the “Deriving Personal Benefit (Internal)” core theoretical concept. For example, participants were highly motivated by their enjoyment of teaching, receiving positive feedback from students, desire to continue learning new things, and challenged by new experiences.

No organizational citizenship type behaviors (OCB) were mentioned by any of my study participants. Lindsay mentioned attending a Christmas party, not knowing anyone, and never attending such a function again. There was no extra participation of any kind by the participants in any activities that could be construed as OCBs. The participants in my study saw themselves simply as a resource the organization needed, and they satisfied that need. Thereafter, they left without any further contact until the next time the organization required their services. This finding was quite contrary to the findings in previous studies (Feather & Rauter, 2004; Lierich & O’Connor, 2009), which

found mixed occurrences of organizational citizenship behaviors. Perhaps the nature of the work arrangements of the participants in my study resulted in the absence of that behavior. Four participants provided highly specialized instruction and there did not appear to be any sense of competition for work. In fact, quite the opposite was evident because these four participants were aware that there was a lack of people who could provide the particular expertise that they provided.

Another difference between the findings of my study and previous research findings was that my study did not reveal that trust was an issue. Previous studies had found decreased trust between contract employees and their employers (Yang, 2012) and between contract employees and permanent employees (Ashford et al., 2007). It is possible that the lack of interaction between the participants in my study and their peers effectively precluded the occurrence of any trust issues from becoming an issue in the workplace where my study was conducted. None of the participants made any comments regarding any trust type issues in relation to their supervisors, who were also the program coordinators. On the contrary, they all reported very positive relationships with their respective coordinators. Yang (2012) had reported that the decreased trust was due to an increase of job insecurity among the standard workers. However, in my study, job insecurity was not an issue because there were no standard or permanent instructors in the program area from which my participants were drawn.

There was possible support for the idea posited by Kezar and Sam (2011) that non-tenure teaching staff (NTTF) should be examined from a professional development perspective rather than an economic and business perspective. With reference to the summary of professions provided by Anteby et al. (2016) outlined in Chapter Two, I

believe my study indicates the following. Based on the descriptions provided by the five participants, it would appear that they each do possess and provide a specialized knowledge. Anteby et al. also stated that professions included a degree of autonomy by members, authority over clients, and an amount of altruism. I believe that each of these conditions is demonstrated by each participant's interview. For example, each participant explicitly described focusing on helping their students be successful (altruism), and trying to find ways in which to achieve this in the courses they taught. Consequently, I believe the professional development perspective is an appropriate lens for this study.

The professional development perspective holds that NTTF are primarily motivated by self-development and improvement in the professional arena. In my study, all the participants spoke at length about the reward and pleasure they took from learning new things, from providing excellence in their work, and from continuing to be challenged in their lives. They talked about needing to remain current, continuing to develop their competence, and ways in which they accomplished these goals. Leslie and Kelly talked about maintaining formal certification in their respective fields through formal learning activities. However, they also discussed informal ways in which they continued to develop themselves. In fact, all five participants discussed a variety of informal ways in which they developed their capabilities to deliver their training, and they each discussed feeling pleasure at being able to do this and to connect this activity to improving their training delivery. For example, Robin and Lindsay talked about reflecting on courses to improve themselves. Robin also described a rare instance of co-teaching with another retired teacher (not a participant in my study) when they each reflected individually on how a course session had worked out, and then they discussed

their reflections with each other to understand how the course might be improved in the future. Kelly, on the other hand, described his efforts at improving his courses as follows. He talked about paying careful attention to what his students were saying about the course and his delivery, and taking active steps to use that feedback. He described being motivated to do this in order to achieve “measurable results” in his courses, which he obtained repeatedly. As a result of these efforts, Kelly thought the reward for him was hearing that students were actively seeking to register in classes that he taught because of his reputation of helping students be successful in his classes. These and other comments are discussed in the following paragraphs in relation to the categories and concepts developed in my study.

