

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter includes the purpose of the literature review, a review of the literature on contract instructors from federal training agencies, academe, and other literature sources. The chapter highlights recurring themes and recommended practices that evolve from this literature review.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this literature review was to describe the relevant studies of the management of contract instructors in training organizations. Specifically, the review asked the question: what methods can be used to effectively support National Fire Academy (NFA) contract instructors' program delivery and their professional development? Preliminary research indicated that this material was relatively scarce. Consequently, this study included existing literature relative to the management of contract instructors in traditional academic institutions and other organizations. Since the literature review failed to locate any existing programs for the management of contract instructors in any civilian federal training agencies, this study further serves to strengthen the need for the development of such programs.

The terms "contract instructors", "part-time instructors", and "adjunct faculty" are used as synonyms throughout this document. However, there may be perceived differences in the meaning of the terms, with "adjunct faculty" being the preferred term used by contract instructors in academe (Rhodes, 1991). At the National Fire Academy "contract instructors" is the current preferred term. These personnel perform functions quite similar to those performed by adjunct faculty in academe.

The review of the literature included four parts. The first part involved describing literature from civilian and military federal training agencies to obtain any existing information about how they manage their contract instructors. The review also examined a basic assumption associated with the use of contract instructors: the alleged inherent cost saving of using contractors versus full-time government employees. The second part was a review of the

previously mentioned literature that has been generated about the management of contract instructors at colleges and universities. The third section was a review of other literature sources, particularly those from business. The fourth section was a discussion of the recurring themes and recommended practices that come from the literature review.

### **Federal Training Agencies**

Several military and civilian federal training agencies provided responses to the reviewer's request for information on their contract instructors. The only one with a written management method is the U.S. Air Force Academy.

#### **Military Training Agencies**

Captain E. C. Wallace, Deputy for Operations, U.S. Naval Academy, advised that the Academy has both active duty military and civilian instructors. The civilians are government employees and, as such, are covered by civil service regulations. The Academy does not use contract instructors (Wallace, personal communication, 1996).

According to Lt. Col. John Sherfese, Director, Studies and Analysis, the U.S. Air Force Academy's program is quite extensive, includes a new-faculty orientation, and has ongoing instructor evaluation (Sherfese, personal communication, 1996). However, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the other service academies, are, in fact, degree granting universities much like other such academic institutions. Thus, the Air Force Academy's information will be included in the Academic Institution's sub-section.

Ms. M.B. Oliver, Education Specialist, Marine Corps University, stated that the University generally hires instructors as federal employees. The University does contract with one company for instructors to teach the "Effective Communication of Instruction" course. However, the University does not directly manage these contract instructors. Instead, the contracting company must provide a program manager, who is responsible for their management, to include instructor evaluation, determination of quality of instruction, and documentation of students' improvement in communication. The University is not yet regionally accredited, but does offer a Master's in Military Studies (Oliver, personal communication, 1997).

## Civilian Training Agencies

The researcher interviewed Mr. John McKay, Superintendent of the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), about the existence of a contract instructor management program at EMI. Since EMI is also co-located in Emmitsburg, MD, and is a Federal Emergency Management Agency training component, the existence of a management program for their contract instructors would hold special pertinence. Mr. McKay stated that EMI uses the contractual scope of work as its management system. He also advised that the professional development of contractors is not the government's responsibility (McKay, personal communication, 1996). The researcher also interviewed the EMI Assistant Superintendent, Steven Seitz. In his opinion the EMI's resident contract instructors have no need for a management program, given the fact that, unlike the National Fire Academy, EMI's program chairs (known as "Course Managers") are physically located in the classroom during an entire course offering. Thus, they field student questions about Institute policies, regulations and course requirements (Seitz, personal communication, 1997).

The National Fire Academy uses a contractual scope of work, also known as the statement of work, to indicate what specific tasks are required of a contract instructor. According to a guide book, *Statement of Work Preparation*, used in a 1993 FEMA training program, a statement of work is defined as follows:

"A description of services that spells out tasks a contractor is legally obligated to perform and provides any criteria the Government will apply to determine whether the tasks have been performed satisfactorily. Statements of work may also specify content, format, delivery medium, and delivery schedule for any information generated during performance of the tasks that must be delivered to the Government."

(Educational Services Institute, 1993. p. 3)

The standard statement of work format suggested in the Educational Services Institute guide book consists of four parts:

1. The Scope Section, which "... delineates the boundaries of the contractor's obligations under the contract" (p. 15).

2. The Applicable Documents Section, which consists of “ ... a bibliography of every document which is incorporated into the statement of work by reference and with which the contractor will have to comply in whole or in part during contract performance” (p.15).
3. The Tasks Section, which “... is the list of task statements [that the contractor must complete]” (p. 16). The guide book emphasizes the importance of this section by boldfacing and capitalizing the following sentence: “The contractor does not have to do anything that is not listed” (p. 16).
4. The Data Deliverables Section, which “ ... describes the content, format, and delivery schedule of all the data the contractor must deliver, such as technical reports, progress reports, texts, and so forth” (p.17).

(Educational Services Institute, 1993)

An on-campus procurement office administers NFA contract instructor procurement. The procurement office uses three of the four Educational Services Institute-suggested sections in its scope of work format. The last section, “Data Deliverables”, is not used by NFA to procure contract instructors since it pertains essentially to the delivery of documents, rather than services. The remaining sections contain the Educational Services Institute content, but use the same title only in the “Applicable Documents” portion. What the Educational Services Institute titled “The Scope” is covered by the NFA as “Background” and “Objective.” And, what the Educational Services Institute titled “The Tasks” is covered by the NFA as “Scope of Work (All Courses)” and “Program-Specific Requirements.” These “Program-Specific Requirements” are divided into three sub-sections:

1. On-Campus Resident and Off-Campus Regional Delivery Courses
2. Off-Campus Direct Delivery Courses
3. State Weekend Courses

NFA also has an additional final section, “Expected Work Activity of NFA Instructors When Not Actually Teaching, Non “On-the-Platform” Teaching Responsibilities” which consists of 22 items. The NFA Scope of Work is included as Appendix A.

