

## Abstract

Adjunct community college faculty play a vital role in educating students. The purpose of study was to qualitatively examine the lived workplace experiences of adjunct community college faculty in Northern California. This phenomenological study narrows a gap in the literature by building a vital database of information which examines occupational issues facing adjunct community college faculty in Northern California from the perspective of these contingent educators. Using the theoretical framework of institutionalization theory and phenomenological design, study utilized interviews of 22 currently employed adjunct community college faculty as the primary instrument of data collection. Interview data was accurately transcribed, analyzed, and codes were established culminating in overarching themes. Themes derived from the data provide insight into the lived experience of the participants and the meaning ascribed to adjunct faculty employment policies. The study revealed four primary themes which are identified as motivation, positive attributes, negative attributes, and desired policy changes. Findings indicated adjunct faculty are motivated by a passion for teaching and helping students achieve academic objectives. Motivating factors and positive attributes are circumscribed by a variety of negative attributes which marginalize adjunct community college instructors. In addition, adjunct faculty are a heterogeneous population by which career objectives play a significant role in perceptions of negative attributes and desired policy changes. Findings of study indicate a need for further research, adjunct employment policy changes to improve the workplace experience of contingent community college instructors, and a multitiered leadership hierarchy engaged in the promotion and implementation of innovative employment policy changes which create an equitable working environment for all faculty.