

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: STAINED GLASS CANTATAS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL  
STUDY OF ADJUNCT FACULTY PARTICIPATING IN A  
COMMUNITY-BUILDING EXPERIENCE

Janet Marie Zimmer, Doctor of Philosophy, 2006

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This study is my exploration of the experiences of eight experienced adjunct faculty members participating in conversations around the theme of community and its role in their relationships to peers and to the university. The text for this study is based upon individual conversations with the participants, and upon conversations held in four group seminar sessions focused on community and community-building.

The question guiding this inquiry is the following: “What is it like for adjunct faculty to participate in a community-building experience?” The hermeneutic phenomenological approach to my research is grounded in the phenomenological philosophies of Martin Heidegger (1953/1996) and Han-Georg Gadamer (1960/2003). Max van Manen (2003) provides the methodological framework for the research

activities. Poetry, stories, and literature from the disciplines of education, community development, and ways of being are used to open up new ways of thinking about the adjunct faculty experiences as shared in the conversational text.

The stained glass cantata and the rose window are the metaphors that come forward through reflections on my own experiences of community and the experiences of the adjunct faculty participants. In chapters one, two, and three, I liken the voices of adjunct faculty to that of a stained glass cantata – that of many voices, each singing his/her own stained glass color, joined together in the community of university adjunct faculty.

In chapter four, as I revisit the conversations, I begin to build a stained glass rose window, using the geometry of the window to refract the lived experiences of the conversants in a focused community-building environment. The themes of their relationships with each other and with the university are brought forward in separate petals of the rose window: “The Seeker,” “The Suppliant,” “The Jester,” “The Joiner,” “The Bookie,” “The Bouncer,” “The Architect,” and “The Advocate.” Each petal is constructed with the many colors of the individual adjuncts as they explore their *being* as adjuncts in community with peers.

In chapter five the implications of the experience are explored through the themes of seeking wholeness, defining community, and a proposal for a faculty professional development workshop that explores *being* above *doing*.

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF ADJUNCT FACULTY PARTICIPATING IN  
A COMMUNITY-BUILDING EXPERIENCE

by

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## DEDICATION

The work is dedicated to:

My daughters, Bree and Beth Zimmer, whose love and support is always there.

And,

Edwin Ramirez Alvarado, an inspiration for *being* and through whose eyes and voice I  
was introduced to an unimagined world of natural beauty.

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\*\*\*\*\*

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**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**TURNING TO THE PHENOMENON: THE SONG OF COMMUNITY**

I want to shape a space for calm  
and stand kneedeep in Mendelssohn and Mozart  
singing stained glass cantatas  
under halos of the moon. (Daigon, 2003, ¶ 3)

**Cantatas and Full Moons**

As an Academic Director and instructor in an adult education university with a significant online presence, I am both a conductor and a singer of cantatas. The large number of faculty at the institution where I work are *full-mooners* (Tuckerman, 1978), instructors who hold another primary job in a non-educational profession but who teach at the university in the evenings or in online classes. Almost all of the instructors in my discipline area, over 100, are adjunct (part-time) faculty. This situation generates a unique type of environment consisting of individuals who straddle two professional lives simultaneously. They are scattered geographically and multiply-focused on differing professional obligations. Yet, they also are part of a community of educators working for an institution somewhat unique in its origin, mission, and structure.

This university was opened in 1970 and was originally was part of the state's flagship public university. The university became an independent comprehensive state public university in 1970, with a mission dedicated to delivering higher education to American service men and women stationed overseas. In the intervening years, the school has broadened its mission to include a focus on U. S. students who wish to pursue a college education while also maintaining and addressing work and family responsibilities and/or geographic limitations. In 1994 the university began to use the Internet as a means of delivering its courses to students who are geographically-separated and time-bound.

The university has grown to become the largest public provider of online higher education in the world. This transition to the online environment, which enables students to enter online classrooms to take courses from many locations around the world, also has increased the number of faculty who not only teach those online classes but who also reside in far-flung locations around the world. These faculty members may be full time instructional staff or part of the large contingent of adjunct faculty members.

Throughout its history, the university has focused on serving non-traditional primarily part-time students. It is an open university with a focus on teaching rather than research and publication. All faculty, whether part of the instructional staff or an adjunct faculty member, are non-tenured. There has been a continued broad use of adjunct faculty, providing this university with the opportunity to engage highly qualified practitioners as instructors, thus providing a perspective much appreciated by the working adult student. In the most recent compilation of information gathered (University of Maryland University College, 2006), it was reported that 74% of the more than 2000 faculty were adjunct or part-time. This use of adjunct faculty has enabled the university to provide students with access to distinguished faculty who are committed to excellence in teaching that incorporates a high level of professional experience gained in workplaces outside of academia.

The voices of anguish heard from adjuncts struggling to break into the tenure ranks of a research university or college differ greatly from those voices that do not rely on teaching as the primary source of vocation or livelihood. These adjunct faculty members bring their professional lives/jobs into their teaching, melding industry or government work into the content of the classroom.

Both full time and part time faculty members are supporting an institution that is, itself, spread in many locations around the world. These faculty members have less frequent contact with the university staff and with their peers. This presents its own set of challenges in terms of ensuring that they feel supported, included, recognized, and valued. But for those who are adjuncts, I wonder whether the connections formed within those day jobs provide a radical contrast to their adjunct teaching positions. In most work situations, one readily can walk into another office, pick up a phone or email someone to discuss a particular situation, thorny or exhilarating. I wonder if adjuncts feel a sense of isolation in coming from the formalized structure of day jobs into the isolation of nighttime or asynchronous online classrooms where they see, hear and observe no other teaching peers. Does this physical distancing, real or effected by a lack of contact with peers, staff, and even the physical presence of a home campus, skew their vision of their relationship to the university? This eclectic mix of adjuncts, facing the struggle to make meaning of their relationship to the university and to their peers, presents me with a chorus of voices to which I am called to attend. Within this chorus of educators I always am listening for the song that speaks of the yearning for community. I am discovering the value that community has for me as teacher. I am searching to uncover the different voices, the different perspectives that reveal a sense of community that sustains the adjunct faculty members. How important is “belonging” to the university community for any full time faculty member? And in what ways is that desire for connection different for the practitioner/teacher who teaches *in addition* to a career in private industry or government?



## **The Song of Connection**

In what way can gaining insights into this need for connection inform my understanding of the struggles adjuncts face in their work, as well as inform my relationships with them in my role as administrator? Even if teaching is not the primary cornerstone of an adjunct's professional life, I feel that in order to engage fully in this activity of teaching/leading there is still a need to stay connected, to bond with peers working in the same teaching environment. Intrator and Scribner (2003) write that "To do our best teaching, we must stay connected. Connected to our inner life, our colleagues, our students, and the subjects we teach. When we work and live in isolation, we miss out on what we need most: empathy, shared wisdom, and communal expertise . . ." (p. 115).

In orientations with new faculty, there is often evidence of an eagerness to collaborate and a willingness on the part of more experienced faculty to share their stories. There is evidence that these professionals, for whom teaching is a second or third occupation/career, want to build a sense of community-within or belonging-to the university and to share and grow professionally with each other: "We were sharing a lot of ideas;" "We've kept in touch;" "I see some of them at faculty meetings now;" "You see the same faces." These snippets of a conversation with adjunct faculty members all speak to the need for contact, for meeting together in one place, for a meaning-making that is based upon community, upon joining together, even if briefly, to share concerns, joys, frustrations, questions, triumphs. This joining together makes us feel part of things; it answers a need to participate. "It seems that in a soul sense we cannot be fully ourselves without others. In order to *be*, we need to *be with* . . . . Belonging together with others completes something in us" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 258). Faculty members cannot

truly develop without the presence of others. Growth of skills and confidence take place only in/through contact, communication with others. What is it about this need for connection that supports growth and skills that relates to the kind of environment I am seeking to create for the adjunct faculty in my charge?

Isolation in thought and in physical environment is dangerous. If independence comes at the price of a disconnection to the ground of our being, at the price of losing our immersion and placement in the matrix of existence, then we no longer truly can know who we are. The university does a great disservice to its faculty if it does not provide a supportive venue for collaborative growth. One cannot teach without students; one cannot grow to be a more successful teacher without interacting with other teachers. Self-reflection is important; but without others' ideas to stimulate, to reflect upon as if in a mirror, one does not change or grow.

We are part of many communities with differing unifying themes and purposes. And the sense of connection varies in these communities, from unquestioned acceptance to the need, on an almost daily basis, to prove oneself worthy of maintaining membership. In the context of teaching as adjuncts, I wonder to what extent a lack of easy companionship affects their sense of fulfillment and joy in the act of teaching, which is itself a communal activity. What special challenges do these educators face as they move between connections to peers in the workplace and students in the classroom, and the less-frequent contacts, attachments and looser relationships to their teaching peers and the educational institution for which they work? The impact of inquiring together in a community of educators, of seeing themselves as *being*, as who they *are* and not just what they *do*, will have a very positive influence on their other relationships. Having the

opportunity to reflect upon who they are in the supportive environment of community may enable faculty members to provide contexts in which students might also be able to see themselves in different ways. Such a grounding in community has the potential to carry over into instructor and students building a very positive community in the classroom. We teach who we are. And if we experience a strong connection, a strong sense of community in whatever setting that community exists, we carry that connectedness into the classroom as well.

In the conversations with adjuncts, I am seeking to see the concepts and events of their adjunct experiences in a new way, in a manner that gets beneath the surface of their activities in the classroom and what might be, at times, a tenuous connection to the institution. What language expresses their sense of belonging that shapes the struggles and tensions they may feel as adjuncts? In what colors and voices do they sing the song of community?

### **The Stained Glass Song of Community**

In what way does the image of stained glass speak to me of the voices of adjunct faculty? Stained glass, colored glass, always has had a special impact on my life. When my brother, John, and I were in our early school years, we would spend at least one week during the summer vacation at the “circus” my three older brothers would create in a field by the house. John and I were the patrons at this circus that consisted of a House of Horrors created with a tent and bales of straw, a zoo (chickens and cats, mostly), and rides (a plank over a barrel made a great seesaw and an iron wheel on a post an exciting merry-go-round). The week was one of tremendous fun for all of us, and the price of

admission was pieces of glass! Colored glass had double the value of plain glass. Even as a youngster I became attuned to the special properties of colored glass.

I dabble occasionally in making stained glass objects. It is a late addition to my list of interests in life, and my usual products are small. I do not make the stained glass; I only arrange the pieces so that their colors can play with the light and with each other.

There is a mystery to glass: It is a form of matter with gas, liquid and solid state properties. Glass is most like a super-cooled liquid. It captures light and glows from within. It is a jewel like substance made from the most ordinary materials: sand transformed by fire. (Art Glass Association, 2004, ¶ 2)

The mystery inherent in the stained glass does not call for solutions but for reverence. “The art of glass is physical poetry; a combination of colour, form, texture, opacity and transparenence. Glass is married with light” (Daunais, 2004, ¶ 3). It is a poetry with which I feel comfortable, challenged, and before which I will stand in awe. Stained glass captures light and space in a poetry of color and form. It is mysterious in its ability to change with changes in the light passing through it, in its ability to change the space on the other side of its panels. Even seeing the rainbow colors reflected on the floor or an opposite wall brings a smile to one’s spirit. The individual pieces, gathered together, tell stories, elicit emotions, and become a wellspring of peace and calmness.

This unique property – individual pieces coming together to create something greater than their individual stories, changing their individual beauty to a larger poem, a song of light and space, is what I seek to find in the lived experience of community, specifically that community of common purpose found among adjunct faculty members. I seek to discover the poetry, the changed space, the story that this living window of color adjunct faculty share. The song revealed in the colors, forms, textures, and light-bearing

qualities of this community, much like the song of the stained glass window, will change in the shifting lights revealed by conversations. Some of these qualities that I see now (and which may appear or disappear as I become immersed in the search for greater understanding) are the shapes of unique combinations of the pieces that make up that which is named adjunct faculty.

The song of community, the stained glass cantata, consists of individual arias or recitative pieces. The individual voices are heard in melodic exchange, sometimes harmonic, sometimes in argument with each other. It is not a massive chorus that sublimates the individuals; rather, the uniqueness of each voice is treasured for its own contribution. Yet cantatas are not solo performances, sung alone, without guidance, without the support of other voices. The cantata-community is the weaving together of different voices. I am concerned that once interviewed and hired, adjunct faculty are left on their own to survive and flourish in the classroom, to work bereft of the support of peer instructors and institutional care. It often feels like I am forcing only solo performances on them, letting them sing alone without guidance, without the support of other voices, perhaps working in the dim light of a lunar eclipse instead of within the halo of the moon's glow. I wonder if they feel recognized as individuals or simply feel like another indistinguishable shadow in the crowd, unrecognized in casual passing. A majority of them never have met the other instructors in their same discipline. Can members who never meet create a community? I wonder to what extent being part of a community is important to them as teachers. Can their success in the classroom point to something they may not be conscious of, point to something they did not see? How might

their reflection on their experience of community as adjuncts create space for the emergence of a new way of being?

**Learning to sing together.** Applebee (1996) reminds us that we “learn to do new things by doing them with others. . . . Tomorrow we do on our own what today we do in the company of others” (p. 108). For these adjunct faculty who come to the classroom with little formal teacher preparation, this learning together is critical. The development of teaching skills is only one small piece in the foundation of community among adjuncts. A more compelling need for community lies in a searching for wholeness, for a total greater than the sum of its parts, for a sense of belonging, a safe area where we can take risks. Or, as Dick relates in a posting to an online faculty forum (*Faculty Forum*, 2004):

I am in my 20th year of teaching at [this university]. . . . I could never have made it this long teaching alone. I need to have participation in the life of the university. The participation has taken many forms, but all of them have brought me closer to administrators and other faculty.

There is a deep pull within each of us for connection, for community. The term *community* stems from the Latin *communitatem*, fellowship (Barnhart, 1988). But the word can be built in different ways: *common* + *ity* – a quality of belonging equally to two or more (Onions, 1966), *com* + *munia*, together + duties – sharing burdens (Barnhart, 1988). As Griffin (1995) tells us:

The wish for communion exists in the body, . . . a desire that is at the core of human imaginings, the desire to locate ourselves in community, to make our survival a shared effort, to experience a palpable reverence in our connections with each other and the earth that sustains us. (pp. 145-146)

Can adjunct faculty truly sing in the cantata if they do not hear the other voices?

“The ideal of creation is community, a whole diversity of presences which belong

together in some minimal harmony” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 260). In what sense is belonging as valuable to these faculty members as it is to me? I am interested in the meaning of community/connection that lies behind the active involvement of some adjunct faculty, while others rarely are heard from as they go about their work. What is the institution’s commitment to provide a nourishing and supportive atmosphere that fosters a sense of community, a sense of camaraderie and companionship, for such widely dispersed peers? “Caring together is the basis of community life. We do not come together simply to console each other or even to support each other. Important as those things may be, long-term community life is directed in other ways. Together we reach out to others” (Nouwen, 1994, p. 64).

I am drawn to hear the individual voices, as well as the melody the voices create in unison, in community. The building of such a community is more than just a gathering together of individuals with common occupations. The connections cannot be forced. “Making pottery, for example, involves more than telling the clay what to become. The clay presses back on the potter’s hands, telling her what it can and cannot do – and if she fails to listen, the outcome will be both frail and ungainly” (Palmer, 2000, p. 16). I am drawn to understand the lived experiences of the adjuncts in this chorus/community, to learn more about the ecosystem in which they live. My desire is to reveal the network of communal relations in which we all are called to live responsively, accountably and joyfully. And I wish to create a space that gives rise to the authentic voice of the adjuncts in their experience of community.

**The voices.** Who are these adjunct faculty? Who are faculty members? We think of them as instructors that form the teaching body of an institution. Faculty is based on

the Latin *facultas*, meaning power, ability, wealth (Barnhart, 1988). And all three of these adjectives may be used to describe the strength of an instructor, the ability to share an investigation of lifeworlds focused around particular subject areas, and the depth and wealth of the experiences the instructor and students share with each other in the classroom. But *facultas* comes from *facilis* – facile, easy to do, and *facere* – people who are pliant, courteous (Barnhart, 1988). And so the word “faculty” means both someone who has an aptitude and ease in accomplishing something, a facilitator, and one who has power, ability, and wealth.

What sort of power, ability, and wealth do adjunct faculty experience in relationship to the university community? Their ability to be effective and supportive instructors often is taken for granted, sometimes with little support for improving those skills. On one level, there is considerable autonomy, independence, and power over how they conduct their classes. I wonder if I make the mistake of assuming that successful experience in the business place translates seamlessly into successful teaching. Do I take for granted their subject matter expertise and translate this into a strength that does not need the support of a community of peers in teaching? Our very culture always has celebrated the individual, illustrated everywhere in American lore as a celebration of drifters, rebels, and loners. The community, if recognized at all, it is likely to appear as a hindrance to be overcome by the free soul of a hero or heroine (Sanders, 1995).

Among all the fantasies of independence that are part of the Western mythos, the adventurer, the pioneer alone in the wilderness, the sailor on the open seas, the crusading knight, the heroic marine, perhaps the most enduring and profound in its influence has been the idea of a mind autonomous from any surrounding. (Griffin, 1995, p. 77)



In their pride of being seen as independent, as being capable of handling the demanding work of teaching, of facing the classroom alone, adjuncts may be afraid to call out for help, to ask for assistance. If they need to ask, does that not indicate a failing on their part, an insufficiency in what it means to teach? My own experience as an adjunct brings forward my concern that the communities of professional life and family life outside the classroom do not provide sufficient support for the adjunct faculty member. In addition to successful teaching experiences, the independence and distance from the workings of the university outside the classroom may leave them feeling powerless in the shaping of issues such as curriculum and faculty governance.

Many adjunct faculty members might well argue that wealth, defined on the level of monetary recompense, is missing in their relationship with the university community. Absence of reward for service in the interest of building community is reflected institutionally in the fact that the President's monetary award for staff members' service is almost ten times that of the award given each year to faculty members nominated by students for excellence in teaching. What message does this send to the faculty about their value to the institution? Valerie, an adjunct in my charge, says, "The pay. That doesn't make you feel like you're worth much....But the work here counts more! We're trying to shape people's lives." What power is contained in that shaping of lives! In the truest sense of teaching, the students are invited to join in the singing of the cantata, to add to the melodies. They are not just the audience; they are co-creators of the educational experience.

There is a terminology used in referring to these voices, these educational co-creators – adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, contingent faculty. In identifying the voices

of those who constitute this stained glass cantata, do the very names used to call out their belonging in some way define our understanding of these members of the university community? What message is implied in the naming?

**Naming these community voices.** The term *adjunct* is derived from the Latin *adjungere*, to join to. But full-time faculty also are joined to an institution, are joined to others. What makes adjunct faculty different? Perhaps the special connotation of *adjunct* stems from older roots of *join*, the Old German *juk* which gave rise to *yoke* – heavy burden, oppression, servitude (Ayto, 1990). Thus the term *adjunct* carries with it a connotation of belonging, but in a subordinate, auxiliary, or incidental position. And traditionally, adjunct faculty members have been considered outliers, outsiders, ones who do not have the full attention of the institution or of the full-time faculty members. They are tolerated in spite of the fact that they provide invaluable support, enabling universities to meet the goals of the institution and the needs of the students, and sometimes those upon whom a heavy (teaching) burden is placed without benefit of support services available to the community of regular full-time instructors.

What does it mean to be called a part-time faculty member? *Part*, from the Latin *pars*, share, part of a whole, is cognate with Sanskrit *parti-s* – present, reward (Barnhart, 1988) and *time*, limited stretch of continuous existence (Onions, 1966). Part-time faculty have made a present of a portion of their existence to the academic world. Wyles (1998) contends that adjunct faculty mirror dramatic changes in the wider world of work, in which there are few definitive jobs and more temporary “work situations” (p. 92). In what way might emerging patterns that are changing the traditional faculty career patterns result in an educational system that is structured on the exploitation, mistreatment, and

disenfranchisement of these gift-givers who manage more or less heroically to continue to provide a quality education in their classroom? If such a result is occurring, one must be concerned because such a system that “routinely requires heroes and martyrs to function is one that will eventually run out of volunteers” (McGee, 2002, pp. 67-8).

The label *contingent* faculty could be construed as a misnomer. From the Latin *contingentem* – befalling, happening, touching, contingent implies a thing happening by chance (Barnhart, 1988). Only in the sense that adjunct faculty members cannot consider continuous employment a *given*, that assignment to classes from one semester to the next is *chancy*, does the term apply. In which direction does the contingency point? Do adjunct faculty fall upon, happen to, and as a result, touch the academic institution? Or is their work that which happens to them, that touches them, that falls upon them as a burden or weight?

In what manner have I absorbed these names into understanding my own heritage as an adjunct instructor? My struggle to come to an understanding of my place in this bifurcated world of teaching part time is a struggle toward sense-making, toward getting beneath the surface of the external structures that support or divide the adjunct from a sense of belonging. It is a struggle toward finding my place in this coming to know the lived experiences of the others who share my interest and passion about community and teaching.

### **My Voice in the Song of Community**

Some journeys are direct, and some are circuitous; some are heroic, and some are fearful and muddled. But every journey, honestly undertaken, stands a chance of taking us toward the place where our deep gladness meets the world’s deep need. (Palmer, 2000, p. 36)

As I begin the exploration of community or connected-ness evidenced by the stained glass cantata sung by adjunct faculty, what assumptions about the need for community as a necessary part of teaching success, do I bring to the journey? Why is community so important to me in relationship to my own teaching and in understanding the lives of adjunct faculty? The beginning of the phenomenological journey must start with a look at the researcher herself. The search for that place of calm and quiet where the music of community can be made and listened to is that which draws me into this investigation of lived experiences of community among adjunct faculty. So much of my life has been wrapped around institutional education, formal education, student and teacher, and the communities I encountered and became part of in these spaces. What colors of stained glass have contributed to the colors of my own song as part of the educational community? Mattie Stepanek (2001) captures the kneedeep-ness of our lives, our present immersed in the songs and colors of the past and the melodies and hues yet to be sung:

Our life is an echo  
Of our spirit today,  
Of our essence  
As it is,  
Caught between  
Our yesterday  
And our tomorrow.  
It is the resounding  
Reality of who we are,  
As a result of  
Where we have been,  
And where we will be,  
For eternity. (p. 62)

## **The Opening Call to Community**

In reflecting on my past history as a teacher, both full time and part time, I have come late to realize that for me teaching always has been associated with community, being-with others, not just in the classroom but being physically co-located with my educator-peers. My first introduction to teaching was via the nuns who taught in the grade school I attended. They lived above the three classrooms that comprised the school. They were defined, in our minds, as members of a religious community whose mission was to teach in Catholic schools. So it was not the teaching that first attracted me to the field of education, but more so belonging to a group where women were respected. A farm community did not prize female children quite that same way; females were expected to marry and become a member of, belong to, another farm family. Only the sons could be seen as continuing stewardship of the family land.

In what way did I begin to make sense of the dichotomy of community as experienced in that small farming community? How does a young female whose role models were women but whose experience of community was that of exclusion because of her gender, make sense of *belonging*? The inclusiveness of the religious community was seen as a *way out* and then a *way into* a community constructed first around religion and secondly around teaching. I observed that same model in high school where other members of the same religious Order taught. Here I watched from the inside, living as a fulltime boarder at the high school. Then, after graduation, I joined this religious community and became a teacher myself. We taught together during the day; we prayed, played, and prepared together outside the classrooms. For me, community and teaching were inseparable. And so my identity became wrapped around what I did, a member of a

teaching community at a Catholic school, with minimal understanding of who I was. It took a radical departure from that community to break the comforting/constraining shell which I had constructed that had allowed me to concentrate solely on *doing* and ignore my *being*. I needed to leave the comfort and confines of that religious school community which had defined my identity and begin to seek out a more complete understanding of my *being*. The paths toward that greater understanding took me through many forms of community: marriage, the birth of two children, divorce, and moving to a different social community 1000 miles away from family. And eventually I found myself *doing* again, but this time in the public school classroom. Now I realized again how ingrained those initial connections between community and education were for me. *Doing* rather than *being* could still loom large in the definition of who I was.

### **Community of Chaos**

The transition to public school teaching, and later to teaching in the local community college, left me without that structure of community that I had come to feel was an integral part of the profession of teaching, the doing of teaching. My first year of teaching in a public school was perhaps the most difficult year of my life. My teaching experience to date had been in private schools where good behavior was taken for granted and the majority of parents were active participants in the educational system. As I re-read the notes in a brief diary I kept that year, there is no mention of staff, no record of meetings with peers, no signs of joy in the effort. Instead, it is a song of despair. The words too often repeated are “Kids horrible today,” or “Kids not so bad today.” I was an experienced teacher, too proud to admit that I totally was out of my element, in a situation unfamiliar to me – an inner city public school in a community rampant with

parental indifference. My lifeline became the church community in which I became involved and a wonderful group of neighbors with children the same age as my own two. Many coffees, dinners, and walks were shared that year and continued during the five years I remained at that same public school. The sense of belonging in the church and neighborhood community did not depend upon what I did for a living. It was a place of nurturing that allowed for development of a sense of who I was, who I was becoming. Although the connection with other teachers did become stronger and my comfort level at the school increased with each passing year, the educational environment no longer held the strong ties to the person I was becoming. Community was still important, but the center of what provided that sense of belonging began to shift.

### **Opting for a Different Song**

When the loss of community in the teaching environment eventually reached critical mass, I opted to leave teaching for the corporate world. In what way could a corporate environment provide that sense of connectedness that I no longer felt in that which had been most enduring for me? Interestingly, I found a place at an engineering company whose transition into supporting software development was beginning at a time when few software engineers were available. The department I joined was led by a manager who, himself a former high school teacher, was in the process of hiring a number of other former teachers of math and science who could then be trained in computer programming. Thus, our group had a good deal in common – a real interest in computers, a background in teaching, and a desire to continue honing our skills by taking advantage of full tuition remission in seeking a graduate degree in computer science. What I was doing was not as significant as the group of women with whom I worked.

They became my friends and mentors, and we still remain in contact after scattering to many different places in our lives. For thirteen years I worked in the corporate environment, progressing upward through the ranks of programmer, team leader, program manager, director.

But I could not still the voice which grounded me most firmly, a voice that spoke always of connection to education. I have since made the transition back into the educational community and now work as an Academic Director of one of the undergraduate degree programs at my university. The duties include curriculum development, teaching, and support of a large number of adjunct faculty who provide the program delivery. That change from the corporate environment to full time work in an educational institution was not an abrupt one. For there was a constant siren call, the pull of the classroom and teaching even while I was fully immersed in the corporate environment.

### **Returning to the Familiar Song**

I began teaching as an adjunct at the local community college immediately after completing my graduate degree in computer science. Would this, then, be the ideal combination – melding the community experience of friends and co-workers with what seemed to always insinuate itself in my life, teaching? Perhaps it makes more sense to think of my teaching as my way of being since that is the one constant in my search for wholeness. To bring together that which I do with who I am is still expressed in my searching for the full sense of community as an educator. This has been the thread that enables me to live more completely, enables me to express myself more genuinely. But that thread at times has been quite frayed, at times near breaking entirely.



**The community of one.** As an adjunct in the community college, the loss of belonging to an institutional community was even more pronounced than that experienced in the junior high school. At the community college I knew the department director and the secretary in the office. I met few other fulltime faculty, and other adjuncts even more rarely. Our paths never crossed. We had an orientation meeting in the fall (for all adjuncts), but it was very pro-forma, providing little information and no opportunity for discussion with others. I just remember sitting in this auditorium listening to folks I had never seen before and would not see again during the coming year. We never attended department or general faculty meetings. We were never observed. We were this academic community's quite literally "invisible faculty" whose potential remained "largely ignored and therefore untapped" (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. 44).

Most semesters I taught in the evening, and I would arrive 30-45 minutes before class and spend time in the office area visiting with Nellie, the secretary. We became close enough to share family stories, and to go whale watching off the Virginia coast. Occasionally another faculty member would be eating an early dinner or making copies of notes for class. I never learned the names of any of those faculty or others on the staff. I was comfortable with the content of the course I taught each semester; I loved seeing the light of discovery and pleasure in the eyes of the students when their Pascal programs worked for the first time. But I sorely missed the support, encouragement, and appreciation that would have come from belonging actively to the institution's academic community. Why was I struggling in my efforts to find my place, my connection here? My definition of who I was depended not only on what I was doing in that building but also on the connections I had made or desired to make to the others associated with that

place. The act of teaching, while fulfilling on one level, still lacked a wholeness because it was disconnected from the people who created the community of teachers. Harkening back to my very first experience of education, it was clear to me that teaching must involve connection, collaboration, encouragement, and camaraderie with others pursuing the same work.

**A community of ghosts.** This isolation was most severe one semester when I taught on a Sunday afternoon. There was no staff on site, no other classroom filled with students, the halls echoing lengths of dimly lighted space. Often the classroom doors were locked and I would have to hunt down a security guard or a lab assistant to open the room. Rick, an adjunct now working at my university, echoes these same sentiments: “At S. it was like you were on your own. No help, no support, no lab tech. If anything breaks, send them [the students] home.” I sorely missed the mingling of voices I always associated with an academic setting. I missed feeding off the energy of not only the students in my classroom but the aggregate energy of other instructors, a community by affinity, a community of common purpose. I missed the verification that I belonged to a larger family, that I belonged. Much like Casey (1993), sent away to summer camp,

I was feeling a profound sense of emptiness, a vacuum of human affection, a suspicion that no one really cared whether I lived or died and that I have been abandoned on the windswept plains, deposited there like an indifferent, subhuman thing. (p. 192)

Valerie articulates similar experiences of isolation, a lack of identity support in the business setting. “I’ve been a contractor for so many years for consulting companies, and there isn’t much of a difference in that feeling [of isolation], except for usually I’m placed in an office at a site. My company is never there, but I get a much bigger paycheck.” Adjunct faculty do not have offices, do not have regular office hours, do not

have that physical connection to the university provided by on-site presence. “We are kind of invisible to you all. But not to the students” (Valerie).

### **The Question in the Song**

How is it that Valerie feels connected to students (whom she never sees because she teaches only online) but not to the university itself? Certainly she is more often in contact with and present to her students, and they rely upon her expertise and insights frequently. The university’s reliance on the adjunct more often is taken for granted and not expressed in terms of public appreciation. Do students provide a more immediate reaffirmation of value and worth to the adjuncts, while the lack of such affirmation on the part of the university makes them feel less visible? Do they feel that they really matter to the institution? I wonder if adjuncts feel that they could disappear and no one would know the difference. If the university has become simply a place of business where the human dimension, the quality of the lives of the instructors is ignored or pushed to the background, the song of community will be difficult to maintain, to hear, to be sung. But that song is essential to the well-being of each participant as it is essential to the well-being of all living things who partner in the ecosystem of which all things material and non-material are a part.

That song can be heard in nature as well as in the voices of humans. Each time I am introduced to text that sings to my inner being, I become hungry to listen to music. Even scientists have come to recognize that black holes *sing* – a B-flat note that is 57 times lower than what the human ear can hear. O’Donohue (1997) reminds us that “Long before humans arrived on earth, there was an ancient music here. Yet, one of the most

beautiful gifts that humans have brought to the earth is music. In great music, the ancient longing of the earth finds a voice” (p. 72). There are individual musicians whose melodies start out ahead of the supporting chorus; there are harmonies that require all the participants to listen to each other. The music of this collaboration, this sharing of mission and vocation, becomes insistent. And alongside collaboration is counterpoint, a melody within or alongside another, bringing richness to the song. Each faculty member must find and play his/her own melody of passion, energy, and commitment to the art of teaching. Yet, that individual melody, played independently, blends seamlessly into the larger symphony of the university.

In my work as Academic Director, I had several preliminary conversations with adjuncts in my charge in order to begin to address the concerns raised in the above questions. It is in coming to know these individuals that I may begin to understand how they express the sense of community and begin to tease out the implicit meanings that lay covered over by their words.

### **Other Singers in the Chorus of Community**

I met Diane for the first time at the top of an escalator. She had staked out this prime spot in the convention meeting hall in order to pass out the survey she was using to gather data for her Ph.D. dissertation on emotional intelligence and online teaching. A few questions uncovered the fact that she was another solo pilgrim at this heavily attended conference. Between presentations I found myself returning to her spot, engaging in bits of conversation and questioning, and eventually assisting her in the distribution and collection of the surveys when she needed to leave for a few minutes. A tentative friendship developed over the next few days, built on providing each other

companionship in a sea of strangers and some, as of yet, unexplored connections. On the last day we decided to play hooky and take a side trip up a scenic highway to the next town. It was during this car ride that Diane related her experiences as an adjunct faculty member at another online institution. I was struck by the strength of character she evinced in overcoming tremendous obstacles. Both of her parents had been murdered when she was nine years old. Her husband would not support her efforts to get the Ph.D., forcing her to find tuition monies via student loans and by teaching as an adjunct faculty member at the same institution from which she was earning her Ph.D. A devastating car accident had left her debilitated for a number of years and she went underwent multiple reconstructive surgeries. What had drawn her into the community of educators? She left a rich background in private industry to seek out the special community of fellow educators. I wondered how she had come to express a hope that this community would provide her with the strength to continue to make difficult choices in a life that had already forced her to face many difficult challenges. Her search for wholeness resembled echoes that resonated in my own story of struggle for independence, identity, and a rich life that was tied together by the landscape of education.

Valerie interviewed for an adjunct teaching position on a sunny, warm day in fall. Only within the context of a lunch meeting a year later did she reveal that the interview had been the first activity she had forced herself to complete, the first effort she had made to leave her house, since the death of her 15-month-old baby. She had been a very successful businesswoman before leaving that job to care for her newborn daughter. Over the course of that luncheon conversation, she began to reveal how her teaching as an adjunct faculty member allowed her to move further through the grieving process and

give her a singular and unique insight into the lives of students who were facing situations of similar personal disruption. She saw her adjunct employment as one step on a path toward regaining her spirit and had begun the process of adopting a baby. I wondered how she came to view the academic family as the wellspring of support she needed at this time. Did she seek out the isolation of adjunct faculty teaching to help her heal – belonging, but on the fringes of a loosely cohesive group, and thus not under the intensive spotlight of daily interaction with peers in an office? How did she translate the association with other peers in academia into unfolding a heart badly bruised by the death of her daughter? Perhaps her work as an adjunct is a detour that allows her to concentrate on heart work, allowing her the space to “illumine possibilities of movement and connection” (Roderick, 1991, p. 104). Her teaching may be her way of turning away from the immediate heartache of her loss, allowing her to take an indirect path to addressing her inner pain, finding her *being* as the mother who has lost a child in the nurturing of others.

Rick and I discovered that we had followed similar paths on our way to current roles as instructor and administrator respectively. Rick is the consummate adjunct, working full time at a local Board of Education office each day and teaching part time for two local colleges in the evening. He is a faculty member often called upon to mentor others, to develop new courses, and to assist in curriculum issues. “What I teach is what I do all day long” (Rick). We both had started out as adjunct faculty at the same community college, teaching at the same off-campus locations, but never crossing paths until moving to our current common institution. Never crossing paths, even while teaching in the same institution, is one of the real challenges facing adjunct faculty who

often teach in isolation from all other members of the academic staff. One semester of such isolation will not deter the individual who is intimately dedicated to working with students. But someone who is new to the classroom or who continues to experience only classrooms where isolation is a distracting factor, certainly would be challenged to continue working in such an environment.

These are glimpses of the stained glass melodies that wreath the lives of adjunct faculty. Diane, Valerie, and Rick define themselves further in the revealing of their personal histories. They needed to share these other aspects of their lives in order to ensure that they were recognized as full humans, not only peripherally associated with their tasks as teachers. As Lingis (1933/2000) tells us, “A tune is not launched by an advance representation of the final note, and its evolution is nowise purposive. . . . Tunes do not imitate but answer refrains that start and stop in the streets, in the fields, and in the clouds” (pp. 33-34). I am led, wandering and wondering, after the notes that come from the lives of those with whom I work, from the adjunct faculty. What is the song that has called them to teach, and do they hear that song as a single, *a capella* note or a full cantata supported by a symphony orchestra? It is my hope that my conversations with the various voices will, like a prism, reveal different colors of the song that speaks of the experience of community among adjunct faculty.

### **Singing Community under the Moon’s Halo**

In winter skies one can sometimes see “sun dogs,” small colored or white patches of light equally distant from the sun. These “sun dogs” actually are part of a halo around the sun and are created by sunlight being refracted through ice crystals high in the atmosphere. Because they are visible only on sunny days, the halo is hard to look at

because of the brightness of the skies. The sun, symbol of elaborateness, artifice, richness, all that resembles the work of a goldsmith, can sometimes blind us (or make us squint) with its strong, clear light. The softer light of the moon also produces a halo that, if bright, still can be looked at directly or, if dim, only can be seen obliquely. It is in the soft, reflected light of the moon that we encounter the stillness that allows us to begin hearing the symphony of life around us. The softer light of the moon's halo are the conversations that will reveal more intimately the voices of the adjuncts as they speak of their experiences of community.

In what way do I connect the moon with a sense of community? As I begin to recognize the original, primeval music to which our human musical constructs have given voice, I truly can appreciate singing under the halo of the moon. I love to drive to work in the morning facing a full moon. What kind of songs are moon songs? Traditionally the moon is associated with the feminine principle, with water, especially the sea, and with change and growth. The powers associated with the moon are those of generation, fecundity. *Lunar* refers to all that is simple, popular, traditional, and emotional. I was raised in a community of German-immigrant farmers from a church community that originated in Germany. Farmers, dependent upon the weather, have long relied on the moon as one of weather's early precursors. That farmer lore flows through my blood, also. The moon always has had special significance for me, drawing me outside into the darkness to talk to her, feeling comforted when I see her in the daytime, and being deeply moved by a glimpse of a sliver of new moon in the evening sky. But perhaps there is a touch of O'Donohue's (1997) Celtic spirituality that "hallows the moon ..." (p. 3) mixed in with my all-German family history.



Several stanzas of the following poem seem to capture elements of the fragmented, yet yearning-for-connection, experiences of community.

**Full Moon Symphony**

Wandering to the yard in the dark,  
match illuminates my face  
for a moment,  
then darkness again.  
The air is heavy and still,  
thick with wet luminescence,  
the sky is aglow with moonlight,  
shimmering through the wispy clouds  
and my thoughts are of you  
and the distance  
and the only thing  
we have in common  
is the moon.  
Are you watching this?

. . . .

Now, in the soft reflected light  
of the brilliant sun,  
the only light  
that does not make me squint,  
I hear the symphony rising  
above my thoughts and  
realize I am not alone here. (O'Neill, 1999, p. 1)

**What we have in common.** Although I no longer require 24-hour community living as an integral part of my current professional life, the time spent with co-workers in the university setting is part of what drew me out of private industry and back to academia. I have begun to understand why community is so important to me in relationship to my own teaching and why it has become an important question in understanding the lives of the adjunct faculty with whom I work. In what ways do we make connection with each other? What is the link that connects me with adjunct faculty and connects them to each other? Even though the intersection of our lives may be limited to professional meetings, I do share a common passion with the adjuncts. We are

implicated in each others' lives by our common focus on education. At times when I must provide background information to security clearance investigators, I am embarrassed by how little I know of my faculty outside my relationship to them as administrator. I always have respected the separateness of their work and personal lives from their role as faculty member. Those few times that a connection is made on a more intimate, personal level are those brief times when the light illuminates their faces.

**Squinting.** We squint when the light is too bright, when the object of our gaze is blurred, or when we do not want to look directly at what has drawn our attention. There seem to be long stretches of time where my only contact with faculty members is dictated by the need to resolve a student complaint, when I must act as administrator, arbiter, and possibly judge. "Power over relationships cut off human communication and create barriers to human empathy and understanding" (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 47). That *power over* may be seen as the sun that brings harshness to the relationship between faculty and administration. Perhaps I am only seen as a supervisor with *power over* and not a community member who is striving to grow alongside the faculty member. Am I a part of a governing body or a nurturer? Can I be both?

Kreisberg's (1992) *power with* speaks to the "synergistic dynamics of listening and being heard, of cultivating one's own and others' voices simultaneously, of developing new insights, new solutions ..." (p. 131). This dialogue is in the form of a collaboration that allows light to be reflected, illuminating in quietness. And this dialogue is the goal to be sought in the relationships among all the adjuncts as well as the administration. In the university where I work, the adjunct faculty members truly do carry the burden, the majority of the instructional support that allows us to provide the

educational resources to students. Without these dedicated instructors, we could not continue. In what ways can I open my eyes completely to these stained glass singers whose song allows us to continue our mission of education? What will be revealed in seeing clearly and directly the lived experiences of community for adjuncts, in uncovering that which may have been made invisible?

**Seeing the invisible.** Gappa and Leslie (1993) list the many reasons why adjunct faculty choose to teach part time, but they also report on the unsatisfactory aspects of employment as “second class citizens in a bifurcated academic profession” (p. 44). This theme is captured by Valerie’s statement, “I just felt I wasn’t being taken seriously because I was adjunct.” She had reported, as is policy, an incidence of plagiarism on the part of one of her students and was told not to pursue it because “She [the student] will get caught eventually.” Valerie felt that the message meant, “Let a REAL professor catch this student.”

What is it that the university does to make adjunct faculty invisible, “impossible to see” or “not easily noticed or detected” (American Heritage College Dictionary, 1993, p. 715)? This same invisibility also applies to full time faculty that do not reside near the administrative offices. Size enables many to be lost in the crowd. In a group of over 2000 faculty, it is easy to stay unnoticed, either by choice or because staff are unable to provide more personal contact. Perhaps insufficient effort is made to personalize communications. Much of that communication takes the form of mass mailings or broadcast email messages that do not recognize the individual but simply lump him/her as a member of this amorphous collection of faculty. “When in the course of our activities we perceive someone, we do not see him as an expanse of colors confined

within borders. We do not see others by their outlines. We see the inner lines of their postures and movement” (Lingis, 1933/2000, p. 139). Do I look through adjuncts just for their ability to carry the burden of teaching? Do I see them as only reflecting the light of the university and not being the source of that light, a source of energy, commitment and creativity? I wonder who/what creates the halo of the moon under which the cantata is sung.

The community that is a university is not a collection of solo performances of the individual members. We need to sing the music together; we need to hear the music together. “There are some things we *need* to hear, but probably never will. There are things we would *like* to hear, but we are also too afraid to listen” (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 19). Will I be open to hearing the voices of the singers, open to hear the words of their songs? In being open to the meaning-making of the conversations with adjuncts, I also must be open to another facet of the word *halo*. Although we associate *halo* with the ring around the sun or moon, the word first came from the Greek *halos*, the ring on the threshing room floor formed by the path of the oxen turning the grinding wheel. And so I am brought back to the yoke, the burden. Do the adjunct faculty I work with feel as though they are second-class citizens? Do they feel “yoked” with heavy workloads, low salaries, few, if any, benefits, and a lack of appreciation? What is the role of community in helping them develop, in challenging them to grow, in providing compassion and care?

Community can never be the answer to all our questions or all our longings, but it can encourage us, provoke us to raise questions and voice our desires. It cares for us, whether we know it or not. (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 261)

It also may be difficult for adjuncts to voice their true concerns, anxieties, and joys until a level of trust is built where they know that what they say/sing will be heard.

This singing also may bring them to inner realizations that they themselves have not addressed or allowed to be brought to light. “The song is hard because the singing may no longer be a solicitation, but must be existence” (Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 136).

The path to growth has to be engaged by both listener and speaker/singer in an atmosphere of respect, trust and love. The speakers/singers may reveal an opening for all participants to grow to a deeper level than casual contact has allowed.

### **Family Songs**

How might the university play a part in fostering or providing a fertile ground where the connection to community can take place? “The most intimate community is the community of understanding. Where you are understood, you are at home” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 262). How do adjunct faculty find that place where they are at home, where they are understood? In what way might adjunct faculty describe this connectedness, this need to find a supportive group? What is it that they would describe as that which matters most – “the experience of *being* in that place and, more particularly, *becoming part of the place*” (Casey, 1993, p. 33)?

Tompkins (1996) presents us with a pointed description of what welcoming someone into your house, into your family means:

When you invite people to your house, you greet them at the door and take them in. You hang up their coats if it’s winter, and if they’re staying overnight, you help them carry their luggage to their room. You show them where the bathroom is, and when they’ve settled in, you offer them a drink and a snack, ask if they’re tired from the trip.

If they’ve not been to your place before, you might offer them a little tour, explain the house rules, if there are any, about keeping windows open or shut, letting the dog in or out, when people usually get up in the morning, how to work the coffeemaker. These practical courtesies let your friends know you have their comfort in mind. They are the ABC of human relations, signs that send a message everyone can read: you matter, your needs are important to us. (pp. 189-190)

I wonder whether adjunct faculty truly feel that they are members of this university family. This is how Rick describes it:

I think that first of all our faculty meetings are fantastic. That really makes you feel connected. . . . Those faculty meetings where you come in and, we're not really wined and dined, but pretty close. . . . You're just finding out what is going on at those meetings, and most people spend a tremendous amount of time talking to colleagues. . . . That takes up a lot of time and I'm always late getting back. Everybody else is, too. (Rick)

Rick, once again, points to the importance of being in the same place as critical to fostering a sense of belonging. Faculty meetings are reminders of returning to the family after a long hiatus. There are handshakes or hugs to be exchanged, questions to be asked, meals to be shared, and so many stories to be told. These homecomings require time. Rushing from one group to another, one room to another, leaves the participant unfulfilled. It is important that time, "a tremendous amount of time," be allocated so that voices can be heard and so that those who wish to simply sit back and listen, can do so comfortably, absorbing the camaraderie that can arise by proximity of participants.

Faculty meetings provide at least one forum where the foundations of such understanding of "home" might occur. Time to relate and physical proximity appear to lend support to the development of community. The coming together in one room, the co-joining at a meeting where not only "insider" information is provided but a meal is shared, makes one feel included, valued. As Rick says, "Where we are and where we're going, upward trends, downward trends, it's good to know." Certainly knowing more about the history and current condition of the institution for which one works, the culture of the community to which one belongs, allows one to "raise questions and voice our desires" (O'Donohue, 1999, pp. 260-1).

**The absent voices.** This same sense of connectedness may be acutely lost for those who physically are distant from the university and who cannot attend the group meetings. An online faculty forum series (*Faculty Forum*, 2004) contains postings from many faculty (located in the European Division particularly) who feel isolated, ignored, and kept out of decision-making loops. These faculty members definitely do *not* feel part of the university family, or at least see themselves as stepchildren who are tolerated but not considered integral to the university that exists and is administered from the headquarters in the United States.

In a community that is dispersed (no common campus), where does one find “home”? Our sense of community, our need to belong, speaks to more than attachment to external places and things. “True belonging comes from within. It strives for a harmony between the outer forms of belonging and the inner music of the soul” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 3). Community speaks of a searching for wholeness, for a sense of belonging, a safe area where we can take risks. “Belonging is a circle that embraces everything; if we reject it, we damage our nature. . . . Belonging is the heart and warmth of intimacy. When we deny it, we grow cold and empty” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 2). As part of that circle, we help each other find that inner sense of belonging; we care. Casey (1993) tells us that “Caring belongs to places” (p. 175). A community that genuinely cares about its members will not be constrained by physical location. Those faculty who are feeling isolated and ignored do not see the university as a caring place, one that is embracing, warm, or intimate. They do not see a family or hear a family song of community. Yet, there *are* others who physically are isolated from peers who do feel connected. I wonder how adjunct faculty become aware of or are encouraged to find an inner music that

makes them the unique and invaluable persons they are and who joyfully share themselves with those they never have the opportunity to meet face to face?

**Self-actualizing voices.** If community is a safe haven where the voice can speak freely, the seeds of that community must begin within the individual, within the “undivided self” (Palmer, 1998, p. 109), for it is only in communion with ourselves, only in our “being” that we can find community with others. “The only way to grasp life is. . . to become inwardly aware of it. . . . Life is experienced only in the awareness of oneself, the inner consciousness of one’s own living” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 253). Heidegger (1943/2002) reminds us that communities themselves and the members in communities are not *our* constructs.

To let be is to engage oneself with beings. . . . To let be – that is, to let being be as the beings which they are – means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness in to which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself. (p. 11)

We cannot experience the full power of community unless we recognize its life as apart from us, unless we grant community and the members of that community an existence of their own, “an inwardness, identity, and integrity that make them more than objects, a quality of being and agency that does not rely on us and our thoughts about them” (Palmer, 1998, p. 109). That which is reality is a “web of communal relationships, and we know reality only by being in community with it” (p. 95). As part of the fragile filaments of this web, what allows adjunct faculty members to make connections, weaving a beautiful pattern that is stronger than the individual strands? What is the power of community that allows for the building of trust that brings them to join to another, giving up some of themselves to become part of something larger? Yet, they cannot subsume themselves into an amorphous group. The individuals must remain distinct,



unique, finding a place where their voices fit, where they can be heard within the song of the cantata. In what way does the result become cohesive and not the chaos of each singing a different song? What calls them to continue the song that speaks of community?

### **Persisting in the Song**

This is more fulfilling than anything I ever did. I always had a sense of “What am I coming in to work for? What is the purpose of what I’m doing?” There just never seemed to be a purpose. Just push papers around and manage projects. I never could put my hands on anything I was doing. (Valerie)

I marvel at the motivations that provide a spark of desire, enthusiasm, and fortitude that bring adjunct faculty back to the classrooms each semester. For some the purpose might be a feeling of obligation that spurs them to pay back in service debts owed to institutions, to society, or even to parents. For others there is a need to help others overcome obstacles that the adjunct faculty member himself/herself already has overcome, to serve as a role model or mentor (Gappa & Leslie, 1997). Valerie states the motivation factor like this: “And when someone says ‘Thank you’ to me, ‘I finally got it!’ it’s worth it....”