Apparently such a comprehensive document should serve well as the NFA’s de facto contract instructor management system. Each contract instructor receives a copy of the Scope of Work stapled to his/her instructional services contract when it is awarded. However, many of the “Expected Work Activity of NFA Instructors When Not Actually Teaching, Non “On-the-Platform” Teaching Responsibilities” (p. 6) are not teaching-related functions. Rather they are administrative duties that contract instructors must perform. For example, item #3, “Undertake necessary interaction with related USFA [United States Fire Administration, also co-located on the Emmitsburg, MD, campus] program office activities”, would be problematic for most new contract instructors since USFA, although part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (as is NFA), is located in another building on the other side of campus. In addition, USFA personnel rarely have opportunities to officially interact with NFA contract instructors or students. Item 16, “Serve as NFA’s “first point of contact” ascertaining and recommending action on special student needs such as minor injury, illness, or an unexpected need to depart early for a back home emergency, etc.” presumes contract instructors’ knowledge of NFA administrative procedures and personnel. Item # 9 states “Advise appropriate NFA staff on equipment or facilities in need of repair or replacement.” Most new contractors would be hard pressed to know which NFA staff members are the appropriate ones.

Further, great variations exist in interpretation of the Scope of Work by contract instructors versus Program Chairs. For example, in the “Program-Specific Requirements” section, item #3, states, “All instructors shall be available in the classroom building during the entire teaching day, except during scheduled meal periods. Any exception to this requirement must be approved verbally by the PC [Program Chair]...” (p. 3). Some Program Chairs take this literally; others feel that as long as a contract instructor is on NFA “business”, for example, researching course content in the on-campus library, known as the Learning Resource Center, while the other contract instructor is teaching, he/she is in compliance with this scope of work item. Similarly, some contract instructors take the same scope of work item literally, others

believe that if you are physically somewhere on-campus when not teaching (dorm room, Learning Resource Center, U.S. Fire Administration offices), conducting NFA “business” or not, you are in compliance with this scope of work item.

#### Basic Assumption of Cost Savings

An unspoken, but important, assumption about the use of contract instructors in government is that there are significant cost savings associated with their use versus the use of full-time government employees as trainers. There is no information in the published literature to support this viewpoint. However, since the NFA did have an employee/instructor as recently as 1993, a rough comparison can be made with that individual’s federal salary and an average contract instructor’s income from NFA contracts. Since a 1993 federal salary schedule was not available the current one is being used. This former employee was a General Schedule (GS) 11, Step 1, instructor at NFA. According to Thomas Hirt, a personnel officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a GS 11, Step 1, instructor would now receive an annual salary of \$38,330 annually, plus benefits (Social Security, health care, retirement, paid vacation and holidays, etc.) estimated as approximately 25% of the base salary (or \$9,582.50) for a total annual cost of \$47,912.50 (Hirt, personal communication, 1997).

Due to the nature of competitive contracting, costs for a specific contract instructor can only be estimated. This is due to the competitive low bid system NFA uses for virtually all of its training programs.

The process the NFA uses to obtain contract instructors is as follows. Any potential bidder must first submit appropriate documentation (for example, claiming recent relevant teaching experience) to the procurement office, which then forwards it to the Program Chair responsible for the course involved. After approval as a qualified bidder, the contractor submits a bid indicating the instructor fee, per diem costs, and expenses for travel as a total cost bid for a course. Generally, the NFA does not conduct instructor training for new contract instructors unless a newly-developed program is being offered. In the few cases where instructor training is offered it presents the newly-developed content and stresses how to deliver that content. Administrative procedures, available campus resources, the management of conflicts between instructors, and other such topics are usually not formally discussed at length.

Although the lowest dollar cost is the bid that receives the contract award; airfare cost, although documented, is not included since this would unfairly disadvantage contractors from the West Coast (NFA is located in Maryland). Contractors have bid as low as “no cost” per day for the instructor fee. In these rare cases contract instructors may, in fact, still be receiving their normal salary from their full-time fire department or academic institution employment. However, the average NFA contract instructor usually bids no more than \$200-\$250 per day as the instructor fee. If a contract instructor bids more than that amount most often he/she will be underbid, and thus, not awarded the contract.

Hypothetically, the NFA resident programs are conducted on weekdays (there are some rare exceptions), with five teaching days per week, and four weeks per month. So, there are 20 teaching days per month multiplied by twelve months, for a total of 240 possible teaching days per year. This calculation does not consider federal holidays, which reduce the number of possible teaching days. Thus, realistically, there are about 200 teaching days per year. If a contract instructor was awarded contracts to teach all of these available days (an extremely unlikely occurrence) his/her instructor fee, at a daily rate of \$250 per day, would add up to \$50,000 per annum. When compared to the annual salary of the government employee/instructor (salary and benefits of \$47,912.50 per annum), tasked with instructing, there are no great cost savings. However, this rough estimation does not take into account the other functions a government employee/instructor may do, such as curriculum development or research.

Yet, the assumption of cost savings may, in fact, make sense if it is acknowledged that, in reality, neither the government employee nor the contract instructor will instruct on all 200 teaching days. For example, if the NFA’s resident two-week “Interpersonal Dynamics in Fire Service Organizations” class is offered, on average, six times per year, for a total of twelve weeks (or 60 instructor days), it would cost NFA \$15,000 (\$250 average contract instructor fee X 60 days) in instructor fees for a contract instructor to teach the program. Meanwhile, if the government employee taught those twelve weeks, and only those twelve weeks, his/her full annual salary would still be due. Even if each of the ten Program Chairs taught every course annually that they were responsible for they would not teach more than a small portion of the possible 200 days. In fact, this is not possible since Program Chairs may have two or more courses being

conducted simultaneously. As a result, full use (200 teaching days per year) of a government employee as an instructor would rarely take place. This is where the cost savings occur when comparing an employee's salary to a contractor's fees.

