8-1-2018

Professor Who? A Phenomenological Exploration of Working Professionals Who Feel Called to Teach as Adjunct Faculty

Molly A. Smith

University of Denver

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd

Part of the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1489

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu,dig-commons@du.edu.
Professor Who? A Phenomenological Exploration of Working Professionals Who Feel
Called to Teach as Adjunct Faculty

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Molly A. Smith

August 2018

Advisor: Dr. Paul Michalec
Abstract

This phenomenological study explores the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their adjunct teaching experience in higher education. In addition to understanding more about how these individuals describe their call to teach, the study explores how adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher. This study also explores how adjunct faculty articulate the relationship between their identity, teaching intentions, and professional practice. Five essential themes emerged as characterizing the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct member in higher education, including (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment. Four auxiliary themes emerged as well. While these auxiliary themes aren’t essential to understanding the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, they provide additional insight regarding the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity, and the relationship between identity, teaching intentions, and professional practice. The four auxiliary themes include (1) consistency of identity and self-description across contexts, (2) belonging, (3) spirituality, and (4) impact of identity on teaching practice.

The findings associated with this study have the potential to impact a variety of stakeholders including adjunct faculty members themselves, university administrators,
human resource professionals, and fellow researchers. In addition to providing valuable insight regarding the connection between identity, teaching intentions, and professional practice, this study also has implications for the recruitment and retention of adjunct faculty members and for the creation of professional development programming that encourages adjunct faculty to conceptualize teaching as an extension of their identity and as a unique and authentic expression of self.
Acknowledgements

Reflecting on the process of writing this dissertation over the last 9 months, I am overwhelmed with appreciation for those who so wholeheartedly supported and encouraged me along my journey. I would first like to thank Dr. Paul Michalec for his willingness to step in as my advisor when he most certainly didn’t have to. I appreciate his mentorship and guidance more than I can say. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. P. Bruce Uhrmacher and Dr. Nicholas Cutforth for their support. And while I can’t include their actual names, I am grateful to my participants for their willingness to share the stories and experiences that made this work come alive in such a meaningful way. Thank you for the heart and enthusiasm you bring to your work and for allowing me a glimpse into your world.

I would also like to thank my family for all they have done to support and encourage me. My father, Dr. Gary Lawson, planted the seed many years ago that someday, I too would earn my doctorate. Thank you for being my inspiration and role model. Thank you also to my mother, Karen, for instilling in me a love of learning at such a young age. I recognize what a gift it was to have been raised by passionate educators who made me believe I was capable of accomplishing anything if I put my mind to it. I couldn’t have done any of this without my amazing husband, Matt. He has always believed in me, and I am tremendously grateful for his love, encouragement, willingness to listen, and unwavering support throughout this entire process. Finally, thank you to Baby Boy Smith who provided the impetus to finish this work before his grand entrance into the world.
For all those I did not mention by name, know how much I value you. I appreciate the many colleagues, co-workers, friends and family who supported me in achieving this goal and encouraged me along the way.
Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem Statement ................................................................. 1
  Purpose .......................................................................................................................... 5
  Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 5

Chapter 2: Literature Review ............................................................................................. 7
  The Concept of Identity ................................................................................................. 7
  Professional Identity ..................................................................................................... 11
    Social Identity Theory ................................................................................................ 11
    Identity Theory ........................................................................................................... 12
    Job involvement ......................................................................................................... 15
  Calling ............................................................................................................................ 16
  Professional Identity of Teachers .................................................................................. 19
    Personal and professional identity in teachers ......................................................... 19
    Teaching as a calling .................................................................................................... 21
    Identity informing teaching intentions and professional practice ......................... 23
  Adjunct Faculty ............................................................................................................ 28
    Growth of part-time faculty ....................................................................................... 29
    Regard for part-time faculty in higher education ................................................... 30

Chapter 3: Methods ........................................................................................................... 33
  Philosophical Assumptions .......................................................................................... 34
  Phenomenology ............................................................................................................ 35
    Phenomenology of practice ....................................................................................... 37
    Role and position of the researcher ......................................................................... 39
  Participants ................................................................................................................... 41
    Recruitment ................................................................................................................ 41
    Participant selection ................................................................................................... 42
  Data Collection ............................................................................................................. 43
    Interviews .................................................................................................................... 45
    Participant-created aesthetic products ..................................................................... 46
    Collection of participant-provided artifacts. ........................................................... 49
  Data Analysis ................................................................................................................ 50
    Reflecting on essential themes .................................................................................. 50
    Writing and rewriting ............................................................................................... 52
  Pilot Study ....................................................................................................................... 54

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings .................................................................................. 56
  Summary of Participants .............................................................................................. 61
References .................................................................................................................. 187

Appendices .................................................................................................................. 205
Appendix A: Recruitment Survey for Participant Selection ................................................. 205
Appendix B: Pilot Study Interview Protocol ...................................................................... 211
Appendix C: Interview Protocols .................................................................................. 214
Appendix D: Visual Catalogue of Materials Made Available to Participants for
Creation of Aesthetic Products .................................................................................. 225
Appendix E: Participant-Created Aesthetic Products ...................................................... 229
Appendix F: Participant-Created Identity Wheels .......................................................... 232
List of Figures

Chapter 2: Literature Review
  Figure 1: Holistic Concept of Identity ................................................................. 10
  Figure 2: Components of a holistic conception of identity in teachers and implications thereof ................................................................. 24
  Figure 3: The Instructional Arc ........................................................................... 26

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings
  Figure 4: Overlapping and interconnected nature of essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member ................................................................................................. 81
  Figure 5: Holistic Conception of Identity ............................................................... 87
  Figure 6: Bob’s Aesthetic Product, representing his desire for significant growth and transformation in his students ............................................................................................................ 92
  Figure 7: Meghan’s aesthetic arrangement representing transformation and growth of student perspectives and worldviews ........................................................................................................... 93
  Figure 8: Chloe’s Aesthetic Product, representing her commitment to providing a quality learning experience that results in excitement, joy, and “fireworks” for her students .................................................................................................................................................. 103
  Figure 9: Holistic Conception of Identity ............................................................... 107
  Figure 10: Meghan’s Identity Wheel highlighting the importance of being a Catholic ................................................................................................................................. 120
  Figure 11: Components of a holistic conception of identity in teachers and implications thereof ................................................................................................................................. 123
  Figure 12: Chloe’s Aesthetic Product, representing how her identity as a storyteller, a memory maker, and a creative translates into teaching practice ................................................................. 126
  Figure 13: Holistic Conception of Identity ............................................................... 142
  Figure 14: Components of a holistic conception of identity in teachers and implications thereof ................................................................................................................................. 145
  Figure 15: The Instructional Arc ........................................................................... 146

Chapter 5: Discussion
  Figure 16: Overlapping and interconnected nature of essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member ................................................................................................. 155
  Figure 17: Nuanced intensities of essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member ......................................................................................................................... 156
  Figure 18: Unique expressions of essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member ......................................................................................................................... 160
  Figure 19: The Instructional Arc ........................................................................... 181
Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem Statement

As the daughter of two educators and an eager student myself, I developed a strong interest in teaching and education at a young age. While the other children in our neighborhood cul-de-sac were playing with dolls and Star Wars characters, I was putting together lesson plans to teach Barbie, Ken and Luke Skywalker about everything from letters and numbers to butterflies and volcanoes. This innate desire to teach others was something that stuck with me throughout my K-12 years, and into college as well. I consistently sought out opportunities to tutor younger students and was willing to help struggling classmates understand course materials and concepts in a variety of different classes. I spent hours organizing study groups, working math and physics problems with others, and explaining how I made sense of a variety of different subjects and topics. Helping others in their pursuit of learning was something that came naturally to me. It was easy, fun, and immensely rewarding. People appreciated it and told me I had a “knack” for making things understandable. While I enjoyed helping others learn and certainly felt a call to teach, I didn’t necessarily feel called to pursue teaching as a formal career choice. In college, I majored in human communication with minors in business in leadership studies. Upon finishing my undergraduate course requirements, I completed my master’s degree in business administration.
After completing my graduate degree, I accepted a full-time job working for a national leadership program for the federal government. Shortly after accepting that position, I was offered my first adjunct teaching job. The course I was asked to teach was *Introduction to Leadership Studies*. It was perfect! Teaching as an adjunct faculty meant that I could continue to work in my full-time job, but could also teach on the side. I eagerly accepted the job. While I had been in informal teaching roles many times before, this position felt different. I was no longer the student in the class who understood the concepts and was willing to explain things to a struggling friend or classmate. I was no longer the after-school volunteer tutor. I was the instructor in a college classroom. What did that mean? Who was I supposed to be in front of my students? What did it mean to assume the role of “teacher” in this formal teaching environment when my normal job wasn’t related to teaching at all?

This experience prompted me to begin my own personal journey exploring the questions of what it means to be a teacher; especially what it meant to be an adjunct faculty member in a college teaching environment when teaching isn’t my primary job. While I have spent years attempting to answer these questions for myself, the question of what it means to be a teacher is not unique to me. For decades, scholars and practitioners alike have explored the question about what it means to be a teacher (Buskist, Benson, & Sikorski, 2005; Cohen & Brawer, 1972; Enyedy, Goldberg, & Welsh, 2006; Palmer, 2008). At a very basic level, it can be said that teachers are simply those “who are good at explaining curricular content” (Roehler & Duffy, 1986, p. 273). At a deeper level, some believe that teaching is a calling (Palmer, 2008) whereas others point to certain skills,
traits, motivations or dispositions that they believe characterize teachers (Helm, 2006; Smith, Hurst, & Skarbek, 2005).

While the question of what it means to be a teacher is important at all levels of our educational system, it is a particularly important question for adjunct faculty because they comprise a growing percentage of the teaching workforce at American colleges and universities. In 1975, 30% of college faculty taught part-time. By 2011, that number had grown to 51%, with an additional 19% of faculty members on non-tenure track. The trend continues today with nearly three-quarters of American professors serving as contingent faculty (Edmonds, 2015). Escalating costs, limited resources, and competition for students continues to fuel reliance on adjunct faculty as the changing landscape of higher education demands efficiency and drives institutions to seek new, creative ways of attracting students while managing costs associated with hiring and retaining faculty (Taylor, 2012; Webb, Wong, & Hubball, 2013). This increasingly competitive environment is driving cost-efficient staffing models that increase demand for professionals who are willing to teach in addition to pursuing other employment opportunities. Along with this increasing demand for adjunct faculty comes an increased interest and curiosity surrounding what it means to be a teacher in this space.

In addition to my personal experiences as an adjunct faculty and the increasing demand for contingent faculty in higher education, my interest in this topic also stems from my work as an Instructional Support Specialist in a professional and continuing education unit at a mid-size private university. Over the last six years, I have worked with hundreds of adjunct faculty members, helping them prepare for success in the college
teaching environment. Most of these adjunct faculty members are working professionals who were hired to teach industry-specific courses, both online and in the evenings. My job is to orient them to university policies and procedures, bring them up to speed on teaching best practice and adult learning theory, provide guidance on content delivery and classroom management strategies, and familiarize them with the technology required to successfully manage our campus-wide learning management system. I provide coaching and support throughout their teaching experience and help them strategize how to best translate their expertise into a meaningful learning experience for their students. Not unlike Howard Tuckman (1978) and Judith Gappa and David Leslie (1993), who developed taxonomies of adjunct faculty, over the years I have noticed different types of adjunct faculty. Some work as adjunct faculty at a variety of other institutions and already seem to “know the drill.” This university is just one more institution to add to their list. Same class, different students. Same content, different university. Repeat. Repeat. Others seem to act as though teaching is, above all else, an accolade to add to their list of professional accomplishments; it looks good on a resume and makes them more competitive in their current profession. Others seem somewhat indifferent. The university has a need, and their skills match the job description. It is a relationship based on function and need that results in a paycheck. Finally, there are those with “The Spark.” These people couldn’t be more excited to step into the role of adjunct faculty. They ooze enthusiasm. They say things like, “I think I have always been a teacher at heart. I just happened to pursue a career in public relations” and “It’s like teaching this class is completing a piece of who I was born to be. It’s just in my blood.” Adjunct faculty with
The Spark are different. They have a passion and eagerness that sets them apart from others. Teaching seems to fulfill something deep within them and satiate a hunger for significance and meaning. Teaching seems to extend beyond what they do. It is who they feel called to be. It is part of the fiber of their very being. It is part of their identity. Over time, as I encountered these individuals and interacted with them, I became increasingly interested in their experiences as adjunct faculty, especially those who chose a profession other than teaching as their primary employment.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the essence of what it means to be an adjunct faculty member who feels called to teach. The goal was to explore the lived experiences of working professionals who, in addition to maintaining other job responsibilities outside of academia, chose to respond to a perceived call to teach as adjunct faculty members. The study sought to understand what meaning these professionals ascribe to their experience of being an adjunct faculty member and how they describe their teaching intentions and professional practice.

**Research Questions**

The central research question for this qualitative study was “How do adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education?” Answering this question gets at the heart of what it means to be an adjunct faculty member and how adjunct faculty interpret and describe their experiences in this role.
In addition to the central research question stated above, the study also sought to answer four additional sub-questions. Additional sub-questions included the following:

- How do adjunct faculty members describe their call to teaching in the post-secondary environment?
- What contexts or situations have influenced the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member?
- How do adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher?
- What impact does identity have on adjunct faculty members’ teaching intentions and professional practice?
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In establishing the relevance of this study and positioning it in the context of existing research, it is helpful to provide foundational background on a variety of related topics including identity, professional identity, professional identity of teachers, and the concept of vocation or calling. It is also helpful to explore existing literature about the landscape of higher education and the role of adjunct faculty in it, especially as it relates to the ways in which adjunct faculty experiences differ from those of their full-time counterparts.

The Concept of Identity

Identity, one would think, is one concept everybody should be clear about. One’s own identity being that configuration of attributes and inheritance which make one who one really is and not somebody else, then the expectation would surely be that the components of identity would be as hard and definite as stone. (Identity, 2008, para 1)

Despite the straightforward definition of identity as a “configuration of attributes and inheritance which make one who one really is and not somebody else,” (Identity, 2008, para. 1) the concept of identity is deeply rich and complex, positioning it as one of the most researched topics in psychology (Rivera, Hohman, & Hohman, 2010). While the intrigue with identity dates to ancient Greece when philosophers first began asking the question, “Who am I?” the quest to understand identity has spanned millennia (Gioia, 1998; McKendree, 2010). In medieval times, an individual’s identity was largely dictated
by the family status into which he was born and remained relatively stable from
generation to generation. As such, the concept of identity had little relevance. It wasn’t
until much later, when society began to recognize that one could gain wealth and
recognition through effort and talent, that the notion of identity assumed meaning, and
eventually, the status of a scientific concept (Schaffer, 2006).

John Locke is largely credited with initiating the earliest systematic, modern
thought regarding the concept of identity (Allison, 1966; Nimbalkar, 2011; Personal
Identity, 1999). In 1694, Locke published a chapter on identity in the book *An Essay
Concerning Human Understanding*. In this chapter, Locke challenged the Cartesian
theory that the soul accounts for personal identity, instead suggesting that personal
identity is a matter of psychological continuity—the notion that identity is tied to
consciousness and memory (Nimbalkar, 2011; Theil, 2011). Despite the “difficulties and
absurdities” of Locke’s work which drew intense criticisms from his contemporaries, the
historical significance of his work is pronounced, and made an “important contribution to
the development of the philosophical concept of the self” (Allison, 1966, p. 41).

Since Locke’s exploration of identity in the 17th century, countless other scholars,
psychologists, and philosophers have proposed, explored, debated, and criticized theories
of identity. Identity has been explored from a variety of perspectives, including gender
(Thoits, 1986; Woodward, 2004), ethnicity and race (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999;
Phinney, 1990), social class (Woodward, 2004), family (Bagger & Gutek, 2008; Tannen,
Kendall, & Gordon, 2007), sexuality (Bregman, Malik, Page, Makynen, & Lindahl, 2013;
Cass, 1979), kinship (Sahlins, 2013), identity as related to the learning process (Wells,
2000), as situated in a particular geographic location (Proshansky, 1978), as related to hobbies and leisure activities (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002; Haggard & Williams, 1992; Stebbins, 1982), and as related to “clarity about the self” (Reis, Youniss, McIntosh, & Eisermann, 2007).

As human beings, we are multifaceted and wonderfully complex. Factors such as gender, culture, nationality, religion, geography, sexuality, social class, ethnicity, and race play a role in our overall conception of self. Focusing on simply just those facets, however, is shortsighted and incomplete. Two other important components should also be considered. First is professional identity. The ways in which people classify themselves as belonging to a particular profession, the behaviors they adopt as a result of this classification, and the level to which they feel connected to their job have important implications for one’s overall conception of self. The second component is calling, or one’s “strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action” (Calling, n.d.). Calling is that “thrilling thing you’re good at and really enjoy,” and that results when people speak of “knowing themselves, finding their own identity, [and] seeking their own fulfillment” (Novak, 1996, p. 39). Whether calling manifests in a professional context such as feeling called to teach or practice medicine, or in the personal arena such as feeling called to be a friend or a mother, calling gives voice to “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (Buechner, 1983, p. 119).

Intentionally designed with resemblance to the taijitu, or yin-yang symbol, the diagram below depicts a holistic conception of identity that suggests a dynamic interplay between principles that contain and give rise to one another, incorporating facets of both
personal identity and professional identity (Highleyman, 2009). Unlike the traditional taijitu, there is a third component positioned at the very center of this diagram. Here, calling is positioned as a unifying element at the nexus of identity representing the intersection of who you are and what you do.

Figure 1: Holistic Concept of Identity

While the personal facets of identity captured in the lower, shaded area of the diagram are important in one’s overall conception of identity, they are not the primary focus of this study. Instead, this study focuses on professional identity and more specifically, professional identity of adjunct faculty who feel called to teach. This is not to say that factors such as gender, culture, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, geography, or religious beliefs should be overlooked. However, an attempt to address all the components of identity in a single study would be like an artist trying to paint an entire forest on the same canvas as a single, highly detailed tree. For the sake of limiting the
study’s scope and preserving focus, our conversation now turns more specifically to the concepts of professional identity and calling.

**Professional Identity**

As suggested in the diagram above, self-categorization, identification and self-verification are facets of one’s professional identity. Since these terms come from Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory, it is appropriate to begin the conversation about professional identity by discussing these two theories. Both theories address the reflexive self that can perceive itself as an object and classify itself in relation to other categories or classifications (Stets & Burke, 2000). Given that professional identity relies, at least in part, on one’s ability to classify himself into a job or profession, these two theories provide helpful insight regarding how adjunct faculty classify themselves and identify with their role as a teacher.

**Social Identity Theory.**

Social Identity Theory, introduced in 1979 by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, outlines a process of self-categorization in which individuals compare themselves to other social groups in order to determine to which groups they are similar and to which groups they are different (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Tuner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). One’s identity is largely derived from the unique combination of social groups to which he or she belongs. Tajfel and Tuner (1979) caution against unduly restrictive definitions of social groups, reminding us that social groups need not depend on the frequency of interaction, role relationships, or interdependent goals of members. Social groups are simply “any set of human beings who either are,
recently have been, or anticipate being in some kind of interrelation” (Social groups, 2010). In their work on social exchange theory, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) support the notion of the workplace as a social group, conceptualizing it as a series of social exchanges that provide “among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behavior” (p. 874). Considering the workplace as a social group to which individuals feel they belong (or don’t belong) provides a helpful lens through which to consider how adjunct faculty make sense of their professional identity as teachers. Do adjunct faculty see themselves as part of the larger faculty? Do they feel like they belong? Given that adjunct faculty are “often treated as outcasts by the academic mainstream” (Dolan, 2011, p. 65), for the purposes of this study it is especially important to consider how their sense of belonging affects their overall conception of professional identity as a teacher.

**Identity Theory.**

The roots of Identity Theory are largely associated with American philosopher George Herbert Mead and the symbolic interaction perspective, which relies on the symbolic meaning that people impose on objects, events, and behaviors in social interactions (Brenner, Serpe, & Stryker, 2014). Although the concept of Identity Theory was first presented at the 1966 meeting of the American Sociological Association, it was first published by Sheldon Stryker in 1968 (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

In Identity Theory, the process of classification is called *identification* (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Unlike Social Identity Theory, where one categorizes himself in relation to groups, identification emerges from categorization of the self into a role and
the associated behaviors and requirements of that role (Burkey & Tully, 1977; Thoits, 1986). The process of seeing oneself in terms of the role and the meanings and norms associated with the role is called self-verification (Burke, 1991; McCall & Simmons, 1978). Identification and self-verification impact both identity and job performance, especially since employment roles often provide “relatively clear-cut rules about the performance of particular tasks” (Suls & Wheeler, 2012, p. 470). For example, behaviors associated with being a chef may include improving knife handling skills and refining other cooking techniques, experimenting with different flavor combinations, trying new recipes, tasting food from a variety of different cultures, collecting cookbooks, reading restaurant reviews, and seeking out conversations about food. Identity Theory suggests that an individual categorizing himself as a chef will adopt these behaviors as an expression of his identity as a chef. Adopting role-specific behaviors as an expression of identity occurs in a variety of other professions as well, including teaching, and is consistent with Penuel and Wertsch’s (1995) conceptualization of identity as “a form of action that is… concerned with persuading others (and oneself) about who one is and what one values” (p. 91).

The concept of identity salience is central to Identity Theory. Identity salience reflects that “persons have as many identities as distinct networks of relationships in which they occupy positions and play roles,” and that “identities within self are organized in a salience hierarchy” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). In other words, identity salience is “the probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). Critical to this perspective is the premise that some role-
identities are more a part of the self than others, and thus have varying impact on conceptions of self and the level of commitment to those roles. The salient (Stryker 1980) or prominent (McCall & Simmons, 1978) role identities are perceived as being positioned near the top of the hierarchy, whereas the role identities to which individuals are less committed are positioned lower on the hierarchy. As such, individuals can assign a subjective sense of import to different roles that make up their identity (Brenner, Serpe & Stryker, 2014). For example:

for one person the occupational role-identity may be the dominant aspect of the self, taking precedence over other role-identities and affecting general self-perceptions and actions. For another person, however, the family role-identity may be more important, and concerns of family will come before those of work. (Callero, 1985, p. 203)

In addition to providing insight regarding the relative importance of various roles that comprise an individual’s conception of self, existing research suggests that salience of particular identities can even predict behavior, as was the case in Stryker and Serpe’s (1982) work exploring the extent to which salience of religious identities predicts time spent in religious activities, and in Callero’s (1985) work exploring the extent to which salience of donor identities predicts the frequency of blood donation. Although exploring the relationship between identity salience and behavior extends beyond the scope of this study, it is important to acknowledge that identity salience impacts more than individual sense-making; it has the potential to manifest in outward expressions and behaviors that impact others as well.
Job involvement.

Job involvement, introduced by Lodahl and Kejner in 1965, is another facet of professional identity. Job involvement is an individual’s psychological identification or commitment to his/her job (Kanungo, 1982). It is “the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work, or the importance of work in his total self-image” (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965, p. 24). Lodahl and Kejner’s job involvement inventory, developed in 1965, has been widely used and includes questions like “I live, eat and breathe my job” to determine psychological commitment to one’s work. They believe psychological commitment to one’s work is important because it involves the “internalization of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the individual” (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965, p. 24). Employees who have high job involvement see themselves as connected to their work and derive meaning and significance from it. As Chughtai (2008) explains, individuals who have high job involvement consider their work to be a “very important part of their lives” (p. 169). High job involvement is also positively correlated with organizational citizenship behavior, suggesting that stronger psychological identification with one’s work leads to increased motivation (Hackman & Lawler, 1971) and ultimately, organizational effectiveness (Pfeffer, 1994). The degree to which teachers experience high job involvement provides insight regarding the psychological connection they feel to their work and how strongly they identify with their professional role as a teacher.
Calling

As previously suggested, calling can be regarded as a unifying element at the nexus of identity that represents the intersection of who you are and what you do and drives a “strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action” (Calling, n.d.). While some of the literature on calling is situated within the context of a particular profession (Cardador & Caza, 2012; Casbon, Shagoury, Smith, & Carpenter, 2005; Cullen, 2013; Fejes & Nicoll, 2010; Gregory, 1998; Guo et al., 2014; Hall & Chandler, 2004; Hansen, 1995; Hartnett & Kline, 2005; Jeffries, 1998; Novak, 1996; Palmer, 2000; Raatikainen, 1997), it is appropriate to begin with a general discussion of the concept in order to better understand its origins and relationship to identity.

The concept of calling has long been associated with religious belief, although it has recently moved away from this religious connotation and toward a broader secular view of work that is done out of a sense of inner direction (Hall & Chandler, 2004). The religious concept of calling existed as far back as 740 B.C. when the Hebrew prophet Isaiah was said to have been called to ministry. However, the Puritan concept of calling can best be understood in the context of the 16th century Protestant Reformation, when society was becoming more secularized and new value became associated with common work (Guinness, 2003). It was during this time that John Calvin is credited with the first systematic formulation of the doctrine, using the term “vocation” to refer to a call from God which constitutes “an indication of election, and to a particular calling or station in life” (Michaelsen, 1953, p. 316). The word vocation comes from the Latin word vocātiō, which means “a call or summons” (Vocation, n.d.), explaining why the terms vocation
and calling are sometimes used interchangeably. While Calvin believed the primary call for all Christians was to be in communion with Christ, he characterized Christians’ work as a response to a call from God as well (Michaelsen, 1953):

> any talents [the Christian] has in the performing of his work came not from himself but from God and should therefore be used for God’s enhancement and not his own. All should be done to the glory of God. Work, then, should be discharged in this spirit of glorification, of duty, and of service to Him through service to fellow men. (p. 317)

Nearly 500 years later, in his book *Let Your Life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation*, Parker Palmer (2000) echoes Calvin’s sentiments about calling and vocation being inspired by God. “Vocation does not come from a voice ‘out there’ calling me to be something I’m not,” Palmer wrote. “It comes from a voice ‘in here’ calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.” (p. 10)

Calling is not just about duty and obedience to God, however. While consistent with Calvin’s and Palmer’s descriptions of calling, American writer and theologian Frederick Buechner integrated the concepts of personal fulfillment and enjoyment in his writing on calling, proposing “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (Buechner, 1983, p. 119). The concept of fulfillment is mentioned in other religious and secular discussions of vocation, too, suggesting that calling integrates a component of both obedience and joy (Novak, 1996; Hartnett & Kline, 2005).

Despite the religious origins of vocation, discussions of vocation in the research literature have moved increasingly in a secular direction (Cullen, 2013; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Hansen, 2005; Novak, 1996; Weiss, Skelley, Hall, & Haughey, 2003). In a secular
context, vocation is often associated with strong identification with one’s work and occupation (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dobrow, 2004), denoting a “personal, inner calling to a particular sphere of work” (Cullen, 2013, p. 933). In his book about business as a calling, Michael Novak (1996) identifies four qualities of calling: (1) a calling is unique to each person; (2) a calling involves preconditions, such as talent, an openness to discovering one’s calling, and a love for the work involved; (3) a calling provides great energy, enjoyment, and vitality to one’s efforts; and (4) one’s calling is not easy to discover since it requires much reflection, dialogue with others, trial activities, and persistence. Weiss, Skelley, Hall, and Haughey (2003) suggest their own features of a calling, which include (1) an awareness that one has a calling, (2) an awareness that one’s work serves others, and (3) a process of introspection or discernment as a method of arriving at a career choice and to know the right path for oneself. Despite the subtle differences in how calling is formally defined, authors seem to agree that discerning one’s calling is not an easy or quick process. In his book Callings: The Purpose and Passion of Work, Dave Isay issues a warning to readers in search of their calling:

> this pursuit takes discipline, resilience, sacrifices, and tremendous hard work. At those moments where you’re unsure of where to go or what to do next, remember to trust your instincts always. Allow yourself to be led by what truly moves you. (Isay, 2016, p. 4)

Isay (2016) also suggests that finding what you’re meant to do with your life has a “lot to do with careful listening—to that quiet voice inside that speaks to who you really are” (p. 4), referencing the work of Palmer when he says, “Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you” (as cited in Isay, 2016, p. 4).
Secular conceptions of vocation and calling have given rise to increased interest in professional settings such as management (Cullen, 2013), nursing (Cardador & Caza, 2012; Jeffries, 1998; Raatikainen, 1997), social work (Guo et al., 2014), elderly care (Fejes & Nicoll, 2010), law (Gregory, 1998), and most importantly for the purposes of this study, teaching (Casbon, Shagoury, Smith, & Carpenter, 2005; Hall & Chandler, 2004; Hansen, 1995; Hartnett & Kline, 2005; Palmer, 2000).

**Professional Identity of Teachers**

While the aforementioned research on professional identity is applicable across a variety of occupations, an additional body of research exists that addresses the identity of teachers in particular. This literature addresses the connection between a teacher’s personal and professional identity, characterizes teaching as a calling, and speaks to the importance of efforts to help teachers understand the role of identity as part of informed teaching practice.