What makes people happy and motivates them to respond with persistence to the purposeful work of teaching? Kaltreider (1998) constructs conversations between two fictional characters, Chasing Deer, a Lakota Elder, and John, a privileged white student. In these meetings, Chasing Deer hopes to pass along the wisdom teaching of the Native Peoples to a willing and inquiring student from a different culture and background. John asks Chasing Deer to define what makes people happy. Chasing Deer speaks of the meaning of happiness, a critical element in persistence, as consisting of four things:

The first was control, being able to make choices that can change things. Second came optimism. This was discussed as being confident in what you do and being able to expect good outcomes from your endeavors. They considered religious

involvement part of optimism as well. Not necessarily organized worship, but rather a sense of purpose, a sense of commitment to being part of something greater than yourself.

The third happiness factor was meaningful activity that was involving and challenging – something that brought out your gifts, so to speak. Last, and most important, were close relationships – those in which you felt respect and love on both sides, where giving and receiving were a joy. It turns out that the happiest people live in small communal settings where there is a strong sense of shared commitment to a higher ideal and the willingness to sacrifice for the greater good. (p. 173)

Control, optimism, meaningful work, and relationships - these elements of

happiness are not restricted to the vocation of teaching, but they can nevertheless describe characteristics of those who persist in the song, either in chorus or as soloists. Allowing faculty to indicate the courses they wish to teach and their preference of site location truly is appreciated by adjuncts. They welcome these choices as a way of respecting their needs and interests, and as their way of inserting a measure of control over their jobs. And all teachers begin the semester with a great deal of optimism that lives will interconnect and be touched on many levels within the classroom in teaching/learning activities that are most meaningful. And finally, relationships are crucial to happiness. A sense of community, of belonging to, is bolstered by their times together, the sharing with peers in which they engage.

There is a deep need in each of us to belong to some cluster of friendship and affinity in which the games of impression and power are at a minimum, and we can allow ourselves to be seen as we really are, we can express what we really believe and can be challenged thoroughly. This is how we grow.... (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 262)

Even those located some distance from the university, find that they can be involved with other adjuncts. An online classroom (called a 999 site) set up for all faculty within a specific discipline, becomes the life-line to those who physically cannot come to the campus and do not have the chance to meet peers. Roberta writes:

I'm a web-based adjunct faculty member living in Hawaii. I found that the 999 site [an online faculty classroom] was my primary means of contact with [the university]. It made me feel connected to the life of the university. There are several reasons this site worked for me: it was well organized, it had useful information, faculty were encouraged to share "teaching tips" so there was a good exchange of information, and it was updated regularly. I see the 999 sites as an important means of communication particularly for web-based faculty. (*Faculty Forum*, 2004).

Communication continues to be a critical element required for developing some sense of belonging, some sense of community among individuals who might be considered soloists due to distance or simply resulting from isolation within the classrooms. But for all, near or far, the persistence in teaching is a calling of the soul and source of happiness that cannot be exorcised by doubts, difficult semesters, isolation, or insensitive administration. I am drawn to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of these individuals in this chorus/community, to becoming the listener attuned to the being that is community. I am drawn to hear the exquisite harmonies as well as the discordant notes to which I must attend in order to become more fully aware of the depths of the song, the holiness and wholeness of the message.

### **Sacredness of the Songs of Community**

I am both an instructor and Director. As Director, much of my focus is that of coordination, a director of individual voices of the chorus who must create a song of harmony. Gadamer (1960/2003) speaks of the co-ordination between the real unity of consciousness in experience and the inner perception of that experience. "Wherever an attempt is made to understand something...there is reference to the truth that lies hidden in the text and must be brought to light. What is to be understood is, in fact, not a thought considered as part of another's life, but as truth" (p. 185). Co-ordination of goals, co-ordination of projects, co-ordination of schedules implies a togetherness, a joining, a

partnering in determining the order, the structure, the rightness, the sequencing. Yet, that is such a technical interpretation! To co-ordain, to jointly bring about, speaks also of creation, the bringing to be, of something that needed this act of partnership to discover, to uncover, to reveal.

Ordain also refers to the act of invitation and initiation into an exclusive community whose purpose is to carry on the sacred work of religious leadership. An ordained priest is one upon whom “holy orders” have been conferred. These holy orders are both instructions to do and instructions on how one is to “be,” – a priest, a rabbi, a shaman. Teachers also are given “holy orders.” These are not the schedules, classroom management, test preparation and other like tasks, but the sacred duties they assume in the teaching/learning interaction with students and peers. In living and uncovering the linkages, the bindings, the frameworks that make meaning of community for adjunct faculty, we also may come to see more clearly the sacred-ness of our life in that community. What is it that might be uncovered in looking at the meaning of community for faculty and the underlying truths that can be teased out from absorbing the messages of these experiences? Gadamer (1960/2003) provides an inspiration for this ordained work:

Coming to an understanding, then, is always coming to an understanding about something. Understanding each other is always understanding each other with respect to something. . . . The subject matter is not merely an arbitrary object of discussion, independent of the process of mutual understanding, but rather is the path and goal of mutual understanding itself. (p. 180)

Community *is* the path of my journey. It *is* the goal for not only my understanding but the understanding of the individuals with whom I take this journey – to the unexpected, the

un-ordered, the ordained. I am searching for that melody that calls to, creates, and reveals community. I am searching for that which reveals the stained glass colors of community.

### **Stained Glass Cantatas**

I have chosen the stained glass cantata as the symbol of the varied voices of adjunct faculty that constitute the song of community. This song is at the heart of my inquiry. The task is to un-conceal the messages and reveal the stories of the stained glass pieces that make up the song, that express ways adjunct faculty have experienced community. I seek to uncover facets of the essence of community that also might inform a pedagogy for the further development of such sacred songs.

#### **Stained Glass**

You started with broken pieces  
From many places.  
Some were red from the war.

The blacks and whites  
Came from my Protestant days.  
You even found a use for  
Large planes of monochromes—  
Those long periods  
When I wanted nothing  
Except to pick my teeth and look outside

From an old marriage  
You took what fragments could be saved.  
Of course you added colors of your own.

It was no window at Chartres,  
We both knew that.  
Still, on certain days  
It brought some pleasure.

A fact of stained glass and light:  
Stained glass dies at night. (Mills, 1979, p. 18)

What does it mean for stained glass to die at night? It looks opaque, shaded, darkened, and dull until light is allowed to shine through it, until that light is refracted by

the special properties of that particular piece of glass. As O'Donohue (2004) tells us, "Colour is the language of light; it adorns the earth with beauty" (p. 82). And I believe that community is the source of light that brings the colors to life. It is within community that the secret messages of self are whispered, messengers of the past, the present, the future that have/do/will burn who these faculty are and who they are always becoming. It is community that allows for the colors they represent and helps them recognize and revel in their colors. What can I learn from looking at stained glass itself and at stained glass windows that might open up my understanding of how the stained glass cantata can move me toward a deeper understanding of community and that particular expression of community experiences by adjunct faculty?

### **Stained Glass Windows**

On a recent trip to Italy, I found myself drawn to the churches in each of the towns we visited. In Milan, the guides taking visitors through the Duomo in the center of this industrialized metropolis, proudly point out the windows where the stained glass was removed during World War II in order to preserve the pieces and then painstakingly replaced at the end of the hostilities. They also make it a point to draw attention to the largest window in the church that, to the unsuspecting eye, appears to be a magnificent collection of stained glass pieces. However, it is glass upon which the colors have been painted – not truly stained glass. The colors are on the surface only, not fused or burned into the glass itself. The eye is attracted to those surface colors, blind to the what-ness of those colors and their relationship to the glass on which they rest. In the easy to see surface layer of adjunct faculty, the reflection appears in the evaluation numbers which are used to rate their performance in the classroom, the fleeting contact at meeting those

who attend the twice-yearly faculty meetings, the ephemeral contact through emails or occasional phone calls. Are these external structures sufficient to come to know the richness of the individuals, to come to hear what they truly need from the institution and from their peers? What is the message inherent in the voice-colors of an adjunct faculty member?

**The artistry of the pieces.** A stained glass window consists of many individual pieces, each bringing its own unique color and shape and participating in a whole or unity that is greater than the sum of the parts, an orchestra of voices that are connected to each other in their singleness. What does it mean to be stained glass? *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (1971) tells us that stained glass is "glass colored throughout by metallic oxides fused into it," or "white glass into whose surface the pigments have been burned" (p. 852). Both "fused" and "burned" reflect the crucible of lived experiences. Those lived experiences inextricably are joined/fused to life, a pouring and melting that changes one forever and continues to change forever that which is blended together in the fusing.

### **Hot Glass**

Artists inspired by secret messages  
whispered  
by colored glass.  
Tortured elements  
touched by flame.  
Changing.  
Flowing.  
Sweat dripping from  
brows of men  
flirting with fire.  
Beauty emerging from  
infernos into the quiet.

Glass, born of sand and fire  
comes to life in  
frozen beauty,  
fragile strength. (Cooper, 2003, ¶ 7)

Teachers are artists! Not only do they practice their craft of teaching in the classroom, they are changing themselves and others as they teach. Some of this change comes with the price of “tortured elements,” changes that challenge set beliefs and customs. But their growth depends upon their ability to change, to flow as they are directed. The glass which they become should never cool, should never become fixed with only one color (for at night that color will die). The frozen beauty of today must give way to a new beauty that emerges from the fusing and burning that must continue to be welcomed as part of life. And along with the internal changes that result from growth comes the ever-changing light of circumstances, relationships, and environments. Adjuncts play with the colors of their lives that speak out in multiple tongues as they practice their art as instructors.

**Playing in the light.** A stained glass window consists of many individual pieces, each bringing its own unique color and shape. These individual pieces of stained glass come to life as the light plays through them.

From the most holy, supernatural things through allegories of nature to everyday things - the images of people at work. . . . Real was only the light, which was permeating and animating everything like the Divine Presence. . . . [Today] stained glass becomes what it was in the times of its magnificence - the miracle of light entering the soul directly. (Bielinski, Przyrowksi, & Tuszko, 2003, ¶ 4)

The pieces play together to create a cantata that cannot be sung by the individual voices. They play along with the shape they are forced into by their placement within the frame and with the artist’s attempts to manipulate them. They play with the fire of



sunlight, changing those who observe them by changing the light that greets the eyes of the observer, the light that shapes those who are bathed in the messages of color. They play back a vision of calm and peace or memorialize chaos and war. They play with the senses.

This suggests as a general characteristic of the nature of play that is reflected in playing: all playing is a being-played. The attraction of a game, the fascination it exerts, consists precisely in the fact that the game masters the players. (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p.107)

Play is essentially communal, its richness coming from playing with others or for others. The audience, either as co-players or as spectators, defines play in its fullest manifestation, even as the game masters the players versus the players mastering the game.

This point shows the importance of defining play as a process that takes place 'in between.' We have seen that play does not have its being in the player's consciousness or attitude, but on the contrary, play draws him into its dominion and fills him with its spirit. The player experiences the game as a reality that surpasses him. This is all the more the case where the game is itself 'intended' as such a reality – for instance, the play which appears as presentation for an audience. (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p.109)

Individual members bring lived experiences that inextricably are joined/fused to life that comprises the stained glass window. In the game that is community, the community engages the members. These members do not consciously create community; rather community creates the playground on which the members interact. Community is a serious game with critical outcomes for its members. Yet, the playground of community also should support a lightness of spirit, a framework that allows the genuine to be respected and acknowledged, the child to feel free to participate, the mysterious privileged, for "play itself contains its own, even sacred, seriousness" (Gadamer, 1960/1993, p.102).

To be a player is to belong, to be part of a community. What is this community's "sacred seriousness"? Community is there to "encourage us, provoke us to raise questions and voice our desires. It cares for us, whether we know it or not" (O'Donohue, 1999, pp. 260-1). This genuine community is a game where one does not have to "play at" being a participant, a contributor. It is an embracing framework where the member does not have to play games, play up or down, play act. This genuine community knows you, cares for you, understands you. And "Where you are understood, you are at home" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 262). Connection, immersion, and placement in the larger context of the matrix of this community of existence give grounding to our being, a definition of who we are. Only in listening to these voices can one hope to be open to the revealing, the uncovering of that which is the melody of community.

### **Listening to the Colors**

I wonder if adjunct faculty members *want* to experience some sense of belonging to this educational institution. One cannot force another to sing, to belong, to grow. "Nothing comes from outside into the ego; rather everything outside is what it is already within the inside" (Moran, 2000, p. 178). Thus, it is important that I start on this journey of discovery by listening to the voices of adjunct faculty, to hear what they sense, what they desire in terms of community/connectedness. I see value in providing a structure, for those willing to participate, to explore ways to "find, celebrate, or interrogate" the multiple "selves" we bring to our classrooms as a means to "get us to someplace we couldn't otherwise get to" (Miller, 1998, p. 152). These individual pieces of stained glass, each with their own unique backgrounds, personalities, strengths, and skills, come together to form the stained glass cantata that is the adjunct faculty. These separate

pieces/members display such variety in individual color, yet they function as one song within the framework of the university community.

### **Stained Glass Story**

Phrases, now panes of personal-ity,  
rough-cut, jaded, leaded,  
pierced evening's deadened  
apathy,  
reflecting diurnal excitements,  
refracting verbal pigments,  
revealing gore and glory  
mirrored in her stained  
glass story.

And I bowed humbly  
in her holy sanctuary. (Groff, 1998, p. 300)

And only in first recognizing the color of my own voice can I hear/see the colors

of the voices with whom I sing and the panes of their personalities. I listen to the *verbal pigments* of the lived experiences of adjunct faculty and ask the question: what is the lived experience of community that adjunct faculty desire, experience, create in their association with the university? What is it that has drawn them into the community that is education? What is their experience of this community? In what way is that experience enriching or depleting, celebratory or oppressive, richly vibrant with diversity and voices or sullen and quiet? What constitutes the beauty and strength of their lives as adjuncts? Just as an opaque piece of glass may be lying in shadow, not illuminated, darkened, obscure, in what manner do adjunct faculty experience that same obscurity, or dullness? Do adjunct faculty ever feel invisible, taken-for-granted, clear panes, lacking the illuminating warmth of light, or an absence of melody?

My journey here is to wander/wonder through the landscape of the community to which adjunct faculty belong as members of the university. I search for the moonshine that illuminates the true stained glass colors and to remove the moonblind-ness that

allows me to overlook what it is that makes the experiences of adjunct faculty so vibrant, melodic, rich. This is a journey of self-discovery and openness. It calls for me to be willing to extend myself and to connect with those with whom I am in conversation. It calls for trust and the forming of relationships that allows me to ask: **What is it like to be in a community-building experience as an adjunct faculty member?**

### **Phenomenological Songs and Colors**

My desire to explore the experience of community stems from the song of connection that exists deep within my body, from the recognition that in the core of my humanity I desire to locate myself in community and to make survival a shared effort. A choral singing places me in the midst of the phenomenological possibilities inherent in listening to the songs and seeing the colors of adjunct faculty as they reveal their own connection to community. Throughout this study I am led to a focus on that which often is covered over by a commonplace attendance to the existence of these persons as objects. I turn away from enumerating facts and external characteristics, away from the colors painted on the glass, toward a deeper understanding of the lived experience of community by faculty who frequently are excluded in such membership.

Phenomenological research is a human science, a search for that which helps to reveal the essence of the being that is human. It is a methodology that revolves around interpretation of the lived experience of humans. As a hermeneutic phenomenological researcher I seek to find a deeper understanding of the lived experience of community as revealed to me in my interactions with adjunct faculty, to give meaning to that which lies beneath the visible, externalized, categorical or conceptual manifestations of the experience. As van Manen (1984) sees it, phenomenology “asks for the very nature of a

phenomenon, for that which makes a ‘thing’ what it is (and without which it could not be what it is)” (p. 38). By granting permission to ourselves as observers to let things be themselves, we get at the heart of phenomenology as Heidegger (1953/1996) defines it, that is, “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself. . . . To the things themselves!” (p. 30). This is the challenge of phenomenology and the quest inherent in phenomenological hermeneutics. My aim is to “unconceal” the lived experience of community among adjunct faculty. I seek to move beyond the everydayness of the experience to allow community, to allow the faculty to show themselves on their own terms. Instead of stopping at the surface revelations, of taking the external manifestations, the appearances, as the *beings*, I try to see with an eye that understands that the object (being) of my question will show itself on its own terms and in its own time. My own thoughts may shift as I write. The shifting is a making visible, a making heard a deep need that always is there, a beauty that is inherent in those people and places and events that give glimpses of the lived experience of community.

Sanders (1998) reminds us that language is limited when attempting to describe beauty.

Language can create its own loveliness, of course, but it cannot deliver to us the radiance we apprehend in the world, any more than a photograph can capture the stunning swiftness of a hawk or the withering power of a supernova. . . . All that pictures or words can do is gesture beyond themselves toward the fleeting glory that stirs our hearts. (p. 153)

That glory, embodied in stained glass or cantata, strains to be seen and heard by the heart as well as by the ears and eyes.

### **The Melodic Thread – the Path of Discovery**

“To let be is to engage oneself with beings.... To let be – that is, to let beings be as the beings which they are – means to engage oneself with the open region and its

openness in to which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself” (Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 124). I am led to be truly within that open region where the lived experiences of adjunct faculty can grant whatever realm of disclosedness they wish to share. I turn toward a reflection on the lived experiences of community among adjunct faculty, looking at how my own experiences have shaped how I hear the song, how I see the colors. Having served both as an adjunct faculty member, and now as a supervisor of a large group of adjuncts, I am eager to understand their experiences in order to improve my support for them, and perhaps my university’s support for them. I am searching for what the experience of being an adjunct faculty member means in relation to the absence/presence of community. It is only through hermeneutic phenomenology that such an essence can be revealed.

### **Capturing the Colors in the Frame**

In a stained glass window, a frame must be placed around the whole of the outside of the window to provide support for both the pieces and for the mechanism used for hanging the window or inserting it into a window frame. My quest is to discover the framework that enables adjunct faculty with whom I work to create a stained glass window, a stained glass cantata. How do these disparate pieces come together in the light of community?

The methodological structure of my path to/through this question about the lived experience of community will be the guidelines suggested by van Manen (2003):

- Turning to the phenomenon – the question which invites;
- Investigating the experience as it is lived – conversations which open up the lived experience;

- Reflecting on characteristics of the phenomenon –thematic analysis;
- Writing and rewriting to uncover the phenomenon – language as the tool for calling the phenomenon into nearness;
- Keeping a focus on the pedagogical relation – respecting hermeneutical phenomenology as a philosophy of action; and
- Balancing the whole and the parts that embody the research context – organizing the writing to reflect the structure of the lived experience, to reflect the themes that call the phenomenon into visibility.

In chapter one I have explored aspects of community as expressed by some of the adjuncts with whom I work, as well as examined the wellsprings for my own personal concern about the need for connection and community in teaching. In chapter two I continue to explore by investigating the phenomenon through literature, conversations, and in etymological word meanderings. Chapter three provides the philosophical and methodological grounding for the investigation.

“To question is to seek, and the path of that seeking gets its direction beforehand from what is sought” (Heidegger, 1953/1996, p. 5). The path is both daunting and exciting. The questioning, the wondering (and, quite assuredly, the wandering) will pass through new grounds and groundings. The growth comes in the journeying, not in the rest at the end. And the growth comes through the struggle to listen to and reflect the melodies in the songs of community, to fit together the pieces of stained glass that make up the community of adjunct faculty, to interpret the songs and colors that reveal the reality of community for its members.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **STAINED GLASS CANTATAS: EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF COMMUNITY**

Community, I have claimed, is the nature of reality, the shape of our being. Whether we like it or not, acknowledge it or not, we are in community with one another, implicated in each other's lives. (Palmer, 1993, p. 122)

To teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced. (Palmer, 1993, p. xii)

In a national culture with a dominant metaphor that idolizes individuality and fragmentation, the resulting disconnections that arise among individuals flies in the face of Palmer's definition of reality and the purpose of teaching. Yet, even the science that defines our age now speaks less of the competition between the smallest pieces of reality and more toward the connections and inter-relatedness at the core of physical existence. Even knowing, long seen as an individual act of acquisition and understanding, is now becoming recognized as a communal act. "Nothing could possibly be known by the solitary self, since the self is inherently communal in nature" (Palmer, 1993, p. xv). We learn, not by gathering individual facts into our solitary existence, but by interacting with the reality we wish to understand. If I truly believe that all of creation is connected, then I must seek not only to be more aware of that connection but also to foster such awareness in those with whom I interact. I begin, then, to explore the experience of community among adjunct faculty by exploring a metaphor of connection and interrelationships, a metaphor of the cohesiveness of the stained glass cantata.

Why have I chosen the metaphor of a stained glass cantata to speak to the lived experience of community among adjunct faculty? Stained glass often is associated with stained glass windows. As Barnhart (1988) tells us, *window* comes from the Old English



*eagthyr*, meaning eye-door. It also can be traced to the Old Icelandic *vindauga* (*vindr* meaning WIND and *auga* EYE), an eyelike opening for admitting air. But is not a glass window put in place to prevent air from blowing into a structure? Air, besides gases or atmosphere, also can mean a melody, a tune. Onions (1966) tells us that the word *air* is of Italian descent from the Latin *aer*, resulting in the Italian *aria*. Likewise, the Old French *aire*, meaning nature, quality, was formulated after the pattern of the German *weise*, meaning both manner and tune. So the stained glass window can be thought of as an opening for admitting song, a melody, a cantata. What is this substance that, although solid, admits the notes that define community, passes through the melody that invites one into community? What song can be heard through the stained glass pieces that are adjunct faculty?

In this chapter my journey continues with an exploration of other sources and their contribution to uncovering the phenomenon of community among adjunct faculty and of their lived experiences of belonging to a university community. I include and interpret comments provided by initial conversations about the community experience that were held with several adjunct faculty members as I became focused on my phenomenon of interest. These same adjuncts, all within my charge, have been introduced in Chapter 1. But I continue here to uncover additional layers of the phenomenon of community as it leads me toward a deeper understanding. Also included are etymological explorations of community, as well as the insights from scholars as they relate their understanding of the experience of community among adjunct faculty. In some of these insights one can hear the tensions that arise between adjuncts and those who are not part of the adjunct community.

## Reflections off the Surface

From an institutional perspective, issues related to adjunct faculty differ widely. The use of adjunct faculty has “varied roots, varied manifestations, and varied effects – from discipline to discipline, from institution to institution, and from one type of institution...to another” (Leslie, 1998, p. 95). As described in chapter one, the university setting in which I am exploring the lived experience of community is that of a non-tenure track faculty, most of whom are adjuncts serving the mission of the university. Gappa and Leslie (1993) in *The Invisible Faculty* list the many reasons why adjunct faculty choose to teach part time, and identified adjunct faculty as belonging to one of seven categories: the semi-retired (former full-time academics or professionals teaching fewer hours), graduate students (teaching to gain experience and augment income), hopeful full-timers (seeking full-time academic positions and/or working under several contracts), full-mooners (holding another primary full-time job), homeworkers (caring for children or parents), part-mooners (part-time job outside academia and teaching part-time) or a small group working for reasons unknown or for very subjective reasons.

As I reviewed the literature on the use of adjunct faculty in higher education, I specifically looked for instances that capture the elusive element of *belonging* (instead of exclusion), for examples that address the question of what it means to be part of an academic community, of what it is that speaks to *being* instead of *doing*. What is the solder that holds the diverse pieces of glass together in the stained glass panel, or allows these individual pieces to become part of a cantata? Although there is a recognition of the need to integrate faculty into the culture of the educational institution (Bazan, Durnin & Tesch, 2003; Leslie, 1998; Watson & MacGregor, 2002; Wyles, 1998), there also

remains an underlying current of mistrust of adjunct faculty based on a perceived negative impact on the quality of education (Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Rajagopal, 2002; Reeves, 2002; Shakeshaft, 2002). The dedication of part-time faculty is questioned because these adjuncts are “*not there* much of the time, and *not there* for the long run” (Nutting, 2003, p. 35).

Poor employment conditions for adjuncts (low salaries, no benefits, and lack of opportunities for input into the institution’s policies, practices and curriculum) are criticized (Beem, Vandal, Roberson, Cisneros-Cashman, & Rideout, 2002; Watson & MacGregor, 2002). Some attempts have been made, with varying success, to organize adjuncts into unions in order to support better working conditions and equitable salaries (Carroll, 2004; Mattson, 2000; McGee, 2002). Attention also has been paid to such issues as non-acceptance by tenured faculty (Church, 1999), lifestyle constraints and freedoms (Fulton, 2000; Tingley, 2002), and the sense of *doing apart* that many adjunct faculty experience (Conley, Leslie & Zimbler, 2002; Gappa & Leslie, 1997). Although adjunct faculty are acknowledged as vital to serve a growing student population, the emphasis of most of the relevant literature continues to focus on the *doing* of adjunct faculty, with less concern for their *being*.

My own experience is within one geographically-located division of a university that relies on the use of adjunct faculty to support the mission of an open enrollment, comprehensive university. The university operates on three continents, and each division is configured differently in terms of students, faculty pool, and in the case of Europe and Asia, contract obligations with the U. S. military. In Europe and Asia, for example, the students are military personnel and/or their dependents. The faculty in these divisions

predominately are full-time faculty, with adjuncts used more sparingly to fill gaps. In the stateside division in which I work, the students primarily are civilian, and the majority of faculty are adjuncts. The two groups of faculty, full-time and adjunct, at times may brush up against each other in their common focus on education but not be compelled to share.

### **Fused Colors or Painted Glass**

With greater emphasis in the past several years to unify the three divisions, certain tensions have arisen among the faculty in the European and Asian divisions of the university. There can be found undercurrents of unease expressed by full-time faculty who fear their positions are in jeopardy, who fear they will be replaced by or understaffed because of the availability of this cheaper labor pool. There are veiled accusations that these adjuncts are less qualified, are less dedicated, are painted glass instead of fused colors. A university faculty member posted such a critical observation in a recent online faculty forum (*Faculty Forum*, 2004):

I think [the stateside division] makes use of a lot of inexpensive faculty employees. People who don't receive much in pay, benefits, and commitment from their employer generally won't be motivated to perform well in the classroom. (Bruce)

Does such a negative attitude toward the role of adjuncts allow for the building of community among individuals? Does the question of *belonging* to the university community mean the same thing to those who desire to make academic teaching the cornerstone of their life work, their *being*, as it does to those who teach *in addition* to a career in private industry or government, the *practitioners* who also teach? The question is not meant to imply that adjunct faculty feel less dedicated to their work in the classroom. They have chosen to teach, an obligation that extends their working day considerably beyond the demands of a regular 8-5 job. They are driven to share the

experiences of the workplace in industry and government with students who themselves are coming from or preparing for jobs in a similar workplace. Much like the dedication students show in committing to evening classes or online classes (the majority now female, working Kramarae's (2001) *Third Shift* – work, family and school), these adjuncts also are working a third shift. In addition to work and family, they now add the sharing of their skills and knowledge with others via teaching. Like the women in distance education in Kramarae's study, these teachers often find themselves grappling with the tasks of teaching in isolation. What do adjunct faculty experience as their connection to the university? In what way do they make meaning of the relevance of community in their work as instructors?

### **Searching for the Genuine Colors**

Through conversations with members of this adjunct community, I seek to transform my understanding and focus my work within my own particular situation to hear the song of community. "To sing the songs means to be present in what is present itself. It means: *Dasein*, existence" (Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 135). In chapter one I introduced the metaphor of the stained glass cantata to speak for the colors and the songs of adjunct faculty. In a stained glass panel, a frame must be placed around the whole of the outside of the panel to provide support for both the pieces and for the mechanism used for hanging the panel or inserting it into a window frame. The obligation to provide that framework is that of the institution. But how would the adjunct faculty describe this framework where community/connectedness can be developed, nourished, and flourish? What is it that is implied by speaking of the adjunct community as a "stained glass cantata"?

Each adjunct brings his/her own particular color to the panel – color fused by background, experiences, desire to teach, and skills in teaching. To be a work of art, the colors in the stained glass panel need to “work” together, creating a montage that lifts the spirit and tells its own story. There must be variety or artful placement of the pieces to create the music of the colors. But the pieces do not hold themselves in place. Each piece, individually crafted, needs to be joined to those surrounding it for support. Without the solder or lead “came” joining all the pieces, held within the outside frame, the window will sag or break. The question is not the source of this joining in the adjunct community but the absolute necessity of the joining, the necessity of belonging to the whole of the panel. Can the song of the stained glass cantata that is the adjunct faculty help bring into being that which is community, belonging?

### **The Yearning for Community**

The focus of my phenomenological research is not the interpretation of the changes in academic policies and practices related to the hiring of adjunct/part-time/contingent faculty. Instead, the focus is the lived experiences of faculty who are the new majority who do “more varied work, in more varied settings, on more varied terms and conditions – and bring more varied preparation and qualifications to academic life” (Leslie, 1998, p. 95). I am searching for that melody that calls to and creates the stained glass cantata that is community. I have explored why community is so important to me in relationship to my own teaching and in understanding the lives of adjunct faculty. I now further explore what it is that draws people into community. I am called by the rich colors of the melodies that are composed by individual faculty as well as the interweaving of these melodies into a singing together, of community.

## **Being**

“Community is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, the flowing of personal identity and integrity into the world of relationships” (Palmer, 1998, p. 90). The seeds of community come from within. We need to listen to our lives, to acknowledge the vocation of teaching as a gift received and not a goal to be achieved (Palmer, 2000). “Our deepest calling is to grow into our own selfhood...” (p. 16). Only in searching to discover our selfhood can we truly discover community, the network of relationships that form community.

How is it that adjunct faculty move forward in this search for self? If we teach who we are, adjunct faculty must be given the opportunities to grow deeper in that awareness of themselves. That awareness can help them find the courage to look at themselves and their gifts in relationship to students and peers. That awareness makes sense of the importance of community, in the opening up of personal identity and integrity in the world of relationships. What form does that awareness take? How do we know the world? How do we know ourselves?

Objectivism indicates that we only come to know, to make rational, that which we perceive through our five senses. It is only what we can perceive through sight, hearing, touch, taste, and feel that is real. But there are other means by which we interact with the world around us – through intuition, empathy, emotion, and faith. These non-rational faculties are “the other side of a world whose wholeness can be known only as these faculties are brought into full partnership with our senses and reason” (Palmer, 1993, p. 52). And since we ourselves are part of the reality we wish to know, we must use all our

faculties, rational and non-rational, to come to an awareness of ourselves. As Palmer (2000) reminds us:

The punishment imposed on us for claiming true self can never be worse than the punishment we impose on ourselves by failing to make that claim. And the converse is true as well: no reward anyone might give us could possibly be greater than the reward that comes from living by our own best lights. (p. 34)

Coming to an understanding of self means examining deepest feelings, expectations and desires about ourselves, about academics, and about teaching in general. That understanding lies at the root of a choice to teach (or pursue any lifework that is ultimately our true vocation).

What are the traits of good teachers? If we recall to mind those teachers we best remember, those who made such a distinct impression that we still can recall individual instances of connection, what was it that made them most singular? They were genuinely passionate and energetic; they loved the subject; they admitted when they did not have the answer; they strayed from the text to include not only their own experiences but found ways to bring forward what the students themselves knew and felt. They helped the students uncover their own self understanding.

I recently had the privilege of being engaged with such a teacher. Edwin is a tour guide for visitors to his native country, Costa Rica. He displayed such a passion for his country, his people, his birds, forests, mountains, and volcanoes that many of us felt distinctly privileged to have met him and subsequently experienced a sense of grief at having to leave. Most of us in the group were not formal (or even armchair) bird watchers. But Edwin's expertise and his sheer delight at finding and identifying the 124 different species we saw within the ten days we were in the country had me, at least,



looking with much more interest and joy at the dozen or so species of birds that come to the feeders in my back yard.

Edwin's skill lies not only in his passion and energy for the subject (whether it is history or geography or plant and animal life) but also in his ability to make us, a group of strangers to the country (and, for the most part, to each other), feel welcomed and wanting, thirsting for more. He is a source of inspiration, *in-spirit*, inspiring rather than informing (Dyer, 2004). He sees beauty everywhere and looks at everything with appreciation rather than judgment. He is a charismatic teacher, in touch with an inner joy that cannot be contained but which bubbles out, revealing an inner source of connection with his true self.

Subsequent conversations with Edwin reveal that he, along with other tour guides in Costa Rica, are very similar to adjunct faculty. They are independent contractors, many of whom have established a relationship with a particular tour company. Those whose assignments primarily come from a single tour company (as does Edwin's) have formal meetings twice a year at which they discuss possible new tourist activities and better ways to perform existing activities. Edwin calls each of these seminars a

very enriching experience.... We do discuss kinds of activities and better ways to perform activities. Or even we talk about new activities. I tell about things we've done that were not written, little things that actually make a trip. And we talk a lot about logistics....We also talk about the activities in the programs themselves, too. Better ways to improve them.

In between the formal meetings, these 18-20 guides also continue sharing ideas as their paths cross at common tourist stops on the road. But all look forward to the general meetings in the off-seasons when everybody is free to attend, to share information, anecdotes, and training. Edwin, with 10 years of experience as an eco-tourism guide, has

been designated as a senior teacher/mentor for new individuals joining the program. He is increasingly being asked to teach other new guides and lead portions of the seminars held each year. The parallels to the community of adjunct faculty are many.

“When you know someone well, you can tell from the music of their voice what is happening in their heart. The lone voice always tells more than it intends”

(O’Donohue, 2004, p. 73). Although I cannot claim to know Edwin well, the music in his voice clearly reveals that he enjoys what he is doing, demonstrating the sort of inner self-confidence, excitement and expertise that underpin good teaching. His awareness of self requires that the excitement and expertise be shared with others. If we open ourselves to awareness of our “be-ing,” we also will discover an elemental need to be connected with all elements of the environment in which we live, a “longing to belong” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 4). Edwin’s connection to his environment has led him into avidly participating in the eco-tourism activities of his country, as well as to replanting open areas of the LaPaz Cloud Forest to provide forest bridges for the native birds and other animals. His longing leads him to scared places of wonder, shelter, comfort, and growth.

### **Longing**

#### A BLESSING

Blessed be the longing that brought you here and that quickens your soul with wonder.

May you have the courage to befriend your eternal longing.

May you enjoy the critical and creative companionship of the question “Who am I?” and may it brighten your longing.

May a secret Providence guide your thought and shelter your feeling.

May your mind inhabit your life with the same sureness with which your body belongs to the world.

May the sense of something absent enlarge your life.

May you succumb to the danger of growth.

May you live in the neighbourhood of wonder.  
May you belong to love with the wildness of Dance  
May you know that you are ever embraced in the kind  
circle of God. (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 50)

A “neighbourhood of wonder” is a place of friends/neighbors that both shelters and allows one to explore. This is the purpose of the community. And at the same time, this neighborhood should also be a place of growth, a place where one can be open to, *succumb* to, growth.

**Befriending the longing.** For me, the most enduring longing for community always has been associated with education, a longing that brings me here to this inquiry, a longing that I now recognize has been a constant in my life. I taught even while working on my Bachelor's degree. At the urging of my future husband, I left teaching to work in an accounting office in Chicago. I lasted six months, and returned to teaching at mid-year. For several years after my marriage and the birth of my two daughters, I did remain at home. But when I was divorced, I returned to teaching. The pressures of providing for two children by myself led me to move into private industry, into the software engineering field. Within 6 months of moving to this new environment I was back in school, this time as a student in a Master's degree program. Shortly after earning that degree I returned part time to the classroom as an instructor in the local community college. But a time of transition within the engineering company forced me to re-evaluate my goals and look at what made me happiest in work. Diana Chapman Walsh's (1999) poem expresses the decision I had to make. It expresses the danger, the taking of risks and entering the unknown that is inherent in growth.

He asks me a question I've never considered before.  
When is it that you know you have to go someplace else?  
At first I think I don't know, don't go, never have, just try to please,

do what's expected, bloom where I'm planted.  
 But then the answer germinates in the soil of my mind.  
 I see a potted plant, roots protruding from the drainage hole  
 in the bottom, ready to go, bursting to grow.  
 After weeks or months or years of putting its root system down,  
 of consolidating its power, husbanding its resources, it has reached  
 a crisis point, lost its equilibrium, has to go, has to grow.  
 I run down to the cellar and root around for a larger pot,  
 a little larger only, so my vulnerable plant won't wilt in the  
 unstructured vastness of a new world without apparent walls.  
 I have to smash the old pot to rescue my restless plant,  
 impacted root system now naked in my hand. A small sacrifice,  
 but a radical operation to deliver the plant from death.  
 Without the space to grow, it will shrivel and die.  
 When is it that I know I have to go someplace else?  
 When I have to grow or die. (p. 207)

Accepting another job in management in corporate America simply would have been the same pot with a new coat of paint on the outside. I needed to break away from that environment and move into the place where I could again flourish. I found the politics of the corporate workplace increasingly enervating and opted to immerse myself again in the educational environment by taking an administrative and teaching position at a university. It is very much like there is a rubber band attached to me, and though I may stretch it somewhat by trying other occupations, it pulls me back to education again and again. I am drawn to the *community* of educators and students.

**Keeping the longing safe.** As Barnhart (1988) tells us, the verb *long* comes from the Old English *lang* meaning “wish very much, yearn.” Yet, it also is directly related to the Old Saxon *langon*, “measuring much from end to end,” and Old High German – “ask, desire, demand” (p. 608). The longing asks, desires, demands connection, and that longing is deep and wide, “measuring much from end to end.”

Your longing is safe there. Belonging is related to longing. If you hyphenate belonging, it yields a lovely axiom for spiritual growth: Be-Your-Longing.

Belonging is a precious instinct in the soul. Where you belong should always be worthy of your dignity. (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 144)

Is the university a safe haven? How is it, then, that adjunct, part-time, contingent faculty become invisible faculty, “impossible to see” or “not easily noticed or detected” (*American Heritage College Dictionary*, 1993, p. 715)? Do we look *through* them just for their ability to carry the burden of teaching? Do we see them as only reflecting the light of the university and not being the source of that light, a source of energy, commitment and creativity? In community colleges in general, and in a growing number of 4-year colleges and universities, the adjunct faculty members truly do carry the burden, the majority of the instructional support that allows us to provide the educational resources to the students. Yet, university administration may fall back on numbers that define success, quantitative results provided by student evaluations and grade distributions that lay a patina of distance between the person who is the instructor and the perceived skills of teaching. At times these numbers determine whether an instructor is re-hired or promoted. The other part of this equation is the university's obligation to enable the faculty to grow, to expand skills, to experiment, and to fail. Bell hooks (2003) calls us, individuals and institutions, to task:

When professors “serve” each other by mutual commitment to education as the practice of freedom, by daring to challenge and teach one another as well as our students, this service is not institutionally rewarded. The absence of reward for service in the interest of building community makes it harder for individual teachers to make a commitment to serve. (pp. 83-84)

The Dean of our undergraduate school is quite sensitive about asking faculty to do things that distract from the quality of their teaching. What service outside the classroom can we expect from adjunct faculty? In this environment, where teaching is done in

isolation, there are ways to challenge one another to excel. The desire is truly there as evidenced in those who choose to be course chairs (leaders for a focused group of instructors teaching the same course). Seth considers this task a beneficial service as long as it does not become bureaucratic or intrusive. Betty states her service in these terms: “I see the real value added of my position as fostering a sense of community among the faculty in these courses – encouraging the sharing of best practices, and enabling each of us to provide high quality education to our students.”

**What brought you here?** In reflection on my messages to the faculty under my charge, I realize that I often indicate appreciation for the service of the faculty in support of the institution, recognizing how we would not be able to serve the students without the efforts of these adjuncts. But the messages, though sincere, still emphasize that the *institution* would not survive without them. There has been less emphasis on the need for their presence in the lives of the students and in each other’s lives, which is more important than their support of the institution. Administrators always indicate that they want this university to be a place where faculty *want* to work, a school with which the faculty *want* to be associated. If we really want this to happen we must be ready to commit ourselves to each other. That commitment must extend to a larger world beyond ourselves. The commitment to each other must make us look together toward those who need our care and attention. This is the commitment that lies at the heart of every community (Nouwen, 1994). This is the neighborhood of wonder to which we belong.

### **Belonging**

University teaching is somewhat unusual work in that in the best situations it provides a high degree of autonomy along with a compelling sense of connection. (McGee, 2002, p. 63)

*Belonging*, as defined by the *American Heritage College Dictionary* (1993)

means to be proper or suitable, to be in an appropriate situation or environment, to be a member of a group; to fit into a group naturally, to be a part of something else. There is both a sense of incompleteness and restlessness, a constant movement toward connection. There is a longing to be present with, to be present to, to belong. “The shelter of belonging empowers you; it confirms in you a stillness and sureness of heart. You are able to endure external pressure and confusion; you are sure of the ground on which you stand” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 5). What is it that a university does that makes more solid the ground on which the adjunct faculty stand? The danger lies in not paying attention to this need for a shelter of belonging, without which there will be shifting sands, uncertainty in footing and balance. I wonder how the sense of belonging, the sense of community allows the faculty member to be the still heart that students feel is open to hearing them, sharing with them, growing with them. Does the university community provide a place where values are shared, experiences are validated, fears explored, and support is provided? Much like the intricate ecosystem of a rain forest, the university community,

will depend for its sustenance on an intricate and vulnerable web of interdependence. If we ask ourselves, as we need to do, what kind of leadership we need to nourish a fragile ecosystem like that, the obvious answer is humanistic leadership, collaborative leadership, leadership that is respectful, that values and rewards individual autonomy, that values initiative, that supports the dignity of every person, that authorizes, inspires, and frees everyone in the organization to do their very best and most creative work. (Walsh, as cited in Glazer, 1999, p. 209)

Cutting down one tree in the rainforest destroys hundreds of living systems.

Closing a door to personal growth, opportunities to share, and a sense of belonging may initiate the deadening of spirit of one instructor. And that death, in turn, may very well

deprive many potential students from benefiting from the life and inspiration of that instructor. The challenge is to “hold open a space in which a community of growth and self-discovery can flourish for everyone” (Walsh, as cited in Glazer, 1999, p. 208).

**Hearing all the voices.** In an online faculty forum series (*Faculty Forum*, 2004), a week-long session of conferencing in an online format, a lengthy discussion focused on administrative directives that seem to have ignored or failed to solicit the input of the larger faculty pool. The challenge simply to enable faculty to communicate with each other was lamented. Lewis writes: “There are not a lot of us who know faculty outside of our own division.” This situation is compounded by the fact that in the States the university’s faculty members overwhelmingly are adjunct. In the European and Asian divisions of the university, the majority of the faculty members have non-tenured, full-time status. Great distances separate many of the faculty, both within the States and within the other divisions. It is very difficult for most adjuncts to know anyone outside their own discipline, much less know someone in a different division. Yet, there is strong evidence that more communication between members, regardless of location or division, is desired. And the impact of such increased communication can be found at any level. Pete illustrates the value of the online Faculty Forums, where anyone interested in participation, stateside or abroad, local or in far-flung places, can participate:

I think they [faculty forums] are incredible. From them, I have learned both the theory and practice behind our operating policies, which contributes directly to my ability to make decisions on behalf of both my students and [the university]. Problems that could escalate get nipped in the bud. I have also learned from my colleagues, and I wouldn't trade this for anything. I am impressed with the forthright collegial manner they use when sharing thoughts, both in agreement and disagreement. Each forum I attend reminds me once again of the healthy tension that exists between the front line soldiers (faculty) and those who lead and administer.  
(*Faculty Forum*, 2004)



The forums are a place where differences can be debated and where teaching occurs, among peers at the faculty level and between faculty and staff. They are a mechanism that provides a free place to express one's ideas and take responsibility for those ideas. Because the forum occurs in an online classroom, the record is permanent; and by allowing for reflective answers to the opinions and concepts posted, a deeper evaluation of the messages being shared is possible. One can see and review an entire thread of a conversation in print as opposed to trying to remember what an individual may have said vocally in a face-to-face meeting.

There is a strengthening effort to make the university "one" instead of continuing to operate as three separate institutions. Yet, to make us "one" requires that we address more than just administrative changes. Accountability, collaboration (or a lack thereof) and difficulties in communication

...often stand in the way of ingenuity, creativity, and energy. These problems often undermine people's willingness to experiment and to take risks, and limit openness to new idea and to new opportunities. They often prevent the development of mutual support and of the partnerships that we absolutely need if we are going to venture off into the unknown – if we are going to break the pot so that the plant can grow. (Walsh, as cited in Glazer, 1999, p. 210)

**Unexpected discoveries in listening.** Resistance to proposed changes on the part of administrative and academic sides dramatically increases when the groundwork for collaboration and communication is not addressed. Sometimes simple meetings can change perspectives. My conversations with Charlie and Feliz, visiting the stateside administrative headquarters to attend a security conference, resulted in my growing awareness of realities facing adjuncts in the other geographic divisions of the university.

Catalin, an instructor in my charge who happens to live in Romania, visited the campus while on a trip to the United States for training. Both he and I were disabused of pre-conceived notions. He envisioned the university's headquarters to be a traditional residential campus (instead of consisting only of an administrative building). And I had pictured a middle-aged Eastern European gentleman instead of the dynamic, personable 30-something individual who showed up at my door. Bonding more easily takes place in proximity to the other. The accountability, collaboration and communication needed for community can be achieved more readily when there is proximity of the individuals involved. This is a particular challenge to a faculty that is so geographically dispersed. What, then, is the framework in which a community of adjunct faculty can be established, maintained, and nurtured? What does it mean for individuals to be-long to, be part of the stained glass cantata that is community?

### **Stained Glass Communities**

There is a beautiful stained glass window in the meditation room at the hospital in Annapolis. Many Sundays as I leave my volunteer duties in the emergency room, I stop in just to absorb the rich colors. It is a very simple design, large flowing monochrome planes of sunrise pink, maroon, teal, deep-water blue and summer-corn green. It speaks to me of the richness of spirit, of the warmth of friends and family, of the vibrancy of life. They are the colors of the communities that have forged the stained glass that I am, the colors of my soul. The colors that are fused and burned there come from many experiences, past and present. And the colors will yet change as the thread of the future brings heat to the glass that records my life. What kinds of messages can I discern in the colors of the community of adjunct faculty? In what ways can that stained glass window

Speak to the experiences of community? What are the stories in the colors that are the adjunct faculty? How does one become open to the colors of community?

### **The Framework of the Stained Glass Window - Communities as Havens**

You have a relationship to a place through the body. It is no wonder that humans have always been fascinated by place. Place offers us a home here; without place we would literally have no where. (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 44)

A haven is a harbor, a port, a refuge. Bachelard (1958/1964) tells us that “All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home” (p. 5). And for Bachelard, the chief benefit of the house is that it “shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace” (p. 6). This first home is a place of intense nurturing or (potentially) nightmares. Adjunct faculty re-live and recall in the classrooms the dreams that are the seeds of their desire to teach. Those seeds were planted in the homes of their childhood. The strength of those memories, if called forward in the safe haven of community, may inform and enlighten the very passion that inspires their teaching today. And the haven that is the university must allow this day-dreaming, this protection, this place of peace.

**Home as haven.** Home is most often bound with house, a physical place of memories, experiences, and people that shaped our emerging self. In most universities, the home that is the university is associated with the buildings that make up the campus. But adjunct faculty typically have no office space, no physical *home* within the academic setting. This university itself of which I am a part has no typical campus, only a building housing administrative staff and several computer labs. Classrooms are rented spaces in another university and in education centers shared with other educational institutions. The only physical haven the adjunct faculty experience is the large conference room used for

the twice-yearly faculty meetings, and the rare visits to the offices of the academic directors who hire and mentor these adjuncts. Those who live at a distance from the administrative facilities do not even enjoy that connection to the physical place that is identified with the university. How, then, can they experience place in such a way that it is a source of the essential connectedness to the university? Does this lack of a physical place, a haven, prevent the formation of community? What is it that they would describe as that which matters most – “the experience of *being* in that place and, more particularly, *becoming part of the place*” (Casey, 1993, p. 33)?

**Tradition as haven.** “Belonging is brought about by tradition’s addressing us. Everyone... must listen to what reaches him from it [tradition]. The truth of tradition is like the present that lies immediately open to the senses” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 463). These traditions provide one sort of glue that allows for the creation of a sense of community. But even then, the community that forms “does not emerge spontaneously from some sort of relational reflex, especially in the complex and often conflicted institutions where most teachers work” (Palmer, 1998, p. 156). For adjunct faculty members, the elemental framework of community will lie deeper than an encouraging administrative staff, the occasional meeting, the intermittent conversations with co-workers, and the acceptance of the symbolic icons that represent the institution. The world of community “is never simply there outside us. Our intentionality constructs it” (O’Donohue, 1997, p. 106). It seems, then, that in order for a community to develop, there must be a joint effort to prepare the fertile ground that will nourish community – a mutual desire on both the university’s side and that of the adjunct faculty member that celebrates the value of community. Some of this building is done via university

celebrations. In an environment where both faculty and students are scattered around the world, these times of coming together in common ceremonies are challenging to negotiate. There only are a couple of times per year when this occurs – at the two general faculty meetings and at graduation. However infrequently this occurs, the value of common celebrations in supporting the development of community cannot be overlooked.

These (community worship) ceremonies are quite extraordinary, quite beautiful, and a crucial part of our work to sustain the bonds of community and connection at a time when outside forces make them ever more fragile and rare. The ceremonies are part of our ongoing commitment to doing all that we can to affirm the necessity of relationship, and to hope friendship and service to others as an ultimate goal. We see this work as fundamental to our core educational mission, not as a nice frill on the side. (Walsh, as cited in Glazer, 1999, pp. 210-211)

In addition to the building of relationships and friendships, these celebrations help us tell a story of who we are, who we might become. These meetings with those who have something in common also speak to a wider circle of community, to our connections with all that is both visible and invisible. The celebrations contain within them other celebrations, stories of how and what we choose to see, what we value, what we hope for, that for which we are moved to express our love (Griffin, 1995).