The concept “Deriving Personal Benefits (Internal)” was developed from the participants’ comments. It showed the importance of intrinsic motivators. For example, one of the categories included in this concept was one I called “Receiving Enjoyment From Teaching”. The participants reported engaging in various activities because they enjoyed teaching and seeing the results they could have on their students’ learning outcomes. Another category of this concept was one that I called “Want To Develop Self & Be Challenged By Work”. All the participants spoke sincerely and with conviction about how they wanted to continue learning and to do things that would develop themselves personally and professionally. I believe this is part of what Kezar and Sam (2011) called the professional development perspective. Although pay inequity was raised by Lee, it was not the most significant factor in her work life. Having said that, three participants did mention that they paid attention to pay because their personal circumstances were such that they needed a minimum amount of income.

Therefore, in conclusion, I would say that the data obtained from the five participants of my study support the professional development perspective more than they support the economic and business perspective.

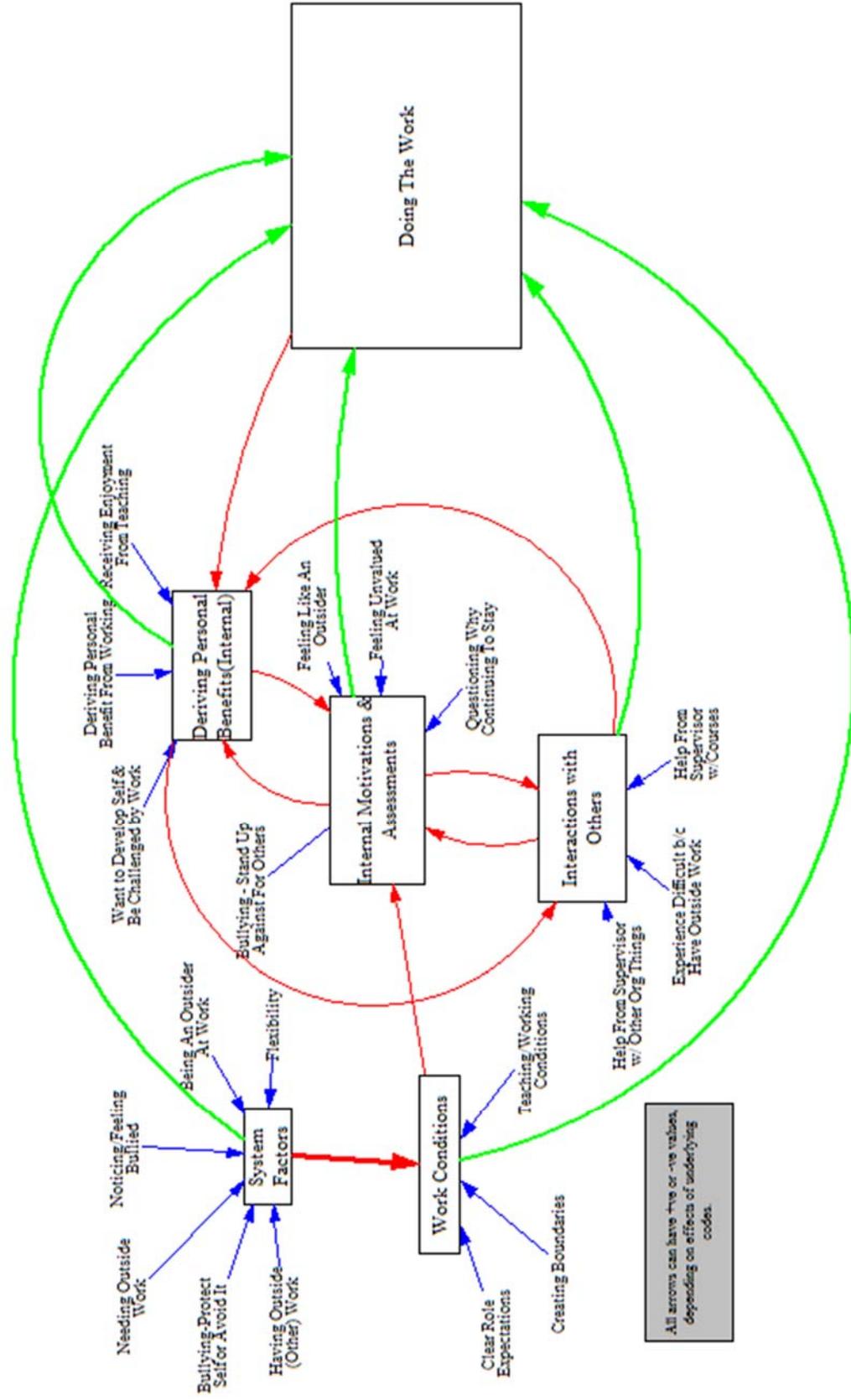
### **Interactions Among Core Theoretical Concepts**