**Personal and professional identity in teachers.**

The notion that a teacher’s professional identity is connected to his or her individual identity is well supported in the literature. To understand a teacher’s professional identity, White (2009) says it is important to explore how both personal and professional experiences interact and relate to each other. Referencing work on multiculturalism, she argues that there are explicit connections between teachers’ personal identities and their professional identities. This vein of research supports the appropriateness of the diagram presented in *Figure 1* that resembles the *taijitu* and suggests a dynamic interplay between principles that contain and give rise to one another.
(Highleyman, 2009). Palmer, one of the leading thinkers on teacher spirituality and identity, agrees that there is a connection between a teacher’s individual identity and professional identity by explaining his belief that “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998, p. 1). Mockler (2011) further supports the connection between teacher professional identity and individual identity when she suggests that teachers’ professional practice is constituted from personal experience that includes teachers’ extracurricular activities, interests, hobbies and activities outside the profession (p. 520). Goodson (1991) also argues for an integrated approach to understanding teacher identity, suggesting that teaching is intensely personal and that we must understand who a teacher is and how he or she is situated within larger social contexts. Kim and Greene (2013) go so far as to say that there are “disempowering effects” of professional identity that are somehow estranged from personal identity (p. 177). Echoing concerns about lack of alignment between personal and professional identity, Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) explain “the distance between personal and professional selves can cause tentativeness…that undermines both [teachers’] trust in themselves and, therefore, students’ trust in them” (p. 272). Rogers and Raider-Roth (2006) go on to say,

> When there is a lack of continuity between a teacher’s professional life and personal self, such that a teacher refers to herself in opposing terms—‘me as a teacher and me as a person’—the apparent lack of continuity between her worlds can become worrisome and her ability to be present is compromised. (p. 272)

Collectively, this body of research reinforces that understanding teacher identity requires understanding that extends beyond job involvement and basic knowledge of the groups and roles into which teachers categorize themselves. It requires a far more
substantial inquiry and invites an examination of the essence of who teachers feel called to be in both their personal and professional lives.

**Teaching as a calling.**

Teaching is inherently a calling. Something we feel deep in our bones. It is a challenging, sometimes thankless, profession, yet it is one we feel compelled to embrace. (Lehman, 2016, p. 28)

Calling, as previously discussed, can be regarded as a unifying element at the nexus of identity that represents the intersection of who you *are* and what you *do*. While a generic sense of calling can be present across a variety of professions, this study was particularly interested in the call to teach.

The notion of calling has a long standing and well-established association with teaching (Mattingly, 1975), and a “surprisingly high percentage of teachers” report being called to teach in a strong sense (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011, p. 134). Yet, the call to teach has received “remarkably little research attention, and has been the object of but very few empirical studies” (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012, p. 7). Despite the lack of empirical research on the topic, a variety of authors have attempted to describe and characterize it. Palmer (1998) describes the call as coming from “the voice of the teacher within, the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self” (p. 29), and Buskist, Benson and Sikorski (2005) suggest the call to teach is marked by “strong positive emotions toward a particular subject matter, students, and the act of teaching itself” (p. 111). Other researchers use the words of teachers themselves to explain what it means to feel called to teach. They quote teachers who characterize their call using explanations such as “It just seemed natural to go into teaching,” and “It just feels right” (Serow, 1994,
They quote teachers who describe teaching as “richly rewarding in ways that other vocations are not” and explain that they “derive abundant rewards from the activities associated with it” (Buskist, Benson, & Sikorski, 2005, p. 112). Hartnett and Kline (2005) summarize these orientations as the “soulish” element that drives teachers to want to make a difference in the lives of others even though they know it does not have great financial outcomes. Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2012) suggest several additional noteworthy components of one’s call to teach; they believe hope and teacher commitment are connected to a sense of calling to teach. They also point to a strong service ethic that drives teachers to focus on the well-being of their students.

In his book *The Call to Teach*, Hansen (1995) suggests that hearing a call to teach first requires being “tuned into the vocational frequency” (p. 125). That is, individuals who approach teaching with a vocational orientation acknowledge teaching as having social value, providing enduring personal meaning, and as being more than simply a choice among the array of available jobs. Hansen (1995) goes on to suggest that teaching as a vocational endeavor can be reduced to several key points: (1) the person regards teaching as more than a job; (2) the person brings a sense of commitment and agency to the work that embodies the belief he or she has something to contribute to it; (3) teaching as a vocation goes hand in hand with questions, doubts, and uncertainties; (4) the person treats the job as more than a routine task; and (5) the person regards the work as larger than its discrete requirements. In discussing the defining characteristics of feeling called to teach, Hansen also positions “personal influence” as one of the recognizable convictions of faith that underscore many teachers’ daily efforts (p. 97).
Identity informing teaching intentions and professional practice.

While the diagram presented in Figure 1 honors the dynamic interplay between personal identity, professional identity and calling, it is generic and could be applied to a variety of jobs and industries. The diagram in Figure 2 includes an outer oval that incorporates two additional components that are particularly relevant for teachers: teaching intentions and professional practice. For, as Palmer (1998) reminds us, “Good teaching requires that we understand the inner sources of both the intent and the act [emphasis added]” (p. 7). In Figure 2, intent is represented by “Teaching Intentions” and action is represented by “Professional Practice.”
Figure 2: Components of a holistic conception of identity in teachers and implications thereof.

Teaching intentions and professional practice are included in the outer oval because they are closely tied to one’s sense of identity. Contemporary poet and teacher educator Anne McCrary Sullivan (2000) cited the need for teachers to “bring their whole organism to their tasks,” implying a connection between the inner life and outward practice of teachers, and Palmer (1998) helps make the connection between the inner circle and the outer oval explicit by explaining that good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; rather, it comes from the very identity and integrity of the teacher.

Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the
classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror, and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge—and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students. (Palmer, 2008, p. 312)

Consistent with Palmer’s emphasis on self-knowledge, Korthagen (2004) developed what he calls the core reflection approach. Core reflection is based on nurturing the relationship between a person’s inner qualities and her experiences in the outer world. It provides a means to integrate, rather than separate, the multiple dimensions of our wholeness as humans—our thoughts, our feelings, our desires and ideals—and to bring the full power and potential of that wholeness to bear upon the experience of teaching and learning. (Greene, Kim, & Korthagen, 2013, p. 4)

This intimacy with one’s inner thoughts and preferences is a critical part of effective teaching. As Fox (2013) suggests, teaching demands more than command of subject matter alone. Indeed, Intrator (2005) contends that our greatest challenge is to sustain, motivate and deepen a teacher’s understanding of true self to help allocate energy in ways that is most consistent with one’s deepest values.

The focus on a teacher’s inner life and reflections as both relate to teaching practice has gained traction in recent years as teacher professional development programs are increasingly being called to address the connection between identity and classroom practice, instead of focusing on activities that seek to “fix” teachers and hold them accountable for school problems (Casbon et al., 2005). Professional development programs like “Courage to Teach,” which was inspired by the work of Palmer, seek to
“renew and deepen an educator’s sense of purpose” and explore how their personal and professional beliefs affect their teaching practice (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006).

While the work of Palmer and others connects the inner circle to the outer oval in Figure 2, an examination of Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders’s (2016) Instructional Arc provides additional support for the inclusion of the two specific components included in the outer oval. Drawing from Elliot Eisner’s work on school ecology, Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders’s (2016) framework incorporates three distinct but related aspects of curriculum. The Instructional Arc, depicted in Figure 3, includes the intended curriculum (what the teacher plans/desires to happen), the operational curriculum (what actually happened) and the received curriculum (what the students learn or “take away” from the experience). Ultimately, the Instructional Arc describes the relationship between the intended and actualized curriculum.

[Diagram of the Instructional Arc]

Figure 3: The Instructional Arc
Reprinted from Using Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship for Qualitative Research (chapter 3, section 4, subsection 2, paragraph 2) by P.B. Uhrmacher, C. Moroye, and D. Flinders [Kindle version retrieved from Amazon.com]. Reprinted with permission.
Eisner (2002) defines intended curriculum as “The course of study; it is that which is planned” (p. 32). It makes sense to include teaching intentions in the outer oval in Figure 2 because teaching intentions are the origin of one’s teaching endeavor, representing what teachers plan and desire to happen. Also worthy of inquiry is the second component of the Instructional Arc: the operational curriculum. Eisner (2002) defines the operational curriculum as “the unique set of events that transpire within a classroom,” including what “occurs between teachers and students and between students and students” (p. 32). In the Instructional Arc, the intended curriculum represents the starting point and inspiration from which instructors select their teaching practices and engage in the actual process of teaching, which is then represented as the operational curriculum. This relationship between intention (intended curriculum) and teaching practice (operational curriculum) is consistent with what Bennett, Wood and Rogers (2007) explain is common practice for teachers: to integrate their ideologies with their practice and select teaching methods to achieve their goals.

Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2016) include a third component in their Instructional Arc: the received curriculum. The received curriculum is what students learn or take away from the experience. In their conversation about research design, however, Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders acknowledge that attending to all aspects of the arc may be too broad for certain studies and discourage researchers from jumping right to results (chapter 3, section 4, subsection 2, paragraph 2). It is for this reason that terms related to performance and teaching effectiveness have been excluded from Figure
2, as those terms imply a stronger emphasis on outcomes and results than is necessary or appropriate for this study.

In summary, Figure 2 honors the dynamic interplay among the concepts of personal identity, professional identity and calling, and acknowledges the impact that one’s inner self has on both teaching intentions and professional practice.

**Adjunct Faculty**

Since the purpose of this study is to explore the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their adjunct teaching experience in higher education, it is helpful to turn now to a brief exploration of existing literature on adjunct faculty and how they are situated in the context of higher education.

Adjunct faculty can best be described as contingent workers who have no expectation of long-term or continuous employment (Wyatt-Nichol & Wyatt-Nichol, 2011). Although some authors differentiate between part-time faculty, adjunct faculty and contingent faculty, the terms are often used interchangeably in the literature to refer to part-time faculty who are not eligible for tenure (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011).

Levin and Hernandez (2014) suggest there are four primary themes in the scholarly discussion regarding part-time faculty. These themes include (1) the growth of part-time faculty, including the merits of this population; (2) descriptive information about their characteristics, employment, and work; (3) the deleterious effects of large percentages of part-time faculty in colleges and universities; and (4) categories and types of teachers within the part-time population. While the literature addressing each of the themes provides valuable insight regarding adjunct faculty in higher education, the
growth of part-time faculty and a brief discussion of how adjunct faculty are regarded in the context of higher education environments are particularly relevant.

**Growth of part-time faculty.**

The significant growth of part-time faculty in American colleges and universities over the last three decades can be attributed to a number of factors including shifting enrollments, changing student populations, economic pressures, and fiscal constraints (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011; Edmonds, 2015; Schell & Stock, 2001; Taylor, 2012). In the 1960’s and early 1970’s, various policies and programs focused on providing access to underserved populations, significantly increasing the number of students enrolled in American colleges and universities. While demographers predicted a decline of student enrollments in the 1970’s and early 1980’s, the trend didn’t materialize as expected, resulting in the need to address what had initially been regarded as a temporary labor need with a longer-term perspective regarding academic staffing (Schell & Stock, 2001). Staffing colleges and universities with adjunct faculty emerged as a cost-efficient way to address labor needs in higher education, a trend which continues today.

From a purely financial perspective, adjunct faculty are attractive because “part-time faculty simply cost less than full-time faculty” (Gordon, 2003, p. 3). The cost savings realized by institutions is in part due to lower salaries for part-time faculty, but also because adjunct faculty are often ineligible for benefits, which can be another significant cost source (Gordon, 2003). Escalating costs, limited resources, and competition for students demands efficiency and drives institutions to seek new, creative ways of attracting students while managing costs associated with hiring and retaining
faculty (Taylor, 2012). Indeed, in a time of constrained resources and shifting enrollment patterns, “many education institutions have found the attraction of contingent faculty appointments to be almost irresistible” (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011, p. 1486). Given that statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics project that undergraduate enrollment will increase 14 percent from 17.3 million to 19.8 million students between 2014 and 2025 (Kena et al., 2016), the reliance on adjunct faculty will likely continue to grow (Webb et al., 2013). This anticipated growth in adjunct faculty underscores the importance of seeking to better understand this population and the experiences they have as educators, which this proposed study attempts to do.

**Regard for part-time faculty in higher education.**

As a group, adjunct faculty have been described as contingent workers who have no expectation of long-term or continuous employment (Wyatt-Nichol & Wyatt-Nichol, 2011). Many adjunct faculty are employed in other jobs, often have family responsibilities, and teach at irregular hours and locations (Burnstad, 2007). Resisting the notion that adjunct faculty are a homogenous cohort, Gappa and Leslie (1993) formulated a typology of part-time instructors based on their lifestyles and motivations to teach. The four typologies include (1) specialists, experts or professionals, who are employed full-time outside their teaching; (2) freelancers, who are employed in multiple part-time jobs including their teaching assignment; (3) career enders, who are concluding their work lives yet desire to maintain a connection to their content expertise; and (4) aspiring academics, who typically have completed, or about to complete, graduate programs with the intention to pursue academic positions.
Regardless of the category into which adjunct faculty are classified, they are often hired to bring industry expertise, professional know-how, and workplace experience to the classroom (Wallin, 2004). Regarding adjunct faculty with respect and as experts in their field is consistent with the original model of adjunct teaching, in which adjunct faculty enjoyed extremely high status. They were regarded as expert visiting professors, so valued for their specialized knowledge that they had to be shared among institutions. They were seen as “prestigious outsiders who lent status and reputation to the institution” (Wallin, 2004, p. 375). More recently, however, the reputation of adjunct faculty has significantly deteriorated. Despite the specialized knowledge and expertise they bring to the classroom, part-time faculty are treated largely as the second-class citizens of academia (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). They have been described as “gypsy scholars,” “highway fliers,” “road scholars,” “academic migrant workers,” and “homeless intellectuals” (Ludlow, 1998, p. 52). Citing larger classes, lower pay and less preparation time for adjuncts when compared to their full-time counterparts, Unger (1995) has gone so far as to characterize the difference between full-time faculty and adjunct faculty as “academic apartheid,” pointing to the differential treatment of adjunct faculty as “unethical exploitation.” The view of adjuncts as valuable assets and as second-class citizens co-exist in the landscape of higher education and have the potential to influence how adjunct faculty perceive their role and value in the teaching environment. Since this study is concerned with lived experiences of adjunct faculty members and how they see themselves and feeling called to teach, it is important to acknowledge these divergent perspectives and the affects they have on conceptions of teacher identity.
In summary, this literature review has addressed a variety of topics related to this study including identity, professional identity, vocation and calling, professional identity of teachers, and what has been termed “the call to teach.” In Figure 2, I presented a conceptual framework that honors the dynamic interplay between personal identity, professional identity and calling, and incorporates two additional components: teaching intentions and teaching practice. Additionally, since the study seeks to explore how adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experiences in higher education, the final section of the literature review briefly addressed exiting research on adjunct faculty and how they are situated in the context of higher education.
Chapter 3: Methods

This was a qualitative, phenomenological study of a group of adjunct faculty members who characterize themselves as feeling called to teach. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this research because my research goals are consistent with the naturalistic approach that qualitative research uses to seek to understand phenomena in context-specific settings (Golafshani, 2003).

The primary question asked was “How do adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education?” This question gets at the essence and lived experience of what it means to be an adjunct faculty member called to teach and how adjunct faculty interpret and describe their experiences in this role. Additional research questions included:

- How do adjunct faculty members describe their call to teaching in the post-secondary environment?
- What contexts or situations have influenced the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member?
- How do adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher?
- What impact does identity have on adjunct faculty member’s teaching intentions and professional practice?
In terms of data analysis, as Creswell (2013) suggests, I followed a systematic procedure that moves from narrow units of analysis, on to broader units and detailed descriptions summarizing “what” the individuals have experienced and “how” they have experienced it. As such, the analysis incorporates components of both description and interpretation, which is consistent with van Manen’s (1997) perspective that all description is ultimately an interpretation of what has been described.

**Philosophical Assumptions**

Before discussing the details of data collection and analysis, it is important to examine the philosophical assumptions that informed and guided the research. Philosophical assumptions, or paradigms, consist of a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17), shape how the researcher formulates the problem and research questions, and inform how he or she seeks to answer those questions. These philosophical assumptions also address questions regarding the kind of knowledge that the research will attain and what characteristics that knowledge will have (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998).

This social constructivism interpretive framework informed my posture as a researcher while conducting this study. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), a constructivist study can be characterized as follows:

- The researcher-respondent relationship is subjective, interactive, and interdependent
- Reality is multiple, complex, and not easily quantifiable
• The values of the researcher, respondents, research site, and underlying theory undergird all aspects of the research

• The research product is context specific (p. 83)

The characteristics of constructivist studies outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1989) are consistent with ontological and epistemological beliefs that other researchers have articulated as being associated with social constructivism. From an ontological perspective, Creswell (2013) describes social constructivism as setting forth the belief that “multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others” (p. 36). Gruba and Lynch (1997) describe constructivism as a philosophical approach where “knowledge develops through social negotiation and reflection upon individual practice” (para. 7). From an epistemological perspective, Creswell (2013) asserts that in social constructivism, “reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences” (p. 36). I embraced these perspectives throughout the study as I conducted interviews, asked probing questions, and clarified perceptions of meaning and significance related to participants’ stories and examples. The constructivist epistemology equipped me to approach the study with an open-minded approach to discovery, and acknowledged my role as a co-creator of knowledge alongside my participants.

**Phenomenology**

I selected phenomenology as a research methodology for this study. As a precursor to explaining phenomenological study and justifying it as a research method, it
is important to recognize that phenomenology is both a disciplinary field and a movement in philosophy. Phenomenology as a philosophical tradition addresses the characteristics of sensory qualities that give meaning and significance to objects, events, tools, the flow of time, the self, and others as they arise and are experienced (Smith, 2003). It “studies the structure of various types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity” (Smith, 2003, para. 6). Phenomenological study, on the other hand, studies structures of conscious experience as experienced from the first-person point of view. It “describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). As a human science, phenomenology begins with real-life situations as opposed to empirical data, asks the question “what is the essence of this person’s experience?” and seeks to make meaning of the lived experiences in one’s world. It provides a form of knowledge through experience and language and is not intended to generate theories or models (Bailey, 1997; Morse & Field, 1995). Phenomenological study requires an emphasis on a phenomenon to be explored, phrased in a single concept or idea. It also requires exploration of this phenomenon with a group of individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon. Ultimately, the goal is to “transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence” (van Manen, 1990, p. 36).

Because this study sought to explore how adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education, phenomenological study was an appropriate approach. I targeted a well-defined phenomenon (feeling called
to teach in a college environment) and explored it with a group of individuals who have all experienced it. Consistent with Creswell’s (2013) suggestion, I focused on the “lived experiences of individuals and how they have both subjective experiences of the phenomenon and objective experiences of something in common with other people” (p. 78). A phenomenological approach is also consistent with the social constructivism interpretive framework and the philosophical beliefs associated with it.

Phenomenology of practice.

Max van Manen’s phenomenology of practice was particularly appropriate for this research because it focuses on the “practices of professional practitioners as well as the quotidian practices of everyday life” (van Manen, 2014, p. 15). More specifically, phenomenology of practice is meant to refer to practice that “reflects on and in practice, and prepares for practice” (van Manen, 2014, p. 15).

Phenomenology of practice not only wants to be sensitive to the concerns of professional practices in professional fields, but also to the personal and social practices of everyday living. In this way phenomenology of practice distinguishes itself from the more purely philosophical phenomenologies that deal with the theoretical and technical philosophical issues. As well, phenomenology of practice is sensitive to the realization that life as we live and experience it is not only rational and logical, and this in part transparent to reflection – it is also subtle, enigmatic, contradictory, mysterious, inexhaustible, and saturated with existential and transcendent meaning that can only be accessed through poetic, aesthetic, and ethical means and languages. (van Manen, 2014, p. 213).

Van Manen (2014) acknowledges there is no single way to conduct phenomenology of practice. Instead, he suggests that a variety of phenomenologies can serve as meaning-giving methods for doing inquiry that helps researchers avoid getting “trapped in dogma and over-simplifying schemas, schedules, and interpretations of what is supposed to
count as ‘true’ phenomenological inquiry” (van Manen, 2014, 15-16). Ultimately, he suggests that a finished phenomenological text is successful when “it lets us see that which shines through, that which tends to hide itself” (van Manen, 1990, p.130), regardless of how we get there.

Empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology is one common type of phenomenology that can be incorporated in phenomenology of practice. Empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology is primarily associated with the work of psychologist Clark Moustakas (1994) and calls for a systematic approach to data analysis. It sets forth a series of guidelines for crafting textual and structural descriptions and calls for researchers to bracket out their own personal experiences to the extent possible in order to approach the phenomenon with a fresh perspective.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is another type of phenomenology that can be incorporated in phenomenology of practice. Hermeneutic phenomenology is primarily associated with van Manen and focuses less on prescribed processes and more on a “dynamic interplay among six research activities” (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). These research activities include (1) turning to the nature of lived experience; (2) investigating experience as we live it; (3) reflecting on essential themes; (4) the art of writing and re-writing; (5) maintaining a strong and oriented relation to lived experience; and (6) balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (van Manen, 1990, p. 30-34).

While some data analysis steps suggested by Moustakas (1994) for empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology provide helpful guidance once data has
been collected, the activities van Manen (1990) outlines in hermeneutic phenomenology are better aligned with phenomenology of practice. Hermeneutic phenomenology was the better choice for this study because of its flexibility and focus on phenomenology not only as description, but also an interpretive process where the researcher is an involved participant in the meaning-making process.

**Role and position of the researcher.**

Creswell (2013) emphasizes how important it is for the researcher to decide how and in what ways his or her personal understandings and experiences will impact the research. *Bracketing* is one concept related to defining the researcher’s role in phenomenological study and is most commonly associated with empirical or transcendental phenomenology. The German mathematician, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), is credited with developing bracketing, which can be defined as the process in which investigators “set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination” (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). Husserl proposed that one needed to bracket out the outer world as well as individual biases in order to “successfully achieve contact with essences,” explaining the process as “suspension one’s judgement or bracketing particular beliefs about the phenomenon in order to see it clearly” (Laverty, 2003, p. 23).

In contrast, hermeneutical phenomenology invites the researcher to be an active participant in the sense-making process. In hermeneutical phenomenology, the biases and assumptions of the researcher are not bracketed or set aside, but rather are embedded and essential to interpretive process. The researcher is called, on an ongoing basis, to give considerable thought to their own experience and to
explicitly claim the ways in which their position or experience relates to the issues being researched. (Laverty, 2003, p. 28).

As previously mentioned, one of the compelling reasons for selecting hermeneutic phenomenology is its flexibility and focus on phenomenology not only as description, but also as an interpretive process where the researcher is an involved participant in the meaning-making process. Being an involved participant in the meaning-making process throughout this study was appropriate given my personal experiences as an adjunct faculty member and my professional role as an Instructional Support Specialist, in which I have helped hundreds of adjunct faculty members over the last six years prepare for success in the college teaching environment. A combination of my own teaching experiences and my work with other adjunct faculty drew me to this research in the first place and continues to motivate me to explore the meaning that those who feel called to teach make from their adjunct teaching experiences in higher education. Being able to integrate my own experiences, assumptions, and perspectives was a critically important part of my approach to the study and my ability to make sense of the data during data analysis. Not only would it have been exceedingly difficult to bracket out my own experiences, it would have required me to ignore the very experiences that inspired my interest in conducting this study. Hermeneutic phenomenology is also consistent with the epistemological beliefs associated with the social constructivist interpretive framework to which I subscribe, where “reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched” (Creswell, 2013, p. 36).
Participants

I selected five participants for this study. Each of these participants self-identified as feeling called to teach, has taught as an on-campus adjunct faculty member for at least two terms, and has some other form of employment outside of teaching. I recruited participants from the pool of approximately 300 adjunct faculty teaching in the college of continuing and professional education at a mid-sized private university. As an Instructional Support Specialist at this university, I work with many of these faculty on a regular basis and have established rapport with many of them over a six-year working relationship. It is important to note that while I do regularly work with many of these faculty, I do not supervise them, nor do I have any evaluative power over their teaching.

Recruitment.

Upon approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, I contacted academic directors for each of the 11 programs in the college of continuing and professional education to request permission to contact their faculty for the purposes of recruiting participants for my study. After engaging in a combination of in-person conversations and email exchanges with each Academic Director, I received permission to contact faculty and was provided with active faculty email lists for all 11 academic programs. I eliminated duplicate emails for faculty who taught in more than one academic program, and in August of 2017 I emailed 399 active faculty to explain the purpose of my study and invited them to complete a voluntary recruitment survey to determine if they were eligible to participate in my full study (See Appendix A for a copy of the online survey, created using the Qualtrics survey tool). In addition to several basic
screening questions about teaching experience and employment status, the recruitment survey included questions designed to address a variety of beliefs and attitudes that Hansen (1995) believes constitute the call to teach. The survey also included several questions inspired by the work of Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2012) that address teachers’ sense of commitment and hope (See Appendix A for details regarding the rationale for each recruitment survey question).

A total of 73 adjunct faculty completed the recruitment survey, which represents approximately 18% of faculty I contacted. I was pleased with this response, especially given that recruitment took place at the beginning of the academic year when faculty are transitioning back to campus after a summer break and are busy preparing for (and starting to teach) their fall term courses.

**Participant selection.**

Upon initial review of the recruitment survey results, I was quickly able to eliminate 33 respondents, which narrowed the pool down to 40 potential participants. I eliminated 13 people who had taught fewer than two terms because I felt that faculty with more experience in the classroom would better be able to answer my questions about teaching intentions and teaching practice. I eliminated 11 people who didn’t have jobs outside of teaching because the study was designed specifically to investigate the lived experiences of working professional who have become adjunct faculty members in addition to maintaining other job responsibilities outside of academia. I eliminated 5 people who scored particularly low on the recruitment survey question “I feel called to teach” since having participants who felt called to teach was also an important part of my
study design. I also eliminated several colleagues with whom I already had close working and/or reporting relationships.

The next step in participation selection was to conduct a second-round review of potential study participants. I created a rating system to assist in this process where I assigned a +1 or a -1 to potential study participants each time they met a certain criterion. They received +1 if they were employed full time outside of the university, a +1 if they had more than five terms of teaching experience, and a +1 if they scored in the top 25% of respondents in terms of how strongly they felt called to teach. I assigned a -1 to potential study participants who scored in the bottom 25% of respondents in terms of how strongly they felt called to teach.

Based on the ratings assigned in my second-round review, I narrowed the final pool down to 16 candidates, all of whom I emailed additional details about the study and asked if they were interested in participating in the full study. Four of the 16 remaining candidates said they were not interested, five candidates never responded, and seven candidates indicated they were indeed interested in participating. Of the final seven candidates, I selected five participants based on my desire for diversity of academic programs, a variety of professional industries represented, and gender balance.

Data Collection

In response to Denzin’s (1970) recommendation to employ triangulation, or the combination of multiple methodological practices in qualitative research, I employed a three-pronged approach to data collection for this study. Collecting data from multiple methods is a strategy that “adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any
inquiry” (Denzin, 2012, p. 82) and will help secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Polkinghorne (1989) also advocates for collecting multiple kinds of data, including expressions of art forms such as poetry and painting.

My primary method of data collection was participant interviews, although I also collected data through participant creation and explanation of aesthetic products that represented the relationship between their perceived sense of calling, professional identity, and teaching identity. The third data source was the collection of participant-provided artifacts that participants believed represent or revealed something important about who they are as teachers.
Interviews.

Creswell (2013) identifies in-depth interviews as the primary tool for data collection in phenomenological research. As such, I interviewed each participant three times for approximately 60-80 minutes each time, using the semi-structured protocol I used for my pilot study in the spring of 2016 as a foundation (See Appendix B for a copy of the pilot study interview protocol). The interviews focused on a variety of topics including professional background and experience, how adjunct faculty describe their call to teach in the post-secondary environment, which contexts or situations have influenced their experiences as an adjunct faculty member, and what impact identity has on their teaching intentions and teaching practice. Table 1 outlines my interview structure, including the topics, purpose and focus of each interview. Full interview protocols are included in Appendix C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Interview 1</th>
<th>Interview 2</th>
<th>Interview 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal background, work history, experience becoming an adjunct faculty member, description of teaching experiences, and the call to teach</td>
<td>Salient aspects of identity, relationship between calling, professional identity and teaching identity, and creation and description of an aesthetic representation of that relationship</td>
<td>Relationship between calling, identity, teaching intentions, and professional practice; and sharing of artifacts that participants believe represent something important about who they are as teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant-created aesthetic products.

Because of the focus in phenomenology of practice on lived experience as “subtle, enigmatic, contradictory, mysterious, inexhaustible, and saturated with existential and transcendent meaning that can only be accessed through poetic, aesthetic, and ethical means and languages” (van Manen, 2014, p. 213), I invited participants to create an aesthetic product that represented the relationship between their perceived sense of calling, professional identity, and teaching identity.

Providing an opportunity for participants to express themselves in something other than a verbal format added an additional layer of richness and meaning to the data and proved helpful in making sense of the participants’ lived experiences. It is well established that drawing can be used as means to facilitate verbal communication (Butler, Gross, & Hayne, 1995; Gross & Hayne, 1998). Although much of the existing research
applies to children, Kearney and Hyle (2004) concluded that the use of participant-produced drawings in a study focused on the emotional impact of change on adults led to a more succinct presentation of participant experiences and helped create triangulation of data (Kearney & Hyle, 2004, p. 361). There is value in other non-verbal, participant-produced aesthetic products as well. In his work on visual data in organizational research, Meyer (1991) urges researchers to collect data from subjects in the form of pictures, diagrams, computer graphics and other visual representations because “informants often possess more copious and meaning information than they can communicate verbally” (p. 220).