**Community outside the haven.** But not every place is a haven that supports community. There is a darker side to the word *haven*. Ayto (1990) tells us that it originally was a term for *container* for ships. But another connection is to the Indo-European *kap*, the source of the Latin *capers* which gives rise to seize, capable, capture. Sometimes breaking free, being outside the place into which one is thrust, can lead to a strong connection, to greater community. The following is a mythical description I wrote about finding community outside of place, outside the belly of the whale.

### **“Janet and the Whale”**

And it came to pass that when Janet was 12 she was cast forth from her family (not in anger or abandonment, but in offering). And she found herself in the belly of a whale called the convent. And after some dozen years living in Chicago, the word of the Mother Superior came unto Janet saying, "Arise and go to Iowa to teach." But Janet told her "No. I will stay in Chicago where I have finally developed a support system that may help me make a very important decision regarding my future." And the Mother Superior sent forth a great storm of anger and then of indifference and Janet was spit out from the belly of this whale, cast away from the community she had known. Amazingly, the storms of uncertainty she had been experiencing inside the whale ceased their raging. For this new place on land was a place of comfort, holding within itself a poor parish in the ghetto where Janet found deep and good friends who supported her while she went to school and finished her undergraduate degree.

After 3 years, Janet entered another maelstrom and was swallowed by another whale called marriage. The raging seas were found again within the whale. She began to resent the whale and be angry with it. But again Janet called upon her supporting friends and her inner strength and forced the whale to spit her out onto dry land. And with her she brought two beautiful daughters. From then on Janet did not fear the whale but began to search for manifestations of its form in the world around her, for she realized it was instead a creature of great wisdom and comfort and mystery. And she realized that within the belly of the whale were the tools of humility and strength and growth and persistence. (Personal writing, 2003)

And so within this framework there are communities of inclusion and acceptance, communities of exclusion and rejection, communities that exist only in cyberspace, and perhaps, as Lingis (1994) names them, communities of those who have nothing in common. In communities, as in all of human life,

...abundance does not happen automatically. It is created when we have the sense to choose community, to come together to celebrate and share our common store. Whether the scarce resource is money or love or power or words, the true law of life is that we generate more of whatever seems scarce by trusting its supply and passing it around. Authentic abundance does not lie in secured stockpiles of food or cash or influence or affection but in belonging to a community where we can give those goods to others who need them – and receive them from others when we are in need. (Palmer, 2000, pp. 107-108)

We must become sorcerers, ones who “influence lot, fate, or fortune” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1035). But the fate or fortune we want to bring into the lives of ourselves and our community of adjuncts is that which serves to unify, to give purpose, to support authentic personal connections (Dyer, 2004). What is the experience of those who are included in this connectedness?

### **The Pieces Joined - Communities of Inclusion**

No individual can develop or grow in an isolated life. We need community desperately. Community offers us a creative tension which awakens us and challenges us to grow. (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 261)

The university where I work is an institution focused on teaching, and significant resources have been dedicated to the study of best teaching practices. There is a comprehensive approach to faculty development consisting of new faculty orientations, mentoring, academic discipline meetings, online training workshops, professional development grants, teaching recognition awards, and online global faculty forums. In all of these efforts, the understated goal of fostering connection, communication, and community always is acknowledged – but as a peripheral result. The goal could never be to get the entire faculty and staff together at any one time – numbers and geographical dispersion hinder that. However, there is concerted effort to establish smaller groups of faculty, organized around academic disciplines that enable these topic-focused groups to establish lines of communication and support. This group of faculty, in connecting with each other, also connect to the larger home that is the university. But the greater connection still lies within the smaller domain of the academic disciplines. Gappa and Leslie (1993) point to the culture of the academic department as being the key variable in satisfaction:

Departments that care deeply about education, about teaching and learning, seem to foster an atmosphere in which faculty members talk with each other about these issues. Such departments also appear to involve part-timers in their talk and seem open to what the part-timers have to say. People sense that they can have an effect on what happens – not just in their own isolated classroom but on the entire program of the department. For part-timers, this environment produces feelings of efficacy and of satisfaction. (p. 185)

**Including the distant.** This presence to another does not have to be physical, although the physical presence can be of great assistance. There are particular challenges in providing this opportunity for face-to-face contact between faculty members who are not located nearby. Even though technology can de-humanize the conversation between persons, it also can provide a forum for continued contact. An online classroom, created for faculty who teach within my discipline, is used for all of the following purposes: announcements, scheduling, teaching tips, syllabus construction, current issues, and focus groups. But the classroom also provides for two-way communication, a place where faculty can and frequently do respond to questions, begin discussions among themselves, or post questions. One can see the potential for using this “classroom” as a communication tool. Not only is it dynamic, allowing for entry of topics of immediate interest, but it also becomes a depository of information that can be referred to at any time. It is one vehicle for bringing together a dispersed group of professionals with a common interest in information access and sharing. As Rick says, “I read it every day....I keep up. And there are good things that get posted there.”

**Equal access to home.** Even though this discipline-based *home* is virtual, it is a place where everyone is a member, a place each person can choose to visit/reside often or occasionally. It provides a common bond between this widely dispersed group who do have something in common – status as an instructor (adjunct or full-time) and a place to



express what is most important or disturbing or of concern in their individual lives within the classroom.

The “how” and the “who” are intimately tied to the “where,” which gives to them a specific content and a coloration not available from any other source. Place bestows upon them “a local habitation and a name” by establishing a concrete situatedness in the common world. This implacement is as social as it is personal. (Casey, 1993, p. 23)

The sharing that occurs, even if they only opt to read or lurk on the outside, gives them the option of being part of the community. It is a place they might call home. Still, a part of me relishes the face-to-face contact of the twice-yearly faculty meetings. The language of the online classroom excludes the expressions, the non-verbal dressings that accompany face-to-face conversations. The online classroom may be a substitute for the frequent contact one might experience in more frequent department meetings, in social events, in spontaneous small group discussions that might arise if all were co-located. It does allow us to “sing” together, but we sing without the visual clues of the conductor and one’s fellow singers. It is a cantata constructed by separate pieces joined loosely together in community, and there is a deep hunger on my part for greater/stronger connectedness of the stained glass pieces within the frame. Yet, I recognize that not everyone chooses to be involved; not everyone receives the attention needed or desired.

Include, based on the Latin *includere* means shutting in (Ayto, 1990). While it implies a gathering together, a bonding of those with “a common stock of observations, maxims for action, and beliefs that are picked up from others and passed on to others” (Lingis, 1994, p. 109), it also implies a cutting off from the other, a walling off from the outside. This walling off makes the *other* invisible. And the issues of exclusion, of being outside, of being invisible also are deep concerns felt by adjunct faculty.

## **Holes in the Window- Communities of Invisibility**

When I was an adjunct teaching at three or four institutions every week, I knew that I was only a ghost. I would have an apparitional identity in these institutions. (Church, 1999, p. 252)

What gets hidden in the invisible places, the places of desolation, abandonment – in the holes in the panel? The experiences of being a ghost, of being invisible, are experiences of aloneness, unconnectedness, displacement or un-placement. *Visible* stems from the Latin *videre* which itself has an Indo-European base in the words, *woid*, *weid*, *wid* which produced the English *wise* and *wit* (*to wit*). Might we then extrapolate the meaning of invisible to be *unwise*, *unwittingly*? It must be acknowledged that some adjunct faculty prefer to remain unconnected, invisible, and apparitional. They reach out only when some connection is perceived to be required – resolving a student complaint, tracking down a missing paycheck, making choices for courses they desire to teach (if their posting of choices is the only way they can guarantee being called upon in a given semester). In some environments, this invisibility is supported by a bias that believes that adjuncts choose part-time status because they cannot get full-time positions. But more often the issue of invisibility stems from an institution that unwisely takes the adjuncts for granted, assumes that their loyalty and continued service can be relied upon from semester to semester without any sort of reaching out or directed efforts on the part of the administration.

**Struggling for identity.** “One of the most crippling prisons is the prison of reduced identity” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 101). There is a reduction in identity fostered within the adjunct faculty if attention is not paid to issues of their integration into the culture of the institution. What helps give solidity to that apparitional identity is public

celebration and recognition of their achievements and creating a physical connection whenever possible so that the community to which they belong is brought forward out of the shadows.

Occupational identity carries an enormous valence in a culture where we understand our work and identity as one and the same. The question is not “What do you want to do when you grow up?” The question is “What do you want to be?”...there is no denying that occupational identity and prestige can offer considerable appeal for adjunct faculty.... (McGee, 2002, p. 64)

Roueche, Roueche and Milliron (1995) identify critical pieces that support the development of a viable and robust identity for adjunct faculty: identifying a clear purpose and direction of their jobs; providing orientation activities, support structures, and professional development activities; evaluating and providing feedback on their performance; and providing equitable pay. These provide some elements of an exoskeleton that support connectedness. They do remain just that – supporting pieces; they cannot reveal the “being” of community or that which reveals the song that is community.

The more I feel myself to be isolated (not only geographically but also socially, culturally, linguistically, etc.), the more I will tend to find my surroundings desolate; and the more I perceive these surroundings to be themselves, desolate, the more I will feel isolated in various ways. (Casey, 1993, p. 197)

**Ignoring the different.** Community, communing, communion is not an isolated ritual. It is a manner of living for, “looking forward toward something good. It reaches out for connection to a new reality, to new relationships, to new community and structures” (Carrol, 2004, p. 10). To be without this togetherness, connection, then, can be seen as a form of death or, at least, alienation.

Lingis (1994) speaks of the rational community, one in which what is spoken is essential and the speaking itself is inessential. This speaking is called “serious speech” (p. 112) that defines empirical laws and practical principles. Those who do not speak this same speech are considered aliens. Those who do ascribe to the same essential laws and principles are considered aliens. And we, ourselves, feel that same alienation when we encounter the unfamiliar voice or language, or perhaps even the voice of nature that we have not allowed to impinge upon our everyday thoughts and activities as speech that is not essential to our rational lives. If *visible* gives rise to the words *view*, *vision*, and *vista*, it also gives rise to *envy* and *revision*. We tend to make invisible that which we do not want to deal with in its essential difference, if it in some way revises our picture of reality. What are the seeds of envy that might be sown by our serious speech concerning the roles and functions of adjunct faculty? Does this rational speech create ghosts by denying the other type of communication that recognizes that it is the voice of the speaker, the saying of something, that is essential and not the message contained in the saying? What is the experience of those excluded from the community?

### **Pieces Rejected - Communities of Exclusion**

Include – exclude, inside – outside. The one excluded has lost his “being-there” and is in danger of being reduced to non-existence. “If there exists a border-line surface between such an inside and outside, this surface is painful on both sides” (Bachelard, 1958/1964, p. 218). Many adjunct faculty members are long-term employees who have accumulated considerable experience in the classrooms. Yet, they often are excluded from academic governance, curriculum development, faculty hiring and related decision processes that intimately affect their own work and the broader qualitative dimensions of

the academic programs in which they teach (Leslie, 1998). “When we are rejected or excluded, we become deeply wounded. To be forced out, to be pushed to the margin, hurts us” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 4).

**Not part of the clique.** “I got kicked out....I got knocked out. That did not make me feel very connected....And it did change my attitude toward teaching. I thought, if that’s not good enough, nothing is good enough” (Valerie). These words capture the pain Valerie experienced at being eliminated from the finalists’ pool for a teaching award. Nominations for the award come from students, and Valerie had received six letters of nomination during the semester. The application package that must be generated by the nominated faculty covers many facets of the teaching experience, and this application requires extensive work (of about 60 pages, Valerie indicated). Valerie concedes that she was weak in some of the criteria against which the applicants are graded. But “It just seems to me that if that many students nominate one person, that should count for something. They should take it seriously.... They don’t tell you, they just say ‘you were not among the 22 finalists’” (Valerie). “Maybe I don’t belong to the clique here,” she comments later. What clique? Is there a presumption on the part of adjunct faculty that certain people are accepted as part of an inner circle, a circle of power, while others are forced to remain on the periphery? Rick adds, “ Well, you know, it took a long time to get my foot in the door, but then they kind of accepted me.”

Valerie’s self-reflectivity allowed her to recognize that she did not meet a certain level of criteria for the award, but the absence of the human kindness/touch in the notification made her feel excluded. There is a constant longing to be part of, to belong,

for within the circle of acceptance is the place where we are empowered, where we find the strength to handle challenges and where we can grow (O'Donohue, 1999).

**Terminal exclusions.** This issue of exclusion becomes even more pointed each time the issue of a “terminal” degree enters the conversations. The requirement for all new instructors to have a terminal degree and the staffing preferences given to those who hold such degrees have increased feelings of insecurity among the current faculty hired before this policy change was implemented. Those who presume that the lack of such a degree means they will be more likely overlooked at staffing time voice heightened levels of tension and resentment. Rick recounts the story of mentoring a new faculty member and sharing with this individual the course materials he had created over the course of several years. The new instructor appropriated Rick’s materials as his own. Rick is particularly chagrined by the fact that, after assuming that these materials are “free stuff that they can just take and use as their leisure,” these classes are now awarded to the newly mentored instructors. When asked why he thought he was not allowed to teach the class again, he responds:

They’ve got the Ph.D. I’m sure they’re much better in their field as far as the research and all that. But what I teach is what I do all day long. Technical people – we never went out for Ph.D.s because it was a detriment to our career. You would not want one because if you did you would NOT be hired. Back in the 70s and 80s. You would be discriminated against – too pricey. So if you had it you would be quiet about it. (Rick)

As Rick recounts, for many of the professionals who work in computer-related technical fields, the Ph.D. is neither desired nor practical. And yet, in staffing courses, many times faculty with Ph.D.s are given preference over those with Masters-level degrees. What message do these adjunct faculty members receive? What is the value,

symbolic or real, in having a Ph.D.? Is the degree more important than content skills and proficiency? Is there a presumption that those who hold a terminal degree somehow are better equipped to teach? In many research universities, the Ph.D. is symbolic of ongoing research, and teaching may be of secondary interest. But in the comprehensive university setting, this research focus is missing, and faculty have teaching as the primary task of employment. In our comprehensive university setting, it may be argued that the insights and experience of professionals working in the “real” world to which these adult working students will return each day is equally valuable regardless of the final degree held by the instructors.

There is another symbolic side to this discussion of the state of exclusion related to terminal degrees. Valerie is more pointed in her feelings about this topic as it recurs in her conversation. When a congratulatory note was posted in the faculty classroom site recognizing that a co-worker had passed her comprehensive exams, another faculty member wrote: “Welcome to the club.” Valerie’s responds, “This is a bad message to us who don’t have Ph.D.s. So that meant the rest of us were not part of ‘your club.’ I want a Ph.D. but I don’t want to be part of that club. I will not be brainwashed along the way to think that I’m better than other people.” Valerie expresses both the “constant and vital tension between longing and belonging” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. xxvii). She wishes to become part of “the club,” to belong to those with the title and piece of paper which symbolizes, perhaps, greater prestige, power or worth. But that acquisition cannot come at the expense of a loss of her own sense of self-worth, her own sense of being.

What elements of being accepted, of belonging, of feeling cared for are missing in the administrative treatment of the adjuncts? Due partly to oversight from accrediting

agencies, the pressure to ensure that instructors are “qualified” via the holding of a terminal degree can overshadow or even negate the incredible talent and “real-world” experience that adjunct faculty who are everyday experts working in the field bring to a comprehensive community college or university setting. There is a great need for the talents as well as a great need for academic excellence regardless of the formal degrees held by *any* faculty member. What is most important is the heartfelt caring brought to the development and growth of students and peers alike that sustains the community. Instead of feeling isolated and marginalized, and without denigrating the value of advanced degrees, adjunct faculty need to recognize the importance of their leadership and full participation in the university as a center of academic excellence.

**Crossing borders.** That which separates the outside from the inside is often a threshold. The first part, *thresh*, has prehistoric roots in making noise, crash, rattle, stamping the feet (Ayto, 1990). The threshold is something you stamp your feet on as you pass from the outside to the inside. It also is related to the word *thrash*, to beat or hit. I have fond memories of the thrashing machine that would travel from farm to farm in the summer to harvest oats, separating the grain from the husks and straw. For me, thrashing time also means a large group of men seated outside eating fried chicken, mashed potatoes, sweet corn, and pie that my mother has spent several days preparing.

Those entering the ranks of adjunct faculty at the university embark upon a similar process of thrashing, sifting out the straw and/or crossing the threshold. The initial threshold or point of rejection is at the resume review process. Those who have the qualifications are invited for an interview, face-to-face if local or online if they live outside the immediate area. In the process of an hour interview, their suitability for



serving the mission of the university is measured. Though some come with no experience in the classroom except what was spent on the student's side of the desk, all come with some spark of need to share, to lead, to mentor with others. They are impelled to answer the internal call to grow personally and to nurture others. But acceptance, being hired, and then staffed to teach a class does not automatically result in a sense of belonging to this community. What awaits the adjunct on the other side of the threshold?

The disciplinary community is always the arbiter and regulator that either includes or excludes membership. Academic freedom is the hallmark of this boundary maintenance...It protects the orthodox and the heretical as it excludes the blasphemous. (Church, 1999, p. 257)

**Thrashing those who cross.** There has been considerable discussion among faculty recently over standardization (common course descriptions and objectives for all sections of a given course). Many full-time instructors feel that this infringes upon their freedom to teach the class in a manner that is best for the students and the instructor. The administrative position is that these common elements, to be the starting point for every instructor teaching a section of a given class, give students confidence that the outcomes of the class, regardless of format or instructor's approach, will be consistent. This issue has created significant thresholds, pitting administration against full-time instructors and full-time faculty against adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty are very quiet on the issue, with few raising any concerns about this impinging upon academic freedom. This silence, in itself, has led to some accusations that adjunct faculty are not as dedicated to teaching and are willing to accept "canned" courses in order to make their teaching life easier. The angst revealed in these discussions gives evidence to the fact that some faculty feel very isolated from the power center of the university. One who is isolated, placed on the outside, is made into an island, completely surrounded by water (filled with crocodiles or

alligators?). The word *isolated* stems from the Latin *insulatus*, made into an island (*insula*) (Barnhart, 1988). A related term is *insulate*, that which protects from the loss of electricity or heat. There is great concern that their voices will not be heard but muffled by the fiberglass batting in which they are cocooned.

**Ignoring the thresholds.** There are many thresholds in this house called a university. Nevertheless, there is a constant longing to be part of, to belong, for within the circle of acceptance is the place where we are empowered, where we find the strength to handle challenges and where we can grow. If there is little that an adjunct faculty member can do to change the external issues of inclusion/exclusion, might the focus of change come from within, to a looking beyond the boundaries of personal life experiences, limitations, horizons, border-lines, because a “horizon is not a rigid boundary but something that moves with one and invites one to advance further” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 245). While remaining attentive to the limits of one’s own horizons, we must be ever ready to recognize, honor, accept the fluidity of that horizon, always enticing us with what lies over the edge. “What haven’t I seen yet? What discoveries are waiting to be revealed during my journey? How can I better grasp what it is that is being revealed in my searching, my experiences, my calling?” It is a journey that moves in simultaneous directions. The centrality of the goal remains to move, expand, explore. For to stand still is to stagnate, and to stagnate is to die to the vibrancy of the life-world that surrounds us. So the threshold must be crossed.

There is one unique threshold that needs to be explored in a university setting where both faculty and students are geographically scattered. What is the experience of community among those not located close to the home headquarters of the university?

### **The 3-Dimensional Window - Virtual Communities**

Since not all faculty members live locally, they cannot attend local faculty meetings. The dispersion of the information from the general meetings must be shared with them in various other formats. Does that lack of real-time presence further isolate those who cannot come to the meetings? What other pieces of the framework, what other support systems can these faculty-at-a-distance identify as critical for holding the whole panel together? Can there be “virtual” pieces in the stained glass panel?

Faculty who live at such a distance beyond the administrative headquarters of the university that they cannot feasibly be expected to attend faculty meetings or other functions may feel even more tenuous in their relationship to the university community. How is it that a “virtual” community might be established that makes the “distant” faculty members feel themselves as willing, critical, contributory members? *Virtual* stems from the Latin *virtus*- excellence, potency, efficacy. A *virtual community* should have the same essence, the same meaning, the same effect on the participants as the simpler word *community*. *Virtus* also gives rise to the word “virtue,” meaning superiority, or excellence. Virtual, virtue, virile, virtuoso, even virulent, stem from *vir* – man (Barnhart, 1988). It appears that in the virtual community perceptions that arise through the senses, the man, the body, are denied their fullness. Merleau-Ponty speaks of the absence of any separation between existence and embodiment: “I am my body as opposed to having a body” (Moran, 2000, p. 423). The full complement of senses enjoined in face-to-face meetings are curtailed by a physical distance that requires email, conferencing, an occasional phone call or video-conference to construct the thread that links the distant member to the individuals co-located.

**Global communities.** Prior to the emergence of electronic media for communication, the engagement of a worldwide body of faculty in an asynchronous but nearly instantaneous manner would not have been possible. Communities separated by oceans or even states could not have been created using the slow medium of mail. Simultaneous phone conversations with hundreds of individuals certainly were not possible. The virtual community we interact with today could come into existence only with the proliferation of the Internet and email. The community in cyberspace “is not a matter of place but of time. The no-place of cyberspace is the instant” (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994, [Speed], p. 4).

Kaltreider (1998) would argue that a global community is not possible:

It also speaks to the shallowness of the ideas about creating a “global village” that Marshall McLuhan has written about. Even the term *global village* shows a lack of understanding of what a real village is. *Global* and *village* are mutually exclusive terms, Grandson.

McLuhan is talking about a valid hope, but perhaps he was mistaking abstractions for people. There is no substitute for personal interaction in creating good communities. For example, television is a kind of global community. It provides a set of experiences for people, but they are abstract rather than personal. (p. 184)

**Dwelling but not residing.** But even in these technologically-fostered communications at a distance, “It is the body which points out and which speaks” (Moran, 2000, p. 423). It is not the physical separation that will deny the existence of place, the formation of community, the dwelling of faculty in the place that is called community. Casey (1993) tells us that “dwelling-as-residing is not necessarily sedentary, not the literal absence of motion but finding a comparatively stable place in the world is what matters in such dwelling. Such finding is possible even when in motion” (p. 133). Whether those faculty members who live at a distance from the home campus or from the

administrative buildings are peripatetic (coming in only for meetings or to teach) or remain always at a distance, the formation of community yet remains a possibility. Perhaps, as van Manen (2002) points out, we have yet to develop an appropriate language for a phenomenon which incorporates a new technology but which, at the same time, incorporates “no-body” in the experience (p. 222).

**Virtual classrooms that connect.** One effort to include those at a distance has been the construction of the online classroom for faculty only. These online classrooms, called 999 sites because of the class designator assigned in the online environment, are in continuous operation and are organized by academic discipline. Every faculty member is automatically rostered into that classroom. It provides a means for all to be connected to the activities within the discipline. Their value in fostering communication and connection is captured in the following posting by an active adjunct:

Oddly, in many ways, the History faculty help each other out more and communicate more [in the 999 classrooms] than we would if we were in a face to face setting. (Diane)

But these classrooms exist currently only for the stateside faculty (and not those in the European and Asian divisions of the university). There is a wistfulness expressed by Patrick in the following posting that indicates a desire to become part of this online community and a feeling that he is someone on the outside, excluded from an inner circle of those with something in common – those teaching for the stateside division.

I have often heard of these secret areas 999 [online classrooms set up for faculty only] but am not convinced they actually exist. Maybe captive aliens are kept there now that the tourist can visit area 51. (Patrick)

Discussion is underway to create a single discipline-focused classroom that will include all faculty members teaching in that discipline, regardless of location or division

affiliation. That will remove an arbitrary threshold that prevents full connection between those who DO have something in common instead of creating an artificial division between individuals based solely on location or administrative department with oversight.

**Online forums.** The other virtual community that finds its existence in the university is that supported by the online faculty forum series. Centered around a specific theme (e.g., accreditation or online teaching), these forums allow dispersed faculty from around the world to post their ideas and suggestions and questions or concerns. It also provides a forum for venting irritations or describing a sense of disconnection. It is a vehicle for making themselves heard. Pete succinctly summarizes the value of these forums:

As an adjunct faculty member living five hours away from [the university headquarters location], I believe it takes a special effort to integrate with [the university]. Attending general and departmental faculty meetings is an extreme effort and there is often conflict with scheduling. Although the 999 classes, occasional newsletters, the memos from the provost, and other efforts to communicate are all a step in the right direction, they are not a substitute for actually attending the faculty meetings. And this brings me to the faculty forums. I think they are incredible. From them, I have learned both the theory and practice behind our operating policies, which contributes directly to my ability to make decisions on behalf of both my students and [the university]. Problems that could escalate get nipped in the bud. I have also learned from my colleagues, and I wouldn't trade this for anything. I am impressed with the forthright collegial manner they use when sharing thoughts, both in agreement and disagreement. Each forum I attend reminds me once again of the healthy tension that exists between the front line soldiers (faculty) and those who lead and administer. And this forum has been the best yet. (Pete, *Faculty Forum*, 2004)

Telecommunications – the Web, email, instant messaging, telephones that transmit pictures and messages in addition to the human voice, change the conditions for the possibility of community. “In the mediatrix, we are no less related for being worlds apart. The local becomes global without being universalized” (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994,

[Interstanding], p. 10). The mediatrix, electronic media, the channel for communication, makes “to be” mean “to be related,” and “to be related” means to be plugged into electronic media which makes communication and community possible.

But with this possibility for creating community that could not have been sustained before, we are left with an additional challenge:

Globalization involves not only unification and integration but also pluralization and diversification. The more closely we are related, the more pronounced our differences become. The task that we face is to find ways to articulate differences without creating oppositions. (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994, [Net Effects], p. 13)

We may not always like to hear what is said because the lines of communication are now open to many more. In the same forum that Pete praised above, another participant posted a request for greater civility:

In this forum, the tone is distinctly different than in our past conversations. I have read almost every posting, and there is a marked increase in sarcasm, in rudeness and in general impoliteness. (*Faculty Forum*, 2004, ¶ 1)

This posting resulted in a heated defense of the postings as being honest, representing the faculty's overall frustration, or, as Stephen characterizes it:

The acerbic tone of some postings is directly related to the perception that these fora are increasingly not genuine round table discussions for faculty concerns but PR campaigns in which the administration pats faculty on the back for doing a good job, informs it of what the university has in store for it, and cordially ignores its problems. (*Faculty Forum*, 2004, ¶ 3)

Be aware of what opening up to the community may enable you to see and hear! As Clark (2001) reminds us, online communities assume that a sense of community can be established by simply providing access to information. But it is a relationship with other people that builds community, not a relationship to information. And, as bell hooks (2003) cautions us,

All too often we think of community in terms of being with folks like ourselves: the same class, same race, same ethnicity, same social standing and the like. All of us evoke vague notions of community and compassion, yet how many of us compassionately went out to find an intimate other, to bring them here with us today? So that when we looked around, we wouldn't just find a similar kind of class, a similar group of people, people like ourselves: a certain kind of exclusivity. (p. 162)

Just as the range of frequencies that create different colors extend on either side of what the human eye can perceive, the range of the colors in the stained glass community of adjunct faculty also includes a spectrum of thoughts, ideas, passions, and beauty that we may not be able to see unless we intently listen to the colors being sung.

### **Seeing the Colors of Community**

I am never more aware of the limitation of language than when I try to describe beauty. Language can create its own loveliness, of course, but it cannot deliver to us the radiance we apprehend in the world, any more than a photograph can capture the stunning swiftness of a hawk or the withering power of a supernova. . . . All that pictures or words can do is gesture beyond themselves toward the fleeting glory that stirs our hearts. (Sanders, 1998, p. 153)

Intense beauty tends to rob us of speech. Most often we savor the appearance of beauty in a reverential silence. As Sanders (1998) says, it is difficult to describe beauty in words, for so often we try to make our words spring from a rationality that closes the doors on other parts of our human existence - emotions, feelings, and intuitions. Inarticulate sounds, the "Ahhh!," the sigh, the simple leaning toward another witnessing the same, even tears express more deeply and truly our reaction to beauty.

Are we moved toward that same recognition of beauty when seeing another person? It is not uncommon for us to identify the physical person with the person himself or herself, thereby missing the depths and layers that exist beneath an outer surface that only reflects light and enables us to detect their presence. What does it mean to get



beneath the presence that lies beneath the outer coating of skin, beneath the shapes, the gait, the arrangement of physical features to see all the colors of truth and beauty truly manifested there?

The true beauty of a person glimmers like a slow twilight where the full force of each colour comes alive and yet blends with the others to create a new light. A person's beauty is sophisticated and sacred and is far beyond image, appearance or personality. (O'Donohue, 2004, p. 39)

A single brief glance at a twilight scene is only a snapshot of the real show being presented. The story unfolds slowly and must be watched for a period of time in order to observe and absorb the changing message being presented to the senses. Likewise, a slow observation is required to delve into and call to recognition the beauty manifested by the person, for the depths and breadth of a person's story are told slowly, are fluid, are never ending. Even death does not complete the story, for the impact of a person's presence is felt long after on those who remain or who are yet to arrive. Nor do the individuals themselves recognize their own colors until there can be a period of reflection, of mirror-gazing, of glimpses out of the corner of the eye that begin to reveal the rainbows of their lives.

Each object is already pulsing to a certain frequency and the hunger or generosity of this frequency determines how much colour an object absorbs. (O'Donohue, 2004, p. 87)

How might we uncover the frequencies of the adjunct faculty as they experience a sense of community with their peers? There are many frequencies that affect the human senses – frequency in the range of visible light, of audible sound, or pulsations felt within the body. But there also are frequencies that result in connection at levels not measurable in ordinary ways, connections of spirit, of heart, of intuition, of love. Do we know our own colors, or own hungers? Since color results from the amount of light that can be

absorbed and reflected, care must be taken to attend to balance of absorbency and reflectivity in the shells that we build around ourselves as members of a university community. What right balance of color sustains a supportive, vibrant, rainbow-hued community? A stained glass window is not constructed of all white glass or of all black, but is a rich melding of the vibrancy of many colors.

### **Rose Window Communities**

Color is the reflection of light. “Colour is the language of light” (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 82). Stained glass windows most often are associated with churches. The magnificent rose windows found in cathedrals are named so because the framing pieces represent the petals of a rose. These windows are called the “prima donnas” of stained glass windows. They are colored with the richest of hues - blues, greens, reds, oranges, golds, white. The colors of the rose window become the color motif for the other stained glass windows within the edifice. The eye usually is drawn first to the rose window. But a church with a rose window usually is built with other stained glass windows encircling the rest of the nave, windows that contain stories of communities that have played an important role in the life story of the religion. In this study, it is the rose window, the story of the lived experience of community among adjunct faculty that draws my attention. Will I be fortunate enough to find the colors of the rose window?

Color as a noun means light reflected, a substance or dye or paint, a skin complexion, even a flag or banner or an opinion or position. As a verb, to color means to impart or change color, to modify, to exert an influence upon, even to misrepresent or take on color such as in blushing (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1971). In song, poetry, movie titles, stories, and design, we have long associated colors with

personalities, passions, feelings, and longings. Many of our associations related to color are the result of traditions that have attached meanings to colors. “For those of us blessed with sight, we've been taught that colors can make us feel good, excite us, generate fear and joy, or literally make us nauseated” (Kohl, 1998, ¶14).

The context of the rose window in a church provides these associations with the colors used:

The golden color is a symbol of the good life and of spiritual treasure, while the oranges and reds recall the warmth of divine love, of courage, and self-sacrifice. These colors are made more significant and resplendent by the developing areas of blue, the color of divine wisdom, of contemplation, of the heavenly reaches, of eternity. Green brings a reminder of springtime, youth, hope and victory, smiles and good humor. Finally, there are traces and flicks of white, the color of serenity, peace and of enduring faith. (Massachusetts General Hospital, n.d., ¶ 5)

There certainly are other associations with these same colors. Kohl (1998) provides us with the following associations. The peace and purity of white is found in two popular peace symbols (the white dove and the truce flag), as well as the traditional wedding dress. Red, the color of blood, is associated with strength, health, and passion. Red roses are a symbol of love. But the "Scarlet Letter" signifies a fallen and sinful woman. Blue, the sky color, is associated with calmness and healing. A blue sky signifies a new day, survival of the darkness and dangers of night. The coming of night, on the other hand, is heralded by dark blue. Dark blue long has been associated with power and authority by, for example, the color of the uniforms of policeman. Purple, associated with wealth, power and royalty, originally was a rare and expensive color to produce. The "Purple Heart," combining the passion of red and the rarity of purple, may be used to symbolize the power of the wounded person to survive.

Green, the color of growth, and cool, soft grass, plants and trees has come to symbolize prosperity. Yellow-green, the color of sick plants, is now associated with sickness or impending death. A sunny yellow is associated with joy and self-confidence about one's beauty. It also is used to signify the mind and the intellect because the ancients believed the sun brought knowledge as well as light. Combining the purity of white and the passion of red gives us pink - the color of gentle love and desire. Pink signifies gentleness, and new birth. And when a day changes into night and before the dark blue covering appears, the sunset is orange. Orange symbolizes change and flexibility.

What colors are the voices of adjunct faculty in community? What are the colors of their lived experiences being adjunct faculty members? "The very heart of an object glows through its colour, and colour is always reaching towards us" (O'Donohue, 2004, p. 88). The very heart of the experience of community reaches out to me. And I seek to be enfolded in its embrace and to hear the colors in the stained glass cantata.

### **Hearing the Colors**

Some individuals actually do hear colors. The condition, called *synesthesia*, is the blending of two or more senses. Seeing certain notes as colors or experiencing a taste associated with touch is a real phenomenon for some individuals. I am not synesthetic, but often have used the phrase "It's delicious" when enthralled by an experience of intense beauty. In this phenomenological study, however, my use of the term, *hearing the colors*, is focused on recognition of the colors absorbed and reflected in the lives of adjunct faculty in their experience of community. These colors will be uncovered in the language of the participants. In that sense, I am associating hearing with the colors they

reveal. It is the voice of the adjuncts to which I will be listening. The listening, at many levels, will need stillness so that those voices are free to uncover the colors that have shaped their lives. At the same time, the listening also must recognize that “It can be quite surprising to discover the ‘owner’ of a voice to be someone totally different from what one expected from merely hearing their voice” (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 73). And that is what makes this exploration both enthralling and intriguing – the revealing of mysteries that were not expected. At the same time, it is important that I stand back and let the mysteries reveal themselves, not predisposing myself to what I expect to find, nor presuming that my interpretation is the only one or even the most significant one that can be uncovered. “To be human is to be ambivalent. Every experience is open to countless readings and interpretations. We never see a thing completely” (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 75). But the focus will continue to be on hearing the colors that reveal the lived experience of community, of hearing the colors that reveal the lived experiences of adjunct faculty.

And in hearing the colors, I am brought back to the stained glass cantatas, the story of the human voiced in song.

Perhaps more than any instrument, song can capture us because the human voice is our very own sound; the voice is the most intimate signature of human individuality and, of all the sounds of creation, comes from an utterly different place. Though there is earth in the voice, the voice is not of the earth. It is the voice of the in-between creature, the one in whom both earth and heaven become partially vocal. The voice is the sound of human consciousness being breathed out into the spaces. (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 72)

Yet, the voice, the song, again reveal only a facet, not the entire person nor the entire experience. “Put flippantly, no-one ever really knows what they are saying” (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 79). To hear that voice and to hear behind the voice, one must be attentive on

many levels, not simply the level of hearing via the ears or seeing via the eyes. More than just the senses of sight and hearing must be brought into play to see the colors of community. Our senses are multifaceted in revealing what is manifested around us and within us, but the heart also must be involved.

**Making Real Sense of the Senses**

Our eyes are for looking at things,  
But they are also for crying  
When we are very happy or very sad.  
Our ears are for listening,  
But so are our hearts.  
Our noses are for smelling food,  
But also the wind and the grass and  
If we try very hard, butterflies.  
Our hands are for feeling,  
But also for hugging and touching so gently.  
Our mouths and tongues are for tasting,  
But also for saying words, like  
“I love you,” and  
“Thank You, God, for all of these things.”  
(Stepanek, 2001, p. 10)

**Hearing the Song**

The human voice becomes “a slender bridge that takes us across the perilous distance to the others who are out there. The voice is always the outer sounding of the mind; it brings to expression the inner life that no-one else can lean over and look into” (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 72). It is the privilege of leaning over and looking into that which I seek through my conversations in this research. I want to see the rich palette of colors that may be observed as they truly are and freely shared. “The work of art is not an object that stands over against a subject for itself. Instead the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 102).

Palmer (1998), in *The Courage to Teach*, points out the criticality of conversation with colleagues, learning in community:

There are no formulas for good teaching, and the advice of experts has but marginal utility. If we want to grow in our practice, we have two primary places to go: to the inner ground from which good teaching comes and to the community of fellow teachers from whom we can learn more about ourselves and our craft.

If I want to teach well, it is essential that I explore my inner terrain. But I can get lost in there, practicing self-delusion and running in self-serving circles. So I need the guidance that a community of collegial discourse provides – to say nothing of the support such a community can offer to sustain me in the trials of teaching and in the cumulative and collective wisdom about this craft that can be found in every faculty worth its salt. (pp. 141-142)

Most of the time, faculty teach behind closed doors and rarely have or take the opportunity to talk about what goes on within that private, walled-off world. Evaluations are left to the students at the end of the course and to a rare observation by an administrator. Palmer counters that the only true way to evaluate good teaching or to promote those practices which support good teaching is “being there,” observing and being observed, and having conversations with each other about teaching. Palmer goes on to say that the participation in such a community of pedagogical conversations is a professional obligation. “Good talk about good teaching is what we need – to enhance both our professional practice and the selfhood from which it comes” (p. 144).

Cox (2004) lists ten necessary qualities for building faculty learning communities: safety and trust, openness, respect, responsiveness, collaboration, relevance, challenge, enjoyment, *esprit de corps*, and empowerment. The talk about good teaching that is part of professional and personal growth must take place in an atmosphere of safety and trust where participants are able to reveal weaknesses or ignorance as well as share practices and activities that were successful. Participants must feel free to share thoughts and

feelings without fear of retribution. Differences of opinion must be listened to and accorded respect by all involved. Members must feel valued and respected as people. This respect may take the form of public recognition or support for attendance at conferences or other learning opportunities. There must be conversation between the participants as well as timely responses from those in leadership or coordinator positions. Concerns and preferences should be shared with the entire learning community. Joint projects and teaching experiences, as well as free discussion of the outcomes of activities, should be encouraged. The subject matter of any community meeting should relate to the real-life experiences of the faculty in teaching. Social activities should be included, where members can interact in a playful way and see each other in settings that not always are constrained by the formality of meetings or professional seminars, etc. Sharing individual and community outcomes with the university should bolster a sense of pride and loyalty. And finally, the learning community should be a place of transformation, increasing the participants' confidence in their abilities, and providing them with a better understanding of themselves as teachers.

Gappa (1984) addresses two aspects of community-building: communication with peers and orientation practices. In stark contrast to the free-flowing contact between faculty who are frequent inhabitants of the school's campus or administrative buildings, adjunct faculty often are not even recognized as employees. The lack of office space and opportunity to meet with peers may lead adjunct faculty to feel like second-class citizens in the academic community. And, since many adjunct faculty are professionals in industry or government first and instructors second, they often do not have any pedagogical training outside of their own educational experiences as students.



Orientations to the mission and goals of the school, the educational needs of the students, and the various programs and procedures in place to meet those needs, are important. Such orientation programs require the investment of time and visibility of academic deans and department chairpersons, the availability of faculty handbooks, training sessions, and mentors. These elements of orientation go a long way to provide a supportive relationship between the part-time faculty member and the institution, between the part-time faculty member and his/her peers.

Although Gappa and Leslie (1993) in an earlier work on the status of part-time faculty unfortunately use the words “getting better control over the management of part-time faculty employment” (p. 232), they also include some recommended practices that address the tenuous issue of connectedness from the faculty’s perspective and not that of administration. Some of those suggestions include: involving adjuncts in staffing plans; periodically providing forums that allow adjuncts to express their perceptions of tasking and job satisfaction, publicly communicating the message that part-time faculty are important, that they are not an afterthought; providing an opportunity for new adjuncts to connect to mentors; involving adjuncts in informal talks and social events where they have a chance to meet and interact with peers; and making available workshops and in-service professional development opportunities.

Roderick (1991) speaks of “teaching as journeying in community” (p. 98). She states that teaching as journeying in community is to be both alone and together. Dialog with self and others provides an opportunity to become more aware of what individuals bring of themselves to the teaching experience and how they might open up to see those experiences in a different way. Speaking aloud those experiences in the company of

others, and listening to others' experiences allows one to move beyond the horizons of personal experience. And the journey implies contexts and horizons that change and leave both those who journey and the country of the journey "enriched for all" (Roderick, p. 101). As Berman (1991b) concludes, "Perhaps we need more focus on relationship, less on technique, more on feelings, less on logic, more on inner thoughts, less on objectivity" (p. 152).

Intrator and Scribner (2003), present a collection of poetry that has inspired teachers. Each selected poem is preceded by a commentary that puts the poem in a context specific to the teacher who selected it, but also reveals much about the teachers themselves. In the introduction to the section named "Making Contact," the editors write:

To do our best teaching, we must stay connected. Connected to our inner life, our colleagues, our students, and the subjects we teach. When we work and live in isolation, we miss out on what we need most: empathy, shared wisdom, and communal expertise. . . . These teachers resist those institutional and cultural forces that would cut them off from each other and their students. They listen deeply to themselves, each other, and their students, and in doing so create communities where learners and teachers can flourish. (p. 115)

Adjunct faculty are not objects to be observed; but their lived experiences are, nevertheless, truly subjects worthy of study. To observe, *ob* (to) and *servare* (to keep safe) is to watch over, look to, attend to, guard (Barnhart, 1988). The observer must watch over, safeguard. But both the observed and observer will be changed in the act of observation/observing. Werner Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle that posits observation at the subatomic level itself changes the object being observed (Hawking, 1996), applies to much more than particle physics. There is a profound responsibility involved in observing, for neither party will come away unchanged. That potential for change must be acknowledged, weighed, revered.

This section of poetry from Lee's (2002) *Alex in Elfinland* provides a guiding mantra for my conversations and investigations.

Can you hear the colors  
see how beautiful I am  
look at the beautiful sound  
Seek the best in me  
that is what I really am  
You will only see your own light  
when it lights up another  
Whatever is on your mind  
lift up your heart and be kind (pp. 50-51)

After looking inward to discover some of the colors and sounds that have brought me to this inquiry, I stand ready to be open to sense the beauty that surrounds me in the lives of the adjunct faculty with whom I engage in my research. A pathway is laid for exploring the beautiful sounds that come from these stained glass cantatas of community. In chapter three I lay out the philosophical foundation and the methodology for this hermeneutic phenomenological study. This foundation and methodology maintain the greatest respect for that which is observed, fully open and aware that I, as the observer, will also be changed as the colors of the songs are revealed.

**CHAPTER THREE:**  
**PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY AND THE  
STRUCTURE OF THE INVESTIGATION**

We explain nature, but human life we must understand . . . .  
Phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience,  
hermeneutics describes how one interprets the “texts” of life. (van Manen,  
2003, p. 4)

When asked during hiring interviews why they want to teach at the university where I work, adjunct faculty members usually mention a desire to give back, to share their expertise and skills with students. They do not mention a desire to form a community with other adjuncts. Although not discussed outright, teaching in isolation from others is taken for granted in this environment. Yet, the very isolation that pushes adjuncts apart also is something that becomes a bonding influence when the opportunity to share stories, joke about experiences, or complain about student behaviors is allowed. They share in the isolation, but they revel in opportunities to send out tendrils of connection, whether through being mentored, participating in an online discussion group or attending a faculty meeting. “Working with others who share the same conditions is thus a central factor in defining the enterprise they engage in. . . . They collectively orchestrate their working and their interpersonal relations in order to cope with their job” (Wenger, 1998, pp. 45-46).

Uncovering the explicit and tacit layers of meaning of what it is like for adjunct faculty to experience community is the task of my research. Many of these factors are not immediately observable. And so I am led to hermeneutic phenomenology as the framework to be used in my research. Phenomenology helps in unconcealing the essence of the experience. Hermeneutics is the way of revealing the hidden meanings that lie

below the observed (van Manen, 2003). In this chapter I put forward the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of this research into the lived experience of community among adjunct faculty and describe the activities that will be undertaken in the context of my relationship to adjuncts as an academic program administrator.

### **Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

Seldom do we take the time to reflect on what it means to *be*. Science can categorize the characteristics and define the structure employed in the *being* present before us. But so much of our attention to *being* is covered over by a commonplace attendance to the visible surface layer of that which we define as objects/persons/beings. These *beings* intrude upon our consciousness; they are. What does it matter their essential whatness and thatness? The beauty of the colors of the stained glass window capture our eyes. But what are the stories that lie beneath the surface colors? What is the essence of the stained glass cantata that is the community of adjunct faculty? The various colors of experiences and the various voices of the individuals who sing the cantata create a unique phenomenon that is community. It is the quest of this interpreter to reach deep into these lived experiences in order to understand the songs these faculty sing and to help the participants become aware of their own songs.

### **Phenomenology: Unconcealment of Essences**

Edmund Husserl, borrowing from ideas proposed by Brentano and Mach, formalized the term *phenomenology* as a new way of doing philosophy that approached traditional and logical epistemological problems by returning to the lived experience of human subjects (Moran, 2000). He rejected philosophy as a causal explanation of what exists in the external world. Phenomenology was put forward as a descriptive psychology

that, as a rigorous science, provided an “epistemological clarification of the essential concepts in logic” (Moran, 2000, p. 9). According to Husserl, our ordinary experiences are of objects obeying universal laws discovered by science. But beneath these experiences is a domain, a life-world, that exists independent of our objectifications and idealizations. The objective of phenomenology is to get beneath the assumptions brought to an experience to the central and essential features of the phenomenon. Phenomenology provides a “holistic approach to the relation between objectivity and consciousness, stressing the mediating role of the body in perception, for example” (Moran, 2000, p. 13).

Martin Heidegger transformed this movement into a methodology for human science inquiry framed within an “irreducible ontological relation with the world” (Moran, 2000, p. 13). Heidegger, like Husserl, challenges the belief that the sphere of knowledge is limited to rational proof and instruction. His inquiry focuses on the “manner in which the structures of Being are revealed through the structures of human existence” (Moran, 2000, p. 197). He views human understanding as talking about meaning, relating to being; being is found in the thatness and whatness of human existence – a being concerned about its Being (*Dasein*) (Heidegger, 1953/1996). Human existence, *Dasein*, is not a *thing* that can be scientifically analyzed. *Dasein* understands itself always in terms of possibilities – to be itself or not be itself. *Dasein* is self-interpreting, defining its own understanding of existence by seizing or ignoring the possibilities presented by choice, by happenstance, by inheritance. Hermeneutics is an interpretation of those possibilities as experienced. “Interpretation of man’s [sic] everyday being in the world” (Palmer, 1969, p. 42) provides a way to study human beings

properly who essentially are self-interpreting (Heidegger, 1953/1996). The researcher, then, stands as an interpreter of the phenomenon as lived by the participants.

Hermeneutic phenomenological research is a human science endeavor, for its search is for that which helps to reveal the essence of the being that is human. The methodology revolves around interpretation of the lived experience of humans.

Phenomenological research seeks to provide a pre-reflective unconcealing of the essence of an experience rather than a conceptualized, categorized, or reflected upon recording of the external manifestation of a phenomenon. This research method is not a counting, or measuring of facts of the lived experience. It attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our lifeworld. The challenge of hermeneutic phenomenology is to reveal the phenomenon by distilling the intention and meaning behind the appearances (Moustakas, 1994). As van Manen (1984) sees it, phenomenology “asks for the very nature of a phenomenon, for that which makes a ‘thing’ what it is (and without which it could not be what it is)” (p. 38). For Heidegger (1971/2001), “Phenomenology means to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself. . . . To the things themselves!” (p. 81). This *letting show* in phenomenology is a “means of being led by the phenomenon through a way of access genuinely belonging to it” (Palmer, 1969, p. 128). The phenomenon reveals itself in its own way and is a reality not bounded by human consciousness or categories. If we focus only on the phenomenon’s immediate appearance, we miss the whole truth of the phenomenon (Gadamer, 1960/2003). Heidegger (1953/1996) claims, then, that what we *see* is only what the phenomenon allows us to see.

The manner of access and interpretation must instead be chosen in such a way that this being can show itself to itself on its own terms. Furthermore,

this manner should show that being as it is at first and for the most part – in its average everydayness. Not arbitrary and accidental structures but essential ones are to be demonstrated in this everydayness, structures that remain determinative in every mode of being of factual *Dasein*. By looking at the fundamental constitution of the everydayness of *Dasein* we shall bring out in a preparatory way the Being of this being. (p. 15)

The members of the faculty with whom I work with change over time. Thus, the phenomenon of community among this varying group manifests itself in different ways over time. My own past experiences, while tinting the light in which I examine the phenomenon now, provide the spark that ignites my interest in observing the meaning of community for these adjuncts with whom I work. The task of this research is to dig down, to reveal and to interpret the elemental structures that illuminate that which represents the essence of community for adjunct faculty.

### **Hermeneutics: Understanding and Interpreting**

The essence of hermeneutics is the power for understanding and interpreting that renders possible the disclosure of being and, ultimately, an understanding of the being of *Dasein* (Palmer, 1969). Hermeneutics is an encounter with Being through language. "Nothing lies underneath language" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2000, p. 461), or, as Derrida (1967/1976) originally states it, "There is no outside text" (p. 227). Language (in any form) is how we define our reality. We think in words. Nothing exists for us except that which we eventually can describe in some way. Discourse holds a central place in our human experience. Discourse does not represent reality but constructs reality, and our ability to construct is limited by the extent of our language. "What is thus conceived of as existing is not really the object of a statement, but it 'comes to language in statements.' It thereby acquires its truth, its being evident in human thought" (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 446).



Interpretation is not subordinate to understanding but an explicit form of understanding. While we use language to interpret a phenomenon, we also must be cognizant of what is revealed by what is not said. As Heidegger (1971/2001) tells us, “What is spoken is never, and in no language, what is said” (p. 11). I am challenged to disallow my own prejudices and biases to cover over what is disclosed and revealed by the phenomenon itself. I am challenged to go beyond what is said to uncover the unsaid, the hidden beneath the text. I need to be prepared not to trust what a phenomenon immediately presents to me (Gadamer, 1960/2003).

### **Linguistic Descriptions: Capturing the Colors in Words**

To capture the essence of a phenomenon in a linguistic description both separates and unites, distances and brings near, abstracts and concretizes, objectifies thought and subjectifies understanding (van Manen, 2003). How do I capture a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description? I try to identify themes. These themes are not just commonalities, for every experience is singular to the unique individual who experiences the phenomenon of interest. I try to capture the essence of the experience by identifying that which speaks to the essence of the phenomenon I am investigating. Thematizing is meaning-making of a text or of a lived experience, a naming of the structure of experience, the focus/meaning point, but not the thing/experience itself.

What is this naming? Does it merely deck out the imaginable familiar objects and events . . . with words of a language? No. This naming does not hand out titles, it does not apply terms, but it calls into the word. The naming calls. Calling brings closer what it calls. However this bringing closer does not fetch what is called only in order to set it down in closest proximity to what is present, to find a place for it there. The call does indeed call. Thus it brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness. . . . The calling here calls into a nearness. (Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 196)

What does it mean to name community as my phenomenon of interest? The naming does not bring community into existence but seeks to allow the phenomenon of community to reveal itself. The challenge laid before me is to move from the position of “reporter,” from a mode of enumerating facts and external characteristics, to a position of letting “what shows itself be seen from itself” (Heidegger, 1953/1996, p. 30). This challenge, in turn, asks for a re-volution, a rolling back of the eye away from just the external manifestation of being, granting permission both to the being and to me, as observer, to let things be themselves. As van Manen (2003) tells us, “To *do* hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal” (p. 18).

So, in quiet moments in the middle of the night or while moving back and forth in the swimming pool, I begin to wrestle with the formulation of a question. What does it mean to unconceal the lived experience of community among adjunct faculty? How do I move beyond the everydayness of the experience to allow *community*, to allow the *faculty* to show themselves on their own terms? Instead of stopping at the surface revelations, instead of taking the external manifestations, the appearances, as the *beings* whose thingness I seek to understand, I have to try to see with an eye that understands that the object (being) of my question may not show itself directly. “It makes itself known through something [else] that does show itself. Appearing is not showing itself” (Heidegger, 1953/1996, p. 26). The challenge is to open oneself to the showing of “itself to itself on its own terms” (p. 15). The path sought is one that moves toward uncovering that which reveals itself shyly, through intermediaries, through the everyday

manifestations. Like the beauty in the heart of a rose, the petals on the outside slowly unfurl, leading us, bringing us to the heart of that which we are seeking to understand.

### **The Structure of Phenomenological Research**

Hermeneutic phenomenological research does not use the data gathering and analysis procedures of empirical research. Instead, bracketing, phenomenological descriptions, phenomenological reflection, hermeneutic analysis and conversation, intersubjective openness and validation, and a pedagogical orientation are the tools employed in addressing the orienting question. Van Manen (2003) suggests that the hermeneutic phenomenological research be organized around six research activities:

- Turning to the phenomenon – the question which invites;
- Investigating the experience as it is lived – conversations which open up the lived experience;
- Reflecting on characteristics of the phenomenon –thematic analysis;
- Writing and rewriting to uncover the phenomenon – language as the tool for calling the phenomenon into nearness;
- Keeping a focus on the pedagogical relation – respecting hermeneutical phenomenology as a philosophy of action; and
- Balancing the whole and the parts that embody the research context – organizing the writing to reflect the structure of the lived experience, to reflect the themes that call the phenomenon into visibility.

### **The Call of the Question**

Among the greatest insights that Plato's account of Socrates affords us is that, contrary to the general opinion, it is more difficult to ask questions than to answer them. . . .

In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know. In the comic confusion between question and answer, knowledge and ignorance that Plato describes, there is a profound recognition of the *priority of the question* in all knowledge and discourse that really reveals something of an object. Discourse that is intended to reveal something requires that that thing be broken open by the question. (Gadamer, 1960/2003, pp. 362-363)

In what way does one uncover the being, the whatness and thatness of community and the experience of community? How does one get to the essence of the question and open up the possibility of discovery? Part of the process involves getting out of the way, allowing these adjunct faculty to explore their experience of community as they live it; letting that which is community in their shared lives expose itself on its own terms.

To let be is to engage oneself with beings.... To let be – that is, to let beings be as the beings which they are – means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself. (Heidegger, 1943/2002, p. 11)

A journey toward the open region must begin. And to be truly within that open region, where community can grant whatever boon of disclosedness it wishes to share, requires that I pass through and shed the baggage of my own expectations for the appearance of that which I am seeking to let be. “Every questioning is a seeking. Every seeking takes its direction beforehand from what is sought. Questioning is a knowing search for beings in their thatness and whatness” (Heidegger, 1953/1996, p. 3). The path is both daunting and exciting. The questioning, the wondering (and, quite assuredly, the wandering) will pass through new grounds and groundings. The growth comes in the journeying, not in the rest at the end.

The question of the experience of community comes *to* me, not from me, insofar as it is a calling to revelation. Although I have started by being intrigued, it is the action

of the subject on me that allows me to begin knowing that subject. Understanding begins only when something addresses me. Hermeneutic phenomenology is the investigative process that challenges me to become open to, to accept the question. This process is the method by which the breaking into, the entering into the question, takes place. To be faithful to this process, my approach to the question reflects how I orient to the lived experiences of community among adjunct faculty, and reflects my interpretation of these lived experiences as described in the lives of these same faculty members. As Gadamer (1960/2003) reminds us, “A person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is said. . . . If we go back *behind* what is said, then we inevitably ask questions *beyond* what is said” (p. 370). This circle of questions leads the questioner to become also the questioned in a movement toward the ultimate aim of this research – a deeper understanding of our human nature, to become more fully who we are.

The phenomenological question is meant to open up boundaries to possibilities. But the question being asked is not, at the same time, without boundaries. It is limited by the “horizon of the question” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 363). This horizon is the historical context in which the question resides, the voices of the past and present, the tradition which has informed our current self. The experience of community by adjunct faculty in my university is unique in its external manifestations and is shaped by the current historical context, the “now” of our life. Gadamer further illuminates the importance of remaining cognizant of this horizon and its impact on our understanding:

It is not only that historical tradition and the natural order of life constitute the unity of the world in which we live as men [sic]; the way we experience one another, the way we experience historical traditions, the way we experience the natural givenness of our existence and of our world, constitute a truly hermeneutic universe, in which we are not

imprisoned, as if behind insurmountable barriers, but to which we are opened. (p. xxiv)

Even as I am awakened to the mystery of the phenomenon to which I am called to investigate, I am called to look beyond what is near at hand, while at the same time acknowledging the preconceptions and biases of my present tradition. Bracketing, or reduction, is a device that allows us to look beyond the horizons of our own personal lifeworlds in order to encounter the mystery of the essential structure of the phenomenon. As van Manen (2003) states, this bracketing takes place at several levels. The researcher needs to acknowledge and then set aside personal feelings or expectations that would prevent the true revelation of the experience as it is lived. In chapter one I have explored my own history of community and teaching in order to recognize the meaning that community has played in my role as educator. This research I now undertake must provide adjunct faculty with whom I work that same opportunity to explore the historical context of community and its meaning in their lives. Only then might the essence of the experience of community begin to reveal itself as itself. Scientific formulations or theories that attempt to present the phenomenon in an abstract (de-humanized) manner must be set aside. And the researcher needs always to look past the particular concrete daily presentation of the phenomenon to the universal essence that underlies the lived experiences of the phenomenon.

The challenge to make meaning of the phenomenon is the challenge of allowing interplay of the movement between myself as interpreter and that of tradition. I must both keep at a distance my own prejudices as to the meaning of the phenomenon and remain open to the meaning and tradition of those with whom I am conversing. Still, it is important to recognize and acknowledge that my interpretation of the other always is

situated in how I know, in my relationship to the phenomenon, in the horizon of my own tradition. This places me in an “in-between” position. Gadamer (1960/2003) describes this “in-between” position as the tension between familiarity (the bond to the subject we bring as a result of seeking to understand) and the strangeness (the connection with the tradition from which the phenomenon speaks). Rilke (2000) describes the suspension between question and potential answer this way:

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart  
and try to love the questions themselves.  
Do not now see the answers, which cannot be  
given you because you would not be able  
to live them. And the point is to live everything.  
Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then  
gradually, without noticing it, live along some  
distant day into the answers. (p. 35)

Live everything; live the questions; live! To be alive is to experience, and I turn to the phenomenon through the experiences of those who are living that phenomenon, through the experiences of adjunct faculty.

### **The Centrality of Experience**

Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with lived experience and the interpretation of that experience. The world of lived experience “is both the source and the object of phenomenological research” (van Manen & Levering, 1996, p. 53). My search is for the essence of the lived experience of community, an experience that is to be presented in a description that reveals anew, or in a new way, the nature and significance of this experience. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a “creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive” (van Manen, 2003, p. 39).

In this search for the essence of the experience, I do not have the freedom to select or reject whatever the phenomenon presents to me; I do not have the freedom to determine beforehand what will constitute the boundaries of this experience; I do not have the freedom to make or remake the experience into something that it is not. Gadamer (1960/2003) points out that hermeneutic work requires “uninterrupted listening” (p. 465), and he reminds us that, “It is not just that he who hears is also addressed, but also that he who is addressed must hear whether he wants to or not. When you look at something, you can also look away from it by looking in another direction, but you cannot ‘hear away’” (p. 462). Likewise, the experience/phenomenon of community among adjunct faculty can never be fully and completely described. Its meaning is part of the fabric of the faculty members’ lives that does not stand still, part of a horizon and tradition that is forever being formed anew. One is never *finished* with a phenomenon. The phenomenological investigator seeks to “live in and report a deeper layer of experience than is accessible to most in the everyday ‘practical world’” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2000, p. 407). Palmer (1969) points out that the great listener actually hears what is said. The more attuned listener hears what is not said, hears that which is brought to light in the speaking.

Like the question that orients me to my phenomenon of interest, the phenomenon itself, the lived experience, is grounded in tradition - historical, cultural and political. As a phenomenological researcher, I study individuals who are living the experience, who are living in the situation, and whose own descriptive language is used to dig beneath the appearance to the essence of the phenomenon, to that which is not made known by observed showing. Heidegger (1953/1996) cautions that “Phenomena are never



appearances, but every appearance is dependent upon phenomena” (p. 26). It is the challenge of phenomenological research to unconceal the truth of the phenomenon, to allow something which does **not** show itself directly to make itself known through something that **does** show itself. I, as researcher, must remain open to the person or text. To bring about this unconcealing requires reflection, returning again to what is actually experienced by the individual as he/she recounts the *what* and *how* of the experience.

The descriptions of the lived experience of community to which I am called to investigate come from texts generated by my reflection on my own experiences related to the phenomenon (chapter one), and from the preliminary voices and writings of those who share their revelations of the phenomenon (chapter two). I gather additional lived experience accounts as I engage with the participants in my study. My stance as researcher requires openness toward others. As the phenomenon is coaxed to open itself to unconcealment, I also am required to seek validation of the connection between the interpretation and the text. I return again to the circle where repeated movement from the whole to the parts and back again to the whole leads to understanding. Gadamer (1960/2003) describes this circular activity as a conversation, but a genuine conversation that is “never the one that we wanted to conduct” (p. 383). It is more accurate to say that the conversation gathers us in and we become involved in the spirit and language of the conversation which itself allows something to emerge. Palmer (1998) cautions us that “the subject knows itself better than we can ever know it, and it forever evades our grasp by keeping its own secrets” (p. 105). In turn, the power of the subject is experienced only when we grant it a life of its own, when we make it not an object of our own creation, but respect the life, identity, and integrity that belongs to the subject itself and does not rely

on us and our thoughts about it. If I turn toward real conversation, which has an unpredictability, danger, and resonance, this conversation can take a turn anywhere, often beyond the borders of the expected and into the unknown. The reward of engaging in such a genuine conversation with/about the subject is large because it is not a fabrication of a solitary ego; it creates community (O'Donohue, 1997).

### **Phenomenological Reflection**

The attempt to grasp the essential meaning of an experience or phenomenon is the purpose of phenomenological reflection. The goal is to “make explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience” (van Manen, 2003, p. 77). This structure, this meaning is never a simple construct, nor is its uncovering effortless. Lyotard (1986/1991) describes this effort as follows:

Phenomenological reflection attempts to restore the experience at hand in describing it as adequately as possible. This reflection is a descriptive reprise of the experience itself. . . . It is, in sum, a faithful rendering of what I think of when I think of my past experience. But again, I must truly think this experience . . . and not some reconstruction of it; I must not allow myself to mask the phenomenon really experienced by a prior interpretation of this phenomena. (p. 75)

Phenomenological reflection attempts to create written or verbal descriptive texts, texts which seek to detail the experience as that which is grasped at the first-person level, as that which the teller has experienced in him/herself and nothing that is a result of hearsay, inference, surmising, or imagining (Gadamer, 1960/2003). The phenomenon must be shown as it is lived by adjunct faculty and not how it is conceptualized. As interpreter of those texts, I must go behind the words to bring forth the questions that gave rise to the text, to the truth of community that happens and is unconcealed by the reflection, even though that truth can never be reduced to concepts and objectivity (Palmer, 1969). Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology is not an analytical or logical task.

The reflective action is not an assimilation, reproduction, or repetition of the text but a new creation of understanding (Gadamer, 1960/2003). As suggested by van Manen (2003), this reflection on the meaning of the experience as described in the texts may, instead, be organized around the discovery of themes – the structures of the experience. Furthermore, he suggests fundamental lifeworld themes that may be used as guides for the thematic reflection in the research process: “*lived space* (spatiality), *lived body* (corporeality), *lived time* (temporality), and *lived human relation* (relationality or communality)” (p. 101).

**Lived space.** How we experience is affected by the space that surrounds us during the experience. Casey (1993) tells us that for something to be it must be “bounded by place, limited by it. . .” (p. 15), but that these very limits are conditions for its existence. Place provides both context and *coloration*, a situatedness that would not be available from any other source. And being **in** place allows the blending of whatever ingredients may be borrowed from the natural world - bodies or landscapes or ordinary items. “What matters most is the experience of being in that place, and, more particularly, becoming part of the place” (Casey, 1993, p. 33). For adjunct faculty, the lived space of community may be found in knowing they share the common act of teaching, in making connections through the limited physical contact of faculty meetings, and, more often, in the electronic contact via email and the online faculty classroom. But are these spaces shared by adjunct faculty places that can call for questions about their lived experience of community? As O’Donohue (1997) reminds us, “You have a relationship to a place through the body. It is no wonder that humans have always been fascinated by place. Place offers us a home here; without place we would literally have no where” (p. 44).

**Lived body.** We do not live in this world outside of our physical manifestation. Our lives, our experiences always are embodied, that is, in our bodies where the memories of our experiences are held. We cannot separate our body (or mind) from our sense of self. When we come into another's presence, we meet via our physicality, our embodiment. Is it possible to establish community with someone you have never seen in person or even via a picture? When we live an experience, we live that experience in and through our bodies. We are a "soulful-body" (van Manen & Levering, 1996, p. 94). "If we knew how to read the faces of others, we would be able to decipher the mysteries of their life stories. The face always reveals the soul; it is where the divinity of the inner life finds an echo and image" (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 39). The physical isolation in separate classrooms and the large geographic distances between adjunct faculty generate significant challenges to reading the faces of the others.

**Lived time.** Language tells us "who we are now, and who we were once, and who we hope to be" (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 421). Unconcealment and understanding requires that we uncover both our own temporal landscapes as well as the horizons of the past, present, and future that have informed the experience we are researching. At a deeper phenomenological level, Heidegger's *Dasein*, that entity which is *being-in-the-world*, runs ahead to its past. "*Dasein* as human life is *primarily being possible*, the Being of the possibility of its certain yet indeterminate past" (Heidegger, 1924/1992, p. 12). Through this lens, *Dasein*, in its possible being, is time; time is *Dasein's how* not a *what*. "What is time? became the question: Who is time?" (p. 22). Lyotard (1986/1991) states the question of time and our relationship to it this way:

Time is subjective, since time has a meaning, and if it has such it is because we are ourselves time, in the same way that the world has

meaning for us because we are world through our bodies. . . . But time is equally objective, since we do not constitute it through an act of thought that would itself be exempt from it; like the world, time is always and already for consciousness, and this is why time, no less than the world, is not transparent to us. Just as we must explore the world, we must “travel through” time, i.e., develop our temporality in developing ourselves. (p. 116)

And thus the conversations revolving around how the human lifeworld is experienced become an element of uncovering how we create the future by creating ourselves from the possibilities of our past. The conversations with adjunct faculty may unconceal a future vision of community, evolving from the experiences of the present and the past.

**Lived relation (other).** Heidegger (1924/1992) also lists being-with-one-another as one of the fundamental structures of *Dasein* itself – “encountering one another, being with one another in the manner of being-for-one-another” (p. 7). Individuals do not develop or flourish in isolation. We need the support and challenges that sharing interpersonal space with others affords.

There is a deep need in each of us to belong to some cluster of friendship and affinity in which games of impression and power are at a minimum, and we can allow ourselves to be seen as we really are, we can express what we really believe and can be challenged thoroughly. (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 262)

This relationality is both a source of verification of our own realities and a source of wonder as we immerse ourselves in the lived experiences of others, experiences that pull us beyond the narrowness of our own world and enable us to slide beneath the descriptions of the structures of these lived experiences to that which identifies what it is to be human. Adjunct faculty members, in preliminary conversations recounted in previous chapters, often provide a revealing recognition that “being together,” in whatever form that togetherness takes, is essential to supporting their efforts in the classrooms.

## **The Rendering of the Phenomenon in Writing and Rewriting**

“Being that can be understood is language” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 475). We must bring to being the phenomenon that calls to us. As van Manen (2003) reminds us, we are to allow that which is being talked about to be seen through conversation, inquiry, questioning and the thoughtful bringing to speech of something through our writing activity. Our thinking about the phenomenon is enabled by the tool of language, and language is the “vibration” through which man and Being reach each other (Heidegger, 1957/1969). The lived experience, the phenomenon of interest comes to be in human thought expressed in words (Gadamer, 1960/2003).

Hermeneutical phenomenological research describes the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting. Phenomenological research does not employ writing simply to report the results of the research. This writing is the very essence of this research, a self-making of ourselves, the writer, that enables us to see the depth of the phenomenon of interest as well as exposing us to our own depths. “As we open up to our experiences, ideas and feelings arise within us as our knowledge comes out of hiding” (Hultgren, 1987, p. 46).

Van Manen (2003) outlines the methodological structure of our writing efforts as an interplay of several activities. We begin this writing by first recalling what seriously interests us and commits us, what drives us to a commitment to “make sense of a certain aspect of human existence” (p. 31). This first activity also helps us formulate the question that calls to us and helps prepare the ground for revealing the phenomenon by identifying our own assumptions and preunderstandings as we approach this investigation.

The second activity involves investigating the phenomenon of interest as we live it rather than how it is conceptualized. Our efforts to renew contact with original experience ask us to be open to “re-learning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of the world” (p. 31). There are two tasks asked of us in this effort – to be open to the fullness of the lifeworld in which we find ourselves and to explore in rich depth and breadth the particular lived experience of interest to our research. We come to that fullness through examining personal experience, from tracing etymological sources of the very words we uncover in describing the phenomenon, and from capturing experiential descriptions from others in conversations, observations, literature, biographies, and other existing sources (diaries, log, journals). Finally, examples of phenomenological literature may provide us with existing descriptive or interpretive approaches to the question that is the object of our interest and which expand our experience in approaching phenomenological research. Reading and re-reading such descriptive or interpretive writings may enable us to deepen our understanding. “When shared communication occurs between text and reader, the re-reading is like another conversation with a friend, pursuing a wish to become better acquainted with the writer’s thought. Re-reading, then, is not a repeated conversation but a new one” (van Manen, 1985, p. 162).

In the third activity, our writing is an attempt to tease out the essential themes which begin to characterize our phenomenon, those characteristics which reflect the significance of the lived experience. This discovery involves visiting repeatedly the source of our descriptions.

Fundamentally, understanding is always a move in this kind of circle, which is why the repeated return from the whole to the parts, and vice versa, is essential.

Moreover, this circle is constantly expanding, since the concept of the whole is relative, and being integrated in ever larger contexts always affects the understanding of the individual part. (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 190)

Through the lens of written reflections, we bring into greater clarity the essence of an experience that we tend to overlook in the busyness of everyday life. This writing effort involves meaning-making through seeking themes, creating linguistic transformations of the themes and thematic statements gathered, revisiting conversations, searching for additional thematic descriptions within artistic sources, using the lifeworld existentials (lived space, body, time, relations) and acknowledging both the speaking and the silences of language. The writing is not a literal recounting of the external elements of the phenomenon, but a description of the experience from the inside – the state of mind, the feelings and emotions, the mood. Hermeneutical phenomenological writing is a sustained conversation that “reawakens our basic experience of the phenomenon it describes . . . in such a manner that we experience the more foundational grounds of the experience” (van Manen, 2003, p. 122). Our writing becomes the vehicle through which the phenomenon reveals itself in its essence. And as vehicle, the holder of the pen, we humbly recognize our own limitations in participating in this revelation. The writing and rewriting take place alone, although reading and sharing these efforts is fruitful.

Daigou (1994) captures the power of the words that come through us and the limitations we place on the free flowing of those words.

### **Writing Space**

This house distilled from  
time invites me in.  
My dents are everywhere.  
The chair I sit in,  
the desk I work at  
occupy the area  
I once imagined.



Desk, chair slide into place,  
the width, the breadth,  
a perfect accommodation.

The room inside my private room  
holds a wide slice of tight-blue sky  
and a sweet apple of light.

There, I feel the peace  
of pen and paper.

Writing letters with indelible ink, I  
Trace an A for you,  
S for sons,  
H for home

smear them with my fingertips  
taste their salty sweetness  
feel their scratch and stroke.

I watch words vanish  
off the page making room  
for more and hear the silence  
between the sentences.

Framed by narrow margins  
they know their limit,  
and I, within the  
boundaries of the room  
and these four walls,  
know mine. (pp. 86-87)

This writing requires us to be fully engaged, physically and mentally. Within the boundaries of that which makes us who we are, we write to create and uncover relations, to “author a sensitive grasp of being itself – of that which authors us, of that which makes it possible for us to be and speak” who we are (van Manen, 2003, p. 132).

### **Pedagogical Aim of the Research**

It is important that our efforts in researching and writing always keep in the forefront the relationship between research/writing and pedagogy. “The intent of

phenomenological inquiry is that, based on research results, one seeks to formulate recommendations that might lead to more possibilities for human autonomy and a better situation for those who are affected by a decision or course of action. . .”(Hultgren, 1987, p. 36). Hermeneutic phenomenological research is a philosophy of action that arises from a thoughtful reflection on the deeper meaning and consequences of the lived experience we are researching. As van Manen (2003) reminds us, our research/writing is a form of thoughtful learning that makes us “more attentive to the meaning and significance of pedagogic situations and relations” (p. 155).

A wise man was walking the banks of a flood-swollen river when he saw a scorpion tangled in the roots near the water’s edge. Knowing that the scorpion would soon drown in the rising waters, he reached down to rescue it, only to be stung viciously every time his hand came near the creature. A passerby berated the wise man for his foolishness, but the wise man replied, “Just because it is in the scorpion’s nature to sting, why should I abandon my nature to save?”

The problem with the wise man’s response is in his assumption that the scorpion’s sting was a reflex reaction rather than an intentional act meaning, “I don’t want to be rescued!” I can identify with the scorpion, as can anyone who has ever been “rescued” against his or her will. It would be a better story if the deepest nature of the wise man was not to rescue automatically, no matter what the situation, but to listen to the truth of the other and respond accordingly. (Palmer, 1990, pp. 47-48)

As this research moves forward, my intention is to uncover possibilities for courses of action that may lead to the strengthening of community among the faculty with whom I currently work and point out pathways to which others might be attentive in efforts focused on the professional development of adjunct faculty. The central question of this research calls upon phenomenological methodology as a way of engagement as I ask: **What is it like to be in a community-building experience as an adjunct faculty member?** The lived experiences of adjunct faculty members do not become statistics and

disembodied reporting on who they are and what they want or need, but living documents of their own journeys to fuller human existence via their work in education.

The authoritarian methods that bad teachers use – methods that put vast and arid distances between students and teachers and subjects – are unconscious attempts to keep these [unexamined] fears at bay. If such teachers understood themselves and their fears better, the results might be teaching that comes from within the teachers' self-knowledge and that makes learning into a live encounter once more. (Palmer, 1990, p. 71)

This awareness, this making of conscious decisions about each action we undertake during the day, has significant impact on our actions in the classroom and on our very existence. "To build, calculate, investigate, create; to see, hear, say, and cultivate; to think; all are ways men and women involve themselves with beings as a whole. For humans are among the beings that for the time being are" (Krell, 1993, p. 35). To question this being is vital for nurturing awareness of the possibilities and vulnerabilities in the simple words that speak of existence: "I am," "We are."

### **Looking at the Lived Experience of Community**

My guiding question for this phenomenological study is: **What is it like to be in a community-building experience as an adjunct faculty member?** To explore this question, I invited eight faculty members, all of whom work in my program area, to participate in individual conversations and several seminar meetings around the theme of community and its place in their lives as instructors. The following section outlines who my participants are and how I engaged them in this study.

#### **Participants**

Members of the faculty within the Information Systems Management discipline who have taught at the University for 2-7 years were given a general explanation of the study and the structure of the research along with an invitation to participate in a series of

seminars on community building (see Appendix A). The initial contact with the potential participants was via email, and there were 19 individuals who volunteered to participate in the study. Individual telephone calls were made to those responding to ensure that they were fully aware of the structure of the activities to be undertaken and the time commitment involved. As a result of the telephone conversations, 12 faculty members were willing to commit to the project. In order to enable free and rich conversations between members, the size of the final group of participants was limited to eight. All eight participants were known to me, but not necessarily to each other. Even though they work in the discipline area for which I am the Academic Director (and I hired each of them to teach at the university), several of them I met face-to-face for the first time during individual conversations held before the seminars began.

The selection of the final group of eight was deliberately managed to include a mixture of participants of differing gender, race, and location (local and distant from the university's administrative offices). Thus, of the eight participants chosen, four were female and four were male. Five of the participants were Caucasian, two were African-American, and one was Hispanic. To represent the increasing number of faculty members who only teach online and live at a considerable distance from the local headquarters of the university, three of the chosen participants were faculty members who reside outside the local Maryland area. Their participation in the group work (the seminars) was via Web camera (video) and telephone bridge (audio). To support this participation from a distance, permission was obtained to use the Faculty Media Lab at the University of Maryland University College in Adelphi, Maryland (Appendix B). Thus, while the five local participants met in the Faculty Media Lab for the seminars, the video and

teleconferencing capabilities of the Media Lab, along with the individual Web cameras used by the three participants at a distance, enabled all members of the group to both see and hear each other during the discussions.

The participants were provided a Consent Form (Appendix C) that they were asked to bring to the initial conversation. The participants engaged in phenomenological reflections, oral and written, that were the focus of our gatherings and discussions (see Appendix D for the syllabus and framework for the seminars and discussions). The conversations and the seminars were audio-taped and transcribed and served as the basis for thematizing the meaning of this experience for them. In addition to the text provided (Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach*), each participant also received a journaling book and a certificate for purchase of books or gifts from Barnes and Noble, Borders or Amazon (participant's choice).

Four informal seminar/conversations were held over a period of 3 months. These seminars consisted of two-hour meetings organized around a theme which provided a focus and launching vehicle for conversations. The conversations, however, were allowed to re-orient themselves around the thoughts and experiences of the participants. The conversations were audio-taped and transcribed.

### **Initial Conversations**

Similar to preliminary conversations held with Diane, Valerie, and Rick, and highlighted in chapter one, the preliminary one-hour conversations with the individual participants were open-ended but focused around their experience of community as an adjunct faculty member. When I met with the participants I was interested in hearing them respond to questions such as the following:

- What is it like to be an adjunct faculty member at this university?
- Describe your experiences of connection to the university. To your peers.
- What is it like to meet other adjuncts only once or twice a year (or perhaps never)?
- What is it that would make you feel more connected to your peers?
- Describe your experiences of communication via the 999 classrooms (online classrooms for faculty only).
- What is it like to be mentored by a peer, or to be a peer mentor?
- Have you ever felt dis-connected from the university or your fellow adjuncts? If so, what was this like?

At this first introductory conversation, each participant was given the syllabi for the three seminars and concluding activities (Appendix D), a copy of Parker Palmer's (1998) *The Courage to Teach*, and a journaling book. Three chapters in the Palmer text provided background and foundational material for discussions that took place in the structured seminars. Each of the participants was asked to prepare short essays or reflections as described in the seminars below. After the initial conversations were concluded, a convenient date for the three seminars was negotiated with the participants. Participants also were encouraged to keep a journal of insights and reflections during the seminar/discussion time period. This journal could be used to provide input into the final reflection paper participants were asked to complete after the seminar conversations were concluded.

## **The Seminars**

Inner work is as real as outer work and involves skills one can develop, skills like journaling, reflective reading, spiritual friendship, meditation, and prayer. (Palmer, 2000, p. 91)

The three seminars and concluding conversation were held over a series of two months. Each of the seminars was organized around a thematic conversation among the participants. Preparation for the conversation included readings and preparation of short essays that were shared with the other members of the group. While allowing the conversations to move freely, guidance was provided for staying on subject via the use of some of the reflective questions contained in Livsey's (1999) *The Courage to Teach: A Guide for Reflection and Renewal*. The questions contained within this Guide were open-ended but provided a focus for the chapter readings and informed the thematic discussion held during the seminar. As with the individual conversations, these seminar meetings were audio-taped and transcribed.

**Seminar #1 – We teach who we are.** The first group meeting was organized around a thematic conversation related to “We Teach Who We Are” (involving autobiographical work). Participants were asked to come to the first meeting having read the Introduction and Chapter I (“The Heart of a Teacher, Identity and Integrity in Teaching”) of the text, *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer, 1998), and having prepared a short autobiography. Preparation of this short autobiography was addressed during the initial conversation with each participant. The participants were asked to share their autobiographical renderings with the other members.

The second group activity was initiated with a discussion of “How did the idea of teaching first arise for you?” “How did you decide to teach?” “What was it like to step

into the classroom for the first time?” Finally, some of Livsey’s (1999) questions were used to direct the discussion toward the concepts of identity and integrity, the sense of self in the classroom, and “experimenting with our lives” to deepen our awareness of our own identity and integrity.

These activities called for the sharing of personal stories that reveal identity and explore the diverse experiences that bear on integrity and wholeness in our lives. The valued ends for these sharings were meant to begin building bridges of comfort and trust between the individual participants and to awaken them to the power of autobiographical narratives serving as a starting point in the exploration of their existence. Opening up conversations around the meaning-making of personal history and community engaged the participants in uncovering and revealing who they are in the classroom.

**Seminar #2 – Community: Being, longing, belonging.** Preparation for the second seminar consisted of reading Chapter IV, “Knowing in Community, Joined by the Grace of Great Things” in Palmer’s (1998) *The Courage to Teach* and preparation of a personal statement that expressed experiences and assumptions that the participants bring to the concept of community. The statement was formulated around a response to the following questions from Livsey (1999):

Talk about an experience of community, of any duration, that has been meaningful to you. [*Community* may be defined in any way that is meaningful to you.] What went on in the situation that made it “community” for you? What was going on in you at that time that made you available to this community?

The conversations in the second seminar focused on the experiences and assumptions that the participants bring to the concept of community. Using the questions from Livsey (1999), participants were led toward uncovering their perception of the existence of a desire/yearning for community in themselves and in their surrounding



environments. In addition, discussion included thoughtful attention to those factors that drive people toward or away from community, as well as enumeration of fears about the impact of coming into community with others. Finally, their understanding of the relationship between community and support of their education mission was explored.

**Seminar #3 – The collegial community.** Preparation for the third seminar consisted of reading Chapter VI, “Learning in Community, The Conversation of Colleagues” in Palmer’s (1998) *The Courage to Teach* and preparation of a personal statement that expressed what is at the heart of the participant’s life as a teacher. The statement was formulated around a response to the following questions from Livsey (1999):

Why did I become a teacher? What do I stand for as a teacher? What are the “birthright gifts” that I bring to my lifework? What do I want my legacy as a teacher to be? What can I do to “keep track of myself,” to “re-member” my own heart? (p. 16)

The conversations in the third seminar focused on the real or needed dialogue between colleagues at the university and the participants’ perceived need for creating a community of discourse about teaching in places where good discussions flourish. After sharing and reflecting as a group on the personal statements that describe the centering influences in their lives as teachers, the participants were asked to identify a metaphor for good teaching, and to discuss institutional programs that they envision as providing a fertile environment for discussions about good teaching. As in the previous seminars, several questions from Livsey’s (1999) *Guide* were used to stimulate the conversation and, if necessary, bring it back to the focus on collegiality.

**Concluding activities and conversation.** In preparation for the final group conversation, the participants were asked to write a short paper reflecting the layers of

meaning this group experience has had for them. The exercise provided an opportunity for each participant to explore the journey toward understanding community that has been brought to light during this study, to highlight insights that have occurred, and to reflect again on a sensitivity to the existence of and the need for a sense of community among adjunct faculty.

### **Ethical Consideration of the Investigation**

Confidentiality, respect for the participants, and the rights of the individuals to both review the content of the transcribed conversations and any portions included in the narrative that help to reveal the phenomenon of interest were paramount. A relationship of respect and trust was fostered and guarded in the group sessions so that individuals would feel free to reveal feelings, emotions, moods, and needs. The atmosphere was one where individuals were not pressured to share what they were unwilling to share.

An important aspect of the ethical conduct in human research is the research “contract.” This contract set forth my obligation to share my research intentions with the participants, and allowed the participants to negotiate a situation which they felt was safe, supportive, and of benefit to them. Participants also were given ample and frequent opportunity to engage in ongoing conversation with me regarding the essential themes of the phenomenon of interest that I uncovered in the investigation.

### **Beginning the Journey**

The activities proposed for this research study were intended to lay the foundation for a circle of trust that allows the participants to uncover what, for them, is their experience of community in the educational environment in which they work as adjunct faculty. The work accomplished in the seminars and conversations was meant to be

neither invasive nor evasive, honoring and protecting the journey toward discovery and meaning-making of community for each individual, but not avoiding the challenges or problems the journey uncovers along the way. The understanding of community is individual to each participant; but the journey toward discovery of that understanding is taken with others who “invite, amplify, and help us discern . . . the clues that are subtle and sometimes misleading, requiring the kind of discernment that can happen only in dialogue” (Palmer, 2004, p. 26).

The conversations and reflections resulting from these activities became the source for thematic analysis, linguistic transformations, and hermeneutic interpretation (chapter four) aimed at uncovering the lived meaning *community* has for these participants at this time in their lives as adjunct faculty members. At the same time, I maintained a strong oriented relation to pedagogical implications of this research (the focus of chapter five), seeking to uncover possibilities for courses of action that may lead to the strengthening of community among the faculty with whom I currently work and identifying potential pathways to which others might be attentive in the development of adjunct faculty.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **REFRACTED STORIES: SINGING NEW SONGS**

Color, as recognized by the human eye, is the result of the bending of light rays. That bending, or refraction, is the breaking open of a beam of light into its individual light wave frequencies. O'Donohue (2004) speaks of "the secret life of colour. Despite its outward beckoning, like true beauty, colour is immensely hesitant in giving away its secrets" (p. 85). In this chapter I seek to coax forth the colors, the phenomenon that lies beneath, by bending and breaking open the stories shared in conversations with the participants in this study. In doing so, the song of the stained glass cantata transitions into new melodic presentations.

The phenomenon of community, as it reveals itself here in the conversations, brings my attention more to the individual voices in the ensemble and the solo songs that are sung as part of the cantata. The music changes, from the multi-colored but unified-voice of the cantata ensemble to the music and colors that speak from the souls of the individuals in this community-journey. We now may hear variations of blues, soul, or laments, as well as some songs of dissonance and the un-harmonious. There also remain, however, ballads that speak of connection, openness, concern, and love. I move from use of the metaphor of the full stained glass cantata to the more individualized construction of a stained glass rose window to capture and interpret these songs/themes. The common thread of the multi-faceted and colored stained glass pieces that represent the faculty participating in this journey still remains. But these pieces now are arranged in a pattern that individuates the songs, that separates the voices, yet still finds that which brings forth an underlying common melody in the telling of this song of community. The full stained

glass cantata defined in chapters one and two address the desire for and definition of a robust community that values, honors, respects, and supports the faculty with whom I work. In this chapter I look at the reality of that community as it is experienced by the participants in this study, a microcosm of the world of adjunct faculty at this university.

### **Rose Windows**

As I tell the story of adjunct faculty experiencing community, I am drawn to the idea of rose windows as “holders” of teaching stories. The rose window, in its most glorious renditions in cathedral settings, is a circular window with cement traceries or dividers radiating from the center. Each section is filled with stained glass. The term *rose window* is based on the resemblance of the window to the petals of a rose. Its original purpose was as a teaching tool, showing the stories of the Christian religion to those who could not read. Rose windows may tell a particular religious story, or they may represent other, non-religious themes. The stories told by the rose windows are as varied as the artists who helped create them.

The origin of the rose window is that of a much smaller round window, the oculus, the eye window or the bull’s eye window. As a continuation of the metaphor used in chapter two, the stained glass cantata, I introduce this chapter with the rose window as a way of looking at and rendering meaning of the experiences of eight adjunct faculty members in a community-building exercise. They form the voices of the colors to which the eye must be open and the ear attuned, to see and hear this phenomenon that makes itself known.

In a stained-glass window the artist creates an area of colored light, modified by monochrome paint, which offers itself as a kind of music of light, instantaneous in space, energized by the physical properties of light

waves in the same way that music is energized by the behaviour of sound waves. (Lee, Seddon, & Stephens, 1976, p. 18)

It is the energy of their light music that I have sought to explore in this chapter. In what manner do the colors of the stories and life experiences told here play a special music that graces the ear of those who listen.

### **Parable in Glass**

Like the window which has many facets, many divisions, and displays light and color in many different ways, adjunct faculty can be observed from many different angles and in many different lights. As I begin to explore the experiences of the eight adjuncts with whom I worked, I use the metaphor of the rose window to capture and symbolize the phenomenon as it reveals itself. Also revealed is the work of the artists who invite the individual pieces into the frame, allowing the window to work its way into our attention. Here I ask that you put aside your connection of the rose windows with religious stories, or even with their usual placement in churches. The stories here in this rose window are soul-stories, stories of spirit, perhaps even spiritual. But they are not necessarily religious.

The window, whether plain, transparent glass or the simple or complex colors of a stained glass rose window, provides me with a way of rendering meaning from some of the complexities of the intricately woven lives of adjunct faculty. Although each life has a full measure of rich experiences, the window, at least temporarily, serves as a holder for all the elements that comprise it. The stained glass window frame may circumscribe the life of the individual, or it may be used to put a frame around the lives of multiple people who have come together in some way to share a common meaning. Here the common thread is that of being an adjunct faculty member at the University of Maryland University College (UMUC).

Think of how PHENOMENA come trooping  
out of the desert of non-existence  
into this materiality. (Rumi, 1995, p. 83)

What is it like for adjunct faculty members to work together in an intimate setting where they explore the concepts and meanings of community for themselves in their lives as adjunct faculty members? Will focusing the eye on themselves in a community-building opportunity allow them to live the phenomenon of community, “trooping out into this materiality,” into existence within the group? Might participation plant the seeds of a greater sense of connection between these participants that would then flow outward into an invitation to peers? In using the rose window as a metaphor, the origin of which is found in the oculus, I also am open to *oculus* as the root of *inoculate* (Ayto, 1990). Will these participants find that focusing on community in some way inoculates them, protects them from the potential isolation that adjunct faculty members might experience?

It is the lived experiences that are the pieces of glass, the spokes of the wheel, the traceries and mullions of the rose window that are meant to be revealed here. As Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) reminds us, “The stories we choose to tell about ourselves let the world know who we are because who we are is not in what we do but in how we live. And this is what shapes the world” (p. 48). These stories are what gives shape to the rose.

Aren't you our geometry,  
Window, very simple shape  
Circumscribing our enormous  
Life painlessly? (Rilke, 1979, p. 25)

### **The Gang of 8 Collage**

I affectionately came to call the participants in this study my *Gang of 8*. Although my first use of this naming stemmed from my interpretation of “gang” as a loose collection of individuals, there is a deeper meaning to this term that supports its fortuitous

choice. *Gang* stems from the Old English *gong*, a “going, journey, step, passage” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 421). How much more clearly this meaning speaks to the work undertaken by the participants! This has certainly been a journey of discovery for them – and for me. And why do I call this a *Gang of 8* and not a *Gang of 9*, including myself in this *going*? I made a deliberate decision in this work of discovery to be the listener, and observer. I was present with them as the convener of our meetings. But the focus was always to be on their words, on their stories, on their experiences, with my own presence and words simply a structure around which they could take the steps on this journey. And I believe that these eight participants fully included me as a listener to their conversations. But they really saw me as the facilitator, the reason for their being together but not a peer member of the group. Their sharings were directed at each other; their questions were directed to each other. It was, for them, always a *Gang of 8 + 1*.

I liken these eight faculty members to collages of stained glass, pieces that present themselves in color and form already created. How do they come to be part of the UMUC community as adjunct instructors? Why do they come? How do they see themselves in the framework, the window that is the community of their peers, their fellow adjunct instructors? How do they contain their complex lives into a single piece or even a section of the window and present that piece or section to others in the same frame? Do they cut themselves to fit? Do their irregular shapes force gaps between themselves and other pieces that must be filled in with solder or lead? Meet the members of the *Gang of 8* as they describe themselves.

**Sonia** was born in Naples, Italy. She recounts that while growing up, “I always dreamt that I could learn how to speak fluently various languages. I wanted to travel and



experience different cultures.” She married an American serviceman based in Naples and, shortly after her marriage, became a student in the UMUC undergraduate program offered at the American naval base in her home town. Military relocations took her and her family to the United States and back to Italy over the next several years. But she managed to complete both her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in spite of the moves and the birth of her son. When she returned to Italy in 2001, she sought employment at the same school from which she had obtained her Bachelor’s degree, the European division of UMUC. Her first teaching experience, then, was at the same naval base where she had previously taken classes, and she found herself now working as a peer with some of her former instructors. Then, two years later, the family moved back to Virginia. Sonia continued teaching for the European division in the online environment, but felt isolated and cut off from the other faculty members. She transitioned into online teaching for the stateside division and has taught at UMUC Adelphi for two semesters. As she writes, “I was able to continue working. However, now lacking the face-to-face interaction of the regular classes, it didn’t take me long to realize that I was feeling isolated.” She has subsequently taken a position in a local bank “in the hope of gaining some of that practical business experience that I am always teaching about.”

**Jef**, the oldest member of the *Gang*, has had many experiences in different educational and business environments. He was born and raised in California, but now resides in Colorado. He obtained an undergraduate degree from Brigham University and then joined the Air Force. During his 23 years of active military service, he also obtained a Master’s degree in psychology and one in computer and information resource management. “I was going to retire and go fishing and play and do all that stuff. I got

bored after three or four months.” Since leaving the Air Force, Jef has taught for several community colleges and several private colleges. He began teaching as an adjunct online instructor for UMUC in 2000.

But Jef also has extensive entrepreneurial experience, having founded an internet service provider company in Colorado; served as director of communications for *Naturally Santa*, an organization that provides Santas to malls and other special events throughout the United States; served as the chief financial officer and president of information technology for a company that provides photo support for holiday pictures; and has been owner of a graphics presentations, computer repair, and other technology-related corporations. Jef does not teach during the fall semester because he travels to Grandville, Michigan to serve as the “naturally bearded” Santa at a Michigan shopping mall.

**Michele** is a Washington, D.C. native and continues to live in close proximity to the UMUC’s administrative site in Adelphi, Maryland. Her undergraduate degree in journalism led to her first career opportunity at the Washington Star newspaper. When that newspaper ceased circulation, she explored the readily-available federal sector and soon found herself working at the Department of the Army. A mentor who worked at the Pentagon encouraged her to consider work in computer-related fields. Michele eventually obtained a Master’s degree in general administration and a second Master’s in information resources management. This began a 20-year involvement with various units within the Department of Defense, and subsequently led to her current position as a Branch Chief in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

With two Master's completed, Michele wanted to take a break before pursuing a still higher degree. But she wanted to stay in the academic arena, a comfort zone that had first been ingrained in her by her mother, an elementary school teacher. "Always, I can remember my mother grading papers, bringing home papers, meeting with the parents, so forth. And I had always been in that background or in that mindset of being around some type of education." She began teaching at a local community college. A friend, another adjunct faculty member, suggested that she apply for a teaching position at UMUC. She is currently in her fifth year of teaching in the undergraduate programs at UMUC.

**Ray** was born in New York and lived in a suburb just outside of New York City. He was an ROTC student who graduated from Pennsylvania State University and immediately after graduation entered the Air Force. After spending time as an aircraft maintenance officer, Ray was sent to Wharton Graduate School and then to Manhattan College in New York to teach in the ROTC and evening school programs there. He finds it ironic that when he applied to Manhattan College after high school, he was denied admission but found himself back there later as an instructor.

After leaving the Air Force, he joined Mobil Corporation, spending time working on computer development projects in such far-flung places as North Sea oil platforms, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia. Although he still was not yet 50 years old, the consulting company he had transitioned to from Mobil began laying off personnel over the age of 45. So he left and went into retirement. Ray says, "That lasted 6 months. And my mind started atrophying. So I started trying to get a teaching job, to get into teaching." Ray met another Air Force retiree at a Smithsonian dinner event. This retiree, also a faculty/staff member at UMUC, pointed him toward the university and helped him apply for a

position. Although Ray was originally recruited by the business management department, he transitioned into his current academic discipline (information systems management) as a result of attending a “new faculty” orientation meeting where he observed me hovering around this table of faculty “acting like a ‘mother hen’”. He introduced himself and offered to teach courses in my discipline, and has been doing so for 4 years.

Al also grew up in the state of New York. His parents struggled to pay the tuition to send him to local Catholic grade and high schools. He qualified for an academic scholarship but could not afford the other fees associated with attending college away from home. An Air Force recruiter convinced him to join the service with the promise of access to higher education, the one thing Al was determined to obtain in spite of few family or social expectations for him to pursue education beyond high school. He spent 21 years in the Air Force, retiring with the rank of Master Sergeant, working primarily in intelligence and signals intelligence. This early grounding led to his current career field where he says he’s “doing the opposite of what I was doing in the Air Force, in which was I was trying to break into systems and now I’m trying to help protect them.” This career has seen him building telecommunications networks in places like Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and England.

Al obtained Master’s degrees from Johns Hopkins and the Defense Intelligence College. But his undergraduate degree is from the university where he now teaches as an adjunct faculty member. He says, “UMUC is very near and dear to me. Because I’m a firm believer that if it hadn’t have been for UMUC, I’d have never gotten a Bachelor’s degree.” He was able to take undergraduate courses from UMUC at all of the various military bases where he was stationed during his Air Force career. Of significance to him

was the fact that his instructors brought real life experience into the classroom, supplementing the theory of the textbook with current applications. He says he is motivated to teach at UMUC “because I look at it as giving something back to the school that was there for me first of all. But second of all, I think I have a responsibility to build that next group of people who are going to come behind me.”

**Gioconda** was born in Ecuador. She and her mother moved to the Washington, D.C. area when Gioconda was fourteen years old. When her father, one of the country’s military generals and later a judge, passed away, her mother decided to return to Ecuador. But Gioconda was determined to stay and found herself, at the age of 14, on her own. She found roommates, paid for her high school education, and completed a degree in Latin American literature and philosophy at the University of Maryland College Park. She began working for the U. S. Government, becoming an expert in developing human-computer interactive courses for employees. During her 19 years of service, she has become an American citizen and has also obtained a doctoral degree in artificial intelligence/intelligent agents. But after finishing that degree work, she felt a “tremendous sense of void.” A long-time friend and mentor suggested that she apply to teach. When she interviewed for a teaching position at UMUC she says “I was just starving, Janet. I was just starving. Cause I have so much. I love teaching. I love learning.”

**Bob** is another retiree from military service. His first career, however, was as a professional musician. Just after college, while Bob was struggling with finding employment as a musician, a Navy recruiter moved in next door to his family home. A promise to get Bob into flight training was the enticement that succeeded in getting him

to enlist. The flight training never materialized, however, and Bob found himself in a variety of assignments, including supply officer on a submarine, financial management work, and comptroller in the Pacific Fleet. With the Navy's support and encouragement, Bob obtained a Master's degree in information technology and a second Master's degree in knowledge management.

After leaving the Navy, Bob began working as a consultant for a large firm, supporting their higher education and E-learning organization charged with building outsource solutions for schools wishing to transition into online education. His military training also resulted in his involvement in scaling up the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) hiring of baggage and passenger screening personnel, and implementation of a large-scale electronic patient record system at all Department of Defense hospitals around the world. The large bureaucratic structure of the companies he was working for was too much like the large bureaucracy that is any military branch, so Bob began working for the risk management branch of a small company that insures colleges and universities against all types of campus risks. In addition to those jobs which put him in the educational-support field, he says that "The common thread throughout my life, as I look back on it, has always been teaching, whether it's been teaching co-workers how to use systems, or whether it be teaching my kids how to do something, or teaching in a more formal way. It's always there, something I really love."

**Beth**, currently finishing her Ph.D degree, might be considered the only full time career educator in the group. She is a tenured instructor for a community college in New Jersey but lives 75 miles away in northern Pennsylvania. In the fall semester during which our seminar sessions are being held, Beth is on sabbatical – to finish her

dissertation and to have both knees replaced with titanium parts. She has had juvenile rheumatoid arthritis since before school age, and even attended first grade in a wheelchair. As she says, “I’ve always had a kind of alternate way of educating myself. In elementary school, on days when I couldn’t get to school, teachers would come in the afternoon. So I was kind of one of the first home schoolers.”

Although both of her parents were members of the U. S. Marine Corps, the family’s numerous relocations came during later years, after both parents had retired from the military. Beth was born in Philadelphia, but lived at various times in Princeton, New Jersey, Houston, Texas, Georgia, and then finally in New Jersey. Marriage brought her to Pocono country in Pennsylvania, where she worked first in the medical field in computer support and then at a community college as Director of Instructional Technology. That job eventually led to a teaching position. A colleague and member of the Association for Computing Machinery sent her the advertisement for teaching positions at UMUC. Because this position is for online teaching, she is pursuing it to alleviate the commute to New Jersey which is becoming less feasible. Opportunities for online teaching in her community college position are limited. Beth is teaching her first online section for UMUC in the fall of 2005.

These are the members of the *Gang of 8* who together took the journey through a community-building experience during the fall of 2005. After our meetings and conversations are completed, in writing, re-writing, re-rendering, re-collecting the experiences of the participants, I struggle to unpack the stories beneath the stories, the themes which I present as individual petals of the rose window. As in the rose window, these petals appear to stand apart from each other, separated by the spokes of the wheel.

But they are connected in their relationship to each other and to the whole story being told by the window. These petals all contain a common element of the story of community as experienced by these individuals in the unique setting of our seminar sessions. It is the overall theme of community which enticed them to join this group exercise.

There is something about being human that makes us yearn for the company of others, to be with and be touched by our family, friends, and clan. Moving about in the world, stuck inside our own skin, we often feel alone and isolated from the rest of creation. Fear and anger at the outrages perpetrated by the irresponsible drive us further into isolation. Introspective solitude can help us learn to live with this deep loneliness, but the only way to diminish the feeling is by making deep connections with others. This is what we mean by community. (Whitmeyer, 1993, p. xx)

Joined around the theme of community, the eight petals of this rose window are further loosely grouped in ways that represent stages in the making of the window – the design, the gathering of the materials, the assembly of the parts, and the placement of the window in its final setting. The focus is on the petals, however, and less on the casement, the lead channels, the solder, the cement spokes of the window. These parts of the window, which might be considered the supporting parts, will be addressed more completely in chapter five as I work with the pedagogical implications of the themes presented here.

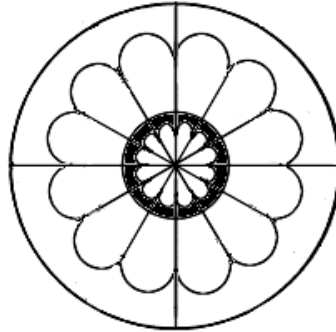
### **The Geometry of the Rose**

In your light I learn how to love.  
In your beauty, how to make poems.

You dance inside my chest,  
where no one sees you.  
but sometimes I do, and that  
sight becomes this art.  
(Rumi, as cited in Chopra, 1998, p. 62)



The typical rose window has 8 or 12 petals. Most often, each of these petals represents a particular theme or even a particular person (for example, the Twelve Apostles, the seasons of the year, or the Zodiac).



(Chiffriller, 2002, p. 21)

Cowen (1979) tells us that rose windows are guides. Their circular form, their roundness, is divided by radial spokes that serve as guides leading the eye toward the center, the “real self at the centre of the soul” (p. 12). Symbolically, the shape of the window and of many parts within the overall design is the circle. This is the shape which most children from all cultures tend to draw first (Levoy, 1997), and the circle has long been accepted as a symbol of wholeness.

Hartz (1997) calls our attention to the traceries and mullions that create a complex arrangement of manifested geometric shapes. But there is also a hidden geometry defined by the story of each individual element in the window, in the relationship of each piece to its neighbors, to its region of the window, and to the center. The center circle is the “point of balance, the still point” (Cowen, 1979, p. 94). What still point supports the work of the adjunct faculty member? What are the manifest, hidden, and symbolic themes that uncover the meaning of community in the roundness of their lives as instructors?

## **Refractions of Being**

Stained glass does not reflect light as does a painted surface. Instead, it refracts or bends the light rays; it is energized by light which itself changes with the time of day and the seasons of the year. “Stained glass is the most ancient and cunning form of kinetic art” (Lee, Seddon, & Stephens, 1976, p. 6). It is an ancient dance of light and glass, both changing and being changed. The lived experiences of adjunct faculty members in relationship to their work as teachers and as members of a teaching community likewise change with the external influences of history, family, students, and circumstances. And these essential experiences are revealed in the refracting stories shared in the seminar setting. The participants are not *reflecting* experiences but bending the essence of those experiences through the prism of their lives.

And what is like to work through the refractions to the underlying phenomenon?  
What is it like to work with stained glass? Rumi (1995) reminds us in his poem,  
*Craftsmanship and Emptiness*,

I’ve said before that every craftsman  
searches for what’s not there  
to practice his craft. (p. 24)

It is best to keep in mind Heidegger’s (1971/2001) suggestion for all artists that “The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other” (p. 17). Typically, those who work with stained glass use glass that has been previously given its rich color by the fusing and burning accomplished in the furnace. And so the pieces come with characteristics that the artist cannot change – colors and textures *frozen* into the form in which the glass presents itself. The artist now responds to

that texture and color and, if deeply attuned to that which the glass itself wishes to make manifest, allows the work to come into being.

All artistic practices, says writer Bharati Mukherjee, are “satellite dishes for hearing the signals the soul sends out,” and each art form individually offers unique contributions to the work of discerning calls. . . . Ultimately, creativity and discernment have much in common. They increase our ability to “draw out,” to call into being, what didn’t exist in our lives before. (Levoy, 1997, p. 123)

The resulting object, panel, or window is the work of both the artist and the glass itself and has meanings well beyond what the human eye sees. “The work makes public something other than itself; it manifests something other; it is the allegory. In the work of art something other is brought together with the thing that is made. . . . The work is a symbol” (Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 19).

The speaking and listening that uncovers the phenomenon revealing itself in the conversations and the writing and re-writing of the text are couched in the themes of the stained glass window and the *other* that the window seeks to reveal to us. I really cannot claim to be the artist in this work. Rather, I see myself simply as one who provides the frame that holds the pieces in place. Although working with stained glass involves scoring, breaking, grinding, foiling, and soldering pieces together, the focus of my research and renderings is not on the work of the artist manipulating the pieces, but on the pieces themselves and how they begin to place themselves in the alignment that they find most appropriate to tell their own story, to construct their own allegory, to speak the *other*. It is this *other* that I seek to acknowledge, respect, and come to know in the stained glass window that speaks of the lives of those adjunct faculty that have come together in the conversations.

You, window, O waiting's measure,  
Refilled so often  
When one life spills out and grows  
Impatient for another.

You who divides and attracts,  
As fickle as the sea—  
Sudden mirror reflecting our face  
Mingled with what we see in back;

Fraction of a freedom compromised  
By the presence of risk;  
Trapped by whatever's in us  
That evens the odds of the loaded outside. (Rilke, 1979, p. 27)

### **Listening for the Parable**

How do I go beyond observing the surface features of the glass? How do I come to know the inner workings of the souls of those who participated in this community building experience, to see beyond reflections to that which is trapped inside? How do I even hope to honor the pieces I work with in studying this stained glass window? What do the voices of the participants call out in this communal sharing of experiences and stories? As Kreisberg (1992) reminds me again, “There are some things we *need* to hear, but probably never will. There are things we would *like* to hear, but we are also too afraid to listen” (p. 19). But it is only in listening to the participants that I can do the work of un-concealing the layers of meaning that lie below the words spoken. This listening means totally involving, totally immersing oneself in what is said in words, body language, and perhaps just as importantly, in what is not said.

What is the deep listening? *Sama* is  
a greeting from the secret ones inside  
the heart, a letter. The branches of  
your intelligence grow new leaves in  
the wind of this listening. . . .

If someone  
can't hear a trumpet melody, sprinkle  
dirt on his head and declare him dead.

Listen, and feel the beauty of your  
separation, the unsayable absence.  
There's a moon inside every human being.  
Learn to be companions with it. Give  
more of your life to this listening. As  
brightness is to time, so you are to  
the one who talks to the deep ear in  
your chest. I should sell my tongue  
and buy a thousand ears when that  
one steps near and begins to speak. (Rumi, 1999, p. 90)

Who are these *secret ones* I have met inside the conversations? What melody has the trumpet played in the voices of these adjuncts? What has the deep ear of my chest heard? And have these participants heard their own trumpet songs and those of their partners in the creation of this melody? It is my hope that no dirt needs to be sprinkled on anyone's head because the trumpet sounds cannot be heard. And it is also appropriate to remember that it always is advisable, when working with stained glass, to keep on hand a supply of band aids for the abrasions and cuts that are inevitable companions to efforts in this art form.

In this chapter I use van Manen's (2003) processes of writing, re-writing, re-rendering, and re-collecting to bring forth meaning from the conversations with the eight faculty members whose lived experiences reach toward wholeness and coherence. I use each petal of the rose window here to reflect a phenomenological uncovering as revealed in the conversations with the eight participants. The participating faculty members in this community-building experience are the center around which the petals contain the themes which represent the "expression of the human aspiration for wholeness and coherence" (Cowen, 1979, p. 10).

### **Holding the Pieces Together – Creating Lines of Communication**

The filigree which holds the pieces together within a particular space within the window enables those pieces to point the eye's focus on the theme which has drawn these pieces together. The lead channels and/or foil into which each individual piece is set separate each piece from its neighbor. How, then, do they overcome this separateness to enable the tendrils of communication critical to any story, to any sense of community to become established?

The eight adjunct faculty members who participated in this experience are a small subset of a much larger group of adjunct faculty working at UMUC. In fact, the majority of faculty members at this university are adjunct or part time, scattered geographically from Hawaii to Romania. Because the primary means of communication between members of this large community is accomplished via email or within online classrooms dedicated to faculty only, I want to briefly introduce the concept of the online faculty classrooms here. This introduction will enable easier understanding of the references made to "IFSM 999" or the "999 classrooms" within the conversations.

The online classrooms for faculty are constructed for the purpose of supporting communication between staff and the faculty and between the faculty members themselves. The organization of these online faculty classrooms (titled, for example, "IFSM 999") uses the same shell structure and delivery platform used for all online classes at the university. But here they are employed solely by and for the faculty within a given discipline – the faculty members are the students. This space is used for announcements, scheduling, sharing of teaching tips, pointers for syllabus construction, discussions of current issues in the classroom, and focus groups who are working on

special projects or curriculum development. Faculty can, and frequently do, post questions, provide responses to questions posted by peers, or begin discussions among themselves. Each faculty member can post a biography and even a picture to put more of a “face” on his/her presence and on membership in the community. Because these adjunct faculty members have other full time employment outside of their teaching duties, it is fruitful to understand their participation here in light of those *doings* that circumscribe their work as teachers. These primary careers provide coloration to the *beings* that they bring to the classrooms and to this small group activity.

### **The Design**

Every stained glass window has a theme or a design around which the content of the window is constructed. As we prod the concept of community as experienced by the members of the *Gang of 8*, two themes emerge that provide elemental reasons for the existence of community among adjunct faculty, themes that I label the *seeker* and the *suppliant*.

### **The Seeker**

To seek is to look for, visit, pursue, keenly scent (Barnhart, 1988). To search for something already presumes that the object of the search, or some variation of it, can be found. No one searches for something that they know is not there waiting to be discovered or uncovered, even though what is to be discovered is not known in its full manifestation. A scent must have a source from which it emanates. I again pull forward Heidegger’s (1953/1996) goal of the seeking, that is, “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself”(p. 30).

We may also seek with the *expectation* of finding exactly what we are looking for, even though its reality, its being-ness may turn out to be very different from our anticipated outcome. What already formed concepts of community did the *Gang of 8* bring to the discussions? What expectations did they have for an experience focused around the topic of community? To expect means to wait for, to hope for, to look for something, to be pregnant with anticipation (Barnhart, 1988). In their reflections on what the term *community* means to them, for what do they hope? What form does the birth of their yearnings take? Pregnant can also mean compelling, weighty, convincing (Barnhart, 1988). What is it about community that compels or convinces these participants to step forward and open themselves up to the discussions in the seminars?

**Community refractions.** Gioconda would find herself most closely aligned with Whitmyer's (1993) definition of the need for community.

I have come to think of community as a kind of vitamin. The experience of connectedness with others is as necessary to a fully healthy life as the minimum daily amount of each of the essential vitamins is to a balanced diet. (pp. xxiv-xxv)

"I think you seek community . . . obviously it boils down to affinities, it boils down to nourishment, warmth, love, being accepted, being respected" (Gioconda). Gioconda comes to this group activity looking for something very specific – the opportunity to discuss teaching techniques, to share exercises that work in a classroom, to argue the unlikelihood of being able to establish a real teaching community in an online environment. She is looking for the opportunity to reaffirm herself as a successful, caring instructor. The fact that the discussion revolves less around teaching experiences and more around the concept of community and its role in the lives of these adjuncts bothers her. The fact that there are no well-defined set of rules or expectations for the ensuing



conversations, that the seminar settings are set up to encourage free exploration, leaves her feeling somewhat cheated by the experience. She expresses the same irritation with the structure and content of the general faculty meetings – too much time is allotted for free-flowing questions and the raising of concerns. For Gioconda, it is not the concept of community that is missing or undesired, it is the focus of that community that requires greater clarity.

Beth defines community as “a lifecycle of connecting, learning, doing, growing, teaching, and knowing with one another.” She is already part of an academic community. But the distance between her home and the campus makes face-to-face communication challenging. It is because of this physical separation, both from her home campus on the community college and from her adjunct faculty campus a state away, that Beth eagerly agrees to participate in this community-building experience. Her example flies in the face of Peck’s (1993) assertion that “Trapped in our tradition of rugged individualism, we are an extraordinarily lonely people. So lonely, in fact, that many cannot even acknowledge their loneliness to themselves, much less to others” (p. 15). It takes a certain level of self-awareness to begin to look at this aspect of our isolation face-on. Beth appears very grateful that she has been included in these conversations. The contact made in my visit to her home in Pennsylvania strengthened her connections. “I thought it a great opportunity to get to know you and to met other folks at UMUC, being a newcomer.”

Bob recalls that his strongest sense of community was in a military education program. For him, strong bonds of community were forged when “a whole lot of intellectually capable people” wrestled through creative conflict to come to a consensus opinion on the assigned topic. The democratic process was in play, allowing each person

to have a say, but then forcing the group to agreement on a final resolution that was much stronger than the ideas of just one person. Community is “a way of talking about the social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognizable as competence” (Wenger, 1998, p. 5). Feeling that one’s input is heard and evaluated with wisdom is the siren call of community for Bob. He speaks of the outcome of a survey as reported on a local radio station.

One of the reasons, or the two top reasons workers become dissatisfied with their jobs: one, they don’t feel they have adequate resources. The other was, they don’t feel in their own mind that they’re making the contribution to the organization that they feel they’re capable of making because of whatever reason they’re being stymied or whatever.

Others in the group speak of personal growth as the element that makes a community vibrant for them, something for which to seek.

It’s difficult for human beings to stand alone. And we need support from others. And without that we tend to withdraw and we tend to not be able to grow sufficiently. (Jef)

Because he teaches only online, lives at a considerable distance from the campus headquarters, and never sees other faculty in face-to-face settings, Jef voices his concerns about having to make decisions without immediate support.

Being an online instructor and never having an immediate person around to respond to a question I might have, I’m oftentimes forced to make decisions that I’m not sure are right or wrong. And quite honestly they’re a little bit intimidating or scary because if I mess up then I’ve got to go back and re-do it. (Jef)

But Jef has a wealth of experience in both teaching and in the corporate world. What is he afraid of messing up? Having support an email away does provide a measure of comfort, but not being able to walk across the hall and ask a question also seems to leave him feeling balanced on a narrow skeleton of support. Jef yearns for greater connection with

his peers, both for social support and for reaffirmation of his position as instructor.

Several times during the seminar sessions, Jef reiterated his joy and relief at having made face-to-face contact (albeit via video cam) with other faculty members with whom he had previously communicated only via electronic formats.

For Sonia, becoming part of any community provides that “feeling of belonging, a certain loyalty to whatever the need or purpose of the community was at the time. . . . That feeling of belonging where everybody is working together to achieve a common goal. And it’s a beautiful feeling, It’s a beautiful feeling.” While working as an adjunct faculty member in Europe she felt isolated and cut off from the rest of her peers, physically separated by distance as well as by a lack of any kind of communication with others. When she joined the stateside division and found the abundant communication links within the online faculty classroom, she once again felt connected, even though she still remains physically remote from the campus headquarters. She joined this *Gang of 8* in hopes of finding common ground with other instructors and to “feel part of something valuable.” Sonia’s Italian heritage and the environment in which she was raised adds to a certain level of anxiety about her anticipation of acceptance into this group of what she supposed are all American-raised peers. Although she approaches the first seminar meeting with a fear that she will not fit in with the rest of the group because her experiences as an instructor were initially in a foreign country, she is delighted to find out that

these people were like me after all! I didn’t feel different anymore, but very similar to my group. As a matter of fact, we all shared some of the same feelings of inadequacy that I often-time experience. After this mind opening revelation, I truly felt I could contribute something to this study and it felt great to be part of a group of minds working together! (Sonia)

A lack of growth can act as a catalyst for moving to a different community. Al knew it was time to leave the Air Force when he no longer felt a sense of *what next?* “I had reached the top of what I was going to reach in that community. And the only way that I could, you know, grow and to continue to be what I thought I was, was to move out of that community, to go and do something else.” That theme was carried forward by Bob:

And when I look back over my whole career, where I’ve been not really happy with my job was because I was in a position where I wasn’t allowed to make the contributions I thought I could make. So I think that has a lot to do with it. Especially if you’re an overachiever and people are keeping you in your box or in your silo. That can really start to cause you to back away from the community that’s there and say you don’t want to be part of this.

Gioconda voices similar thoughts about why she opted to add teaching to an already full work schedule. It helped her “fill the void” she felt after completing her doctoral degree and no longer finding that her work completely satisfied her desire to be nurtured, challenged, and moving forward. She has truly found a niche that allows her leadership strengths blossoming in the classroom. And Michele chimes in.

I, also, am in the federal government. And I can relate to you [Gioconda] as far as being disconnected, because I felt disconnected in the job I had when I was with the military. And I became complacent. And nothing was happening. And, you know, I was just there. But then I said, “I need to make a change. *I need to do something.*” And it was at that time that I decided to apply for other positions. And so now I’m out of that, which really was growth, again. And so now I have more attention, more community than I really want!

**Community fractures.** Perhaps there is a relationship between the desire for growth, new challenges, and contributions and a definition of American independence that Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) posit:

American culture has savored the freedom associated with autonomy and rootlessness. Its members have delighted in finding their own way and in not having to answer to anybody. Americans have defined themselves in terms of individual freedom: a people breaking away from old, limiting structures, dogmas, and attitudes and pushing forward to new frontiers. (p. 5)

That position is espoused by Ray who questions why adjunct faculty would seek assistance from peers. In preparation for the third seminar meeting, focused on collegiality, the participants are asked to read a section of Parker Palmer's (1998) book, *The Courage to Teach* that addresses the Quaker process called *Clearness Communities*. This process calls for a person to present a specific problem with which he/she is wrestling. The other members of the community (an invited small group) assist the person only in the form of asking questions – no advice or examples can be given; only questions can be asked. In the informal conversations in the Media Lab that occurred while we are waiting for Jef, Beth, and Sonia to link in via phone bridge, Michele speaks of how much she likes this particular chapter, while Ray and Al indicate how they “hate” it. Ray feels that no such type of experience would work with adjuncts because they are all too focused on their own issues. Al does not find anything “useful” in there that he can apply. He thinks that the *Clearness Community* concept would only work in a face-to-face environment. Bob elicits surprise from Ray and Al when he indicates that he has used just such a process the previous week with his small group of employees.

Why does Ray feel that other adjuncts are too involved in their own issues to want to participate in any sort of common work that addresses problems they all face as instructors? He did an analysis of participation in the IFSM999 classroom, reporting that only 31% of the total number of faculty (158) ever participate, and that only certain subjects receive much attention (“Boasting” – reporting on personal or family

accomplishments, and “Bios” – informal updating of resumes). It seems to him that these subjects are areas where the individual is promoted in ways that do not invite collegiality among peers. “To get somebody to coach you on your teaching, the impression I get is ‘What makes you right and me wrong?’ And I’m not sure that I understand why I would even listen, or better yet, why somebody else would listen to me” (Ray). Ray’s comment might seem to present an insurmountable barrier to any sort of true collegiality among adjunct faculty. This attitude is not shared by all members of the group, however. And at least the 31% (and Ray himself is one of those who is willing to participate) indicate that there is a sense of seeking among some members of this larger adjunct pool. Michele has the last word – “You’ve got to join the community.”

But letting others know even a small bit more about you than just what is constrained by the title of *adjunct faculty member* provides the seed-bed for establishing stronger connections between the participants. It may be very challenging to establish any threads of connection if only the titles and roles as adjunct faculty members are brought to the table. To that end, we begin the first meeting of the group with a sharing of short autobiographies. Focusing on Palmer’s (1998) contention that we teach who we are, these personal histories open small cracks in the walls each participant has erected prior to coming together the first time. Each autobiographical piece shared in the group reveals more than the professional overlay that initially each participant brings to that first meeting.

Often people devote their primary attention to the facts of their lives, to their situation, to their work, to their status. Most of their energy goes into doing. Meister Eckhart writes beautifully about this temptation. He says many people wonder where they should be and what they should do, when in fact they should be more concerned about how to be. (O’Donohue, 1997, p. 24)

To discuss community as an external entity to which one belongs, it is necessary to first establish an internal community, “a certain rough confederacy among the various and occasionally conflicting parts” (Levoy, 1997, p. 73). In the short time we are together, the *Gang of 8* does not take the time to explore to any depths the “who” that is brought to the classroom. It is hoped, however, that the seeds of curiosity about ourselves as teachers, as peers will give rise to some “why”s. As we progress through the seminars, there are multiple occasions of heart-full witness to the need they have found which compels them to become part of this experience, and which compels them to associate themselves with this university and their fellow adjunct faculty members. The questioning, as well as the answers that might be revealed, are part of a process that invites creativity. We are not making anything new, here. We are bringing to the forefront “information that’s on the brink of consciousness” (Levoy, 1997, p. 123). If, as Levoy continues, all artistic practices are “satellite dishes for hearing the signals the soul sends out” (p. 123), it is the implicit purpose of the seminar meetings, the assigned readings, the reflective papers, to tune those satellite dishes so that the soul may be heard. We are looking, seeking, and pursuing. How are those in the *Gang of 8* to *be*? What holds them together? For what are they asking?

### **The Suppliant**

To be a suppliant is to be one who will “plead humbly” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1094). The suppliant is asking for recognition, acceptance, and inclusion. Whether these adjunct faculty members are searching humbly or boldly, I want to explore how important the sense of belonging to the university community is for them. Does this sense

of belonging exist? Why is it even an important matter to consider? And what form might this belonging take?

O'Donohue (1999) speaks of different styles of belonging – the native who belongs because of being born in that place; the visitor who belongs somewhere else but is in our space temporarily; the neighbor who lives next to us but who has minimal significance in our lives; the wanderer who does not have a fixed abode but who is constantly called by new horizons; and, finally, the stranger, the unknown person whom one has not met before. Into which of these categories would each member of the *Gang of 8* place their fellow adjuncts? The diversity in the personalities of the participants is reflected in their varying expressions of *need* to feel a part of the larger community of the university as well as part of the group of peers teaching in the same discipline. For some, just *belonging* to a university is not what draws them into greater contact, greater opening to others. Their need to connect is driven by specific needs, questions or concerns. Thus, they might consider their peers visitors (invited to their space temporarily) or even strangers with whom they exercise caution and from whom they maintain a comfortable distance.

They lead busy lives. They belong to many other communities. Participation in the university community is limited by choice. Al is reluctant to say it out loud. “From my perspective as a teacher who also has another career, I don’t feel the university is that important to me to belong to....No, UMUC is, the university itself, is not as important as the community that we build in each one of our courses.” His sentiments are echoed by some other members of the group. “Yeah, belonging to the classroom is far more important to me than belonging to this academic community of adjuncts” (Bob).



The thing that I liked the most was the students. And that's why I wanted to come back and teach. So my community, my second community, is the students. It has *nothing* to do with the school. And it's interesting in an academic environment. I've been trying to think this through. In an academic environment, you're really not forced to become part of the community. You're an individual. You can run your class and put it in a U-shape, or you can put whatever you want. But it's *you*. And I don't care what you do. I want to do what *I* want to do. (Ray)

**Community when convenient.** Community appears to be limited in its definition to being able to get solutions to questions or problems. "I have a question, I can shoot it to Janet; I can shoot it to you [other members of the group]. I can shoot it to Seth, and get an answer. And I don't need any more than that from this community" (Ray). This supplicant is not the person who asks humbly and earnestly, who is submissive, bending, or kneeling down (Barnhart, 1988). There is boldness here, a certain recognition of the boundaries beyond which any need for help will not be crossed or revealed. Admitting to his immediate supervisor that assistance is needed is acceptable. Posting that need for all his peers to see goes too far. There is little bending, little suppleness in Ray's position. But he still acknowledges that he does need support.

One of the Old Irish roots for *need* is *nune*, meaning famine (Barnhart, 1988). For what is the adjunct faculty member hungry? What does it take to recognize a need, to find that scent which points toward something yet to be discovered? What does it mean for people to opt to be part of a community, however loosely one wishes to define the term? Is it based solely on satisfying a need to have a question answered, or to clarify some action that needs to be taken? If this is the only stimulus for interacting with the community members, is any real communication other than technical or administrative facts taking place? Is there a chance for deeper connection among this group of peers? Ray is quite adamant about his sense of what provides the incentive for people to reach

out to their peers or to the staff of the university. “There has to be a need. If there isn’t any need, then in this environment there isn’t any community.” He feels that the large number of faculty who support a specific discipline does not provide the grounds for a need that entices the faculty members in that discipline to develop any sense of connection. For Ray, the need that calls people into any sense of community or connectedness might possibly be found in faculty groups who are teaching the same course “because there’s a need in those different groups.” Perhaps Ray’s definition of need-based community is not so far from Hamman’s (2001) list of criteria for a social community, people with some common ties interacting in a shared space. I did ask the group at one point whether just having staff available to answer questions is sufficient to support them as instructors. Are they comfortable in being self-sustaining in their separateness as adjuncts? Ray insists that “the community between faculty is what I’m saying doesn’t really exist or has to exist. And that the faculty themselves, by definition, are very insular.”

**Community as critical.** Others, with greater longing to belong specifically to a university community, might consider their adjunct peers as neighbors, those who balance caring and courtesy with space to engage or disengage in ways that support individual freedom. For Sonia, being “completely left out there by [herself]” when she was teaching for the European Division was “not a good feeling.” She reiterated several times during our meetings that her connection to other faculty and to the university through the faculty online classroom gave her that thread/string/rope that grounded her as an instructor. For Sonia, listening in to the online conversations centered around teaching problems and the sharing of personal information about families and professional and

career news fosters her sense of belonging and support that she needs to be an effective instructor. “There is a community there, even though it’s not like taking all of our time as with a regular full time job. But it’s enough to support the job that we do at the university.”

However, a sense of isolation from others until a need arises is exacerbated by the physical distancing among adjuncts members who infrequently, or never, see their peers face-to-face. Beth, already part of another school as a full time tenured faculty member, felt a greater sense of acceptance and connection when she sought out an experienced instructor at her community college for assistance in addressing a case of plagiarism. But it was not until that specific need for assistance arose that she recognized her ability to connect with other faculty members at her full time institution. How much more difficult it is, then, to reach out to others who are never seen, who are faceless names in an online classroom. Is it not just easier simply to ask questions of the supervisor instead of creating a messy connection with peers whom one does not know and who do not know you?

Gioconda, who is local to the campus headquarters, attends the local faculty meetings, and opts to teach only in face-to-face classroom settings, still finds the need for human contact with peer instructors, a need she feels is lacking in our university setting. She longs for a forum where she can share with others her ideas and activities that have made her a successful classroom instructor. Because that does not happen, even at discipline-specific faculty meetings where her peers meet together, she reaches out to older roots, an earlier educational community for support. When she has concerns or questions about pedagogy or teaching methods, she goes back to the faculty and mentors

she encountered while obtaining her undergraduate degree. Like others in the group, however, she also couches this linkage with the community of her undergraduate studies in terms of contact when she “needs” encouragement or assistance. “So you decided you needed something. So then you reached out to the community to get what you needed” (Al to Gioconda).

**Relationship and need.** Simply getting all the faculty members who are teaching the same course to come together at a common site or in the same virtual/online study group does not automatically guarantee the development of any sense of connection between the participants.

You can’t mandate a sense of community. Community has to happen for two reasons. One is there’s a shared specific purpose between individuals in the group. They *have* to need something or want something out of it that’s the same thing somebody else wants. The other thing is, they won’t really work together unless they have already established relationships.  
(Bob)

In speaking of her experiences of being a mentor to a faculty member teaching for the first time, Michele recounts that she had little response from the mentee during the course of the semester. But later, when the instructor had a question, she did come to Michele for an answer. “When there’s a need, they will contact you” (Michele). But that instructor may never have come to Michele unless the relationship had been established, however tentatively and perhaps reluctantly, during the mentoring program. Unless the relationship has been established, there is no reaching out. “They have to have a need, and they have to have a relationship. So if they have a need and no relationship, it won’t happen. If they have a relationship but no needs, it won’t happen. You have to have both” (Bob).

As Wenger (1998) concludes:

Mutual engagement does not entail homogeneity, but it does create relationships among people. When it is sustained, it connects participants in ways that can become deeper than more abstract similarity in terms of personal features or social categories. (p. 76)

There are several elements of need with which to contend. The group must be focused on specific problems which they all face to some degree. The linking threads are the commonality of issues that all instructors face in the classroom environment or in negotiating the administrative processes and policies. Some mechanism is required to sustain the communication and refresh and invigorate the discussions. There have to be opportunities for establishing relationships, presumably relationships that extend beyond the limited circle of a particular issue with which the members may be wrestling (course projects, grading or student lack of preparedness, etc.). This mutual engagement is the potential for community. And it is the filigree, the solder, and the lead channels that hold the pieces together in their section of the window. It can be viewed as that which connects them and not that which separates them.

It's logistics, for the most part. I mean, we're really not having intellectual discussions about what's the best way to teach. So I think that we shouldn't necessarily give up on the idea of fostering a greater sense of community, because I think there probably are missed opportunities. I don't think any of us are lacking in being able to do our job. But who knows, there might be more we can do if we can figure out a way to get into deeper issues than "Can I just borrow your syllabus?" Or, "Do you have people complaining about grades, too?" (Bob)

Just establishing relationships among the members as the sole goal of community does not address the deeper need for inner reflection into our own being-ness, the "deeper issues" that Bob speaks of. I ask them, "What is it you want from your other adjunct faculty members? What is it you want from the university?" Al says,

I want the university to provide the rules. I want them to provide the standards and the guidance. Ok. What I want from other faculty is, ah, I want their ideas. I want to hear how you're doing it, whatever that "it" is. In the classroom, in your syllabi, whatever. Then *I* want to be able to decide how I take from that to deliver my product to my students.

The rule, the standards, and the guidance, much like the cement work in a rose window, should support but not distract from the story of the window. It is the individual pieces, working in some sort of concert, that tell the story. The supporting structure has to be there. It is active only insofar as it provides glue, the solder that supports the pieces so that they can tell their story. Bob echoes Al's need for the external structure to be in place. "You know, we're all professionals at teaching, but generally don't need help with teaching. What I need help with most of the time are administrative issues and the referee."

Do we then relegate adjunct faculty to pockets of isolation that they breach only when they need something? In what way does that support their growth as individuals and as professionals? How do they find out that there may be more innovative, more interesting, more inclusive ways to teach, to strengthen the communities in their classrooms? In what ways can they become better teachers outside of doing singular research in the privacy of their own homes? These are challenges that the university faces in the "care and feeding" of its faculty, whether full time or adjunct. It is around these challenges that the rose window of community or community-building experiences must be designed. But in order to recognize the true hunger in the needs expressed by the faculty members, it is helpful to understand more about the individuals. It is important to understand why they teach, what they value, what colors they bring or wear to their *being* as adjunct faculty members.

## Acquisition of the Pieces

The reader has already been introduced to the members of the *Gang of 8*. But are there any characteristics of this group that make it unique, that are layers of being below the surface label of *adjunct faculty member* which drew them together into this particular community-building exercise? Does the invitation to participate in a community-building experience have a particularly strong siren-call for these participants? And does this small group reflect in a unique way the larger group of adjunct faculty that serve the university?

Two distinct themes illuminating the *who* of the participants arise in our conversations – that of the *jester* and the *joiner*. In the first theme of the jester, a mask hiding the true self of one of the participants is disclosed and, ultimately, is challenged by the group. In the second, the joiner, a very strong common bond among the participants, unanticipated, is discovered.

### **The Jester**

By its very nature, stained glass changes light as it passes through the pieces of glass. The bending of light rays is what causes our eyes to see the colors. So I might consider these stained glass pieces as masks, hiding the true nature of the light that is made visible as I stand on the inside, looking through the glass toward the light source. The jester taunts, jeers, lampoons, entertains, and amuses. But from Middle English *gesten* – recite a tale + *-er* (Barnhart, 1988), the jester is also a minstrel who recites stories that mask reality, much like the mask that the jester wears is a disguise covering over the reality of the person underneath.

During our very first group meeting, after sharing brief autobiographical sketches with each other, the discussion turns to one of the orienting questions that are part of the

syllabus prepared for this first seminar meeting: “In what manner do our autobiographical stories reveal the masks we have worn and the deep identity that is our existence?”

Barnhart (1988) tells us that the word *mask*, besides referring to covering the face, to masquerading, also includes links to *buffoon*, *specters* and *nightmares*. Are these masks that we wear, in the classroom or in these seminar meetings, made of clear glass, revealing the authentic person? Or are they specters of our authentic selves, blurring, hiding, or blocking our deep identities? Do these same masks allow us to reveal the playfulness of the child, the antics of a clown, or the silliness of the buffoon that are not our real persona? Or are they outlets for that which seeks to be recognized, revered, accepted? What nightmares are also hidden under these masks? If these masks are specters of our real selves, can we hope to build a level of trust among these participants that will allow the masks to be removed? Why do we feel so impoverished that we need to hide behind a mask? Levoy challenges us with the task and incredible courage required to heal that which the mask hides.

Elevating self-esteem, though, is among the most difficult work there is. The term ‘self-esteem’ is tossed around with such cloying abandon that it has effectively been gutted of meaning and is often represented to be something we can turn on with the flick of a switch. Our deeper intelligence tells us, however, that the lack of it is a monster at the heart of the soul, at the heart of the world. Filling the void requires courage and damned hard work. Healing wounds of our self-image cannot occur if we don’t admit the wounds exist, if we don’t take the hot waters of self-scrutiny and take up the plow to work new furrows into the brain. We also cannot heal without understanding that healing not only involves our own hard work but also requires retooling the apparatuses of human relations: child raising, education, religion, relations between the sexes and the races. (Levoy, 1997, p. 224)



**Presenting the mask.** Al is the most gregarious member in the group setting, often taking the lead in introducing or expounding on the topic that is on the table. And so he is the first to offer that he wears the mask of Master Sergeant in the classroom.

Who do I bring to the classroom? Well clearly I bring this Master Sergeant, this guy who was in the Air Force for 21 years. And it kind of sets the tone the very first evening. . . . When I first started [teaching] most of my students were military people. And there was no question that *I* was in charge of the class. And there was no question if I said something was due on the 21<sup>st</sup>, it was due on the 21<sup>st</sup>. And if you missed it you paid the penalty. But I've watched over the last 10 years where now it's a fifty-fifty split, where you have people with *no* military background, no connection to the military, that are in [the university's] classes. And I'm finding I'm having a tougher time with it. Because I *do* bring that Master Sergeant to the classroom.

There is a ripple that goes through the group; several protest that Al does not need to wear this mask. At the same time there is recognition that he has placed the bar of honesty before them. This is our very first group meeting, and Al has thrown out to the fledgling community a challenge to trust each other by sharing information that is personal, private, honest. When Gioconda asks him why he feels a need to wear this mask in the classroom, he says:

I think when people look at me, you know, they see, you know, black male, bald head, tongue ring in his [mouth]. . . . They don't get to see the 21 years in the military. So they don't get to see unless I mention it. So I have to have those masks, and I bring them up a lot less than I used to. But I have those masks because that's the way that you know, that I have the confidence.

As Gioconda continues to protest that she has never seen Al lacking in confidence, Al goes on to explain his need for hiding behind his masks:

I came from a very poor environment where my father had a 4<sup>th</sup> grade education; my mom made it through high school. But I went to a Catholic school all the way through high school. And I've always been told that the best that I could hope to achieve with that educational background in my family would maybe be a high school diploma, you know, I'd learn a trade and go be a welder or a construction kind. . . . And I rebelled against that notion. And I was very aggressive in it. I was

always fighting this idea that that's the best that I could be. So the mask that I wear when I'm in the classroom is really to hide the fact that I'm still trying to figure out, or I'm still trying, "Do I really belong here?" Because I've been told this whole time that I don't belong here. Right? So even at 50 years old, every time I walk into that classroom, right, it's, you know, every first class is like ... it's ... I can't describe it, you know. Because it's ... you're told that you don't belong here and here I am, teaching in a major university, you know. And that is "Wow!" Something that I never would have thought that I would do. So I have to have those masks, I think, to hide behind the fact that I'm still questioning if I really belong here.

Al has laid the issue of masks on the table. He is genuinely surprised at the reaction of the group to his disclosure. But in exposing his mask to the others in the room, he has also allowed a glimpse of the distortion this mask means for him, the lie that it tells, and the acknowledgement that he needs to put it aside.

If we look only to others to show us who we are, however, then the reflections we'll have of ourselves will always be distorted a little, like our reflections caught in other people's sunglasses, in dark windows, fish-eye lenses, or the sides of teakettles – the light always a little refracted and the image never quite true. (Levoy, 1997, p. 217)

Al's openness in acknowledging his deception, if only to himself, has provided the smallest of foundations upon which trust might be built between the members of the group, some of whom had never met each other before this Sunday afternoon meeting. It gives the others the permission, the freedom, to try out tentative feelers of trust in revealing what they perceive as their own masks.

Perhaps the masks we wear are another way of accepting or rejecting the labels others have hung around our necks. Michele struggles between having been told by others that she wears one mask (introvert) and proving to them that they are wrong, that she is really a self-developed extrovert. This extroversion, a thrusting outward, a turning outside herself, may have given rise to her selection of the bird as a metaphor for who she

is when teaching. The bird, flying freely, sociable in the flock, belies the tag (the cage?) of introvert that others had placed on her.

Jef finds himself bristling when students challenge him on course content, admitting that he hides behind his credentials as an instructor and still feels threatened if those credentials are challenged. Bob, who also used to worry about others challenging his credentials, now sees himself as facilitator in the classroom, less concerned about being expected to know all and always provide correct answers. He appears much more comfortable with this mask. Sonia, who had been a stay-at-home mom since the birth of her child, worries that students will not take her seriously. She would like to have some masks of respectability (some titles) to wear:

I'm finding this very, very interesting. And I think that because of ... we both touched on a subject that I have felt, and that has been very troublesome for me. I'm pretty young. I consider myself pretty young in the sense that I'm only 32 and I've been teaching for the last 5 years. And one of the reasons I'm working where I'm working right now [in the HR department of a bank] is because I'm pursuing, I'm trying to show myself that...or maybe what I'm trying to show my students is "Hey, I have a mask to put on for you." 'Cause I don't have any. I don't have any titles. I don't have any, I really don't have any titles to put on. . . . But I have to fight, almost, with these personalities, with students who are, many times, older than me, have much more experience than I do. And that's when, I think it was Bob was saying, that's when I try to say, "Hey, I'm just a facilitator here. And my goal is to prove that everything is possible, that you can reach your limits, that you can learn, and I can help you with that.

Her final sentence provides some hope for the community-building experience in which we are participating, "But it's very, very fascinating to me that you've all experienced this in your teaching experience. I thought I was the only one." The dropping of masks has put another chink in the wall that separates. "Each time we drop our masks and meet heart-to-heart, reassuring one another simply by the quality of our presence, we

experience a profound bond which we intuitively understand is nourishing everyone” (Dass & Gorman, 1993, p. 89).

**Acknowledging there is a mask.** During that first meeting Ray has been quiet, somewhat of a lurker. After he shares his biographical information, I feel an even greater withdrawal on his part. He remains attentive and listening, but without any compulsion to contribute. His few offerings are in good humor but with an edge of cynicism underneath. His mask is the most complicated in the group, allowing him to observe without being required to reveal. He distrusts the *egos* of academics, insisting that they are too self-centered to openly share and listen to others or even ask for input, to be part of a community where sharing is a basic requirement. The support that administration provides for adjunct faculty can be better labeled as “Help Desk support” and not true community building.

But there is something of a struggle going on behind that mask. Following our second seminar session, Al and I were discussing an academic issue after the group had left. Ray *returned* to the room to tell Al that he had thought a lot about masks after that first meeting and he wondered if everyone around the table had similar masks but are too hesitant to reveal them. It might take more than four meetings to get this *Gang of 8* to build a firm foundation of trust among its members. But by making this special trip back to the meeting site to assure Al that he had taken the open discussion of masks seriously, Ray made a move from lurking observer to active participant. By the third seminar meeting he reveals that the metaphor which describes him best is that of a clown, not in the sense of acting out in the classroom, the class clown, but of making teaching and learning “fun.” Ray signs each email message with “Have fun.” He is the jester in the

classroom, the minstrel of Middle English, the singer or musician, both entertainer and servant (Barnhart, 1988).

Ray comes to the third seminar meeting dressed from head to toe in the colors and symbols of the Washington Redskins football team. He had given away his tickets to the Opening Day game in order to participate in the seminar. Season tickets to these games are prized possessions, and I am curious as to what seems to compel him to remain loyal to this small group activity even while, at times, insisting that adjunct faculty do not need, and are even dis-inclined to be part of, the university community. Although he does admit that his only fear about participating in this community-building exercise is that of feeling foolish in front of peers, he is convinced that he has come away feeling more comfortable with himself, partially because he has “had a number of preconceptions confirmed.” Masks, besides hiding our true selves from others, also may prevent us from looking inward to find that core which defines us.

### **Moment between Masks**

As long as we stayed in closed rooms  
and stiff coats, we were disguised;  
but toward the end of winter the carnival  
helps us to *play* at disguise for a while.

For soon spring will remove all the masks:  
it wants a clear country, and honest garden;  
already a fully naked air leans on the basin  
where water waits for the shadows of spring.

We'll feel its body, full of sap, stretch,  
but have we ever seen its face?  
barely adult, it never takes off  
the mask of greenery it completes. (Rilke, 1979, p. 245)

A clear country and an honest garden – is this something we must provide for/by ourselves or is it something we participate in fully only when in communion with the

others who have shucked their coats and left their closed rooms? Where in the academic community is it safe to take off the mask? Even if we are self-aware, is it safe to teach who we truly are? The body-mind, “full of sap,” full of juice, new wine (Barnhart, 1988), needs to grow, stretch and take off the mask to feel the naked air of phenomenon – “the self-showing in itself” (Heidegger, 1953/1996, p. 36). This is a journey that must be taken by each individual, in fits and spurts, in youth and in maturity. Self-acceptance needs to be practiced, a repeated and persistent opening to seeing ourselves as we are, and simply being with what we see (Mountain Dreamer, 2003).

**Swapping masks.** Yet, we may shift identities much like we shift communities. Ray continues to see himself as a different person depending on the community he is involved in at the moment. “I think that I belong to many communities and I am a different self in each of them, so I am unsure which one is my true self.” And thus, one of his masks is his way of dealing with what seems to him to be the artificial community of the university or the faculty with whom he associates. Is there a moment between these masks, these shifting persona, when the genuine being manifests itself? Wooldridge (1996) suggests in her writing workshops that participants try writing from several perspectives, from several points of view, utilizing different voices. “We may express needs we’re not aware we have, coming from parts of us we barely know are there” (p. 81). As Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) says, “The question is not why are we so infrequently the people we really want to be. The question is why do we so infrequently want to be the people we really are” (p.7). And so we continue to seek glimpses of the genuine being behind the mask. This seeking now turns to look at how experiences of community have shaped perceptions of community and its centeredness in the lives of the

individual members of the *Gang of 8*. In the next petal of the window, a deeper revealing of that which formed the concept of community among the participants is revealed.

### **The Joiner**

Some were red from the war. (Mills, 1979, p. 18)

In what ways do our earliest experiences of community define for us the meaning and form of the educational community in which we find ourselves in the present?

During the second seminar, the participants are asked to talk about an experience of community, of any duration, that had been meaningful to them. Why did they define that experience as one of community? What are their feelings at that time that made them open to community?

In looking back at experiences that exemplify community, the participants in the group recount family and social settings. What becomes surprisingly but abundantly clear in this second seminar meeting is that all eight participants have been touched by a military service environment, either as direct participants, in major career jobs associated with the military, or as family members of those in military service. I was not aware of this connection when choosing the participants. But this common thread winds its way through subsequent conversations and sheds some light on why these particular adjunct faculty may have chosen to participate in this community-building experience. The message becomes clear – the impact of the military community on the lives of the participants is indelible. Either as a direct participant or a member of a family immediately impacted by military service, the military community fulfilled “one of the crucial needs that every individual has: the need to belong” (O’Donohue, 1997, p. 143).

The most enduring belonging is within the individual, the wholeness that comes from recognizing and celebrating or *being* and our longing for wholeness as individuals.

**This community is home.** Ray clearly and firmly identifies the connection with others in military service as impacting his understanding of community.

It's a home. You're safe. You're protected. You've got everything you're going to need there. So you become reliant on that. . . . I feel like I'm usually connected to the military today. And I think that's the community that I'm the closest to. (Ray)

Ray equates community with home, safety, protection. For him, this is what is meant by community. *Home*, from the Gothic *hiams*, means village (Onions, 1966). And the military community is certainly one form of a village, although it has grown far beyond the usual meaning of village as a small town, or a farmstead with outbuildings. However, the term village connotes a form of connectedness where dwellers are known to each other, and privacy is rarely found. Community, from the Latin *communis*, means common or public. This ground of the commons, common denominators, common sense and the common cold all support the notion of communication, communion, making common to many, sharing, imparting to others in the group (Barnhart, 1988). "You've got everything you're going to need there," Ray reminds us. Why would anyone ever opt to leave?

Whether in the form of first-person immersion in the military community or being part of a military family, military service has provided a unique coloration to the concept of community for every member of the group. Perhaps, as for Ray, Bob, Al and Jef who served as active members of the armed services, the military community has provided the means for feeling whole, healthy and respected. This community, in most cases, impacted the individuals at formative times in their lives, providing an external framework for the development of an enduring sense of belonging that has engaged the center of their lives,



has created a home where they felt, for some significant period, not a tenant but an owner. In the military, it is the squad or the platoon that forms this home, the commons, the brotherhood that erases boundaries between the individual's wants and needs and focuses on a common goal or mission. "The commons is always a place and a possibility – a reality and an aspiration" (Parks, 2005, p. 299). The individual does not disappear as a person but becomes integrally entwined in the lives of the others. That entwining seems to be permanent, even when distance and life decisions separate the individuals.

Your friends are still the friends you had when you were in the military. If they haven't left (or even if they have), you still have this common bond and this thread and this understanding. . . . And they have a commitment to you because you have a commitment to them. And you live with that the rest of your life, knowing that this group cares about each other. And it's this sense of community that allows this to happen. (Bob)

Even Michele, who has worked in the military environment for many years as a civilian, recognizes this call of community that is unique to the military environment. In speaking of a significant other in her life, she says, "If I get upset with him, and he gets mad with me, then he knows he has the military to go to. And so that is his love, and that is his community."

For Al, the military, the Air Force, was a way for him to lift himself out of the limitations imposed by family, school, social boundaries.

When I went into the Air Force I was very poor, I had an academic scholarship to go to a college. I did the arithmetic and I said, 'I will starve to death. I will not have clothes on my back. And I will not have a place to live.' So I joined the Air Force. And they took care of all of those lower-level needs, right, that we call the psychological or the survival needs, which created the environment for me to take those next steps that I needed to take. (Al)

Although he acknowledges that he did leave active service because he felt he had reached a plateau in his personal and professional life and needed to look elsewhere for continued

growth, he still keeps that community “on the fringes,” living now close to the Pentagon. And he plans that “When my time comes, they can just roll me right up the street to Arlington National [cemetery].” For Al, the military family is almost a birth-to-death connection.

Jef perhaps is the most distant in time from his military experience. He does not speak of that experience as being an integral part of his current community life. However, when I visited Jef in Colorado Springs, he and his wife, Janice, proudly showed me around the grounds of the Air Force Academy and Peterson Air Force Base, easily accessible only because of the military sticker on his car windshield. Although he does not state his connection to community as strongly as Ray, Bob, and Al, its impact on his current life is still apparent. It does seem that if one becomes a member of a military service branch the tie can never be entirely severed. For all four members of the group with direct military service, their choice of where to live or retire is based on having access to military benefits such as the Post Exchange (PX) and health services. This link cannot but have an impact on what *community* means for the individual. As Al admits, in listening to Ray and Bob, “I’ve never left.”