In this study, I developed six core theoretical concepts that comprised 27 categories. I examined the 27 categories through the lens of system dynamics (Sterman, 2000) to examine how these categories appeared to interact with one another, based on the interview data I had obtained. According to Sterman, system dynamics is concerned with learning about and modeling complex systems and how they function in a non-linear fashion. Although grounded in physics and engineering, system dynamics also draws upon various social sciences when it is applied to human social systems such as organizations. In system dynamics, the components of complex systems are examined as to how they interact with one another through feedback loops dynamically and in non-linear fashion. According to Sterman, studying these non-linear causal relationships leads to the formation of mental maps that can result in an improved understanding and decision making in these complex systems. Bechtel Jayanti (2011) has called for the development of non-linear HRD models citing a number of problems that arise through the use of linear HRD models. These problems include a theory – practice gap, increasing organizational myopia during times of rapid change, and linear HRD models that fail to account for synergies, time, and human free will. Sterman points out that people are poor at dealing with even the simplest feedback systems such as exponential growth, underestimating the growth because they estimate the growth in a linear fashion rather than exponentially. Sterman indicates a foundational principle of system dynamics

is that “the structure of a system gives rise to its behavior” (p. 60), and yet, it is commonplace to blame individuals for their behavior. Attributing behavior to people results in management blaming and scapegoating people rather than focusing on how to achieve results by focusing on the design of a system. The system dynamics perspective is that anyone placed into a system will behave according to the system structure. Therefore, Sterman notes that understanding the system structure is crucial for understanding how to optimize behavior of people working in a system. For these reasons, I believe system dynamics is an appropriate lens to use to examine the data from my study.

I found that the categories had either positive or negative attributes in terms of how they interacted with other categories and concepts. This interaction could, therefore, either enhance or detract from the experience of being contingently employed at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. I developed the following understanding of how the six core theoretical concepts and their constituent categories interacted to affect the participants’ work experiences:

Figure 8 shows an ongoing internal assessment of: Interactions With Others, the Work Conditions, and Internal Motivations and Assessments, and Deriving Personal Benefit (Internal) when affected by System Factors affected how the participants went about Doing The Work. These interactions are shown in the figure on the next page.



**Figure 8.** A system dynamics view of the six core theoretical concepts and some of the categories showing how “Doing the Work” is influenced . (See Appendix “H” for a complete list of concepts and categories.)

In Figure 8, the clear square boxes represent the six theoretical core concepts. The underlying categories for the five concepts on the left of the diagram are indicated, with blue arrows showing which category influences which concept. Red arrows show which concept influences which other concept. The green arrows show that all five concepts influence the sixth concept, “Doing The Work”. All arrows shown in the diagram can have either a positive or a negative influence.

Figure 8 suggests that System Factors are key in determining how the participants do their work. System Factors have a direct effect on Work Conditions encountered by the participants. As a result, the three concepts, Deriving Personal Benefits (Internal), Internal Motivations and Assessments, and Interactions With Others interact with each other in positive and negative ways, ultimately influencing how the participants do their work.

### **Implications For Managers, Organizations, and Employees**

The findings of this study suggest a number of possible avenues for managers who supervise contingent staff. Although this study only used contingently employed staff from one program area at one campus of Saskatchewan Polytechnic, it is possible that the following findings may be applicable to other settings as well.

The study pointed out the importance of providing interaction between the contingently employed staff and the organization. A key point of interaction is the immediate supervisor; however, other points of contact are also important. All the participants in my study spoke about how well they interacted with their respective coordinators. This position in this institution appears to be key to the success of the work carried out by the participants. Where possible, the contingently employed staff should

be included in the activities of their program in some way in order to combat the feelings of isolation, which may be present or may develop in those staff. Even though they are by the nature of their employment temporary employees, these contingent workers still want to be part of an organization, and they want to feel valued. Interactions that the participants thought was helpful included: communications (verbal, email), being included in course development and initial consultations with clients about course development, contact about participants' availability to work in the context of what worked for their personal schedules, and discussions and feedback about how individual courses went.