Although each participant was given the option to opt out of creating an aesthetic product during the second interview, I was pleased that all five chose to engage. During the interview, participants were given approximately 10 minutes to interact with a set of materials which included items such as Play-Doh, construction paper, scissors, glue, markers, feathers, pipe-cleaners, paint, blocks and Legos (See Appendix D for a visual catalogue of materials made available to participants). The materials were selected after informal consultation with five educators who were not involved as participants in the study. After describing the nature of the activity, I asked the educators which types of materials they would most like to use in the creation of an aesthetic product like the one I described. Responses fell into three main categories: (1) art supplies (including crayons, markers, paint, glue, etc.), (2) building materials (including Play-Doh, blocks and Legos), and (3) natural materials (including flowers, twigs, and feathers). I took these
recommendations into consideration as I prepared the set of 26 items that were presented to study participants for use during the activity.

As the participants created their aesthetic products, I invited them to narrate their work in real time, giving voice to the options they were considering, the decisions they were making, and the inspiration behind their creative work. Some participants spoke more than others during the creation of their aesthetic product, although upon completion of the activity all participants were able to explain the significance of their aesthetic product, describing how it represented the relationship between their sense of calling, professional identity, and teaching identity. The narration that participants provided during the creation of their aesthetic product and the explanation of the product’s significance were captured as part of the interview. I also photographed and/or video recorded a 360-degree perspective of each participant’s finished product (See Appendix E for photographs of each participant’s aesthetic product).

Although the final activity was not designed to be as flexible or open as the creation of the products described above, participants were provided one additional opportunity to express themselves through an aesthetic product. In the second interview, participants were asked to create an “Identity Wheel” that outlined up to five of the most salient aspects of their identity. The first step in the activity was for participants to brainstorm all the different aspects of their identity that came to mind. The second step was for participants to select up to five of the most important aspects to include in a pie chart. The final step in the activity was to draw the pie chart such that the size of the slices reflected the relative importance of each aspect; the larger the slice, the more
important that particular aspect of the participant’s identity was perceived to be (See Appendix F for photographs of each participant’s Identity Wheel).

**Collection of participant-provided artifacts.**

In addition to participant interviews and the creation of an aesthetic product as described above, participants were also invited to share existing artifact(s) they believed represented or revealed something important about who they are as teachers. Although participants were encouraged to share whatever types of artifact were meaningful to them, I suggested they consider artifacts such as statements of teaching philosophy, feedback they provided to students on assignments or class participation, excerpts from their course syllabus, student emails or other forms of correspondence, their instructor biography, or their video introduction to the course (all faculty in this particular department are required to post a video introduction to their course before each term begins). Yin (2009) encourages the collection of artifacts because they represent another form of primary evidence that “can be invaluable to your qualitative study” (p. 155) and “can reduce the problems and challenges of reflexivity” (p. 157) because they were produced for a purpose independent of the researcher’s inquiry.

In addition to encouraging participants to share existing artifacts, they were also given the option to create a new artifact such as a story, poem, drawing, painting, or collage that represented or revealed something important about who they are as a teacher. I provided this option in case there was something important that participants wanted to share that wasn’t captured elsewhere, or in case they felt their ideas could be better expressed by creating something new as opposed to drawing from existing items or
documents. Providing the opportunity for participants to express themselves through multiple forms of representation is important because as Eisner (2008) suggests, various forms of representation “give us access to expressive possibilities that would not be possible without their presence” (p. 5). While all the participants selected existing artifacts to describe and discuss in the third interview as opposed to creating something new, one participant said she appreciated the invitation to create something new and said she would have done so if she had more time.

Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, van Manen suggests that phenomenology of practice can integrate a variety of approaches to data collection and analysis to help researchers avoid getting “trapped in dogma and over-simplifying schemas, schedules, and interpretations of what is supposed to count as ‘true’ phenomenological inquiry” (van Manen, 2014, p. 15-16). Drawing from the six research activities van Manen (1990) presents as part of hermeneutic phenomenological research, I focused primarily on (1) reflecting on essential themes which characterize the phenomenon, and (2) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and re-writing.

Reflecting on essential themes.

Determining the essential quality of a theme in phenomenological research is “to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is” (van Manen, 1990, p. 107). Essential themes are those that are critical to understanding the phenomenon; without them, the true essence of the phenomenon cannot be discerned. They represent a “thoughtful, reflective grasp of
what it is that renders this or that particular experience its special significance” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). Once these themes have been identified, the reflection process consists of “reflectively bringing into nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32).

I leaned heavily on Lichtman’s *Three C’s of Data Analysis* model to identify the essential themes in my data. Although Lichtman (2005) uses the term “concepts” instead of “themes” in her model, the six steps she outlines in the movement from codes through categories to concepts provides valuable guidance regarding the process of aggregating individual data into meaningful groups and bigger-picture themes. Lichtman’s (2005) steps include (1) initial coding, (2) revisiting initial coding, (3) developing an initial list of categories, (4) modifying initial list of categories based on additional re-reading, (5) revising categories and subcategories, and (6) moving from categories to concepts. Although I didn’t use empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology for this study, Moustakas’s (1994) process of *horizonalization* also proved helpful in the coding process. Horizonalization refers to the process of going through interview transcripts to highlight significant statements, sentences and quotes that provide insight regarding how participants experienced the phenomenon of interest.

Drawing from the practices outlined by both Lichtman (2005) and Moustakas (1994), I distilled the data down to five essential themes, which I then reflected upon to help “grasp the essential meaning” of the phenomenon in question and to make “explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 77) of study.
participants. In addition to the five essential themes, I identified four additional themes, which I called “auxiliary themes.” While these themes emerged as important in terms of the study’s articulated research questions and overall goals, they didn’t fit van Manen’s definition of an essential theme, and as such, were classified differently.

Writing and rewriting.

As van Manen (2014) suggests, “phenomenological reflection cannot be separated from phenomenological writing…phenomenological inquiry cannot really be separated from the practice of writing” (p. 365). In phenomenological research, writing is not merely the final step in the research process. It is instead, an integral part of the research itself. As van Manen describes “…to do research in a phenomenological sense is already and immediately and always a bringing to speech of something. And this thoughtfully bringing to speech is most commonly a writing activity” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32).

Through the process of writing, the author “puts in symbolic form what he or she is capable of seeing” and “lets us see that which shines through, that which tends to hide itself” (van Manen, 1990, p. 130).

I engaged in four writing phases during the research process. The first phase took place immediately following each interview. During this phase, my goal was to characterize the overall essence of the participant experiences shared with me. I summarized stories and examples that stood out to me during the interview and recorded my impressions about what was said, how it was said, and what was not said. I also described any noteworthy non-verbal behavior that nuanced the tenor of the conversation.
The second phase of writing took place after I transcribed each interview. Given the importance of reading as part of pedagogical writing (Kafle, 2011; van Manen, 1990), I first read the transcripts and what I had written during the initial writing phase. Then I wrote about trends and themes that had begun to emerge, as well as new insights and impressions that hadn’t previously surfaced.

The third phase of writing consisted of generating narrative descriptions for each participant. In their article on interpretation and analysis methods in hermeneutic phenomenology, Crist and Tanner (2002) suggest that interpretive writing begins with three-to-five-page summaries of participant stories, which are then refined through “frequent written revisions by the investigator” (p. 204). The goal of this phase of writing was to synthesize content from the first two phases of writing and describe various aspects of participants’ background, experience, teaching identity and classroom practice. In this phase, feedback is important since it helps to “best represent what is intended by the participants” (Kafle, 2011, p. 196). As such, upon completion of each narrative, I engaged in member checking as a quality control process by which I sought to “improve the accuracy, credibility and validity” of what had been recorded and written (Harper & Cole, 2012, p. 1). To conduct member checking, I emailed each study participant a copy of the narrative I had written for him or her and asked if there were any corrections or updates. I also asked if each participant felt that what I had written accurately reflected what he or she hoped to communicate during the interviews. Of the five participants, three responded that what I had written was factually correct and did indeed provide an accurate picture of what had been shared during our interviews. Two participants
responded with corrections. One participant pointed out a spelling error I had made and corrected an academic degree, which I had attributed to the wrong academic institution. The second participant suggested a different way of describing her current consulting work, suggesting that I refer to her as an “Emotional Intelligence Trainer/Coach” as opposed to an “Emotional Intelligence Training Coach.” She also corrected an error I made in describing a previous professional position she held. I had described her work in “Human Resources” as opposed to “Public Relations” based on a transcription error where I had typed “HR” instead of “PR.”

After conducting member checking and receiving feedback from participants, I engaged in the fourth and final phase of writing. In this phase, I re-read previous writing, re-wrote portions of the narrative descriptions, wrote and re-wrote the anecdotes and stories included in my description of essential themes, and generated additional content that is included in Chapter Four.

**Pilot Study**

In preparation for this study, I conducted a pilot study. In the pilot study, I interviewed one participant with the purpose of testing my interview protocol and providing an initial opportunity to see what types of responses I would receive. My interviewee had been teaching as a graduate-level adjunct faculty member for approximately three years in a college of professional and continuing education and had extensive professional experience in the areas of customer service training and corporate leadership development.
Upon completion of the interview, I transcribed the recordings and analyzed the data by looking for themes that emerged from my interviewee’s responses. After listening to the interviews and recording and transcribing much of the dialogue, I identified six themes: (1) teaching is not a new endeavor (my interviewee has had lots of jobs and professional roles that have involved teaching and training others); (2) it is personally fulfilling to be a part of the growth and development of others; (3) adjuncts have the “best of both worlds” because they are active in both industry and academia; (4) teaching is an exciting profession; (5) the teacher is also a learner; and (6) deep, meaningful relationships with students are an important part of the teaching experience.

Although I acknowledge the limitation of having just one participant in my pilot study, the interview provided valuable insight in helping craft the conceptual framework presented in Figure 2 as well as the interview structure presented in Table 1. It also affirmed my interest in this topic and encouraged me to further pursue my scholarly inquiry into the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their adjunct teaching experience in higher education.
Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

This study explored the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their adjunct teaching experiences in higher education. Given the growing percentage of adjunct faculty in the teaching workforce at American colleges and universities, this research provides valuable perspective and insight regarding the relationship that adjunct faculty see between their identity and their teaching intentions and professional practice.

Anchoring this research was the central research question “How do adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education?” Additional research sub-questions included the following:

- How do adjunct faculty members describe their call to teaching in the post-secondary environment?
- What contexts or situations have influenced the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member?
- How do adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher?
- What impact does identity have on adjunct faculty members’ teaching intentions and professional practice?

This study was a qualitative, phenomenological study that sought to describe the “common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or
phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Specifically, I chose van Manen’s phenomenology of practice, which “reflects on and in practice, and prepares for practice” (van Manen, 2014, p. 15). This approach was particularly appropriate because of its focus on professional practices in a professional field, and because of the flexibility it allows in terms of research activities and the integration of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Chapter Four presents findings that emerged from data collected throughout a series of interviews conducted with five participants who have all taught as adjunct faculty in the college of continuing and professional education at a mid-sized private university. The three-series, semi-structured interview protocol provided a rich opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and experiences related to a variety of topics including professional background, experiences becoming an adjunct faculty member, salient aspects of their personal and professional identities, descriptions of their perceived call to teach, what they see as the relationship between identity and calling, their teaching intentions and goals, and their teaching practices. To add additional rigor, breadth, complexity, and richness to the inquiry, as Denzin (2012) suggests, I also integrated two other forms of data collection: participant-created aesthetic products and participant-provided artifacts. Because of this multi-faceted approach to data collection, I was able to draw from interview transcripts, photographs and video of participant-created aesthetic products, and participant-selected artifacts in my story sharing and thematic reflections.

While sharing participant stories and reflecting on themes in the data is an important part of presenting the study’s findings, the metaphor of “feeling at home” breathes life to the nuanced richness of what it means to feel called to teach as an adjunct faculty
member. Reflecting on the findings reminded me of the experience my husband and I had while purchasing our home a couple of summers ago. In our home-searching process, we immediately dismissed some houses because they didn’t meet our minimum requirements: some needed too much work, didn’t pass inspection, or weren’t quite what we were looking for in terms of space or location. When touring houses that made the initial cut and looked promising in pictures and online, I remember walking into to a few houses, looking around for about 30 seconds and immediately saying, “Nope. This isn’t the place. It just doesn’t feel right.” People who subscribe to the principles of feng shui, the traditional Chinese practice used to harmonize people with their environments, may have suggested that the qi, or vital energy flow, was somehow off (Xu, 2012). Other times, my negative reaction was due to more tangible things like poor lighting, paint color, or the floorplan (who really thinks it’s a good idea to put the master bedroom in a dungeon-like basement?). When we walked into the home we ended up purchasing, I experienced an entirely different feeling. I felt a sense of welcome, comfort and belonging. Everything was “just right” and seemed to fall into place. It simply felt like home.

While our experience was related to purchasing an actual home, looking for a place that “feels like home” can be used in a metaphorical sense, too, describing the place where we feel most comfortable, becoming one with the spaces that surround us in our experiences of life. “In general, we may say that we become the space we are in... In a general sense, lived space is the existential theme that refers us to the world or landscape in which human beings move and find ourselves at home.” (van Manen, 1990, p. 102)
“Feeling at home” in the felt space of teaching implies a sense of comfort in the teaching environment and a willingness to embrace the call to teach in a way that reflects full engagement as opposed to hesitation or trepidation. To feel truly “at home” requires a certain set of components to align in just the right way to generate that magic sense of welcome, comfort, and belonging—just as I experienced, walking into our home for the first time.

When looking for a place to call home, most people start with non-negotiables such as the structural integrity of the house, functioning plumbing, safe electrical wiring, and other crucial details like whether or not the roof leaks and the furnace works. After all, can anyone imagine comfortably settling into a new home that’s missing a roof or sends sparks flying when you turn on the lights? These non-negotiables are like the essential themes identified in this study. Essential themes are those that are critical to understanding the phenomenon; without them, the true essence of the phenomenon cannot be discerned. Essential themes are the non-negotiables that must necessarily be part of the conversation about what it means to feel called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, just like the non-negotiables I mentioned above that are essential to identifying a place that “feels like home.”

As any homeowner knows, there is more to finding the place that “feels like home” than simply the absence of material defects. Other factors are important, too, although they may not be perceived as non-negotiable for every homebuyer. For example, access to running trails or open space may be supremely important to some people. For others, vaulted ceilings or proximity to good public schools may be more
important priorities. These factors are like the auxiliary themes identified in this study. Auxiliary themes are important, but shouldn’t be classified as essential components of the phenomenon, because they aren’t universally true for all participants—just as an expansive sunroom will be more attractive to some homebuyers than others.

Even once the house inspection is complete and homebuyers have diligently compared their list of priorities against the house’s features, there is something more required to truly “feel at home” in a place. This feeling transcends checklists, inspections, comparables, and other calculated assessments. It’s the process of closing your eyes and being able to picture yourself experiencing the richness of life in that space. It’s a montage of future memories waiting to be made—moments of joy and happiness, and perhaps some moments of heartache and sadness—experienced, celebrated and mourned within those walls. It’s the mysterious, beautiful experience of “feeling at home” that, like the call to teach, can best be described by the stories of those who have experienced it and have attempted to put words to it in a way that offers a glimpse of the unique essence that gives calling its powerful draw: that sense of something ineffable that makes people feel comfortable, relaxed, happy, and whole. This is the gestalt that makes a house a home and the experience of teaching feel like a calling as opposed to just a job.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I share the stories and lived experiences of the study participants to describe the themes that emerged in the data, address my research questions, and further explore how the metaphor of “feeling at home” reflectively “[brings] into nearness that which tends to be obscure” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32).
Summary of Participants

There were five participants in the study, all recruited from the college of continuing and professional education at a mid-sized private university. The study participants included two men and three women, all of whom self-identified as feeling “called to teach,” had taught as an on-campus adjunct faculty member for at least two terms, and who had some form of employment outside of teaching. The participants came from a variety of backgrounds and professions and taught in a variety of undergraduate and graduate academic programs including healthcare leadership, arts and culture, leadership and organizations, business, and information communications technology. Pseudonyms assigned to study participants were Tom, Bob, Meghan, Pat, and Chloe.

Tom.

Tom has been teaching courses in project management, SharePoint, and contracts and procurement for the last 14 years in the Information Communications Technology program. He has a background in construction management, loves to fly-fish, and wants to make sure students understand how important it is to be fair and ethical in project management work.

Bob.

Bob is a semi-retired consultant with a doctorate in education who has been teaching as adjunct faculty since 2012. He is a published author who teaches approximately 10 business courses per year at both the graduate and undergraduate level. He’s deeply tied to his roots as a “Pittsburgh guy,” is interested in politics, loves to read, and regularly integrates case studies into his teaching.
Meghan.

Meghan is a practicing lawyer and dental hygienist who teaches in the Healthcare Leadership program. She describes herself as a Catholic and a devoted mother who is committed to helping her students see that everything they do ultimately affects patients. She’s deeply committed to justice and describes herself as always being up for a challenge.

Pat.

Pat is a certified emotional intelligence trainer/coach who describes herself as wife, mother, business owner, business coach, and business consultant. Since 2010, she has taught a variety of graduate and undergraduate classes related to business social intelligence, organizational development, leadership, and entrepreneurship. In addition to consulting and teaching, she’s also pursuing a certificate in spiritual formation at a local seminary.

Chloe.

Chloe’s PhD is in film and film scripting with a special focus on the transliteration of novels into film focusing on young adult literature. She teaches in an Arts and Culture graduate program and oversees a service membership collaborative of over nearly 50 arts, culture and science organizations that provides outreach and programming for local schools. She describes herself as a story-teller, a memory-maker, and a person of faith.
Participant Narratives

Generating multi-page summaries of participant stories is one component Crist and Tanner (2002) suggest as part of the interpretive writing process in hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology research. Doing so gives voice to the lived experiences of individual participants and helps foster a deeper connection to their lives, perspectives, and stories. The following summaries are like expanded homebuyer profiles that provide additional insight and context about who these participants are and what’s important to them in finding the place that “feels like home.”

Tom.

Tom is a project manager and fly-fishing enthusiast who is known for being conscientious, hard-working, loyal and one of the best when it comes to tying flies. He’s not afraid to speak his mind and appreciates that rules exist for a reason. Being a project manager impacts his personal life, too, and he acknowledges that his wife and daughters would probably say he has a tendency to take control of situations, especially when it comes to things like planning family vacations. Deep down, though, he is convinced they really do appreciate all his planning.

Tom earned an undergraduate degree in construction engineering from Montana State University and spent approximately 15 years working for a construction company before going back to school in the evenings to earn a master’s degree in construction management at the University of Colorado. Reflecting on his decision to pursue a graduate degree, he says he wanted to “keep the door open” to fulfill his goal of teaching one day. It didn’t happen right away, though. After finishing his graduate degree, Tom
left the construction company to work in the IT department at a direct-broadcast satellite service provider doing construction work with data and call centers. He also got involved in software project management, which ultimately led him to a variety of different positions in the pharmaceutical, construction and engineering industries. He also did work for the National Park Service that took him on stimulus-funded construction projects around the country including the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island, Liberty Hall, and a Civil War graveyard in Missouri. His most recent professional work has included building data centers with IBM and working for a national provider of wholesale data centers and colocation services.

Tom’s interest in teaching emerged in college when he realized how much he enjoyed leading study groups when he knew the answers nobody else had figured out. He didn’t mind being the go-to guy for help when people didn’t understand something. It felt good. After finishing his master’s degree and working for a few years, he started asking around about how to get into teaching at the university level. He reviewed construction management degree programs at several different universities in the area and volunteered his time in a classroom at one local university to get his foot in the door. His efforts weren’t particularly well received by all the faculty at that institution, though, and ultimately, he was told it wouldn’t work out to teach there since he didn’t have a PhD. Undeterred, he reached out to the institution where he currently teaches and was directed to the program director for the Information and Communications Technology program. It took about nine months, but he received a call asking him to teach a contracts and procurement course. That was 14 years ago. Since that time, Tom has regularly taught
courses in project management, SharePoint, and contracts and procurement. He typically teaches two to three classes per year, characterizing the experience as a “side line gig” that’s more than enough to keep him busy. He adds that teaching part-time is a much better way to make some extra money than working in retail, at Home Depot, or pushing carts at Wal-Mart.

Tom loves the outdoors and is heavily involved with his local fly-fishing club, having served in a variety of leadership positions including club president. With over 40 years of fly-fishing experience, he can describe with great nuance what it is like to be out on the water, to tie flies, to build his own fishing rod, and to push everything out of his mind to relax and be one with nature. When describing how other people see him, Tom explains that anyone who knows him would say he’s a deeply loyal person who is fair, hard-working, reliable, and adept at working with all different kinds of people. Tom will tell you that his word is his bond and that being open, honest, and ethical is important. He is also a husband and a father to two teenage daughters.

When describing his call to teach, Tom said that he feels he has something significant to give his students, that teaching is more than just a job, and that there is something about teaching that makes him feel whole and rounds out his life. He can’t imagine not having done this work for the last 14 years because he enjoys it so much and it has become such a big part of his life. His greatest desires in the classroom include helping students learn from the mistakes he has made throughout his career, ensuring students have a big-picture understanding the project management process, and making
sure that they understand how important it is to be fair and ethical in project management work.

Bob.

Bob is a semi-retired consultant and adjunct faculty member who was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by working class parents who valued education. The first thing he tells people when describing himself is that he’s a “Pittsburgh guy,” which serves as testament to the fact that he sees his roots as a deep part of who he is today. His father’s parents had no formal education, and his grandfather went to work in the coal mines at eight years old. His mother’s parents were immigrants from Poland. Despite his parents’ limited education and working-class status (Bob’s father worked in a steel fabrication plant), Bob’s parents valued education and pressured him from a young age to get good grades and go to college. Contrary to social norms of the time, in the late 1950’s, Bob’s mother even took a job to help earn money to send both Bob and his younger sister to college.

Bob began working in the training and organizational development industry when he graduated from Penn State with a journalism degree in 1972. His first job was as a volunteer trainer with Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a national service program founded by John F. Kennedy. Upon concluding that he didn’t want to work for the government for his entire career, he decided to return to graduate school in the evenings to earn a master’s degree in communications. After completing his graduate degree, he went to work in the training department for an oil company and then served as a training manager for a large American manufacturing company. In his 30’s, Bob quit
his job and went back to school full-time, this time pursuing a doctorate of education at Harvard. During this time, he also taught in the business school at Northeastern University in Boston. Although he considered pursuing a full-time teaching role upon graduation, he was recruited to work in the management and organizational development arm at Pfizer, a biopharmaceutical company in New York. Five years later, Bob started his consulting practice, which still exists today. While he doesn’t actively solicit new business, Bob still maintains several long-term client relationships and occasionally accepts speaking engagements.

Bob’s teaching career at his current institution began about five years ago when a neighbor connected him with the associate chair of the management department who was looking for someone to teach an organizational behavior course. Given Bob’s background in organizational behavior and training, and the fact that the textbook that had been identified for the course was written by Bob’s dissertation advisor, it was a perfect fit. He now teaches approximately 10 classes per year in addition to maintaining occasional consulting jobs on the side.

Bob is an avid reader and published author who loves politics and has been actively writing a blog for almost 15 years. While he says that people who like him will describe him as outgoing, outspoken, helpful, and “pretty smart,” he acknowledges that people who don’t like him might describe him as being arrogant, overbearing, and/or sort of difficult. Laughing, he’ll admit that there are probably threads of truth in all those adjectives. He’s also a huge Pittsburgh Steelers football fan and self-described “old jock”
who used to play rugby. Although he attended Catholic school through the eighth grade, he’s not particularly religious, describing himself as almost “anti-religion.”

When describing his call to teach, Bob said that he feels he has something significant to give his students, he has great hope for his students and what they’re capable of achieving, that teaching is more than just a job, and that teaching brings him great joy. His greatest desire in the classroom is to encourage interaction and critical thinking.

Meghan.

What do you say when a lawyer, a dental hygienist, and a teacher walk into the room? In Meghan’s case, you say “Hello, Meghan.” Then you invite her to sit down and describe what it’s like for a curious person like her to “fall into” such a multi-faceted career path while raising three children and fueling her seemingly insatiable hunger for challenge and lifelong learning.

After pursuing a bachelor’s degree in dental hygiene and working in the field for six years, Meghan knew she wanted more. Going to dental school, however, wasn’t what she had in mind. Instead, she changed gears and went to law school. She appreciated the “mental travels” and new creative ways of thinking that law school introduced, especially compared to the science-based, black and white way of thinking to which she had grown accustomed during her undergraduate education. As much as she loved law and the creativity it brought out in her, she also loved being a dental hygienist and never could quite give it up. She still practices and sees a few patients per month. After finishing her law degree, she took a position the attorney general’s office to represent the dental board.
and ended up representing all different kinds of healthcare programs including nurses, physicians, physical therapists and “almost any other healthcare worker you can think of.” After serving as the assistant attorney general for about 15 years, she was ready for the next challenge. About a year and a half ago, she took on a role as a program manager in one of the programs at the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

Meghan’s first teaching experience was years ago at a local community college where she taught dental law and ethics of dental hygiene. She loved it but describes the experience as “short-lived” because it became too much to juggle with other life priorities at the time, which included raising three young children. Approximately four years ago, she crossed paths with the academic director of the program where she now teaches. She mentioned she would be interested in teaching again if the opportunity arose. Five or six months later, she got a call “out of the blue” asking if she would be interested in taking on a course. She was delighted by the invitation and described herself as being “over the moon” since she had enjoyed teaching so much before and was excited to have another opportunity to do so.

Meghan says the first and most important thing about her is that she’s a mom. Although her children are adults now, she reminisces about how she was at every single Halloween and Valentine’s Day party for them growing up. Her role as caretaker extends beyond being a mom, as she also cares for her aging parents. She describes herself as kind, honest, and deeply committed to justice. Being a Catholic is also a big part of who she is, although being a faith-based person isn’t something she talks about a lot. Nonetheless, she says she’s “pretty into it” and it’s something that’s important to her.
When describing her call to teach, Meghan says it’s all about making a difference. She’s drawn to teaching because she feels like she has something to give and it has something to give to her. She has great hope for her students and what they’re capable of achieving and sees teaching as more than a routine task. Her greatest desire in the classroom is to drive home the point that everything her students do affects patients. Rather than approaching topics and concepts from a purely academic perspective, she wants students to see the emotional side of patient care. She also cares deeply about encouraging her students to be open-minded and comfortable expressing their opinions.

Pat.

One of the exercises that participants are asked to complete as part of a Franklin Covey class on identifying their life purpose is to reflect on times in life when they felt most alive. Looking back to that exercise over 20 years ago, Pat says the question was an easy one for her to answer. She felt most alive and energized when she was helping people, whether that was as a softball coach, a girl scout leader, an executive coach, a consultant, or in the classroom. From that point on, she embraced that her primary purpose in life is to help people grow and change. This life purpose seems particularly well-aligned with the metaphor of a shepherd that largely guides and directs Pat’s personal, spiritual, and professional life.

Pat studied journalism and English as an undergraduate student and spent her early career in public relations before pursuing an MBA at Creighton University while working in the university’s public relations department. The MBA set her up to move into strategic planning, management, and executive leadership positions in the corporate
sector. She spent years working 80+ hours per week in high stress jobs, including Enron and a software company in California. In an effort to seek more flexibility and balance in her life, Pat eventually moved into consulting, which she has been doing for more than 20 years now. As a certified emotional intelligence trainer/coach, her current roles include coaching, training and facilitating for mid-market businesses, serving as an executive coach for business owners and c-level executives, and teaching as an adjunct faculty member. She’s also a seminary student pursuing a certificate in spiritual formation.

While she was on a “six-month sabbatical” after leaving her high-stress job at Enron, Pat was offered a part-time teaching position in the marketing department at a small college in Iowa. They needed someone to teach in the marketing department, and Pat had always said that she wanted to work in academia. Her parents were both teachers and expected her to become a teacher too (much to Pat’s initial resistance and protest). She enjoyed teaching so much that she began applying for full-time teaching positions when her husband finished graduate school and they moved to San Diego. She taught at a few different institutions in California but was offered a general management software sales job that was too good to pass up. She continued teaching a few classes as adjunct faculty, but eventually quit teaching to meet the demands of full-time work and motherhood.

Pat was offered the opportunity to teach at her current institution when a good friend was asked to teach a course and declined the opportunity. She recommended Pat for the job. Pat dove in and created that first class from scratch, a process she absolutely loved. Since 2010, she has taught a variety of graduate and undergraduate classes related
to business social intelligence, organizational development, leadership and entrepreneurship.

Pat describes herself as a wife, mother, business owner, business coach, business consultant, and most recently, as a seminary student being developed into a spiritual director. She is rooted in service and feels like her integrity and sense of self-awareness are also important parts of her identity. People look to her as a leader and director, although she prefers to think of herself as a shepherd since being a shepherd is more about guiding others than being in charge.