**A closed circle.** “The military community is a closed community. It is quite closed. Unless you’ve deployed, unless you’ve had someone deploy, unless you’ve stood watch, you’re not really allowed in” (Bob). And Ray agrees. “You can’t, you as a person, compete with that community. And you have two choices. One is to back off or join it.” What impact does this military experience have on the definition of community for these adjunct faculty members? Do these instructors expect the same environment in their roles as instructors, that the group of adjuncts should be a closed community? Al speaks of a

need to trust the other participants, much as he placed his life in the hands of comrades. But Ray does not expect any such trust to exist among the adjuncts. Ray thinks that egos prevent even the possibility of any formation of community among adjuncts. According to him, the other adjuncts are concerned only with themselves. There is no sharing. There is no trust. Is this how they all see what is lacking in a community as embodied in an academic environment? What about those who were never in active service, Beth, Michele, Sonia, and Gioconda?

Gioconda did not speak much about her connection to the military except to say “I had an incredible model of a father who was a general, a philosopher, a poet, and a judge. So that foundation, from my father who I admired tremendously, stayed with me. And I had a lovable dictator of a mother.” Gioconda, with her history of on-her-own survival in a foreign country at the age of 14, seems the least likely to look at the military environment as providing the foundation for her sense of community. And yet, the description of a much-admired father includes his role as general alongside that of poet and philosopher. Her earliest years were spent in a military family setting. Even her mother is described as a “lovable dictator.” Dictators are many times associated with military rule or, at a minimum, require military support and protection within a country. Gioconda may have thrown off the bonds of a military community at an early age. Her stated sense of community rests more in academia and in her association with former instructors and dissertation advisors. However, she has worked in the military-like environment of a government agency for nearly 20 years. “It puts a roof over my head,” she says. But she speaks with pride of the opportunities she has had there to develop training modules for personnel, particularly in the area of learning foreign languages.

Beth's parents both were members of the Marine Corps. "And they speak about this trust. Like, if you're going into war or whatever, you know that the person beside you has been trained, and you trust them with your life. But people who do not have that strong military background like you [have] don't come with that assumption." How does this issue of trust relate to the interactions between the members of the *Gang of 8* and between adjunct faculty members? Is it possible to generate that level of trust among a loosely aggregated group of individuals who do not have a structure similar to that of the military? Or perhaps might it result not from voluntary service but from recognizing a common purpose. Even in the military, "You take a bunch of guys and send them to Iraq. They don't want to go there. But guess what, they come back as a community. So it can happen many ways. It doesn't have to be voluntary" (Bob).

Sonia married into the military – her husband is an American Navy serviceman. He met Sonia while he was stationed in her native Naples. Like Michele, Gioconda, and Beth, she lives on the fringes of that environment, impacted by it, but not part of the inner circle of active service members. This living on the fringe in some ways allows these participants to seek deep community outside the military environment. They are not so intimately formed and tied to the military community and are, in some ways, more open to different types of community definitions and experiences that they find enriching.

**Community calls.** There is an element of a *calling* heard in the tone of all the members as they speak about their immediate or familial experience of military service. Heeding a call requires listening and a willingness to learn from whatever source is available. Levoy (1997) names these great listeners heroes. And he further states:

Heroic people understand that calls are not just inner experiences – passions, dreams, symptoms – but also outer. These come to us from the

world and from the events in our lives, and whether they fling themselves at us like fastballs or follow us around and rub up against us like stray cats, they, too, require a response. (p. 98)

I can understand this linkage of community with a structured environment such as the military. It is much like the experience of belonging to a religious community. There is a level of rigidity that supports continuity and consistency. There is a level of sublimation of the individual into a group identity. And like Al, Ray, and Gioconda who speak of the need to leave this comfortable place in order to experience growth, I can appreciate the need to get free. But also, like every other member of the *Gang of 8*, I am forever colored in my definition of community by this initial immersion in a highly structured group. My own need to find the structure of community that supports my work as an educator mirrors that of the members of the *Gang of 8* – mirrors but does not reflect the same image as what is seen in their own definitions of community. The commonality is the embeddedness in a group experience that is part of the fused and burned colors of our lives. Our colors are different, different shades of red, perhaps. Our calls then, are different, also. Mountain Dreamer (2003) tells us that “The call is about finding the one thing you came here to say and saying it a thousand different ways – in your words, in your actions, your choices – so you and the world can really hear it” (p. 187).

Is there any explanation as to why every member of the *Gang of 8* has a level of military connection? It would only be fair to point to the fact that the university was initially founded to support education of military personnel and their dependents. The military connection is prevalent in information literature and advertising about the university. In addition, there is a strong culture of word-of-mouth recruiting done within the faculty ranks. This culture of service to military personnel can be considered one

drawing card for those who wish to teach here. Retired military also find many others with similar experiences, providing an immediate connection based on that common factor. And like Ray, now looking for a retirement community restricted to former members of the military, the common language of military service can bridge the trust-gap among strangers quickly. Those who do not share that language may find themselves having a more difficult time establishing bonds of acceptance among others. Is this why Ray feels that there is little trust among adjunct faculty members? Indications of a similar difficulty in establishing trust are never expressed when the group talks about the interaction between themselves and students. There is an easier bond established more immediately in the classroom, a stronger sense of community more readily acknowledged. Why the evidence of higher walls between adjunct faculty? Al repeatedly indicates that he thinks of other adjuncts as already vetted, already members of the platoon or squad, simply by the fact that they have been hired as instructors. He assumes that no one who is not qualified will be part of this pool of adjunct faculty. But Al also has been very actively engaged with other instructors. He serves as a coordinator for a large contingent of instructors teaching one of the high-enrollment courses in the general education area. Shades of his military leadership skills can be found both in his engagement with the instructors, his decision-making abilities, and his concern for the other members of the group. Of all members of the *Gang*, Al carries his military experience most closely into his work in the telecommunications industry, as well as in his work as an adjunct faculty member.

Engagement and communication are integral parts of a healthy community. What opportunities do adjunct faculty members have for engaging in activities that excite

them? What opportunities do they have for meaningful and sustained communication on topics that are pertinent, focused, and supportive of their work as instructors? What are the rules of engagement in this community? What are the rules needed for successfully assembling the window of community?

### **Assembling the Window**

What is it that supports successful community-building? Are there basic components that ensure community? Hamman (2001) gives us this outline:

The sociological term *community* should be understood here as meaning (1) a group of people (2) who share social interaction (3) and some common ties between themselves and the other members of the group (4) and who share an area for at least some of the time. (p. 75)

The faculty members have opportunities to share interests, problems, and solutions related to teaching in the form of ideas and information posted in the common space of the online classroom. This *Gang of 8* is also sharing a more intimate common space in these seminar meetings. Is that enough to ensure community? What is the incentive to being active in any community?

### **The Bookie – Having Skin in the Game**

Bob succinctly couches the incentive in terms of having *skin in the game*. “It means you have a stake in the outcome, in what’s going to happen. It comes from golf, actually. And ‘skin’ is money. And if you’re in the game and it’s your own money that you’re betting on the outcome, then you have *skin in the game*” (Bob). What is the skin that these faculty members contribute? What are they hoping to win? What score do they hope to achieve? Sonia is very clear about what both the online classroom and this community-building experience mean for her.

So having a community, having a point of reference is very, very important to me. And again, even in the virtual format, but I still feel that I'm part of a real institution instead of something that's just in the air that I don't see and that I don't go to. (Sonia)

The sense of their legitimacy and value as adjunct educators remains strong within this group. Al voices his position as follows: "I think adjuncts who are doing what they do and bringing that practical knowledge back to the classroom, refresh the course every time they teach it. That's critical." When asked what keeps them going as an instructor, even in the face of working alone without frequent contact with people who are committed to this work in the same way, Bob says, "Oh, the love of teaching." And Gioconda replies, "If it's a passion, it's strong enough."

Is this passion for teaching all that is required to maintain their continued work? Is there no real perceived need for linking up with others with the same passions? "I think the community has to have a real purpose. And I think if a bunch of faculty are comfortable doing things their own way, they have really no reason to belong to a community" (Bob). Those seem to be harsh words about the community that university staff seem so intent on creating and supporting. This sense of independence and self-imposed isolationism is not absolute, however. "But, you know, I communicate with Al, and Al communicates with me and others because we have to get something done. And we know we can depend on each other to do that. So that's where the strongest sense of community exists, where there is a common, clear purpose for its existence" (Bob). Sonia voices this same need for inter-action this way: "You come together because you want to have contact with other people doing the same thing you're doing. . . . I do want to be with people with my same background or doing what I do" (Sonia). The coming-together is vital to sustaining the work, whatever the work may be.



**Risks of the game.** What risks did these participants anticipate in joining this community? As Whitmyer (1993) reminds us, the risks can be weighted as heavily as the anticipated rewards:

In the company of others I can find comfort or pain. In the company of others I can belong or be shunned. In the company of others I can become who I truly am or be bent and twisted beyond recognition. (p. 255)

Ray admits to having come to the initial seminar meeting with some concern that he might “make a fool of myself in front of a group of peers.” He admits to not thinking of community as paramount to his activities as an adjunct faculty member. But “There is a strong sense of community with the students in my current classes since we are all involved in a common goal.” That same pull toward a common goal is not felt with his fellow adjunct faculty members. Trust plays a large part in Ray’s participation – both in faculty interaction and in his relationship to the *Gang of 8*. “I think getting to know people is part of this. It’s somebody who you know who you can go to and ask something and they know what you’re talking about.”

Jef reiterates this need for trust. Within the intimate setting of the seminars, he finds reaffirmation and acceptance.

This environment was good for me as it opened the doors for me to express my feelings and get some honest feedback and reflections. The sense of community really started to build then, and I came away with a sense of bonding with everyone on the team. Before this community experience, I knew I could count on and ask Janet any questions that I had and she would always provide me with answers and support. Now I have several more that I can go to without fearing that I would ask a stupid question or be rejected. (Jef)

**Recognizing the rules.** Are there other components of this structure that are needed to forge a true sense of community? There is some question of whether the participants know the rules or expectations of them as members of this community of

adjunct faculty. “Maybe we don’t understand the rules of our community, and that’s why we can’t see the relationship. Do we as a community understand the rules we’re bound by? In our community we’re a little more laissez-faire, aren’t we?” (Jef). What does he mean by laissez-faire? The term refers to allowing people to do as they please, “deliberate abstention from direction or interference, especially with individual freedom of choice and action” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1971, p. 472). Is Jef, in some way, indicating that there is too little attention paid to their work as instructors, that they are truly left to their own devices in their work? The lack of face-to-face contact among faculty members certainly flies in the face of both shared interaction and shared space. Gioconda vocalizes this emptiness, this lack of real community. In the setting of a general faculty meeting, where there was the opportunity for face-to-face interaction, she detects a lack of movement toward that interaction both on the part of the organizing structure of the meeting and in the responses of the participants.

I don’t sense that it’s there [community]. This is the first time that I sort of have this type of interaction among some of the faculty members....When I decided to come back . . . to teach . . . , my first meeting, I remember very clearly, obviously a faculty meeting, I found it incredibly impersonal. There was no contact. I never got to meet any other adjunct professors there. It was very impersonal. I found the first meeting incredibly commercialized. I saw lots of numbers in terms of “How can we retain students? How can we bring in more students?” It was so mechanized. Honestly, I was very discouraged. ‘Cause I was hoping to get to know the other human beings and see if I can build a network. But I didn’t do that. So I said, “Where did I fail as an instructor?” Maybe I should have been more aggressive and started talking to instructors. But I didn’t know the instructors. I didn’t know who was who. It was very confusing.  
(Gioconda)

What Gioconda hoped for was a level of intimacy that could have been fostered by someone simply making introductions. What makes these faculty members not reach out to others in this large group setting, even when they know by placement at tables that

others seated there are members of the same teaching discipline? Is there a level of trust among the participants that must actively be supported by the actions of the staff?

Gioconda does not detect this same aloofness in faculty members she has come to know at the university from which she obtained her undergraduate degree. She frequently goes to them for emotional and intellectual support. Hamman's (2001) definition of community does not mention size. But it might be fair to surmise here that sheer numbers, as found in a general faculty meeting, gravitates toward a greater level of the impersonal. Much like attending a large convention where you know none of the others, it is challenging to make the first moves toward interaction. Intimacy and trust are issues that take deliberate pro-activity. Ray points this out to Gioconda, not just in terms of general faculty meetings but also to the large group of faculty participating in the IFSM 999 online classroom: "You sound like you trust the people that are in this group [of faculty at another institution]."

But there is a sense of what Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) calls "interbeingness," where *inter* here means between and not among. What I occasionally sense is that, although they are truly educators, they view their work in education as lying between their connections to the community of the 8-to-5 workplace and the community of full time faculty.

We go to work everyday and we have that community that we work with. Full time faculty also have that because they're working on publishing and they've got all kinds of departmental issues and they have all the issues that surround them – that's their job. So that's their community. So we sort of tap into it because we're experienced at what we do, we sort of tap in here. But we don't live in this community. And I don't think we can have the same type of community they have. Our community exists from 8 to 5 every day, and then, when necessary, at this other level. (Bob)

Is there some sense of not living fully in the concrete world of education that is being expressed here? Is this interbeingness a living that exists between beings, a no-man's land, a grey fog that exists somewhere between the hard reality of the workplace and that of the full time academician? In what way do they sense that their position as adjunct faculty members feels less than authentic as educators? Bob states:

I think one could put a hypothesis, anyway, that those of us who are adjuncts and work in this stuff everyday, probably have a better handle on the subject matter than a tenured faculty member. But I would also put forward the argument that a tenured faculty member may very well be a better teacher because they spend more time in the classroom teaching.

This results in a chorus of "No" from other members of the group.

There is a slip in the terminology used, however, that may cover over a real or perceived sense of separateness between full time educators and adjuncts. In describing the sense of community among faculty at an institution where he taught some years ago, Ray says that "When I taught at Manhattan College I was part of the *real* faculty. And the *real* faculty, my observation, was not different than here." I have heard this term, *real faculty*, used at other times by various faculty members. I challenge Ray as to why he used the term *real faculty* in referring to the full time faculty at that institution, the implication being that adjunct faculty members are not real, are fraudulent as academics. He corrects my interpretation, countering with "I think the adjunct faculty is probably more qualified and better than the full time faculty because they've got more experience in what the real world is, and they're not in their little pod all the time, dealing with their pod."

This sense of interbeingness, of being somewhere in-between, is brought into sharper focus when the teaching contracts for the fall semester are received. The format

and language of the contracts had changed, and the changes caught the adjunct faculty off guard. An animated discussion took place during the seminar session:

- Al: “So this is the first time I really felt like a distinction was being made between the adjunct and the collegiate.”
- Michele: “So we’re not faculty, we’re staff?”
- Gioconda: “We’re contractors, basically.”
- Janet: “You’re both [faculty and staff].”
- Al: “The new contract makes it very clear that we’re not employees of the university
- Gioconda: “It was a drastic change from the previous letter that we received. I say ‘Whoo, do I really want to work for this place?’ We’re just passing through.”
- Michele: “So how can you build a community with a letter like that?”
- Gioconda: “I didn’t feel part of it. I did not feel part of it. I felt like I was this temporary human being serving as a consultant, on a consulting basis for one semester. And ‘See you later.’ I felt a *huge* gap there.”
- Ray: “I saw enough of it where it said ‘You’re not an employee, blah, blah, blah.’ And I said, pssbt, this is so that we can’t claim benefits. We’re not an employee. It’s ER stuff.”
- Bob: “I work for Janet. And I don’t look beyond that, to be quite honest with you.”
- Ray: “So what’s coming out of this boisterous group here is that there ain’t no community that we’re part of.”

The actuality of the adjunct position is that it is a contract position with limited (one semester) length. That is the reality that all agree to. However, the language of this contract places so much emphasis on the temporal nature of the contract with no indication of the value that the university receives from the services of these employees.

Is the perception such that only the adjunct faculty members have to put *skin in the game*? Strong instructors can expect to be assigned classes in successive semesters, even being given precedence over newer or less-qualified instructors when enrollments limit the staffing positions available. But the language of the contract, the communication with the adjunct, is, in its legalese fashion, punitive rather than constructive, a “Thou shalt...” message with no balancing “We will support you in this manner...” But what choice do the adjuncts have (other than refusing to sign the contract and thus not being staffed to teach)? The *skin in the game* was at too high a cost for Gioconda. She has opted not to teach in the coming semester.

Are there other sets of rules, explicit or implicit, that are barriers to experiencing a sense of community in this university environment? Other than the contract issue discussed here, are there other individuals or practices that exclude one from membership or terminate membership after one has been granted admittance? Do the members of the *Gang of 8* themselves experience structure or rules that enable them to share a common space for a small time?

### **The Bouncer**

The bouncer is one who protects the boundaries, ejecting those who are no longer welcome. Its root is somewhat of a mystery. Ayto (1990) feels that it is an independent onomatopoeic formation. There are similar words, such as the Dutch *bons* (“thump”) or Germaun *bunsen*, “beat, thwack” (Onions, 1966, p. 110). The first recorded use of *bouncer* dates from a newspaper article in the London Daily News dated July 26, 1883:

“The Bouncer is merely the English “chucker out”. When liberty verges on license and gaiety on wanton delirium, the Bouncer selects the gayest of the gay, and – bounces him! (Harper, 2001, ¶ 2)

Are there any rules that define participation in the university community? And if the adjunct faculty member does not cooperate, will he/she be thumped or bounced out of the group? If community is based on communication, what is the measure of participation required in order to reap any benefits from having *skin in the game*?

**Speaking from the inside.** The syllabi provided to the participants is the only guideline laid out for participation in this community-building experience. We did negotiate the meeting dates and times as much as possible to accommodate time zone differences and travel plans. Each member is asked to come prepared to each seminar meeting having read an assigned chapter in the text and having prepared some notes on the questions outlined in the syllabus. They take these assignments quite seriously. Having a focus and structure is important. As Gioconda says, “You have to perform. We had homework to do. We had to participate.” She feels that she has made a promise to be part of the group and wants to follow through on that promise.

“Participation ... is both personal and social. It is a complex process that combines doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and belonging. It involves the whole person, including our bodies, minds, emotions, and social relations” (Wenger, 1998, p. 56). The isolated-ness of adjunct faculty members makes it hard for them to feel they have a need or question actually shared by others. Much like students who are afraid to ask a question in class for fear of being labeled in some way, adjunct faculty members may feel that reaching out to others is a sign of incompetence. “Dancing alone is often easier and certainly less complicated than dancing with someone else, but there is nothing quite so satisfying as creating even one moment of real beauty moving gracefully with another” (Mountain Dreamer, 2001, p. 93). How can adjunct faculty be lured into the dance of

participation? Can they just lurk without being ejected from the community? Can they survive as peripheral pieces, ones that fill in the gaps between the geometric shapes of the window but remain less noticed as someone observes the whole or the circle? Can they become opaque and thus fade into the background of the casement or the tracery of the window? Michele acknowledges that participation is not effortless. “I think it’s really the time element. Because once you throw out an idea, then you have to expand on it and work on it and mold it. And I think there’s a timeframe that you probably just don’t have the time to do it” (Michele).

“Healthy communication reconciles differences, deepens intimacy, fosters a sense of wholeness, and opens individuals to a broader view” (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993, p. 252). But can four meetings result in that level of rich communication? To what risk does that level of communication expose the participants? Bob, in speaking of his participation in the *Gang of 8* activity, says, “I think the one risk you face when you meet with a group of professionals is that you might not be accepted. Or you might not be respected.” Michele paints it in a more benign light:

I didn’t anticipate any risk. And I really didn’t have any fear. Because I looked on it as a learning experience. And whenever you encounter a learning experience, to me, you’re learning something. Risk didn’t really come into mind. So I didn’t have any fear because I felt that I would learn something. I enjoy learning. I enjoy being in a team environment. And so I just took it. And I don’t want to see risk as being negative. But I looked at it as more of a positive in helping me with my team-building experience.

**Silent participation.** Beth, Sonia, and Jef are generally quieter than those who are seated in the Media Lab. Some of it stems from not being able to see everyone else at the same time, so “jumping in” seemed more intrusive or a greater hurdle to overcome. But there are also differences of opinion on the need to be verbally involved in order to



participate in a community fully. The physical separation of Beth, Sonia, and Jef seems to tie closely with their reasons for extending more of an ear than their voice to the seminar meetings.

I think the point was being made was that in a community, not everybody talks the same amount, or doesn't participate in the same amount. Can you still see it, still be part of the community without necessarily posting anything? Ok, I'll bring myself as an example. I log into IFSM999 once a week, and what I'm mainly interested in is what is going on with the community, what's going on, what's happening, what are the latest announcements. And if it's something that regards me directly, then I'm going to read it. And if there's anything that I can add, I *will* add. But if there's nothing I can add, I'm not going to add anything. (Sonia)

But what if somebody's personality is that they just, you know, they're not as gregarious or loquacious. But they get a lot just being around somebody in a community and absorbing whatever they can. And maybe over time they will be able to participate later. (Beth)

And if I can't contribute, then I don't feel like I want to. You know, just to put words out there so that people know 'Jef's around'. (Jef)

What draws the individual instructor out of the boundary of his/her own personal experiences to seek relationships with other instructors? Beth insists, "I think you can lurk and be part of the community." There has to be a need, a compelling reason to leave the comfort and cossetting of one's personal views and actions to seek assistance from an outside source that one might not even know, or to proffer advice to those who might not respect or want that intervention. There has to be a level of trust that in exposing oneself by raising a question, that one's right to be a member will not be questioned. There is a level of accountability that all members of the community share.

These relations of accountability include what matters and what does not, what is important and why it is important, what to do and not to do, what to pay attention to and what to ignore, what to talk about and what to leave unsaid, what to justify and what to take for granted, what to display and what to withhold, when actions and artifacts are good enough and when they need improvement or refinement. (Wenger, 1998, p. 81)

Gioconda expresses irritation at the fact that, during a discipline-specific faculty meeting held the week before (for all local faculty teaching in the same discipline area), the experienced instructors were bored or, worse, offended by the time it takes to answer questions from those “who should know where to have found those answers.” She had wanted to share the practices that have made her successful in the classroom, not be bogged down by inane administrative questions that have nothing to do with classroom practices. Others in the group are more tolerant of those less-experienced attendees who feel the need to express concerns or frustrations or ask questions. “If you look at it strictly from a contractual perspective, you may not know all of the rules. All you know is you’re bound to teach this course within these dates, based on this contract” (Al).

The general faculty meetings, held only twice a year, are the only chance local faculty have to meet in a face-to-face setting. But attendance at the faculty meetings is voluntary. The discipline-specific meeting, coming after a long morning sitting in a passive mode listening to administrative reports, consists of a precious two hours that some have come to look forward to eagerly, and others experience as being just a gripe session. Can these short times together be the basis for some type of community-building? There are questions about the best use of this time; for example, forcing greater structure by breaking up the larger group into smaller working groups with a specific agenda and reportable outcomes.

**Bounced out.** “In some cases, the boundary of a community of practice is reified with explicit markers of membership, such as titles, dress, tattoos, degrees, or initiation rites” (Wenger, 1998, p. 104). One marker that expresses exclusion appears in early conversations with those faculty members whose comments are incorporated in chapter 3

and with two of the participants in the *Gang of 8*. It is not an issue that has been tackled head-on. But the use of full academic title (“Dr.”) is perceived by others as a flaunting of position solely on the basis of that title. The walls that are erected give some participants the feeling that they are on the outside of the wall behind which stands a more privileged (at least in their own minds) group of faculty. In an early conversation with Ray, we talk about how members identify themselves in the IFSM 999 classroom. Some of them do sign postings with their full title, “Dr. So and So.” Ray comments, “Yeah. And what strikes you is that within a peer group you wouldn’t do that. Or maybe that’s me. It certainly sets up a barrier. You know, it starts putting up a fence, whether it’s a real fence or a perceived fence...it’s a perception.” I continue to struggle with this perceived separation between adjuncts based on use of honorifics or titles. Bob, quite independently of Ray’s comments, also raises the issue of the perception of barriers between full time faculty and adjuncts.

Well, recently there was some discussion about performance in the 201 classroom. And someone made a comment about, well, it may have something to do with the number of adjuncts. And I wrote a comment back, ok? And I tried to be very tactful. Something to the extent, “You might want to reconsider your comment or retract your statement.” But, you know, those of us who are adjuncts, of course, take great exception to that. And I know right now they have no validated research to back up their statement that there’s any difference between the quality of education provided by . . . [adjuncts]. And without it, they should keep their mouth shut. I’m sure that’s how most adjuncts feel.

These are isolated instances, but instances heard too often to ignore. Having achieved the title of Doctor by completing a degree which grants that title should be celebrated and honored. But titles have to be used carefully in situations where being placed in that position (assistant or associate professor) does not depend on having that particular degree. There is a common purpose for adjuncts to be working in academia,

and the community of adjuncts should be inclusive, regardless of the academic degree one has earned. “Rules of inclusion focus on the extent to which an individual shares the purpose of the community as expressed in actions congruent with that purpose” (Ulrich, 1998, p. 159). It is a fine line between recognizing the degree and the work that it took to achieve the title of Dr., and using that title as a bludgeon to denigrate others. In the adjunct community the focus should be on teaching, not on position. All the adjuncts should have the same *skin in the game*. And all have equal rights to their position in the university. And all have the same expectations laid upon them in the classroom.

I have investigated here six themes that address attitudes toward community, some that stem from early experiences and some that stem from common bonds revealed in the conversations. Let us move now to look at the last two petals of the rose window, those that impact the final placement of that window. The full story of the rose window cannot be told in just the pieces. Those pieces must be assembled into a whole. But once assembled, the last stage of the construction of the rose window is implacement, finding a place where the window can be installed.

### **Implacement**

Clearly community is a process. But it also a place. (Palmer, 1997, p. 20)

In the setting of this university, committed to distributed education and distributed support for both faculty and students, what unique challenges face an *architect* who finds a place where the story of a community-building experience can be told? And if the architect can capture a place for the revealing of those lived experiences of community, there must finally be an *advocate* who pledges to provide the support for bringing forward the story that is told in this stained glass rose window.

## **The Architect**

The word *architect* finds its roots in *tekton*, builder. That same *tekton* is related to *techne*, art or craft (Barnhart, 1988). The architect is the chief builder, the one who oversees the placement of the individual pieces into the window and then puts the completed window in its final resting place. How important is *place* for this window? Even the placement of the individual pieces in the rose window will change the dynamic of the window itself. What does implacement mean for those participating in this community-building experience? What does implacement mean for adjunct faculty? Where do they find a place in the university?

Implacement is an ongoing cultural process with an experimental edge. It acculturates whatever ingredients it borrows from the natural world, whether these ingredients are bodies or landscapes or ordinary things. Such acculturation is itself a social, even a communal act. (Casey, 1993, p. 31)

*Culture* and *colony* come from the same root word, *colere*, to till, turn, and is cognate with the Sanskrit *karsu-s*, furrow (Barnhart, 1988). The setting for the seminar meetings, for this meeting of a small colony of adjunct faculty, is a small room with a square table and chairs for six, surrounded by electronic equipment that provides support for the Web camera and audio bridges linking the local group with those participating from a distance. This is such a different type of soil for tilling than that which might have been found in the more intimate setting of a living room. Gioconda, during our initial one-on-one conversation before the group met for the first time, had suggested that we meet in a more comfortable setting, where food and drink could be shared as well as conversation. But the need for the electronic equipment to link the remote participants precludes such a setting from being used. Some snacks and drinks are provided for those

who met in the Media Lab, but the setting is a Sunday afternoon, in a quiet building lacking other traffic. What effect might this more sterile setting, and the technology which surrounds the participants, have on the willingness of the participants to be open, to share? What does being the same room versus participating from a distance have on the dynamic of this community-building experience?

**Sitting in place.** Casey (1993) tells us that “Implacement itself, *being concretely placed*, is intrinsically particular. It is occasion-bound; or more exactly, it binds actual occasions into unique collocations of space and time” (p. 23). Although the eight participants are never in the same *place* at the same time, it could be said that they are collocated, occasion-bound, by focus and attention and conversations during time of the seminar sessions. But, “Where we are as a great deal to do with who and what we are. . . . As to the *who*, it is evident that our innermost sense of personal identity (and not only our overt, public character) deeply reflects our implacement” (Casey, 1993, p. 307). Being physically in the room with the other participants is seen as preferable, even if the environment was more sterile than a living room or home office. The most articulate expression of that preference occurs when Bob, one of the five local participants, had to be away on a business trip and joins the group in the third seminar session via the Webcam and telephone bridge. “It was miserable! It was miserable, basically. I’ll be honest with you. It’s difficult to sort of enter the discussion because you can’t see when other people are starting or stopping. It’s a lot easier when you’re sitting there.”

“Place as we experience it is not altogether natural. . . . Place, already cultural as experienced, insinuates itself into a collectivity, altering as well as constituting that collectivity. Place becomes social because it is already cultural” (Casey, 1993, p. 31).

What is this connection between body and collocation that changes the dynamic of the experience for the participants? Beth articulates it this way:

I felt like there were actually two cohorts of community in this study: in person and at a distance. Perhaps being at a distance, I needed to try harder to integrate into the community. Perhaps a kickoff meeting where all 8 adjunct faculty met in person first would have been helpful. I was hoping to attend the concluding activity in person to see if the experience differed from being at a distance, but I was not able to attend because of doctor's order to limit travel for a few more weeks after surgery. If given the choice again of either participating from a distance or not participating at all, I definitely would participate from a distance, but with a different level of expectation learned from this fine experience. I appreciate the invitation to participate. (Beth)

Bob articulates a sense of dis-connection when he must participate from a distance. "I feel a lot less involved. I can hear everybody but I can't see them. So I'm missing that part of the communication." There is a longing voiced here, a longing for more immediate contact, for physical presence, for viewing body language and facial expression that interprets the words that are shared. Jef voices the same need as does Sonia. "It would be more fun to see you guys face-to-face and shake your hand and, you know, be able to see the expressions and stuff" (Jef).

**Seeing but not seeing.** Cannot the technology that is available bridge the gap of distance? If we can see each other and hear each other, why does being in the same room still seem to be so important? The use of the Web camera and telephone bridge enabled the far-distant members of this *Gang of 8* to meet together. Jef is particularly appreciative of the fact that he could meet some faculty he had known by name before but never *seen*. It is apparent, however, that use of the Web camera for visual communication does not solve the problem of desiring proximity. Adding the visual component is not the total solution to establishing a deeper level of connection. "I can look at that screen all day

long, but I really don't know how they feel about me" (Bob). Perhaps the visual support that might be enabled by having television-quality cameras focused on each participant might overcome the lack of visual cues that assist in building a true connection between the participants. But can the technology itself be a distraction? On the weekend that Beth spends in the hospital after her double knee replacement, she participates by phone only. I am surprised to hear her reaction to not having the video component available.

When I didn't have the video cam the last time, I felt better, somehow. I didn't try to look and pick up anything. I didn't feel like I had to have a stage presence in front of this camera. And I actually felt more relaxed when I participated through audio. I had less expectations and I participated like I was having a telephone conversation. (Beth)

So here we find that the technology, the tools used to unite, can also be a means of adding an element of uncomfortableness or pressure to perform. Al and Bob both chime in with instances of feeling more at ease in telephone conversations than in participating in videoconferencing. "I do better, actually, with a telephone conference with just one other person on the other end. After a while you almost feel like they're in the same room. You sort of adapt to the sound of their voice and their emotions" (Al). But isn't the availability of facial expressions and body language a plus in creating better communication? Is not that exactly what being in the same room allows? It is the technology itself that cannot replicate the same experience of being in the same room. Video feeds, at least with the low-level components we are using in the seminars, are compressed, resulting in somewhat jerky movements of the participants. The pictures often will *freeze*, leaving a fixed picture of the participant on the screen, much like a photograph. Subtleties of body language cannot be captured. The camera can be focused on only one person at a time, and those outside the camera's range are invisible. Because



of that, it is difficult for participants, particularly those at a distance, to know exactly when to begin speaking. “I don’t mean to interrupt” often precedes statements that Beth, Sonia, and Jef make. “So when we speak, and I think Sonia says it, we always feel like we’re interrupting” (Beth).

**Technological static.** Interrupting, rupturing, breaking, fracturing. What is being broken or broken into here? Why do those at a distance feel they are breaking something when they wish to speak? There is a sense that those participants who are sitting in the Media Lab have formed a closer relationship with each other than that available to those at a distance. Beth says, “It was harder for me at a distance trying to become as close as everyone appears to be around the table. I wish I could have been sitting around the table with all of you.... I don’t think I gained a sense of community that I was really hoping for. But it’s fine” (Beth). There is a definite poignancy in Beth’s “But it’s fine.” One cannot quite believe her. In fact, she had intended on driving down from Pennsylvania for the last meeting. But her doctors advised her not to make such a long trip so soon after surgery. And Sonia also articulates a sense of loss. “First of all, I believe that the group of you, the 5 or 6 that are there in Maryland, have achieved a much deeper sense of involvement and camaraderie than us far away. Did I establish a camaraderie? I think I did, but not as much as I would have if I had been there” (Sonia).

But the technology does allow for some level of basic community experience – the simple fact of being able to see (even with a less-than-perfect consistency) and hear each other simultaneously. Just as those sitting in the same room experience the meeting differently because of each individual’s background, interests, and personal stories, mixing participants in a cyber-community experience creates another level of complexity.

It is a form of community that is experienced differently by each participant because of the technology involved. Clearly, being in one place, physically, cannot be replicated by the cyber-community experience.

**Cyber locations.** The similarities between this community-building experience and those of teaching face-to-face versus teaching in online classrooms are raised multiple times by the participants. What they are feeling, appreciating, missing in this seminar forum reminds them of what their students are experiencing in online classrooms, and even of what adjunct faculty experience in the online faculty 999 classrooms.

I very seldom ever have a question about teaching. And I don't know, to be quite honest, if that's ever going to happen in an adjunct environment, because we just don't have a way to build the personal relationships that are necessary, that create an environment where, you know, you stop somebody in the hall and say, "Hey, I have a question." And I don't know that you ever get there when all of your communication is either by email or online. (Bob)

But Al says that he feels "a little bit shocked that everybody needs this personal touch." He insists that we need to re-define community to account for the technology that supports contact that is purely electronic. He is surprised that personnel in a company newly-merged with his employing firm repeatedly request face-to-face meetings in the Midwest instead of being content with teleconferences. Perhaps he would agree with Casey (1993) that "Just as the lived body refuses to be reduced to a sheerly physical fact or object, so built places (into and out of which the same body moves us) cannot be confined to their purely physicalistic predicates" (p. 178). The community place for Al is the electronic/online community, the cyberspace of wireless telephone, pager, computer and teleconference. Yet, the term *online community* contains aspects that are both

opposites and ambiguous. Paccagnella (2001) posits that the vocabulary does not yet exist to describe this phenomenon of the virtual/online community that has come into existence only with widespread access to the Internet. Even our understanding of the word *community* has morphed considerably from the generally accepted meaning that first brought the term into standard vocabulary. “Perhaps precisely because of this, it is now a term of uncertain meaning, used to describe groups of people ranging from local neighborhoods to entire countries” (Paccagnella, 2001, p. 367). However, the bedrock upon which a community of any definition can continue to exist is communication. Both community and communication have the same Latin root *communis*, common. Communication between members of the fellowship “may be seen as a crucial dynamic part of the fundamental process for the structure that we call a community. However, communication by itself does not necessarily create a community” (Paccagnella, 2001, p. 368).

For the entire *Gang of 8*, each member is participating in some way in the cyber-community, regardless of whether they are sitting with their peers in the Media Lab or are scattered across the country. What is this cyberspace that is being inhabited here by the participants? Cyberspace and cyber-community are terms coined in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but stem from the Greek *kubernetes*, “steersman” or *kubernan*, “to steer” (Onions, 1966, p. 239). “Cyber” is a prefix that has come to mean a person, thing, or idea as part of the computer and information age (Whatis.com, 2001, ¶ 1). So the cyber-community is mediated or steered by electronic means (not just a computer, however). Hamman (2001) tells us:

Interaction among community members has shifted away from physical space into spaces created by new technologies. People now have to

actively contact their friends and acquaintances if they wish to remain in touch, rather than visiting a public space and talking with anyone they know who passes by. (p. 88)

We must be aware, then, that cyberspace can be a double-edge sword, a blessing and a curse.

Many who research cyberspace write about the ease with which barriers of distance are overcome by computer networks, and this is never more apparent than when members of a network community are able to communicate when they are located thousands of miles apart. (Hamman, 2001, p. 91)

Yet, Al still questions whether his students in his classes find him remote, un-accessible, “cold.” He is definitely comfortable in an electronic environment, and at the same time warm, engaging, and personable in face-to-face settings. In a purely text-based environment, there is another side that also must be acknowledged.

Despite the many similarities between networks and traditional communities, it would be a dangerous mistake to assume that the two behave in exactly the same way. Take, for example, the lack of visual and aural cues in electronic interactions. On a network, we can get to know each other’s minds and spirits without considering age, education, ability, race, physical appearance, or other potential barriers. But by the same token, we are vulnerable to deception, intentional or unintentional, and misperceptions. It’s possible to build up a complex picture of another person in our mind and then have to do a lot of mental rewiring after a f2f meeting. (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993, p. 152)

**Cyber homes.** We are such social creatures, seeking contact, physical, mental, and emotional, with our fellow beings. “It’s a lot more fun to have others around that we can relate to” (Jef). Space is often thought of as a void, and emptiness. Does the world of cyberspace indicate a void or emptiness, the lack of a steersman? Is there a danger that reliance on the electronic community will leave the adjunct faculty members lost in that space? What groundings, furnishings, ownership, and leadership can make that cyberspace a home? What makes cyberspace tolerable? “All really inhabited space bears

the essence of the notion of home” (Bachelard, 1958/1964, p. 5). What notion of home does the university provide for its adjunct faculty members? Or perhaps the question should be, Is the university an inhabited space for adjunct faculty members?

This is what home is: not only the place you remember, but the place that remembers you, even if you have never been there before, the place that holds some essential piece of you in trust, waiting for you to return when you go out into other places in the world, as you must. (Mountain Dreamer, 2001, p. 121)

In searching for those elements of a home that this community-building experience provides for the participants, we are looking at beginnings. “What is there in the beginning is a dwelling place for all that becomes” (Casey, 1993, p. 176). In an almost painful way, this *Gang of 8* does provide a beginning for Gioconda. Although she speaks of teaching as filling a void in her life, as giving her an outlet for a deep need to teach others and to be challenged in the teaching, her first semester was rather bumpy in terms of being hired and then feeling somewhat abandoned. But, reflecting the resilience she showed as a survivor, as the 14-year-old who managed to create a life for herself on her own in a new country, she became pro-active.

Obviously, I was a little lost. And I got smart and I said “Let’s get a mentor. Maybe a mentor will guide me. And I’ll see what happens.” And he did. Bill was fabulous. And he said, “Gioconda, did you know that they already have advertised the next running?” [Bill is referring to the call for staffing preferences for the next semester.] And I said, “Really! Where? Where?” Somehow I didn’t capture that there was whatever you want to call the 999. I didn’t know that that existed. And I’m being very honest here. So he said, “No, you can access here and that’s where you can sign up for the next semester.” Ok. Those are a few examples, I think. No one told me that there was such a thing as a community. I do access 999 twice or three times a week just to find out “What am I missing? What do I need to do?” Faculty meetings. Anything I need to know. I go there. But I do not post anything ‘cause I find it extremely impersonal. And I don’t know how to contribute, because this is the first time I get to meet some of the faculty. Isn’t that ironic? (Gioconda)

How many other adjunct instructors have felt this same sense of abandonment after being hired – whether it is face-to-face or in cyberspace?

It is about inclusion. So there may be people who do have the need to have those feelings of those small groups....So it's not about having everybody have this sense of community. But for those 10 or 12, or maybe 10% of all your instructors who really, really need that, you're creating an environment for that to happen. (AI)

Heidegger's beautiful description of shaping the void might point us in the direction of hope. "The jug is not a vessel because it was made; rather, the jug had to be made because it is this holding vessel" (Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 166). And he goes on to say, "From start to finish the potter takes hold of the impalpable void and brings it forth as the container in the shape of a containing vessel" (p. 167). It is not the casement that shapes the rose window. It is the architect who builds the casement and brings forth that which is the story being told by the participants. It is only the making-visible that which is community as experienced and explored by the participants that enables the window here to become. The steersman is at the mercy of the story which needs to be told.

But if the architect is the overseer of the project, following a specific design, working with the acquired pieces, overseeing the assembly of the parts, there still exists the sponsor, the one who asks first that the window be constructed. This is the one who calls for the discussion, who does not create, but who asks that a story be told. This is the advocate.

### **The Advocate**

Community doesn't just happen. People make community. Every community experience that has ever been or ever will be begins when one or more individuals decide to focus their time and energy on calling others together with a clear intention. (Whitmyer, 1993, p. 33)

The advocate is one who calls, witnesses or advises (Barnhart, 1988). In a circular positioning of figures around the center of the rose window, inevitably one figure is found to be standing on its head. This part of the rose window, this piece of the story, is one that I did not want to see or acknowledge, for it turns upside down my desire for this community to come from the intentionality of the participants in the *Gang of 8*. Until I could accept Whitmyer's (1993) words, "Most groups begin when someone holds up a flag to see who salutes" (p. 34), I rejected the message heard repeatedly within the group about why they agreed to participate.

I think, even though you don't want to hear it, a lot of us did it just because it was you. In fairness, if it had been someone, even in the university, that I didn't know, and wanting me to give up Sunday afternoons, and I was teaching on Saturdays, and one of those just happened to be opening day for the Redskins, I would have "thunk" twice and three or four times about making that commitment. (Al)

What is the role of the flag-waver? Barnhard (1998) tells us that *flag* comes from the Middle English *flakken* – to flutter, to float to and fro, to be tossed by waves. There is an element of impermanence in this concept of flag (beyond the noun itself). Fluttering, floating to and fro, being tossed by waves, gives an impression of inconsistency, a lack of focus. When I created a conference in the IFSM999 online classroom called "The IFSM Community," what was my purpose? What does it mean to wave the flag of community in front of adjunct faculty, in front of these eight participants? Am I only hoping to get their attention?

Ray said jokingly in the very first session, that Janet was our lure. . . . It's probably true. I mean, because of the nature of the way we are, you are the one common factor. You're the common denominator. And maybe that is all we need. (Al)

**The Allure of flags.** I have waved the flag of invitation to a conversation on community in a community-building experience. “You created a question mark [about needing community as an adjunct]. And essentially I have to agree with Al, too, and Bob, that you are the community. ‘Cause when I have a problem, I go to you with the problem or the question” (Ray). I am *not* the community; I can only claim to have provided an invitation. Once lured, however, the participants must be motivated to remain, to become part of, to participate, to own the conversation. To initiate the process, to see who salutes and then to abdicate any further responsibility is not the mark of the true flag-waver, the servant-leader. The servant-leader must be present for the life of the journey. Gioconda issues that challenge for continuity in leadership, “We also need that. That’s very important.”

I work for Janet. I think that says something very, very important for all of us, that we’re still looking for somebody or something that we can refer back to. And you do your job. Yes, we teach, you teach the students. But Janet is our leader. She is the person we can refer to. She is there for us.  
(Sonia)

And Michele, with a smile, says, “So don’t go anywhere.”

It is not that leadership must be found in a single person. I ask the participants what they think would happen if I did not continue as the Academic Director. What would happen if I left the position of leadership of the larger group of adjunct faculty that currently are under my supervision? I challenge them that this would not mean that the group would fall apart because somebody would step in with leadership skills. And Ray responds, “The answer to your question is, it would, it could. [But] as long as the person didn’t have your communications and your caring, it wouldn’t.”



**The flag leading the parade.** What characteristics should be found in that flag-waver and the advocate who witnesses and advises? According to Greenleaf (1993), “The only truly viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant-led” (p. 56). For the servant-leader, the primary motivation is to serve, not to drive or acquire. “He initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success” (p. 56). But along the way there must be real listening, acceptance, empathy, awareness, willingness to step aside to honor the strengths of others in the group, and attunement to the signals in the environment. “For a real community to appear, the leader does not have to disappear. The leader does have to be able to hold a conscious space, a place that can see into the gap of possibility” (Casbon, 2005, p. 241).

At the same time, community is not the solver of all ills, a utopia of total agreement on all issues. The rose window is not synonymous with rose-colored glasses. Greenleaf (1993) reminds us that the flag-waver/leader is also a disturber and awakener. There are genuine but respectful disagreements among the participants – about the need for community, about the willingness of adjunct faculty to participate in common conversations, about even their expectations for what was my intended focus and desired outcomes for these seminar meetings. And Bob brings us back to the reason the group has forged some small sense of community through this process:

Well, I think we are all professionals. And I think we are inquisitive. And I think we all believe that when you put eight people together and yourself that something good will come out of it, and we want to be part of that. I mean, that’s happened in the past, and we want to feel that again. (Bob)

### **Standing in the Light of the Rose Window**

After this work together, the participants find themselves standing and viewing the rose window, the light of their stories casting colors that stain that which they take back to their families, their classrooms, their workplaces. The light refracted through the window becomes the tool by which these participants may begin to see the phenomenon of community as it impacts/affects/guides their lives. As the light from the rose window plays across the faces of the *Gang of 8*, how might they describe the changes that have taken place in and as a result of this experience? They have a different and hopefully more personal relationship to the word *community* and the impact of community in their lives as faculty members, whether it is finding common bonds with other faculty members, or being even more sensitive to the existence of that which makes community more possible and richer in the classrooms. Already they report of changes they intend to make in their classrooms – leaving masks behind (and asking students to do the same) or asking themselves and students how they expect the class to be transformative.

### **Refracting Stories – Choosing Metaphors that Unmask**

What figure, symbol, or metaphor might these participants choose for themselves if they are to create one of the petals in the rose window? In our seminar meeting on collegiality, the participants are asked to select a metaphor that describes how they see themselves at their best in the classroom. “Can you select a metaphor that would represent for you teaching at your best?” Identifying a metaphor proves to be somewhat of a challenge for some. They can not report on such a metaphor that singly captures an essential self, or at least they are not willing to share that metaphor in the group. Bob and Jef admit to not having found a metaphor with which they feel comfortable. Gioconda,

perhaps, speaks for the three of them. Although the exercise is to select a metaphor that describes them at their best as teachers, Gioconda has difficulty putting herself into that single role as teacher.

I couldn't come up with one 'cause I think we are all encompassing. We have so many...it depends on the environment...we have so many, we're so many...we're a combination of things. I cannot isolate myself and say I'm this. I cannot. 'Cause it depends. In one day, if I have to go to the Laurie Center, I can be silly, I can be a clown, I can be a dog and get on the floor and chase them, I can do many things. So it depends. (Gioconda)

Perhaps in not understanding the question or in deliberately not wanting to put herself in a single box of identity, Gioconda reflects messages heard throughout the conversations – adjunct faculty members are leading complex lives with identities shared among several job-bearing roles exercised on a daily basis. This deflection away from their role as instructor may also reflect their deepest held feelings that teaching is not the center of their professional lives.

In the chapter of Palmer's (1998) text that was assigned reading before this session, the author describes his metaphor as one of a sheep dog, protecting, moving, collecting, focusing, and yes, harrying the students. Sonia feels some affinity for that description. "I couldn't come up with one, either. I just like the sheep dog example. That was pretty nice. I could relate with that one in a way." Her comments seem to lack a measure of ownership, however, to the image of the sheepdog.

Ray, although he feels that he really doesn't have a metaphor to share, actually brings forward the same one that was revealed as we talked about masks.

The closest I could come would be a clown. And that's because what I keep telling the students is, if you're not having fun, get out of here. 'Cause this has got to be fun. And if the class isn't fun and you're not enjoying it, then I'm not enjoying myself. So if I can't have fun with them, then I don't want to be there.

Even though one can hear a level of internal laughter in this metaphor, he once again reiterates what is the heart of his being as an instructor – having fun in the classroom. In his persona as a rustic, a peasant, a jester, Ray is, nonetheless, quite intense in his passion for teaching.

Michele needs to put herself in a concrete situation, in a classroom of cement walls and students whose bodies are present in front of her.

I put myself in a face-to-face class. And I said when I'm teaching at my best, I feel like a bird flying. And that is, you know, you get into a good conversation, like some of the conversations we've had here. And you just take off and you just expand and you just go out on the horizon. But that would only, I could only see myself doing that in a face-to-face class.

What does it say that Michele can only see this metaphor working if she is in a face-to-face classroom? The disembodied world of the virtual classroom seems to leave her with nothing to hold onto. She can fly only if her feet are first tethered to an actual floor. Perhaps that is what the lure of flying is about, becoming free of that which holds us earthbound. If we are all only living in the *air*, the space of the virtual classrooms, would we long for that which holds us to the ground, even if only occasionally?

Beth has a metaphor more focused on a mental state as opposed to an object, animate or inanimate. She has spent the previous week having both knees replaced and thus has not had the chance to read the assigned chapter.

Actually I was reviewing the email that you sent and, you know, trying to prepare a little bit for the conversation today. And I would say that my metaphor is "In the zone." When I'm teaching, the rest of the world doesn't exist. I don't even know when time goes by. The students, in the beginning of the semester I always tell the students, "Ok, who's going to be a clock watcher?" Because I'll keep talking and talking and I'll just get into my subject. And I get students participating and things like that. So I always say if I'm in a good class or, you know, on a roll, I'm in the zone.

Every teacher who is not just surviving in the classroom has experienced this dislocation in time that occurs when he/she is totally immersed in the beauty of the subject matter and passionate about enabling others to become similarly enamored by the material. What is that zone into which one is submerged? *Zone* is derived from the Greek *zone*, meaning girdle or belt (Barnhart, 1988). Beth finds herself bound, girdled by the subject matter, no longer free but responding to the *thingness* of that which is being explored with her students. The mind and body are so totally engaged in the activity that there is a calm energy that harmonizes and focuses the work so that the efforts of teaching and engaging, in some sense, occur outside oneself or, perhaps, in spite of oneself.

Al is the most articulate in choosing and describing his metaphor.

Ok. I think of myself as a chef. And I kind of alluded to it a couple of times when I said “the ingredient.” To me, the ingredients are the textbooks and the subjects and the students. And they’re changing. A lot of time I don’t have a choice. I don’t have a choice of students. I have a *say* in textbooks but I really don’t have a choice. And sometimes other material is just presented itself to me by the semester. So then it becomes my responsibility, because I know what the outcome needs to be. I mean, you can make a soufflé, or whatever. So I have to combine those ingredients through my lectures, the assignments that I give, the weekly conference. But then I add my own little touch to it, my own seasoning. And that is going to be the quizzes, the midterm, the interactive conference work, and that kind of thing. And then the plating and the eating happens when you take the final exam or you hand me completed projects. And just like in the real world, when you cook, sometimes the soufflé falls flat. Because you’re going to have some students that, you know, you didn’t use the right combination of ingredients and seasonings and heat, and that student didn’t get it. And the others ones are going to be ok. So when I think about it, that’s really what I do.

What a rich and descriptive metaphor, one which stands on its own in capturing the essence of the *who-ness* of Al and his work as an instructor. Much like exposing the Master Sergeant mask in our very first meeting, Al has gone deep into his sense of self to

tell us what he feels like as an instructor, how important this work is for him, and how important it is that his work results in a viable, even delicious, outcome.

### **Transformations**

During the final group conversation, the participants are asked to share insights uncovered during their exploration of community during the weeks of meeting together. Each participant is invited to summarize or share significant milestones of the journey toward understanding community and its meaning in his/her life. The participants are very honest in expressing their expectations and their sense of the level of fulfillment of those expectations. “One insight I gained from this group experience is that building a sense of community among adjunct faculty is very challenging” (Beth).

Are there unlikely expectations for the potential outcomes of meeting as a group only four times? “A community doesn’t just surface in a few meetings. It takes a lot of meetings. It takes a lot of trust. It takes a lot of respect. And a lot of sharing. And also it takes a person that’s moderating, that’s monitoring, that’s inspiring, that’s coordinating” (Gioconda). And Ray affirms, “I agree with Gioconda in that I don’t really think that there was any huge community. We got to know one another. But as far as community in Bob’s sense, where we have a need to be here for something, we’re here for you. It’s that simple” (Ray). And Beth echoes the complaint of those who participated from a distance:

I think it was a different experience than I was anticipating because it was at a distance. I wish I could have been sitting around the table with all of you. But I’m glad I did it. Because you always learn from every experience that you have, whether it’s what you expected or not. And yeah, it’s just given me some more insights to take with me through the rest of my life, whether it’s work or personal or whatever. That’s it in a nutshell. I don’t think I gained a sense of community that I was really hoping for. But it’s fine. (Beth)

It must be reiterated that the purpose of the seminars is to observe and listen. No fixed expectations were delineated ahead of time. Having members of the *Gang of 8* express a feeling that the outcome of the experience is not the formation of an intimate and strong sense of community should not be seen as a failure.

My sense is that we *are* a community. However, we are all experienced faculty who don't have many requirements of others in this community we've developed. I think if we come up against a situation where we all now have a shared need, we will probably turn to each other to solve that. But I just don't see myself communicating much more with this group.  
(Bob)

To a general chorus of laughter, I reply, "You don't want anything more to do with them!" But that sentiment is not held by all. Sonia, for whom connection to an academic community has been repeatedly expressed as a deep longing, replies in this way.

For a very short time, with these eight instructors, we achieved a sense of a small meaningful community. We had an opportunity to know each other and share our experiences. We had the opportunity to think together and find answers. I don't think the purpose of the study would have made a difference. The experience of being together is what really mattered. I have to admit that it was a very rewarding experience. (Sonia)

She adds a somewhat bittersweet observation.

I believe that the group of you, the 5 or 6 that are there in Maryland, have achieved a much deeper sense of involvement and camaraderie than us far away. I'm sure we would have had totally other findings if everybody had been at a distance like Beth and I and Jef.

For the five local participants, just making that face-to-face contact with other adjuncts has proved rewarding, opening doors for potential lines of support being thrown out to others who were just names in the faculty list before.

So I guess what I'm trying to say is, I've established a camaraderie with [the participants]. And I feel much more comfortable, because I think I would have done it before, but I feel a lot more comfortable in emailing them. And I think I had even said that I if I had taken, you know, if we're in a Center for Teaching and Learning course or something online and I

would recognize their name, then I would say “Hi, how’re you doing? How did you like Janet’s sessions?” And, you know, progress after that. So I think I’ve established a network, some colleagues that I feel that I can communicate with just like that, as opposed to someone I didn’t recognize them or know them. (Michele)

Even Bob, who focuses on the reason for any community to exist is that of a need, acknowledges that here he has found other members to whom he would turn to meet that need.

And if I *were* to turn to a faculty member for something, I would turn to this group first, now. . I created relationships at some level with all of these people, just by spending time with them. I’ve listened to them speak; I know they’re all consummate professionals; and I would feel very comfortable in asking them any question. (Bob)

Al appears to be able to most openly express the changes that have occurred during his participation. I leave his comments as the closing summation of the work accomplished by this *Gang of 8*.

You talk about transformation. After that second session, I have completely changed my perspective of what I am in relation to this community. And this notion of belonging. And I’ve made a vow to myself as a result of that. And I don’t think that ever would have happened if it wasn’t for this group. I think I could have went for years carrying around this baggage and this mask and this question in my mind. And every time something happened, I would have fallen back on this question and wasted time on it. What this has done, this group, has really convinced me that that’s a waste of time. “You need to focus on the real issue. Put that out of your head and get down to business.” And so that’s my transformation, and it wouldn’t have happened without this group. I don’t think so. There’s just no way. And I don’t think I could have gotten it if I was distance. I had to be physically sitting here with you guys for me to be able to make that change. (Al)

### **Returning**

This chapter began with the description of the rose window as a metaphor for the themes uncovered in conversations with eight adjunct faculty members in a seminar setting. The stained glass in the rose window represents the complicated lives of adjunct



faculty members balancing multiple careers in government, industry, and education. The soul-stories revealed in the rose window are the expressions of understanding, need, acceptance, rejection, and benefits of a sense of community with other adjunct faculty members and with the university for which they work. The song of the stained glass cantata is heard here in the form of solos, songs of the individuals. The themes explored here are presented in terms of the development of the rose window: design, acquisition of pieces, assembly, and implacment. “A true symbol cannot be ‘explained’; rather, it serves as a fountainhead from which meaning and relationship flow, like treasures inexhaustibly cascading from a treasure chest” (Hartz, 1997, p. 29).

It was necessary to be inside and intimately part of this experience, to be part of the construction of the rose window as a holder of the stories of the participants. What is the meaning-making that becomes possible as I step back to look at that which is revealed here though the refracted experience of these participants as they share their stories and thoughts about this community-building experience?

It is only as daylight streams through the panels and plays on the infinite variety of texture and tone, the streaks and striations, the facets, bubbles and layers, the full strength of rich colour or the delicacy of tint and pastel, that the window comes to life. Glowing and iridescent, it then makes its statement as a finished work of art. (Lee, Seddon, & Stephens, 1976, p. 189)

All of the participants read though my interpretation of this journey of discovery and agreed to the words chosen to tell their stories and describe them individually. With their affirmations of support held dearly in my heart, I celebrate Al’s move toward putting aside the masks he has felt obligated to carry with him into the classroom. His openness to being his authentic self more comfortably may lead to an openness that allows his students to observe the richness of the congruence between his doing and his

being. The other members of the *Gang of 8* seem to be involved and participatory in this unfolding, and they have marveled at AI's transformation, openness and trust.

I also come away more aware of that which divides or separates in the rose window. The spokes, traceries, mullions, and the outer and center circles are necessary to give solidity and strength to the window. Perhaps I entered this study hoping to find that all the individual glass pieces, the participants and their individual needs and wishes, would all be melted into one large window of unanimity. As it applies to this revealing of community, unanimity is not the case. Some members of the *Gang of 8* have strong feelings about their need for a sense of belonging to the community of adjuncts and to the university. Others express no such need. Rather, they prefer the freedom of isolation as it pertains to their teaching. They are willing to cross the dividing boundaries only when there is a specific request for their assistance, or they have a question or need to be addressed. Why should this view bother me? Melting glass pieces of different colors may result in another unique color with different textures, but the uniqueness of the original pieces is lost. Certainly I do not wish for the faculty to lose any of that which makes them different and unique.

The other issue with which I continue to struggle is that of the virtual community which is necessarily used because we cannot all meet in the same place at the same time. Gioconda will not teach online classes because she feels that the electronic environment cannot support true community. But the community of online classrooms, whether for students or faculty, is now a constant in our university's environment. What still needs to be done to make that environment a place where community can begin, grow, and be maintained? Community, whether face-to-face or online, must have "direct personal

relationships, strong common values, feelings of solidarity, and reciprocal recognition” (Paccagnella, 2001, p. 367). Having once had lunch with my one instructor from Romania enables me to feel more closely and directly connected with him than with my instructor in Hawaii, whom I have never met or even talked to on the phone. I am more attentive, now, to enabling meetings where faculty can come together in a single space to discuss an issue or plan a curriculum revision. Although still relying on email and the online 999 classroom so that all the stakeholders are able to participate, I feel that more robust work is accomplished in the face-to-face settings.

As Michele has noted, however, this feeling of missing something as it relates to community connections with faculty who live at a distance may be more a factor of generational differences than physical separation. Each semester I ask students in my classroom (online) whether they believe cell phones lead to greater isolation or better communication. The responses can almost always be divided by age groups, with younger students feeling that communication is greatly enhanced and older students feeling that the “noise” of such means of instant contact is distracting.

Perhaps it is my definition of community that needs to be expanded. Coming from my first construction of the meaning of community in the context of education, the pre-technology era of the closed circle modeled by the nuns who taught in the grammar school I attended, I have carried forward a definition of community that still requires full engagement of all five senses to be complete. The reality of the educational milieu in which I work must be constructed, by necessity, as that of a cyber-community. My perception of how all the senses I still feel are components of community shifts into different presentations. Using van Manen’s (2003) themes of lived space, lived body,

lived time, and lived relationships captures the essence of the shifting paradigm of community as one mediated more by electronic means than by traditional engagement of the five senses. In these lived areas of a cyber-community we occupy a large but bounded space, such as an online classroom. We associate ourselves with a body of similarly-focused others who are in relationship to each other, and we share that lived area at times simultaneously or at times in isolation. If I still struggle with the cyber-community as lacking the nearness that is part of my traditional definition of community, Palmer (2004) puts both solitude and community in perspective:

Solitude does not necessarily mean living apart from others; rather, it means never living apart from one's self. It is not about the absence of other people – it is about being fully present to ourselves, whether or not we are with others. Community does not necessarily mean living face-to-face with others; rather, it means never losing the awareness that we are connected to each other. It is not about the presence of other people – it is about being fully open to the reality of relationship, whether or not we are alone. (p. 55)

In chapter five, I use the newfound perspectives and these lived experiences that have been shared in this chapter to reflect and to explore new pathways that can be taken with the insights now revealed. How can the experiences of these eight adjunct faculty members provide insight into how the university views and provides for the need for community-building exercises? In the age of virtual classrooms, for students as well as for faculty groups, does the definition of *community* need to be rethought or reformulated? How can the experiences of these adjuncts enable us to rethink how to best serve the adjunct faculty who are the backbone of this institution? Chapter five explores the pedagogical implications of this study.

**CHAPTER FIVE:**  
**ANNOTATING THE MUSICAL SCORE: EXPLORING THROUGH**  
**THE LIGHT OF THE ROSE WINDOW**

That feeling of community that reaches beyond boundaries only happened because of the incredible generosity of everyone present. (Ron Scapp in hooks, 2003, p. 115)

What are the lived experiences of adjunct faculty participating in a community-building exercise? What are the lived experiences of connection among adjunct faculty at this university? These are questions which have led me to spend time with eight adjunct faculty members, to explore their concepts of community and connection. But these questions lead to more questions. This chapter explores the light reflected through the metaphoric rose window as I look once again at the story of community told there and “bend back” the reflective possibilities. In a sense, in this chapter I am annotating the musical score sung by the stained glass cantata, adding places for the soloists’ messages contained in the petals of the rose window, adding marks to those parts in the composition of the cantata that call for emphasis, for new inclusion, and for quiet reflection.

**Reflections on the Light of the Rose**

I was witness to the experiences of eight adjunct faculty members as they worked through their understanding of the concepts of community coming from their personal lives and from their work as adjunct faculty members. What is it that one comes to understand through such conversations? All eight participants are known to me, but not necessarily to each other. Over a span of three months, these individuals made a commitment to read, to think with each other, to openly share ideas and opinions, to allow for disagreement. This commitment was added to lives already filled with day jobs,

families, and teaching. Their openness to participating, itself, was a testament to their willingness to investigate an area that has had little focus in the adjunct community, that of the role of community or community-building among adjunct faculty. Why did they agree to participate? What drew them to sacrifice Sunday afternoons to join in conversations on the topic of community? What did they want me to hear about their lives as adjuncts?

The focus of the conversations was not on the environment of the classroom or the pedagogy of teaching. We talked here of who they are in relationship to their peers and to the institution. However, the stories here change both the teller and the listener. Discussions about connections, about community, cannot but bleed over into their subsequent work in those classrooms. Perhaps the questions here will revolve around what it is that makes these adjunct faculty happier and more fulfilled as faculty members, thus making them better instructors in their classrooms.

### **Retracing the Steps**

In chapter one I shared how I came to be interested in the topic of community and the experiences of that concept in the lives of adjunct faculty. In chapter two I looked further at the phenomenon of community, exploring etymological and literature sources. In this chapter, via preliminary conversations with three adjunct faculty members, I also began to look at the connection between adjunct faculty and their peers, and between adjunct faculty and their serving institution. In chapter three I presented the research methodology to be employed, that of hermeneutic phenomenology to address my question: **What is it like for adjunct faculty to participate in a community-building experience?** The works of Heidegger, van Manen, and Gadamer were explored for a

greater understanding of the framework for this research. In chapter four I sought to uncover, unpack, and reveal the lived experiences of eight adjunct faculty members as they met in a community-building experience. Etymological, existential and literature sources were used to clarify and support what I listened for and watched unfold behind the text of their conversations.

As I began to consider the subject of my research, I likened the adjunct faculty community to a stained glass cantata, a symphony of individual pieces coming together to create something greater than their individual stories, changing their individual beauty to a larger poem, a song of light and space. But I needed to hear some of the voices of that cantata; I needed to begin to hear the song *they* sing, the poem *they* write, disassociated from my visions of community among adjuncts. Through the unpacking process of hermeneutic phenomenology, I have come to a clearer understanding of the lived experiences of community among the adjunct faculty in this study. Thus, in chapter four I listened to the themes revealed through their conversations, through their stories of lived experience of community in their lives as adjunct faculty. I built a rose window around the messages their lived experiences brought forward. In the process of building this stained glass symphony, this rose window depicting their lived experiences, I have had to put aside the pieces and colors I might have chosen. My own experiences of the connection between community and education are not echoed in the experiences of the eight participants. And so, I needed to step out of my preconceptions to truly hear what was being revealed in the voices and silences of the conversations.

## **Looking Forward**

I use this chapter to revisit this journey with my *Gang of 8* and to re-think how what I have learned can be used to inform my understanding of the struggles adjuncts face in their work. To visit, from the Latin *visitare* is to "come to (a person) to comfort or benefit" (Barnhart, 1988, pp. 1207-1208). I come once again to see, to notice, and to observe the phenomenon revealed in the rose window. What is it about these lived experiences that might inform and reform my relationships with adjuncts in my role as administrator? Should more community-building experiences be provided for adjunct faculty? What form might these activities take? On a broader scale, what is it about these lived experiences that might inform the university's relationship with adjunct faculty members? How can the rose window be constructed so that it tells a story of a community as a place of reflection, a place of trust, a place of shared practice, a place of connection?

## **Seeking Wholeness**

What justification might be provided for proposing and sustaining efforts to build such places and opportunities where faculty can engage in sharing and discovering who they are and not just what they do in the classroom? Tompkins' (1996) message about cultivating the wholeness of students is equally applicable to teachers:

Human beings, no matter what their background, need to feel that they are safe in order to open themselves to transformation. . . . It's not a question of repressing or cutting back on intellectual inquiry in school, but rather of acknowledging and cultivating wholeness.

The real objection to a more holistic approach to education lies in a fear of emotion, of the imagination, of dreams and intuitions and spiritual experience that funds commonly received conceptions of reality in this culture. (pp. 213-214)

Yet, how can we ask faculty to address the wholeness of students if they themselves never have been provided an opportunity to look at their own wholeness,



identity, and integrity, or never have been given opportunities to see how this impacts who they are in the classroom? “Most institutions of higher learning in our country do not address the inner lives of their students, except as a therapeutic stopgap” (Tompkins, 1996, p. 220).

### **Reflection**

Could the word “faculty” be substituted for “students” in the above sentence? What do adjuncts see in their reflections? To reflect is to “turn or bend back” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 901). Just as stained glass bends the light, the white light entering the window of this reflection on the lived experiences of adjunct faculty members is bent into a new presentation. What opportunities are given to adjunct faculty members to step back and take a look at their being as peers and as teachers? Can adjunct faculty members be made to see their roles in the university in fresh ways that are not bounded by adhering to the contract as the means of their link to the institution and to each other? “Conscious community nurtures in each of its members the unfolding from within that allows them to become more fully who they are – and it nurtures its own unfolding as well” (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993, p. 11). The pursuit of self-knowledge should not be the only endeavor of those parts of the institution charged with support of the faculty. But it might be argued that in the case of adjuncts there is an assembly line mentality. They are hired, minimally instructed in the culture of the university and its expectations for them, placed in classrooms to teach, and occasionally offered opportunities to tweak their instructional skills. The university’s Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) currently offers a considerable number of pedagogically-oriented workshops for faculty. The current catalog of offerings includes topics such as *Best Practices*, *The Art of Feedback*, and

*Handling Difficult Students in Online and Face-to-face Courses*. But for those faculty members who desire more than stimulating ideas in pedagogy and technology, avenues for exploring self-reflective experiences are not yet available.

### **Leaping Into the Not-Knowing**

Halifax (1999) argues that the Western definition of *education* as the accumulation of facts should be balanced by the tribal notion of education as *initiation*. “Initiation takes us into the unknown and is grounded in not-knowing” (p. 173). As applied to exploring self-knowledge, faculty first have to be encouraged to take a leap into unfamiliar territory, at least into territory that is unfamiliar because it is not normally addressed within the preparation they receive. This leap is a sort of separation, “moving away from the familiar landscape of the social territory and into the unfamiliar, the unknown: into not-knowing” (Halifax, 1999, p. 174). The risk of *not* moving forward, the danger in not recognizing this need for exploration is severe.

Sometimes we decide to bury a longing that seems impossible to fulfill because we cannot bear the pain. The danger in doing so is that we forget the name of that longing. And if we cannot find it again, we lose a piece of ourselves. (Mountain Dreamer, 2001, p. 111)

But what is it that is longed for but not known? If to *know* is to “perceive, be acquainted with” (Onions, 1966, p. 508), what is it that is not seen? Exploring the relationship between our own schooling/upbringing and its impact on *who* we are as teacher in the classroom may be somewhat unfamiliar territory. Most adjunct faculty do not define themselves as “professors” first, but as “professionals” who also happen to teach. That identity construct – professionals, then teachers – may change how they approach the art of teaching. What in their lifeworld speaks to the need for a meaning-making that is based upon a community open to more than just the sharing of concerns,

joys, frustrations, questions, and triumphs? In what manner might the university provide an environment where adjunct faculty members can feel safe in this exploration of identity that results in an enriching transformation toward wholeness in their work as educators?

### **Exploration**

The explorer leaves the comfort zone and goes out into the wild to see what there is that might change the accepted or prevailing positions. Going out can be a chance to take a hand at experimenting and “exploring possibilities, reinventing the self, and in the process reinventing the world” (Wenger, 1998, p. 273). Before the journey that explores their *be-ing* as teachers, these faculty members will question what they will find out about themselves during the journey. Will they be able to rejoice in that finding or be tempted to hide what they perceive as shortcomings behind masks? Can they trust the others with whom they journey to support and respect them? This quest is encapsulated in the opening of Sartre’s (1974) poem, “Now I Become Myself”:

Now I become myself.  
It’s taken time, many years and places.  
I have been dissolved and shaken,  
Worn other people’s faces.... (p. 156)

But this leap into the unknown is also the opportunity to find and accept what *is* without attempts to control, manipulate or judge (Halifax, 1999). Putting a lens on our lives is an opportunity to re-connect, to re-member what it is that we already know (Levoy, 1997). Yet, the journey is never at an end. Becoming oneself is not a fixed goal to reach but a continuous journey of exploration into that which was, is, and is still to come. The journey involves embracing opposites, and living in the tension between limits and potentials (Palmer, 2000). As O’Donohue (1999) reminds us:

The unknown evokes wonder. If you lose your sense of wonder, you lose the sacramental majesty of the world. . . . Yet the flow of our lives cannot be stopped. This is one of the amazing facts about being in the dance of life. There is no place to step outside. There is no neutral space in human life. There is no place to go to get out of it. (p. 199)

### **Entering Places of Community**

I do want to be with people with my same background or doing what I do. But it can't be unfocused. It can't be just so that we need each other. . . . But if there is a need, if there is a reason to come together, then that's meaningful, that would be meaningful. And I think that would be a good start for creating relationship. (Sonia)

In the seminar settings of this research effort, the focus was on exploring a sense of community among the participants. There were no pedagogical issues that were in the forefront of the conversations, although such issues insinuated themselves at times. They frequently flowed quite naturally from those instances when the path of the exploration included the participants' connections between who they are and what they do in the classroom. However, if the attempt is to engage faculty members in explorations beyond pedagogical and technological issues, how does one address Ray's insistence that this type of engagement, community-building, is misguided?

Why would you even want to do it if we're saying that we don't really see the value of community except when there's a need and except when we need to do it. What does the organization get out of these things other than maybe some solutions? And the idea of having all of the relationships, what value is that? 'Cause we said that in this environment that doesn't make a lot of sense. (Ray)

Ray's position is not shared by all of the members, but there also was agreement by some. If this were a sentiment expressed by all of the participants, by all of the adjunct faculty members, why would we bother to push forward any actions that support development of a sense of community among adjuncts? Is it sufficient for the university's administration to simply be a Help Desk? Into lives already filled with many other

obligations, is it possible to fit one more activity? I find it difficult to compartmentalize the being of the adjuncts into what they do as adjuncts apart from who they are as whole persons. The invitation to go farther and faster must be expressed in such a way that calls to adjunct faculty. Palmer (2000) reminds us:

Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we *ought* to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks – we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service, as Frederich Buechner asserts, when he defines vocation as “the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.” (p. 16)

The words “calling” and “vocation” are closely linked. “Vocation” stems from the Latin *vocare*, to call (Barnhart, 1988). A true calling or vocation is not a voice heard from outside oneself telling us what we ought to do. As Palmer (2000) tells us, it is learning, trusting, and accepting what is our true self and the giving of authentic service to the world. A true calling does not make one wear “other people’s faces” (p. 13). But such a calling may also make us wonder if we’re “good enough, smart enough, disciplined enough, educated enough, patient enough, and inspired enough” (Levoy, 1997, p. 193). And even though finding our true vocation is an intensely personal journey, “Community is closely allied with the unfolding of an individual calling. In fact, the bigger a call, the more it is by *definition* a public affair, a community concern” (p. 40). And so I find purpose in pursuing the development of the sense of community among adjuncts that goes beyond administrative, technical, and pedagogical support to that which also helps grow authentic selfhood.

### **Support from the Outside**

The whole of a rose window is supported by the casement (the outer circle of stone) and the tracery (the cement or stone filigree), including the circle at the center, that

surrounds the pieces. These parts of a rose window are not just decorative. But, as Cowen (1979) tells us, “The weakest areas in any rose window are the centre and the perimeter” (p. 35). If we think of the casement, the outer circle, as representing the university, and the center representing the concept of community among adjuncts, what pressures are being put on this center to distort or even break it? What strengths are needed by the casement to allow for the concept of community, in its many manifestations, to flourish?

Organizations that recognize and support workplace spirituality are those that recognize that “people have an inner life that nourishes and is nourishing by meaningful work that takes place in community” (Robbins, 2005, p. 62). This spirituality should not be confused with organized religion. The culture should be one that supports that which enables the faculty members to be valued, to “be strong, be well, be worth” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1192). “Communities of values have clear, strong, and distinct identities that give meaning to members and distinctness to nonmembers” (Ulrich, 1998, p.159). A community of value is one in which wholeness of the person is of concern. It is not only the work of teaching that is valued and supported, but the wholeness of the teacher as well. There should be opportunities to integrate personal life and professional service for those who wish to pursue such work of wholeness. How is it that a strong, many-pieced window of community manifests itself? To what should special attention be paid in building such a rose window? What kind of community is possible?

### **Community of values.**

The family values that I embrace are the habits of heart and mind essential for creating and maintaining such a community, and among these are generosity and fidelity and mercy, a sympathetic imagination, a deep and abiding concern for others, a delight in nature and human company and all forms of beauty, a passion for justice, a sense of restraint and a sense of

humor, a relish for skillful work, a willingness to negotiate differences, a readiness for cooperation and affection. (Sanders, 1998, p. 71)

The format of professional development workshops *can* be the venue where “information, which makes a best practice in one site transferable to another and allows members to draw on the expertise of others to apply it to local conditions” (Ulrich, 1998, p.161). Bob wonders whether the voluntary characteristic of such work actually works against the mindset which entices participation.

People will shoot me when I say this. But I think one of the ways we could build on the number of relationships and the quality of relationships that exist, thus improving community if that’s a goal, (not that I feel that it necessarily has to be), is to have [hesitation] *mandatory* faculty training for our department or for whatever, *inside* our portal, not off to the side with the Learning Center or anything. . . . So in *that* training we start to learn about people and understand where they’re coming from and what they do, and relationships start to build. (Bob)

But there is another topic for professional development which addresses not just information sharing but exploration of self-knowledge as well. However, there is some genuine resistance to repeating the type of community-building exercise that the *Gang of 8* had just completed.

And I think that when UMUC offers things like the faculty development seminars for a specific thing, like pedagogy, or it might be writing, or it might be math, or it might be better writing assignments that you can use for online technology projects, it’s those type of things where you have a stated purpose, and those people that are going to come to that have a need. And they’re going to be sharing a common type of vision. Unfortunately, that’s probably the best that UMUC is going to be able to do. I don’t think having this again, or trying to propagate this particular thing is going to be useful. (Al)

Has Al just told me that expanding this research study is not feasible or useful? Ray and Bob seem to agree with Al’s position on the kinds of activities that would be of interest to adjunct faculty members. I feel gratified that Al was comfortable enough to

make this comment in the group setting – but part of me is disheartened, for I argue that this is *not* merely the best that UMUC is able to accomplish in seeking to provide a place of community for adjunct faculty members. Organizing community places around technical issues which impact their lives in the classroom is certainly valuable. But it is not the only community place that might draw in those who are looking for more than support solely based on classroom needs. There are places to bring forward a pathway toward wholeness that includes pedagogy, and techniques, *and* recognition of the identity and integrity that form the whole person, the whole teacher using those tools. And this pathway is not taken alone. Palmer (2000) points us toward the link between genuine selfhood and community: “The Quaker teacher Douglas Steere was fond of saying that the ancient human question “Who am I?” leads inevitably to the equally important question “Whose am I?” – for there is no selfhood outside of relationship” (p. 17). Even in its broadest sense, where the purpose of the community is that of common practice, the sharing of teaching techniques or the pedagogy of teaching, the concept of community is recognized as important. “A community for adjunct instructors can achieve a very important purpose, that of making many people from different parts of the world feel that, although distant, they are still part of a real institution” (Sonia). But going beyond that valued purpose of creating connections toward entering into the heart of the relationships with others in that community is forever a matter of individual choice.

**Community of choice.** Most adjuncts, by the very nature of their association with the university, are free to leave their second or third career in education as desired and needed. Outside of fulfilling contract requirements, they can easily opt out of teaching for a semester, a year. Their participation in education is participation in a community of



choice. Partially because of the increase in the number of adjunct faculty at most schools of higher education, there is increasing competition for the services of adjunct faculty.

This fact mirrors what is found in the greater environment of industry.

Almost all significant communities of the future will be in intense competition for members. They will be communities of choice. . . . The leader of the community of the future will face much greater challenges in retaining members. (Goldsmith, 1998, pp. 113-114)

In what ways can a university become an employer of choice in this increasingly complex environment? Professional development opportunities, albeit but one piece of that which invites faculty members to work at an institution, nevertheless presents a strong incentive.

I think any time you implement professional development, which is what this sort of amounts to, is that you get better teachers and you get happier teachers because they're not frustrated with the problems they're experiencing. (Bob)

Potent inspiration for joining together with others in the work of education also can be found in Rumi's (1995) poem *On Being Woven*:

The way is full of genuine sacrifice.

The thickets blocking the path are anything  
that keeps you from that, any fear  
that you may be broken to bits like a glass bottle.  
This road demands courage and stamina,  
yet it's full of footprints! Who are  
these companions? They are rungs  
in your ladder. Use them!  
With company you quicken your ascent.

You may be happy enough going along,  
but with others you'll get farther, and faster.

Someone who goes cheerfully by himself  
will go even more lightheartedly  
when friends are with him. (pp. 246-247)

In reality, addressing the “thickets blocking the path” may be the invitation that first brings the adjuncts into working with each other. If we think of these community-building experiences as being initially centered around educational practice, the members will have opportunities to invest themselves, to pledge their participation as they address these problems. Each of the participants brings to the community unique and personal approaches to whatever “need” is being addressed.

I think that if you wanted to develop more of a community, more relationships within the organization, within IFSM or the university, whatever, then focus groups, focusing on some issue like this could develop that kind of community. It wouldn't have to be this. I mean, it could be anything, the ADA thing, or grades or getting people to write or what have you. Something that people could focus on and that they could deal with I think would work. (Ray)

The type of community work described here might be labeled “communities of practice,” as Wenger (1998) names them. They are a valuable piece of the support structure for all faculty members. Both Bob and Ray point out that this joining together in community is voluntary.

Then what is it that will make any particular university the employer of choice for these adjuncts? Robbins (2005) lists five characteristics of organizations that recognize the need for involvement and connection among their workers: work that is purposeful, development of the individual's strengths, an atmosphere of trust and openness, empowerment of the individual, and toleration for individual expression. These valued ends mark an organization that addresses the spirituality of the employees. Spirituality, spirit, is derived from the Latin *spiritus*, “soul, vigor, breath, related to *spirare* to breathe” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1047). Breath is the force of life. In order to be engaged fully in their work as educators, the faculty must be able to breathe in that which makes them

whole, and express such wholeness in their work with their peers and in the classrooms with their students. In what manner does the university breathe into the organization that which supports the spirituality of the adjunct faculty?

**Community of awareness.** “Typically our decisions reflect personal preferences and an orientation to ourselves as enduring entities” (Kaza, 1993, p. 106). Wholeness demands an awareness of greater patterns in interconnection and interdependence. Berman (1998) speaks of “horizontal persons” who “see and hear what is around, but they can also use their work, their abilities and imaginations, to create something that takes us beyond the here and now and adds a twist that enables viewers to see life in a new way” (p. 176). One might argue that this process is exactly what can happen in the classroom. Creating opportunities for seeing life in a new way is akin to Al’s identification of his personal metaphor as that of a chef. As every baker knows, items seldom turn out the same way twice, even if the same ingredients are used and the same steps followed. There are other environmental contingencies affecting the outcome. The level of awareness required to see the here and now, coupled with the freedom of imagination which looks for other possibilities, is too often confined by rules, political correctness, or inertia. Workshops on professional development, time set aside for focus groups at faculty meetings, and online discussion forums can provide the grounds for letting the imagination free to conceive of the unseen or unexplored connections.

**Imagination.** “Opportunities for community today are limited only by your imagination and the degree of your intention” (Shafer & Anundsen, 1994, p. 9). The community of which I write here must provide a fertile ground where seeds of the possible can be planted. The faculty “must be able to understand where they come from

and where they can go” (Wenger, 1998, p. 273). The institution may need to change so that the spirituality of adjuncts is addressed. Such change only is possible when there is a place made for the inner work needed to counteract forces trying to defeat community in teaching and/or defeat those who band together to do that teaching. “Institutions are projections of what goes on in the human heart” (Palmer, 1993, p. 107). It is important to build spaces for a genuine sense of community that includes trust. That space must exist for those who do administrative work as well as for those who teach. And the richest of outcomes can be expected when those spaces are integrated, where adjunct faculty members identify with the environment of education and consider themselves integral to this environment.

**Redefining the terms.** Are we using the correct terms for this community-building effort that is being proposed here? Any professional development workshop, regardless of topic or focus, can no longer expect to be only presented in a face-to-face format. The number of faculty who are geographically dis-located from one another precludes even small groups being able to congregate for a workshop. So the format of workshops, to be fairly accessible by all faculty members, must be available in multiple formats – those that meet in a designated place and time, and those that are mediated via electronic formats. Thus, every discussion of community-building experiences should always consider that the format may be such that participants do not ever *see* each other. Even though that is the reality of today’s far-flung adjunct ranks, faculty longingly still mention a desire to meet in person.

As benefits today’s mobile society, community does not need to be defined entirely by where you live. You can choose to pursue community anywhere. Your work team, with whom you spend the largest part of your week, may provide more opportunities for kinship and inclusion than your

residential neighborhood. ... You may even feel strongly connected to people you have never seen. (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993, p. 8)

Al, who is comfortably attached to instant communication links (wireless telephone receiver and speaker clipped to his ear, pager in the belt) is adamant about the need to recognize that physical presence is becoming less a part of community-building. "I think that it's possible to build a virtual community, but we have to change the definition. We are trying to apply a rotary phone definition of community to a cell phone environment. And it's not working" (Al). Is difficulty with this paradigm shift in community construction a generational thing? If we are having trouble with thinking in terms of instant communication always available (cell and cell picture phones, text messaging, pagers, Internet access always on), the next generation will find it hard to imagine life without this instant communication capability. Michele laughingly tells us a story of presented on a television show about 5 years ago.

This young guy, teenager, was in a barbershop, and he went to use the telephone. Well, the telephone was the rotary dial. And he just stood there and looked at it for about 10 minutes. And someone had to say, "Eighteen years old, doesn't know how to use the telephone." He didn't understand that. But he's able to understand the new phones, the I-pods, and everything else. And his generation would be more adaptable to this newness that we are still trying to grapple with. (Michele)

We might chuckle at the scene, but there is a small measure of uneasiness, perhaps, lurking in the back of our minds that questions whether we can handle this new definition of community based on electronic information sharing. Will it even allow for the level of sharing that arises out of genuine discovery of self in community with others?

Taylor and Saarinen (1994) created an unusual text that in 1994 was quite forward-looking regarding the modes of communication that have since become commonplace. Counter to the prevailing print culture, this text, as supplement to a

teleconferenced seminar, is organized so that it can be read in any order and is highly focused on images and words that are graphical in presentation. “Imagology insists that the word is never simply a word but is always also an image” (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994, [Styles], p. 3). Although the Internet was gaining in popularity in 1994, access was more limited and less prevalent than now. In looking forward to the impact of electronic media on communications, they write:

Technology, which at first seems to create a distance by putting the machine between the teacher and student, actually creates connection by bringing us together in an ongoing conversation. I have always insisted that more education takes place outside than inside the classroom. Unfortunately, the dialogue between teacher and student usually ends at the threshold of the classroom. Email erases that threshold by allowing discussion to go on any time day or night. ([Pedagogies], p. 8)

Well beyond the medium of email, we now speak of teaching and learning in synchronous and asynchronous classroom sites, online chats, and iPod broadcasts, all supplemented with audio and video components. It may be that a faceless community still can engender deep connections in spite of the anonymity of distance. Even when that community, of students or of faculty, is virtual, the sense of inclusion it can generate is real.

Yes, we do have community. We do have other communities. And we do get a certain fulfillment in those other communities. But because of what we do as faculty members, we still need a community. We still need to feel part of UMUC. And you have to understand that for those of you there at UMUC, you have an opportunity for teaching face-to-face classes as well. That gets you *to* UMUC. But when you’re only teaching at a distance, you lose a belonging; you don’t know who you’re part of anymore. You don’t know if this condition even exists. It’s hard to describe, but you kind of lose touch with what’s going on and what’s happening. So having a community, having a point of reference is very, very important to me. And again, even in the virtual format, but I still feel that I’m part of a real institution instead of something that’s just in the air that I don’t see and that I don’t go to. (Sonia)

Being part of a “real institution” is a part of making our identity “real” as well. This virtual community provides a place to express our selves, to make visible our presence in this aggregate of individuals joined in the common purpose of education. But it is also very possible to become lost, invisible in that amorphous community if one does not make an effort to participate. Lurking, although allowed and tolerated, does not provide the deeper incentive for growth as does taking the risk of expressing and exposing one’s unmasked identity to the others. What kind of support for the rose window is required of the pieces that make up the story? What is it that allows for these spaces of trust, connection, and reflection to exist in the university setting?

### **Support from the Inside**

Even within the window, as it represents the whole body of adjunct faculty, there are smaller circles, squares, and triangles which, by themselves, have their own stories. Each of these smaller parts is rich in meaning. It is necessary that the window be broken into smaller pieces, for one very large sheet of glass could not be sustained. The filigree that contains parts of the window, and the lead channels or solder that hold individual pieces in place, can be seen as ways to separate, to isolate both portions of the window from the whole and individual pieces from each other. Perhaps the sections would like to ignore the filigree, or recognize it only when they “need” to acknowledge its presence as holding them in place. Perhaps individual pieces would actually prefer to ignore the other pieces in the window. But what do they need from the other pieces? What do they need from the framework? Can they opt to participate when they please and opt to disassociate themselves from the others when they please? Can they opt to remain invisible, transparent, at times? Can they fall out and come back when they want to take some

strength from the whole window, or even the pieces that are next to them, or in their small area within the window?

I created relationships at some level with all of these people, just by spending time with them. I've listened to them speak; I know they're all consummate professionals; and I would feel very comfortable in asking them any question. (Bob)

But this improvement can only take place in pockets. The whole of the adjunct community can be improved by working on the small parts. Some suggestions for communities of practice that would bring small groups together include taking teachers who have never taught a class before and putting them together with an experienced person; or taking everyone who has taught a first class and have them come together to talk about what went well, what did not go so well, and what they would change. This is a deliberate invitation to address an issue that calls and requires a personal commitment. The relationships will happen. Participation in such multiple workshops will build a network of relationships. And a resultant valued outcome would be a growing greater sense of community among the faculty. Could not another topic of workshops include exploration of who we are in the classroom? Such topics would enrich not only new faculty but also experienced faculty who are looking to deepen their connections to their students in a way that raises both students and instructors to a greater level of awareness.

**Bounded by size.** “Put a man among large masses of men and he will begin to gather a few of them together to build a small community” (Morgan, 1993, p. 16). The *Gang of 8* participants repeatedly echoed the sentiment that creating a sense of community among a large number of adjunct faculty members was not feasible. Their personal experiences have borne this out. “I think the larger the community gets, the



more dysfunctional it becomes. Our effective communities were the small ones, where it was just Jef and I and just a couple other guys and gals” (Bob).

Why is it that large numbers do not seem to provide that sense of community, that level of intimacy associated with *belonging*? Intimacy implies close friendship. It is derived from the Latin *intimus* - inmost. Does the community of adjunct faculty allow for sharing of the most closely held personal revelations? Certainly not every community requires that personal secrets be revealed. But those secrets that relate to the purpose of the community, here the shared role of faculty member, need to be offered, need to be aired in order for all members to feel that they are trustworthy of such sharing. Size does play a role in allowing each member to participate as desired. A large group does not support this opportunity to speak when one desires. In smaller settings it is less easy to hide; but even in small groups it is still allowed that members remain quiet. In this research study it became important, even in a setting with just nine participants, that the more silent ones be given the opportunity to speak by asking them directly if they wanted to join in.

For a genuine sense of intimacy to develop, an environment where it becomes safe to take off masks and reflect on the identity and the integrity of the individual, a large group may seem too great a risk of exposure. Likewise, if there is an attempt to provide opportunities for professional improvement, it would be challenging to think about improving the entire university community.

Once a community gets so large, is it really a community then? I mean, you might have the umbrella of the university holding a bunch of mini-communities together. So the community is not the university, it's the smaller groups within it that are really the communities. (Al)

One might think that if this is a group whose communication is effected by participation in an online environment, there would be no impediment to each person having the opportunity to “speak.” However, that same ability easily can generate such an excess of postings that individuals give up trying to read them all. In a recent faculty forum (*Faculty Forum*, 2006), I have over 200 unread messages, postings by the more than 60 participants. Intimacy and connection easily is lost in such numbers. The *Gang of 8* agrees that the most fruitful size of a group focusing on a given topic of study would need to be limited to seven or eight participants. A number greater than this would not provide an opportunity for full participation by every member.

**Bounded by opportunity.** This past year I was invited to present a two-hour workshop at a staff/faculty retreat in another academic department. The topic of the workshop, based on a modified and much shortened version of the Seminar #1 syllabus presented in this research (Appendix D), was “We Teach Who We Are.” The first group conversations were centered around an autobiographical remembrance of an early learning experiences that participants believed impacted their vocation as teachers today. In moving around, listening to the conversations during the group work, I heard touching, revealing, and insightful stories. There was a lot of laughter as individuals shared stories. For most participants, this was the first and only time they have looked at the connections between their early histories and who they are in the classroom now. Reaction to this workshop was generally enthusiastic. As Dyer (2006) writes,

We know that there’s something deep within us waiting to be known, which we sometimes call a “gut reaction” to life’s events. We have a built-in yearning to seek our inspired self and feel wholeness, a kind of inexplicable sense that patiently demands recognition and action. (p. 4)

That which we uncover deep within us is conveyed in *messages* to one another. The *meanings* are internal and only can be shared to the extent that those who hear our messages have had similar experiences (Berman, 1968). And the experience of sharing stories in a setting such as is described above can be one of those small experiences of coming-to-be that Heidegger (1971/2002) tells us is the “setting-into-work of truth” (p. 72).

### **Stepping Beyond the Boundaries**

Also in attendance at the workshop described above was a staff member from the university’s Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). He is charged with the worldwide training of faculty in the use of the online delivery platform UMUC uses for its online classes. His reaction was that such a workshop was a critical need since the personal side of who we are as teachers is neglected in all of the workshops currently offered. Thus arose the concept of developing such a workshop for faculty, one that can be used in face-to-face and online formats. This proposal, including a complete syllabus (see Appendix E) will be presented to the Director of CTL for consideration as an offering for faculty. The workshop will borrow significantly from the seminar series used in this research. But it will be adapted for a wider audience of faculty and/or staff members interested in this path toward self-knowledge.

This workshop will continue the study of lived experiences of faculty members as they take one small part of a journey toward being. We *become*, through questioning, through becoming more aware of our human condition, through relying on our *being* to support our *doing*. “Hold tenderly who you are, and let a deeper knowing color the shape of your humanness” (Mountain Dreamer, 2003, p. 57).

In a series of three course modules, participants will be encouraged to examine educational questions from the vantage point of their own personal background. In the context of working within a group of peers, they will first look at their basic and early educational experiences and think about the impact those lived experiences have had upon them in their current vocations as teachers. Next they will be encouraged to explore a core identity that may be covered over with masks used to protect perceived selves from the eye of others or from the inner eye of their own criticism. Finally, the participants will be asked to identify the traits of good teachers. In recalling those teachers who made such a distinct impression that individual instances of connection can be clearly identified, they will be calling to mind what or whom they emulate or hope to emulate in their own classrooms today. It is hoped that this workshop will be a place where one of the foundations of community, trust of one another, will be fostered as the participants look with a keen insight into what will serve them well as excellent teachers in the classrooms. This measure of excellence will not be expressed in terms of pedagogy and techniques, but in terms of bringing a genuine-ness to the work in the classroom. The journey will take the form of individual reflections and activities and the sharing of those reflections and projects with other participants.

### **A Pedagogy of Hospitable Spaces**

How might we formulate the presentation of this less-traditional workshop that will truly entice faculty, full time or adjunct, to participate? Who would want to participate in such group work? In a recent online Faculty Forum (*Faculty Forum*, 2006), a series of conversations held by and among faculty, a participant posted this response to a suggestion that a new workshop might be offered that focused on topics that explore

coming to a greater understanding of who *we* are in the classroom. “I think that for effective learning at a distance the projections of self that we are considering are inevitable and that process could be handled with more awareness if we did have faculty workshops on these areas” (Starr-Glass, 2006, ¶ 5). With this greater knowledge of who they are as informed by the paths that have brought them to the present, strategies for bringing that awareness and wholeness into what they do in the classroom can be explored.

Applebee (1996) speaks of “deadly traditions” (p. 21) that engender a practice of imparting knowledge out of context instead of engaging students in exploration and discovery. This workshop is offered as an alternative to the more confining definition of pedagogy as that of following a rigid set of steps or a technical approach to teaching. Instead, here is presented a means of creating a space for exploration that is both hospitable and charged (Palmer, 2002).

These faculty workshops will need to include a self-study of the instructors’ own identities, and the sources of those constructions, so as to understand the ways in which students might build identities. This occurs in the current online classrooms where students go through a process of identity construction or identity hiding. For those who choose not to be anonymous, “There is a genuine attempt to reveal bits and pieces that will lead to the construction of a preferred image. Yet, others set up avatars that mask self-understood characteristics or project ones at variance with their perceived selves” (Starr-Glass, 2006, ¶ 2). If we turn the tables and have instructors as students in an online forum, this same set of activities would likely be found. But this will take the development of a deep level of trust, facilitated by the group experience and subscribed

to by all the participants. And so the spaces must also have a “sense of electricity, of risk, of stakes, of the danger inherent in pursuing the deep things of the human soul” (Palmer, 2002, p. 296). Such electricity, risk and danger may be “off putting” to some who have never engaged in such activity in the context of their teaching. And yet, the obvious enthusiasm evidenced at the staff retreat, the responses posted to a simple posing of questions about such a workshop presentation in the faculty forum may provide the opening of a door where word of such explorations will spread and become a place where others hungry for looking at teaching from a different viewpoint seems not only desirable but imperative.

### **Stained Glass Art: The Singing and the Song**

You look at where you’re going and where you are and it never makes sense, but then you look at where you’ve been and a pattern seems to emerge. And if you project forward from that pattern, then sometimes you can come up with something. (Persig, 1984, p. 149)

In this journey of phenomenological inquiry and discovery, I have been both listener and singer of the song that is adjunct faculty members in a community-building experience. I have been the architect and at the same time a part of the stained glass window constructed within these pages. “Art, as the setting-into-work of truth, is poetry. . . .The setting-into-work of truth thrusts up the unfamiliar and extraordinary and at the same time thrusts down the ordinary and what we believe to be such” (Heidegger, 1971/2001, p. 72). As a participant and artist, the work of creating also has created a difference in me and my understanding of community as it applies to the adjunct faculty members with whom I work. The telling of the story shapes the mind of both the listener and the teller. Within every meeting with these adjunct faculty members, other meetings have occurred, not in physical presence but in the “mirror of consciousness” (Griffin,

1995, p. 152). In the reflections upon the stories shared, the truths revealed by the *Gang of 8*, I have had the chance to reflect and to consider my own story, my own understandings, my own ordinary and extraordinary.

The methodology itself, hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, has been an "Aha!" experience which has opened up so many more possibilities for addressing questions. This interpretive methodology has allowed me to define my phenomenon of interest in terms of the whole rather than a part. The individual person has not been lost in the unpacking of the phenomenon under study. Nor did I have to remain aloof, apart, or separated from the focus of my study. The connectedness between subject and investigator is much more attuned to my present need to stay connected, to develop relationships, to be less of a spectator and more of a participant.

Yet, in this experience I come away feeling that I did not share enough of my own stories. My own masks remain firmly in place. The participants, although my peers as faculty members, also depend upon me for their staffing each semester. In some ways I am surprised at the quickness at which the participants in the room became comfortable in their sharing and in the trust they felt for speaking freely. They seem to have little hesitation in discussing whatever topic was on the table. My role as administrator seems to have given them a sense that they were included because their input was valued. I, on the other hand, felt constrained by my position of Academic Director and representative of the university administration. The openness to inclusion remains evident on their part, but I was uncomfortable stepping over self-imposed boundaries. It is a dissonance in perception that I see now only in retrospect. In its own way, this fear of crossing boundaries is one of the masks I wore during this study. And that mask belies one kind of

shadow that anyone in a leadership position must be willing to admit to and to wrestle with. As Moxley (2005) tells us, “Learning to dance with it, if not embrace it, is a critical step to becoming a whole, true self” (p. 263).

### **Singing Out of Tune**

Phenomenological inquiry can open one to listen to just such dissonances. I am acutely aware of the need for attentiveness, for listening to hear what is really being said. Berman (1968) reminds us that communication is both irreversible and unrepeatable. Words, once spoken, cannot be undone or taken back. And the exact situation in which the communication takes place can never be replicated again. Time moves forward; and those who speak are different because of the speaking; those who listen are different because of the hearing. Being acutely aware of the dynamics of the conversations impelled me to be quiet, to ask questions, but also to allow for sustained, unembarrassed silences also to occur.

This journey has ever more convinced me that teachers need time to reflect and they need time to talk with other teachers.

Teachers nurture each other by inquiring together: teaching is uncertain; knowledge is uncertain; life is uncertain. It matters desperately that teachers and students abdicate frames of mind that value control and certainty over ambiguity and uncertainty. (Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 175)

Although I am very sensitive to Ray’s insistence that “belonging to a university” is not the driving factor in the desire to teach, and that building community with other peers is not a high priority in his mind, there is still an obvious need for adjunct faculty to feel supported, encouraged, and appreciated. When I recently put out a call for faculty to assist in review and revision of one of the courses in my discipline area, Ray was quick to step up and volunteer to be part of the revision team.



In order to inquire together, provisions must be made for faculty to *be* together. Speaking face-to-face is more intimate than an electronic meeting. I am uncomfortable with AI's insistence that community be defined in terms of its electronic version. The conversations in the Media Lab on Sunday afternoon were not equivalent to conversations in a living room, but they were conversations at a more normal speed. Even those whose presence at these conversations was facilitated by electronic means (video camera and telephone bridge) were participants in real time and were part of the ebb and flow of the conversations.

“Addiction to speed, to the artificial rhythms generated by electronic media, can change our consciousness” (Steindl-Rast & Lebell, 2002, p. xv). The conversations in this community-building experience may have been quite different if they had been held entirely in an electronic format. I had met in one-on-one conversations with the local participants before we began our seminar activities. But I also had the advantage of having met with Jef, Sonia, and Beth in face-to-face conversations in their home locations away from the university. A different connection had been forged with them as a result of those meetings, a connection the five local participants did not have. A struggle is created in me, this awareness that physical location does play an important and creative role in forging relationships, while at the same time recognizing the reality of the scattering of faculty around the world. Some of those who sat together in the Media Lab insisted that meeting other faculty was not important. Jef, Sonia, and Beth, however, strongly and repeatedly expressed the wish that they could be there with us. In this setting, at least, all the participants were able to hear each other at the same time (even while the video component was less reliable). But what does this speak to for the vast

number of faculty who never have the chance to work together in real time and who must rely on online classrooms and email for connections?

The hunger for this inquiring together was again observed in the avid discussions that took place around tables at a recent faculty meeting. When given the opportunity to share questions and concerns and stories with peers, this group, not members of the *Gang of 8* but a larger group of faculty teaching the same courses, immediately launched into spirited conversations. Only an imminent snow storm curtailed the length of time they spent at these tables, for I felt that they would have willingly continued the discussions for much longer than the one hour time we had that afternoon.

I have consciously not addressed the similarity between the experiences of faculty who communicate only in the online environment and those of students who also take only online classes. Surely the expressions of desire for greater proximity as expressed by Sonia, Jef, and Beth might also be heard from students who find themselves isolated from the rich connections and sharings of classmates as they struggle through the discoveries that should be part of every learning experience. Even the participants in this study spoke of an attunement to the unique challenges faced in the online classrooms in which they find themselves as instructors. It is very common to hear faculty, myself included, verbalize a desire to return to the face-to-face classroom because the mode of intercommunication enabled in that environment is thought to be more robust than a purely online or electronic environment. Gioconda insists that true community cannot be forged solely via electronic media. But the lens of my inquiry here has been on the experiences of faculty in a community-building experience. Although we cannot spend all our energies on a search that solely focuses on self and community, that time taken to

recognize our own experiences of and desire for community will inevitably color our relationships with the students whom we teach but may never see face-to-face.

### **Blowing on the Pitch Pipe: Getting Back on Key**

It is important that these researching and writing efforts always keep in the forefront the relationship between research/writing and pedagogy. As stated in chapter three, “The intent of phenomenological inquiry is that, based on research results, one seeks to formulate recommendations that might lead to more possibilities for human autonomy and a better situation for those who are affected by a decision or course of action. . .”(Hultgren, 1987, p. 36). As van Manen (2003) reminds us, thoughtful reflection on the deeper meaning and consequences of the lived experience we are researching also includes a call to action. Let us turn once again, then, to that center circle of the rose window, to that which reveals the “real self at the centre of the soul” (Cowen, 1979, p. 12). What is the real soul of community? What is it that is of greatest importance in any experience of or desire for community? What is it that is of greatest importance to these adjunct faculty members in their relationships to each other and to the university?

Community, to whatever degree is it desired or experienced, opens up one to a place where one “matters.” Schlossberg (1989) defines mattering as ensuring that the participants are noticed, cared about, needed, and appreciated. Mattering also means that there is someone who acknowledges the successes and steadily stands by when there is failure. This, then, is the charge laid upon the university that is concerned about community in the various forms it takes in supporting staff, full time faculty, and part time faculty.

The desire and need for community will manifest itself in diverse ways among different members of the faculty. A sensitivity to this diversity of needs, to limitations on time available for participating, should call forth new approaches for recognizing and responding. Some of these will take the form of an expression of a longing that is in all of us to look further into who we are as it defines our presence in the classroom. The desire for shared inquiry may originate within the context of pedagogical matters or even in creating classroom environments. What opportunities or changes might be recommended that allow faculty to begin inquiring together? In what ways might we strengthen the message that adjunct faculty matter? The interpretation of insights included here call forth a moral obligation. The recommendations listed here are seen as emanating from the community as it exists now, a modeling of behavior from within academic units that will gradually change the culture of community in the university and, potentially, result in changes in policy or procedure. These changes, even in their initial presentation, will require support from administrators as well as budgetary support. They are presented here as seeds for discussion, with potential implementation coming as windows of opportunity become available for rendering of administrative support. These are suggestions for untapped ways of making faculty feel that they matter.

- 1) Provide more times for faculty to meet together, such as in holding smaller discipline-oriented faculty meetings up to 4 times per year rather than the two large general meetings.
- 2) Provide financial support for faculty living at a distance from the administrative offices to come to the university headquarters for the general faculty meeting. This

visit would incorporate socializing with staff and peers, as well as participating in the information sharing at the larger group meetings.

- 3) Continue to provide a space where faculty can share more than teaching tips and concerns about classroom management. Encourage inclusion of family or personal achievement sections in the online faculty classrooms.
- 4) Expand ways in which faculty are recognized for their excellence and service to the university and students. At the present time, a limited number of recognition awards are provided to the entire faculty pool each year. Smaller ceremonies of recognition can come from the discipline areas. For example, an entire group of faculty who have tested the pilot version of a new application might be provided with certificates and other appropriate tokens of recognition.
- 5) Supplement the required legal terms of the adjunct contract with a cover letter that focuses on appreciation and recognition of the incredible service and value that adjunct faculty provide to support the university's mission.
- 6) Implement the professional development workshop outlined in Appendix E and make modifications as needed to enrich the content and better serve the purpose of opening up inquiry into the concept of "We teach who we are."

My hope is that this inquiry will be a courting of the truth, a telling of our lives that creates panels of multi-colored spaces and shapes. For,

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.  
I want to know what you ache for,  
And if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing. (Mountain Dreamer,  
1999, p. 15)

Within the context of this aching, this dreaming, it is my intention to work toward bringing out of the desert of non-existence a common enterprise of belonging, a

community of hope, and opportunities for an integration of who we are with what we do as adjunct faculty members.

## APPENDIX A

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

March 2005

Dear Faculty Member,

I invite you to engage in a research study with me that explores your experience of community as an adjunct faculty member. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland at College Park, MD.

The purpose of this study is to understand what it is like for adjuncts to come from the formalized structure of day jobs into the nighttime or asynchronous online classrooms where they may see, hear and observe no other teaching peers. In what ways might participation in a short series of seminars change the vision of their relationship to the university and to their peers? As I seek to understand the sense of community among adjuncts, I will conduct an individual conversation with each participant. An example of the kinds of questions asked in the individual conversations will be:

- What is it like to be an adjunct faculty member at this university?
- Describe your experiences of connection to the university. To your peers.
- What is it like to meet other adjuncts only once or twice a year (or perhaps never)?
- What is it that would make you feel more connected to your peers?
- Describe your experiences of communication via the 999 classrooms (online classrooms for faculty only).

This will be followed by three two-hour group seminars focused on community and teaching. A final, concluding conversation with the entire group will provide the participants with the opportunity to share reflections on the meaning of the journey undertaken during this study.

The seminars will, ideally, be conducted in a face-to-face environment. However, some non-local participants may participate via video or telephone conference call or online chat. These conversations and seminars will be recorded and transcribed. Any comments made or reflections shared will be used anonymously. You will not be identified by name in the published findings. After the research is complete, I will share the results with you. As a participant, you will receive a copy of Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach*, a journaling book in which you can record reflections, a gift certificate for purchase of books or gifts from a preferred book store, and, if you so choose, a notation in your employment records of participation in a professional development workshop.

This study will make an important contribution to understanding the experiences and perceptions of community as it relates to your lifework as adjunct faculty members. If you would like to be one of my conversants, please let me know by responding to this email by March 31, 2005.

Sincerely,

Janet Zimmer

## APPENDIX B

### PERMISSION TO USE THE FACULTY MEDIA LAB AT UMUC FOR SEMINAR CONVERSATIONS



UMUC

*Center for the Virtual University*

March 1, 2005

Dr. Thomas Wible  
Department Chair  
Education Policy and Leadership  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742

Dr. Wible,

Ms. Janet Zimmer, pursuant to her Ph.D. in Curriculum Theory and Development under the dissertation supervision of Dr. Francine Hultgren, has requested the use of the Faculty Media Lab at University of Maryland University College to support the conducting of several seminars/conversations with 7-10 volunteer faculty members, some of whom will not be local to the College Park area. The video conferencing capability available in the Media Lab will provide visual and/or audio contact for those who cannot attend the seminars in person, and will further support the focus of Ms. Zimmer's research into the experience of community among adjunct faculty members.

Permission to use the Media Lab for these purposes is hereby granted.

Dr. Theodore Stone  
Assistant Provost and Director  
Center for the Virtual University



## APPENDIX C

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Page 1 of 3

**Identification of  
Project/ Title**

STAINED GLASS CANTATAS: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE  
OF COMMUNITY AMONG ADJUNCT FACULTY

**Statement of  
Age of Subject**

I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research conducted in the department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland College Park

**Purpose**

I understand that the purpose of this research effort is to collect and interpret personal experiences and perceptions of community, the lived meaning of community, as it relates to my lifework as an adjunct faculty member. This research work may, in turn, uncover possibilities for courses of action that lead to the strengthening of community among faculty with whom I work.

**Procedure**

I understand that the conversations, focused around my experiences of community as an adjunct faculty member, will be tape recorded for transcription later. This recording will occur for designated individual conversations with the researcher, in three group seminars, and in a concluding group conversation. I also understand that my written reflections about my experiences related to the topic of community, as well as reflections on the participation in the group activities, may be used.

The original individual conversation will include sample questions such as: What is it like to be an adjunct faculty member at this university? Describe experiences of connection to the university and to peers. What is it like to meet other adjuncts only once or twice a year (or perhaps never)?

Each of the seminars will be organized as thematic conversations around specific subjects such as the diverse experiences that have influenced my life as a teacher, the experiences and assumptions I bring to the concept of community, and the need for creating a community of discourse among colleagues.

Preparation for each seminar involves readings (a specific chapter in the text provided) and preparation of short written reflections to be shared with other members of the group.

## APPENDIX C

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Page 2 of 3

These reflections will include a short autobiography, a personal statement that expresses experiences and assumption I bring to the concept of community, and a personal statement that expresses what is at the heart of my life as a teacher.

Examples of the focusing questions to be explored in the seminars include: In what manner do our autobiographical stories inform our teaching? What is it like to reveal my identity and integrity in the classroom? What is it like to experience community? How important are these experiences for me as an adjunct faculty member? What does it mean for me to teach in isolation from my peers? Can I select a metaphor that represent for me teaching at my best? (The syllabus for each of the Seminars is attached.)

I will be encouraged to keep a journal that captures the journey toward understanding community that is brought to light during this study. A final written reflection, shared at a concluding group conversation, will be an opportunity to highlight the insights that have occurred during this time spent with the other participants.

### **Confidentiality**

I understand that my name will not be used in any public documents or oral presentations. A pseudonym will be used instead. I understand that data I provide will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation purposes. The researcher will have exclusive access to all data (tapes, transcriptions, notes, reflections) and they will be stored in a locked cabinet in her residence. At the completion of the study, all data will be destroyed.

### **Risks**

I understand that there are minimal risks associated with participating in this study.

### **Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw**

I understand that this research is not designated to help me personally, but the researcher hopes to learn more about the experiences of community among adjunct faculty in order to inform administrative and support services that may assist adjunct faculty. I understand that I have the right to withdraw without penalty at any time.

## APPENDIX C

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**To Contact  
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*If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:*  
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**Name of  
Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of  
Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### SEMINAR SYLLABUS

#### Seminar #1. “We Teach Who We Are”

##### Orienting Quotations:

What a long time it can take  
to become the person one  
has always been! How often  
in the process we mask  
ourselves in faces that are  
not our own. How much  
dissolving and shaking of  
ego we must endure before  
we discover our deep  
identity- the true self within  
every human being that is  
the seed of authentic  
vocation. (Palmer, 2000,  
p.9)

Our life is an echo  
Of our spirit today,  
Of our essence  
As it is,  
Caught between  
Our yesterday  
And our tomorrow.  
It is the resounding  
Reality of who we are,  
As a result of  
Where we have been,  
And where we will be,  
For eternity. (Stepanek, 2001, p.  
62)

##### Preparation:

- Read the Introduction and Chapter I of *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer, 1998).
- Prepare a short autobiography – the format may be a chronological story, highlights of important milestones, or a single life-changing event that captures some element of who you are today.

##### Valued Ends

It is my hope that this seminar will allow you to relook at your basic experiences of the world and think about the impact those experiences have had upon you as teacher. In this journey, you also will be allowed to hear experiences of others on this same journey. By exploring freely the events of our past, we hope to become more conscious of the intentions of our actions now and more aware and thoughtful of the consequences of these actions. It is hoped that this small journey inward will be the beginning of an ever-expanding search outward to a greater understanding of the human condition, through being in community together.

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### The Conversation

“I can hear myself when I listen to the other; I can hear myself *in* the other, or in the position of the other. But the reverse is also true. I can hear the other when I listen to myself. . .”(Kreisberg, 1992, p. 182).

We are encouraged to examine educational questions from the vantage point of our own personal background. To that end, some of the orienting questions for our first seminar are the following:

### Orienting Questions

- In what manner do our autobiographical stories reveal the masks we have worn and the deep identity that is our existence?
- In what ways do the narratives of our own lives or the lives of others have a power to express the essence of existence?
- Sharing information about our inner lives, our identity and integrity are ingredients for our growth as teachers. That sharing may involve revealing strengths, weaknesses, hopes, desires, or despairs. What drew you to participate in this inquiry? What expectations or fears do you have about the process?
- “Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). What is it like to reveal your identity and integrity in the classroom? In what manner do you see your identity and integrity hidden or even compromised in the classroom?

### References:

- Kreisberg, S. (1992). *Transforming power: Domination, empowerment, and education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palmer, P. (2000). *Let your life speak: Listening for the voice of vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Stepanek, M. (2001). *Journey through heartsongs*. New York: Hyperion.

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### Seminar #2. Community: Being, Longing, Belonging

#### Orienting Quotations

Community is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, the flowing of personal identity and integrity into the world of relationships. (Palmer, 1998, p. 90)

There is a deep need in each of us to belong to some cluster of friendship and affinity in which the games of impression and power are at a minimum, and we can allow ourselves to be seen as we really are, we can express what we really believe and can be challenged thoroughly. . . . The most intimate community is the community of understanding. Where you are understood, you are at home. (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 262)

#### Preparation:

- Read Chapter IV of *The Course to Teach* (Palmer, 1998).
- Prepare a personal statement that expresses experiences and assumptions that you bring to the concept of community. The statement may be formulated around a response to the following questions from Livsey (1999):

Talk about an experience of community, of any duration, that has been meaningful to you. [*Community* may be defined in any way that is meaningful to you.] What went on in the situation that made it “community” for you? (pp. 27-28)

#### Valued Ends

In this seminar we will examine our perceptions of community in ourselves and in our surrounding environments. Thoughtful attention will be given to those factors that drive people toward or away from community, as well as fears about the impact of coming into community with others. Finally, our understanding of the relationship between community participation and its support of our education mission will be explored.

#### The Conversation

In what sense is belonging valuable to adjunct faculty members? I am interested in the meaning of community/connection that lies behind the active involvement of some

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adjunct faculty, while others rarely are heard from as they go about their work. What is the institution's commitment to provide a nourishing and supportive atmosphere that fosters a sense of community for such widely dispersed peers? "Caring together is the basis of community life. We don't come together simply to console each other or even to support each other. Important as those things may be, long-term community life is directed in other ways. Together we reach out to others" (Nouwen, 1994, p. 64).

### Orienting Questions:

- In what manner is community revealed? What are the features of experiences that cause us to say "This is what community is like."
- Share a time in which you experienced community. What was this like?
- In what manner are people driven toward community? Away from community?
- What is your greatest fear or hope about coming into community with others?
- How do adjunct faculty find that home where they are at home, where they are understood?
- How important is *belonging* to the university community for the practitioner/teacher who teaches in addition to another career ?

### References:

- Livsey, R. (1999). *The courage to teach: A guide for reflection and renewal*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. New York: Wiley.
- Nouwen, H. (1994). *Our greatest gift: A meditation on dying and caring*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- O'Donohue, J. (1999). *Eternal echoes: Celtic reflections on our yearning to belong*. New York: Harper Collins.

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### Seminar #3. The Collegial Community

#### Orienting Quotations:

No individual can develop or grow in an isolated life. We need community desperately. Community offers us a creative tension which awakens us and challenges us to grow. (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 261)

Departments that care deeply about education, about teaching and learning, seem to foster an atmosphere in which faculty members talk with each other about these issues. Such departments also appear to involve part-timers in their talk and seem open to what the part-timers have to say. People sense that they can have an effect on what happens – not just in their own isolated classroom but on the entire program of the department. For part-timers, this environment produces feelings of efficacy and of satisfaction. (Gappa & Leslie, 1993, p. 185)

#### Preparation

- Read Chapter VI of *The Course to Teach* (Palmer, 1998).
- Prepare a personal statement that expresses what is at the heart of your life as a teacher. The statement may be formulated around a response to the following questions from Livsey (1999):  
Why did I become a teacher? What do I stand for as a teacher?  
What are the “birthright gifts” that I bring to my lifework? What do I want my legacy as a teacher to be? What can I do to “keep track of myself,” to “re-member” my own heart? (p. 16)

#### Valued Ends

In this seminar we will explore the actual or desired need for dialogue between colleagues at the university. In what ways do we express a need for creating a community of discourse about teaching in places where good discussions flourish? How would we describe the centering influences in our lives as teachers – what is it that is at the heart of our teaching?

#### The Conversation

In orientations with new faculty, there is often evidence of an eagerness to collaborate and a willingness on the part of more experienced faculty to share their stories. There is evidence that these professionals, for whom teaching is a second or third



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occupation/career, want to build a sense of community-within or belonging-to the university and to share and grow professionally with each other: “We were sharing a lot of ideas;” “We’ve kept in touch;” “I see some of them at faculty meetings now;” “You see the same faces.” These snippets of a conversation with adjunct faculty members all speak to the need for contact, for meeting together in one place, for a meaning-making that is based upon community, upon joining together, even if briefly, to share concerns, joys, frustrations, questions, triumphs. This joining together makes us feel part of things; it answers a need to participate

### Orienting Questions:

- What would it mean for you to take part in conversations with colleagues that explore paths beyond the techniques of teaching?
- Can you select a metaphor that would represent for you teaching at your best?
- How would you describe institutional programs you consider essential in providing a fertile environment for discussions about good teaching?

### References:

- Gappa, J. M., & Leslie, D. W. (1993). *The invisible faculty: Improving the status of part-timers in higher education..* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- O’Donohue, J. (1999). *Eternal echoes: Celtic reflections on our yearning to belong.* New York: Harper Collins.

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### Concluding Activity and Conversation

#### Orienting Quotation:

A strong community helps people develop a sense of true self, for only in community can the self exercise and fulfill its nature: giving and taking, listening and speaking, being and doing. (Palmer, 2004, p. 39)

#### Preparation:

- Prepare a short paper that that reflects upon the layers of meaning this group experience has had for you. Your journal can be used as a starting place for this reflection paper. Explore the journey toward understanding community that has been brought to light during this study. Highlight insights that have occurred, and reflect again on your sensitivity to the existence of and the need for a sense of community among adjunct faculty. These reflections will be shared and discussed with the other members of the group and the papers will be collected by the researcher.

#### Valued Ends

The exercise will provide an opportunity for each participant to explore the journey toward understanding community that has been brought to light during this study, to highlight insights that have occurred, and to reflect again on a sensitivity to the existence of and the need for a sense of community among adjunct faculty.

#### The Conversation

This final group conversation will focus on the sharing of insights the participants have uncovered in their exploration of community during these weeks of meeting together. Each participant will be invited to summarize or share significant milestones of the journey toward understanding community and its meaning in his/her life. In addition to the personal sharing, the following questions may be used to open up the participants' lived experience of this group work and the journey undertaken.

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### Orienting Questions:

- What was your greatest fear or hope about participating in this process of discovery with others? How would you describe those hopes or fears after having participated in this study?
- “If we want to deepen our understanding of our integrity, we must experiment with our lives” (Palmer, 1998, p. 16). What are some way that you have experimented with your work in order to deepen your understanding of your identity and integrity? What were the risks? What were the rewards?
- “Only as we are in community with ourselves can we find community with others” (Palmer, 1998, p. 90). What does it mean to be in community with one’s self?
- In Chapter 7 of his book, Palmer (1998) speaks of “communities of congruence that offer mutual support and opportunities to develop a shared vision” (p. 166). What would it mean for you to have such a community to sustain you in your work as an educator?

At the conclusion of the sharing of personal insights during the conversation time, all the participants will be invited to a celebratory meal that will honor the efforts of the participants as well as provide a venue for closure to the work accomplished to date.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Proposal for a Faculty Workshop – Exploring *Being above Doing***

The development of the workshop will be in adherence to CTL's "Guidelines for CTL Faculty Development Workshops" (Appendix F). The material for the workshop is found in four major categories: the syllabus, the course modules, the conference discussion questions, and a study group area set aside for submission of the projects outlined in the syllabus. Posting the projects in the Study Group area will allow all participants to share their creative work. The sections of the syllabus are those parts required for any online course/workshop offered by the university. Upon approval of CTL and with successful completion of the workshop as defined in the syllabus, a Certificate of Completion will be awarded to each participant.

Because many faculty members are not located in the Maryland area, the proposal here will be in the format of an online workshop and will be modeled on the structure of the university's online classes. The content of the workshop can easily be adapted for a face-to-face environment. Because this workshop requires reflective reading and writing, it is recommended that it take place over a span of 21 days.

### **Syllabus for Faculty Workshop on Exploring *Being over Doing***

#### **Course Description**

In the context of a community of peers, participants in the workshop will be encouraged to examine educational questions from the vantage point of their own personal background. To that end, participants will first look at their basic experiences of the world and think about the impact those experiences have had upon them in their current vocations as teachers. With this greater knowledge of who they are as informed by the paths that have brought them to the present, strategies for bringing that awareness

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and wholeness into what they do in the classroom will be explored. The personal explorations will be enriched by the learning that takes place in the sharing of this journey with other participants.

### **Course Introduction**

Your teaching persona is the sum total of all your convictions, goals and commitments with regard to being an educator and scholar. (Carroll, 2001, p. 62)

Knowing and doing are not the sole measures of effective and excellent teachers. Sharing our passion for the subject matter will always be wrapped in *who* we are as well as what we do or teach in the classrooms. To care for the subject matter more genuinely, as well as the students in our classrooms, it is appropriate also to step back and look at what have been the foundation and influencing factors in our development as teachers. This exploration goes deeper than the preparation of a teaching philosophy. What of our own experiences of education color our work in the classroom? If we wish to involve our students fully, calling upon them to respond from their own places of identity and integrity, it behooves us, as instructors, to also have explored those same pathways that have led us to know more deeply who we are as we teach. The interactions between students and teachers can only be richer if the teacher can call forth by his/her own modeling, that which expresses the result of heart-focused reflection of the complex elements that contribute to our teaching persona.

In the journey we will take together in the next several weeks, we will rely on each other – to question, to challenge, to affirm, to support, and most importantly, to listen. “I can hear myself when I listen to the other; I can hear myself *in* the other, or in

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the position of the other. But the reverse is also true. I can hear the other when I listen to myself. . .” (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 182).

Our listening will take the form of discussions and activities formed around discovering who we are, as that informs how we teach. Issues of *being* and not doing, identity and integrity, masking who we truly are, and growth of ourselves as teachers will be explored through autobiographical work, through readings, and through discussions of conference topics in our online classroom. It is the hope that everyone will find this classroom a place where we can trust one another and look with a keen insight into what makes us excellent teachers in the classroom. This measure of excellence will not be expressed in terms of pedagogy and techniques, but instead in terms of bringing a genuineness to our work in the classroom. This genuineness that comes from our hearts will inspire our students to begin looking at themselves and become involved in the subject matter from a richer perspective of wholeness and integrity.

In this university’s specific milieu, where academic courses are provided for students, and professional development workshops are offered for faculty in an online format, this exploratory focus holds specific benefits.

I think that, in an online classroom, in which teachers and students construct images of one another through our writing alone (maybe also through photos posted in the Bios or classroom), the issue of our identities – who we are and how we present/represent ourselves, can become especially interesting. (Starr-Glass, 2006, ¶ 2)

### References – Course Introduction

- Carroll, J. (2001). *How to survive as an adjunct lecturer: An entrepreneurial strategy manual*. Chula Vista, CA: Aventine Press.
- Kreisberg, S. (1992). *Transforming power: Domination, empowerment, and education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

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Starr-Glass, S. (2006). Posting in *Faculty Forum*. (2006). 0602 FACD100, Section 0206, February 6 – 12.

### **Valued Ends (Objectives)**

*Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:*

- Begin evaluation of the connection between their personal history and their *being* in the classroom as it affects their *doing* in the classroom.
- Formulate a strategy for engaging students in assessing and responding to the issues of identity and integrity as it applies to their work in the classroom and their connections with peers and the instructor.
- Construct connections between awareness of personal history, biases, and projections and the work of interpreting and critically evaluating student responses.

### **Course Materials**

Support from the university's library services will be sought in order to obtain permission to post several readings in the Webliography section of the classroom. The readings will be excerpts from the following sources:

Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-33. This text can also be found online at <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/character/palmer.htm>.

Levoy, G. (1997). *Callings: Finding and following an authentic life*. Chapter 10, Memory's Vital Secrets, pp. 163-185.

### **Grading Criteria**

In accordance with CTL's Guidelines, to be awarded a CTL certificate of completion, participants must:

1. Make substantive comments in at least 75% of the conferences.

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2. Submit at least three of the four projects (described below) in a special shared Study Group area.

This workshop consists of 3 conferences. 75% participation is defined in this workshop as: posting at least one substantive comment or question in each of the 3 discussion conferences AND posting at least one question or comment offering a constructive critique to another classmate in each of the 3 assignment conferences. "Substantive" is a comment or question that is responsive (but beyond a mere "I agree" or "that's interesting"), stimulates discussion, shows reflection on the discussion question, or helps focus attention on a particular aspect of an issue. "Constructive critique" is a comment or question that recognizes both the strong points of a colleague's work as well as areas for improvement. This critique will provide additional information or reinforcement of the approach the colleague has used in solving the problem or requests clarification of the methodology.

### **Project Descriptions**

Participants will be required to:

- 1) Prepare and share an autobiography (5 -6 pages in length) which explores an early educational experience and relates that to how you are as a teacher in the classroom today. You might reflect on your earliest introduction to the vocation of teaching or to the field in which you teach today. When and why did you feel drawn in this direction? What does your current work in the classroom or in this field reveal about who you are today?
- 2) Every life is a story that can be written in many different ways. Sometimes a story about the story brings forth hidden meanings of which the person living the story



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is not aware. Write a one-page summary of an assigned partner's autobiography by utilizing a metaphor that captures the overarching theme(s) of the lived experiences captured in that autobiography. Rewrite the story told in your partner's autobiography.

- 3) Prepare a personal statement that expresses what is at the heart of your life as a teacher. The statement may be formulated around a response to the following questions from Livsey (1999):

Why did I become a teacher? What do I stand for as a teacher?  
What are the "birthright gifts" that I bring to my lifework? What  
do I want my legacy as a teacher to be? What can I do to "keep  
track of myself," to "re-member" my own heart? (p. 16)

- 4) Construct an activity, assignment, conference topic for use in your classroom that incorporates the issues discussed here and your understanding of the impact on your *being* in the classroom. You may find yourself constructing multiple responses to this project as we move through the workshop. Try to include in your proposed activity the path that brought you to this activity/assignment, how you would introduce it to your students, and in what way you hope that the students will become engaged.

### Course Modules

The course modules are supporting materials that the participants are invited to read as background for the discussion topics to be explored during the week of work. The content of the course modules may be thought of as springboards that raise questions to be explored in the conversations that take place in the threaded conferences area of the classroom.

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### **Module 1 – Life stories**

#### Orienting Quotations:

Every life is a story. . . . Sometimes the simple willingness to explore story asserts the reality of the individual, and then the creative process of finding and telling the story becomes part of the way that we construct a life. Our life becomes a story that we are always in the process of discovering and also fashioning, a story in which we both follow and lead – a story that grips us with its necessity, possesses us unmercifully, and yet, paradoxically, that we create and recreate. (Metzger, 1992, p. 49)

Our life is an echo  
Of our spirit today,  
Of our essence  
As it is,  
Caught between  
Our yesterday  
And our tomorrow.  
It is the resounding  
Reality of who we are,  
As a result of  
Where we have been,  
And where we will be,  
For eternity. (Stepanek, 2001, p. 62)

Oriah Mountain Dreamer (2001) says, “The question is not why are we so infrequently the people we really want to be. The question is why do we so infrequently want to be the people we really are” (p.7). How does one come to know who we really *are* as opposed to the labels and titles we give ourselves in terms of what we *do*? There are many pathways to such self-discovery and many means of assistance to get us started or to keep us going when the light disappears, or we find ourselves coming to know that which is not what we expected to find.

“To question is to seek, and the path of that seeking gets its direction beforehand from what is sought” (Heidegger, 1953/1996, p. 5). The path is both daunting and exciting. The questioning, the wondering (and, quite assuredly, the wandering) will pass through new grounds and groundings. The growth comes in the journeying, not in the rest at the end.

How is it that one moves forward in this search for self? If we teach who we are, we must be given the opportunities to grow deeper in that awareness of who we are. That

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awareness can help us find the courage to look at ourselves and our gifts in relationship to students and peers. That awareness makes sense of the importance of community, in the opening up of personal identity and integrity in the world of relationships. What form does that awareness take? How do we know the world? How do we know ourselves?

Objectivism indicates that we only come to know, to make rational, that which we perceive through our five senses. It is only what we can perceive through seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and feeling that is real. But there are other means by which we interact with the world around us – through intuition, empathy, emotion, and faith. These non-rational faculties are “the other side of a world whose wholeness can be known only as these faculties are brought into full partnership with our senses and reason” (Palmer, 1993, p. 52). And since we ourselves are part of the reality we wish to know, we must use all our faculties, rational and non-rational, to come to an awareness of ourselves. As Palmer (2000) reminds us:

The punishment imposed on us for claiming true self can never be worse than the punishment we impose on ourselves by failing to make that claim. And the converse is true as well: no reward anyone might give us could possibly be greater than the reward that comes from living by our own best lights. (p. 34)

Coming to an understanding of self means examining deepest feelings, expectations and desires we carry within us, about academics, and about teaching in general. That understanding lies at the root of a choice to teach (or pursue any lifework that is ultimately our true vocation). We begin this journey toward greater understanding by looking at our memories. Through the lens of written reflections, we bring into greater clarity the essence of an experience that we tend to overlook in the busyness of everyday life. Our autobiographical sharings here will be a brief foray into dwelling with self, to an

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exploration of the “corners, recesses, and hiding places of being. Such explorations allow persons to come to grips with themselves and that which seems to be incongruous in life” (Berman, 1991a, p. 186).

### References – Module 1

- Berman, L. (1991a). Dwelling: A return. In L. Berman, F. Hultgren, D. Lee, M. Rivkin, & J. Roderick. *Toward curriculum for being: Voices of educators* (pp. 185-189). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and time* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). Albany: State University of New York Press. (Original work published 1953)
- Metzger, D. (1992). *Writing for your life: A guide and companion to the inner world*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Mountain Dreamer, O. (2001). *The dance*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.
- Palmer, P. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Palmer, P. (2000). *Let your life speak*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Stepanek, M. (2001). *Journey through heartsongs*. New York: Hyperion.

### **Module 2 – Identity and Integrity**

#### Orienting Quotation:

What a long time it can take to become the person one has always been!  
How often in the process we mask ourselves in faces that are not our own.  
How much dissolving and shaking of ego we must endure before we  
discover our deep identity- the true self within every human being that is  
the seed of authentic vocation. (Palmer, 2000, p. 9)

The word *identity* is derived from the Latin “*idem* – same, extracted from the adverb *identidem* – over and over again” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 505). From this root one might expect that identity means unchangeable, the same, over and over again. But is our identity truly fixed? Can we, do we ever come to know our true selves once and for all?

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Or might it be that we do have a core identity that we cover over with masks to protect our perceived selves from the eye of others or from the inner eye of our own criticism. We are encouraged here to take a look at the masks we have worn to cover over the deep identity that is our true existence. Barnhart (1988) tells us that the word *mask*, besides referring to covering the face, to masquerading, also includes links to *buffoon*, *specters* and *nightmares*. A large portion of teaching is, in fact, acting. In the face-to-face classroom, this is more apparent than in the anonymous environment of the online classroom. Are you aware of what mask you might be wearing in the classroom? Some of the masks we wear are there to present specters of our authentic selves, blurring, hiding, or blocking our deep identities. They might be outlets for that in you which seeks to be recognized, revered, and accepted. And these same masks might allow us to reveal the playfulness of the child, the antics of a clown, or the silliness of the buffoon that are not our real persona. What nightmares are also hidden under these masks? If these masks are specters of our real selves, can we hope to build a level of trust among our students that will allow the masks to be removed? Why do we feel so impoverished that we need to hide behind a mask? Levoy challenges us with the task and incredible courage required to heal that which the mask hides.

Elevating self-esteem, though, is among the most difficult work there is. The term 'self-esteem' is tossed around with such cloying abandon that it has effectively been gutted of meaning and is often represented to be something we can turn on with the flick of a switch. Our deeper intelligence tells us, however, that the lack of it is a monster at the heart of the soul, at the heart of the world. Filling the void requires courage and damned hard work. Healing wounds of our self-image cannot occur if we don't admit the wounds exist, if we don't take the hot waters of self-scrutiny and take up the plow to work new furrows into the brain. We also cannot heal without understanding that healing not only involves our own hard work but also requires retooling the apparatuses of human relations:

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child raising, education, religion, relations between the sexes and the races. (Levoy, 1997, p. 224)

Integrity is related to the word *integer*, meaning whole or sound (Barnhart, 1998).

Integrity is intimately related to identity. Fractured identity indicates a loss of wholeness, a lack of integrity. There is a general expectation that integrity be part of the lives of all persons. The fundamental characteristics of such integrity include living an honest life according to principles, and speaking with truth and candor from the foundation of those characteristics. Theodore R.Sizer, Former Dean, Harvard University College of Education, speaks of a second layer of integrity especially critical to the teacher:

Another, but equally important, kind of integrity is **completeness** or unity of character, the sense of self-confidence and personal identity a fine teacher exhibits. . . . A fine teacher is not particularly one who exudes self-confidence from every pore – a superperson (more likely, a hypocrite!). Far from it. A fine teacher does have confidence, but the honest confidence that flows from a fair recognition of one's own frailties as well as talents and which accommodates both joyfully. (Sizer, nd, ¶ 6)

In what way does this resonate or conflict with your definition of integrity as expressed by the teacher in the classroom? In what manner is the teacher's integrity displayed in the classroom? And how do teachers call forth genuine integrity and wholeness from their students?

### References – Module 2

Barnhart, R. (Ed.). (1988). *Chambers dictionary of etymology*. New York: Larousse Kingfisher Chambers.

Levoy, G. (1997). *Callings: Finding and following an authentic life*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Palmer, P. (2000). *Let your life speak*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sizer, T. (n.d.). *Good teaching*. Retrieved February 13, 2006 from <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip>

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### **Module 3 – The Heart of the Teacher**

#### Orientation quotation:

My ability to connect with my students, and to connect them with the subject, depends less on the methods I use than on the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood – and am willing to make it available and vulnerable in the service of learning. (Palmer, 1998, p. 10)

What are the traits of good teachers? Can you recall those teachers you best remember, those who made such a distinct impression that you that you still can recall individual instances of connection, those instances that made them most singular? They were genuinely passionate and energetic; they loved the subject; they admitted when they didn't have the answer; they strayed from the text to include not only their own experiences but found ways to bring forward what the students themselves knew and felt. They helped the students uncover their own self understanding.

This author recently had the privilege of being engaged with such a teacher. Edwin is a tour guide for visitors to his native country, Costa Rica. He displays such a passion for his country, his people, his birds, forests, mountains, and volcanoes that many of us felt distinctly privileged to have met him and subsequently experienced a sense of grief at having to leave. Most of us in the group were not formal (or even armchair) bird watchers. But Edwin's expertise and his sheer delight at finding and identifying the 124 different species we saw within the ten days we were in the country had me, at least, looking with much more interest and joy at the dozen or so species of birds that come to the feeders in my back yard.

Edwin's skill lies not only in his passion and energy for the subject (whether it is history or geography or plant and animal life) but also in his ability to make us, a group of strangers to the country (and, for the most part, to each other), feel welcomed and

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wanting, thirsting for more. He is a source of inspiration, *in-spirit*, inspiring rather than informing (Dyer, 2004). He sees beauty everywhere and looks at everything with appreciation rather than judgment. He is a charismatic teacher, in touch with an inner joy that cannot be contained but which bubbles out, revealing an inner source of connection with his true self. “When you know someone well, you can tell from the music of their voice what is happening in their heart. The lone voice always tells more than it intends” (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 73). Although the author cannot claim to know Edwin well, the music in his voice clearly reveals that he enjoys what he is doing, demonstrating the sort of inner self-confidence, excitement and expertise that underpin good teaching. His awareness of self requires that the excitement and expertise be shared with others. If we open ourselves to awareness of our “be-ing,” we also will discover an elemental need to be connected with all elements of the environment in which we live, a “longing to belong” (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 4).

How well do the following excerpts from Berman’s (1991a) *Dwelling: A*

*Return* describe what you would call the heart of your teaching?

Our students are wandering sojourners. Schools can be dwellings where their beings are restored and regenerated. In the process students may come to know more fully the meaning of being.

Teachers, too are wandering sojourners, searching for ways to make their own lives more fulfilling as they provide meaningful settings for those whom they teach. . . . We have reflected upon how we are and might be in teaching together.

For starters we feel we might

Do more listening to each others’ stories,  
Develop fewer abstract generalizations,

Show more concern for the wholeness of the lives of each other,  
Be less concerned about the detachment of the total being from  
work,



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Search for more opportunities for being together,  
Engage in less isolated teaching,

Work together more *in* teaching,  
Be less concerned about supervisory evaluation *of* teaching,

Spend more time sitting at the table dealing with particularized  
dilemmas,  
Spend less time thinking about prescriptions from outside the  
situation,

Be more concerned about the questions,  
Be less concerned about answers to which there are no questions,

Search to understand more fully the multiple facets of the person,  
Spend less time thinking about intellect as distinct from being,

Show in diverse ways that one cares,  
Be less concerned about abstract and unexamined rules,

Give more time to reflect on self and others as being,  
Be less concerned about persons as only linear knowers. (pp.  
188-189)

And finally, consider the following. You are charged to work within a specific curriculum in the classroom. Have you even considered looking at your teaching from this perspective: "Who does this curriculum think you [the students] are? The question is adapted from Elizabeth Ellsworth's (1997) "Who does this film think you are?" in which she describes the intended and imagined audiences of films. "Films, like letters, books, or television commercials, are *for* someone" ( p. 23). There is a targeted audience, a group for whom this film is constructed, for whom the appeal will be the greatest, and those who the filmmakers hope will spend sufficient money to see. Do we structure our teaching around what we hope is the audience? Or do we genuinely look at our audience and, with the heart of caring, reach out to pull the students into the circle of a joint exploration of what it means to *be* in relationship to the topic being studied?

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### **Conferences - Discussion Questions**

The discussion questions are posted in the Conference area of the classroom. This area allows for threaded conversations. Participants can post and respond to any other posting, and the postings can be viewed by all members of the workshop. All questions will remain open for the duration of the workshop, but each set of questions will be the focus of a specific week of work, corresponding to the course module assigned for that week. The workshop moderator will provide summaries of the conference postings. All projects will be visible and available as resources for the other participants. The Course Schedule, found at the end of this proposal will link the readings, the modules, the projects, and the discussion questions.

### **Week 1 - Introductions**

(This conference is open simultaneously with the Module/Conference on Autobiography and Identity – Week 1.)

Please post a short introduction that tells us a little about who you are. You might consider addressing some or all of the following:

- where you live

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- what you do for fun
- what gives you a sense of worth in your life
- how do you think this workshop might change you

### **Week 1 - Autobiography and Identity**

- In what manner do our autobiographical stories reveal the masks we have worn and the deep identity that is our existence?
- In what ways do the narratives of our own lives or the lives of others have a power to express the essence of existence?
- What revelations or insights came to you as you constructed your short autobiography? What was revealed to you about your *being* as a teacher?
- In what manner might you incorporate into your class activities that engages your students in exploring their being, the masks they might wear, and the impact of masks, biases, convictions that color interpretation of the work of learning in the classroom?

### **Week 2 - Identity and Integrity**

- Sharing information about our inner lives, our identity and integrity, are ingredients for our growth as teachers. That sharing may involve revealing strengths, weaknesses, hopes, desires, or despairs. What drew you to participate in this inquiry? What expectations or fears do you have about the process?
- “Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). What is it like to reveal your identity and integrity in the classroom?
- In what manner do you see your identity and integrity hidden or even compromised in the classroom?

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- In what ways might you be able to lead students to explore identity and integrity as it impacts their engagement in the classroom?

### **Week 3 - The Heart of the Teacher**

- What does it mean for you to take part in conversations with colleagues that explore paths beyond the techniques of teaching?
- Can you select a metaphor that would represent for you teaching at your best?

### **Course Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates/ Module</b>	<b>Assigned Readings and Projects</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>TBD/ Module 1</b>	1. Reading from Webliography: Palmer, P. (1998). <u>The Courage to Teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life</u> . Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-33. 2. Read Module 1 3. Prepare Project #1 and post in Study Group area 4. Post introduction in Introductions Conference 5. Post response to questions in Autobiography and Identity Conference	<b>TBD</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>TBD/ Module 2</b>	1. Reading from Webliography:: Levoy, G. (1997). <u>Callings: Finding and following an authentic life</u> . Chapter 10, Memory's Vital Secrets, pp. 163-185. 2. Read Module 2 3. Prepare Project #2 and Project #3 and post in Study Group area 4. Post responses to questions in Identity and Integrity Conference	<b>TBD</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>TBD/ Module 3</b>	1. Read Module 3 2. Prepare Project #4 and post in Study Group area 3. Post responses to questions in The Heart of the Teacher Conference	<b>TBD-</b>

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# Guidelines for CTL Faculty Development Workshops

The Center for Teaching and Learning's (CTL) Faculty Development Workshop Program offers a comprehensive set of courses that serve the diverse needs of UMUC's large, global faculty.

Over the last year, participation in our workshops has increased greatly, generating the need for the creation of new workshops and multiple sections of the same workshop. In addition, CTL has developed an option whereby participants can earn Continuing Education Units (CEU) for these workshops. Eventually, CTL hopes to offer a full certificate program organized around its workshops.

In the interest of offering consistently rigorous academic material in all our workshops, as well as safeguarding the accreditation of the CEU program, CTL has created the following guidelines for creation and facilitation of its workshops.

Workshop creators and facilitators should review the following guidelines.

### 1. Using the Course Content Area

- If you are the workshop creator, please post your course material in this area.
- CTL workshops will have most of their course material in the Course Content area of WebTycho.
- Label the individual topics clearly, identifying their main theme and when they should be read.
- For workshop creators: workshop content should be created by you and/or CTL. Do not reproduce material that is copyrighted by a third party. Instead, link to outside content or quote relevant passages, abiding by Fair Use guidelines and clearly cite your sources.

### 2. Using the Conference Area

- The discussions and most of the interaction of CTL workshops typically occur in the Conference area.
- Conference area material should correlate with and reinforce the material in the Course Content area.
- Questions for discussion should be posted within the conference as Main Topics rather than in the conference description area.
- Create the number of conferences that adequately accommodate the length and number of major topics of your workshop. A simple example of this would be course on Information Literacy dealing with four kinds of database of more or less equal complexity; normally, this would require roughly four conferences
- Please label the conferences very carefully, giving them titles that reflect their thematic material and relevant dates.

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- At the end of the workshop, please establish some kind of closure with the participants. This can be achieved in many ways: a summary or overview conference; a notice in the Class Announcement of WT; or an email
3. Using the Syllabus area. With the exception of LIBS 150, CTL workshops use a special WT template, which includes the following syllabus areas:
- Course Description
  - Course Introduction
  - Course Objectives
  - Course Materials
  - Grading Information
  - Project Description

Please note that you need to add your own workshop schedule, appending it by using the blue bar at the bottom of your screen and clicking on "Create Additional Text." Under Link Text," write "Schedule." Your schedule will then appear as the bottom segment of your syllabus. Use the other syllabus areas as appropriate in order to present a clear picture of your course for its participants.

4. Preparing Your Course
- If you are facilitating a workshop authored by someone else, please review the course content and conference material at least one week before the start of the workshop. **Consult CTL before you make any changes to the material.**
  - Please post the first two days of the workshop to the WebTycho classroom 36 hours before the formal start of the workshop. This will allow you to proofread for typographical errors before the actual start of the class.
  - Before the first day of your workshop, it's best to post your conference material in READ ONLY mode.
  - If you are working with a co-facilitator, please carefully coordinate responsibilities in advance.
5. Assignments and Participation
- To be awarded a CTL certificate of completion, participants must:
    3. Make substantive comments in at least 75% of the conferences (not including cyberlounge or cybercafé)
    4. Submit at least one acceptable Major Assignment—see below
    3. Because different facilitators might organize their conferences somewhat differently, it is important that you very clearly explain your criteria for participation to the participants in your workshop. We suggest that you carefully define what you mean by "substantive comments" and be very precise when you explain how you are going to tabulate conference participation.

Here are two examples that you might review before creating your participation requirements:

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*To receive a certificate of completion in this course, you must make substantive comments in at least 75% of the conferences in this course. A substantive comment is defined as a remark posted in a WebTycho conference that is not merely social ("Good to meet you again online"), does not repeat something previously said, and adds to the discussion. My criterion for "substantive" does not depend on length: a very short comment can indeed be substantive; a long one can be mere recapitulation. The important thing in our workshop is that discussion comments move the discussion forward by providing your own insights into the themes under discussion. As for the "75 % of the conferences" requirement, you will be expected to participate in 75% or more of the Main Topics in 5 of our 6 conferences. You are not required to participate in our Cyberlounge.*

Here is another approach to your participation instructions:

*This workshop consists of 5 conferences, 2 of which are discussion areas and 3 of which are for sharing work on assignments.  
75% participation is defined in this workshop as:*

- *posting at least one substantive comment or question in each of the 2 discussion conferences (not including Introductions or CyberCafe)*  
*AND*
- *posting at least one question or comment offering a constructive critique to another classmate in each of the 3 assignment conferences*

*"Substantive" is*

- *a comment or question that is responsive (but beyond a mere "I agree" or "that's interesting"), stimulates discussion, shows reflection on the discussion question, or helps focus attention on a particular aspect of an issue*

*"Constructive critique" is*

- *a comment or question that recognizes both the strong points of a colleague's work as well as areas for improvement*
- *provides additional information or reinforcement of the approach the colleague has used in solving the problem or requests clarification of the methodology*

4. If you have any questions or need feedback about participation requirements from CTL, please don't hesitate to contact us.

**Note: Workshop facilitators should explain the criteria for completion at the beginning of the course by posting it in a prominent area in the classroom such as the Syllabus or Introductory announcement.**

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- One-week workshops should entail a minimum of 5-10 hours of work. Two-week workshops should entail a minimum of 10-20 hours of work. Work here is defined as online time, study time, or preparation of the major assignment.
  - Major Assignment. Please require at least one major assignment that requires 1-2 hours to complete. It should be obviously relevant to the major concepts or objectives of the workshop. The following assignment types are examples of what can be considered a major assignment: paper, project (individual or group), presentation posted in the WebTycho classroom, case study, research project etc.
  - Once enrollment is complete, facilitators will receive a final participation report form with the names of the participants from Dawn Kemp. Please fill out this form at end of your workshop, and return it to Dawn Kemp (dkemp@umuc.edu) within seven days of the last day of the workshop. Facilitators will receive payment for facilitation only after the final participation report form has been received by CTL.
6. Using the Gradebook. Please be sure to use the WT Gradebook to record a) faculty participation, b) receipt and success of major deliverables, and c) whether the participants have successfully completed the course. Once you have determined successful and unsuccessful completion of the workshop, kindly notify the participants about their status. Toward the end of the workshop – if not earlier – it is probably best to inform faculty when you will post completion results to the workshop site.
7. If administrators with system access to WebTycho make submissions to your workshop, please request that they formally register for the course. If this seems sensitive, please contact CTL.
8. If you have any suggestions concerning your workshop – either with regard to its content or the administrative procedures – please contact us. If you have ideas for new workshops, feel free to contact us. Throughout the workshop process, the CTL staff will be pleased to assist you! Thanks very much for taking part in our workshop program!



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