Summarizing this section, federal agency written information on methods to effectively support contract instructors' program delivery and their professional development is virtually nonexistent. Apparently, Emergency Management Institute Superintendent McKay's earlier statement that the contractual scope of work serves as EMI's management system is an accepted methodology throughout government (McKay, personal communication, 1996).

An additional explanation may be that written information does exist on how federal agencies manage contract instructors. But, the documents are what Susan Imel (1991) refers to as "fugitive materials" due to their ephemeral nature. Residing in unknown file cabinets the documents are irretrievable unless an extremely knowledgeable federal "insider" accesses them.

### **Academic Institutions**

A number of documents deal with the management of contract instructors in academe. These range across the full spectrum from demographic data to the inherent problems of using contract instructors as well as potential solutions to the problems of using contract instructors, with Gappa and Leslie, authors of *The Invisible Faculty: Improving the Status of Part-timers in Higher Education* (1993), providing the most comprehensive information.

#### **Demographics**

No demographic data apparently exists for contract instructors at the National Fire Academy. However, literature on the demographics of part-time instructors in academe includes a wide variety of data. For example, studies have addressed gender (Tuckman and Tuckman, 1981), reasons that part-time faculty seek employment (Tuckman and Tuckman, 1981, Turgeon, 1983), and the job definition, the level of subjects taught, and compensation (Talbot, Davis and Cetone, 1988). Tuckman and Tuckman researched women as part-time faculty and found pay equity issues (1981). They further developed a taxonomy for the reasons that part-time faculty chose this position. Their seven reasons are:

1. Semi-retired,
2. Students,



3. “Hopeful Full-Timers” (those wishing to become full time),
4. “Full-Mooners” (those with another full time job),
5. “Homeworkers” (those with responsibilities in the home),
6. “Part-Mooners” (those with another part-time job), and
7. “Part-Unknowners” (all others) (1981).

The Tuckman’s early attempt to categorize part-time faculty is useful as a reminder that these personnel are not a homogenous group.

Turgeon, examining part-time faculty at Corning Community College (NY), identified two main reasons for their part-time employment: they either already had full time jobs or were otherwise not available for full time employment (1983).

Overall, contract faculty account for approximately one-third of all faculty members in the United States (Gappa and Leslie, 1993). In specific cases, especially at the community college level, they account for even greater numbers. At the Prince George’s Community College (MD) the part-time faculty accounted for 65% of its faculty (Cohen, 1992). The Central Texas Community College, Europe Campus, (which provides academic opportunities for U.S. Armed Forces members serving in Europe) has had its percentage of part-time faculty increase from 60% in 1980 to 80% in 1990 (Ostertag, 1991). Based on this research (Gappa and Leslie, Cohen, and Ostertag) an obvious conclusion is that the use of part-time faculty is extensive and growing.

Talbott, Davis, and Cetone focused on selected departments at three public Arizona universities: Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona. They sought the answer to the question “Who are the temporary faculty?” Their answer, encompassing job definition, includes three groupings: first, those individuals from the community that teach two or less courses each semester; second, are those that teach full time, but on a temporary basis (i.e., from year to year); and finally, those individuals from other universities brought in to these Arizona universities to temporarily fill existing positions vacated for various reasons. They further examined the level of the subjects taught by these personnel. Of a total of 209 courses taught by temporary faculty at Arizona State University’s (ASU) English Department during the Fall 1987-Spring 1988 academic year 136 (65%) were freshman level courses, with an additional 22 (10%) at the sophomore level. During the same period at

ASU's Mathematics Department temporary faculty taught 22 courses of which none were at the freshman level, but 21 (95%) were at the sophomore level. The researchers found similar results at the other universities studied. Essentially, temporary faculty at the indicated universities taught predominately freshman and sophomore courses. Talbott, Davis and Cetone also found that compensation was less for temporary faculty than for full time faculty (1988). No comparable demographic data has been found for contract instructors at federal agencies.

Judith Gappa and David Leslie conducted what is, perhaps, the most comprehensive study of part-timers in Higher Education (1993). They interviewed 240 members of what they characterize as the "invisible faculty" (i.e., part-time, non-tenured faculty), plus 146 department chairs, 58 central administrators (including deans), and 23 faculty leaders (a total of 467 individuals) at 18 colleges and universities (p. 10). All academic institutions were located in the United States, except one, a Canadian university. The institutions represented all types (public, private, and mixed), all regions of the United States, and included both unionized and non-unionized personnel systems (Gappa and Leslie, 1993, p. 8).

Using the interview data from the 18 selected academic institutions as well as from the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF), conducted in 1988, Gappa and Leslie reported on part-time faculty's demographics, academic preparation, length of service and motivations for teaching. They found that part-time faculty tend to be younger than their full-time counterparts, but not by a statistically significant margin. The gender of part-time faculty, based on NSOPF data, was that men accounted for 57.9%, and women 42.1%. By contrast, men accounted for 73%, and women 27%, of full-time faculty (Gappa and Leslie, 1993, p. 24).

Given the common assumption that part-time faculty were not as academically prepared as full-time faculty, Gappa and Leslie's interview results indicated "very few expressions of concern about part-timers' qualifications in [their] interviews with department chairs and deans" (p. 31). This lack of concern with academic qualifications is a critical finding since department chairs and deans, who occupy positions similar to the NFA's Program Chairs, are most sensitive to any allegations of academic under-preparedness by their faculty, part-time or otherwise. The NSOPF data show that part-time faculty degrees are distributed as follows: 28.5% have doctorates or professional degrees, 42.7% have master's degrees, and 28.8% have bachelor's or other degrees.