Pat believes she has something significant to give to her students. When describing her call to teach, she says it's something that has been with her since she was a child. She can recall the feeling of fulfillment and purpose when she engaged in service projects as a child, which is the same feeling she gets when she is teaching. In grade school, she remembers memorizing the Baltimore Catechism response to the question, “Why did God make you?” which was, "God made each of us for a unique purpose and our purpose in life is to find out what that is.” While she’ll admit that memorization wasn’t the best way to learn, the question about life purpose has stuck with her through the years, and guides her in both her personal and professional work. Her greatest desire in the classroom is for engagement and movement that results in emotional connection.

Chloe.

As we sit in Chloe’s dining room together listening to her clock chime, she tells me about a trip she and her husband recently took to visit a former student who works as a costume designer for a popular television show. She described what it was like to get a
tour of the set, see the big-name movie stars, get an up-close look at the painted plywood backdrops of Washington, D.C., and step into a replica of the Oval Office. Watching her former student repeatedly (and somewhat dramatically) check his phone and direct other costumers in preparing extras for the day’s filming, she got the impression he was putting on a show to impress her, just as he did 25 years ago when she had him in class. After all, she explained, he was always an actor at heart. Chloe uses this example to share one of the reasons she enjoys teaching. Behind the glitz and glamour of a high-profile job in the television industry, Chloe sees her student from decades ago whom she pushed, encouraged, and challenged to be the best he could be. It made it all worth it when he looked her in the eye at the end of her visit and said “Thank you for pushing me. You put me on this path.”

Although she wasn’t active in theater or drama in high school, Chloe auditioned for a production of *Fiddler on the Roof* her first year of college. She found herself cast in the chorus. After listing on her audition form that she could sew, she began sewing costumes, which turned into a full scholarship as a costumer in the theater department. Chloe went on to earn a master’s degree at a large university in the South where she turned down working in the costume shop for a teaching assistant position in public speaking. After finishing her master’s degree, Chloe stayed at the same institution to pursue her PhD in the area of film and film scripting with a special focus on the transliteration of novels into film focusing on young adult literature. After that, she began teaching full-time at a university in North Carolina. Ultimately, she moved out west to follow the man who would become her husband and accepted a position overseeing a
service membership collaborative of over 50 arts, culture and science organizations that provide outreach and programming for local schools. She applied a few different times to a local university theater department, but nothing materialized until a friend encouraged her to apply to the graduate-level arts and culture program where she began teaching in 2010.

Chloe describes herself as a storyteller, a memory-maker and a “creative,” a term she explains refers to anybody who works in a field that has to do with aesthetics, imagination, design or performance. She’s a person of faith who believes in walking through doors of opportunity when they present themselves. In conversation, she quickly establishes that she’s a southerner since she thinks it gives some context to her friendly and warm demeanor. She’s quick to mention how important it is to be credible and respected, too, and emphasizes her communicative, efficient, and responsive nature. She also uses the word whimsical to describe herself and says you can’t take life too seriously.

Chloe’s call to teach has been a cornerstone in her life. For her, teaching is more than just a job; it brings her great joy and makes her feel whole. She feels that she has something significant to give to her students and sees teaching as a creative opportunity to make learning both engaging and interesting for her students. In addition to hoping that students do actually learn something in her class, she desires the same as when she’s directing a play or any other kind of performance; she wants people to come out of the theater (or out of her class) moved, challenged or inspired in some way.
Theme Identification

To identify themes in the data, I drew primarily from Lichtman’s (2005) *Three C’s of Data Analysis* model, which includes (1) initial coding, (2) revisiting initial coding, (3) developing an initial list of categories, (4) modifying an initial list of categories based on additional re-reading, (5) revising categories and subcategories, and (6) moving from categories to concepts.

Although I didn’t use transcendental phenomenology for this study, Moustakas’s (1994) process of *horizontalization* proved helpful in the initial coding stage because it encouraged me to identify significant statements, sentences and quotes in the interview transcripts that provided insight regarding how participants experienced the phenomenon of interest. Throughout the initial coding process, I regularly revisited, tweaked and updated the codes, changing code titles and recoding data as I progressed.

While revisiting initial coding is the second step of Lichtman’s (2005) *Three C’s of Data Analysis* model, she describes the process as circular and iterative, as opposed to strictly chronological. As such, it was appropriate to review and revise codes throughout the entire coding process as opposed to engaging in two distinct steps. As a result of Lichtman’s first and second steps, I identified 188 unique codes.

After reviewing the 188 unique codes, I moved into the third step of Lichtman’s (2005) *Three C’s of Data Analysis* model, which is to develop an initial list of categories. I grouped the 188 unique codes into the following 18 categories:

- Aesthetic Products
- Artifacts
“Call to Teach” Adjectives
Classroom Practice
Consistency and Alignment in Various Aspects of Life
Descriptors of Personal Identity
Descriptors of Professional Identity
Enjoyment
Financial Matters
Motivation to Teach
Online Teaching
College Experiences (as a student)
Professional Background
Religion and Spirituality
Teaching Experiences
Teaching Intentions
Teaching Metaphors
Upbringing

Lichtman’s (2005) fourth and fifth steps are to modify the initial list of categories based on additional re-reading, and to revise categories and subcategories. In this part of my data analysis, I made several small changes such as moving “Online Teaching” from its own category into a sub-category under “Teaching Experiences.” I also created a new sub-category called “Professional Identity as a Teacher” under “Professional Identity.”
This was an important change because it provided a new category under which to code much of the data I had initially coded exclusively under “Aesthetic Products” and “Artifacts.” While my initial coding approach identified how the data emerged from participants, I also wanted to code the data into content-specific categories. Doing so required the addition of the “Professional Identity as a Teacher” subcategory and the subsequent recoding of approximately 20 codes and 100 specific references. The introduction of this new subcategory and subsequent recoding underscored the importance of embracing Lichtman’s (2005) notion of a circular, iterative process that requires the researcher to code, recode, modify and revise categories, and recode again. Ultimately, the coding and categorizing process resulted in 181 unique codes under 17 categories and 149 subcategories, as outlined in Table 2. Note that Table 2 was included to summarize the coding structure I used to help make sense of the data and identify themes; it is not intended to imply any kind of relative weight or importance of various codes or categories. For example, the fact that the category of “Motivation to Teach” had 16 subcategories and 17 unique codes does not mean that it was any more important than the category of “Professional Background” that had 5 subcategories and 6 unique codes, or any less important than the category of “Classroom Practice” that had 39 subcategories and 40 unique codes. The figure simply summarizes the structure I created in the software program NVivo to help make sense of the data during this phase of the data analysis process.
The sixth and final step of Lichtman’s (2005) *Three C’s of Data Analysis* model involves the process of moving from categories to concepts, or themes. In his discussion about themes in phenomenological research, van Manen points out the need to make a distinction between themes that are truly essential to describing the phenomenon and those that may be incidentally related. Determining the essential quality of a theme is “to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is” (van Manen, 1990, p. 107). In other words, essential
themes are those that are critical to understanding the phenomenon; without them, the true essence of the phenomenon cannot be discerned. Essential themes are the non-negotiables that must necessarily be part of the conversation about what it means to feel called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, just like the non-negotiables I mentioned as being essential to identifying a place that “feels like home” like the structural integrity of the house, functioning plumbing, safe electrical wiring, and other crucial details like whether or not the roof leaks and the furnace works. The five essential themes I identified included (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment.

Other themes can emerge in phenomenological research, too, although they should not be classified as essential themes if they are not critical to understanding the phenomenon. I called this second set of themes “auxiliary themes.” While these auxiliary themes were helpful in terms of answering my research questions, they weren’t truly essential to understanding the phenomenon of what it is to feel called to teach as adjunct faculty. In the metaphor of finding a place that “feels like home,” the auxiliary themes are factors like running trails, schools or sunrooms that may be perceived with varying levels of priority or desirability for different homebuyers. The four auxiliary themes I identified included (1) consistency of identity and self-description across contexts, (2) belonging, (3) spirituality, and (4) impact of identity on teaching practice.

**Essential Themes**

Although it has been said that the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics is that there is no method (Gadamer, 1975; Rorty, 1979; van Manen, 1990), reflecting on
the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon of interest is one of six “practical approaches that may be helpful in doing hermeneutic phenomenological human science research” (van Manen, 1990, p. 30). Identifying essential themes is not an “unambiguous and fairly mechanical application of some frequency count or coding of selected terms in transcripts or texts, or some other break-down of the content of protocol or documentary material” (van Manen, 1990, p. 78). Instead, van Manen (1990) suggests the following:

As we are able to articulate the notion of theme we are also able to clarify further the nature of human science research. Making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure – grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of “seeing” meaning. (p. 79)

Again, the five essential themes identified in this study were (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment. Before moving into more in-depth descriptions of each individual essential theme, it is important to first acknowledge their interconnected nature. Conceptualizing the themes as interrelated and overlapping acknowledges the depth and complexity of what it means to feel called to teach and positions its various aspects as part of a holistic “web of experiences” as opposed to discrete components of a larger whole. The diagram presented in Figure 6 outlines the interconnected, overlapping nature of the essential themes and suggests that an integrated, holistic approach is required to fully understand the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member.
Because of the overlapping and interconnected nature of the essential themes, in some cases, compelling arguments could be made to share a given story or anecdote in the explanation of more than one essential theme. Take, for example, the participant who shared how her call to teach is related to the significant connection she feels to her students and how that connection generates enjoyment and deep satisfaction in her role as an adjunct faculty member. This statement could appropriately be shared under the essential theme of *Significance, Connection, or Enjoyment*; all would be equally justifiable. For the purposes of sharing my findings, I selected just one theme under which to share each story, quote, or anecdote. In the “real world” expression of these lived experiences, however, many participant stories and anecdotes reside in the shaded areas of overlap closer to the center of the diagram as opposed to the seemingly mutually
exclusive portion of each essential theme represented in the outer part of the diagram in Figure 4 where there is no shaded overlap.

From a data presentation standpoint, in phenomenological research, in-depth conversational interviews may be re-worked into reconstructed stories or anecdotes that illustrate or highlight a theme. In this way, themes are presented not as objects or generalizations, but as “knots in the web of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through meaningful wholes” (van Manen, 1990. p. 90). When possible and appropriate, I used blocks of participants’ own words as opposed to short quotes or summaries to best preserve the overall essence of the stories and experiences shared. Doing so honors the way in which van Manen (1984) characterizes phenomenology as a “poetizing project” where, like in a poem, researcher-generated summary can threaten the integrity of the story. “To summarize a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem itself is the result. The poem is the thing” (van Manen, 1984, p. 38). Using large blocks of participants’ own words also honors van Manen’s recommendation “to ‘borrow’ other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience” (van Manen, 1984, p. 55). Sharing the data in this way attempts to reflectively “[bring] into nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32).
Essential theme one: Enjoyment.

Enjoyment was the first theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Participant stories and experiences related to this theme centered around perceptions of fun, pleasure, delight, joy, and satisfaction. This theme is consistent with the way Buechner (1983) describes calling as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (p. 119) and the way Novak (1993) describes calling as that “thrilling thing you’re good at and really enjoy” (p. 39).

While essential themes should emerge through a holistic consideration of the data as opposed to the “unambiguous and mechanical application” of processes that rely on word frequencies or strict coding systems (van Manen, 1990, p. 78), it is worth noting that all five study participants mentioned some aspect of enjoyment when discussing their call to teach. Perhaps Bob captured it best when I asked how he describes his call to teach and he immediately responded with a grin and an enthusiastic, “I enjoy it and think it’s fun!”

In addition to his enthusiastic response, “I enjoy it and think it’s fun!” Bob explained that teaching is an enjoyable way to spend the twilight of his working career because in addition to being fun, it keeps him intellectually stimulated and allows him to feel like he’s making a difference:

I want to do this because I like doing it and I think that I'm being helpful for people. I had one student - she was very quiet, and I used to call on her a lot in class. She said, “you really helped me because you really pushed me.” And see,
that's the kind of thing I live for. Sure, somebody could say, “he's a good
lecturer,” or “he's funny,” or “he knows all this stuff,” but she was basically
saying “look, you touched my life.” There’s something really affirming about
being part of that. I enjoyed helping her realize she could do more than she might
have thought she could do and break out a bit more of her introverted shell. (Bob)
Pat enjoys teaching because of the impact she has on her students. She finds it
particularly enjoyable when she is able to help students be successful in their careers:
I had a student in organizational behavior last spring. He was a manager at Visa
and had no background in education and managing. They didn't do anything to
help him be a better manager. So, just by the process of going through the
organizational behavior class, he started figuring out - oh, there's a little bit of an
art to this management thing. And he was just effusive at the end of the class
about how taking organizational behavior had changed the way he managed, and
that people he managed were commenting about how much more positive their
experience was. That comment felt great! This is the whole reason I do this, you
know. (Pat)

Chloe also enjoys teaching because of the impact she makes on her students.
When describing her call to teach, she shared the story about visiting a former student
while he was working on the set of a popular television show (the story is included in
Chloe’s participant narrative earlier in this chapter). Reflecting on the student’s
comments about how she impacted his career by pushing, encouraging, and challenging
him to be the best he could be when he was a student, Chloe said, “I think that's why I
really enjoy teaching. Because 25 years later, I'm going, ‘Wow, something special happened for him in my class. I really made an impact on this person.’”

Chloe also shared her belief that people live out their passion by what they do (or choose not to do), explaining, “If I didn't like this work as an adjunct professor, I simply would have stopped it.” Instead, she eagerly anticipates each teaching opportunity she is offered. “You know,” she explains, “I really look forward to those emails asking if I want to teach another term. It's like, of course! Sure! Yeah! I really do like it. A lot.”

When Meghan was first invited to teach in her current position in the Healthcare Leadership program, she said, “I was delighted. I mean, I was just sort of over the moon. It was just really something that I wanted to do.” Her enjoyment stems from impacting her students on both a personal and professional level:

When I teach the legislative process, I honestly feel like it makes a difference in their lives. I honestly feel like it's one class that isn’t particular just to what they're going to do professionally. It can be something that they’re passionate about in their personal life. And that is just one of the things that I love about it. (Meghan)

Tom was the fifth of five participants to specifically address enjoyment when describing his call to teach. While Tom enjoys teaching because it provides the opportunity to help others, he also enjoys the variety it offers in his professional life:

Teaching is so much different from my regular job, and it invigorates me. I enjoy it. It's a different thing to do and I feel like I'm doing something good. You know, in my job, I'm calling up people and telling them why I need to have this task done, or figuring out budgets, or figuring out how to make the boss happy. But,
with teaching, I am in charge of my own classroom, which I really like. I get to teach what I want to teach. I get to teach when I want to teach. I have no day-to-day boss who is banging on my desk saying, “get this done already.” Teaching is far different from my day job, which I like. I enjoy it and have been doing it for 14 years. It has been a good aspect of my life. It’s a lot of work, but it’s also a lot of fun. It’s a fun job. (Tom)

In summary, the essential theme of Enjoyment emerged through the stories and lived experiences of all five participants, which is consistent with what the existing literature says about the connection between enjoyment and calling, and how teaching is seen as “richly rewarding” by those who feel called to the profession (Buskist, Benson, & Sikorski, 2005, p. 112). Whether related to helping students, impacting their personal and/or professional lives, or offering a welcome change of pace from the routine of “normal work,” stories and experiences related to this theme centered around perceptions of fun, pleasure, delight, joy, and satisfaction. As the first essential theme identified in this study, Enjoyment must necessarily be part of the description of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, just like an intact roof is a non-negotiable when looking for a place that “feels like home.”

Essential theme two: Alignment.

Alignment was the second theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Participant stories and experiences related to this theme centered around the feeling that being an adjunct faculty member is aligned with who the participants know themselves to be; teaching is a natural extension
of who they are. Novak (1996) describes this aspect of calling as the “knowing of yourself” and the “finding of your identity” that is critical to uncovering your strong inner impulse towards a particular type of work or course of action. Chloe characterized this kind of alignment as a “beautiful synergy” that she believes can only be described as “divinely inspired.”

Describing the call to teach as residing at the heart of converging identities relates to the Holistic Conception of Identity diagram initially presented in Chapter Two.

![Holistic Conception of Identity Diagram]

**Figure 5: Holistic Conception of Identity**

Intentionally designed with resemblance to the *taijitu*, or yin-yang symbol, the diagram suggests a dynamic interplay between principles that contain and give rise to one another, incorporating facets of both personal identity and professional identity (Highleyman, 2009). Participant stories and experiences related to the essential theme of
Alignment do indeed seem to support this model where calling is positioned as a unifying element at the nexus of identity representing the intersection of who you are and what you do.

Embracing that her primary purpose is to help people grow and change is what guides Pat’s personal, spiritual, and professional life. Articulating her purpose in this way has provided a strong sense of alignment across many aspects of Pat’s life:

About 22 years ago, I participated in a workshop that asked us to look back on significant events in life to recall what gave us the most energy. I wrote down that I felt most energetic when I was teaching college, when I was a Girl Scout leader, coaching softball, and working with my clients one-on-one. When I thought about what the commonality was in those scenarios, I realized that what drives my life purpose and motivates me is helping people. It’s kind of mind blowing to me that all these pieces of my life came together. That purpose statement has served me as a mother, a wife, a teacher, a student, a coach, and a consultant. It’s my “being” statement. (Pat)

Bob says he has always been fascinated with training and organizational development. He got into training right out of college when he accepted a position as a trainer for volunteers serving in Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a national service program founded by John F. Kennedy. Even back then, Bob knew he was particularly drawn to that “teaching, training, development kind of thing” because it was a “natural extension” of him:
I was always fascinated by the whole training and organizational development world. My interest in that arena has been very consistent. It's not like I was an accountant and all the sudden, I decided I wanted to at the end of my career, teach people how to be better accountants. It has been more of a thread of, you know, what I like doing and what makes me feel good about myself or valued. Early on, once I first started doing training work - first with VISTA volunteers and then in the oil company - I realized this is what I was meant to do. (Bob)

Like Bob, Tom realized he was drawn to teaching and helping others early in life. In college, he noticed how people always seemed to come to him when they didn’t know the answers. Tom naturally fell into helping people and explaining concepts to them in a way that made sense, which is something he sees himself doing in the classroom as well:

I did study groups in college and everyone would gather around me. I knew the answers when nobody else had figured them out yet. And that was kind of fun. People would ask, “What did you get for this?” and I would go through it and they would okay “Okay, now that makes sense.” That made me feel good and I liked being that guy. (Tom)

Tom’s desire to teach and help others aligns with aspects of his personal life, too. As an avid fly-fisherman and the president of a local fly-fishing club, he regularly interacts with other fishermen who are new to the sport and just getting started:

I’m involved in my fly-fishing club. We have fly-tying days and sessions and it’s fun for me to teach people how to do that. If I can see something I can do to make somebody else’s day a little better, I enjoy doing that. Whether it’s giving them a
fly that’s working or giving them advice on how to line a fish, I enjoy that. That’s fun. I also think I have a responsibility because fly-fishing is a huge part of my life and I know the history of it. I think other people who want to get involved need to understand the history of it as well. (Tom)

In summary, the essential theme of Alignment was present in the stories and lived experiences of the study participants. Whether characterized as a consistent thread throughout life, part of one’s life purpose, connected to a personal interest/hobby, or a product of divine inspiration, the stories and experiences related to the essential theme of Alignment consistently supported Meghan’s sentiment, “You simply can’t check who you are at the door.” As the second essential theme identified in this study, Alignment must necessarily be part of the description of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, just like a functioning furnace is a non-negotiable when looking for a place that “feels like home.”

**Essential theme three: Significance.**

A call to teach happens when you're really drawn to it. That's what a call is. You're drawn to do something. And you're drawn to it because it's something you feel like you have to give to, and it gives to you in return. I want to give to this. I need to do this because something important is going to happen. (Meghan)

**Significance** is the third theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Consistent with sentiment expressed in the quote from Meghan above, participant stories and experiences related to this theme suggested that teaching is about something important and meaningful; it’s more than just
information exchange. It’s about transformation, growth, inspiration, and legacy-building.

Although the significance of a calling was initially attributed to the fact that it was believed to have been inspired by God, the concept of calling has adopted a more secular nuance in recent years (Cullen, 2013; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Hansen, 2005; Novak, 1996; Weiss, Skelley, Hall, & Haughey, 2003). While some participants mentioned spiritual motivations for teaching (which will be further addressed in the discussion of auxiliary themes), Weiss, Skelley, Hall, and Haughey (2003) suggest that spiritual or religious motivations aren’t necessary. They propose a set of secular defining features of calling that includes awareness that one’s work serves others, which is consistent with many participant stories and examples.

As his aesthetic product, Bob created a visual representation of student growth and transformation that he believes characterizes his call to teach. His aesthetic product represents how he sees teaching as a catalyst for growth and transformation in his students that drives them to reach their potential and “become something significant.” While Bob sees himself as “never having progressed past the second lump of clay,” he hopes that his students surpass him, exceed all expectations, and truly blossom.
Figure 6: Bob's Aesthetic Product, representing his desire for significant growth and transformation in his students.

In describing his aesthetic product, Bob shared the following about the items in Figure 6:

Here's me (referring to first ball of Play-Doh located at the top of the image). And through the early part of my life, I was just like this lump. I went to school and it wasn't very cool in my school to be smart. So I hid it and was just like a lump. I was kind of unformed when I left high school. Then, through some hard work, through some luck, through the help of other people, this is sort of me today (referring to second ball of Play-Doh located to the far right in the image). I've sort of blossomed a little bit (referring to the feathers stuck in the second ball of Play-Doh). Why I want to teach is to help people to really blossom and grow (referring to third ball of Play-Doh located at the bottom of the image). This is all I was able to do (referring to second ball of Play-Doh), and this is what I'd like to be able to help people to do (referring to third ball of Play-Doh). I want them to exceed way more than whatever I was able to do. The whole idea is to help other people be bigger, and smarter so hopefully, they go on to be a fourth lump, which
would be at least double in size with lots more of the feathers in it. It’s about something bigger than me. It’s about building a legacy. (Bob)

Meghan incorporated components of growth and transformation in her aesthetic product as well, integrating seed pods, flowers and pipe cleaners in her symbolic arrangement of objects., shown below in Figure 7:

![Image of Meghan's aesthetic arrangement](image)

**Figure 7: Meghan’s aesthetic arrangement representing transformation and growth of student perspectives and worldviews.**

Meghan selected seed pods (pictured in the lower left corner of the image in Figure 7) to represent students when they first come into her class with their set ways of thinking and making sense of the world. Her hope is that by the end of the class, they break out of their narrow perspectives and become like beautiful flowers (pictured in the upper right corner of the image in Figure 7):

In my last class, I had a student whose cousin-in-law has worked with a particular legislator. So, of course, he had a set way of thinking. So, I can see him like this (referring to the seed pods pictured in the lower left corner of the image). And
then, about three-quarters of the way through class, all of the sudden he said, “I’ve learned a lot in the legislature, but not to the depth that I have learned in this class.” And he became different. I really don’t know how to use these (referring to the flowers pictured in the upper right corner in the image) other than the corny stuff, which is to say that growth is a significant and beautiful thing. It’s a growing, flowering experience to see people’s minds blossom, which is really what you hope for. You start with a little seed and have just 9 weeks to orchestrate a movement to result in this (referring to the flowers pictured in the upper right corner in the image). (Meghan)

Meghan also used pipe cleaners in Figure 7 to represent the change she hopes to inspire in the ways her students think, bending and straightening them several times during her explanation to demonstrate the ways she hopes students change, adapt, and reinvent the ways they think and perceive the world:

I think they come in kind of like this (referring to the pipe cleaner twisted into the shape of the number 8 on right side of the image in Figure 7). They’ve kind of got their ideas, which are working for them. And it just all makes sense to them, but it represents circular thinking. And then, my goal really is to at least get them to be kind of like this (she straightens out the pipe cleaner). To open up a bit. Think about things a little bit differently. Expand. Or, if they’re really linear (referring to the straightened pipe cleaner), to become more like this (re-shaping the pipe cleaner back into its original shape resembling the number 8). (Meghan)
Referencing the importance of self-awareness, reflection, and self-knowledge, Pat believes her call to teach is significant not only because of the impact it allows her to have on others, but also because of the impact it has on her own life. She sees teaching as an opportunity live out her personal gifts from God in a meaningful and important way, which is consistent with many traditional conceptions of calling (Buechner, 1983; Michaelsen, 1953; Palmer, 2000). Chloe and Tim also commented about the significance of teaching in their own lives, although not necessarily in a religious sense. Chloe said, “Teaching has become much more than just a job. It is a cornerstone in my life. It is the fabric of my life.” Tom shared a similar sentiment when he said, “There is something about teaching that makes me feel whole. It does round out my life.” Statements like this speak to a strong sense of psychological identification with the work of teaching, which Lodahl and Keiner defined as job involvement, or “the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work, or the importance of work in his total self-image” (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965, p. 24).

In summary, the essential theme of Significance showed up several different ways in the stories and lived experiences of the study participants. For some participants, feelings of significance were directly related to the growth and transformation they saw in their students. Pat summarized this perspective when she described that “teachers teach to transform, not just to inform.” For other participants, feelings of significance were related to spiritual motivation and the impact of teaching on their own lives. Descriptions of this perspective included language about wholeness, job identification, and how teaching provides an opportunity to live out one’s life purpose and gifts. As the third
essential theme identified in this study, *Significance* must necessarily be part of the
description of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member,
just like a sound electrical system is a non-negotiable when looking for a place that “feels
like home.”

**Essential theme four: Connection.**

*Connection* was the fourth theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Participant stories and experiences related to this theme centered around meaningful interaction, authentic relationship, and getting to know students on a personal level. As Chloe described it, “I don't want to be seen as this ‘ivory tower’ college professor. I want to come across and say, ‘I'm really a fellow human being here!’” This sense of connection is related to what Hansen (1995) describes as “personal influence” where students seek more than knowledge of subject matter from their teachers, and teachers “[engage] in an authentic relationship with students where [they] know and respond with intelligence and compassion to students and their learning” (Rogers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 265-266).

Wanting to “be in touch with people” is part of Chloe’s call to teach. Since 2010, she has kept track of every single graduating student she has taught. Joking that it must be the “librarian coming out in her” (one of Chloe’s degrees is in library science), she shared an Excel document she designed to capture summaries about her students. Row after row, page after page, the list goes on, including each student’s name, location, job, and a field for other notes about his or her career and employment. At the end of each
term, Chloe asks students to connect with her via LinkedIn. That way, she has a way to contact them to follow up and see how things are going in the months and years to come:

These are all the students that I have had in class. Their name. Where they are from. Where they are now and what they're doing. I want to make sure that we acknowledge that we've got students that are doing some pretty remarkable things. We have students all over the place and each one of these is more than just a name. There are a lot of good stories, which is something that you can be proud of. (Chloe)

Pat has a similar tracking system where she uses index cards to record notes about each of her students. She asks the students to complete the front side of the index card with basic information such as their name, preferred learning style, and academic major. Pat then fills the back of the card with notes about each student’s in-class performance and any personal information she thinks is important or helpful:

I do these cards for every class. The front side they fill out with contact information. I also ask them what their history is with attending college. So this is Scott Brady (referring to Scott’s card in her hand) and he went to University of Phoenix, Community College of the Air Force, and Colorado Christian before he started here. And he put down here that he is a visual learner…I made a note here (referring to the back of Scott’s card) that he commutes from about an hour away, so I know that might be an issue for him. He didn’t put down here that he’s former military, that he’s pursuing a criminal justice degree, and that he currently works with the Sherriff’s office. But when he introduced himself in class, I added
that. I take notes as I go. Here’s Shannon Pickering (referring to another card). I wrote down that she’s a very busy single mom with two kids, two part-time jobs, and taking three classes this term. I also made notes that she is a paralegal and works at a restaurant…she was working at the major league baseball field, too. These details help me to know if there are personal things going on that might affect her in class. (Pat)

Connections can be fostered through conversation and getting to know students on a personal level, too. “By the time I’m done with the class,” Meghan described, “I feel like I know each person. I know something about them. A little bit of who they are.” In one specific example Meghan provided, she described an experience with a student who quit showing up for class. Concerned about her, Meghan reached out to make sure everything was okay:

I saw a student who was a very shy student and all of the sudden she quit showing up. So I reached out to her to find out what was going on. And to make a long story short, she shared with me that her uncle had passed away. And it was unexpected. A complete shock to her family. So, I kind of gently went there with her saying (reading from an email Meghan shared as one of her artifacts), “I’m so, so sorry. I appreciate very much your willingness to share this with me… Please continue to heal at your own pace. I respect it.” At least I was able to find out that something was going on in her life. And in this particular case, she was pretty shy, and I think it was a difficult thing for her to tell me. But once she told me, it made
all the difference. And I was like, “Okay - let's figure this out together and let’s help you succeed. And let's help you get through this class.” (Meghan)

In addition to supporting students in times of struggle and keeping track of their career paths and unique life situations, connections can also be fostered through formal assignments, as is the case in one of Chloe’s classes:

In week one, students have to state three goals. The first two are professional or academic. “I hope I can learn to write better.” Or, “I'd like to find out what you do when you're called an events coordinator.” The third can be anything they want. “I wish I could lose 10 pounds.” Or, “I'd like to run a triathlon and get the dining room painted.” They automatically get points for whatever they put. Later in the term, I check in with them ask how it’s going. I care about their academic goals, but I’ll also make sure to ask, “Have you picked out the color for that dining room yet?” All that to say, the value that I find is that this assignment provides me some insight to who my students are and what their priorities are. (Chloe)

In summary, Connection was the fourth theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. In Pat’s words, connection is about being “high-touch” in a high-tech world. Participants described fostering connections through tracking of students’ career paths and unique life situations, formal classroom assignments, and supporting students in times of struggle. Despite the varying approaches described to foster student connection, the stories and experiences related to this theme seemed to center around what Hansen (1995) described as “personal influence” that was achieved through meaningful interaction, authentic
relationship, and getting to know students on a personal level. As the fourth essential theme identified in this study, Alignment must necessarily be part of the description of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, just like structural integrity is a non-negotiable when looking for a place that “feels like home.”