Contingently employed staff are likely to experience feeling isolated from the organization in which they work. The study participants spoke about this as a negative experience. Therefore, managers should take active steps to mitigate or eliminate as much as possible such feelings of isolation.

Contingently employed workers are in a vulnerable position by the very nature of their employment arrangement. Managers should be aware that in some cases bullying and harassment type behavior might exist or be perceived by these contingently employed staff. Organizations should be aware of this, not just so that they can be seen to provide work experiences in a manner that dignifies human beings, but also because from a risk avoidance perspective, this is simply a smart business practice because preventing harassment in the workplace can avoid expensive court proceedings. Although many organizations have formal policy against harassment in the workplace, harassment is still a considerable issue. For example, a 2014 survey of public service employees in Canada found that about 19% reported being harassed by a co-worker or

supervisor (Public Service Employee Survey, 2014). Given the comments of my study participants, it would be prudent for managers and organizations in general to pay close attention to the mechanisms that exist to report, investigate, and deal with incidents of bullying and harassment.

The participants in this study spoke about obtaining some sort of personal benefit or enjoyment from the work they do. This feeling was a very strong motivator and sustained them through times when they faced some difficulty. Even if a manager was not in an education setting, it would still be valuable to discuss with the contingent employee what they like about their job. This way, the individual motivators can be discovered. According to the participants in my study, they derived a personal benefit from being challenged and from being able to learn and develop themselves. Money was not a primary motivating factor, although perceived unfairness in relation to pay and benefits was a source of discontent.

From the perspective of the contingent employees, the following implications may be drawn from this study. For people who enjoy continuing to learn and to develop themselves, contingent work appears to provide an excellent opportunity to learn and develop the self. Anyone who decides to enter into a contingent employment role must be aware of the possibility that the role may come with feelings of isolation and of being cut off from the organization. At its worse, this isolation may result in feeling undervalued by the organization for which one is working. Therefore, people entering into contingent employment arrangements should be prepared to deal with such feelings and the concomitant interpretations about the workplace, which may result. The five participants of this study had each achieved this to varying extents, although two participants

indicated they would be discontinuing this work in the near future because “they had had enough”.

In this academic setting, the professional development of participants appeared to be more important than any concerns about income. However, the matter of fairness of pay and benefits was still an issue for some participants. When combined with other comments made by the participants about how difficult they thought it would be for younger employees to work several part-time jobs, the issue of job quality becomes a concern. Job Quality was raised by the OECD (2014) as a concern because the low quality of jobs may contribute to wealth inequality. Therefore, people considering entering into contingent employment should be aware that they might be entering a set of circumstances that would be disadvantageous because of the risk of working in poor quality jobs, which may in turn relegate them to the lower end of the wealth inequality spectrum. As Marler and Milkovich (2000) point out, those temporary workers with lower levels of education are at a competitive disadvantage. Therefore, individuals considering working as contingent workers would benefit from developing their knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis in order to compete effectively. Effective competition increases the likelihood of higher pay that would compensate for the poorer quality of jobs overall.

### **Future Research Directions**

This study was limited by a number of participant characteristics. There were five participants. All the participants were older, what could politely be termed “mature”. Four of the employees had pension income from previous careers. The setting in which these participants worked was one particular department within a large institution,

located in Regina, Saskatchewan. The field of work, education, was singular. Therefore, a number of possibilities for future research occurred to me.

I think it would be interesting to conduct similar research with younger participants. Two of this study's participants spoke about the difficulties they saw among younger co-workers working contingently. What would happen, for example, when contingent workers do not have other sources of income to fall back on such as pensions or other incomes?

I also think it would be interesting to conduct this study in a non-academic setting. For example, the retail and service sectors would be interesting areas, as would be trades-based settings.

Finally, if future studies provide support for the concepts and their relationships indicated in figure #8, then it would be interesting to attempt to develop instruments to measure the magnitude and direction of each arrow. Such instruments would provide a way to assess and measure an organization in terms of how well it is supporting contingently employed staff to conduct their work.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, I have examined what five contingently employed instructors at Saskatchewan Polytechnic said about their work environment. I have used grounded theory methodology to obtain and analyze the interview data. Despite the obvious limitations of my study, I think some interesting insights have been obtained from this study. One of the chief benefits of this study is that by using grounded theory, the data have been analyzed without overt and intended reference to existing theories. Rather, by using the participants' own words, categories and concepts have been developed from

the data. The results obtained have also been related to previous findings by other researchers and some concordance, as noted above, was observed. Finally, the use of a system dynamics lens has made visible the dynamic interaction between the categories and core theoretical concepts developed from the data. If confirmed through subsequent research, then this type of modeling provides a way for managers, organizations and individuals to make sense of their contingent work environment by informing the fundamental business functions including planning, organizing, leading and decision making.