However, the proportions change when applied to public and private research institutions. Their part-time faculty's have, respectively, 68% and 50% doctorates or professional degrees (Gappa and Leslie, 1993, p. 31). No comparable demographic data has been found for contract instructors at federal agencies.

Length of employment was also examined by Gappa and Leslie. Using the NSOPF data they found that 51.5% of part-time faculty had taught fewer than 4 years, 15.5% had taught for 4-6 years, 11.1% had taught for 7-9 years, 15.5% had taught for 10-19 years, and 6.5% had taught for 20 or more years. Gappa and Leslie's interview results disclosed that most variance in length of employment was due to individual instructors' circumstances rather than institutional practices. For example, graduate teaching assistants had less employment longevity than did those working in academe in rural areas, which had inherently more stable populations (Gappa and Leslie, 1993, p. 35). No comparable demographic data on employment longevity has been found for contract instructors at federal agencies.

Part-time academic instructors may be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. McGuire believes that "intrinsic rewards and contributions to human development were the most important motivators," especially given the low pay rates (1993, p. 3). In 1989, 149 adjunct faculty survey respondents at Prince George's Community College (MD) were asked to rate six factors influencing their decision to teach. Approximately two-thirds rated "personal satisfaction" as their first or second choice (Cohen, 1992). Gappa and Leslie's interviews of 240 part-time non-tenured faculty yielded several intrinsic motivators, such as personal development, social interaction and community or professional service, most often among those who were fully employed elsewhere. They also found a substantial number who expressed enthusiasm for teaching, as well as many who felt a social obligation to fulfill a debt that they felt they owed to a particular academic institution, society, or even to parents who were teachers (1993, p. 37).

Many studies focus on the perceived organizational advantages and disadvantages of using contract instructors (Ancona, 1989, McGuire, 1993, Rhodes, 1991, and Selvadurai, 1985). In addition, some studies have identified solutions to the noted disadvantages (Cohen, 1992, Yantz and Bechtold, 1994, Gappa and Leslie, 1993, and Ostertag, 1991).

## Advantages

Marlene Cohen, speaking at the 78th Annual Speech Communication Association conference, addressed several advantages of using part-time, or adjunct, faculty at Prince George's Community College (MD). She called adjunct faculty the "economic bargain of the century" (p. 3), and cited her institution's Controller, Gerard DeSeve, as having noted their lower per-hour salary when compared to full-time faculty. Cohen also quoted DeSeve's observation that adjunct faculty allow flexibility in the scheduling of classes. Finally, she indicated that adjunct faculty often are employed outside of teaching and can link their current workplace experience with their teaching (1992).

Citing their institution's experience (Tompkins Cortland Community College, NY) Patricia Yantz and Charles Bechtold disagreed with the commonly held belief within academe that adjunct faculty are "casual labor". At their college "nearly half (47%) of part-time/adjunct faculty have been at the institution for six or more semesters" (1994, p. 4). They consider this longevity an indicator of stability and commitment.

Jean Rhodes listed several benefits to colleges that use part-time instructors: the instructors are less expensive, they provide staffing flexibility, they are rarely unionized, and have a wide variety of skills and expertise (Rhodes, 1991). John McGuire offered several other benefits, including the sometimes overlooked fact that part-time faculty may serve as a link to area employers, and can help to place former students in jobs, or arrange jobs and experience-opportunities for existing students. He also noted that part-time faculty save colleges money: "In a very real sense, they help subsidize programs and full-time faculty salaries." However, he considered that to be a dubious benefit, since colleges that see savings as the driving motivation for using part-time faculty tended to view them as "cheap labor" and "second-class citizens" (McGuire, 1993, p. 3).

## Disadvantages

Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron devote part of an entire chapter to the perceived problems involved in using part-time instructors (1995). Citing a variety of sources the authors note a number of pejoratives, disadvantages, and problems associated with these personnel: from being labeled "freeway fliers" (dashing along highways from one teaching assignment to another)

(p. 2), to their dissatisfaction and alienation from their teaching communities (p. 5), concerns by others about their instructional abilities (p. 9), to fears that their over-use is a threat to full-time faculty (Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron, 1995, p. 19).

Gappa and Leslie noted that it is often alleged that part-time faculty have a negative impact on “quality” (p. 6), are not connected or integrated into campus life (p. 180), and, along with tenure-track faculty form opposing economic interests, often in different collective bargaining units (Gappa and Leslie, 1993, p. 228).

Given all of the potential negatives associated with using part-time faculty, and their increasing use in academe, methods must be devoted to improving their status. Similarly, the status of federal contract instructors must be examined, and, if indicated, that status must be improved.

#### Management Methods/Solutions

Many academic institutions have used elements of the training needs assessment (TNA) process to determine what should be done to solve problems associated with adjunct faculty (Cohen, 1992, Gappa and Leslie, 1993, Parmenter and Others, 1989). According to Allison Rossett, a training needs assessment is “... the systematic study of a problem or innovation, incorporating data and opinions from varied sources, in order to make effective decisions or recommendations...” (1987, p. 3).

Rossett suggested a variety of TNA techniques and tools. A researcher can use extant data analysis to determine the results or outcomes of performance. It is most appropriate for determining performance problems (p. 49). Needs assessment involves looking at the difference between optimal situations versus actual situations, and incorporates people’s feelings, causes of problems and potential solutions (p. 63). Another TNA technique is subject matter analysis, which attempts to determine what performers (contract instructors, in this case) must know to do their jobs to the optimal level (Rossett, 1987, p. 97).