**Essential theme five: Commitment.**

Commitment was the fifth and final theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Participant stories and experiences related to this theme centered around feelings of responsibility and obligation to students and to the teaching profession, and as a commitment to student learning and success. Hansen (1995) contends that bringing a sense of commitment and agency to your work that embodies the belief you have something to contribute to it is a defining characteristic of being called to teach. Similarly, Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2012) identify teacher commitment as one of the primary characteristics of feeling calling to teach, pointing to research from Firestone and Pennell (1993) that defines commitment as a “psychological bond or identification of the individual with an object that takes on special meaning and importance” (p. 491). In this study, the specific objects of commitment for teachers included students’ learning, students’ career success, the students themselves, and a specific kind of learning experience.

Bob’s commitment to his students is an extension of the responsibility he feels to ensure students learn something in his class. He sees teaching as a significant responsibility and a role that must be taken seriously, sharing that:
If I commit to doing something, I’m going to do it as well as I can…I feel completely committed to the students. It’s more than just a job. I mean, it really is a responsibility. These people are entrusting you with something that’s very important. You don’t just kind of walk through it. (Bob)

Tom feels a responsibility to ensure students learn something in his class, too. Based on his own experience of feeling underprepared to enter the field of project management, Tom is committed to making sure his students are poised for success in the real world:

I really do feel an obligation to teach and make sure my students learn something. I want to make sure they're happy coming out of the class and getting good content. I don't want to do a bad job because they're paying a lot of money and I think they deserve to learn some stuff. Being committed to the students and their success is part of being a teacher. I’ll do everything I can to make them succeed. I tell them, in my first job, my boss threw something on my desk and said, “Write out a request for a proposal so we can get bids on this stuff.” And I about collapsed into a puddle - I didn't know what to do. I tell my students, “I'm going to teach you to do that stuff, so you'll have an idea what to do in that situation.” (Tom)

As a coach and consultant, Pat’s commitment is to her students’ long-term career success, which is evidenced by a statement in her syllabus that encourages them to reach out if they want help addressing challenges or issues in their professional lives:
If people have issues with where they want to go in their career or business, I'll coach them on that as they go through class. That's kind of the side benefit of being in my class. I was actually just getting my class ready for next quarter and copied and pasted a statement into my syllabus that says, “Please feel free to come and talk to me about organizational issues, business, your career, etc. It's part of the class.” (Pat)

In addition to feeling committed to the long-term success of her students, Chloe discussed her commitment to provide a high-quality and engaging learning experience, which she also referred to as “memory-making.” She said the first step in providing a high-quality learning experience is to accomplish what she outlines in the syllabus. “I do hope that’s a baseline,” she said. She’ll tell students, “I’ve told you that you are going to have these experiences and learn about these areas. And I hope that 10 weeks later, you can go ‘Yeah! that happened.’” Another step in providing a high-quality and engaging learning experience is to get students out of the classroom and into local organizations where they have the chance to interact with leaders in the arts and culture community. On the first day of class each term, Chloe asks students to look around the classroom. Then, she says “I vow as God is my witness, we will never be back here.” As one of her artifacts, Chloe shared a summary of all the off-campus locations where she holds class throughout the term. From performing arts centers to museums and botanic gardens, she strives to provide connections to professional in the field, expand her students’ knowledge and awareness of local arts and cultural organizations, and build practical knowledge from first-hand experiences in the community. To help reflect her
commitment to providing a high-quality and engaging learning experience for her students that results in excitement, joy and “fireworks,” Chloe created the aesthetic product pictured in Figure 8:

Figure 8: Chloe’s Aesthetic Product, representing her commitment to providing a quality learning experience that results in excitement, joy, and “fireworks” for her students.

In describing the different components of her aesthetic product, Chloe shared the following:

In my teaching, I feel like I take all of these kinds of disparate, different things (represented by the various objects pictured at the top of the image in Figure 8). We need fidelity and beauty and consistency. And then, every once in a while, we just need to go off the charts. I bring in multiple experiences and multiple contacts and put them in through a filter of what kids need to know (represented by the
And then into a highly structured final point to create excitement and joy and fireworks. It all makes sense to students in the end. That is what I’m trying to accomplish. (Chloe)

In summary, Commitment was the fifth theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Participant stories and experiences related to this theme centered around feelings of dedication to students and their success, or like Chloe described, to creating a particular type of learning environment. Ultimately, the essential theme of Commitment captured participants’ overall feelings of responsibility to making a positive impact on students and their learning. As the fifth and final essential theme identified in this study, Commitment must necessarily be part of the description of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, just like functional plumbing is a non-negotiable when looking for a place that “feels like home.”

The five essential themes that emerged in this study were (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment, which are consistent with existing literature that describes and characterizes the call to teach. Although each essential theme bears a separate title, it is important to recognize their interconnected nature. Many of the stories and anecdotes relate to more than one essential theme, further reinforcing that the phenomenon of feeling called to teach is better characterized as a holistic “web of experiences” (van Manen, 1990) than as a set of discrete components that make up a larger whole. In summarizing the essential themes which characterize the
phenomenon, the participant stories and experiences related to the theme of Enjoyment centered around perceptions of fun, pleasure, delight, joy, and satisfaction. Participant stories and experiences related to the theme of Alignment centered around the feeling that teaching is a natural extension of who the participants are hard-wired to be. Participant stories and experiences related to the theme of Significance suggested that teaching extends beyond information exchange and is more about transformation, growth, inspiration, and legacy-building. Participant stories and experiences related to the theme of Connection centered around meaningful interaction, authentic relationship, and getting to know students on a personal level. And finally, participant stories and experiences related to the theme of Commitment centered around feelings of responsibility and obligation to students, to the teaching profession, and to student learning and success. Collectively, these five essential themes characterize what participants described as feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Carefully curating participant stories and lived experiences that characterize each of the essential themes was one way I reflected on these themes, attempting to bring “nearness to that which tends to be obscure” related to the phenomenon to teach as adjunct faculty. I also compared the essential themes to the non-negotiables in looking for a home like structural integrity of the house, functioning plumbing, safe electrical wiring, and other important details like whether or not the roof leaks and the furnace works.

**Auxiliary Themes**

In addition to the five essential themes discussed above, I identified four auxiliary themes in the data. While these themes aren’t essential to understanding the phenomenon
of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, they emerged as important in terms of the study’s overall goals and specific research questions. In the metaphor of finding a place that “feels like home,” the auxiliary themes are factors like vaulted ceilings, quality of schools, and access to outdoor spaces that may be perceived with varying levels of importance by different homebuyers. The auxiliary themes included (1) consistency of identity and self-description across contexts, (2) belonging, (3) spirituality, and (4) impact of identity on teaching practice.

**Theme one: Consistency of identity and self-description across contexts.**

The first auxiliary theme centered around consistency of participants’ self-descriptions across various aspects of their personal and professional lives. Whether in social settings, in the classroom, or at work, participants described themselves in consistent ways. In Meghan’s words, “I never check who I am at the door.” Like the essential theme of *Alignment*, this theme also connects back to the Holistic Conception of Identity diagram initially presented in Chapter Two.
Intentionally designed with resemblance to the taijitu, or yin-yang symbol, the diagram suggests a dynamic interplay between principles that contain and give rise to one another, incorporating facets of personal identity and professional identity into the same, collective whole (Highleyman, 2009). Given the interconnected nature of the collective whole, it was not surprising that participant stories and experiences reflected consistency of identity and across contexts.

When asked to describe himself, Tom said, “I’m fairly process driven and I like following the rules. I always follow the rules, both inside and outside of work.” He also described how being a project manager shows up in his personal life:

I do like being a project manager. I enjoy that skill set and enjoy what’s involved. And you know, unfortunately, for my family it’s kind of how I manage
everything, including family vacations. One of my daughters took a spring break with her friends. When she came back, she said, “I didn’t realize how much you plan out everything we do.” Like I said, I’m a project manager. Project management covers so much of my daily life. It’s not just my job. It’s everything I do! I’m always planning, scheduling, thinking about things to that’s a big part of who I am. I don’t think I change all that much when I walk out the door or in the door. (Tom)

Tom’s careful planning and preference for structure shows up in the structure of his classes, too. Tom selected his syllabus as an artifact to share during the third interview, describing in painstaking detail the flow of the assignments, the course schedule, and his grading expectations. “I don’t think there are any surprises,” he said. “I mean, every assignment is laid out. I break down the rubric exactly how I grade everything. I can’t make it much easier.”

When articulating what’s important to know about her as an individual and as a professional, Chloe started out by saying, “I think those two do merge.” She went on to describe how, given her reputation for being “professional, quick-responding and efficient,” it’s important that people see her as a “real human being” and have some insight into the whimsical side of her, too. For example, when creating a video reminder for her students about an upcoming event or deadline, Chloe records the message in her dining room, surrounded by eclectic décor including a windchime made out of forks, her antique kitchen appliances from the 1940’s, or an entire miniature snow village creatively
displayed on wooden boards supported by the rungs on opposing sides of a large, open ladder:

Instead of writing a formal text-based announcement in our online learning management system, I’ll record a quick and informal video saying “Hi, welcome to my dining room. Sorry the cat is walking by the camera right now. But I wanted to remind you that this paper is due.” (Chloe)

Another aspect of Chloe’s identity that shows up in various aspects of her life is her self-described role as a “memory-maker.” Whether in the classroom, at her church, or in the work she does overseeing the membership collaborative of over nearly 50 arts, culture and science organizations, Chloe sees it as her mission to help shake people out of stagnation to experience something memorable:

My own personal mission – my mission in life, which I think is also part of my educational philosophy, seems to be providing opportunities for others to make memories. As I see it, my job is to use the creative and management skills I have, in the classroom and elsewhere, so that other people will have the opportunity to make memories. If I worked with your kids at church and we’re going to do a Christmas pageant, I’m the person who can give you the opportunity to make a memory. In the classroom, I feel that way, too. This also plays out in my work.

For example, I may be working with a physics teacher who wants an engaging presenter, just somebody that comes in and drones on about physics. So I turn to Colorado Ballet and ask, “Could you do a program on physics with your dancers?” Now imagine a classroom of middle schoolers with a male dancer who...
is in sweatpants and an Avalanche jersey (no tights allowed on men in middle school!) and a ballerina that's about the size of a stick. The male dancer says, “I'm going to try to lift her over my head, but she's not going to help in any way. We are not going to use physics. I am just trying to get this 93-pound person over my head.” And he would start to lift her as dead weight. He would get her to about his ear and he would say, “I really don't think I can do much more than this.” And then he would say, “Let’s use physics.” So, the ballerina got a distance from him and as she ran to him, he said, “This is momentum.” As she bent her knees, he said “This is thrust.” And he held her over his head with one hand. Now that’s a memory! These kids will remember this dancer who looked like a football player who was able to lift this girl using physics. Being part of that kind of memory-making is so fulfilling. (Chloe)

Seeing herself as a shepherd is the consistent part of Pat’s identity that shows up across multiple aspects of her life. She characterizes the role of the shepherd, in part, as that of an encourager, which she sees playing out in various roles in her life including as a coach, teacher, consultant, mom, and wife. After recently starting an academic program at a local seminary, Pat sees her role as a shepherd playing out in the work she plans to do as a spiritual director upon graduation:

Being a shepherd means you come alongside somebody. You don't lead them. You don't direct them. You don't follow them. You just work alongside of them. And that is also very much how I approach my work. It’s how I approach my kids, too. I think they get kind of frustrated with me because sometimes, they'll
say, “I need your help to figure something out.” And instead of telling them what to do, I'll ask them questions to make them think about what they should do. This approach helped me in my interactions with my four siblings after my mother’s recent passing, too. I struggled a little bit with the situation because my natural tendency is to be in charge, but I'm not the executor of the estate. It wasn’t until I attended a Bible study after returning from the funeral that the message came through. “You're the shepherd to your siblings which doesn't mean you're in charge, but just kind of be the guide to make sure that they don't stray.” (Pat)

Meghan has always been upfront with her employers explaining, “I don’t check who I am at the door.” She desires to be herself and live as herself, regardless of the environment or her professional surroundings. Part of being herself means consistently representing and integrating her worldview as both a clinician and a lawyer. Her students seem to appreciate the transparency, too. Reading from one of her artifacts, Meghan shared the following email exchange:

Dear Professor,

I’m so excited to delve into this area of study. I find your career path so intriguing and have so much respect for your combined clinical and legal perspective.

Thanks for leading this class.

Dear Danielle,

Thank you for recognizing my combined legal and clinical experience. It’s been very beneficial because it helps me stay focused on the fact that all health care regulation ultimately impacts patients. It’s easy to get distracted and caught up in
the “red tape” of legislative law. I try to impart this perspective to my students because it’s something you always need to stay mindful about in your role as a health care leader. (Meghan)

In summary, the theme of consistency of identity and self-description across contexts emerged in a variety of participant stories and lived experiences, which is consistent with the interconnected, dynamic interplay among various aspects of identity that is depicted in the Holistic Conception of Identity diagram initially presented in Chapter Two. Whether describing themselves in the classroom, at work, or with their families, participants used consistent language to characterize their behaviors, priorities, roles and ways of perceiving the world. Whether identifying as a careful planner, a memory-maker, a shepherd, or as a dual-industry professional, Meghan described it well when she said, “You are who you are and can’t check that at the door.”

**Theme two: Belonging.**

The second auxiliary theme centered around participants’ sense of belonging to their academic communities and to the institution as a whole. Stories and experiences related to this theme centered around gestures of inclusion and validation, opportunities to get involved on campus, institutional resources available to adjunct faculty, previous ties to the institution, and physical proximity to campus. Exploring the auxiliary theme of belonging in the context of this study is important for two primary reasons. First, belonging is important is because it is a major component of Social Identity Theory. According to Social Identity Theory, individuals engage in a process of self-categorization where they compare themselves to other social groups (which may include
co-workers and colleagues in the workplace) to determine to which groups they are
similar and to which groups they are different (Tajfel & Tuner, 1979; Turner, Hogg,
Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Another way of describing Social Identity Theory is
that one’s identity is largely derived from the unique combination of social groups to
which he or she feels as though he or she belongs. Whether or not adjunct faculty feel as
though they belong to their academic communities and/or institutions has implications for
their perceptions of identity, the identity salience of “being a teacher,” and their feelings
of connection to their work and job responsibilities. The second reason that exploring the
auxiliary theme of belonging is important is because adjunct faculty are “often treated as
outcasts by the academic mainstream” (Dolan, 2011, p. 65) and regarded as the second-
class citizens of academia (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). While this was not the case for
participants in this study, it is important to recognize that their experiences of inclusion
and belonging represent a departure from the norm, which appeared to have strengthened
their identity salience of being adjunct faculty and further affirmed their perceptions of
feeling called to teach.

Bob attributes the sense of belonging he feels to a variety of factors. One reason,
he believes, is because he goes out of his way to foster relationships with the full-time
faculty in his department:

I make friends with the full-time faculty. They have been very, very welcoming to
me and they treat me as a partner, not as like, you know, somebody who is of
somewhat lesser status. Some of that may be me because I’m a reasonably
outgoing guy. I think some of it may also be that I have a terminal degree, when a
lot of adjunct faculty don't. I think a lot of it has to do with the nature of the people that we have here the department. Just this fall, we have a new head of the department and he’s incredibly inclusive. He’s been involving me in things that a typical adjunct wouldn’t be invited. (Bob)

When asked if he could recall any situations or incidences that made Bob feel an especially pronounced sense of belonging, a few came to mind. The first was an appreciation event at the on-campus coffee shop to say thank you to all adjuncts for their work. The second gesture was when Bob was given his own “official” mailbox in the departmental office. The third gesture was a sympathy card signed by everyone in the department when Bob’s father passed away last year. Bob shared the card as one of his artifacts describing it as a “really nice thing” that made him feel “included and a part of things” at the university. The final gesture Bob mentioned that made him feel a sense of institutional belonging was represented in another artifact he shared - a university-wide publication designed to share reflections about identity, difference, and community. Bob’s essay about the importance of literacy and education was included as one of twelve selected from submissions across campus and was highlighted by the chancellor of the university in the opening comments of the book. In describing the significance of being included in the publication, Bob shared how it represented a meaningful opportunity to “get involved in something” after so many years of working independently as a consultant without a sense of a professional community:

For so many years, I worked on my own. I realized after I got here that I had missed sort of belonging. I didn't realize that I missed it until I sort of belonged
again. Now that I'm here, I thought that I would like to be involved something that makes me feel like I've joined something. In this case, the university. So, when I saw that they were looking for people to write for the book, I said, “Well, that would be fun.” It was just a part of feeling more a part of the greater institution. (Bob)

Although Chloe wasn’t as specific as Bob in outlining instances where she felt an especially pronounced sense of belonging, she did mention being invited to provide feedback on the design and content of her specific academic program. She also mentioned professional development opportunities and her physical proximity to campus as contributing to her sense of belonging:

I think there are opportunities to be as connected as I want to be. I appreciate that they occasionally bring us in for a faculty meeting in and go, “What do you think about this program? What’s missing?” I like that. I also know there are many more opportunities to get involved, like the voluntary professional development program. I’ll look at the list of workshops and go “Ooooooh…. Can I make that happen?” I also think I feel a part of the university due to proximity as well. I don’t live a half a mile away from the college. So that makes it really easy for me. It’s very easy for me to connect with the college because it’s in my neighborhood. (Chloe)

In addition to feeling a sense of connection and belonging to the university because of the opportunities to get involved in an academic context, Chloe attributes her sense of belonging to the non-academic resources available to her:
The discount to be part of the on-campus recreation center and to take yoga classes has been really good for me. And so, I walk on that campus and I feel like this is my campus. And also, my husband and I will buy tickets to go to the on-campus performing arts center. I recently went to a play that was done by graduates of the theater department. (Chloe)

Like Chloe, Tom also mentioned physical proximity in describing his sense of belonging and connection to the university:

In terms of making me feel like I belong here, I guess living so close does help because I drive by all the time. And you know, I’m happy when the sports teams do well. I feel a part of that. I also like that I can bring people to campus. For example, I’m the president of my fly-fishing club and because of my connections here, I was able to secure meeting space in one of the nice locations on campus, which was convenient. (Tom)

Since Meghan lives approximately 45 minutes away from campus, she doesn’t spend as much time on or near campus as Chloe and Tom. The first thing that came up for her when describing her sense of belonging to the university was her status as an alumna of the law school:

I feel very much a part of the university on various levels. Of course, I graduated from there, so that in and of itself has something to do with it. I certainly have had that connection through the years. I have participated in some alumni activities and will tell my students, as an alumnus you’ve just become part of something
really big. The alumni opportunities here—well, I don't know that you can find anything like this. It's just unbelievable. (Meghan)

In addition to feeling a connection because of her status as an alumna, Meghan also feels a sense of connection because of the level of support that has been offered to her as an adjunct faculty member. The department is invested in her success and is willing to provide help and assistance when needed:

I really do feel a strong sense of connection and belonging to the university as a whole. In terms of teaching, that's been great because people have been very supportive. The staff has been very supportive. There are so many resources. It's a situation where it's what you want to make it. (Meghan)

In summary, the second auxiliary theme centered around the participants’ sense of belonging at the university. Stories and experiences related to this theme centered around specific gestures of inclusion, the availability of various opportunities to get involved on campus, the variety of institutional support resources available to adjunct faculty, a longstanding relationship with the institution as an alumna, and the implications of being located within the immediate geography of campus.

**Theme three: Spirituality.**

The third auxiliary theme centered around participants’ connection to faith, religion and spirituality. While not all participants acknowledged the presence of a spiritual or religious component in their lives, Pat, Chloe and Meghan described themselves as women of faith for whom the spiritual dimension of their identity is an important guiding force. Because the theme of spirituality was not pronounced across all
study participants, it was not appropriate to consider it an essential theme characterizing the phenomenon of feeling called to teach. Discussing it as an auxiliary theme is appropriate, however, because of the significant role that it did play for some participants and because of its impact on their identities, motivations to teach, and classroom practices. Discussing spirituality is also appropriate because of the long-standing, historical relationship between calling and religious belief. Calvin first described the concept of “vocation” in the 16th century, characterizing Christians’ work as a response to a call from God (Michaelsen, 1953), and present-day authors like Palmer continue to characterize calling and vocation as being inspired by God. “Vocation does not come from a voice ‘out there’ calling me to be something I’m not,” Palmer wrote. “It comes from a voice ‘in here’ calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.” (Palmer, 2000, p. 10)

Pat embraces that her primary purpose in life is to help people grow and change, which she sees as connected to her spiritual mission as well. In addition to attending church and regular Bible studies, she started attending seminary this past year to further pursue her mission, choosing to enroll in a certificate program in spiritual formation. The seminary program, in addition to several powerful sermons at her church, has led Pat to embrace her role as a shepherd, which she believes entails coming along beside someone to provide support and guidance without actively directing or leading them:

I started going to the seminary this fall. I’m working on a certificate in spiritual formation, which will be working in churches or spiritual settings with adults to develop their faith. You know, it’s the same thing I have been doing… it’s
helping people grow and change. I’ll be a spiritual director, which means that you walk beside someone as they experience Christ. It’s so similar to coaching. And there are so many applications for emotional intelligence. It’s kind of mind-blowing to me that all these pieces of my life came together in this way. (Pat)

Pat described how spirituality and faith play a role in her classroom practice, too, when she explained how she integrates seminary-inspired activities into the learning experience for her students. Although she refrains from using the Bible as a textbook, seeing how Biblical parables could be used as a teaching text in the classes she teaches relates to management, emotional intelligence and organizational behavior:

One of the things I like to do in class is reflection. I have really gotten an appreciation for reflection after being in seminary because it’s part of everything you do in seminary – you read and then you reflect. You interact and then reflect. Reflection is built into everything. I like bringing that stuff from seminary – like reflection, journaling – into the classroom more and more. Self-awareness is such a big part of Christian ministry as well. So that’s all kind of tied together for me.

You know, if I wanted to go to a Christian University, I could just use the Bible as the textbook because it’s respect for people, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence. You really could take the parables out of the Bible and use them as a textbook for soft skill concepts. (Pat)

Like Pat, a large portion of Meghan’s identity is associated with her religion and spirituality. In the Identity Wheel she produced during one of her study-related
interviews, Meghan identified being Catholic as one of three most salient aspects of her identity (pictured in the upper left quadrant of the image in Figure 10).

Figure 10: Meghan’s Identity Wheel highlighting the importance of being a Catholic

In describing the importance of being Catholic, Meghan said she is “pretty into” her faith and thinks of herself as a mom and a Catholic before anything else. “I’m a faith-based person, although I don’t talk about it a lot. But that’s a lot of who I am. I love my profession and I love all the opportunities I’ve had, but all that is on the side compared to the bigger part of my overall life picture.” Meghan also believes that the classroom should be regarded as a “sacred space” where people are able to be themselves without hiding anything:

I guess that’s the main takeaway. Be authentic. I think that classrooms should be a sacred place. It’s one of the few sacred places left. Where you really should be
able to say whatever you feel and feel like you’re being heard. I mean, how many other sacred places do we have anymore? And, once you get out into the work world, you don’t get to do that very often. So, the classroom should be that place. I feel really strongly about that. (Meghan)

Like Pat and Meghan, Chloe describes herself as a woman of faith. Reflecting on the time she took a break from teaching for a few years, she said she knew something was missing in her life. Then, when the opportunity to teach in her current program arose, it was a “perfect fit.” Chloe credits a higher power for bringing her life together in such a satisfying and meaningful way, describing the merging of interest and opportunity as a product of “beautiful synergy”:

I am a woman of faith and would say that it really has been a gift and grace that I have always found work that combines a variety of my loves. And that’s where I just sort of go, “Thank you, divine inspiration, for guiding all of these things together.” (Chloe)

In summary, the third auxiliary theme centered around participants’ spirituality and connection to faith and religion. Stories and experiences related to this theme centered around the importance of spirituality in participants’ lives, the impact of spirituality on teaching practice, the importance of seeing the classroom as a sacred space, and the role of divine inspiration in generating opportunities for meaningful and rewarding work.

Theme four: Impact of identity on teaching practice.
The fourth and final auxiliary theme centered around examples and stories related to the impact that identity has on teaching practice. While a clear connection between identity and teaching practice emerged from many of the participants, stories and examples ranged from relatively straightforward to multi-faceted, layered, and complex. This theme is consistent with existing literature that ties together the personal and professional identity of teachers and connects that identity to the practice of teaching. As Palmer (1998) states, “we teach who we are” (p. 1). Palmer further explains the connection between identity and teaching practice saying, “Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together” (Palmer, 2008, p. 312). Sullivan (2000) expresses a similar sentiment, describing that teachers bring their “whole organism” to their tasks. The connection between identity and teaching practice relates back to the diagram presented in Chapter Two that depicts the relationship between personal identity, professional identity, teaching intentions, and teaching practice and suggests interrelationship among the various components.
Figure 11: Components of a holistic conception of identity in teachers and implications thereof.

Some examples participants shared regarding the connection between identity and teaching practice were straightforward. For example, Bob’s identity as a “sports fan” and “old jock” is related to the sports metaphors he likes to use in class. Tom provided another straightforward example when he said, “Project management covers so much of my daily life. It’s not just my job. It’s everything I do, including the way I teach.”

Other examples of the connection between identity and teaching practice weren’t quite as succinct or straightforward. Take, for example the connection between Bob’s love of politics (he dedicated 30% of his Identity Wheel to politics) and the way he
described his approach to teaching a recent management class on the principles of neuroscience that relate to human behavior:

If I do something or say something politically in class, I'll tell students they have to understand I come from a left perspective. For example, the other day, I got into a little bit of neuroscience and brain chemistry. There is one part of the brain called the amygdala, which is your primitive brain. It's fight or flight kind of stuff. And, then you have the prefrontal cortex, which is the executive brain where we make all our rational decisions. I had a slide where I was saying, “Here's two people that you know.” One was a person who operates using her prefrontal cortex and I showed a picture of Michelle Obama. And then, I showed a picture of Trump and said, “You know, his amygdala rules him.” I went on to explain that just last week, there was somebody in North Korea who made mention of Trump as an old lunatic. And then Trump tweeted that he was insulted to be called old, although he didn't seem to mind being called a lunatic. Anyway, he retorted about the leader of North Korea and said, “I don't call him short and fat.” That's an example of the amygdala being in charge. So, I'll bring up politics sometimes like that in class. (Bob)

Another example from Bob is related to his identity as an author. As opposed to writing a traditional midterm exam/case study for his graduate students, Bob had them co-author two different books about common sense and leadership advice:

I was trying to figure out a good case study that people could analyze as a midterm and decided I wanted to do something else interesting instead. Because I
know how to publish books, I had groups write papers on material that we covered in the course. That turned into one book. I had already written another book that I use in my consulting practice that’s organized as 140 pieces of common sense career advice. I liked the idea of the tweet piece with the 140 characters, so I had another group give me tweets. And then, you know, you can self-publish a book on Amazon where people can either download it as an eBook, or you can print it on demand. (Bob)

As an extension of her identity as a storyteller, a creative, and a memory maker, Chloe sees teaching as a creative opportunity to make learning both engaging and interesting for her students. As was previously described in the essential theme of Connection, Chloe’s aesthetic product represents the way she sees teaching as a creative process of sometimes “going off the charts” to integrate components into her course that make learning fun, exciting, and memorable for students.
Figure 12: Chloe’s Aesthetic Product, representing how her identity as a storyteller, a memory maker, and a creative translates into teaching practice.