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## Appendix “A”

[*University of Regina*  
*Faculty of Education Letterhead*]

***Participant Consent Form***

**Project Title:** Contingent Employment at Saskatchewan Polytechnic: A Grounded Theory Study

**Researcher:** Tom Janisch, Graduate Student in the Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Phone: 306.570.6650, Email: janischt@uregina.ca

**Supervisor:** Dr. Abu Bockarie, Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Phone: 306.585.5601, Email: Abu.Bockarie@uregina.ca

**Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:**

- The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of instructors who are in contingent employment arrangements at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. The study will focus on developing an understanding of the ways the instructors perceive such contingent employment arrangements as influencing their ability to perform their work.
- The data obtained during this research will be used to complete the thesis toward a degree of Master of Human Resource Development.

**Procedures:**

- In this study each participant will be interviewed in private by the researcher. It is anticipated that the interview will take about 90 minutes, depending on what the participant says. The interview will be audio recorded. A transcript of the audio recording will be produced and the participant will be provided the opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy. It is anticipated the review of the transcript may take about 30 minutes. The location for the interviews will be at a mutually acceptable time and location decided by the participant and researcher.
- Several short quoted excerpts from the interview transcript will be used in the written thesis. Such quoted excerpts are intended to provide the reader with a richer understanding of what each participant’s experience with contingent employment has been, and will, therefore, be used to support the findings of the study. Permission will be sought from each participant to use any such quoted excerpts. In all cases efforts will be made to anonymize the identity of each participant in this research.
- Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

**Funded by:** This research is not funded

**Potential Risks:**

- There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

- Any digital recorded data or work product will be stored encrypted on a thumb drive and password protected. Only the researcher will have access to the information contained on this thumb drive.
- **The interviews will focus on the participants' perceptions about their contingent employment arrangements. Depending on what exactly is said during each interview, there may be some risk to you arising out of the statements made. This is because the participants are in contingent work arrangements.**

### **Potential Benefits:**

- It is anticipated that the study will be a useful contribution to the body of research about contingent work arrangements. Instructors working in contingent work arrangements and the organizations that utilize such work arrangements may find the results of this study useful, as well as people who are considering working in contingent arrangements at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Prospective employees would be able to understand the study participants' experiences when working in contingent arrangements at the institution.

### **Compensation:**

- No compensation of any kind is provide to participants in this research.

### **Confidentiality:**

- The researcher will conduct interviews with each participant individually and in private. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Only the researcher will know who has participated in interviews in the study. Each audio recording will be identified with a numeric identification to prevent the interview data from being directly attributed to each participant. In the body of the research each participant will be identified with a pseudonym and the real identity of each participant will only be known to the researcher.
- The audio recorded interviews, the transcripts of these interviews, and any work product derived from these interviews will be stored securely. Digital data and work products will be stored on a thumb drive in an encrypted state with password protection. Only the researcher will have access to the information contained on the thumb drive. All data and associated work products will be stored in the researcher's possession for five years. All data will be destroyed after the expiration of the required storage period. This destruction will be done by securely shredding paper materials, and digitally recorded data will be securely deleted.
- After completing the interviews, the researcher will use excerpts of the interviews as brief quoted portions in the body of the thesis. The purpose of such quoted excerpts would be to provide readers with a richer level of detail regarding the experiences related by the study participants, and, therefore, to support the findings of the study. However, the researcher will ask permission from the relevant participant who's interview excerpts would be used.
- The identity of research participants will not be stated in the thesis, and attempts will be made to anonymize data used in the thesis in such a way as to minimize the possibility of identifying which participant made which comments.

- **Although the researcher will strive to maintain the confidentiality of the study participants, such confidentiality may be limited due to the nature or size of the sample of participants which are selected, and by the way in which participants may be referred to the researcher by other participants.**

**Right to Withdraw:**

- Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- Should you wish to withdraw, you can do so by advising the researcher as soon as possible either verbally or in writing. If you withdraw any data (interview responses) you have provided will not be used in the research. Any such data will be destroyed.
- Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply until May 31, 2017. After this date the results will have been analyzed, written up and/or presented and it will not be possible to withdraw your data.

**Follow up:**

- A summary of the study's findings is available upon request from the researcher. To obtain results from the study, please contact the researcher by email at: [janischt@uregina.ca](mailto:janischt@uregina.ca)

**Questions or Concerns:**

- Contact the researcher using the information at the top of page 1;
- This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the UofR Research Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at (306-585-4775 or [research.ethics@uregina.ca](mailto:research.ethics@uregina.ca)). Out of town participants may call collect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Researcher's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## Appendix “B”

*[On U of R, Faculty of Education Letterhead]*

### Letter of Invitation To Participate in Research

[date]

To: [Name of Participant]

From: Tom Janisch (the “Researcher”), Graduate Student at the University of Regina

RE: Research Study – “Contingent Employment at Saskatchewan Polytechnic: A Grounded Theory Study”

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study noted above. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of contingently employed instructional staff in the Continuing Education Department of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Regina Campus. This study will be used to write a thesis in support of my completion of a degree of Master of Human Resource Development at the University of Regina.

What you can expect as a participant:

- Participants in the study will be interviewed individually and in private at a mutually agreed upon time and location.
- It is anticipated that the interview will last about 90 minutes, but this will depend on what participants have to say during their interviews.
- The interviews will be transcribed and participants will be asked to review the transcript of their interview for accuracy. It is estimated this review process will take about 30 minutes.
- The identities of participants will be kept confidential and efforts will be made to anonymize information provide by participants in the written thesis.
- No compensation of provided to participants for their participation in this study.
- Attached is a list of questions which will be used to guide the interview. The interview process will be open-ended and so this list of questions is not an exhaustive list.
- During the first meeting with the researcher a formal Consent to Participate form will be provided for review and signature by the participant.

This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board on March 21, 2017. The supervisor for this study is Dr. Abu Bockarie in the Faculty of Education. If you have any questions about this research he may be contacted by email at: [abu.bockarie@uregina.ca](mailto:abu.bockarie@uregina.ca) .

To arrange the interview by the researcher please contact Tom Janisch by email at: [janischt@uregina.ca](mailto:janischt@uregina.ca) .

Sincerely,

Tom Janisch.

## Appendix “C”

### Guiding Questions for Interviews

1. Demographic Information
  - Age
  - Years of teaching experience, and in what courses
  - Current courses taught
  - Courses taught before
2. Tell me something about how you came to be a part-time instructor at Sask Polytechnic. What were some of the considerations that went into your decision to work here?
3. How would you describe a typical day at work? What do you do?
4. Please describe the most important lessons you have learned as a part-time instructor. What are some of the high points you have experienced as an instructor at Sask Polytechnic?
5. What do you see as the key benefits as a part-time instructor at Sask Polytechnic? What are the things that make work interesting and enjoyable for you here?
6. Tell me something about the disadvantages you have experienced as a part-time instructor. How have you coped with those disadvantages?
7. Please describe the ways your views as a part-time instructor may have changed from the time you were first employed at Sask Polytechnic to now.
8. Sometimes working in a place can change people in small ways. Tell me about how working here has changed you personally over time? Tell me about any way in which your personal or family has been affected.
9. Based on your experience as a part-time instructor, what advice would you give to someone who is considering part-time instructional work at Sask Polytechnic?
10. What suggestions would you offer to the Sask Polytechnic Administration to make the workplace environment conducive and enjoyable for part-time instructors?
11. What advice would you give to instructors who are permanently employed to make the workplace environment conducive and enjoyable for part-time instructors?
12. Are there any other insights about part-time employment at Sask Polytechnic you would like to offer?

**Thank you very much for participating in this interview.**

## Appendix “D”

### Request For Research Participants

I am looking for people to participate in research. This research is to complete a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Resource Development at the University of Regina.

The purpose of this research is to examine the experiences of contingently employed instructors in the Continuing Education Department at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

If you are:

- An instructor in the Continuing Education Department at Saskatchewan Polytechnic (Regina Campus), and
- Contingently employed (Contingently employed means: employed in a term contract and have been working for at least one semester), and
- Interested in participating in a study about your experiences with contingent employment

Then please contact the researcher for more information about participating, or to become a participant.

Participation in the research is voluntary and NO compensation is being offered to participants.

Participants will be interviewed individually and in private. Interviews will last up to 90 minutes, depending on what the participants have to say.

To Participate, or To Find Out More Information:

- **Contact:** Tom Janisch (researcher) by email: [janischt@uregina.ca](mailto:janischt@uregina.ca)

(This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board on March 21, 2017. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at (306-585-4775 or [research.ethics@uregina.ca](mailto:research.ethics@uregina.ca)). )

**Appendix “E”**Transcript Release Form

Title of Study: Contingent Employment at Saskatchewan Polytechnic: A Grounded Theory Study

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Tom Janisch. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Tom Janisch to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

**Appendix “F”**

**Certificate of Ethics Approval**



***Research Ethics Board  
Certificate of Approval***

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR  
Tom Janisch

DEPARTMENT  
Education

REB#  
2017-042

SUPERVISOR:  
Dr. Abu Bockarie

TITLE  
Contingent Employment at Saskatchewan Polytechnic: A Grounded Theory Study

APPROVED ON: RENEWAL DATE: March 21, 2017  
March 21, 2018

APPROVAL OF:  
Application For Behavioural Research Ethics Review  
Letter of Invitation  
Consent Form  
Interview Questions  
Recruitment Poster  
Transcript Release Form

Full Board Meeting

Delegated Review

The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: <http://www.uregina.ca/research/for-faculty-staff/ethics-compliance/human/forms1/ethics-forms.html>.



Dr. Katherine Robinson  
Chair, Research Ethics Board

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Please send all correspondence to:

Research Office  
University of Regina  
Research and Innovation Centre 109  
Regina, SK S4S 0A2

Telephone: (306) 585-4775    Fax: (306) 585-4893    [research.ethics@uregina.ca](mailto:research.ethics@uregina.ca)

## Appendix “G”

### List of Codes

- 1 adapting learning materials
- 2 analyzing on the spot to adapt learning material
- 3 answer student questions
- 4 assisting students post classes
- 5 attempts to understand what happened
- 6 avoiding talk about making profit from courses
- 7 aware: evaluations determine if continues working
- 8 becoming aligned / familiar with materials
- 9 beginning trng delivery
- 10 Being an Outsider at work / not part of system
- 11 being involved in creating Crse = more ownership
- 12 being monitored at work
- 13 being the face of the company
- 14 building seniority as instructor
- 15 choosing not to complain (union)
- 16 Clarity about pay
- 17 cleanup physical materials in class
- 18 collect evaluations
- 19 compensate for org sys frust's:apply for new crse
- 20 concerned re recency/relevance- work experience
- 21 conduct course assessments
- 22 conduct selfassessment
- 23 Contracting
- 24 creating fulltime job via many part-time jobs
- 25 dealing with conflict of interest
- 26 dealing with corp problem children
- 27 dealing With Difficult Situation-due to Clients
- 28 demonstrating value
- 29 deriving benefit- freedom to leave at any time
- 30 deriving benefit- transition/bridge to retirement
- 31 deriving benefit-can continue to teach
- 32 deriving benefit-can stay up to date
- 33 deriving benefit - feel valued by share experience/knowledge
- 34 developing course with SP staff
- 35 developing self
- 36 dissatisfied with pay and not getting union benefit
- 37 documenting carefully
- 38 double dipping concern
- 39 encounters new materials
- 40 encourages prospective instructors
- 41 Enjoying learning many new things in other fields

- 42 Enjoying the flexibility of the work arrangement
- 43 Enjoying the variety of the work arrangement
- 44 establish boundaries
- 45 establishing a need at SP
- 46 experiencing a conflict- about a course
- 47 experiencing resource limitations
- 48 experiencing resource limitations - due to neglect
- 49 family concerns impact his business
- 50 feel rel'nships with coworkers/supervisor important
- 51 feeling blessed re facilities
- 52 feeling blessed re help received
- 53 feeling bullied
- 54 feeling drained by teaching
- 55 feeling free from bureaucracy (eg in Fed Gov)
- 56 feeling frustrated by org system
- 57 feeling frustrated by students' behavior
- 58 feeling isolated from org sys
- 59 Feeling more a part of "it"
- 60 feeling safe in SP environment
- 61 feeling taken advantage of by org sys
- 62 feeling unvalued by org system
- 63 feels amazed / blessed re benefits
- 64 feels pleased to get work
- 65 feels support by staff & likes struct'rd environ
- 66 freed-up from having to deal with SP systems
- 67 gaming the system
- 68 gets physical materials ready
- 69 getting a benefit re dealing with registration & students
- 70 getting a benefit re having promotion done
- 71 getting a benefit re using facility to teach
- 72 getting employer permission
- 73 Getting enjoyment/ reward from teaching
- 74 getting extra benefit concern
- 75 getting more work through good FB/referrals
- 76 getting paid to do something you like
- 77 getting pay and benefits
- 78 has clear understanding of what is expected re job
- 79 has vague understanding of what is expected re job
- 80 having an impact on students / workplaces
- 81 having choice to accept contract - check schedule
- 82 having choice whether or not to work at all
- 83 having prior relationship with staff
- 84 having relevant experience to get hired/do work
- 85 ID problem children
- 86 Impacting Students' lives and work

- 87 interacting with staff
- 88 Intervening against bullying / unfair treatment
- 89 knowing barriers / limitations of students
- 90 knowing where to look to apply for teaching posn
- 91 limited as to what is allowed to teach
- 92 making proposal
- 93 making suggestions to SP staff
- 94 manage time
- 95 match btwn need and ability
- 96 meeting with sponsors of external course
- 97 navigating boundaries
- 98 Need to Stay Current / Relevant with Course Req.
- 99 not interacting with staff or other instructors
- 100 Noticing Org Concern about break-even/Profit
- 101 offer internal value
- 102 onboarding
- 103 owns & runs his own business
- 104 perceiving lack of opportunity-due to org sys
- 105 perceiving lack of opportunity - due to union environment
- 106 prefers interactive course delivery
- 107 prefers to be prepared in advance
- 108 prepare invoices
- 109 preparing course
- 110 Promoting courses for high attendance
- 111 providing extra individual help
- 112 Pushing to Have Course
- 113 Questioning why is continuing to teach
- 114 receives help from perm staff
- 115 receives help from security staff
- 116 receiving consideration of personal needs by SP
- 117 receiving expressions of gratitude from students
- 118 receiving feedback
- 119 Relying on Coordinator for help with things
- 120 relying on workers to be principled
- 121 reviews materials
- 122 send Assessment to Company
- 123 separating work environments
- 124 shielded by manager from org concerns
- 125 SP communicate w clients
- 126 sponsorship
- 127 submit invoices
- 128 supporting his own business-advertising
- 129 teaching for success
- 130 teaching too much could become boring
- 131 type of training is imp & can limit acceptance

- 132 using tools to do work
- 133 wanting security and adequate pay
- 134 wanting to be paid / compensated for work done
- 135 wanting to have challenges in work / life
- 136 wants to do good job
- 137 wishing had been in small org earlier in career
- 138 working both in & outside
- 139 working by him/herself
- 140 working in a "Shaky" or tenuous work environment
- 141 working outside

## Appendix “H”

### List of Concepts and Their Categories

<b>CONCEPTS</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
System Factors	Being An Outsider At Work Bullying - Protect Self or Avoid It Flexibility Having Outside (Other) Work Needing Outside Work Noticing/Feeling Bullied
Interaction With Others (Staff/Clients)	Experience Difficulty b/c have Outside Work Help From Supervisor w Courses Help From Supervisor w Other Org Things
Work Conditions	Clear/ Unclear about role expectations Creating Boundaries Teaching/Working Conditions
Internal Motivations & Assessments	Bullying - Stand Up Against (for others) Feeling Like an Outsider Feeling Unvalued At Work Questioning Why Continuing to Stay
Doing The Work	Contracting Creating/Modifying Courses Delivering Courses Evaluating Courses Help Students Offer Value To Org Preparing Course Promoting Courses
Deriving Personal Benefit(internal)	Deriving Personal Benefit From Working Receiving Enjoyment from Teaching Want to Develop Self and be Challenged by Work