A variety of tools can be used in conducting a training needs assessment. Interviewing, observing, group processes (such as focus groups), and questionnaires/surveys are often used methods (Rossett, 1987, pp. 27-28). Given the paucity of data on NFA contract instructors this

methodology could assist in determining what initial and on-going training, if any, is needed by these personnel.

Another tool and an accepted practice within adult education is the use of instructional system design (ISD) plans or models. Jerrold Kemp notes that both the approach and the procedures used in designing instruction constitute the ISD plan (Kemp, 1985, p. 8). Barbara Seels and Zita Glasgow reviewed seven different ISD models, including Gagne and Brigg's (1979), Dick and Carey's (1985), Kemp's (1985) and their own. Although each model had strong and weak points these authors believe the use of a model is inherently helpful in the ISD process. Regardless of the form of the model, it will "...present a view of reality, ... give visual form to the procedures used, ... showing the relationship between the steps and how the steps occur chronologically" (1990, p. 40).

Seels and Glasgow found common features among the various models studied, to the extent that they developed a generic ISD model with five steps:

1. **Analysis** --This includes a needs assessment, problem identification, and task analysis.
2. **Design** -- This includes writing objectives, developing test items, planning for instruction, and identifying resources.
3. **Development** -- This includes working with the content producers, and developing the workbook and program.
4. **Implementation** --This includes teacher training and piloting of the course.
5. **Evaluation** -- This includes interpreting test results, surveying graduates, and revising activities.

(Seels and Glasgow, 1990)

There are several implications for this study that can be drawn from this generic model. First, the model helps to insure that no important steps are left out when conducting the process. Second, the use of models, such as this generic ISD one, smooths the way for adult educators to accept other models, since the model technique is within their accepted paradigm. And third, this

model and others like it help training organizations to understand how the various individual pieces or steps fit together by their internal logic.

A final implication is that this model may be helpful in designing a professional development model or a career path model for contract instructors. By slightly permutating this generic ISD model's steps it provides insight into the process. During the **analysis** step a thorough needs assessment must be conducted. In the case of the National Fire Academy data for this assessment was provided by a meeting with four of the ten Program Chairs in February, 1996 and a meeting with six contract instructors in December, 1996. These two meetings provided preliminary information to identify perceived contract instructor problem areas. The resulting contract instructors' questionnaire answers and Program Chairs personal interviews provided further data on these identified problem areas. This information then provided the basis for the **design** of a career path model and associated professional development options. In addition, the data provided insights into ways to better support the administrative needs of contract instructors. Further **development** of this model will have to be undertaken by each training organization using a consensual process with contract instructors, management and others involved. When the model is **implemented** this will invariably disclose strengths and weaknesses in the model. As further **evaluation** is done these identified strengths can be reinforced; while strategies for resolving weaknesses are developed.

Professional associations may offer other strategies for resolving instructional weaknesses. Elaine Shelton and W. Franklin Spikes note that “historically, professional associations have provided excellent ways for educators of adults to increase their knowledge, develop new skills, and expand leadership competencies” (1991, p. 71). The NFA’s contract instructors have such an association, the Society of National Fire Academy Instructors, Inc., which was founded in 1983. However, the Society has never offered an annual conference or other types of learning opportunities. The Society publishes a periodic newsletter which serves as a focal discussion point on controversial issues.

Another management method involves examining the issue of adult education professional development. Ralph G. Brockett argues that adult education has suffered at the hands of those who have a vision of adult education professionalization as one that “... stresses such values as

client dependence, professional authority, and rigidly defined criteria for the right to practice ...” (1991, p. 7). Brockett believes that this view of professionalization has “ ... led many to be skeptical of adult education ...” (1991, p. 7). This situation can be partially rectified by changing the vision. An element of this change in vision involves a concomitant change in adult education professional development. Brockett suggests looking at professional development as a kind of artistry that has two components: technique and style. Technique includes nuts and bolts skills, such as “ ... being able to write objectives, ... use different teaching techniques, or knowing how to evaluate outcomes” (1991, p. 8). While acknowledging that style is difficult to easily classify, Brockett, nonetheless, characterizes it as manifesting “ ... itself in how one expresses oneself, which in turn is typically linked to such characteristics as personality, basic value system, and previous life experience” (1991, p. 9). The assessment of previous life experience, specifically as it relates to NFA contract instructors teaching experience and content knowledge apparently has not been done. Thus, there is no baseline data with which NFA could use to begin to assess contract instructors’ professional development needs. Further, professional development must be viewed as an investment, rather than an expense. It is unclear if NFA is willing to view the professional development of contract instructors as such an investment.

Within academe staff development of employees is an accepted practice. Carroll Londoner provided two rationales for academic staff development. First, this is one of the ways “an organization achieves its goals. It is in staff development that an organization’s goals are interpreted and integrated with the teacher’s career goals, as both strive to meet the needs of adult learners” (1979, p. 25). A similar case can be made for contract instructors and their need for development. Londoner’s second rationale for staff development is that trainers need to be aware of “... new knowledge and skills that can enhance their effectiveness with adult learners” (1979, p. 25).

Londoner suggests a staff development program with two steps: initial orientation and in-service education. The initial orientation is designed to help new personnel to “...quickly perceive the policies, procedures, and daily related routines of their new assignments.” In addition, the initial orientation assists them to become aware of their role in the organization and how this contributes to the organization’s goals (1979, p. 26). The in-service education program,



according to Londoner, may be especially pertinent for part-time staff, since this may be their "... only contact with adult education theory and practice" (1979, p. 29). This need for in-service education may also be important for NFA contract instructors who may not have any adult education background. Also, NFA contract instructors may have a need for some type of initial orientation as well as periodic in-service programs to improve existing presentation skills.