In my teaching, I feel like I take all of these kind of disparate, different things (represented by the various objects pictured at the top of the image in Figure 12). We need fidelity and beauty and consistency. And then, every once in a while, we just need to go off the charts. I bring in multiple experiences and multiple contacts and put them in through a filter of what kids need to know (represented by the squiggly arrow that points down towards the bottom of the image in Figure 12). And then into a highly structured final point to create excitement and joy and fireworks. (Chloe)

Seeing herself as a shepherd is an important part of Pat’s identity (25% of her Identity Wheel is allocated to being a shepherd). Her decision to pursue her seminary
certificate is, in large part, due to Pat’s continued desire to shepherd others in a way that helps them grow and change. An important part of fostering growth and change in her students is engaging them in the some of the classroom activities she has seen modeled in the seminary, which include including reflection and self-awareness:

One of the things I like to do in class is reflection. I have really gotten an appreciation for reflection after being in seminary because it’s part of everything you do in seminary – you read and then you reflect. You interact and then reflect. Reflection is built into everything. I like bringing that stuff from seminary – like reflection, journaling – into the classroom more and more. Self-awareness is such a big part of Christian ministry as well. (Pat)

Like Pat, Meghan’s identity is related to the design of assignments and activities in her class. Meghan allocated 50% of her Identity Wheel to “truth,” explaining “I’m always, bottom line, looking for the truth. Always.” Truth, honesty, and authenticity are concepts she explicitly addresses in her teaching because she feels that classrooms “should be a place where you should be able to say whatever you feel and feel like you're being heard.” While she always encourages to students to speak their minds and share their perspective, Meghan shared one particular assignment where she seeks to inspire honest reflection and authenticity. In the first step of the assignment, as presented in the artifact Meghan shared, students identify opinions and biases that influence the ways in which they interact with people who hold opposing views. Instructions for the assignment read as follows:
Identify negative feelings: It is important (though admittedly it can be uncomfortable) to identify negative feelings that you have about your opposition. Are you biased? Do they make you angry? Do you think they are stupid? This is not about identifying the arguments your opposition raises, but rather about identifying and describing negative feelings and/or biases that either you or opposition hold about each other. These could include, but are not limited to, negative feelings and/or biases regarding political ideology, religious belief, morals, socio-economic background, race, sexual orientation, etc. (Meghan)

Meghan believes asking students to engage in an honest assessment of their own bias is the best way to help them move forward and find common ground upon which to successfully advance legal negotiations.

In summary, this auxiliary theme relates to the ways that the identity of adjunct faculty impacts his/her classroom practices. The theme centered around different expressions of identity in the classroom, including examples that instructors provide, the ways in which they communicate, the learning activities they design, and the assignments they create. While stories and examples ranged from straightforward to complex, a clear connection between identity and teaching practice emerged. The connection between identity and teaching practice is consistent with existing literature and reinforces the appropriateness of the figure presented in Chapter Two that depicts various components of a holistic conception of identity in teachers and implications thereof.

The four auxiliary themes that emerged in this study included (1) consistency of identity and self-description across contexts, (2) belonging, (3) spirituality, and (4)
impact of identity on teaching practice. In summarizing these auxiliary themes, “consistency of identity and self-description across contexts” centered around consistency of participants’ self-descriptions across various aspects of their personal and professional lives. Participant stories and experiences related to the theme of “belonging” centered around gestures of inclusion and validation, opportunities to get involved on campus, institutional resources available to adjunct faculty, previous ties to the institution, and physical proximity to campus. Participant stories and experiences related to the theme of “spirituality” addressed participants’ connection to faith, religion and spirituality. And finally, examples related to the theme of “impact of identity on teaching practice” included various ways that identity influences teaching behaviors like the examples instructors provide in class, the ways they communicate with students, the learning activities they design, and the assignments they create. While these auxiliary themes aren’t essential to understanding the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, they emerged as important in terms of the study’s overall goals and specific research questions. Returning to the metaphor of finding a place that “feels like home,” the auxiliary themes are distinct from the essential themes, which represent the non-negotiables like structural soundness of a home. Auxiliary themes are like vaulted ceilings, which represent factors that may be desirable for homebuyers, but are perceived with varying levels of importance and relevance.

**Connection to Research Questions**

The central research question for this qualitative study was “How do adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher
education?” In addition to the central research question stated above, the study also sought to answer four additional sub-questions:

- How do adjunct faculty members describe their call to teaching in the post-secondary environment?
- What contexts or situations have influenced the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member?
- How do adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher?
- What impact does identity have on adjunct faculty members’ teaching intentions and professional practice?

**Central research question.**

The central research question for this qualitative study was “How do adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education?” Answering this question gets at the heart of what it means to be an adjunct faculty member and how adjunct faculty interpret and describe their experiences in this role.

The essential themes presented earlier in this chapter provide valuable insight regarding the central research question. Exploring essential themes in phenomenological research is to see the “knots in the web of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through meaningful wholes” (van Manen, 1990, p. 90), which is consistent with exploring the meaning that adjunct faculty make out of their
experiences teaching in higher education. The five essential themes identified in this study were (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment. While each essential theme offers unique insight into the meaning that adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make out of their teaching experience in higher education, their interconnected nature positions them as related facets of a larger whole.

Given that the words “meaning” and “significance” are synonymous (Significance, n.d.), it is logical that the stories and experiences related to the essential theme of Significance had a strong tie to the ways participants described making meaning out of their teaching experiences. Stories and experiences related to this theme suggested that teaching is meaningful because of its power to transform students, encourage growth, inspire others, and build lasting impact. In describing the significance of teaching, Meghan said “It’s something you feel like you have to give to…I want to give to this. I need to do this because something important is going to happen.”

Another way that participants made meaning out of their teaching experience was reflected in the discussion of essential theme of Enjoyment. Participant stories and experiences related to this theme centered around perceptions of fun, pleasure, delight, joy, and satisfaction. Chloe provided an especially good example of how enjoyment impacts meaning-making in teaching when she shared her story about visiting a former student while he was working on the set of a popular television show. After describing comments the student made about Chloe’s impact on him and his career, she said, “I think that’s why I really enjoy teaching. Because 25 years later, I’m going, ‘Wow,
something special happened for him in my class. I really made an impact on this person.”

Participants also appeared to make meaning out of their teaching experience through the alignment of purpose it promotes in their lives. For example, in one of the stories related to the essential theme of Alignment, Pat talked about teaching as one of the ways, among many, she lives out her life purpose of helping people grow and change:

I realized that what drives my life purpose and motivates me is helping people.
It’s kind of mind blowing to me that all these pieces of my life came together.
That purpose statement has served me as a mother, a wife, a teacher, a student, a coach, and a consultant. It’s my “being” statement. (Pat)

Stories of meaning-making related to alignment can also be found in the auxiliary theme of spirituality. Participants who described a connection to faith, religion, and/or spirituality discussed how their faith shows up in various aspects of life and serves as a guiding force in aligning their priorities and activities. Chloe provided one example of the role she sees her faith playing in aligning various aspects of her life in a meaningful, significant way:

I am a woman of faith and would say that it really has been a gift and grace that I have always found work that combines a variety of my loves. And that’s where I just sort of go, “Thank you, divine inspiration, for guiding all of these things together.” (Chloe)

The final way that participants appeared to make meaning out of their teaching experiences was related to relationship. Stories and examples of relationship emerged in
the essential themes of both *Connection* and *Commitment*, as well as the auxiliary theme of belonging. Participant stories and experiences related to the theme of *Connection* centered around meaningful interaction, authentic relationship, and getting to know students on a personal level. Participant stories and experience related to the theme of *Commitment* centered around feelings of responsibility and obligation to students and to their learning and success. In contrast to student relationships, the relationships discussed in the auxiliary theme of belonging focused on relationships with fellow teachers and departmental colleagues. Overall, stories and examples related to this theme revolved around student relationships, what it meant to the participants be invited to academic events and meetings, and as Bob described, having been treated as a partner and an equal as opposed to “somebody who is of somewhat lesser status.”

**Research sub-question #1.**

The first research sub-question was “How do adjunct faculty members describe their call to teaching in the post-secondary environment?” One approach to answering this question is to summarize individual participant responses. While this approach provides valuable insight into the unique perspectives and motivations of each person, it does little to thematically group the responses or tie them together in a meaningful way. Therefore, it is also helpful to turn to the five essential themes that were identified as characterizing the phenomenon of interest in this study because the phenomenon of interest (the call to teach in higher education) so closely mirrors the nature of this research question. The combined approach of summarizing individual participant responses and integrating essential themes provides robust insight regarding this research.
question because it integrates both individual nuance and big-picture thematic explanation.

*Tom.*

When describing his call to teach, Tom said that he feels he has something significant to give his students, that teaching is more than just a job, and that there is something about teaching that makes him feel whole and rounds out his life. He can’t imagine not having done this work for the last 14 years because he enjoys it so much and it has become such a big part of his life.

*Pat.*

Pat believes she has something significant to give to her students. When describing her call to teach, she says it’s something that has been with her since she was a child. She can recall the feeling of fulfillment and purpose when she engaged in service projects as a child, which is the same feeling she gets when she is teaching. Pat says her life purpose of helping people to grow and change guides her in both her personal and professional work, which includes teaching.

*Bob.*

When describing his call to teach, Bob said that he feels he has something significant to give his students, he has great hope for his students and what they’re capable of achieving, that teaching is more than just a job, and that teaching brings him great joy.
Chloe.

Chloe’s call to teach has been a cornerstone in her life. For her, teaching is more than just a job; it brings her great joy and makes her feel whole. She feels that she has something significant to give to her students and sees teaching as a creative opportunity to make learning both engaging and interesting for her students.

Meghan.

When describing her call to teach, Meghan says it’s all about making a difference and believing she needs to do it because “something important is going to happen.” She’s drawn to teaching because she feels like she has something to give and it has something to give to her. She has great hope for her students and what they’re capable of achieving, and sees teaching as more than a routine task.

Before moving into a discussion of the five essential themes and how they relate to this research question, it is helpful to briefly review the 11 individual data codes that were classified under the category “Call to Teach Descriptors” during data analysis. In addition to influencing the essential themes, these codes reflect the breadth and variety of participant descriptions regarding what it means to be called to teach.

- Transformation
- Teaching is an honor
- Prepare students for work in the field
- Make a difference
- Legacy
• Inspiring good in others
• Connected to spirituality
• Connected to service
• Connected to people
• Connected to learning
• Connected to helpfulness

Drawing from participant stories and experiences included in the codes listed above, the five essential themes of (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment also provide insight regarding the ways participants described their call to teach in the post-secondary environment.

Participants described their call to teach as enjoyable and related to perceptions of fun, pleasure, delight, joy, and satisfaction. They also described their call to teach as aligned with their identity in ways that made teaching feel like a natural extension of who they are and know themselves to be. The essential theme of Significance is related to this research question because participants feeling called to teach described their work as meaningful, impactful, and significant, pointing out that teaching is about transformation, growth, and legacy-building more than it is about mere information exchange. Participants also brought up how feeling called to teach was related to establishing and sustaining a sense of connection with their students, which is similar to what Hansen (1995) describes as “personal influence.” Finally, participants described their call to teach as being committed to their students and feeling responsibility for their students’ success.
Research sub-question #2.

The second research sub-question was “What contexts or situations have influenced the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member?” Because participants’ first teaching experiences took place between 14 and 40+ years ago at a variety of different colleges and universities across the United States, it was appropriate to approach this research question by focusing on the participants’ experience of becoming adjunct faculty members at their current institution as opposed to becoming an adjunct faculty member, in general. When describing the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member, participants generally expressed excitement at being offered the opportunity to teach. Several participants described the experience as unsolicited and occurring by happenstance or chance, often as the result of professional networking or referral. Chloe also pointed to the availability of support resources as having an impact on her ability to manage the learning curve associated with becoming a new faculty member.

When describing the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member, excitement was the most common emotion participants mentioned. Although Chloe spent much of her career as a college professor, she stopped teaching when she relocated to a new city and took a job outside of academia. Reflecting on the break she took from teaching, she said she knew something was missing in her life. Then, when the opportunity to teach in her current program arose, she was excited to get back into it, describing the opportunity to teach again as a “perfect fit.”
Tom was excited, too, when he was offered the opportunity to teach as an adjunct faculty member. He knew he always wanted to teach and after several failed attempts to get his foot in the door somewhere, he was happy when the opportunity finally presented itself:

I always liked academics and the college atmosphere and higher education and thought I might want to teach. After I got my master’s degree and had been working for a while, I was like - now if I want to teach, what do I do? I looked at one campus that is well-known for construction management, but they don't teach a lot of project management. I went and talked to a couple of professors at another campus, too, and I started helping out with a couple classes for free, but unfortunately, they had an adjunct guy who didn't like me being there. So, he kind of sabotaged me, which didn't help things much. And then, because I didn't have a PhD, the dean of the engineering school said it probably wasn't going to work out for me since I only had a masters. Finally, I talked to someone in my current academic program who said he’d love my resume. Then, finally a class opened up and I started teaching! That was 14 years ago. (Tom)

Meghan also described herself as being excited when she was first offered the opportunity to become an adjunct faculty member. She met the director of her academic program at a legal education event and happened to mention she had taught in the past and might be interested in teaching again at some point in the future. When the Director called and offered her the opportunity to take on a class, Meghan was “delighted”: “After that legal conference, I got a call, sort of out of the blue asking if I would be interested in
taking on a course,” she recalled. “I was just delighted. I mean, I was just sort of over the moon. It was something that I really wanted to do.” While Meghan described herself as “delighted” and “over the moon” about becoming an adjunct faculty member, she also acknowledged that “it kind of happened by happenstance” and wasn’t something she intentionally set out to do.

Pat similarly described her experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member when she characterized it as the result of a series of unforeseen events. A friend of hers was asked to teach a course and declined the opportunity. When asked if she knew of anyone else who might be good for the job, Pat’s friend passed her name along:

The program director wanted to know if my friend wanted to teach a business social intelligence class in 2010. She didn’t want to do it since her other business was taking off and she was really too busy with that. She recommended me, so came into the program and just loved the process of creating a class! (Pat)

Like Meghan and Pat, Bob described his experience of becoming an adjunct faculty as a product of convergence and serendipity:

It all started because my neighbor who was teaching here came to hear a talk I had done someplace. And he said, “We could use you at DU because you’re a good speaker.” At that point, however, it just wasn’t going to work with the way my schedule was. Fast forward a to 2012, though, when I was kind of burned out on all the travel and I said to him, “Hey, I’d like to talk with folks over here.” As it turned out, my friend’s wife and the associate chair of the management department’s husband worked together. So there was what you may call a little bit
of convergence. I think there was some serendipity involved because they were looking for someone to teach organizational behavior course, and the book that they used was written by my dissertation advisor. I was familiar will all his stuff and got invited to teach the course. (Bob)

In addition to discussing the circumstances surrounding the initial invitation to as teach adjunct faculty member at their current institution, several participants also discussed how the availability of resources and support influenced their experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member. Chloe specifically mentioned the instructional support and the regular faculty meetings as positively impacting her experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member:

It’s not really coddling, but I don't know that I would have stayed with this institution, or the online learning management system if I hadn't felt immediate support. If I didn't have that support, I may have gone, “You know, my life is just too important to me to figure out how to do things like close an online discussion or enter grades.” I also like the fact that my academic director will occasionally convene a faculty meeting for adjuncts. I talk a lot there because I really want to ask questions about how you handle things. Or, I’ll say, “I have this idea and thought it worked pretty well. What do you think?” I appreciate the fact they took some serious time to bring us in to ask, “What do you think about this program? What's missing?” I know that there are many more opportunities for me to be as connected as I want to be. (Chloe)
Research sub-question #3.

The third research sub-question was “How do adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher?” Many of the participant experiences and stories shared under the essential theme of Alignment speak directly to this question. The essential theme of Alignment centered around the feeling that teaching is a natural extension of who the participants are hard-wired to be. Novak (1996) describes this aspect of calling as the “knowing of yourself” and the “finding of your identity” that is critical to uncovering your strong inner impulse towards a particular type of work or course of action. Chloe characterized alignment of various aspects of her personal and professional life (including teaching) as a “beautiful synergy” that she believes can only be described as “divinely inspired,” and both Meghan and Tom commented that you can’t change who you are when you walk into the classroom; you have no choice but to be who you are.

Describing the call to teach as residing at the heart of converging identities relates back to the Holistic Conception of Identity diagram initially presented in Chapter Two and mentioned elsewhere in Chapter Four.
Figure 13: Holistic Conception of Identity

The diagram suggests a dynamic interplay among various facets of personal identity and professional identity that converge around a strong inner impulse towards a particular type of work or course of action. Participant stories and experiences related to the essential theme of Alignment do indeed seem to support this model where calling is positioned as a unifying element at the nexus of identity representing the intersection of who you are and what you do. The auxiliary theme of “consistency of identity and self-description across contexts” is also relevant in answering this research question because it centered around consistency of participants’ self-descriptions across various aspects of their personal and professional lives.

In addition to being described as the product of “beautiful synergy,” the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher was
evidenced in the articulation of participants’ life purpose or personal mission. Pat and Chloe both shared stories about how their life purpose or personal mission integrates various aspects of their identity and informs their call to teach.

Pat embraces that her primary purpose in life is to help people grow and change. This life purpose is particularly well-aligned with the metaphor of a shepherd that she considers to be an important part of her identity (25% of her Identity Wheel is allocated to being a shepherd). In her role as a shepherd, Pat describes herself as coming alongside people to support them, guide them, and help them grow, regardless of whether that takes place in the classroom, at home, as a coach, or in her business:

I realized that what drives my life purpose and motivates me is helping people grow and change. It’s kind of mind blowing to me that all these pieces of my life came together. That purpose statement has served me as a mother, a wife, a teacher, a student, a coach, and a consultant. It’s my “being” statement. (Pat)

Given that “memory-making” is one of the components Chloe included in her Identity Wheel, it is not surprising that her personal mission centers around shaking people out of stagnation to experience something memorable:

My own personal mission – my mission in life, which I think is also part of my educational philosophy, seems to be providing opportunities for others to make memories. As I see it, my job is to use the creative and management skills I have, in the classroom and elsewhere, so that other people will have the opportunity to make memories. If I worked with your kids at church and we’re going to do a Christmas pageant, I’m the person who can give you the opportunity to make a
memory. In the classroom, I feel that way, too. This also plays out in my work.

(Chloe)

**Research sub-question #4.**

The fourth research sub-question was “What impact does identity have on adjunct faculty members’ teaching intentions and professional practice?” The auxiliary theme “impact of identity on teaching practice” directly speaks to this research question, although some insights related to this question were also discussed under the auxiliary theme “consistency of identity and self-description across contexts” and the essential theme *Alignment*.

While nuances of the connection between identity and teaching practice have been addressed in the existing literature (Greene, Kim, & Korthagen, 2013; Korthagen, 2004; Palmer, 1997; Palmer, 1998; Palmer, 2008; Sullivan, 2000), there is general agreement that it is nearly impossible to divorce identity and teaching practice because “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998, p. 1). Further elaborating on the connection between identity and teaching, Palmer (2008) explains that “teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together” (p. 312). Participant stories and examples presented in the auxiliary theme of “impact of identity on teaching practice” reflected this connection in a variety of ways including examples that instructors provide to students in class, the ways in which they communicate with students, the learning activities they design, and the assignments they create. Take, for example, how Bob’s identity as a “sports fan” and “old jock” informs
the sports metaphors he likes to use in class. Tom provided another example when he described how he sees himself as a project manager in all aspects of his life, including the way he teaches: “Project management covers so much of my daily life. It’s not just my job. It’s everything I do, including the way I teach.” Stories like Bob’s and Tom’s relate to the diagram initially presented in Chapter Two and mentioned elsewhere in Chapter Four that depicts the interconnected nature of identity and teaching practice.

Figure 14: Components of a holistic conception of identity in teachers and implications thereof.

While stories like Bob’s and Tom’s relate to the interconnected nature of identity and teaching practice depicted in Figure 14, additional discussion is required to fully answer the research question and address the role of teaching intentions. As Uhrmacher,
Moroye, and Flinders (2016) outline in their Instructional Arc (as depicted in Figure 15), both the intended curriculum and the operational curriculum are part of an integrated process that incorporates what teachers desire/plan to happen (the intended curriculum), what actually happens (the operational curriculum), and what students learn or take away from their experience (the received curriculum). The decision to focus on just the first two components of the Instructional Arc in this study is justified since Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders acknowledge that attending to all aspects of the arc may be too broad for certain studies and discourage researchers from jumping right to results (chapter 3, section 4, subsection 2, paragraph 2). As such, the discussion now turns to teaching intentions (the intended curriculum), and professional practice (the operational curriculum).

![Figure 15: The Instructional Arc](Reprinted from Using Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship for Qualitative Research (chapter 3, section 4, subsection 2, paragraph 2) by P.B. Uhrmacher, C. Moroye, and D. Flinders [Kindle version retrieved from Amazon.com]. Reprinted with permission.)

To fully understand the scope and breadth of teaching intentions expressed by the participants in this study, it can be helpful to list the individual data codes generated
during data analysis and classified under the category “Teaching Intentions.” Participant stories and examples contained within these codes were shared in responses to questions about teaching intentions, what participants “desire to happen in their classes,” and “what they hope to accomplish with their students.”

- Teach ethics
- Replicate real life
- Provide guidance and direction
- Prepare students for careers
- Meet student needs
- Interaction
- Engagement
- Drive patient concern
- Discipline-specific content
- Critical thinking
- Create partnerships
- Create a safe space
- Change students
- Challenge students
- Appeal to emotions

In addition to the list of data codes classified under the category “Teaching Intentions,” it can also be helpful to briefly summarize what the participants described as their
intentions and desires in the classroom. Doing so provides valuable participant-specific context for understanding how his or her teaching practices support their articulated goals.

**Bob.**

Bob’s intentions in the classroom include encouraging student interaction and critical thinking. He believes he can leverage his talent for taking complex topics and simplifying them in a way to help students better understand what’s happening and “why things are the way they are.” He also desires to create opportunities for students to engage with content in a meaningful way that practically translates to the “real world.”

**Chloe.**

Chloe sees teaching as a creative opportunity to make learning engaging, interesting, and memorable for her students. In addition to hoping that students actually learn something in her class, her intentions include wanting people to come out moved, challenged, or inspired in some way.

**Pat.**

Pat’s intentions in the classroom include encouraging student engagement that results in measurable growth in her students from the first day of class to the last day of class. She desires to see students make an emotional connection to the material so they are prepared to use and apply it, whether formally or informally.

**Meghan.**

Meghan’s intentions in the classroom include driving home the point that everything her students do affects patients. Rather than approaching topics and concepts
from a purely academic perspective, she wants students to see the emotional side of patient care. She also cares deeply about encouraging her students to be open-minded, honest, authentic, and comfortable expressing their true opinions.

Tom.

Tom’s intentions in the classroom include helping students learn from the mistakes he has made throughout his career, ensuring students have a big-picture understanding the project management process, and making sure that they understand how important it is to be fair and ethical in project management work.

While summarizing their teaching intentions provides valuable participant-specific context for understanding what informs teaching practice, the summaries alone are insufficient to answer research sub-question #4. To fully address the impact that identity has on teaching intention and professional practice, it is necessary to address all three components: identity, intention, and practice. The information presented in Table 3 does just this; it provides the insight necessary to connect all three components of the research question and fully answer how identity impacts both teaching intention and teaching practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Identity Descriptor</th>
<th>Teaching Intention</th>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>To create opportunities for students to engage with content in a meaningful way that practically translates to the “real world”</td>
<td>Designed an assignment where student work was used to co-author and publish a book on leadership advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe</td>
<td>Creative/Memory-maker</td>
<td>To create an exciting, engaging, and</td>
<td>Organizes weekly field trips and off-site class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

149
memorable learning experience for students | meetings at local arts and culture venues
---|---
Pat | Shepherd | To help students learn and grow | Integrates reflection papers and journaling activities to cultivate self-awareness
Meghan | Truth-bearer | To encourage students to authentically speak their own truth on controversial issues | Designed an assignment where students identify and honestly assess their biases on a given issue
Tom | Ethical/Responsible | To inspire ethical practices related to bidding and procurement processes | Designed an ethics unit that incorporates discussion/reflection on ethical issues in project management

Table 3: Summary of connections between participants’ identity, teaching intention, and classroom practice.

Summary of Findings

This study was a qualitative, phenomenological study that sought to describe the “common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Specifically, I chose van Manen’s phenomenology of practice, which “reflects on and in practice, and prepares for practice” (van Manen, 2014, p. 15). I chose this approach because of its focus on professional practice in a professional field and because it allowed for the integration of a hermeneutical approach.

In this chapter, I presented findings that emerged from data collected throughout a series of interviews conducted with five participants who have all taught as adjunct faculty in the college of continuing and professional education at a mid-sized private university. I described the process of analyzing my data and presented the findings in the form of direct quotes, summaries, participant stories, and anecdotes using the metaphor
of looking for a place that “feels like home” to help differentiate between essential and auxiliary themes. The essential themes represent non-negotiables like the structural integrity of the house, functioning plumbing, and safe electrical wiring whereas the auxiliary themes represent other factors, that while important, may not be perceived as non-negotiable for every homebuyer. The five essential themes included (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment. The four auxiliary themes included (1) consistency of identity and self-description across contexts, (2) belonging, (3) spirituality, and (4) impact of identity on teaching practice.

In my discussion of these nine themes, I integrated participant-provided artifacts and participant-produced aesthetic products, and connected the findings to relevant existing literature. I then connected the findings to my central research question to provide insight around the ways in which adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education. I also connected the findings to my research sub-questions: (1) How do adjunct faculty members describe their call to teaching in the post-secondary environment? (2) What contexts or situations have influenced the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member? (3) How do adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher? (4) What impact does identity have on adjunct faculty members’ teaching intentions and professional practice?
Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this research was to explore the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their adjunct teaching experiences in higher education. This study was a qualitative, phenomenological study that sought to describe the “common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Specifically, I chose van Manen’s phenomenology of practice, which “reflects on and in practice, and prepares for practice” (van Manen, 2014, p. 15). This approach was particularly appropriate because of its focus on professional practices in a professional field, and because of the flexibility it allows in terms of research activities and the integration of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Anchoring this research was the central research question “How do adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education?” Additional research sub-questions included the following:

- How do adjunct faculty members describe their call to teaching in the post-secondary environment?
- What contexts or situations have influenced the experience of becoming an adjunct faculty member?
- How do adjunct faculty characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher?
What impact does identity have on adjunct faculty members’ teaching intentions and professional practice?

To answer these research questions, I conducted a series of interviews with five participants who have all taught as adjunct faculty in the college of continuing and professional education at a mid-sized private university. I also integrated two other forms of data collection including participant-created aesthetic products and participant-provided artifacts. This multi-faceted approach to data collection added additional rigor, breadth, complexity, and richness to the inquiry (Denzin 2012) and allowed me to engage two of the research activities that van Manen (1990) outlines as part of hermeneutic phenomenological research: writing and re-writing, and reflecting on essential themes.

I engaged in four writing phases during the research process which allowed me to distill the data to five essential themes which included (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment. In addition to the five essential themes, I identified four auxiliary themes. While these auxiliary themes weren’t essential to understanding the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, they played an important role in answering specific research questions and achieving the overall goals of the study. The auxiliary themes included (1) consistency of identity and self-description across contexts, (2) belonging, (3) spirituality, and (4) impact of identity on teaching practice.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss a variety of ways to bring additional “nearness to the obscure” regarding the phenomenon of feeling called to teach, discuss
implications of my findings, address study limitations, reflect on my methodology, and make recommendations for future research.

**Bringing Nearness to the Obscure**

In phenomenological research, van Manen (1990) calls researchers to “[bring] into nearness that which tends to be obscure” in order to discern what it is that renders a particular experience its special significance (p. 32). Story is a popular method for presenting aspects of human science research, and anecdote in particular can be used as a “methodological device in human science to make comprehensible some notion that easily eludes us” (van Manen, 1990, p. 116). Carefully curating participant stories and lived experiences that characterize each of the essential themes was one way I attempted to make sense of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Integrating anecdotes and long quotes into the presentation of findings in Chapter Four provided “nearness” to the phenomenon because it highlighted specific moments that the participants articulated, in their own words, as being connected to this phenomenon.

Another way of bringing nearness to the obscure was to graphically depict the phenomenon’s essential themes, initially presented in *Figure 4* and presented again in *Figure 16*. When used appropriately in qualitative research, diagrams can be superior to verbal descriptions because of their ability to efficiently group information in a way that avoids the need for lengthy explanations, and because of their ability to support multiple perceptual interfaces that are easy for humans to make sense of (Larkin & Simon, 1987). I created the diagram to depict the overlapping and interconnected nature of the essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member. As discussed in
Chapter Four, many participant experiences reside in the shaded areas of overlap near the center of the diagram, as opposed to the isolated themes represented in the outer part of the diagram. In other words, the participants’ lived experiences related to their call to teach as adjunct faculty do not fall neatly into discrete categories; instead, they depict a holistic “web of experiences” that represent a variety of essential themes woven together into a unique set of experiences and stories.

![Figure 16: Overlapping and interconnected nature of essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member.](image)

While the diagram is helpful in generically describing the interconnected nature of the essential themes that characterize the call to teach, it is important to recognize that each person’s call to teach is unique. For example, some participants talked much more about the importance of connection with their students than they did about enjoyment. Others only lightly touched upon aspects of connection but shared several in-depth stories.
about the level of commitment they feel in preparing their students for success in the real world. Because of this individual nuance, an additional layer of the diagram is required to accurately characterize the unique thematic intensities for different people. In Figure 17, the “X” marks indicate varying levels of intensity in the different areas represented on the diagram. These varying levels of intensity don’t mean that the person represented in Example A is any more (or less) called to teach as an adjunct faculty member than the person represented in Example B. The diagrams simply represent different expressions of the same phenomenon as uniquely experienced by two different individuals.

Figure 17: Nuanced intensities of essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member.