As a result of a 1989 needs assessment Cypress College (CA) began a series of staff development activities, which were coordinated by a Staff Development Steering Committee (later the Comprehensive Staff Development Steering Committee.) The Committee included adjunct faculty input and surveyed all college staff to catalog areas of interest or concern. As it relates to adjunct faculty, one of its goals was to "... make staff development a shared effort involving the total staff" (Parmenter and Others, 1989, p. 3). The survey led to several activities. A mandatory "flex day" was held to familiarize staff with the campus and to provide an opportunity for them to meet other staffers. Although adjuncts participated in this activity an additional program was held, "Flex Activities for Adjuncts." New adjunct faculty were given a one-hour briefing on campus processes and procedures. They then joined with the existing adjunct faculty for a reception, followed by a workshop on instructional skills (Parmenter and Others, 1989). No similar activities are offered to NFA contract instructors.

The United States Air Force Academy, a federal military training agency and an accredited university, has a twice annual orientation, an extensive faculty handbook, and a performance appraisal process for the management and evaluation of their faculty. Responding to a written request for information Lt. Col. John Sherfese, the Air Force Academy's Director, Studies and Analysis, indicated that the background of the 550 members of the 1995 faculty was 87% military, and 13% civilian. The civilian faculty members are federal employees. Doctorates were held by 46% of the faculty, with the other 54% having at least a Master's degree. Due to the rotation of military faculty the annual turnover was 25-30% (Sherfese, personal communication, 1996).

The Air Force Academy holds a faculty orientation twice a year, for all returning and new faculty. The 1995 Summer orientation consisted of five consecutive half days with each day devoted to a single topic: Day One - Expectations, Day Two - Building the Best, Day Three - USAF Academy Uniqueness, Day Four - The Academy Educator, and Day Five - The Students.

The Air Force Academy's orientation materials consisted of an unpaginated two inch thick text, which provided paper copies of audiovisuals used during the orientation, plus copies of rules and regulations. (Sherfese, personal communication, 1996). The Air Force Academy is the sole federal training agency yet identified that has written documents used in the management of instructors, whether employees or contractors.

A professional development plan may be built around different instructor performance factors. Bob Powers has developed an instructor performance system with seven components:

1. **Job Definition** - identifies the organization's training goals, areas of responsibility, and the trainer's needed skills, knowledge and qualifications.
2. **Selection** - involves choosing the right trainer for the instructional assignment. Selection is predicated on the job definition.
3. **Performance expectations** - are also partially based on the job definition. In addition, Powers has developed a series of performance standards for excellent instruction.
4. **Job Tools** - include the equipment and resources needed to meet the performance expectations.
5. **Training** - is used to give prospective trainers the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to successfully present instruction.
6. **Feedback** - is the method used to advise trainers of how well they are accomplishing the performance objectives.
7. **Rewards** - are the formal and informal ways that a trainer who meets or exceeds performance expectations is recognized.

(1992, p. 9)

Training organizations - in business, academe, or government -- can be evaluated against these seven components to determine how comprehensive their instructor performance system is. For example, the NFA uses the contractual Scope of Work as its **job definition** and written criteria for initial selection of instructors. Its **performance expectations**, to a limited extent, are extracted from the Scope of Work. However, more precise standards could be developed for each course series (such as the "Management Sciences" or "Executive Development" courses).

The **job tools** that NFA gives to instructors include student manuals, instructor guidebooks, and audiovisual materials. Whether these “tools” are sufficient or not is a major portion of the research in this project. Generally, however, the administrative support of NFA instructors has been inconsistent. The **training** of NFA contract instructors is also an issue that this researcher investigated. There does not appear to be a consistent plan or process in place to train contract instructors. There is one exception: newly-developed courses are usually packaged with an instructor training program before being offered as a normal part of the curricula. The **feedback** that NFA contract instructors may receive -- from students and Program Chairs -- is also being examined in this research project. Clearly, instructor performance is an important issue within academe and the federal government. Litigation may even result from a lack of faculty effectiveness. John Centra noted that a “...complaint by students that a course had little substance, did not match the catalogue description, and lacked adequate evaluation of student performance...” resulted in a court case, Ianello versus the University of Bridgeport. Although this case was ultimately dismissed by the court the threat of such litigation remains (1988, p. 3).

There are more compelling reasons to evaluate than litigation avoidance. If instructional performance is to improve, the baseline data needed to decide needed changes is provided by evaluation. Centra cautions, however, that there is “...no single foolproof way to evaluate teaching” (1988, p. 3). In 1976 Centra polled 453 department chairs based at 134 colleges and universities. The department chairs ranked “...fifteen possible sources of information according to their importance in teacher assessment, listing as most influential chairman evaluations, systematic student ratings, and colleagues’ opinions; least used are videotapes of classroom teaching, the long-term follow-up of students, alumni ratings, colleague ratings based on classroom visits, and student examination performance.” (1988, p. 7). At present the NFA only occasionally uses program chair evaluations and systematic student evaluations. On several occasions in the past few years the contract to electronically collate student evaluations of instructors has been allowed to expire. The result was that instructors often received no written student feedback. Without such feedback contract instructors are often left “in the dark” about needed improvement areas in their instructional performance.

Powers' final component, **rewards**, has not been formally addressed by the NFA. However, certificates of appreciation and other non-monetary types of recognition (as well as financial awards) are used to reward NFA employees.

One potential solution predominately involves an attitude change. Robert Bodine believes that "...a relationship with an outside contractor is like a good marriage: you must have trust, and you need to treat him or her as a partner" (1998, p. 55). In his opinion this mind-set helps a training organization to approach its "...new association with a contractor as the beginning of a long-term relationship...[and this] will color everything that you do" (1998, p. 56). Unfortunately, many training organizations view contractors as short-term hired help. However, if they examine the actual length of service of their individual contractors they will often find that the opposite is true.