Within the five essential themes, there are nearly unlimited combinations of thematic intensities that can characterize the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. It’s also possible that the diagram may look different for the
same person from class to class, term to term, or from year to year. There’s a certain fluidity and movement to the ways the essential themes present themselves across a variety of situations, classes, or stages in one’s career; it is not likely they will all emerge with balanced emphasis at any given time. After a great term, the essential theme of *Enjoyment* may be particularly pronounced. After a rough term, it may be slightly less pronounced. Conceptualizing the diagram as customizable, flexible, and fluid accommodates these types of subtle shifts and allows the same basic visual representation of the phenomenon to be used to characterize multiple permutations of essential theme intensity.

Metaphor is a third way of bringing nearness to the obscure because it requires readers to draw from prior experience in a way that inspires meaningful, personal connections to the data; it makes the research come alive. Metaphor has a longstanding tradition in qualitative research (Dexter & LaMagdeleine, 2002; Goffman, 1959; Richardson, 1994; Vasconcelos, 1997) and has been characterized as a “heuristic device [that] can serve as a powerful tool in refinement of the issue being investigated” (Dexter & LaMagdeleine, 2002, p. 363). In the following section, I expand on the metaphor of looking for a place that “feels like home” that I first introduced in Chapter Four to breathe life to the nuanced richness of what it means to feel called to teach as an adjunct faculty member.

**Looking for a place that “feels like home.”**

As I first introduced in Chapter Four, looking for a place that “feels like home” provides a metaphorical lens through which to help understand the essential themes
related to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. I
likened the essential themes to house hunting non-negotiables that must necessarily be
present in a place that “feels like home” such as the structural integrity of the house,
functioning plumbing, safe electrical wiring, and other crucial details like whether or not
the roof leaks and the furnace works. Just as the absence of any of the essential themes
presents an incomplete picture of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach, it would be
difficult to characterize a house as “feeling like home” if any of the non-negotiables are
absent; for example, few people would “feel at home” without running water, or minus a
functioning furnace in the dead of winter. While this basic metaphor provides helpful
insight, it is possible to take the metaphor one step further to provide additional “nearness
to the obscure.” As previously mentioned, when looking for a place that “feels like
home,” most people start with non-negotiables such as the structural integrity of the
house, functioning plumbing, safe electrical wiring, and other crucial details like whether
or not the roof leaks and the furnace works. Within this set of non-negotiables, however,
there is much room for variety. For example, a roof can be made of shake shingles,
composite shingles, tile, wood, or even grass. A roof that keeps the elements out is the
non-negotiable, but the specific characteristics of the roof may vary greatly. Another
example is consistent electricity and safe electrical wiring. The fact that electricity is
safely and readily available is the non-negotiable, but the electricity may come from
fossil fuels, solar power, wind power, geothermal power, oil, or natural gas. Like roof
composition or different sources of electricity, variability exists in the ways the essential
themes are expressed by those who feel called to teach as adjunct faculty members. Take
for example, the different ways the essential theme of Significance was experienced by the study participants. Pat, Chloe and Meghan all mentioned a spiritual dimension as contributing to a sense of significance related to their call to teach, whereas Bob spoke more about student growth and transformation, and Tom spoke about the significance of preparing students for success in the working world. The essential theme of Significance was present for everyone, even though the nature of participant stories and the source of the significance varied. Unlike Figure 17, which depicts how individuals’ experiences can be mapped onto the diagram to represent varying levels of perceived intensity related to the essential themes, the diagram in Figure 18 depicts how the essential themes related to the metaphor of looking for a place that “feels like home” provide nuance in the expression of the essential themes. All the essential themes are present in Example A and in Example B, but the unique nature of the essential themes is reflected in the differing colors and patterns, just as one place that “feels like home” may have solar panels and composite shingles while another may have a tile roof and use electricity generated by fossil fuels. As in Figure 17, these differing expressions don’t mean that the person represented in Example A is any more (or less) called to teach as an adjunct faculty member than the person represented in Example B. The diagrams in Figure 18 simply represent different expressions of the same phenomenon as uniquely experienced by two different individuals.
Figure 18: Unique expressions of essential themes that characterize the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member.

The metaphor of looking for a place that “feels like home” accounts for both the non-negotiables and the “nice to haves” which, while important to some, may not be perceived as non-negotiable for every homebuyer. In the metaphor, the “nice to have” features are the auxiliary themes. Even though they may not be perceived as universally non-negotiable, running trails or access to open space may be quite important to some homebuyers. For others, vaulted ceilings or proximity to good public schools may be more important priorities. These features are like the auxiliary themes of “spirituality” and “belonging”: while they may not be present for everyone who feels called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, they can be of pronounced importance to the people for whom the auxiliary theme is present. Because these themes are not universal, varying greatly from one individual to another, it would be nearly impossible to depict them on a
diagram in the same way the essential themes were depicted in Figure 17 and Figure 18. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the critical role that auxiliary themes can play in characterizing the lived experiences of those who feel called to teach as adjunct faculty members. When paired with each person’s combination of essential theme intensities and unique thematic expressions, these features provide the “something more” that transforms a mere dwelling into a place where people feel comfortable, happy and whole—a place that “feels like home.” It is only when all these factors are taken into consideration together as part of a unified whole that we are offered a glimpse into the unique nature of each individual’s call to teach as an adjunct faculty member and begin to embrace the nuance that “brings nearness to the obscure.”

**Existentials as a Reflective Lens**

In addition to reflecting on essential themes in phenomenological research, van Manen (1990) suggests exploring what he calls “fundamental lifeworld themes” or “existentials.” The existentials of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations “pervade the lifeworlds of all human beings, regardless of their historical, cultural or social situatedness” and thus provide language to describe the ways in which all human beings experience the world (van Manen, 1990, p. 102). Three particularly relevant existentials in study include lived space (spatiality), lived time (temporality) and lived other (relationality). In briefly reflecting on these existentials, I have woven together my perspectives with those of my participants to provide additional insight regarding the study’s findings. Unlike empirical or transcendental phenomenology that requires bracketing out of personal experiences, integrating my own perspectives in this
way is appropriate since hermeneutical methodology invites the researcher to be an active participant in the sense-making and interpretive process (Laverty, 2003).

The existential of spatiality refers to ways that certain spaces make us feel and how comfortable we are in our surroundings. It was during my initial exploration of this existential that looking for a place that “feels like home” first emerged as a metaphor to help make sense of the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. The metaphor resonated with me because spatiality encourages us to thoughtfully consider the physical space in which we find ourselves and to assess the degree of comfort we feel in that environment. While assessing our degree of comfort in a given physical space was very much a part of the homebuying experience for my husband and me, I think it applies to the teaching environment as well. After teaching for nearly 10 years as an adjunct faculty member myself, I know firsthand what it feels like to walk into a classroom and feel comfortable. “Feeling at home” in the felt space of teaching implies a sense of comfort in the teaching environment and a willingness to embrace the call to teach in a way that reflects full engagement as opposed to hesitation or trepidation. The connection between comfort in the teaching environment and the call to teach as an adjunct faculty member isn’t limited to my own personal experience; the existential of spatiality was present in several participant stories and experiences presented in the essential themes of Enjoyment and Alignment as well. Enjoying teaching, or feeling as though it is aligned with who participants are hardwired to be, isn’t to say that there isn’t a learning curve associated with teaching or that there aren’t moments of uncertainty or discomfort. Participants certainly spoke to the presence of challenging
moments and moments of doubt in teaching. However, in general, the felt spaces described by participants suggested a sense of comfort and familiarity in both the physical and metaphorical spaces related to teaching. Whether it was Tom describing how he likes being in charge of his own classroom environment absent of a boss banging on his desk, or Chloe’s commitment to move her students out of the traditional classroom setting and into local arts and culture organizations for class meetings where she feels the space is “richer for learning,” participants talked about a sense of feeling settled in the physical and metaphorical spaces of teaching. For them, the felt spaces of teaching brought a sense of comfort that made them feel satisfied and whole.

The existential of lived time, or temporality, is another lens that can be leveraged to meaningfully reflect on the findings. Temporality relates to the sense of subjective time, like the kind of time that “appears to speed up when we enjoy ourselves, or slow down when we feel bored during an uninteresting lecture, or when we are anxious, as in the dentist’s chair” (van Manen, 1990, p. 104). The kind of lived time that accelerates during times of enjoyment mirrors the work of Csíkszentmihályi (1990) regarding flow (or what he called “optimal experience”) where time no longer seems to pass the way it ordinarily does, and people feel strong, alert, in effortless control, unselfconscious, and at the peak of their abilities. These temporal descriptions align with what Bob said about feeling “in the zone” when asked to describe a metaphor that describes him at his best in the classroom. Tom said it’s like “hitting all the gears,” and followed up with the comment that he could hardly believe he had been teaching now for 14 years. I, too, have felt “in the zone” in the classroom and have been surprised to look at the clock and
realize how quickly the time has passed. None of the participants talked about minutes ticking by, or years creeping by, suggesting that their perceptions of time position teaching more as a desirable opportunity as opposed to a chore or unattractive obligation. The existential of temporality also manifests in the ways that people make sense of their past and the temporal landscape that van Manen (1990) describes as a relationship between past, present, and future. This existential has played out in the ways that participants talked about their past teaching experiences and decades-old motivations for teaching. As Tom explained, he knew he “always wanted to teach,” and Bob described his teaching and training experiences as “always having been a part of what he was meant to do.” Participants discussed their desire to continue teaching into the future as well. None of the participants talked about teaching as a short-term endeavor or something they were doing just for the here and now; they expected they would teach in future terms with several participants talking about activities, assignments, and instructional approaches they might integrate the “next time around.” In general, the conversations about teaching integrated memories from the past, reflections on present experiences, and comments regarding anticipated future teaching opportunities. Teaching was described as an ongoing experience that extends over time, suggesting the enduring importance of teaching and further reinforcing its permanence across participants’ temporal landscapes.

The final existential that makes sense to discuss in the context of this study is that of lived other, or relationality. Van Manen (1990) defines relationality as the “lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them” (p. 104) implying the importance of relationship, connection, and meaningful interaction in
our human relationships. This existential emerged strongly in the essential themes, most notably in *Commitment* and *Connection*. Participant stories and experiences related to the essential theme of *Commitment* centered around a sense of obligation to students’ success and well-being, and stories related to the essential theme of *Connection* centered around meaningful interaction, authentic relationship, and getting to know students on a personal level. When I think back to my own teaching experiences, I often think of individual students more than I think about the mechanics of teaching during a given term, the quality of the assignments they submitted, or the grades I assigned. It’s the relationships with students and my concern for their well-being that stands out as important, meaningful, and memorable. Take, for example, when Shelly got the amazing promotion halfway through the term and brought cupcakes to class to celebrate. Or, the term where Shawn’s best friend was killed in a drive-by shooting and we spent hours talking outside of class about how to cope with the senseless tragedy. There was also Torrey, who decided to become a passionate vegetarian after writing a paper about meat handling practices in America. I can’t forget Maria, the immigrant from South America, who moved to the United States with her husband to start a new life. Her hands were literally trembling as she handed over her first paper after 20 years of being a stay-at-home mom, desperate for any sign of affirmation and approval. “You can do this, Maria,” I said. “I have confidence in you.” I believe stories like mine and similar stories shared by study participants that demonstrate a sense of connection and commitment to students highlight the existential of relationality that van Manen (1990) says is critical to making sense of the meaningful interaction in our human relationships. Stories of connection and
commitment provide an additional reflective lens that positions authenticity of relationship as a meaningful and impactful component of what van Manen (1990) characterizes as “belonging to the fundamental structure of our lifeworld” (p. 102).

**Implications of Findings**

What it means to be a teacher has been discussed and debated by countless scholars and practitioners over the years (Buskist, Benson, & Sikorski, 2005; Cohen & Brawer, 1972; Enyedy, Goldberg, & Welsh, 2006; Palmer, 2008). Whether conceived of as merely explaining curricular content (Roehler & Duffy, 1986); as a certain set of skills, traits and dispositions (Helm, 2006; Smith, Hurst, & Skarbek, 2005); or a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action (Calling, n.d.); conceptions of what it means to “be a teacher” are varied and contested. The findings of this study provide additional perspective about what it means to “be a teacher” and provide valuable insight regarding the ways in which adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education. Implications of this research have the potential to impact a variety of different stakeholder groups including adjunct faculty members themselves, university administrators, human resource professionals, and fellow researchers.

**Implications for understanding classroom practice.**

Since one of the research questions in this study focused on the impact that identity has on adjunct faculty members’ teaching intentions and professional practice, the findings have the potential to impact the ways that adjunct faculty and university administrators understand the connection between identity, teaching intentions, and
classroom practice. While Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders’s (2016) Instructional Arc outlines the connection between the intended curriculum (what the teacher plans/desires to happen), the operational curriculum (what actually happened), and the received curriculum (what the students learn or “take away” from the experience), it doesn’t account for the role that identity plays in informing intentions and practice. The study’s findings, specifically those related to research sub-question #4, provide tangible examples of this connection and may inspire other faculty to identify components of their own identity that influence teaching intentions and practice. These findings may also be relevant for college and university administrators seeking insight or perspective regarding the curricular choices and practices of faculty they supervise.

**Implications for human resources.**

*Enjoyment* was the first theme that emerged as essential to the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member. Participant stories and experiences related to this theme centered around perceptions of fun, pleasure, delight, joy, and satisfaction. This is important from a human resources perspective because happy, satisfied employees are more productive (Revesencio, 2015). As such, there are implications for human resource professionals related to recruiting and retaining these adjunct faculty. From a human resources perspective, it is also desirable to recruit and retain adjunct faculty who feel called to teach because they typically have high levels of job involvement, which is defined as “the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work” (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965, p. 24). High job involvement is positively correlated with organizational citizenship behavior, suggesting that stronger
psychological identification with one’s work leads to increased motivation (Hackman & Lawler, 1971) and ultimately, organizational effectiveness (Pfeffer, 1994). Given the continuing growth in adjunct faculty in U.S. colleges and universities over the last 40 years and the fact that nearly 75% of professors today serve as contingent faculty (Edmonds, 2015), recruiting and hiring adjunct faculty members who are motivated, engaged, and invested in their work is more important than ever.

**Implications for professional development of adjunct faculty.**

While acknowledging complex contractual teaching workloads and/or limited time available outside of assigned teaching duties to engage in professional development initiatives, it has been well-established that supporting adjunct faculty members through ongoing professional development is essential for the achievement of institutional effectiveness - especially when adjunct faculty don’t have prior teaching experience (Burnstad, 2007; Lyons, 2007; Webb et al., 2013). While professional development programming for adjunct faculty has increased in recent years, the focus generally coalesces around teaching methodologies and curriculum development (Fagan-Wilen, Springer, Ambrosino, & White, 2006). While this kind of skills-based training fills a need in terms of equipping adjunct faculty members for successful content delivery, it often fails to integrate a reflective component that encourages them to consider the deeper meaning of teaching and the impact that their identity has on teaching practice. Some progress has been made in programs like “Courage to Teach” that focus on teachers’ inner lives and reflections as they relate to teaching practice. However, many of these programs are largely focused on public school educators in the K-12 environment.
(Casbon et al., 2005; Dominican University of California, 2018). Whether offered through teaching and learning centers or through individual academic departments, adjunct faculty at colleges and universities could benefit from programming that presents the opportunity to explore connections between their identity, motivations to teach, teaching intentions, and classroom practice. Professional development programming that addresses these topics presents the opportunity, as did this study, for adjunct faculty to reflect on who they are as individuals and professionals, and on what draws them to teaching. It inspires conversation about what it means to be a teacher and why it matters to them. It also reinforces the importance of bringing the fullness of their whole selves into the teaching environment, challenging the notion that there are “right” and “wrong” ways of teaching.

There are a variety of practical ways to structure professional development programming to integrate reflection and promote self-awareness. As a part of this study, I have written extensively about the phenomenon of feeling called to teach in an attempt, in van Manen’s words, to “bring nearness to the obscure” regarding the phenomenon. I believe faculty members can also “bring nearness to the obscure” as they reflectively turn inward to explore their own stories and teaching experiences. Carter and Doyle’s research rests on the premise that “the process of learning to teach, the act of teaching and teachers’ experiences and choices are deeply personal matters inexorably linked to their identity and life story” (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 120). As such, professional development opportunities that encourage faculty to explore their identity and life story are an important part of the professional development process, especially for new adjunct
faculty members whose work takes place primarily outside the context of higher education. Some of the other tools I used in this study to encourage reflection could be integrated into professional development programming as well, including asking participants to create aesthetic products that represent something important about their teaching and/or call to teach; to select and describe artifacts that demonstrate something meaningful about their teaching practice; and to articulate metaphors that describe them when they’re at their best as a teacher. In addition to being particularly relevant for the goals of this study, these activities can be powerful tools in professional development programming since they provide an opportunity for adjunct faculty to conceptualize (or re-conceptualize) teaching as an extension their identity and as a unique and authentic expression of self.

**Implications related to creating welcoming and inclusive environments.**

Social Identity Theory suggests that feelings of belonging and inclusion play a role in the ways individuals determine to which groups they are similar and to which groups they are different (Tajfel & Tuner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Feeling “part of a group” can also impact perceptions of identity salience and the extent to which individuals psychologically commit to a given task or role. As has already been discussed, psychological commitment translates to higher levels of job involvement and yields desirable results in terms of productivity, citizenship behavior, and organizational effectiveness. Burnstad (2007) has gone so far as to say that cultivating a sense of belonging is a requirement for part-time faculty in effective institutions. Given that part-time faculty are treated largely as the second-class citizens of
academia (Gappa & Leslie, 1993) and “often treated as outcasts by the academic mainstream” (Dolan, 2011, p. 65), there are important implications for university administrators regarding the ways in which they cultivate inclusive environments and encourage a sense of belonging and acceptance for adjunct faculty members. Pointing to specific examples from the data, gestures of inclusion may include activities such as providing dedicated office space, assigning on-campus mailboxes, thoughtfully acknowledging important life events, inviting contributions to university publications, and involving adjunct faculty in departmental meetings and social activities.

**Implications for future researchers.**

There are two different implications for future researchers that emerged from this study. The first set of implications is discussed in more detail in “Recommendations for Future Research.” These implications represent an invitation for future researchers to build upon the knowledge generated in this study and further advance the scholarly knowledge regarding the experiences of adjunct faculty who feel called to teach.

The second implication for future researchers is related to the success of integrating participant-created aesthetic products as part of the data collection process. Providing an opportunity for participants to express themselves in something other than a verbal format added an additional layer of richness and meaning to the data and proved helpful in making sense of the participants’ lived experiences. While I more fully discuss participant feedback and perceptions of value related to this activity in “Methodological Reflections” later in this chapter, my hope is that this study inspires other researchers to integrate similar activities into their research.
Limitations and Other Research Considerations

This study was a qualitative, phenomenological study that sought to describe the “common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). As with any qualitative study, there were inherent methodological limitations: (1) Research quality is heavily dependent on the individual skills of the researcher and easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies. (2) Rigor is more difficult to maintain, assess, and demonstrate than in quantitative studies. (3) The researcher's presence during data gathering may affect the subjects’ responses. (4) Findings cannot be generalized to a larger population (Anderson, 2010). Van Manen (1990) outlines additional methodological limitations that are specific to phenomenology: (1) Phenomenology is not an empirical analytic science that describes actual states of affairs. (2) Phenomenology cannot be used to show or prove anything. (3) Phenomenology does not problem-solve nor suggest correct answers.

In addition to the methodological limitations outlined above, several other limitations are worthy of mention. Some of these limitations were intentionally integrated into the study design, whereas other limitations were a result of individual characteristics of study participants, or a product of the academic unit from which they were recruited. I also included several other “research considerations” because they represented boundaries, whether intentionally imposed or not, that influenced the study and findings. Although these boundaries didn’t necessarily impact the findings in a negative way, I felt compelled to acknowledge their presence and potential impact.
The first limitation of the study was that adjunct faculty members were recruited from a professional and continuing education unit which is staffed almost exclusively by adjunct faculty. Since being an adjunct faculty member in this department is the norm, faculty perceptions of inclusion and belonging may differ from those of their colleagues who teach in more traditional units at the university. (As part of this conversation, it is important to note that Bob also teaches in a different unit at the same university. Some of his responses reflected interactions in that department, which has a different focus and staffing model.) The fact that adjunct faculty members were recruited from a continuing and professional education unit is also noteworthy because of the unit’s strong orientation towards practical knowledge, hands-on and experiential learning, and real-world application. As such, extensive industry knowledge and professional experience is a prerequisite for all adjunct faculty. This may be different in other academic units that have less of a practitioner focus, and as such, may have impacted participants’ sense of enjoyment and satisfaction related to preparing students for success in particular industries and/or career fields.

The second limitation of the study was that participating adjunct faculty members had to have taught at least two terms in an on-campus setting. This eligibility requirement eliminated adjunct faculty who teach exclusively online, even though approximately 70% of the courses taught in the continuing and professional education unit are taught in the online format. By focusing upon on-campus delivery, I recognize that I eliminated perspectives regarding online teaching from the study and narrowed my pool of potential study participants. While this was a conscious choice built into my study design, it
nonetheless represented a limitation. The requirement to have taught at least two terms in an on-campus setting also eliminated adjunct faculty who were new, or relatively new, to teaching. Eliminating these faculty was intentional because I felt that faculty with more experience in the classroom would better be able to answer questions about teaching intentions and teaching practice than a novice teacher who was still “figuring things out.” While this, too, represented a conscious choice built into my study design, I acknowledge it limited the perspectives that the study was able to capture.

In addition to the limitations acknowledged above, I wanted to share two additional considerations that may have impacted the outcomes and findings of the study. The first consideration had to do with class size. Given that the study took place within a private institution with small class sizes ranging from fewer than 10 students to approximately 30 students, adjunct faculty were afforded the ability to get to know their students in ways that are more difficult to accomplish in larger classes. Since the ability to connect with students and foster personal relationships emerged in more than one essential theme, the size of the classes may have played a role in participant perceptions of enjoyment, fulfillment and connection.

The second consideration affecting the findings was that this study did not attempt to address the third component of Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders’s (2016) Instructional Arc. The Instructional Arc includes the intended curriculum (what the teacher plans/desires to happen), the operational curriculum (what actually happened), and the received curriculum (what the students learn or “take away” from the experience). In their conversation about research design, Uhrmacher, Moroye, and
Flinders (2016) acknowledge that attending to all aspects of the arc may be too broad for certain studies (chapter 3, section 4, subsection 2, paragraph 2). I determined that such was the case for this study. Nonetheless, a conversation about all three components would have added an additional layer of significance to the study that would have further enhanced its value and overall impact.

**Methodological Reflections**

Van Manen’s phenomenology of practice, which “reflects on and in practice, and prepares for practice” (van Manen, 2014, p. 15) was a particularly appropriate approach for this study because of its focus on professional practices in a professional field, and because of the flexibility it allows in terms of leveraging research activities associated with hermeneutic phenomenology. At first, the flexibility was overwhelming. However, I much preferred the flexibility as opposed to feeling trapped in the stricter, systematic steps required in empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology. Given my personal interest in this topic and my own experiences as an adjunct faculty member, I also appreciated not having to bracket out my own experiences as is required in empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology. Despite my initial overwhelm, ultimately I used van Manen’s (1990) six hermeneutical research activities as a guide, and—by incorporating Lichtman’s *Three C’s of Data Analysis* model—engaged in a process of writing and rewriting to identify the five essential themes and four auxiliary themes identified and discussed in Chapter Four.

As part of my methodological reflections, I also wanted to briefly address the participant-created aesthetic products I integrated as part of the data collection process.
After consulting the literature, soliciting advice from friends and colleagues about appropriate materials to provide, and doing a test-run with a volunteer who was external to the study, I felt justified in including the aesthetic product creation in my data-collection. Nonetheless, I was nervous about how it would be received and feared that some participants may balk at the invitation to “do arts and crafts” as part of a research study. As I mentioned in Chapter Three, I gave participants the option to opt out of the activity and was pleased when all five chose to engage. Overall, the feedback I received from participants about creating the aesthetic products was positive. Although some participants expressed initial hesitation, in the end, all five agreed it was a positive experience. Some even expressed pride in the quality of their finished product.

Bob was one of the participants who initially expressed hesitation. When I asked him what the process of creating the aesthetic product was like for him, he said his initial reaction was, “Uh-oh. I’m not great with representational stuff.” However, once he had completed the product and began describing it to me, he sat back and remarked, “As I’m looking at it, I’m actually pretty happy with it. The more I look at it, the more I think it’s kind of cool. It doesn’t look bad, does it?”

Unlike Bob, Chloe was excited about creating her aesthetic product from the moment I introduced the activity. When I asked her what the process was like for her, she immediately responded, “I loved it. I think it’s great and I was absolutely thrilled to do it because I love things that are out of the ordinary.” She described how having such a variety of materials gave her options and allowed her to think in a creative and uninhibited way, adding that the idea of drawing a funnel came to her instantly when she
saw the feathers and paint. Like Bob, Chloe was proud of her final product. Shortly after finishing her aesthetic product, her husband returned home from a walk around the neighborhood (the interview during which Chloe created the aesthetic product took place in Chloe’s dining room). With a mix of pride and childlike shyness, Chloe pushed the paper towards him and said, “Look at what Molly let me do. Look at what she let me do.” Teasingly, her husband commented about how Chloe typically makes quite mess when she has access to art supplies. Laughing, Chloe said, “I know, but look at what I did. I did it good. Maybe it could go on the refrigerator.”

Overall, the integration of participant-created aesthetic products was an excellent addition to my data collection methods. It provided an opportunity for participants to express themselves in something other than a verbal format and added what I felt was an additional layer of richness and meaning to the data. Given the positive feedback I received and the value that the aesthetic products added to the study (I integrated aesthetic products from Bob, Chloe, and Meghan into my discussion of various themes throughout Chapter Four), my hope is that other researchers will feel inspired to integrate similar activities into their research in the future.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This phenomenological study explored the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their adjunct teaching experience in higher education. The findings provide perspective about what it means to be an adjunct faculty member at a college of continuing and professional education at a mid-sized private university and can best be understood in the context of departments comprised primarily of adjunct faculty who
have a strong orientation towards practical knowledge, hands-on and experiential learning, and real-world application. The findings have implications for a variety of stakeholder groups and offer a foundation from which to build as future investigations further explore the topics of faculty identity, teaching intentions, and professional practice. Four primary areas I recommend for future research include (1) adjunct faculty who teach primarily in online environments, (2) adjunct faculty who teach in more “traditional” departments than the one investigated in this study, (3) adjunct faculty who can be classified into different areas of Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) adjunct typologies, and (4) full-time faculty in higher education. Future research could also compare and contrast the call to teach with other types of professional callings and further explore how identity and calling impact all three aspects of Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders’s (2016) Instructional Arc.

To be eligible for participation in this study, adjunct faculty had to have taught at least two terms in an on-campus setting. From the 73 potential participants who indicated interest in my study and responded to my initial survey, 13 of them, or nearly 20%, did not meet this minimum requirement. While some of these faculty were new to teaching, others had years of teaching experience in the online environment. Having such pronounced online teaching experience in my candidate pool was not surprising since nearly 70% of the courses offered in the department from which I recruited are offered online. Nonetheless, my intent for the study was to focus on faculty who teach in an on-campus setting. While excluding faculty from this study who teach primarily online was
an intentional, conscious choice, one recommendation for future research is to investigate perceptions of identity and calling in this population.

Another recommendation for future research is to investigate perceptions of identity and calling in adjunct faculty populations that teach in academic departments that compositionally and/or philosophically differ from the continuing and professional education unit in which this study took place. As previously mentioned, the department from which study participants were recruited is staffed almost exclusively with adjunct faculty. Therefore, being an adjunct faculty member is the norm, not the exception. As such, faculty perceptions of inclusion and belonging in this unit may be different than in other departments that have a higher percentage of full-time faculty. Future research could also be conducted with adjunct faculty who teach in departments that don’t have as strong of an orientation towards practical knowledge, hands-on and experiential learning, or real-world application. Conducting research with adjunct faculty members from these departments would provide the opportunity to explore how participants’ sense of enjoyment and satisfaction is related to preparing students for success in particular industries and/or career fields as opposed to teaching more traditional, academic subjects.

My third recommendation is to conduct future research with adjunct faculty who can be classified into different areas of Gappa and Leslie’s adjunct typologies. Resisting the notion that adjunct faculty are a homogenous cohort, Gappa and Leslie (1993) formulated a typology of part-time instructors based on their lifestyles and motivations to teach. The four typologies include (1) specialists, experts or professionals who are employed full-time outside their teaching; (2) freelancers, who are employed in multiple
part-time jobs including their teaching assignment; (3) career enders, who are concluding their work lives yet desire to maintain a connection to their content expertise; and (4) aspiring academics, who typically have completed or are about to complete graduate programs with the intention to pursue academic positions. Conducting research with adjunct faculty who represent these different categories could provide additional insight about how lifestyle, motivation, and “life space,” may impact perceptions of the connection between calling and identity.

My fourth recommendation is to investigate the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their full-time teaching experience in higher education, especially if they have significant research responsibilities in addition to teaching. It would be interesting to explore the ways they characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity and how their perceptions differ from their adjunct counterparts. This research would also provide the opportunity to assess how relevant the essential themes identified in this study appear to be across a variety of teaching positions and ranks including tenure-track, non-tenure track, teaching faculty, clinical faculty, and research faculty.