This long-term viewpoint by training organizations and by contract instructors has benefits for both. Training organizations gain "...good contractors ...willing to go the extra mile to learn your company's way of doing things" (Bodine, 1998, p. 56). Contractors gain by being considered "...an investment" and "...true strategic partners" (1998, p. 56).

### **Other Literature Sources**

Writing in "Training and Development", Bassi, Benson, and Cheney (1996) described a widespread shift from employee/trainers to outsourcing (i.e., the use of contractors instead of employees) among the American Society for Training and Development's Benchmarking Forum companies. These companies, some of the world's most successful businesses, include AT&T, Aetna, American Express Financial Services, Chevron, Chase Manhattan Bank, General Motors and Xerox. In these firms contractors account for 30% of instructors, and 23% of course designers and developers (p. 35). While no precise statistics are available, the NFA has undergone a similar shift: from a 50% mix of government employees/instructors to contract instructors; to the current almost exclusive use of contract instructors (Fabyan, personal communication, 1997).

Jeffrey Bradach, in a Harvard Business School working paper (1997) argues that today's workplace is in the midst of a major change: from the "loyalty model," which has been predominant for the past fifty years and was "... characterized by strong and enduring

relationships between corporations and their white collar workers ...” to the current “flexibility model” (1997, p. 1). This model “... is built on short-term relationships between organizations and individuals who work as independent contractors” (1997, p. 2). Interestingly, Bradach finds contractors “... working on activities that are central to the organization’s success. These findings challenge the traditional notion that employees are “core” workers who conduct the organization’s key activities and contractors are “secondary” workers who work on less critical tasks ...” (1997, p. 6). Further, these findings complicate the notion that professional development is solely a contractor obligation. Can any organization that intends to survive, whether corporation, academic institution or government training agency, allow “core” workers to develop professionally in a haphazard fashion? The responsibility for such professional development must evolve into a shared one. At the NFA contract instructors are the first point of contact for students, and closest to the “core” activity described in the Academy’s mission statement (i.e., promoting the professional development of fire personnel.) Bradach is unsure if the flexibility model will signal a permanent shift in work organization and if contractor “exploitation” will become an issue (1997, p. 41). Finally, it is significant that he notes a “... lack of research ...” of the independent contractor environment, as well as the existence of only a “... small body of literature [exploring] the institutional context surrounding independent contractors...” (p. 3).

### **Recurring Themes**

Gappa and Leslie reported on several recurring themes which bear special pertinence, not just for part-time instructors in academe but also for part-time instructors in any training organization.

The faculties examined in Gappa and Leslie’s study were bifurcated into high status and low status “castes”, with part-timers as members of the low status “caste” (1993). Cohen noted that adjunct faculty have provided “... no less than the survival of low-cost community college education in the financially-strapped times of the 80s and 90s.” And, yet, in her opinion the thanks reaped by adjunct faculty for such valuable services were “... low pay, no benefits, no sick days...” (1992, p. 4). This “theme” of academic institutional contractors as low status workers without benefits or adequate compensation may be replicated with NFA contract instructors. Yet,

no comparable data on this “theme” has been found for contract instructors at NFA or at other federal agencies.

Department chairs, as the principle point of contact for part-time faculty, fill a crucial role. Yantz and Bechtold reiterate the important role of Division Chairpersons as “key players” in getting optimum use of faculty resources (1994). Part-time faculty quickly sense any lack of respect by the department chairs towards them. Gappa and Leslie found department chairs to be under-prepared and administratively overwhelmed by part-time faculty issues (1993, p. 12). This “theme” of academic institutional department (or division) chairs as “key players” may be replicated with NFA Program Chairs, who serve as the primary agency contact for NFA contract instructors. Yet, no comparable data on this “theme” has been found for contract instructors at NFA or at other federal agencies.

Gappa and Leslie also found several “false economies” as a result of employing part-time faculty. A principle “false economy” was the assumption that part-time faculty can teach as well as full-time faculty without having the same level of administrative support (1993, p. 13). This “theme” of academic institutional “false economies”, particularly as it relates to administrative support levels, may also apply to NFA. Yet, no comparable data on this “theme” has been found for contract instructors at NFA or at other federal agencies.

Beyond this administrative support assumption is a related one: that part-time faculty, and contract instructors have little need for institution-provided professional development. Essentially, academic institutions and federal training agencies believe that such personnel provide “turn key” services: that is, they provide whatever their contract requires, while the respective organizations bear no responsibility to provide professional development.

Given the similarities between the functions of academic department (or division) chairs and NFA Program Chairs, and the concomitant similarities between the functions of academic part-time instructors and NFA contract instructors these “themes” bear closer examination.

Based on Gappa and Leslie's research and the themes noted they posed 43 recommended practices, several of which are of special pertinence to the research at hand:

**Recommended Practice 6: Periodically survey part-time faculty for additional information about their perceptions of the conditions under which they work, their satisfaction with their employment, and other concerns or interests.**

These authors believe that part-timers "... rarely have channels through which they can make known their problems and frustrations" (p. 239). Yet, without this baseline data it is difficult to make informed decisions about contract instructors. The NFA, for example, has used contract instructors for its entire existence (approximately 20 years) but until the current research associated with this doctoral project has never surveyed these personnel.

**Recommended Practice 16: Establish career tracks that provide rewards and incentives for long-term service and/or high achievement.**

A career track option "...may appear overly burdensome to some institutions long accustomed to term-by-term appointments, which provide great flexibility. However, "...the hidden costs associated with treating all part-timers as members of a marginal work force are high" (p. 252). Without such a track in place contract instructors may feel that outstanding performance or longevity go un-noticed. In fact in many training organizations the contract instructor hired today is treated exactly the same way as the one who has served for a decade. To put a finer point on this imagine any academic institution where there was no career track: educators that were initially employed as lecturers could with hard work, research, an advanced degree, and twenty years service ultimately qualify as...lecturers. In such an environment instructor motivation would be in short supply.

**Recommended Practice 26: Provide support services to part-time faculty.**

Gappa and Leslie believe that part-time faculty perform the same instructional services as full-time faculty. Thus, they need the same level of "... clerical support and access to

instructional materials no matter when or where their classes are taught" (p. 260). For example, NFA contract instructors most often arrive at the training site in Emmitsburg, MD, on Sunday but may not have full access to their classrooms, photocopier, or other supplies until Monday. To many this is a waste of valuable preparation time.

**Recommended Practice 29: Orient department chairs to good supervisory practice.**

Many department chairs assume their positions because of a willingness to serve the training organization. Unfortunately, few have had either extensive supervisory experience or training. Expecting them to supervise contract instructors, and to do it well, is unfair to the department chairs and to the contract instructors.

**Recommended Practice 32: Provide faculty mentors to inexperienced part-time faculty.**

Gappa and Leslie believe that "... the most cost-effective way of helping inexperienced part-time faculty members develop their teaching skills and their familiarity with the department is to pair each one with a mentor from the full-time faculty" (p. 267). For training organizations, like the NFA, that have no full-time faculty a logical alternative is to pair the inexperienced contract instructors with experienced contract instructors.

**Recommended Practice 37: Invite part-time faculty to social events.**

This may seem frivolous, but these "... social occasions are where bonding, camaraderie, and the trust necessary for cooperation are built" (p. 269). For example, in years past NFA contract instructors, if on-campus, were routinely invited to Christmas parties and other social gatherings. A recent 20th "birthday" celebration of the United States Fire Administration (NFA's parent organization) was notable among contract instructors because of their exclusion. NFA staff had voiced vague fears of "procurement violations"



if contract instructors had been included. As a result, some NFA contract instructors felt left out.

**Recommended Practice 38: Publicly recognize part-time faculty for their achievements and contributions.**

Full-time faculty and staff appreciate official notice of their efforts. "[P]art-timers also appreciate gestures of respect, recognition, and thanks" (p. 270). These non-monetary indicators of official recognition can include thank you notes, certificates of appreciation, plaques, longevity award pins and other such small, but meaningful, items.

**Recommended Practice 39: Orient part-time faculty to the institution and to the expectations the institution has for them.**

Gappa and Leslie found that orientation programs at academic institutions had many common features: "They provide part-time faculty with information, perspectives, and a philosophical frame of reference...[t]hey begin with a welcoming ceremony...in which a meal is shared with other part-timers and selected full-time faculty, department chairs, and central administrators" (p. 271). Further, these programs provide practical information about how the training organization operates, how the courses part-timers teach relate to the institution's goals and serve as an entree to professional development.

**Recommended Practice 40: Conduct frequent workshops on good teaching practices.**

**Recommended Practice 41: Provide in-service professional development opportunities for part-time faculty.**

Both of these recommended practices are interrelated. If the primary job of contract instructors is to teach, major emphasis must be placed on the maintenance and

improvement of teaching skills. Similarly, professional development, especially as it relates to contract instructors' subject matter expertise must be encouraged.

**Recommended Practice 42: Provide incentives for good performance.**

Gappa and Leslie view many of these incentives as financial, such as "...grants for projects, [and] travel funds" (p. 274). However, in federal training agencies these may not be appropriate due to procurement regulatory restrictions. Nonetheless, there are a range of other non-monetary incentives that could be acceptable. One example is the award of no-cost contracts to perform research of interest to the contract instructor and to the agency.

**Recommended Practice 43: Use teaching evaluations to help part-time faculty improve.**

This recommended practice is especially pertinent for inexperienced contract instructors, who will gain keen insights into areas of deficiency and of excellence. Meanwhile, more experienced instructors can also benefit from "... someone's analysis of the performance of their students on objective measures" (p. 275).

The foregoing practices have two major implications for training organizations that use contract instructors. First, in their absence they point to potential problem areas that may arise. For example, if Recommended Practice 42, provide incentives for good performance, is not implemented a training organization may find that good teaching performance extinguishes itself due to a lack of positive reinforcement. Second, these practices can serve as the beginnings of a "road map" for contract instructor excellence.

**Summary**

This literature review sought to answer the question: what methods can be used to effectively support National Fire Academy contract instructors' program delivery and their professional development? Preliminary research indicated that this material was relatively scarce.

Consequently, existing literature relative to the management of contract instructors in traditional academic institutions and other organizations was included. Since the literature review failed to locate any existing programs for the management of contract instructors in any civilian federal training agencies, beyond the use of a contractual Scope of Work, this further strengthens the need for research on such programs at the NFA. However, the literature review did locate a number of training management methodologies that may have pertinence for contract instructors in academe and in government. Rossett's suggestion that a training needs assessment can be completed with tools such as interviews and surveys has been used in the current research of NFA contract instructors. Londoner's two-part staff development program, Powers' seven elements that contribute to instructor excellence, and selected recommended practices from Gappa and Leslie may offer potential as the basis for a conceptual model. Based on the preliminary information from the February, 1996 meeting with four of the ten NFA Program Chairs, the December 1996 meeting with several NFA contract instructors, and the literature review it appears that NFA contract instructors may encounter problems in several areas. These areas include problems in orientation of new instructors, program delivery, evaluation, professional development, and relationships with the Program Chairs. These problems may be solved or abated by offering an orientation program, honing instructional skills with training, improving evaluation processes, developing a career track with associated professional development options, and offering formal and informal opportunities for contract instructors to develop their relationship with Program Chairs.

This chapter included an introduction to the review of the literature, a purpose, a description of the literature pertaining to federal training agencies and academe, a review of other literature sources, an examination of the recurring themes and recommended practices that come from the literature review, and a chapter summary.