In addition to the four primary recommendations outlined above, future research could also compare and contrast the call to teach with a perceived call in other professions. Research has been conducted on calling in professional settings such as management (Cullen, 2013), nursing (Cardador & Caza, 2012; Jeffries, 1998; Raatikainen, 1997), social work (Guo et al., 2014), elderly care (Fejes & Nicoll, 2010), business (Novak, 1996), and law (Gregory, 1998), although most of this research
describes the call itself as opposed to exploring its connection to identity. Additional research could help discern if the connection between identity and professional calling is as distinct in other professions as it appears to be for those who feel called to teach.

My final recommendation for future research is to further explore how identity and calling impact all three aspects of Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders’s (2016) Instructional Arc. As first introduced in Chapter Two, the Instructional Arc (depicted in *Figure 15* and again in *Figure 19*), outlines an integrated process that incorporates what teachers desire/plan to happen (the intended curriculum), what actually happens (the operational curriculum), and what students learn or take away from their experience (the received curriculum).

![Operational Curriculum: What actually happened?

Intended Curriculum: What does the teacher plan/desire to happen?

Received Curriculum: What did students learn or “take away” from the experience?](image)

**Figure 19: The Instructional Arc**

*Reprinted from Using Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship for Qualitative Research (chapter 3, section 4, subsection 2, paragraph 2) by P.B. Uhrmacher, C. Moroye, and D. Flinders [Kindle version retrieved from Amazon.com]. Reprinted with permission.*

As briefly discussed in the study limitations, I chose to address just the first two components of the Instructional Arc (the intended curriculum and the operational curriculum) in an effort to focus on the aspects of the framework where adjunct faculty
members are the primary drivers; interviewing or surveying students regarding what they learned or took away from their experiences in classes taught by Chloe, Bob, Meghan, Pat and Tom was beyond the scope of my research. Future studies, however, could more fully explore the impact of teacher calling and/or identity on the received curriculum and how alignment between identity and teaching practice affects perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the essence of what it means to be an adjunct faculty member who feels called to teach. The goal was to explore the lived experiences of working professionals who, in addition to maintaining other job responsibilities outside of academia, have chosen to respond to a perceived call to teach through their work as adjunct faculty members. The central research question guiding the study was, “How do adjunct faculty who feel called to teach make meaning out of their teaching experience in higher education?” Through four additional sub-questions, the study also sought to characterize the relationship between personal identity, calling, and professional identity as a teacher and explored how adjunct faculty articulate the relationship between their identity, teaching intentions, and professional practice. Because much of the existing literature on teacher calling and identity is situated in the K-12 environment, the insights this study provides are particularly valuable to a higher education audience.

I introduced the study in terms of my personal interest in the topic and expanded on the components of my background and experience that drew me to the research
questions. In Chapter Two, I provided a review of literature addressing the topics of identity, professional identity, vocation and calling, professional identity of teachers, and what has been termed “the call to teach.” As part of this literature review, I discussed the religious origins of the concept of calling and discussed Social Identity Theory, Identity Theory, job involvement and identity salience. I also explored existing literature on adjunct faculty and how they are situated in the context of higher education, including topics such as the growth of part-time faculty, the merits of leveraging part-time faculty as teachers in colleges and universities, categories of teachers within the part-time population, and some of the challenges that this teaching population faces.

In Chapter Three, I outlined my philosophical assumptions and explained my methodological approach, justifying why phenomenology of practice was an appropriate research method for the study. I then described how I recruited and selected my study participants and outlined the details of my data collection process, including how I integrated participant-created aesthetic products and participant-provided artifacts into the study design. I also described my data analysis process and briefly summarized a pilot study I conducted in preparation for this research project.

In Chapter Four, I revisited the research questions and presented my findings. Five essential themes emerged as characterizing the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct member in higher education including (1) Enjoyment, (2) Alignment, (3) Significance, (4) Connection, and (5) Commitment. I compared these essential themes to the non-negotiables that homebuyers seek in a place that “feels like home” like the structural integrity of the house, functioning plumbing, safe electrical wiring, and other
crucial details like whether or not the roof leaks and the furnace works. I also identified four auxiliary themes that included (1) consistency of identity and self-description across contexts, (2) belonging, (3) spirituality, and (4) impact of identity on teaching practice. While these themes aren’t essential to understanding the phenomenon of feeling called to teach as an adjunct faculty member, they emerged as important in terms of the study’s overall goals and specific research questions. In the metaphor of finding a place that “feels like home,” the auxiliary themes are factors like vaulted ceilings, quality of schools, and access to outdoor spaces that may be perceived with varying levels of importance by different homebuyers. I concluded Chapter Four with a discussion of how the essential and auxiliary themes related to the research questions that anchored the study. As part of this discussion, I revisited the diagrams initially presented in Chapter Two that characterized the dynamic interplay among the concepts of personal identity, professional identity and calling, and acknowledged the impact that one’s inner self has on teaching intentions and professional practice. I also revisited Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders’s (2016) Instructional Arc that incorporates three distinct but related aspects of curriculum, to help make explicit the connections that emerged in the data between identity, teaching intentions, and teaching practice.

In Chapter Five, I expanded on the metaphor of looking for a place that “feels like home” to provide additional “nearness to the obscure” that van Manen (1990) encourages in phenomenological research. I described how nuanced thematic intensities and different expressions of each of the five essential themes characterize the unique nature of each individual’s call to teach as an adjunct faculty member and discussed how van Manen’s
existentials of spatiality, temporality and relationality provide an additional reflective lens for making sense of the study’s findings. I also outlined the implications of my research for various stakeholder groups and highlighted the particular importance of this research as it relates to professional development programming for adjunct faculty members. I then discussed limitations of the research and reflected on my choice of methodology and integration of participant-created aesthetic products as part of the study design. Before moving into this summary, I also discussed several recommendations for future research related to this topic.

**Closing Thoughts**

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to interact with Chloe, Meghan, Tom, Bob and Pat to learn more about the lived experiences of working professionals who, in addition to maintaining other job responsibilities outside of academia, have chosen to respond to a perceived call to teach as adjunct faculty members. The hours of conversation with each participant provided an in-depth look at the unique nature of each individual’s call to teach as an adjunct faculty member and generated a deep appreciation for their willingness to share stories and experiences in a way that breathed life into my research questions and the study as whole.

In addition to feeling inspired by the richness of the participants’ stories and lived experiences, this study has been an important part of my own journey exploring what it means to be a teacher – specifically, what it means to be an adjunct faculty member in a college teaching environment when teaching isn’t my full-time job. In preparing to teach next term and thinking back on my childhood memories of teaching basic addition to the
classroom full of Cabbage Patch Kids propped up on makeshift wooden blocks I thought looked like desks, I am reminded that the journey continues—both for me and the countless others who have felt the call to teach and have chosen to respond. Discovering our own unique version of what it means to feel called to teach as an adjunct faculty member and thoughtfully considering what Palmer means when he says, “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998, p. 1) requires ongoing exploration, learning, and discovery that embraces the nuanced expressions of self that reside at the very core of who we are. Therein lies the invitation to respond in a way that allows us to live into the fullness of our unique identities and to see teaching as a unique and authentic expression of self.

In closing, I’d like to suggest that exploring what it means to be called to teach as an adjunct faculty member in higher education is more important than ever, especially as adjunct faculty comprise a growing percentage of the teaching workforce at American colleges and universities and are poised to have a significant impact on future generations of learners and leaders (Taylor, 2012; Webb et al., 2013). Ultimately, my hope is that this study inspires further inquiry into the topic of identity and calling in faculty members of all types, and generates additional scholarly interest in what it means to understand teaching as a calling that we feel deep in our bones and have no choice but to wholeheartedly and enthusiastically embrace as a natural extension of who we are and who were made to be.
References


doi:10.5465/AMBPP.2004.13863838


Schaffer, R. *Key concepts in developmental psychology*. London, United Kingdom: Sage UK. Retrieved from


http://www.thesaurus.com/browse/significance


https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-group


Retrieved from [http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2012-05-17/competition-is-killing-higher-education-part-1](http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2012-05-17/competition-is-killing-higher-education-part-1)


Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Survey for Participant Selection

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study that aims to explore the meaning that those who feel called to teach make out of their adjunct teaching experience in higher education.

Completing this survey is the first step in determining if you meet the selection criteria for participation in the full study. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete and will involve responding to 5 questions about yourself and your teaching experience. It will also ask you to indicate how strongly you agree with a series of short statements related to teaching.

Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary and the risks associated with completing it are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue your participation at any time. It is your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me or my faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Michalec:

Molly Smith, Graduate student
Morgridge College of Education
303-871-7408
molly.a.smith@du.edu

Dr. Paul Michalec, Professor
Morgridge College of Education
303-871-7952
paul.michalec@du.edu

Respondents who meet certain selection criteria will be contacted at the email address provided in the survey with further information and details about participation in the full study.

Name:


Email address:


How many terms have you taught as an on-campus adjunct faculty member?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 2 terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7 terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 terms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your employment status? (select all that apply)

- I am employed full-time outside of University College
- I am employed part-time outside of University College
- I am not employed outside of University College
- I am employed as an adjunct faculty member at another institution
- I own my own business
- I am retired
- Other

If you selected "Other" in the question above, please explain.

[blank space]
Using the scale below, indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel called to teach</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is more than just a routine task</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have something significant to give to my students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have great hope for my students and what they’re capable of achieving</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was born to do this kind of work</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel wholly committed to my students and their success</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is more than “just a job”</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find great joy in teaching</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s something about teaching that makes me feel whole</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Rationale for Recruitment Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question Inspiration/Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>To identify respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>To prompt respondents to provide contact information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of terms taught as adjunct faculty</td>
<td>To ensure respondents meet selection criterion of having taught on-campus classes for at least two terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>To ensure respondents meet selection criterion of having some other form of employment outside of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matrix Questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel called to teach.</td>
<td>To discern the extent to which respondents self-report feeling called to teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is more than just a routine task.</td>
<td>From <em>The Call to Teach</em> (Hansen, 1995, p. 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have something significant to give to my students.</td>
<td>From <em>The Call to Teach</em> (Hansen, 1995, p. 15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| I have great hope for my students and what they’re capable of achieving. | From “On Teacher Hope, Sense of Calling, and Commitment to Teaching” (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011)  
AND  
From *The Call to Teach* (Hansen, 1995, p. 60) |
<p>| I was born to do this kind of work. | From <em>Let Your Life Speak</em> (Palmer, 2000, p. 10) |
| I feel wholly committed to my students and their success. | From <em>The Call to Teach</em> (Hansen, 1995, p. 15) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching is more than “just a job.”</th>
<th>From <em>The Call to Teach</em> (Hansen, 1995, pp. 9,10 &amp; 15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find great joy in teaching.</td>
<td>From literature discussing the relationship between joy and professional calling:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Now and Then</em> (Buechner, 1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Preventing the Fall from the ‘Call to Teach’: Rethinking Vocation” (Harnett &amp; Kline, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life</em> (Novak, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s something about teaching that makes me feel whole.</td>
<td>From “Transforming Education from Within” (Greene, Kim, &amp; Korthagen, 2013, p.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Pilot Study Interview Protocol

Interview Set Up:
Thank you for agreeing to let me interview you today. I appreciate your time and willingness to participate in my study. First, I’d like to give you a copy of the informed consent form. I’ll give you a moment to read it and ask any questions you have. Once your questions have been answered, please sign at the bottom of page two indicating that you have read and understood this form, including the risks and benefits of participation, and that it’s okay to audiotape our session today. One of copy of the informed consent is for you, and one copy is for me.

I plan to use two digital recording devices this afternoon, just in case there is a problem and I need a back-up. I’ll place them here on the table in front of us, so they’ll be able to record what we are saying. I might also jot down some notes as we go to make sure I’m accurately capturing what you have to share.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Category 1: Context and background**<br>
*I’d like to start out by understanding a little bit about your professional background and experience. This first set of questions will help me learn more about your career and professional experience.*<br>
1. Tell me about your career and professional background. How did you get into your chosen field and how long have you worked (or did you work) in it?<br>
2. How do you describe what you do for a living to others, especially those who may work outside your industry?<br>
3. What adjectives would you use to describe success in your non-teaching professional work?<br>
4. How long have you been teaching?<br>
5. Before accepting your first teaching position as adjunct faculty, did you have any other formal or informal teaching experience?<br>
   a. Probe about significance and duration of those experiences.<br>
6. At which institution(s) have you taught?<br>
7. What course or courses have you taught? | Understand professional background and establish baseline of how to define success in professional context. Also, establish basic background knowledge regarding teaching experience. |

| **Category 2: Initial Teaching Motivations**<br>
*Next, I’m going to ask you what it was like to first get into teaching.*<br>
1. How were you first introduced to the opportunity to teach as an adjunct faculty member? | Explore motivations for teaching. |
2. How did you feel when you were first asked to teach?
3. What was most exciting for you about the opportunity? What was most concerning?
4. Ultimately, what motivated you to accept the position as an adjunct faculty member?

**Category 3: Novice Teaching Experiences**
1. What was it like to teach in a college classroom for the first time?
2. Can you think of an experience or experiences that were particularly rewarding for you when you first started teaching?
3. To what extent did you experience significant challenges in your first few classes?

**Category 4: Reflections on Current Teaching**
*Now, I’d like to transition into talking about some of your more recent teaching experiences.*
1. How would you describe your current teaching approach?
2. If I were to watch you teach, what would I see?
3. Why do you teach this way?
4. Do you think your teaching approach changed since the first class you taught? How? Why?
5. Are the things you find rewarding and challenging now different than what you found rewarding and challenging when you first started teaching?

**Category 5: Reflections on Identity**
*At the beginning of our interview, I asked you what adjectives you would use to describe success in your non-teaching professional work. I’m also interested in learning more about how you define success in a teaching context.*
1. What does success look like as an adjunct faculty member?
2. Is there a metaphor that easily comes to mind that best explains who you are when you are “at your best” as a teacher?
   a. Probe and ask for explanation
   b. Do you think this metaphor has changed over time?
3. Has the experience of teaching impacted how you describe yourself as a “professional”?

**Category 6: Summary and Wrap-Up**
*As we wrap up our time together, I wanted to make sure to give you some time to share anything else that you would like me to know. In our remaining time together….*

| Explore initial phases of what it was like to “become” a teacher. |
| Explore how instructor functions in teaching environment (current experiences). |
| Explore notions of “success” and how things look when at his/her best as a teacher (contrast to success in industry). |
| Allow interviewee to highlight important points, clarify previous answers, and/or |
1. Is there anything I haven’t asked you, that you would like to share?
2. Do you have additional thoughts about a question I asked earlier that you would like to revisit?
3. When I go back and transcribe this interview, what are you hoping really stands out to me?

Thank you very much for your time today! I really appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with me and to be part of my study. If you have any questions, or want to follow-up regarding something we discussed today, please feel free to contact me. My contact information is included in the email signature I used to confirm our meeting today. Thank you again.
Appendix C: Interview Protocols

Interview 1

Interview Set Up:
Thank you for agreeing to let me interview you today. I appreciate your time and willingness to participate in my study. First, I’d like to give you a copy of the informed consent form. I’ll give you a moment to read it and ask any questions you have. Once your questions have been answered, please sign at the bottom of page two indicating that you have read and understood this form, including the risks and benefits of participation, and that it’s okay to audiotape our session today. One of copy of the informed consent is for you, and one copy is for me.

I plan to use two digital recording devices during this interview, just in case there is a problem and I need a back-up. I’ll place them here on the table in front of us, so they’ll be able to record what we are saying. I might also jot down some notes as we go to make sure I’m accurately capturing what you have to share.

I will be asking you three sets of questions in this interview. The first set of questions is related to your background and work history. The second set of questions is related to your experience becoming an adjunct faculty member and actually teaching. The final set of questions is related to your perceptions of the “call to teach.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 1: Personal background and work history</strong>  &lt;br&gt; <em>I’d like to start out by hearing about your professional background and experience. This first set of questions will help me learn more about your career and professional experience.</em>  &lt;br&gt; 1. Tell me about your career and professional background. How did you get into your chosen field and how long have you worked (or did you work) in it?  &lt;br&gt; 2. What motivated you to pursue this kind of work?  &lt;br&gt; 3. How do you describe what you do for a living to others, especially those who may work outside your industry?  &lt;br&gt; 4. What adjectives would you use to describe the way you feel about your non-teaching professional work?  &lt;br&gt; 5. What is the most rewarding aspect of your non-teaching professional work?</td>
<td>Become acquainted with participants, understand professional background and motivations for pursuing non-teaching professional work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 2: Becoming an adjunct faculty member</strong>  &lt;br&gt; <em>Next, I’d like to talk about your experiences becoming an adjunct faculty member and actually teaching.</em></td>
<td>Learn about how and when participants first became adjunct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

214
1. How were you first introduced to the opportunity to teach as an adjunct faculty member?
2. How did you feel when you were first asked to teach?
3. What was most exciting for you about the opportunity?
4. Ultimately, what motivated you to accept the position as an adjunct faculty member?
5. Before accepting your first teaching position as an adjunct faculty member, did you have any other formal or informal teaching experience?
   a. Probe about significance and duration of those experiences.
6. How long have you been teaching?
7. At which institution(s) have you taught?
8. What course or courses have you taught? Are they related to your non-teaching professional work?
9. What has your overall experience teaching as an adjunct faculty member been like?
10. To what extent do you feel like you’re “part of” the institution(s) where you teach? Do you feel like you belong?
11. What is your favorite part about teaching?
12. What challenges or roadblocks, if any, have you encountered as an adjunct faculty member?
13. How, if at all, has the experience of teaching impacted how you describe yourself as a “professional”?
14. Is there a metaphor that easily comes to mind that best explains who you are when you are “at your best” as a teacher?
   a. Probe and ask for explanation
   b. Do you think this metaphor has changed over time?

**Topic 3: Articulating your call to teach**

*The final set of questions for this interview relate to your perceived “call to teach.”*

1. How do you define or describe the “call to teach”?
2. In what ways do you feel called to teach?
3. How do you describe this call to others, especially those who don’t have teaching experience?
4. Are you able to recall when you first felt called to teach? What was that experience like for you?
5. Have you felt called to any other jobs/professions/industries? If so, how would you compare that call to your call to teach?

In the online survey you completed at the beginning of this study, I asked you to indicate how strongly you agreed with faculty members, their motivations to teach and their teaching experiences (Research sub-question #2).
each of the following statements (provide handout to participant). I am going to ask some follow-up questions about those same statements. As I ask my questions, don’t worry about how you responded on the survey. I’m interested in your thoughts now, regardless of how you initially responded.

- I feel called to teach
- Teaching is more than just a routine task
- I have something significant to give my students
- I have great hope for my students and what they’re capable of achieving
- I was born to do this kind of work
- I feel wholly committed to my students and their success
- Teaching is more than “just a job”
- I find great joy in teaching
- There’s something about teaching that makes me

6. Are there any statements on this list that resonate particularly strongly with you? Why?
7. Are there any statements on this list that you don’t think really apply to you?
8. Are there any other statements you would include on this list that would capture something important about feeling called to teach?

**Summary and wrap-up**

As we wrap up our time together, I wanted to make sure to give you some time to share anything else that you would like me to know. In our remaining time together....

1. Is there anything I haven’t asked you, that you would like to share?
2. Do you have additional thoughts about a question I asked earlier that you would like to revisit?
3. When I go back and transcribe this interview, what are you hoping really stands out to me?

Allow interviewee to highlight important points, clarify previous answers, and/or bring attention to particularly meaningful responses.
Thank you very much for your time today! I really appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with me. I look forward to our next interview.

If you have any questions in the meantime, or want to follow-up regarding something we discussed today, please feel free to contact me. Thank you again for your time.
Interview 2

Interview Set Up:
It’s good to see you again! Thank you for meeting with me for a second interview.

As I mentioned last time, I plan to use two digital recording devices during this interview, just in case there is a problem and I need a back-up. I’ll place them here on the table in front of us, so they’ll be able to record what we are saying. I might also jot down some notes as we go to make sure I’m accurately capturing what you have to share.

In addition to the questions I want to ask you today, I am also going to give you the opportunity to draw something and create something out of the materials and supplies I have brought with me. I’ll explain the activities in more detail once we get through a few initial questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 1: Salient aspects of your identity</strong>&lt;br&gt;You told me about your professional background in our first interview, but I wanted to take some time now to learn a little more about you and the things that are important to you.&lt;br&gt;1. When someone asks you to describe yourself, what information do you usually include?&lt;br&gt;2. What descriptors, characteristics or traits do you think other people mention when they are asked to describe you to someone who has never met you?&lt;br&gt;3. What do you think is important for others to know about you, either as an individual and/or as a professional?</td>
<td>Explore salient aspects of identity to provide foundation to explore research relationship between personal identity, professional identity and calling (Building toward research sub-question #3).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTIVITY 1:** On this sheet of paper (give participant a sheet of paper that is blank on one side and has the outline of a large circle on the other side), I would like you to brainstorm all the different aspects of your identity that come to mind. I will give you approximately 3 minutes.

**** 3 minutes of work time

Now, I would like you to select up to five of the most important components from your list to include as part of a pie chart on the back side of your paper. The size of each slice of the pie should reflect the relative importance of the particular component you have selected. The more
important you feel the component is, the larger the slice will be. I will give you another couple minutes to draw the slices in your chart.

**** 2-3 minutes of work time

4. Talk me through your chart. What aspects of your identity did you include? Why did you include them?
5. What do the components included on your pie chart say about you and what you value?
6. To what extent do the components in your pie chart affect your perspectives and worldview on any given day?
7. Is there anything else you want to add about your pie chart or the components you chose to include?

**Topic 2: Relationship between personal identity, professional identity and calling**

Now that we have explored some of the salient aspects of your identity through the creation of your pie chart, I want to ask some additional questions about how those components are related to your call to teach and your professional identity as a teacher.

1. How, if at all, do the components in your pie chart inform and/or relate to your professional identity as a teacher?
2. How, if at all, do the components in your pie chart inform and/or relate to your professional identity outside of teaching?
3. How, if at all, do the components in your pie chart inform and/or relate to your call to teach?
4. How, if at all, do the components in your pie chart inform and/or relate to your call to another job or profession?

**ACTIVITY 2:** I have another activity I’d like for you to do. I’m going to give you about 10 minutes to create something that represents the relationship between your call to teach, your professional identity, and your identity as a teacher. I would like for you to narrate your work in real-time as you go, explaining what you’re thinking, why you’re making the decisions you’re making, and what is inspiring you throughout the process. I may ask you some follow-up questions when you’re done.
**10 minutes of work time**

5. Tell me about what you created. What do the different components represent?
   a. Probe at meaning and significance of design choices
   b. Follow up on particular aspects of narration

6. What was the process of creating this product like for you?

7. How, if at all, did this activity encourage you to think differently about the relationship between your call to teach, your professional identity, and your identity as a teacher?

**Summary and wrap-up**

As we wrap up our time together, I wanted to make sure to give you some time to share anything else that you would like me to know. In our remaining time together....

1. Is there anything I haven’t asked you, that you would like to share?
2. Do you have additional thoughts about a question I asked earlier that you would like to revisit?
3. When I go back and transcribe this interview, what are you hoping really stands out to me?

Allow interviewee to highlight important points, clarify previous answers, and/or bring attention to particularly meaningful responses.

Thank you very much for your time today! I really appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with me.

For our next interview, I want to invite you to consider bringing or creating an artifact, or more than one artifact, that represents or reveals something important about who you are as a teacher. Examples of existing artifacts you may wish to share include your philosophy of teaching statement (if you have one), feedback you have provided to students on assignments or class participation, excerpts from your course syllabus, student emails or other forms of correspondence, the instructor biography you posted in Canvas or in your syllabus, or your introduction video to the course. The artifact can be anything you feel represents or reveals something important.

If you like, you may also wish to create a new artifact such as a drawing, painting, story, poem, or collage that represents something important about who you are as a teacher.

I will provide time for you to share your artifacts in our next interview.
If you have any questions in the meantime, or want to follow-up regarding something we discussed today, please feel free to contact me. Thank you again for your time.
Interview 3

Interview Set Up:
It’s good to see you again! Thank you for meeting with me for our third and final interview.

As I have mentioned before, I plan to use two digital recording devices during this interview, just in case there is a problem and I need a back-up. I’ll place them here on the table in front of us, so they’ll be able to record what we are saying. I might also jot down some notes as we go to make sure I’m accurately capturing what you have to share.

I will be asking you two sets of questions in this interview. The first set of questions is related to the intentions and desires you have for your teaching. The second set of questions is related to your teaching practices. I will also give you time to share any artifacts you have brought with you. Before we wrap up, I’ll give you the chance to re-visit any of the topics we have discussed over our three meetings and ask if there is anything else you want to share.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic 1: Teaching intentions</strong></td>
<td>Explore teaching goals and intentions and how interviewees plan for instruction, with a special focus on what informs these intentions (Research sub-question #4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d like to start out by asking about your teaching goals and desires. This first set of questions relates to your teaching intentions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Generally speaking, what do you desire to happen in your class(es)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do you go about deciding and/or determining what is most important to accomplish in your class(es)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Step me through the ways in which you prepare to teach. How do you determine your plans and goals for each class or class session?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How would you complete the following sentence? I will know I have been successful in my class when ___________.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In what ways, if any, does your identity influence and/or inform your teaching intentions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In what ways, if any, does your call to teach influence and/or inform your teaching intentions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic 2: Teaching practice**
Next, I’m going to ask you about teaching practices. This second set of questions relates to the methods and practices you use to achieve your teaching goals.

1. How would you describe your teaching approach? | Explore specific teaching practices, methods and approaches interviewees |
2. What types of teaching methods and/or practices do you use in your classroom?
3. Which teaching methods and/or practices do you most prefer? Why?
4. Walk me through how you go about identifying and selecting the teaching practices that you think are most likely to achieve your teaching goals.
5. In what ways, if any, does your identity influence and/or inform your selection of teaching practices?
6. In what ways, if any, does your call to teach influence and/or inform your teaching intentions?

> employ, with a special focus on what informs these teaching practices. (Research sub-question #4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 3: Discussion of artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the end of our last interview, I told you I would reserve some time in this interview for you to share any artifacts that you feel represent or reveal something important about who you are as a teacher. Did you bring any artifacts to share?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What does this artifact represent or reflect about you as a teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How, if at all, is this artifact related to your teaching intentions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How, if at all, is this artifact related to your teaching practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How, if at all, is this artifact related to your identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How, if at all, is this artifact related to your call to teach?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary and wrap-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As we wrap up our time together, I wanted to make sure to give you some time to share anything else that you would like me to know. In our remaining time together...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Is there anything I haven’t asked you, that you would like to share?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you have additional thoughts about something I asked previously, either in this interview or the other two previous interviews?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When I go back and transcribe this interview, what are you hoping really stands out to me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there anything else you would like to add?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Allow interviewee to highlight important points, clarify previous answers, and/or bring attention to particularly meaningful responses. |
Thank you very much for your time throughout this multi-interview process! I really appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with me over the last couple months. Your insights have been very valuable, and I thank you for your time.

If there is anything else that comes up that you want to share, please feel free to contact me. Thank you again for your time.
Appendix D: Visual Catalogue of Materials Made Available to Participants for Creation of Aesthetic Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Photograph</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Photograph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art Paper</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Art Paper Photograph" /></td>
<td>Feathers</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Feathers Photograph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green foam letter</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Green Foam Letter Photograph" /></td>
<td>Small rectangular wooden blocks</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Small Rectangular Wooden Blocks Photograph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stickers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glue and glue stick</td>
<td>Rubber bands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial fall leaves</td>
<td>Artificial flowers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colored pipe cleaners</td>
<td>Play-Doh and tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assorted colors of finger paints</td>
<td>Crayons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colored construction paper</td>
<td>Legos blocks and human Lego figure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint brushes and wooden dowels</td>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth-tone raffia twine</td>
<td>Tape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium sized interlocking plastic blocks</td>
<td>Spanish moss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafters foam block</td>
<td>Markers</td>
<td>Colored cotton balls</td>
<td>Seed pods and decorative twig/feather balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Crafters foam block" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Markers" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Colored cotton balls" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Seed pods and decorative twig/feather balls" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Participant-Created Aesthetic Products

1. Bob’s aesthetic product representing his desire for significant growth and transformation in his students.

2. Chloe’s aesthetic product representing (1) How her identity as a storyteller, a memory maker, and a creative translates into teaching practice, and (2) Her commitment to providing a quality learning experience that results in excitement, joy, a “fireworks” for her students.
3. Meghan’s aesthetic arrangement representing transformation and growth of student perspectives and worldviews.

4. Pat’s aesthetic product, inspired by the game “Mouse Trap”, that represents the neural pathways that the teacher opens up for each student to help him/her make sense of concepts and see connections.
5. Tom’s aesthetic product representing balance between the structured and easy-going aspects of his personality, both in and out of the classroom.
Appendix F: Participant-Created Identity Wheels

1. Bob’s identity wheel including learning, politics, sports, and helping/nice guy:

2. Chloe’s identity wheel including friendships/people, professional actions (including communicative, efficient, and responsive), memory-making, respected/credible, and warm/humorous/stories:
3. Meghan’s identity wheel including honesty/truth, Mom and Catholic:

4. Pat’s identity wheel including shepherd, communication, strategic, self-awareness, and integrity:
5. Tom’s identity wheel including responsibility, loyal, helpful, and easy going: