A STUDY OF THE LIVES OF CASUAL TAFE LECTURERS
IN METROPOLITAN PERTH

Priscilla Shorne
Masters of Business Administration,
Graduate Diploma Business Administration (Arts),
Bachelor of Arts, Diploma in Teaching,
Certificate Four Training and Assessment

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Priscilla Shorne
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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE LIVES OF CASUAL TAFE LECTURERS IN METROPOLITAN PERTH.

Towards the end of the last century in Australia one aspect of the restructuring of work has been a major increase in the number of people who are employed on a casual basis. The ‘traditional’ full time permanent job is no longer available to many people.

This project examines aspects of the personal and work lives of casual TAFE lecturers in the Perth metropolitan area. It provides a specific case study of workers who have been affected by the changes in the workforce which have developed over the past 25 years. In particular, these are workers who, given their tertiary education and work experience, would not necessarily have expected to be employed on a casual basis but who are now part of the roughly 27% of the workforce employed in this mode.

Supporters of the restructured workforce claim that work flexibility has advantages for the economy and for both the employer and the employee and argue that many are happy to work in this mode. This project seeks to test this assertion, to examine briefly the economic and political features that led to casual work being adopted as the preferred employment model at TAFE in Western Australia, and to consider in detail its consequences for some of those employed in this manner.
Through a series of interviews of 40 casual TAFE lecturers it investigates some of the particular features of such employment; such as how people obtain and maintain work, and whether they regard themselves as having a career, as well as looking at broader aspects such as stigma, insecurity and the place of risk in the workplace. The research reveals that while this mode of employment suits a subset of casual employees, others pine for greater security and certainty in their working lives.
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CHAPTER ONE

The Introduction

Part One - The Project

This thesis examines aspects of the personal and work lives of casual TAFE lecturers in the Perth metropolitan area. It provides a specific case study of workers who have been affected by the changes in the workforce which have developed over the past 25 years. In particular, these are workers who, given their qualifications and work experience, would not necessarily have expected to be employed on a casual basis. However, they are now part of the roughly 26-27% of the workforce who are employed in this mode (Watson et al, 2003, p. 68; ABS, 2006).

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis and the issues with which it deals. It consists of:

Part One: this brief introduction of the project

Part Two: an outline of the general working climate in Australia which led to the increase in the casual workforce

Part Three: an examination of how this context translated to employment policies in TAFE in Western Australia

Part Four: a brief summary of each of the chapters of the thesis that are to follow
At this point it is appropriate to point out that the body of the thesis consists of a series of essays which are linked by three themes: Structural Matters, Wider Social Implications and The Casual Experience. It is an approach which was influenced by my decade of work as a casual TAFE lecturer which demonstrated to me that when full time permanent work is regarded as the norm, then those who are outside of this situation have experiences which are different. These experiences are unfamiliar and perhaps even denied by those who have not undergone them. The essays were a response to issues that puzzled, infuriated and intrigued me. While having an overall purpose in mind, that is giving a voice to the casual workers themselves, I followed various areas of interest finding in the process that the work which resulted could be divided thematically.

This thesis is not a statistical analysis of casual work, that role is carried out by others in the field such as Buchanan, Campbell, Pocock, Shah, Watson and others\(^1\). My purpose has been to give voice to a working group whose lives I have shared.

As a casual TAFE lecturer, I became used to having my work and the work of other casual lecturers devalued. It was not so much the quality of the teaching that was at issue but rather our status as workers who were deemed to be readily disposable, employed or laid off at the last moment, expected to prepare courses without resources or payment in record time and not given office space. At the same time we were expected to provide a professional level of teaching and student mentoring.

\(^1\) See bibliography for examples of their work.
During my studies for a Master of Business Administration I was also conscious of the writings of such management gurus as Handy (1994), Peters (1994), Dent (1995) and the sundry economists and managerial experts who predicted or advised on the efficient use of the casual worker. It seemed to me that these people who touted the advantages of the casual or temporary workforce had little experience of this situation themselves. I determined that I wished to write from within the experience of a particular sector of the casual workforce. I wanted to provide a voice for the experiences of those who were actually intimately involved with this form of work and so had some first hand knowledge of its consequences; a voice for those who are ignored by those who have no experience of working as a mature aged casual and who are unlikely ever to have such an experience. This is an approach that I think important for as Sennett and Cobb (1972, p.9) point out ‘both sides in the argument about workers, rebellion and culture, think more simplistically about workers than workers think about themselves’.

Part Two - Casualisation and Work in Australia

In the late 1980s to early 1990s of the twentieth century in Australia, the world changed for some workers. Australia had been for most a prosperous place after the Second World War with returning soldiers eager to settle down and build families and houses. High wages and high demand promoted high consumption (Williams, 1992):
Australia’s good fortune during the 1950s and 1960s was founded on a continually expanding world trade and a stable international monetary system, both largely the result of measures initiated by the United States to safeguard western capitalism (Bolton, 1990, p. 90).

Those who had grown up in the post war era of Australia when jobs were easy to get suddenly discovered that it was harder to get a job and that when work was available, it was offered on a temporary basis. The early post war generation had been brought up in an era where material possessions were often scarce but there was a belief that work was available and that hard work never hurt anyone. Their fathers might have had a job for life or if not, work in the trades was usually plentiful apart from glitches like the recession in the 1970s which did not affect everyone. It was though, a harbinger of what was to come:

This boom period in the 1950s and 1960s began to falter in the late 1960s and showed signs of long term crisis in the 1970s, resulting in the severe recessions of 1982 and 1992 (Williams, 1992, p. 9).

At this time, mothers were largely home-based attending to family duties or were working part time (Probert, 1989; Bolton, 1990).

A fundamental basis for their expectations was the Harvester Judgement handed down by Justice Higgins in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in 1907. Justice Higgins assumed that the male was the breadwinner and that women cared for the children and were the home makers. He structured a minimum living wage for an unskilled labourer based on enabling a family of
five to live in very modest comfort on the wages earned by the father (Probert, 1989). The Harvester Judgement or Harvester Man as it came to be called, provided social security for white male workers who had full time jobs and who worked the whole year (Watson, Buchanan et al, 2003). It provided a set of assumptions that underpinned the way our society worked including the idea that a full time job should bring a living wage. Adjustments were made along the way to give women and Aboriginals access to equal pay but interestingly this came as Harvester Man was being called into question by rising rates of unemployment, the entry of greater numbers of women into the workforce and the influence of neo-liberal economists.

Members of the post war generation were the first to enter tertiary education in any great numbers. The children born in the late 1940s and 1950s had significantly improved access to education which had generally been denied to their parents. Their parents, having been born in the depression and having gone through World War II, wanted better things for their children. Prime Minister Robert Menzies poured money into universities and increased the numbers of Commonwealth Scholarships in 1961 (Hastings, 2008; Bolton, 1990) which enabled many working class children to attend university. For anyone who had not won a scholarship, signing a bond with the Education Department paid university fees along with a living allowance in return for teaching for three years wherever the education department chose to send you. This meant that many people, who became the first of their families to attend a university, were able to undertake a degree.
The cohort born post war through into the 1960s always expected that work would be there for them and when for various reasons it was not, life changed for them in a way that challenged their expectations. By the early 1990s when the first of this generation were in their mid forties, the move towards flexibility in the workplace was underway. A process which involved changing and ‘deregulating’ the economy which in reality does mean regulating it in other ways, had begun in Australia in the late 1980s. As Watson, Buchanan, Campbell and Briggs (2003, p15) point out:

Once market regulation gained ascendancy in the late 1980s new approaches to the labour market and to workplace issues came to the fore. Instead of an encompassing program for change, an employer-driven concern with productivity (narrowly defined in cost cutting terms) began to prevail.

One of the biggest costs for most enterprises is labour so it is no wonder that employers and management began looking at ways of cutting labour costs. A whole raft of awards began to be overhauled with a view to introducing multi-skilling and abolishing demarcation disputes and the like. At the same time the cooperative welfare approach of the Keynesians was giving way to the ideology of the neo-liberals who believed in self interest and the importance of individuals taking responsibility for themselves. Bob Hawke introduced the ‘Accord’ and for a brief period there was cooperation between unions and the government and even to a certain extent business. Wage restraint by unions was rewarded by social spending such as Medicare (ACIRRT, 1999) and increased welfare spending. However pressure was put on
the Accord when those workers not covered by an award sought and gained wage increases outside of those sanctioned by the award and the skills shortage encouraged some workers to seek wage increases. The pilots’ strike of 1989 was a failure but it was part of the pressure that led from strict national wage outcomes to modified enterprise bargaining. The moderate conciliation of the Hawke era gave way to the Keating era. Paul Keating was not only interested in economic deregulation, he openly aimed to deregulate the labour market (Watson et al, 2003) and the days of the centralised award were numbered.

The Keating strategy was a response to the rise of globalisation. Argy (2003, p. 108) defines globalisation as ‘the closer economic integration of national markets through increased trade and mobility of capital’. By globalisation in this context we mean market forces, deregulation, an emphasis on share holder profits, a push to compete on world markets and increased productivity through cutting costs. Of course a major cost in Australian business is labour so business was constantly seeking to deregulate labour to reduce costs. As Watson et al (2003, p. 15) point out, ‘the ideology of market regulation gained a strong following in many countries which had been undergoing difficult economic times’. Margaret Thatcher in the UK proposed that there was no alternative to market solutions and these economic policies were taken up eagerly in the English speaking world. The Europeans seemed less keen to adopt them and maintained more regulated economies.
The rapid development of technology saw Australian manufacturing industries fade away with products being imported more cheaply than they could be made in Australia and many companies outsourcing their work and/or moving it offshore. Even if they did not move production offshore, technological developments meant that fewer workers were needed so there were frequent job losses. It was a time of rapid and dramatic change and many people were thrown out of work. There was also a shift to valuing young workers over older workers as they were seen as more able to adapt to change and more specifically to technological change. The low skilled older factory worker found it very hard to find work in another industry and many never worked again once they had lost their jobs. Moving these workers onto disability pensions became a way of disguising the extent of the problem.

Employers found it increasingly attractive to employ people on a casual basis. In order to be more competitive, labour had to be made productive and having workers being paid during downturns did not make economic sense. In the post war years, there had been a labour shortage and employers, eager to keep their workers, were prepared to pay the costs of over stocking, (ACIRRT, 1999) but by the 1990s, there was an oversupply of workers so management could afford to introduce flexible work practices. Consequently there was a loss of full time work and a shift to part time jobs and rather than being on a permanent basis these jobs became contract based and increasingly, even casual.
During this period many women re-entered the labour force at the same time that this shift from manufacturing occurred. Many of these women had families and were looking for part time work so that they could combine family responsibilities with their paid work. The employers saw this as an opportunity to employ women on a casual rather than permanent part time basis. While the Harvester Man approach was losing favour, some of the attitudes which underwrote it such as the male being the breadwinner and the female being a subsidiary worker dominated and still do in attitudes to casual work. It is not seen as problematic that a woman has casual work when she has family responsibilities whilst in reality, permanent part time work with all its attendant rights might benefit the worker more. According to Williams (1992), married women were still doing most of the domestic and family labour in the home and thus preferred part time to full time work. Permanent part time jobs had been resisted by the union movement and not necessarily offered by employers, so the work these women found tended to be casual (Bolton, 1990; Women’s Advisory Council, 1998).

A report on casual employment in Australia, (Simpson, Dawkins and Madden, 1996) examines the growth of casual employment in Australia from 1984-1993. The report shows that casual employment grew from 15.8% of the workforce in 1984 to 22.7% of the workforce in 1993. This increase was almost double the growth of the part-time workforce in the same period. No industry showed a decline in the use of casual labour between 1984 and 1992 and agriculture, mining, transport and storage and manufacturing showed quite significant increases in the use of casual labour (Simpson et al, 1996;
It is a trend to diversification in modes of employment which has occurred through most industry sectors including education.

Pocock et al (2004) argue that while some shift from labour regulation was necessary to meet the changes in technology and globalisation, the trend towards deregulation such as casualisation, labour hire arrangements and dependent contracting\(^2\) was not so desirable and were in fact likely to cause problems for working families. As they point out ‘these jobs are characterised by a short-fall in protection, whether large or small, in comparison with the majority of jobs within the framework of the protective system’ (Pocock et al, 2004, p. 18). This diminishment of protection was seen most clearly in casual jobs. This shift to deregulation was not matched by other OECD countries that have modernised their regulatory systems to match changing circumstances.

There are commonly held beliefs about casual workers. Three groups in particular are held to be particularly attracted to it: young people between the ages of 15-19, women with family commitments and workers over the age of 55. Casual employment was also seen to be concentrated in the service and retail sectors (Simpson et al, 1996; Romeyn, 1992). However evidence is now mounting that casualisation is increasing throughout the Australian workforce. Male casual employment grew by 74% during 1984-1993 compared with female casual employment which grew by 19% though of course both were starting from different bases. A research note from the Federal Parliamentary Library (No 53, 24 May, 2004) points out that by 2003

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\(^2\) Dependent contractors are those who might see themselves as self employed contractors but in reality they only work for one employer (ACIRRT, 1999).
approximately 28% of all jobs were now casual and that from 1988 54% of all
new jobs were casual. This is a major change and one that has had dramatic
effects on people’s lives.

It is also of note that there are a class of ‘quasi permanent casual workers
(who) work on a casual basis in ongoing jobs, performing tasks
indistinguishable from those of permanent workers’ (Weller, Cussen and
Webbe, 1999, n.p.; Campbell, 2004). So it is possible that the receptionist at
your physiotherapist or the barrister at your favourite coffee shop are casual
even though they are employed on a long term basis. Pocock et al (2004, p19)
postulate that ‘the majority of jobs classified as ‘casual’ in Australia are
indeed ‘permanent casual’ jobs’.

While it might be expected that casual workers are largely female, by 2003
the numbers of males in casual work had reached 24% as can be seen from the
following table which is taken from an Australian Parliamentary Library
Research Note 2004 citing figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In
the fifteen year period, male casual employment whether full time or part
time has increased from 11.7% to 24%, an increase of 105% while female
casual employment of all forms has increased from 28.9% to 31.0% an increase
over the same time of 10.8%. 
Rates of casualisation 1988-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total casual %</th>
<th>Male casual %</th>
<th>Female casual %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is still true that casual work is concentrated in certain occupations such as hospitality, retail, health and community services, basic clerical and manufacturing and those who are casual workers are generally less well educated than those in permanent work (Kryger, 2004). However there has also been an increase in casualisation in areas such as nursing, education (from schools to the tertiary sector) and even in the public sector and this is diversifying the profile of the casual worker. These are areas that would once have had ongoing employment as their main employment mode. They are also areas in which most workers have some form of post secondary education with many having post graduate qualifications. Some of these were the post war generation who for various reasons had fallen through the employment cracks and now found themselves qualified, experienced older and almost unemployable. One of the places that these people could find work was at TAFE (Technical and Further Education).
Part Three – TAFE Background

The employment of lecturers in TAFE in Western Australia is mirroring this trend of casualisation. At the time of conducting this research some permanent positions remained but new entrants were offered contract or casual positions, a status that is frequently interchangeable according to market needs. In this project though, casual will mean those workers who are currently employed on a casual basis as in paid only for the hours that they are in front of a class and receiving no sick leave or holiday pay. The emphasis now is on flexible delivery and on ensuring that ‘resources are managed professionally and for optimum value’ (Strategic Directions, 1995). From 1995, selected permanent staff were offered redundancies to free up positions for flexible appointments. This process has slowed in recent years since the 2002 Certified Agreement for TAFE Lecturers and the advent of a Labor government at the state level who around the same time converted longstanding contract positions into permanent ones\(^3\). There is a chance now of being appointed as a permanent lecturer but many casual positions remain and some believe that the numbers are increasing.

TAFE systems throughout Australia have commonly employed casual staff. They used to and may still be, people in industry that came in to pass on their knowledge of the ‘real’ world in mainly evening classes to students who wanted a practical rather than a theoretically based education. While such

\(^3\) This though did not apply to casual lecturers who, no matter how long they had been working at a college, had no way of converting their working conditions from casual to permanent without waiting for a vacancy to be advertised and going through a merit select process.
casual staff were numerous, they complemented a solid core of permanent TAFE teachers who taught the bulk of the courses.

The TAFE sector attracts lecturers who come from other areas: from trades, from other types of teaching and from industry. These are people who already have had at least one career whether as a trades person or in some other area. They come to TAFE with experience in the trades, industry or some other vocational area. Formerly, these lecturers, if untrained in adult education, were offered various forms of teacher training and given tenure. It seems that few people have ever started out to be TAFE lecturers as their primary career goal; in fact the need to have relevant vocational training and experience militates against TAFE lecturing being a primary career choice. This remains the case though entrants from other areas may now be offered contract or casual positions rather than tenure. In fact the VEETAC paper on staffing TAFE for the future (VEETAC, 1992, p67) sees the tenure of lecturers as a disadvantage claiming that ‘the acquisition of permanent staff who have a narrow range of skills/subject expertise and who have limited ability to change creates a serious limitation for TAFE’s flexibility’.

As a clarification here, it is important to note that casual employment in TAFE generally means ongoing employment for the term of a particular unit of competency that does not attract ‘certain rights and benefits, including paid annual leave, paid sick leave, paid public holidays, notice of dismissal and redundancy pay.’ (O’Donnell 2004 cited in Campbell, 2004, n.p.) Thus a lecturer may teach a 20 week course for two or three hours a week over a period of five months. Casual lecturers may also be brought in to provide
relief for lecturers who are absent which is a more traditional use of casual workers. It is interesting to note that the Western Australian Education Department does not employ casual teachers in schools on a long term basis. Anyone filling a gap for more than four weeks is put on a contract. As clause 13.1 (e) in the Teachers General Agreement states:

‘Casual Employee’ means an employee engaged by the hour for a single appointment not exceeding four (4) weeks, to provide relief for a teacher employed as part of the normal staffing establishment (p. 17).

The consideration of casual TAFE lecturers in this thesis illustrates features of a workforce in a time of change from the standpoint of those who are frequently invisible in the writings on TAFE. Members of this group include women with family responsibilities, people displaced from other occupations, those who only want part-time work, those who need flexible hours, those who have other jobs and those who are trying out the work to see if they like it. This topic was chosen because the economists and managerialists recommending flexibility in the workplace rarely seemed to have consulted those who were to be made flexible on whether they were ready for this brave new experiment or whether they would prefer the stability of regular, reliable work.

The project is designed to enhance our understanding of the effect of casual work on the lives of these lecturers with a view to finding out how working as a casual, dealing with issues of power and control, lack of stability and uncertainty affects them and possibly by implication others involved in casual work. It will analyse how the lecturers themselves view their working lives
and how they cope with the changes in this sector. This study will throw light from this particular vantage point upon the issues of diversity and inequality highlighted by analysts such as Sennett and Cobb (1972), Watson et al, (2003), Probert (1989) and Pocock (2003).

The point of the project is to examine the ways in which not all casuals thrive in this work mode and to discuss why this might be so and what they might really want anyway. Why is it that some people are happy to be employed as casual and what distinguishes them from others who do not like it? Are they people who have a secure income anyway and so their work is not as instrumentally important to them? Do some casual lecturers cope better with insecurity than others and does resilience play a part? There is a whole range of issues about peoples’ lives that are not addressed when the flexible workforce is discussed solely from an employer perspective.

Government departments were not immune to the changes in ideology that were affecting other areas of the economy. TAFE colleges were once run by Directors who had risen through the lecturing ranks in the same way that a school principal does and TAFE colleges were educational institutions rather than businesses. The Director was an educational leader rather than just a bureaucrat who did not necessarily have any experience of lecturing. However the rise of managerialism meant that college directors and other senior management were less likely to be former TAFE lecturers. The whole point of managerialism is that managers who have the right skills can manage any organisation so, for example, in the 1990s the past director of the prison service became the Director of TAFE.
The cult of managerialism harks back to Taylor ‘with its claims that management can be a true science and that such ‘science’ can be universally applied’ (Rees cited in Rees and Rodley, 1995, p. 17). It sees managerialism as an efficient practice that can be applied equally to the private or public sector and it sits well with the policies of economic rationalism that are current. In the TAFE system, this means that the colleges are run as a business rather than as a public good and achieving favourable financial outcomes is easily as, and maybe even more important, than achieving favourable educational ones. The latter are of course important but their importance in this new concept lies in developing the reputation of the institution and ensuring new and repeat business.

In 1996, as part of this movement, the TAFE system was decentralised and run as separate colleges which had to compete for students and resources and business. Lorrimar (2006) points out that the VET Training Act 1996 ‘aimed to free TAFE colleges from the controls of a centralised bureaucracy and encouraged the adoption of corporate models of management’ (p. 42). Colleges became autonomous training institutions and statutory authorities and college directors became business people rather than educational leaders with varying degrees of success. The competition between colleges was such that lecturers were sometimes warned not to share materials with colleagues who worked at a different college4. There was some dispute about lecturers’

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4 Personal discussion with one of the interviewees who was told by a manager that she could not use any of the material she prepared for classes at his college at any other college. It was also my own experience.
teaching materials and other intellectual property being owned by the College they worked at and its use being restricted to staff at that college.

This break up of the sector did serve casual lecturers in one particular way. The Certified Agreement of 1996\(^5\) only permitted casual lectures to work eight hours with a particular employer before they were to be put on a contract. In reality, college management did not wish to put people on contracts so they restricted casuals to working eight hours only. Those casual lecturers who wanted more work than this, had to seek work at other colleges and it was not uncommon for casual lecturers to work at two or more locations in order to get the number of hours they wanted.

This break up of colleges into separate entities rather than one VET sector was part of a restructuring of technical and further education in Western Australia which began with the Kangan Report on technical and further education in 1974 (White, 1990). The oil shock of 1974 followed by the economic problems of the 1980s focused attention on the need to revamp technical and further education in Australia. In Western Australia, TAFE remained part of the Education Department but there were pressures developing to reorganise and restructure:

Colleges shared an identical academic calendar to departmental schools and award courses were offered on ‘traditional’ basis, producing a culture which militated against TAFE involvement in the growing variety of training initiatives within industry. Inflexible

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\(^5\) Lecturers (Public Sector, Technical and Further Education) Certified Agreement 1996. This restriction was lifted in the TAFE Lecturers’ Certified Agreement 2000.
teaching staff conditions were aligned to industrial awards applying to school teachers and tied to public service promotion criteria (White, 1990, p. 3).

This inflexibility was deemed detrimental to the sort of technical and further education that was required to strengthen technical training for an Australia that was facing potential globalisation⁶.

While these changes were occurring, the Hawke government within the Accord had started the processes of revamping awards and making them more flexible, a process which was continued under succeeding governments. A report in 1987 from a trip overseas by a tripartite team from the ACTU, industry and education, Australia Reconstructed, claimed that Australian needed a restructure of its economy, industry and workforce with emphasis on the role to be played by education and training institutions (Sachsse, 1994). Other reports such as Skilling Australia followed and there was an Australia wide realisation that TAFE needed to be updated and refocused. This led to the National Training Reform Agenda:

The federal government and other interested parties hoped that changes wrought by the national training reform agenda would provide, not only the immediate skill needs of the nation, but also the basis for strengthening the links between vocational education and training and a ‘modernised’ Australian economy (Aeuckens, 2000, n.p.).

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⁶ The inflexibility of TAFE has been a constant theme with the Skills for Australia report (1987) discussing the need for education and training needing to be more flexible through to the current moves by some state governments and the Federal government to open TAFE funding to competition so as to force TAFE colleges to be more flexible (Forward 2008).
With trade and industry needing to be revitalised and the economy modernised, it was no surprise that there was an emphasis on training since the existing trade training had been rigid and gender based. The Hawke Federal Labor government introduced a series of incentives and requirements such as the Training Guarantee Levy\(^7\) so that organisations over a certain size would provide training for their employees. With moves like this, the old TAFE in Western Australia needed to be upgraded.

TAFE in Western Australia was not separated from the control of the Education Department until 1989 and in the same year college campuses were grouped into multi campus colleges each with its own director with a view to rationalising resources and developing greater flexibility. The scene was set for a change in work conditions. There was considerable opposition to changes in working conditions but in 1996 a new certified agreement radically changed TAFE lecturers’ working conditions abolishing most penalty rates, cutting leave, extending normal working hours and increasing the face to face contact hours with students to the highest in Australia.

There was no official policy ever put on paper but while these events were happening, TAFE management had been dealing with the inflexibility of the working conditions in their own way. They simply stopped employing lecturers on a permanent basis and new employees were offered either short term contracts or casual conditions. From around 1991, it was unusual to find

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\(^7\) The Training Guarantee Act 1990 and the Training Guarantee Administration Act 1990 required all employers with a payroll threshold of more than $200000 to spend 1% of their payroll on staff training. The amount was indexed each year. The acts were suspended in 1994 and abolished in 1996 (Fraser 1996).
any new lecturer being appointed on a permanent basis. This continued until 2004 when the Gallop Labour government under pressure from the State School Teachers Union of introduced a conversion process similar to the one that had applied to the Western Australia Public Service. The Certified Agreement of 2005 also set limits on the ratio of casual lecturers to permanent or contract staff.

How the decision was made in Western Australia to only employ people on a casual or short term basis is uncertain and even those who were involved in the management of TAFE employees are unclear. It seems just to have been the way things were done and there was no specific directive that it should be so. Looking at the wider context though, it seems that an organisation whose management regarded itself as hamstrung by restrictive awards and working conditions would seek to find other ways to manage their workforce and since the award was still regarded as restrictive and did not undergo major change until 1995, casualising the workforce must have seemed the way to go8. Junor (2005, n.p.) comments that ‘institutional drivers of TAFE casualisation include a decline in permanent recruitment, perhaps in response to uncertainty over the direction of industry restructuring, and cost minimisation.’

This inflexibility is perceived even today though the reality is somewhat different because of the changes that have been made in subsequent certified agreements. Lecturers are accused of not being flexible enough though they

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8 I have been unable to locate any documents dealing with this, neither can anyone else I spoke to including TAFE management and Department of Education and Training officials recall any official policy.
already work both on and off campus, deliver and assess in workplaces, in
classrooms, online, through distance education and multi media and the like
and work a broad ranger of hours without overtime or penalty rates applying.
In a proposed new Certified Agreement to take effect in 2008, management
has proposed the formation of new flexible lecturer positions where lecturers
will work as directed by management with no differentiation between duties
as now occurs in the Agreement\(^9\). Lecturers could be employed any time
between 7 am to 10 pm Monday to Fridays and 7.30 to 12.30 pm on Saturdays
on or off campus as directed. It is believed that this freeing up of hours
worked from the division into preparation time will make TAFE less rigid in its
work practices. While there is an offer of an extra 5% pay for people who
agree to work this way, it is unclear how many people will be attracted to the
offer.

Lecturing, like any other form of teaching requires not only content
knowledge but also a pedagogy which comes from experience,
experimentation and learning. TAFE colleges that rely heavily on casuals to
deliver their training may not be giving them the support and on going
professional development they need to become truly skilled at their jobs
which is not to say that many casuals are not highly skilled and dedicated to
their work\(^10\). However, when they are regarded merely as resources to be
used or discarded as circumstances dictate, when no commitment is shown by

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\(^9\) In the current agreement hours worked are divided between 21 hours teaching/delivery,
4 ½ hours of professional duties and 11 ½ hours of activities related to delivery which means
preparation and marking etc. Lecturers are permitted to take 7 ½ hours of this ARD off
campus.

\(^10\) At least one college in Western Australia, only permanent lecturers are given free access
and a time allowance to undertake the Certificate IV of Training and Assessment, a vital and
required qualification for TAFE lecturers. Contract and casual lecturers must do it in their
own time and pay for it themselves.
management to the work that they do and to their personal welfare, one would have to question the commitment to the educational process shown by TAFE Colleges and their management. These are among the issues that I wish to examine in this thesis.

Part Four – The Thesis Overview

Chapter One: this introduction to the project.

Chapter Two deals with a number of issues commencing with the methodology I adopted for this work. I found the work of Devine and Heath (1999), Roseneil (1995) and Dorothy Smith (1987) particularly helpful in letting me focus on both process and theory since my ten years working as a casual TAFE lecturer gave me an insider’s perspective of the lives of casual TAFE lecturers. I realised that my experience enabled me to adopt a participant observer status whilst still writing from the standpoint of the casual.

At the same time, I found the insights provided through the work of Erving Goffman particularly useful in describing the working lives I saw.

Chapter Three describes the particular group of people I interviewed. I interviewed 40 people altogether with roughly equal numbers of males and females. I found people in a variety of ways ranging from asking those I know to getting people to recommend others, to advertising at conferences and in the Western Teacher, the newspaper for the SSTUWA, the union for teachers and TAFE lecturers. I also distributed flyers around colleges and contacted various newsgroups in case there were suitable candidates there.
The research will show that casual TAFE lecturers are by no means a homogeneous group; on the contrary they have a variety of reasons for working in the ways that they do. For example, some do fit the stereotype, such as an industry expert who maintains their main job and just gives a few hours to TAFE and those with family responsibilities or some other occupation who just want a few hours work. However, there are others who depend on this work for their livelihoods. Members of this latter group tended to be the people who were less than happy with their situation, wanted more hours, more certainty, and wanted the option of a career.

Structural Matters

Chapter Four examines the ways that people obtain work at TAFE through a partial analogy with the work of Goffman in The Moral Career of the Mental Patient (1972) which traces involuntary admissions to mental hospitals in the 1950s. I use the involuntary nature of these admissions as a loose metaphor for the nature of entry into much casual work at TAFE.

Since there is a rigorous selection process for permanent staff, it might be expected that casual lecturers be made to jump through similar hoops. This is not so. While attempts are made from time to time by various colleges to ensure people go through some sort of application process, in general casual lecturers are recruited in an ad hoc manner. It can be just a case of a staff member knowing somebody who is seen as acceptable and is free to do the hours required. There is no selection process and in fact the final decision goes down to the program manager or her/his equivalent. If the program manager likes you then you have a job and you may even keep it for years.
unless a permanent staff member needs your hours whereas if the program manager does not like the casual employee, then that person will not keep work or their hours will be reduced. In other words, the process of getting and keeping work often depends on the whim of one person.

In Chapter Five, I consider some of the features of the concept of career and its relatively recent impact on working lives and investigate the ways in which casual TAFE lecturers reflect on their working careers. A key issue of working as a casual is whether casual lecturers perceive themselves as having a career. A significant proportion of the respondents are only too aware that they have been cut out of the career progression at least temporarily and their comments demonstrate how they attempt to reorder their lives and to redefine their working lives in order to salvage some notion of career. At the same time it is worth questioning whether the concept of the career was anything more than a 20th century aberration, which will increasingly disappear for all but a small privileged minority.

Chapter Six deals with how casual lecturers are treated at work and how the allocation of space reflects their status. Most workers if they have a space permanently allocated to them colonise it in some way and develop feelings of territoriality about it. It would be rare to find a TAFE campus that had spare physical resources and office accommodation for lecturers is no exception. Colleges operate on the assumption that lecturers spend the bulk of their time in class and so need minimal office space. Since casual lecturers are only there to teach, then they do not need to have much space allocated to them. However this attitude does have many consequences and is
indicative of negative or at the best dismissive attitudes to those lecturers who are not regarded as part of the college. At the same time, the issue of space at work has deeper implications for workers’ morale and the way that they are regarded by colleagues and by management.

Wider Social Implications

Chapter Seven studies the new culture of risk in the workplace. Risk management has become an important part of managing an organisation and many careers are now being built on it. The point though is that risk may be managed by quarantining yourself from it and transferring it to others who traditionally would not have borne the risk. This concept is examined through the work of Ritzer (1993) whose thesis is that society is becoming ‘McDonaldized’ through transferring labour to the consumer and through Breen (1997) who writes of risk as probability.

In an institution like TAFE one of the greatest costs is of course labour, the investment is in intellectual and even emotional labour at that, and the risk is that there may be cost overruns in this area. Having permanent staff in areas which have lost popularity means that you may be paying people who have no useful function or future in the organisation unless they can reinvent themselves. Changing technology and fashion has seen various departments contract or be reconfigured. One example is Business Studies that once would have been called Secretarial Studies. The advent of the personal computer and the photocopier meant that more of the administrative work could be done by managers who once would have had their secretaries do it for them.
Now Business Studies is more generally administrative, the demand for it has been decreasing.

If you employ casual lecturers to replace permanent staff who have left as a result of natural attrition, you can put them off easily if the numbers of students are not there. In this way the risk is transferred to the employee and not borne by management; however defraying the TAFE costs involves passing the costs to the individual employee who is then involved in finding ways to lessen this risk.

The Casual Experience

The latter part of the project deals with some personal rather than general attitudes towards being a casual TAFE lecturer.

The first of these chapters, Chapter Eight, deals with feelings of being stigmatised in the workplace. This chapter looks at when it is acceptable to be employed on a casual basis and when it is not and whether there are visual signs that indicate that someone is employed on a casual basis. There are indications that many permanent lecturers regard casual lecturers as being out of the ordinary and this may be explained by the fact that no matter what the origins of permanent lecturers, whether they came from trades or whether they entered by other means even through transfer from the education department, what they had in common was their permanency and permanent lecturers see their conditions as normal. I propose to demonstrate that in their world, the casual lecturer is the abnormal, even the dangerous since they may be seen to represent a threat to conditions. Since there is no
obvious physical taint and no social taint as they all teach the same students, there may well be a perceived moral one. This feeling of taint is teased out further in this chapter.

Chapter Nine deals with personal issues of being casual and not surprisingly one of the main issues was how did people deal with the constant insecurity? This insecurity is not only to do with not knowing if you will have work for the next semester but it has strong links with financial insecurity and being able to provide adequately for your future. Beyond this there are issues of how people deal with stress and the impact on their health and the levels of tiredness for people who work at more than one campus and have to travel a lot.

People coped with these issues in different ways. Some prepared themselves by being able to teach a wide range of subjects and finding work in other areas as well, some denied that they felt any insecurity at all and some fared very badly. Those who did not have some other source of income whether it be from a partner or from some form of investments were frequently forced to resort to social security payments to tide them over the longer holidays which some found humiliating and the others accepted as their right. Most though wanted greater certainty and security in their lives.

Chapter Ten deals with casual lecturers’ attitudes to work and their commitment or lack of it to their job. It can be suggested that casual lecturers are casual in their approaches to their work but the respondents to this project say otherwise. For them there appears to be a commitment to their work which is not matched by a commitment to them by their employer.
The education employer needs a worker who will do the right thing by the students and teach to the best of their ability but this employer will not necessarily reciprocate since to them the casual lecturer is of instrumental purpose only.

Commitment is not a simple construct. Lecturers are committed to their work in many ways. At the most basic and fundamental level, lecturers are committed to their students. Teaching and lecturing involve emotional labour and that cannot be done effectively without commitment to the students and the learning process. Most casual lecturers when queried saw themselves as being professionals in that they were professional educators. While they may not have been regarded as professionals since they were not part of the formal structure, they saw themselves as being professional in how they carried out their work and professional in the sense that they were educators primarily and casual TAFE lecturing was merely their mode of employment.

Chapter Eleven, the penultimate, considers those who enjoy being employed as a casual and who do not wish to be employed in any other mode. These can be divided into two main groups; those who shy away from commitment and so are happy being employed on a casual basis since it means they can drop everything and go when the fancy takes them and those for whom their work at TAFE is not financially important as they have other means of support. The people in this latter group may well change if their circumstances change. For example, shortly after one of the respondents was interviewed, her marriage broke up and her financial circumstances changed dramatically. She gave up casual lecturing and sought permanent work in
another area. This chapter examines why some workers might prefer to be employed on a casual basis rather than as a permanent part time workers.

The Conclusion draws together the material from the previous chapters to give an overview of the life of the casual lecturer. It also suggests some areas for further research.

Summary

In this introduction I have set the scene for a particular consideration of one of the significant changes in the nature and distribution of work in Australia in the last twenty years; that is the increasing casualisation of the workforce. I have used casual TAFE lecturers as a case study in order to illustrate the limitations of the conventional expectation of the types of people who work casually. This group of workers are well educated come from a section of the community whose members would never have expected to have so little choice about their mode of employment. They are the forerunners of an increasingly short term way of working that was predicted by writers such as Rifkin (1995) and Handy (1994). This thesis traces relevant aspects of their work lives and the impact on their personal lives of this mode of work.
CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

In this chapter I describe and explain the methodology used in this project which includes some of the technical aspects of the work such as the interviewing process, the selection of the participants; the benefits of transcribing work yourself and the use of Nudist software. I adopted an auto-ethnographical/standpoint approach to the material (Roseneil, 1995; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). I conducted semi-structured, face to face interviews with 40 casual TAFE lecturers in metropolitan Perth. All bar one were working as casual lecturers at the time I interviewed them though some have since given up working at TAFE, some have obtained contracts and some have achieved permanency. I also monitored the business media for stories about casualisation and flexible working practices.

For feedback I showed extracts from the work in progress to casual lecturers who had not been included in the interview cohort to see if it concurred with their experience. My own experience of working as a casual TAFE lecturer for ten years before I attained a position as a permanent TAFE lecturer influenced my attitudes and inspired me to undertake this research.

Issues of Methodology

Issues of methodology are particularly pertinent to this project since I write from my lived experience. I was a casual TAFE lecturer before I was a student of sociology and in part my work in sociology and on this topic arises from my
experiences and my concerns with the working conditions experienced by 
others and myself. I am no tourist gazing ‘rapaciously at social scenes for 
signs of activities that appear to be new and different’ (Silverman, 1993, p. 5) 
doing my time at TAFE and only subsequently moving on. I was a part of the 
system at the time I designed and carried out the interviews and wrote the 
story with an insider’s understanding.

I was and still am struck by the contrast between what I, and those I 
interviewed, experienced and felt about being a casual employee and what 
the pundits wrote about the virtues of the flexible workplace. It seemed to 
me that the view of the pundits was weighted heavily in the interests of 
management rather than in the interests of the worker. I decided to 
investigate the views of the casuals themselves in this PhD thesis. Though I 
have now attained a permanent position at a TAFE college, this transition has 
been recent enough that I still suffer the consequences of having being 
employed as a casual such as not having had my casual experience counted 
properly for the pay scale or at all for long service leave entitlements. My 
department at TAFE still employs casual lecturers so I am kept up to date with 
the issues that confront them. The work inspired the research and now the 
research keeps me working in this area feeding my need for more and more 
material; the job that I took up just to support me while I studied in another 
area has now become my career - each process feeds upon itself and also 
feeds the next.
Literature Review

In this project I have chosen not to write an overarching literature review for it seemed more appropriate to introduce reference to specific literature as and when relevant in the body of the thesis. My early introduction to readings on casual work came from my Masters of Business Administration studies which I completed in the 1990s. I was influenced by the work of Feldman and Doerpinghaus (1994), Thurman and Trah (1990) and Tilly (1991) in an elementary research project on casual work. Subsequently, specific literature has been used depending upon the particular issues I was investigating.

The Theoretical Approach

Though my research training was in quantitative research, I have come to feel more at home in the bricoleur approach of qualitative research that finds its material in a variety of sources. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to the bricoleur as a maker of quilts. The researcher/bricoleur selects material from a range of sources, looks for patterns, cuts, selects, discards and sews together various shapes and forms to come up with something new\textsuperscript{11}. Sometimes some of these scraps of material may seem trivial by themselves, but together they make the whole cloth. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 6) write:

> The methodological bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection.

\textsuperscript{11} As someone who is a quilter in other parts of my life, I find this a very satisfying approach.
My quilt is made of interviews, my own experiences, newspaper reports, my observations, remembered conversations and a whole lot more. I did not work to a set pattern and had no idea how it would look until I finished but this did not mean working without any sense of purpose or direction: I always had in mind the examination of the casual experience from within the experience. I knew what I wanted to achieve but not how I was going to get there. I also had a range of skills that I could use in my work from qualitative techniques through to interviewing skills and beyond.

Valerie Janesick (2000) uses the metaphor of choreography to analyse research design. All dance, even the most improvisational, requires a vocabulary of movements, developed muscles and a ‘learning of the principles’ from which to expand and embroider (p. 380). She contrasts the minuet, a highly regimented form of dance with improvisation. The minuet has very set rules and movements which must be learnt and carried out precisely; yet even so, the personality of the dancer(s) may influence how they perform the dance. She compares this to improvisation, which may appear to the uneducated viewer to be totally spontaneous and freeform. Yet underpinning this is a structure of techniques, skills and knowledge which informs the movement.

Janesick compares this to qualitative research. While proponents of quantitative research may view qualitative research as being bereft of technique, she sees good qualitative research as depending on a repertoire of techniques. It needs appropriate preparation, thought and reflection and then enlightenment and formulation. Compare a child banging on a piano
with an accomplished pianist who can improvise. One is without structure and knowledge, the other builds on a lifetime of experience and skills. My approach, I hope, is approaching improvisation.

This approach has developed from a number of sources. Roseneil (1995) in her book *Disarming Patriarchy*, about her experiences and the experiences of others at Greenham Common describes her technique as retrospective auto-ethnography. She spent some time at Greenham as a 16 year old, returned a year later for ten months and kept a sporadic diary. Four years later as a sociology student she returned to the experience. She regards herself as anything but an ‘unbiased, objective observer required by the positivist tradition in sociology or even of mainstream interpretive qualitative research’ (Roseneil, 1995, p. 8).

Dorothy Smith (1987) while addressing the issue of sociology written from a male viewpoint points out that:

> Established society has objectified a consciousness of society and social relations that ‘knows’ them from the standpoint of their ruling and from the standpoint of men who do that ruling (1987, p. 2).

In a similar vein, I would argue that the dominant discourse about casual work does not discuss the matter from the point of view of the casuals. When the president of a business association or a politician extols the virtues of flexibility in the workforce, one wonders if they have ever experienced this situation other than perhaps as a young student who was working to fund their studies but who then went on to more permanent and lucrative forms of work.
My observations, my experiences colour my perceptions but they are also influenced by others, by staff room chatter, by stories told by others; all can confirm or challenge my own experience. As well as this, my response to my own circumstances is ambivalent. I am not sure how I feel about being a ‘casual’; this work is an attempt to make sense of it. Can I write objectively about the material? Probably not but perhaps my own involvement combined with the disciplines of sociology and a willingness to pursue a range of views held by casual TAFE lecturers enriches the work. As C Wright Mills writes, ‘you must learn to use your life experience in your intellectual work; continually to examine and interpret it’ (Mills, 1959, p. 196).

The traditional view of the researcher as an objective, value free observer of the human condition has long been and continues to be contested. ‘Qualitative researchers have assumed that qualified, competent observers can, with objectivity, clarity and precision, report on their own observations of the social world’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 18). The question is whose objectivity is to be given primacy? What biases does the current environment support?

Qualitative researchers are likely now to be more reflexive and to admit ‘they are aware of, reflect on and are explicit about the ways in which different forms of bias affect their research’ (Devine and Heath, 1999, p.7). Thus the researcher’s life experience, political commitments, values, beliefs influence not only the way they choose to work but also even the subjects which interest them. While this approach is also criticized by some as ‘emphasizing subjectivity as the dominant form of academic production while devaluing and
displacing essential modes and priorities of critical thought’ (Taft-Kaufman, 2000, n.p.), it is my belief that acknowledging my location within the research is a crucial step in developing a critical approach to these particular issues.

Other problems which might arise are that my particular standpoint might influence my selection of data and that the interviewing process itself is not a neutral activity. Given that my interviews were basically structured rather than free flowing, the actual choice of question becomes crucial since what I ask necessarily displaces what I might have asked but did not. Obviously what I ask depends on what it is that interests me about the process of working as a casual lecturer so when I ask people whether they feel exploited by this form of work, there is an assumption that this work might be regarded so.

The Interviewing Process

Interviewing itself is especially not a neutral behaviour. ‘Increasingly, qualitative researchers are realising that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results’ (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 646). The experienced interviewer knows how to manipulate people into answering in certain ways so how can we ever be sure that the respondents are telling us the truth rather than what they want us to hear?

During earlier studies I spent some time working as an interviewer for a marketing research company, experience which has proved very useful and informative. I worked both doing phone interviews and face to face
interviewing. It was the latter which was particularly interesting. Generally I was going from house to house, knocking on doors, introducing my company and myself and getting myself invited in to conduct the interview. When I first started, it was desperation that kept me going but later as I grew more experienced, I could relax and enjoy it.

With one regular set of interviews I had a weekend to obtain 10 interviews which could vary in length from 15 minutes to 45 minutes. I was paid a set amount for completing the interviews so it was in my own interest to complete the interviews as soon as possible without breaking too many rules since there were checks with participants on our work. One of the things that I found particularly interesting was that at the front door we had 30 seconds approximately to convince the person who answered the door that we were their newest best friend who they were going to invite inside and confide in. All of this of course without breaking the script we had been given or at least not too much. Such experience provides the successful market researcher with a persona which is trustworthy and not too intimidating.

But it was in the actual asking of questions that I found how possible it was to manipulate. Establishing a rapport means humanising yourself, establishing some sort of mutually pleasing relationship; you need to please the interviewee so that they will cooperate with the interview, especially if it happened to be one of the longer ones and they themselves sometimes felt the need to please their new friend. Accordingly, I think it was sometimes the case that they searched your demeanour for clues as to how you might like the question answered. We were not permitted to explain the meaning
of a question but had to accept the answer they gave but an experienced interviewer could experiment with tone of voice, emphasis, facial expression, pauses, gestures and the like. Of course if you were doing your job as a market researcher correctly, you would attempt to maintain a neutral demeanour so as not to influence the interviewee but the interviewer is not always conscious of what they are doing especially when it is a topic in which they are particularly interested.

With this research, I think the fact that I was also a casual lecturer, established a context and relationship between the interviewee and me that encouraged them to be a little more forthcoming as I could be seen as one of them. Does this mean though that they wanted to please me with their answers and so tailored them to fit? I hope not but I cannot be sure. Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2003) discuss how the researcher is interested in more than the plausibility of the account; they are also interested in the structures of plausibility, those markers such as vocabularies of motive. ‘In proposing an account of doings and events, a speaker is constrained to locate such an action within a shared frame of reference.’ Atkinson, Coffee & Delamont, 2003, p.125). Because I was one of them, we had a stronger shared frame of reference than we might have if I were an outsider.

Perhaps we could say that being interviewed creates of itself an unnatural situation however Fontana and Frey (2000) point out we live in an interview society; we take interviews for granted. Considering how many interviews we watch on television or go through in our everyday lives there is nothing
unusual about them in general except that being interviewed for research may seem different.

Another aspect of interviewing was the actual timing of the questions. The good interviewer seeking qualitative data is taught to give time to the interviewee to answer and to probe in various ways that are seemingly neutral to encourage the interviewee to respond fully so that the interview will take the time that it takes. With a market researcher, who is conscious of time passing, no matter how conscientiously they approach their task, there is always the impulse to speed the interview on a little not by much but it did not make commercial sense to encourage interviewers or interviewees to talk too much.

With the interviews for my own research, I was conscious that by trying to hurry people, I might be cutting off valuable information and so tried to probe effectively. But in playing back the tapes of the interviews in order to transcribe them, I can hear times when I have cut people off from comments which may have proved illuminating. This was not done consciously but even so it had some effect on the material I was gathering. It is hard not to let the outside world with its distractions and demands influence your work. For example, I had one interviewee who took twice as long as most people to complete the interview as he gave very complete answers. This interview was taking place after work at one of the locations at which I worked. I had allowed what seemed like sufficient time for this interview to take place, but it went much, much longer and I found myself trying to hurry it along.
Another significant part of the process for me was the actual transcribing of the interviews which I did myself. There were some people who suggested that transcribing my interviews myself was a waste of time especially as I was only able to work on this project on a very part time basis due to the need to work but I found it valuable both as a guide to improving my own interviewing technique and as a means of reviewing the material. Listening to the tapes helped me to understand what was going on and to develop my own hypotheses. It was however a very time consuming process.

I also have to wonder whether my own biases about the potentially exploitative nature of casual work could have had any influence on the responses I received. As I have mentioned earlier, it is possible for the interviewer to affect the nature of the response given by various aspects of body language. As I was aware of this situation, I tried to take it into account and become the recorder of responses rather than an active participant in the interview. To my mind this does have some disadvantages in this style of interviewing as one of my regrets is that I did stick closely to my interview questions when at times a more discursive investigation might have been appropriate.

There were times when I heard comments with which I disagreed or even in some cases regarded as a form of false consciousness, but this was the material that would make the work interesting. As an objective researcher, I should accept whatever response I am given but as a casual lecturer, I sometimes felt like telling someone that they were wrong in their beliefs about casual work or at least giving them an alternative point of view. I
needed then to keep my opinions in check though sometimes at the end of an interview when the official business was finished, we might chat about the issues.

On occasions, the interviewing process could have unexpected results. After one particularly long interview, the participant announced that the interview had made her think about issues which had concerned her about working as a casual at TAFE and consequently she had decided that she no longer wished to work this way and would instead concentrate on the other forms of work in her portfolio. She then resigned from TAFE.

Devine and Heath (1999) consider the essential ‘messiness of sociological research’ (p. 17) and suggest that the social and the natural worlds do not confront quite the same problems, though of course there are well known problems of bias, politics and ethics which can be found in both areas. Similarly they suggest that ‘there is a growing commitment to reflexivity whereby researchers are aware of, reflect on and are explicit about the ways in which different forms of bias affect their work’ (p. 7).

The market research world in which I once operated would make claims for the accuracy of its findings otherwise it would not be able to sell its services to commerce. But it was obvious to me how the interviewer could manipulate either consciously or unconsciously the data they were seeking whether it was quantitative or qualitative. It was assumed that interviewers would have no reason to sway results and on the whole I would expect this to be true. If anyone were to do it in a large scale way, it would require the cooperation of
large numbers of interviewers which would be ridiculous unless this was organised from the top down.

Selection of Participants

If I were undertaking quantitative research, the pressure would be on to utilise random sampling methods. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) point out, ways of sampling depend on the context and situation and vary on the paradigm being utilised. As I was utilising qualitative methods and examining a particular group of people of limited number attempting to use random sampling would be counter productive.

Thus I made no attempt to achieve a random sample but rather started with those people I knew and went from there. This meant that the departments from which my participants came were fairly restricted being on the whole management departments, human services and hospitality though some lecturers did come from other areas. These were the areas in which I worked and so my contacts both in management and amongst the staff were there. I did make efforts to broaden the scope but these efforts were largely unsuccessful. There is a variety of factors that influenced the way I contacted people such as communication difficulties and reluctance of some managers to cooperate with the research which will be illustrated as I outline the techniques I used to gather participants. In general though asking people I know worked best.

By far the most successful method was a personal approach. I asked first the people I knew starting with those who were my friends and who were thus less
likely to refuse and then asked them if they knew people who might be willing to be involved. While I did get the occasional refusal, most people were happy to participate. This snowball technique provided the bulk of my interviewees.

I wrote a brief article for the Western Teacher, the newspaper for the State School Teachers Union (SSTUWA) which covers TAFE, asking for people willing to be interviewed to contact me but received no reply. There could have been a variety of reasons for this; the only guaranteed recipients of the Western Teacher are those people who are members of the union because the paper is often posted to them. Copies of the paper are distributed to campuses where they are to be circulated by the campus union representative. This may or may not happen effectively according to the workload of that person and whether there is some way of circulating the paper other than taking it from office to office which is a time consuming process. Even now as a permanent member of staff and a union member, I am not sure that I see every issue of the paper that is printed. At this time, there are only a handful of casual members of the union, seven at one stage and I had interviewed at least one of them, so the majority of casuals were unlikely to have the paper posted to them. Then again, even if casual lecturers have access to the paper, they may have not been interested in what the union was doing as my research has indicated that few of those I interviewed knew much about the union.

I also participated in a panel discussion at the SSTUWA's Women’s Conference in 2000 and as part of that asked participants for their help. However in
general those attending were union members and thus were unlikely to be casual employees, consequently while I received a lot of good will, I gathered no participants from this exercise. The bulk of participants were also school teachers and not TAFE lecturers so may have had little contact with potential participants.

I posted a message on the post graduate email chat line at Murdoch University and received some offers of assistance from that. Some post graduate students realised that the hourly casual rate they could receive for working at TAFE was better than they might receive elsewhere and so had become casual lecturers. In some cases, people who were not teaching casually at TAFE themselves passed my information on to a partner or friend who was and they contacted me.

Another tactic I used was to contact management at TAFE though I found that the level of support and assistance varied from college to college. In one department the Program manager distributed a flyer about the project I had produced with an endorsement from her to all casual staff in the department. This flyer explained the purpose of my research and asked people to contact me either by leaving a tear off form in my pigeon hole or by calling me. I received a very good response from that. This contrasts with another college where the Program Manager decided that he could not make the decision to distribute the flyer on his own and so asked me to write a submission to his manager who then interviewed me about what I wanted and decided that he could not make such a decision and that it should be referred to the executive of the college to see what they thought. I never received an answer to my
request but fortunately I was able to find sufficient participants without the involvement of staff from that college.

At another college, the administration decided that if I provided them with copies of my flyer, they would distribute them to program managers and it was up to them. I received a couple of replies from the hospitality department. I also tried leaving the flyer in the pigeonholes of people who I knew were casual with a fairly limited response.  

One of the issues raised by some participants is the problem of poor communication with the department within which they were working. Casual lecturers generally do not attend staff meetings because they do not get paid to attend in addition they are usually not invited specifically nor are they expected to attend or they may be working somewhere else at the time. Consequently much of what is going on may pass over their heads unless there is a specific effort made to inform them. As well, they may not have access to a workplace computer and as memos are often sent by email, they miss out on this form of communication as well. This can lead to a feeling of isolation and not being part of the college. They see themselves as coming in doing their job and leaving without leaving much impression on what is going on nor receiving one either. As one participant says:

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12 Recently I came across a letter to the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia from a lecturer complaining about conditions and pay for casual lecturers at this same college. She would have been working there at the time I was looking for participants in my research. She did not respond to my request for interviewees. Was she ever given the information about it or did she ignore it. Without contacting her now, how would I know?
There is no coordination. I didn't even get to meet the other lecturers. There is no discussion among the lecturers of what we are doing, no meetings at all. It is working in isolation all the time.

Some might expect that this isolation might make people more likely to want to discuss what is happening to them but I suspect it is equally likely that people who do not feel part of the system withdraw from it and that this alienation leads to a feeling that participating in an interview on being a casual would not seem to be of any great importance. This might also be true if they saw casual lecturing as a somewhat stigmatised occupation.

The Participants

The participants worked at campuses all over Perth but were concentrated at two main venues. This was a result of the way I contacted people. Since the bulk came through personal contact and the assistance of that one truly supportive program manager, they tended to come from locations at which I had worked in the past or was working at the time. It was only those people who were referred to me by others who were likely to be working at other venues though it must be said that many casual lecturers work at more than one college in order to get enough hours to provide a reasonable income. It is this fact that also makes it hard to determine how many casuals are working in the system. There is no coordination; no central register and people often work at more than one campus to get enough work to survive.

The choice of 40 interviewees was also somewhat arbitrary. I wished to have a large enough number to explore the reasons that people became casual
TAFE lecturers. From my own observation, I was aware that people fell into various categories and I wished to investigate a sufficient number so that these categories and any others there might be would become evident. The interviews were semi-structured and gave opportunity for participants to expand on their experience if they so wished. I did not consciously select people on the basis of what groups they might fall into except to keep an eye on gender balance.

I did keep in mind that I wanted roughly equal numbers of males and females so I did exercise some selection in this matter but only in so far as that once I had interviewed 20 women, I then concentrated on finding male participants. This happened quite naturally in any case as I had people volunteering to assist in roughly equal numbers. I am not sure what the ratio of male to female casual lecturers is as no central body keeps figures on casual employees; it is a matter for the Human Resources Departments at each college and they are not willing to divulge this information without official direction. Mitussis (2004) cited in Junor (2005) estimates a casual workforce of 2000 out of a workforce of 36000. Even where there are figures available, they are not necessarily accurate. This is not just the situation in Western Australia, Junor (2005) points out restricted hours of work may mean that numbers have to be deflated because multiple job holders are counted more than once.

However as I was interested in not only the traditional view of casuals as being women with family responsibilities who chose to work casually, I
wanted to include a sufficient number of men in my research to examine their circumstances and opinions.

Another point about using a range of participants who fall into different groups is that of whether anyone voice is more truly representative of the group than the others? Which voices offer the most insight? As will be seen in the next chapter where the participants are shown to largely fall into various groups such as retirees or women with family responsibilities or those who make their living solely from TAFE, there are various motivations for working on a casual basis. It is not my intent to privilege any one group over another. Who are the true casuals? There is no such group but rather a variety of people in a variety of circumstances. It might be satisfying to record that those who most closely matched my own experience were the ones who had the true consciousness of what it means to be casual but this is not so. It is my intent to document as well as I can the voices of all groups that I encountered in this research.

Developing the Questionnaire

I was concerned (see introduction) that while the instrumental world of work regarded casuals as a disposable commodity, that more and more people had no alternative but to seek to make a living from this form of work and that these people were rarely represented in any discussion of work. Thus their experience was ignored. I was interested in what difference being a casual made to the casual’s perception of self, to practical matters about how they coped financially and to whether they did want to work in a full time, permanent position.
These concerns arose originally from my own ambivalence about working as a casual. While I could rail against the unfairness of some of the industrial issues, at the same time I had a certain pleasure in seeing myself as being outside of the system, of being both connected and unconnected at the same time. I liked the feeling of being able to escape from the official side of TAFE, the bureaucracy.

The design of the interviews drew in the first place upon my own experiences and from the literature (Feldman et al, 1994; Lewis, 1990; Thurman and Trah, 1991; Tilly, 1991) and from input from a set of pilot interviews. The interviews consisted of a mixture of both closed and open questions. The pilot interviews were done with friends who were also casual lecturers at TAFE and who then suggested material that I should include. The material then came from what others told me and suggested, from what I observed and from general reading.

On playing back the pilot interviews and then transcribing, I had ample opportunity to reflect on what material might also be included. Ultimately as I wanted to standardise the basic form of the interview, I had to make a decision after the early interviews to limit the ultimate content. The desire to ask more never left me and even now as I play back the interviews I regret not asking other questions.

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13 I undertook a research unit when I completed my MBA in the early nineties and as a part of that did a small qualitative research assignment on casual TAFE lecturers at one of the colleges at which I worked. I had used these American references as at that time, I could not locate much local research.
The Content of the Questionnaire

The content of the interviews ranged from questions seeking basic biographical information which included both personal and work related information to questions related to such matters as:

- their feelings on how they were treated by TAFE
- how they saw themselves as employees
- what their views were on careers and whether they thought that they had one
- it looked at issues of security/insecurity, restraints and constraints that they felt in their employment
- whether they actually wanted permanent employment
- it examined the role of work in their lives
- whether they felt they were valued both by TAFE management and by other more permanently employed lecturers
- it also looked briefly at their financial circumstances
- whether they regarded themselves as professionals
- what they saw as the role of work within their lives

I chose these particular questions as I wished to concentrate on the participants and their lives. While there is a great deal of work from an economic or policy point of view (Junor, 2005).

At the beginning of each interview, I asked each person to tell me what they thought were the main issues that concerned them as a casual TAFE lecturer so that they had an opportunity to discuss what was on their minds. In some
cases the responses were solely on issues to do with the nature of teaching while others immediately expressed equity and industrial issues especially on how they felt about the insecurity of their position.

Location of Interviews

In most cases I went to the interviewees’ homes to interview them. I felt a bit more comfortable with this as it enabled me to leave when I wished to. Four of the interviewees came to my house and these interviews were likely to also become social events as I felt the dilemma between being hospitable and getting the job done. On a couple of occasions, I interviewed people in cafés but found these locations unsuitable since my tape recorder picked up quite a lot of background material which created difficulties in transcribing. The same thing also happened when I interviewed one person at work in a room off the main office. Although it seemed to be relatively quiet, noise seeped through from the office. After that, when I was interviewing at work, I made sure that I found an empty class room though these ran the danger of being interrupted by students. For interviewing I used a voice-activated recorder but in retrospect a higher quality tape recorder with a more directional microphone might have been a good idea.

The choice of interview location was left entirely up to the participant. I was concerned to make the interview circumstances as convenient as possible for them in order not to discourage any potential participant. This meant that I travelled quite long distances in the Perth metropolitan area ranging from as far as Quinns Rocks in the north to Secret Harbour in the south, a distance of approximately 100 kilometres.
It was suggested that I only record highlights from the interviews in order to save the time and effort of transcribing or pay some else to transcribe them for me. However while frustrating and extremely time consuming, I found listening to the tapes a valuable experience. As I listened I was able to review and reflect not only on what was being said but also on my own performance as an interviewer. I heard when I cut people off rather than letting them finish, I heard when I missed opportunities to follow issues up and that listening assisted me in becoming a better interviewer. However the real value was being able to reflect on what was being said and how it was being said and what that meant for my research.

From there, the transcribed interviews were loaded into Nudist, a qualitative data analysis program. It is interesting to consider how the use of Nudist influences what I discover. The instantaneous provision of more data than it is feasible to use has an impact I suspect on how the material is reviewed. A series of thoughts and concerns are translated into questions on paper which in turn are asked of various people and recorded on a voice activated tape recorder and in turn replayed and transcribed. These transcriptions are exported into Nudist which allows the researcher to search for a single word, compare, consider, contrast, browse and select. It is a mediated network which shapes the work by making textual nuances available. It sorts and orders the work and as the researcher explores its capabilities, it offers a range of possibilities. As Law (1992, p.7) writes:

It not only effaces the analytical divisions between agency and structure, and the macro- and the micro-social, but it also asks us to
treat different materials – people, machines, ‘ideas’ and all the rest –
as interactional effects rather than primitive causes.

At the same time Charmaz (2000) sees computer assisted data sorting
programs such as Nudist as being exceptionally helpful with the issue of
‘mountains of data’ (p. 520). It permits researchers to do multiple searches
using more than one word at a time and is helpful in mapping relationships.

There is no way I can be objective about my experiences of working for TAFE;
my perceptions inevitably colour my work and yet to my mind they also enrich
my work making it possible for me to develop a multi methodological
approach. There is a problem of how much of this research should include my
own experience; after all I was involved in an exploration which involved both
retrospective and current auto-ethnography. I refuse to believe that my own
experience is invalid because it is my own experience but as well I have to be
careful that this is not about me alone. As will become clear this is a work
which gives a voice to a group of people engaged in roughly similar work
experiences but who respond in very different ways.

Another crucial theoretical influence on my interpretation of what I saw and
particular issues which interested me, is the work of Erving Goffman.
Goffman, a symbolic interactionist, developed the idea of sociological
dramaturgy in the interactions between people. Cahill, cited in Charon
(1992), asserts that Goffman’s approach to social interaction is both a study
of performance, the self and of ritual.
Goffman’s use of the idea of the dramaturgical perspective (Goffman, 1959) examines the context in which behaviour takes place rather than its causes. It is concerned with the performance or presentation employed by the actor and shaped by the environment s/he is operating in. It is a performance which is open to interpretation by observers. It is relevant because casual lecturers are required to ‘perform’ to others to demonstrate their suitability for continuing work. In this analysis of the lives of casual TAFE lecturers, their relationships with others in the TAFE system and their responses to their situation, I found Goffman’s analyses very useful.

Of course, there is far more information available to me from these interviews than I was able to use. A reading of the questionnaire in Appendix One shows topics such as attitudes to the union which have played little part in this particular project. There was so much material available that I have had to make choices about what to use and what to omit.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the theoretical approach I adopted and the techniques I used to gather information. I have described the way the questionnaire was developed and examined the ways that participants were found. I have also discussed the problems of interviewing in some depth and looked at the benefits of transcribing work. In the next chapter I go on to discuss the lecturers who participated in this project. I demonstrate that they are not a homogenous group and that they have different motives for working at TAFE as casual lecturers.
CHAPTER THREE

Who are the Casuals?

In this chapter, I will introduce the participants in this project. However, it should be kept in mind that one of the key findings of the early stages of this research is that unlike the stereotyped image of the ‘casual’ presented in the media increasingly those working as casuals are drawn from different segments of the community. Hence they are far from a homogeneous group and their reasons for working as casuals and their reactions to it differ widely. In order to illustrate this heterogeneity in this chapter I record in some detail the comments of a subset of the participants while also providing a more general overview of the types of people who work as casual lecturers in TAFE.

Biographical Details

The study consists of 19 men and 21 women from varied backgrounds. I deliberately kept the numbers fairly evenly divided between the sexes because I wished to examine how men responded to casual work as well as women. There is a belief that casual work is mainly a female concern but this idea can be contested and some recent statistics suggest that casual work is increasingly becoming an issue for men. A paper from the Parliamentary Library in the Parliament of Australia on trends in casual employment states:

While there are more female casuals than male casuals, the growth in male casual employment (albeit off a low base) has greatly exceeded

Appendix Two summarises participant information.
that of female casual employment in the 15 years to 2003, male casual employment grew by 151 per cent compared with an increase of 62 per cent in female casual employment. Today there are about an equal number of males as there are females in casual work (Kryger, 2005.)

Kryger gives a general profile of a casual employee pointing out that the majority of casual employees are in part time employment though the growth of full time casual work has been 8% over the past 15 years while part time employment rates have decreased accordingly. The bulk of casual workers were under 35 and only 38% were older. Their education levels were lower partly of course because many of them were young people still in the education system but on the whole only 11% had a bachelor degree or higher. As a comparison, in the general population, according to figures from the 2001 census, 18.5% of the general post 15 year old population had a bachelors degree or higher while a report on Australia’s workforce in 2005 estimated that the number of people in the workforce with higher education qualifications would reach 26% in 2005 (DEST, 2005). The casual TAFE lecturers I interviewed had far higher levels of qualifications though this is not surprising as they need some sort of post school education to be employable at TAFE.

Age

Most of the casuals I interviewed were over 40; in fact one third were over 50 and there was only one person who was under 30. My supposition from observation is that they generally reflected the ages of those working at TAFE.
both on contracts and as permanent staff\textsuperscript{15}. The permanent staff are likely to be older as few permanent appointments were made in the 1990s and only in 2001 were there any moves in the Western Australian system to convert those who had been on continuous contracts for at least five years. There has been therefore no defined entry path to working in TAFE for young people; jobs have not been offered on a permanent basis and the sometimes the short length of contracts offered is not very attractive. In addition, TAFE lecturers are expected to have some years of current industry experience so by the time they qualify to be a lecturer, young people may well have been caught up in a career and not wish to make the transition to working at TAFE in jobs which are neither particularly secure nor well paid\textsuperscript{16}.

Another reason for the age profile of casual lecturers at TAFE is that for some casuals, because they are older, this may be one of the few types of work that they can get. The problem with losing a job in the nineties is that once you are over 40, it is not simple to find another permanent position\textsuperscript{17} (Richardson, n.d.; Watson et al, 2003). TAFE is one of those areas where being older is not a significant disadvantage. Some then were using lecturing on a casual basis to augment other work. I came to lecturing after being retrenched from another industry and I have worked with others from various industries such as the police service and a senior bank manager who had been

\textsuperscript{15} The Twomey Report (2007) claims that the average age of TAFE lecturers is 48 but it increases to 55 if part timers are included.

\textsuperscript{16} The Western Australian TAFE lecturers’ certified agreement of 2005 has one of its selection criteria for lecturers that they have ‘at least 5 years of vocational or lecturing experience relevant to the industrial vocation or professional field relevant to this position’ (p. 125).

\textsuperscript{17} Since that time and until recently, jobs of some sort have been easy to find especially in Western Australia because of the mining boom; they may not have been jobs which reflected people’s skills and interests, but they were there. It remains to be seen how the current economic downturn affects jobs.
made redundant. Even for those who only want part time work for family or other reasons, casual lecturing can be simple to get if you have the right contacts and the hourly rate seems attractive.

Another reason for the older cohort is that teaching, whether at TAFE or in the Education Department where the salaries are roughly similar, has not been attractive to young people because of the comparative lowness of those salaries and perhaps even because of the perceived lack of status of the jobs. In any case with the requirements that potential lecturers should have industry experience, they may already be earning more than they would at TAFE and since TAFE generally prefers to start its lecturers at entry level salaries, with no account for other experience, they may see the sacrifice as not being worth it. It is a concern in the Education Department that the average age of teachers is 45 plus and shortages are looming (Twomey Report, 2007). Based upon my research I would suggest that there is no reason to think that TAFE will be any different.

Main Breadwinner Status

Instead of asking whether people were married, I asked if they were the main breadwinner in their household seeing that in all other respects, marital status was irrelevant. Asking people if they were the main breadwinner sorted out those who were working part time because of family responsibilities and there is no reason today to expect that to be solely women. I also asked how many wanted more hours of work and how many would like some form of permanency. Thirteen people described themselves as the main breadwinner and a further 11 said they were the only
breadwinner so we can see that well over half of the 40 would seem to have some strong commitment to work.

However, not all of these would regard their TAFE work as their main income as some may just be doing a little bit of extra work on top of their other occupation. When the lists are compared though there are eight people who class themselves as being the main or only breadwinner in their household who also class their work at TAFE as their main source of income; this is 20% of the sample. Altogether there were 18 people who classed TAFE as being their main source of income, so what do the other 22 respondents do? They can be divided into several categories: family responsibilities, retired and keeping their hands in, those with another job with TAFE as an extra, those who are studying and those who put together a portfolio of jobs to make a living.

Four women meet the stereotype of women who have family responsibilities and who have thus reduced their work commitments though this does not necessarily mean that they want casual work rather than permanent part time work. One of the women who regarded her work as an extra, now works full time as her marriage has broken down since she was interviewed and another works to augment her husband’s PhD scholarship. Two men and one woman have recently retired and have been asked to do some casual work though one of the males had done no TAFE teaching before, he had specialist skills which were needed and so he was approached by TAFE to work.

Another four, two men and two women, are employed in other areas and teach a class or two a week to bring current industry experience to TAFE
courses. These, like the women with domestic responsibilities most closely meet the traditional views of the composition of casual lecturers. Two women are working on their PhD studies and use TAFE teaching to augment their scholarship income and five have their own businesses which range from being an HR consultant, an accountant, to a tutoring business, being a professional visual artist and an engineering business. The other five include it as a part of a portfolio of jobs.

Education

As one would expect, the lecturers are highly qualified but what might surprise is the level of their education, though of course since there appears to be little research on the education levels of permanent staff, it is difficult to say if this is unique to casual lecturers. The group included two with PhDs and two who were studying for them. The least academically qualified person was someone who had been doing a Diploma of Hospitality when she was plucked out of the group to teach courses on Housekeeping as she worked as a butler at a prominent hotel. This was not a very satisfactory situation as she felt it was appropriate to give up her own studies but the staff did not treat her as one of them and some of the students were somewhat hostile:

I had unbelievable students that - and I really didn't get any support from other teachers. I still don't feel like I fit in with the teachers. I don't fit in with the students obviously because I am not one of them but don't fit in with the teachers because I was a student last year and I haven't been shown around things... (I was) chucked in the deep end; it was like sink or swim and I don't know where I am, if I am even...
buoyant anymore. I had no resources to call on; nobody helped me at all.

She, though, was an exception. Those who were teaching in the more technical areas such as trade areas or hospitality had the required trade/technical qualifications and the three who were lecturing in the management courses whose highest qualifications were TAFE diplomas, either were those who were industry experts who only taught a couple of classes at night or people who had started that way and gradually moved into teaching more at TAFE.

However in the Community Services area and the Management area, the level of education was considerably higher. Thirty-two respondents had a bachelor’s degree or higher and of these 18 had postgraduate education in their subject area. Six people had Master’s degrees with one respondent having two and she was currently working on her PhD on TAFE. Of those 32, eight were involved in further academic studies ranging from postgraduate diplomas to PhD’s. The reasons for doing the further study varied with the individual. One, already with a Master’s degree, was doing Graduate diploma of Training and Development hoping to make herself more employable at TAFE but the others were following up studies in their areas of interest. None of this would necessarily make them any more employable at TAFE.
Profiles\textsuperscript{18}

The following are some examples of respondents who fit the various categories of people working as casuals: women with family responsibilities, retirees, those with another job, those studying fulltime, those who have a portfolio of jobs and those who make their living from TAFE. These have been selected in order to illustrate the range of people that can be found in the system. As far as possible I let these individuals speak for them. It must also be noted that these are not real names but pseudonyms used to ensure anonymity.

Alice - The woman with family responsibilities

Alice, who is in her forties, has a husband who is the main breadwinner and two children who are still at primary school. Before she had children, she worked in the Department of Employment and Training in various departments but was not interested in full time work after she had her first child. She had never regarded herself as being particularly focused on a career and describes herself as being opportunistic, taking whatever work came along. At the same time her income has been very important since her husband had previously been involved in full time study and in receipt of a PhD scholarship which would not support the family.

She said that when she was younger, she never would have imagined herself ending up teaching at TAFE. She has been working as a casual TAFE lecturer for approximately six years and chose the work for quite pragmatic reasons:

\textsuperscript{18} See appendix B.
Because I had kids and the TAFE was 5 minutes away from my house. I started off doing literacy in the work place, with one young kid. That wasn't all the time. It was every now and then I would have a contract. I quite like the fact that I didn't know what I was doing for the rest of the time. I like the flexibility, the variability. If life got too busy at home then I wouldn't take on another contract. There was a bit of flexibility.

She got her job by doing a literacy in the workplace course and then submitting her resumé to TAFE. They then contacted her with an offer of work. She used to work for an average of 13 hours a week but the changes to the certified agreement cut her work back to eight hours.

Despite the pragmatism of her choice to work as a casual at TAFE, it is also an important part of her life:

I really enjoy the work and I learn a lot as I go along - I am always learning new things so it's a good stimulation and interest for me. And the people I meet are really interesting - so I don't just work for the money. It gives me a lot of other feedback.

She also sees herself as choosing to be a casual because of the flexibility involved but has not ruled out working more or taking a contract when the children are older. Her general happiness with the flexibility of working as a casual has probably a lot to do with her approach to life in general. When asked if she thought that life had treated her fairly she agreed that it has and explained her reasons for thinking so:
O - just a whole lot of things really I probably got a pretty good start to life with a good family and I've always had the sort of - I haven't had the pressure to go out and be something that I - I've had a very casual approach to life yeah. And I've got a good partner who much as he would like to push me out to a job hasn't been desperate for that.

She does not see this way of working as being a permanent situation:

Well it was really only the other day that I was thinking maybe it would be nice to work full time for a few years perhaps when the kids are a bit older and if a job came up - maybe just so I could get more experience in the teaching. Basically it has given me because it was a new area for me when I had the kids to start ESL teaching and it has been a great way to ... I mean I have built a new potential career while I have had my children - which is pretty good.

On the other hand she does say that if she had been working full time and had gone from that to working casually without family considerations being involved, she might have had a different attitude and she does feel that at the end of each semester there are negatives in not knowing how much work she might have:

I think my only negative experience is at the end of term and the end of the semester, when everyone is starting to work out what they are going to next term, and semester. Just waiting on the winds is sometimes a bit trying. Just once I felt that I was a bit of an outsider then.
Ben - a retiree

Ben is in his late sixties and was a TAFE lecturer before he retired. He is the main breadwinner and lives on a pension which means he does not wish to work any more than six hours a week because it affects his pension. Before he retired he worked in the same department at TAFE as a lecturer and got his casual work before he retired by asking the program manager for some casual hours. His highest level of education is two TAFE Diplomas. He also never saw himself working as a TAFE lecturer.

Ben had worked for 12 years at TAFE on a series of mainly one year contracts. He never achieved permanency he said because every time he got close the goal posts seemed to change. Of course since work by the union and the change in attitude to casual work brought in with the Gallop Labour government, his ongoing contracts could have been changed into a permanent position. Before he worked in TAFE, he worked in a number of areas:

When I first went into the workforce I had a job which had a career (the RAF) and then they started retrenching people when I was 38 so that career ended. And since then I have been doing bits and pieces. The second longest career was the 12 years with TAFE on annual contracts.

He sees working as a casual now as a really positive thing for him:

I enjoy working as a casual because I can do the subjects I want virtually when I want them. And as I am not in a position where I have
to have the money if (the program manager) ever said do that at the wrong time then I just would not do it.

And asked if he would prefer not to work, his reply was:

I think I would do it purely because of the mental stimulus. If I got fed up with it I would just say I don't want to work. The thing is I don't have to.

He also believes that he is accepted by other lecturers but as he had been a part of the system for so long, he was already well accepted but this is not necessarily so for others:

Yes I am accepted but I do think there is a strong, fairly strong school of thought that casuals are not very good. I have heard the opinion expressed by one person that they can't be very good because they wouldn't be working for that sort of money.

Ben has a privileged status among casuals and since he is working largely for personal reasons, he feels in control of his working life.

Clive - the finance broker

Clive has a career outside TAFE and usually worked only for a couple of hours a week. In fact he was about to resign from casual TAFE lecturing as his career was becoming too demanding. He has a Bachelor of Business and is working in Real Estate arranging finance for people. He is in his thirties and is the main breadwinner in his family. He has been working for TAFE for about five years and got his job as he says through nepotism:
My father was a senior lecturer there at Central college of TAFE and they needed sales lecturers so they asked him to ask me. So I came in and saw them and just dropped in. I had an interesting thing about it as well. There was very, very little if any induction training, no nothing. Basically here's a text book, there's a class, do it. And in sales lecturing that is interesting because you are speaking to people who are much younger and much, much older. And especially with sales you have people, who have been doing it, doing it, doing it for 15, 20 years. And you have to go in there and make bells and whistles so that they give some credence to what you tell them.

This did not stop him from enjoying his work at TAFE though:

It's been enjoyable, it's been a learning experience, and it's been rewarding in most cases. It's enabled me to get up there and say things and get some sort of credibility out of it.

He was asked if he felt accepted by other staff:

Casual's difficult. I came in once a week, nobody knows you, nobody sees you come in. You're the phantom basically. You come in, you grab your stuff and you go. So possibly not but I wasn't expecting to be anyway. I wasn't expecting to join in the functions or anything else.
The best things about the way he worked at TAFE were:

I guess the autonomy because although the autonomy had it negatives, they didn't know what you were doing from day to day. No one seemed to worry. You could do what you wanted to and providing you were competent, the students were happy. So there was a lot of autonomy, a lot of authority basically placed on you.

However it was this lack of guidance that he also saw as one of the worst things about working at TAFE:

The lack of direction provided. It's a double edged sword, it's both good and bad. The lack of direction is bad but the lack of supervision was good.

Clive, like Ben, has had generally positive experiences about working at TAFE but both of them had other options and did not really need to work there.

Donna - full time student

Donna is the youngest of the lecturers I interviewed. She is in her twenties and is working on her PhD. Her main income comes from her PhD scholarship and she also works in a shop on Saturday mornings. She never expected to be working at TAFE and it was the easiness of obtaining work that attracted her. She has a partner and considers herself to be an equal breadwinner. She works eight hours per week at TAFE and thinks that is sufficient.
She got her work by sending her resumé to various TAFE colleges. She is teaching English as a second language:

Well I didn't think I would be able to do it but then someone else that was doing honours with me was doing it and I said how did you get into that and they said it is really easy. You just have to have a degree and you send off your resumé and they call you up and that's what happened I sent my resumé in and I sent it to a few different places and I only got called from Balga TAFE but I've been called back several times.

Donna does not really see her career as being at TAFE though she has not ruled it out. Since she is doing a PhD, she is more oriented towards an academic career though at the moment she is not really focused on anything other than finishing her studies. What she does like about her work are the students:

I love my students because I teach migrant English and I've never met such an embracing group of people who just took me on and want to learn. Most of them are enthusiastic about it. They've got a good sense of humour. I reckon I'm learning more from them than they're learning from me.

But she sees the lack of training she has received and her inexperience at teaching as the downsides. She describes:

Feeling a bit like a fish out of water as far as my teaching goes because I've never had any training and I don't know if I'm doing what
everyone else is doing. It's really hard to know and sometimes when other teachers say will you do this class for me and they say just do this, this and this, I find that other people's lessons work really badly for me. Only my lessons work for me. If I try to use other people's idea it almost always I see looks of boredom and blankness on their faces. And it's not because the lessons are bad in themselves, I just haven't got the motivation to teach them. In the teaching side I am not sure what I am doing.

She is also unsure about her relationship with permanent lecturers and worries about offending them:

I feel like I should defer to the permanent lecturers if they deign to give me advice and I feel like I need to tiptoe around the offices and not use everything that's there without asking. And I kind of feel I need to let them use the photocopier first before I do because I've found that they often do get quite shitty if I get in before them. There was one woman, all the casual lecturers were trying to get things photocopied for their lessons and she started going off her brain as if we were standing there all day long and doing all our private photocopying.

While she enjoys the work, and feels quite secure financially, she does feel that there is a stigma in being employed as a casual, however it suits her needs at the moment and she has no hesitation in recommending to other people:
Yes I think so. I don't think it gets much respect, which is ironic because most of the work which seems to be going is casual. It's also when I think of casual, even though I'm casual, I tend to think of doing late hours and being in a position to be exploited, getting better money for doing really bad hours.

In her position as a full time student, work at TAFE seems very well paid, much better than she would get in her other retail jobs and it has the benefit of being interesting. She likes the work and worries about not being trained for it but resists professional development because as she says:

The only things that I don't really like are the ways they try to make you go to professional development things without paying you for it. I find that a bit annoying. They are constantly on your back to go to these sorts of things when I have other things to do. If they want me to train, why aren't they going to pay me for it?

Elizabeth – the portfolio job holder

Elizabeth is in her forties and has recently completed a PhD. She is single and is the main and only breadwinner in her household. She is one of the respondents who is having to support herself and so has tried to put together enough work to keep herself going. She has been working on and off for seven years in TAFE and currently works for five hours a week though she would like more. She also runs a tutoring business and has also been employed as a tutor at the university she attended. She quite enjoys having more than one job.
but hates the driving involved. Unlike the previous respondents, she has had to resort to living off unemployment benefits quite frequently.

Elizabeth does not like working as a casual and would much prefer to have one permanent full time job:

Because it is impossible, it is very impossible to have a sustainable income because I don't get paid for any of the semester breaks although at the university they are good because they actually stretch it over the 13 weeks but at TAFE they just don't pay you for those 2 weeks. And then when it comes to the end of October, like basically it would be the end of November right through till the beginning of February, I simply don't get paid and it's just not possible to get work in those particular months in the areas I work in. So I have periods of being paid and not paid and when it comes down to it I actually do earn well less than $20000 a year working as a casual.

Well the reasons are that first of all I would be paid well more than $20000 a year for my expertise and experience. Secondly I would get sick leave. Thirdly I would get holiday pay although I believe that's said to be factored in but I would be able to have paid holidays. I would also get superannuation; I would also get leave loading. I would also get the actual allowable 20 allowable things that are covered by the award.
Like the others she had not answered an advertisement to get her work at TAFE. She contacted the Women’s Bureau in the Department of Training and sent in her resumé. They contacted her and gave her work in the New Opportunities for Women courses.

Elizabeth is interested in having a career as she says it is what she spent ten years studying for but cannot see it happening at TAFE:

I don't know. No not really and yet it has been suggested to me but I can't seem to find a space for me. And I think partly it is also the people that work at TAFE, nothing against them there are a lot of people with great experience but I don't fit in. That's exactly how I feel. You know I felt that 8 years ago too.

Elizabeth certainly believes that there is a stigma involved in working as a casual and feels it most at TAFE:

Not from the outside community but inside the TAFE. I don't think I get treated like that at ..(College x) but yes, I was treated like that certainly. And I think people were angry. The staff were angry because I was casual, because the casualisation of the workplace and them having to apply for their jobs was a very difficult time. But I had no other choice, there were not a lot of jobs available for me to get so that made it difficult.

Oh yes, I mean there's no doubt that there is. Only because so many people, the whole casualisation of the workplace hasn't really hit the
mainstream people and those people see that there must be something wrong with the individual as opposed to the system. And also casual work is seen to be women's work and that's not the case of course because there's many men who work casual work. Maybe that's changed slightly but it often seen as women just getting pin money, hobby money. So I could be constructed in those terms which really annoys me.

She had never thought of herself as teaching but now she has tried working at TAFE she can imagine herself working there but just not full time. Her aim though is to work in research. She says that the difference that working as a casual has made to her plans is:

O well it has stopped my plans to a great degree. I have had to take risks though in a sense as I have actually purchased a property but market forces have allowed me that right because the difference between rent and the mortgage is hardly anything. So it's meant, materially it's meant that it has stopped quite a number of things, holidays, going away overseas is out of the question, buying new goods is pretty much out of the question.

Overall she has not found the casual experience of uncertainty and lots of travel to her various workplaces to be a positive one:

Well the worst things I think are having to drive, particularly having to drive on the freeway when I have just had a major accident on the freeway, the time consuming nature of having to drive to places. And
I don't like driving at the best of times so that's stressful. Trying to think in five weeks I am going to be unemployed or in this amount of time I am not going to have many money, particularly now knowing that over Xmas, January, December, January, February I will not be paid and what am I going to do about it because there are no jobs on the horizon? Having to work out what to do and having to owe, owing people money to get through particular months.

Fiona - the sole income earner

Fiona is a sole parent who is raising three adolescent sons. She was a mature age student who trained in psychology with a view to becoming a counsellor. TAFE provides her main source of income though she does find some work in the holidays if this is possible. She is in her forties and has been working at TAFE for five years and has been working at four sites for two colleges. She averages about 16 hours a week which is more than usual and because of the eight hour limit, it is necessary to work at different sites to earn enough money to support a family. She like many others came to TAFE by accident:

I think the position chose me. I finished my degree and was looking at doing training workshops myself, so I decided to do a small business course for six weeks. I met someone there who was a casual TAFE lecturer. He rang me up to say they needed someone to teach the teams unit. He knew I had specialised with teams and groups the year before. I went and did that, and from then on I was asked to come and do other things. Before I knew it, five years down the track I was not
only teaching all these management units, but also human biology to people over in human services that were going to be carers.

Fiona has been particularly successful in getting and keeping work as a casual. She needs to maintain a certain number of hours so she has analysed what it takes to be regarded as a suitable employee:

Be nice to people and as one of my program managers said, I am always available and flexible, and that she knew she could ring me up at seven o'clock in the morning and I would be there at seven thirty. Willing, able, helpful and cheery. I also get on well with the other staff members at the various places I work. That helps more than qualifications, to be part of the team and to be able to fit in is what it takes to be able to get work as a casual lecturer.

She also stresses the need to be reliable, punctual, get your marks in on time and be nice to staff as ways of retaining work and since she has now obtained a fulltime contract which has led to permanency, there is obviously something in what she advises. Her pragmatic attitude also extends to issues of loyalty. Whilst most people claim they are loyal, Fiona has a different attitude:

Not a great deal, because if someone asks me to do a four hour class and I have already told another program manager I will do a hour and a half class, I have no qualms about getting back to them and telling them I'm not doing it. I have done that many times.

I think this is bad for them, because they then have to run around and get someone else. But, they are not loyal to us (casual teachers) so we
are not loyal to them. But they are saving money doing it this way. I think the quality of their teaching suffers in that way because they may have to put some else on that is not so qualified.

This is actually quite a rare response but it does emphasise that Fiona feels a certain degree of control over her working life. She admits that she did not feel financially secure but says she still does not feel financially secure with a contract. What she is certain of though is her ability to get work:

Because of the amount of subjects and units I can teach, I never panic. Maybe in the first year or so, I had a bit of a panic. But as it got closer to the end, I never had that. I was never worried, in fact in the end I ended up saying to the human services course at Carine do not put me down any more. Because while I could have Joondalup, Leederville, Carine and Perth, there was such a wide area that I could teach in, it was very easy. No in the end, I was knocking back work as a casual.

Generally she has been happy with her work though she prefers to be on contract because that is more certain and secure and she wishes to earn more money than she can as a casual. The major thing she did not like, working as a casual was:

The having to drive to all the different places when I didn't feel like it. Looking back I can say I didn't really like having to drive to Carine and Joondalup. Five campuses was always a real rush. The fifth campus was Scarborough, and of course sometime there was Whitfords, so that
makes it six. Going from one place to another and one time for one of the NOW classes I forgot and went to the wrong campus. I had to ring up and ask them to wait.

I do not have a profile of permanent TAFE lecturers with which to compare the casual lecturers I interviewed. However, I believe that they will not differ substantially from the casual group since in other times and circumstances, these casual lecturers would probably have been offered permanent positions. The lecturers I interviewed were not short of skills or experience; they should be very employable. It is obvious that these lecturers differ greatly from the ‘norm’ of the casual worker painted by Kryger. This is a niche employment opportunity, so that is not surprising. Further chapters will examine are how these working conditions affect their lives.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that casual TAFE lecturers are a very specific group in terms of education and age who work in this mode for a variety of reasons, the main being that casual mode is what they were offered and they had little choice in deciding how they would be employed. These groups include the woman with family responsibilities, the retiree, the finance broker, the full-time student, the portfolio job holder and the sole income earner. Even those who wanted only part time work might be served as well with permanent part time work but this option had not been offered to them. As we will discover, there are both advantages and disadvantages to casual work and these factors will be teased out in the later stages of this project.
This chapter completes the introduction to the project. The next section deals with the job structure that faces casual lecturers. It describes how people actually get and keep work, how space is allocated to casual workers and what that might mean and examines the notion of career. The next chapter, chapter four, focuses on the various ways that casual workers actually find and retain work at TAFE. It takes Goffman’s essay The Moral Career of the Mental Patient (1972) as a loose analogy.
CHAPTER FOUR

Getting and Keeping Work or the Moral Career of the Casual TAFE Lecturer

There is no one right way of obtaining work as a casual TAFE lecturer in metropolitan Perth. Some people apply through advertisements, some are headhunted and some have an interlocutor who pleads their case. What is certain is that none of the participants in this project had to undertake the merit select process that is essential for contract positions over three months or for permanent positions. This means that their appointment was often arbitrary and dependent on the whim of one person operating on rules that were not transparent and not consistent. In this chapter, I examine how this group of casual TAFE lecturers obtained and retained work.

While some of the processes I mention might apply to anyone seeking work ie getting work through someone they know rather than through independent application, there are particular issues involved that do not necessarily apply to someone who is entering into permanent employment. These issues are important as they provide evidence of the arbitrary and contingent nature of casual work and how the respondents of this research cope with this situation.

A case can be made that the admission/employment process has links to the method described by Erving Goffman in The Moral Career of the Mental
Patient (Goffman, 1972)\(^{19}\). The Moral Career of the Mental Patient traces involuntary admissions to mental hospitals in the USA in the 1950s. This might seem a strange analogy but in both cases, the person needs to make some adjustments to their attitudes and behaviour. Parallels can be drawn even though TAFE cannot be considered a total institution.

I have chosen to use the work of Goffman to develop this metaphor because of his focus on ‘the socially developed self developed in and governing specific interactions’ (Cahill, 1992). This is a situation where performance and impression management are key. For the casual lecturer to maintain his/her job, s/he must be seen to be the right sort of person which means ensuring that their front, the area which they present to the working situation, is appropriate.

When an individual enters the presence of others they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his trustworthiness, etc (Goffman. 1959. p. 1).

Goffman’s Moral Career of the Mental Patient (1972) describes how the inmate needs to adapt his/her own performance in order to negotiate the ward system and to eventually gain his/her release. In the same way the casual TAFE lecturer must negotiate the workplace to eventually gain permanency if this indeed what they desire.

\(^{19}\) Originally published in Psychiatry: Journal for the study on Interpersonal Processes Volume 22, Number 2, May 1959.
Involuntary admissions to psychiatric hospitals require for most people an adjustment to the patient’s concept of self since most people do not expect to have their free will overridden and to be incarcerated for their own good and for the good of others. Similarly some casual workers, who had high status jobs before being retrenched, and perhaps feeling some sense of relief that they do have work, may not see that their new employment status is for their own good and for the good of shareholders and a restructured society. Their consequent resistance to acknowledging their status can be compared to the resistance of their situation by mental patients which may at first be expressed by refusing to speak or to acknowledge their predicament. Eventually most settle down to a life ‘stripped of many of his accustomed affirmations, satisfactions and defences’ (Goffman, 1972, p.90). According to Goffman, the patient, who is dealing with shifts in reflected status, learns the rules for negotiating the ward system and reconstructs the self as s/he deems necessary. So the newly casual TAFE lecturer must learn the rules for negotiating the system if they wish to retain work.

Goffman (1972) refers to the mental patient’s career as having three main phases, the pre-patient stage, the in-patient stage and the ex-patient stage. He only examines the first two stages, the implication being that successful negotiation of those stages will lead to the third.

Similarly, in this chapter, I propose to concentrate on the career of the casual TAFE lecturer in the first two stages only. These I see as the process of finding work or being admitted to the institution and then the process of keeping the work and being re-employed which is akin to negotiating the ward
system. For the sake of this analysis, I am treating TAFE as if it were a form of total institution which it is not and the team leaders/program managers as analogous to the staff on the wards. It is possible to relate the leaving of the casual state by means of obtaining permanent work as a way of moving through the ward system to become an ex patient. At the very least, the gaining of a contract, no matter how short, is a progression in status from the merely casual akin to being rewarded for good behaviour through being moved to a different ward. However not all casual lecturers see this as a desirable outcome so I do not overemphasize it.

Total Institution

What is important in this Goffman project is not madness itself but rather the ways of behaving within the total institution. Learning to adapt one’s behaviour within a total institution may seem distant from most workplaces, and yet by drawing on Goffman we can illuminate the complex rules which face those who do not have certainty or permanency in their working lives.

Mental hospitals, at the time that Goffman was writing, were total institutions just like other locations such as an army barracks, a concentration camp, or a prison: institutions lived in on a 24 hour a day basis. What sets total institutions apart is the degree of conformity and adherence to rules that they

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20 There is a tendency though for some TAFEs to encourage not only their students but their staff to wear uniforms not only for official marketing functions, but for normal work. My own TAFE has issued college beanies and scarves in the college colours and with the college logos.

21 Because those on contracts are expected to attend staff meetings and to spend more time on campus, they are more likely to be involved in decision making. Their opinions are regarded as more legitimate. At a recent planning meeting, the casual staff were not expected to attend but then were not consulted on a major policy decision because they were only casuals. One permanent lecturer, who had once been casual herself, remarked that the casual lecturers should not have a vote because they were casual and not permanent or contract lecturers.
require though there are always forms of resistance. Total institutions aim to change people, to experiment on the self to create the ideal person for their purposes.

Large bureaucracies by their very nature have emphasised rules and procedures. Though bureaucracies such as TAFE have been corporatised and theoretically made more flexible and competitive, it is my contention that the intrinsic nature of the organisation remains the same. There is still a requirement for an adherence to rules and procedures and an insistence that policy be adopted by all, and for the code of conduct to be followed. The adherence to policy and procedure, to the Australian Quality Training Framework mandates, strengthens the analogy's use in this context.

The crusade for both organisations and individuals to remake themselves as entrepreneurs and the pervasiveness of this culture is evident throughout every aspect of our lives and TAFE is no different. Casey (1995, p. 191) describes it as the 'corporate self' and says that its emerging characteristic is capitulation. Many people in large organisations have participated in culture change programs that aim to improve efficiency, to develop a customer focus and make enterprises more profitable (Du Gay, 1996). TAFE institutions in Western Australia are not immune from these moves. The policy statement and code of ethics from one of the campuses (SEMC, n.d.) states that all staff will embrace the College values which include quality and continuous improvement, customer satisfaction and the provision of value for money services, the efficient and effective use of resources and industry relevance and responsiveness. Thus this adoption of enterprise culture by TAFE can be
shown to make participation more of a total experience. A permanent or contract employee of TAFE who does not follow and demonstrate the required values may find themselves performance managed which could lead to dismissal at worst and a redundancy package at best. Of course a casual lecturer will just not be offered any more work by that college.

Moral Career

Goffman (1972, p. 79) defines career as ‘any social strand of any person’s course through life’ and sees its particular strength as a concept as being able to suggest both internal and external meanings that life events have for the individual. In Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity, (1963) he points out that:

people who have a particular stigma tend to have similar learning experiences regarding their plight, and similar changes in conception of self – a similar ‘moral career’ that is both cause and effect of commitment to a similar sequence of personal adjustments (p. 45).

It is my contention that because of the precarious and contingent nature of casual employment those casual TAFE lecturers who wish to retain and even increase the amount of work they are given must make personal adjustments in their behaviour to ensure that this will happen or in other words in Casey’s terms learn to capitulate (1995, p. 191). Harre (1983, p. 233) points out that ‘one’s standing as a person depends in part on the degree to which one is capable of actually doing what the moral order requires, fulfilling one’s
commitments etc.’ The implicit moral order in the TAFE site is one which the successful casual must learn to follow.

The Prepatient Stage

Seeking Admission/Getting work

A major difference between Goffman’s total institution and TAFE is that while most mental patients presumably wish to leave and not revisit the institution, the would-be casual TAFE lecturer seeks admittance to the TAFE system and seeks to leave that precarious situation, unemployment. Because the work must be constantly renewed, this admittance must be sought again and again and again. The problem is not getting out; it is staying in. Keeping regular employment as a casual can be as difficult as getting it in the first place and requires the casual to learn both the rules of the ward/staffroom and how to turn him/herself into an employable person. A form of commodification of the self has to take place but for many there is also ambivalence about becoming a casual TAFE lecturer in the first place. Some, who would be otherwise unemployed, may see this as a stop gap while looking for other more satisfactory employment.

Those, who are not aware of their declining psychological state, rarely choose to be institutionalised. Most are admitted on the urging of a complainant via a mediator. This complainant may be a family member or next of kin or it may be some other community member who is concerned about the behaviour of the patient. The mediator can be a family doctor, a mental health professional or some agency. The mediator is ‘the sequence of agent and
agencies to which the prepatient is referred and through which he is relayed and processed on his way to the hospital’, Goffman 1972, p. 84). Many of these mediators may be purely advisory but ultimately in the sequence of meetings and consultations, there is someone with the authority to agree to the admittance.

Potential casual TAFE lecturers may seek work by applying through rare job advertisements or through sending resumés direct to the appropriate program managers at the campuses. These are the admitting officers, the hospital administrators. It is rare that these approaches will work especially if the casual has no prior experience. To be admitted to the TAFE world, it helps to have someone who can mediate for you. In my own case, approaches I made to the various TAFE campuses were ignored. I posted numerous letters receiving a stock reply noting my application and undertaking to put it on file. I heard no more. Another would be casual lecturer sent resumés with a covering letter and had no response. Yet one of the TAFE program managers she contacted was later desperately seeking people to take classes in her subject area. It would seem that sending a resumé was an inefficient way of gaining work.

When the Perth TAFE system was divided into four autonomous colleges with multiple campuses, the appointment of casuals seemed to be a haphazard affair. In a practical sense it still remains the prerogative of the program manager/team leader to employ casual staff as needed. Rather like those English aristocratic patrons in Jane Austen’s novels who had the power to distribute livings to clergymen, the program manager becomes a patron.
Some program managers would appoint by word of mouth or might approach someone they had heard about. This system largely still applies even though advertisements for TAFE staff will now sometimes include references to casual lecturing positions.

Some of the TAFE colleges now advertise for casuals and may make casuals complete and submit the same lengthy application for work that is used for contract positions. In 1997 casuals in one TAFE college went through this process twice in four months. These changes were made in the name of transparency, best practice and quality assurance and though some were tipped off that their jobs were secure, not everybody retained their position. Those who did retain them were not interviewed which means there was no real merit select process nor even any true transparency. For most casual lecturers, work comes from someone you know; once you actually get into the system you can work from there, but to get in you need an agent to speak for you.

The Mediator

Just as the mental patient is often started on his/her career as a mental patient when a family member persuades them to meet with a mediator, I was only successful in gaining employment when I had a ‘next of kin’ to speak for me to a mediator. A neighbour, who had connections with TAFE, undertook to ‘introduce’ me to the coordinator of a TAFE department. Thus just as the patient is relegated to the role of other in the interview while the next of kin and the mediator discuss their concerns and try to establish what to do for the best, in the role of next of kin, my neighbour had to attest to my
appropriateness as a potential TAFE lecturer. I became the other in that coalition. While gaining many jobs will depend on who you know not what you know, there is something which is diminishing in not being able to obtain a job without the intervention of an intermediary.

This introduction gained me an interview which resulted in my being offered a short term project. My career in TAFE had begun. I had a chance then to show that I was the right sort and suitable for further employment. All employment that I have subsequently gained has had its origins in that original mediation.

There is a sense in which this use of a next-of-kin infantilises both the mental patient and the casual TAFE lecturer. At the beginning of the process, the mental patient is a person with rights and responsibilities even though s/he may not be exercising them in a way sanctioned by society. The process of admission to hospital transforms him/her to being the third person in an ‘alienative coalition’ (Goffman, 1972, p. 84), while the actual admission removes those rights and leaves them dependent on those in power in the institution. For the casual TAFE lecturer the process is less direct. Obtaining jobs through the agency of some other is frequently the way that casuals get jobs, the negative aspect of this process is that they have not been merit selected so their rights and responsibilities are diminished in comparison to others in the institution who undertake an official selection process.

On the other hand, some have been approached to teach certain courses because they have specific expertise. At one stage I acted as agent/mediator to find someone to teach a course in desktop publishing. Another casual lecturer had no intention of working at TAFE until she was approached by an
acquaintance. It is quite possible to take on those intermediary roles once you are in the system and found both suitable and credible. However the protégée must then seek recognition from the program manager. The casual may recommend but only in the most exceptional circumstances will ever have the power to appoint and that power will not be official. For some time a casual lecturer found the staff for the course she coordinated but they had to be ratified by the program manager.

Contingency

Goffman discusses the role of contingency in the moral career of the mental patient. Actions committed by one person may not end up with that person being committed to a mental hospital while the same actions committed by another may lead them there. Factors which lead to committal vary but may include the patient’s socio-economic status, the visibility of the offence, the proximity to the mental hospital, the availability of a support network etc. So it would also be possible to examine the nature of contingency in the moral career of the casual TAFE lecturer.

Just as being a mental patient is not a career option of choice for most, nor is casual TAFE lecturing though of course while casual lecturers are not forced to take up casual TAFE lecturing their other options may be limited. Nevertheless there is an element of contingency in the way casual lecturers get work. Some are approached by the patron/program manager to take up work, some come to it through a number of other life choices and experiences such as redundancy from some other occupation which leaves them seeking any work which might reflect their previously professional status and income
and some fall into it in other ways. For example some may have jobs passed on to them by the current holder. Providing the recommended casual has the appropriate qualifications and the program manager has no other people in mind, this can happen. In most cases there is a strong contingent element. In fact one might say that this is the market place as contingency writ large. The following lecturer explains:

It was offered to me. It was by accident. Someone was teaching managing and developing teams, an interest of mine. He had to pull out because for him it was let's say a moonlighting job. So I finished off the six weeks then they offered me more the next semester and then it snowballed from there. Then I got headhunted across to this campus.

And another:

I had a friend, a colleague who actually... I was working as a school teacher in a primary school and they desperately needed someone to teach maths. She couldn't find anybody at all and she said will you just come and do it for 2 hours a week. You are part time at the primary school; the days that you are not working you can come and work 2 hours here. I thought I will have a go at it and I actually loved being with the adults. It has grown from there.

Of course there is a difficulty now that jobs are advertised for permanent positions, a change that has come about through union action in the past five years. Due to the current boom, trades lecturing positions are hard to fill
since trades people can earn much better money in industry. However in other areas such as community services and childcare, the merit based selection process focuses very strongly on teaching skills while at the same time wanting strong industry experience. Someone coming straight from industry is not likely to have had that teaching experience, so this offers casuals a chance to apply for the jobs. It is almost as if, in some areas, you cannot get work without having had at least some casual experience to augment your industry qualifications.

Inpatient Stage

The second stage for the mental patient is the in-patient stage. The patient is stripped of rights and accustomed behaviours. A case file is kept; the patient is under observation many people have the right to record and/or make judgements on the patient’s behaviour. If the patient is ever to leave the hospital, then they must be ‘cured’ and being cured involves behaving in particular and appropriate ways. The patient is inducted into the ward system and learns to orientate himself/herself in terms of the ward system.

Progression Through the Ward System

Progression through the ward system is both dependent on the patient’s ‘good’ or ‘moral’ behaviour as perceived by others. Even gossip by hospital staff at morning tea might have an effect on the way the patient is rated and thus on their progress (Goffman, 1972, p. 96). Similarly casual lecturers are rarely observed in the classroom but may be judged in the staffroom as unsuitable through talk, personal style, complaint, idle chatter and the like.
People may be overlooked for work on the wrongful presumption that they are working elsewhere\textsuperscript{22}. With casuals, there is no problem with wrongful dismissal, work is no longer available or it is reduced or someone else is given more hours and there is no recourse. In fact, there is often very little realisation that this might have some negative impact on anyone’s life. If the aim of the casual is to obtain the number of hours needed for survival and perhaps even be awarded a contract, then the sometimes arbitrary nature of this could be likened to progress through the ward system\textsuperscript{23}.

When a new casual lecturer enters a TAFE site there are procedures to be learnt, records to be kept and the casual must learn how to behave. The casual must learn the appropriate mode of dress, how should s/he speak and about what and how much interest or lack of interest it is appropriate to take in the affairs of college. As Sennett and Cobb (1972, p. 75) assert, ‘everyone in this society, rich and poor, plumber and professor, is subject to a scheme of values that tells him he must validate the self in order to win others’ respect and his own.’ This learning the culture or the moral code is crucial to any new employee no matter what their employment status but it is particularly important for the casual given that the casual needs to seek reemployment constantly.

\textsuperscript{22} I have overheard discussions about staffing where assumptions were made about the availability of casual lecturers which were in fact incorrect.

\textsuperscript{23} There is relevance here to Marx’s discussion of free wage labour versus slave labour and the ambiguity it involves. While casual work is obviously free wage labour, there are elements of formal subordination in the relationship between a casual and his/her employer. Neilsen (2007, n.p.) argues that ‘Marx’s model of subordination is based on a coercive concept of power, in which labour is compelled to sell its labour power as a matter of physical survival, and in which workers’ bodies are physically and outwardly controlled in their every detailed movement.’ It is of course important to note that the mental patient’s daily life is far more coercive than that of the casual TAFE lecturer. I am grateful to Dr David Neilsen for drawing this point to my attention.
There is ambiguity about who controls the employment of casuals. While the casual lecturer is employed by the College management, it is the program manager who makes the decision; however, other staff may play a part in whether a person is offered work again. This is true in many situations involving casuals. Official channels of authority are important but unofficial ones are crucial. For example a temp at a university was given work by someone who had bypassed his own secretary. The temp referred the work to the secretary since if she were seen to be taking on work that was not appropriate, the secretaries, could easily take her off the list of those to be employed. She was very conscious of having to learn how to behave and more importantly of whom not to offend. It is the same for the casual lecturer. Sources of power are not always obvious. Just as the doctor in the asylum may make the final decision about the patient, they may be influenced by those who, no matter what their status, have daily dealings with the patient.

Security of status is significantly different for the casual than for the permanent staff member. The permanent staff member only has to apply for his/her job on the one occasion and unless s/he seeks promotion, may never have to make an application again. This is not to say that they will not face the prospect of redundancy or redeployment but in general their jobs are comparatively secure.

The casual, on the other hand, reapplies constantly and may not be offered work until the very last minute. While casual lecturers are technically employed on an hourly rate, the general custom is for them to be given a class to teach for the time that class runs which may be 10 hours or may be 50
hours. However being given a class on one occasion is no guarantee that there will be more work in the future. Someone who has worked regularly over a period of years may not be offered work if numbers change, programs are dropped or permanent staff are redeployed. They are at the mercy of individual college policy, changing circumstances and the program manager. A change of program manager may mean starting all over again just as a change of ward orderly may affect the mental patient.

Learning the Ropes

The casual must ‘learn the ropes’. While good behaviour cannot guarantee further employment, inappropriate behaviour is likely to ensure that the person is not re-employed. While a program manager has little real control over a permanent staff member s/he can decide whether a casual is given work again. People who are regarded as unsuitable or who do not display the appropriate performance are unlikely to be re-employed. Obviously inappropriate behaviour includes not turning up for class, not keeping the rolls correctly, behaving unacceptably in class and poor timekeeping. Less obviously, but just as importantly, I believe there are many less tangible matters that influence other staff such as friendly but not too friendly behaviour, being confident but not too confident and other social interaction such as being obliging or not being perceived to be a pest.

Some issues may appear very trivial such as using the wrong coffee cup. One casual annoyed the team leader by bringing a box of fundraising chocolates to work and leaving it on the staff room table to be sold. It is also important not to express opinions too strongly or to refer too much to other TAFE colleges at
which the casual might teach. An illusion of loyalty is required and in the
days of autonomous colleges competing for business, casuals, who are in fact
of necessity mercenaries in the system, needed to be discreet about what
they said or revealed about another system. The casual must learn which
meetings must be attended even though they are not being paid for
attendance and which social activities and interactions are important. For
example, I have never refused a request to buy a raffle ticket or to donate for
flowers or a gift. I always paid my tea money without being asked and tried
to ensure that I completed forms promptly.

One lecturer puts it this way, when asked if there were any things she thought
she should do or not do as a casual lecturer:

    Low profile in terms of office politics; it is the usual thing of trying to
be charming to the people who ultimately make the decisions about
who gets what work every semester. But obviously when one is not
permanent and decisions are made about your future every four, five,
six months, then you know how to play it.

She says she ensures that she keeps her work by:

    I think number one by being good at it, by ensuring that what I am
doing, I am doing to the best of my ability. By ensuring that I've got
frameworks in place that I get evaluations from the students which I
ensure that other people get to see. That is probably the most, that's
probably the strategy I have employed the most to try to do my
lecturing well and to get that feedback that I'm a good lecturer and there is just the issue of being pleasant and charming.

Some do it through their passion for teaching, while at the same time ensuring that it is noticed:

Make sure that I have the skills and those people that employ me can see that I do have the skills and that's done in a whole range of different ways: the material that students are given, the feedback that students give and the program manager and team leader. The level of enthusiasm and interest demonstrating that you actually do more than wander around and sprout something off the top of your head. It is about organisation, it is about quality of delivery of product and it's about a sense of enthusiasm that comes across. I never don't want to go to work. I always look forward to it and in fact when I have two weeks off for a semester break, I really miss the contact. It is something that I enjoy doing, that I love doing. That comes across and you don't have to tell people I love doing this. It's honest.

Others see no way of doing anything that might help them keep their jobs:

You can't. It does not matter how good you do your job or anything like that, there is nothing you can do to ensure you keep it.

Of course some of the administrative matters can be taught through an induction process and according to quality assurance procedures all staff are to be given an appropriate induction. This may consist of an induction file
which is kept in the office and to which the new lecturer is referred. In some
colleges, there may even be a longer induction process but it is most likely to
be on an informal basis and whether or not you get it will depend on the
culture of the particular department and the kindness of other lecturers.

There are other issues such as being asked to give the college copies of
material used to teach a particular subject which the casual may have
developed in their own time for another college. It is difficult to refuse such
a request. One casual lecturer discovered that material she had prepared had
been printed and was being sold by another campus of the college. On
protesting, she was told that she had no rights to this material even though
she had developed it before she came to this particular college. She felt that
further protests would do her employment prospects little good. On the
other hand, the practice in some departments is to share course materials and
to coach newcomers in the needs of the subject. This latter approach is not
all that common though.

Apologias

The mental patient on first admission ‘may very strongly feel the desire not
to be known to anyone as a person who could possibly be reduced to these
present circumstances’ (Goffman, 1972, p. 89). Life as a casual TAFE lecturer
is not dissimilar. Working as a casual professional, with little control over
working conditions, is not a high status form of employment particularly if it
is not entered into voluntarily. Just as the mental patient may construct an

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24 At another college, when I was leaving at the end of the semester, a permanent lecturer
who would teach ‘my’ subject the next semester, asked for all my notes and lesson plans so
he could take over without having to prepare too much. I handed them over of course.
apologia to explain the reason for their admittance to the hospital, so the 
casual TAFE lecturer may develop an apologia to explain why they are casual.
For one retrenched bank manager it was just for fun, something to fill in the 
time; for another lecturer it was a stop gap until she found another job; 
others say that it is useful to have flexible hours while they are studying, or 
that they have family commitments. Some claim to be consultants with 
lecturing just part of a package of work and that really they are too busy for 
it but ‘you can’t let people down’. The explanations are many and varied but 
they serve to explain to the casual and the rest of the world what the person 
is doing in that position. A later chapter in this thesis examines the stigma of 
working as a casual employee rather than as a permanent or contract one.

Apologias may be success stories or they may be sad tales (Goffman, 1972, 
p. 92). People who can present a favourable and positive view of their 
circumstances and their future are telling success stories; those whose past 
and future prospects are not so positive may be the tellers of sad tales. 
Casual TAFE lecturers like mental patients, construct an image of their life 
that provides them with a self image with which they can live. A positive 
success story is likely to be a better tool in the workplace than the sad tale 
that may be too uncomfortable for those listeners who are unsure of their 
own future. Casual lecturers who present themselves as confident and 
capable are more comforting to those who are not in their situation ie 
permanent staff. People might not wish to be reminded too frequently and 
obviously that they are employed in superior conditions to others who are 
carrying out the same work. When obvious inequity touches people’s working 
lives, it can create discomfort.
The casual needs to develop an appropriate performance. Goffman (1959) likens people’s behaviour to a performance designed to show that they are of good character and competency. A performance in the front stage area or public arena should take place in an appropriate stage setting which confirms the messages being sent by the actor. The actor through his/her appearance and manner conveys information about her/himself which is read by the audience. The casual creates a performance that constantly reinforces the idea that s/he is a desirable employee and colleague. People who thus present themselves in a certain way are making a moral demand to be treated in a certain manner. While permanent staff may relax their modes of self presentation, the casual needs to be on guard on all occasions. The self presented is a commodity. One casual, dropped by a college after her first semester of teaching, believes that her style did not fit and that she was regarded as too unconventional to fit in. This was her apologia of course; she might not have been very good at her job.

This is reflective of the contemporary workplace in the enterprise culture; in order to get work you have to be enterprising and you have to network. As Tom Peters writes, ‘the new self reliance (build a towering competence, whether you’re a receptionist or computer programmer) also includes a new loyalty - loyalty to one’s network peers’ (Peters, 1994, p.124). Business gurus such as Handy and Peters assert that people have to make and keep themselves employable by constantly retraining and reinventing themselves. Doing your job well is not enough; expecting permanency or tenure is somehow second-rate; but to embrace constant change enthusiastically is to be a winner. This does apply just as much to permanent lecturers as well.
Negotiating the Ward

The in-patient is admitted to a ward and needs to ‘orient himself in terms of the ward system’ (Goffman, 1972, p.90). This is a graded series of living arrangements depending on status. TAFE lecturers also have their equivalent of the ward, the space in the staff room. Permanent and contract lecturers have their own desks often with computers and places to keep their professional library and other aids to lesson planning. In the kitchen they have their own cups and a place in the social routine. Casuals on the other hand, if given access to a desk and this is by no means certain, must share it with other casuals. No place is provided for storage, all must be carried with them. If they are afforded space, it is at the most basic level; they do not have the privileges of the other staff. They have not earned them by being offered permanency or contracts. A long term casual may gain some privileges but they must never be taken for granted.

The negotiation of the ward system is part of the treatment of the mental patient, part deliberate and part contingent. While for the casual, it is not so deliberate; there is no doubt about the message it sends. Managers would defend this lack of access to desks and equipment as inevitable due to shortages of resources, but people who are given no space to work at know they are not supposed to be there and that their work is undervalued. If there is no place to work other than the classroom, and no area to store things needed for your work, then you are invisible for most of the time and this issue will be dealt with in greater depth later in the project.
Goffman claims that ‘the institutionalization of these radically different levels of living throws light on the implications for self of social setting’ (1972, p. 91). While a tourist can take pleasure in visiting an exotic location which reflects nothing of his/her own self, a person’s own living room will reflect the image that the person wishes others to have of him/herself. The work site is not usually under the employees’ control though its furnishings and location may reflect the person’s status. Goffman describes the ward system as an extreme version of this. So the casual TAFE lecturer who is allocated no space, who has to carry their space with them so that they become in fact car boot teachers carrying their tools of trade in a series of bags or even in some cases suitcases on wheels may find that this has an effect on their image.

For the mental patient, assignment to a particular ward is dependent on a system of rewards or punishment meted out by ward personnel both through informal meetings in the staffroom and through formal meetings to discuss patient’s records and progress. The patient is dependent on the good opinion of the ward personnel. In the same way, the casual is dependent on the good opinion of the college staff though this cannot help in every situation. A decrease in student numbers may reduce the need for casual staff, and an enterprise agreement which changed normal teaching hours for permanent staff from 22 per week to 23 also reduced the need for casuals. TAFE counsellors whose positions were abolished were redeployed to teaching positions displacing in some cases casuals and contract staff who had been
employed in these positions for some time. Ultimately a casual lecturer’s position is influenced by contingency\textsuperscript{25}.

Power Relations

Casual lecturers have a different relationship with the program manager than do permanent staff. While the program manager can make reports on the permanent staff member and has the opportunity to affect their work life through the allocation of classes and resources, they do not employ them, though they may undertake performance management of them. That lecturer is protected by their conditions of employment and their union. They cannot be easily dismissed because of one disaffected program manager. It is not so for the casual. Their work existence is dependent on the whim of this person.

Just as the mental patient undergoes a form of social collapse where they are deserted by society and stripped of their rights and responsibilities so the casual may see themselves as deserted by society and not accorded their rightful position as a professional person. For example, a letter in the West Australian (April 2, 1998, p. 15) described agency nurses as ‘casual blow-ins’, the inference being that being casual means that you are not as proficient or qualified as permanent staff. Likewise, a union flier during industrial action in 1996, warned students that if they did not support the permanent TAFE

\textsuperscript{25} At one stage, when in a gamble to get permanency or at least a contract, I dropped all work bar for that at one college. It was acknowledged by the team leader and the other permanent staff, that I was ‘next cab off the rank’ and so I was privileged by having my own desk and by getting access to more work.
teachers in this action, they were in danger of being taught by unqualified casuals\textsuperscript{26}.

Perhaps casual staff and permanent staff live with contradictory realities. Permanent staff have proper jobs and take their jobs seriously while casuals are just that, casual in status and approach. But many casual staff have extremely high qualifications and cannot afford a casual approach to their work since their livelihood depends on it in a way that it does not for permanent staff. Many permanent staff consider that casuals are extremely well paid given their lack of responsibilities. Taken at face value, the hourly rate seems attractive but this does not take into account the lack of holiday pay, the time spent travelling between campuses, the lack of sick pay, the lack of access to long service leave and the fact that casual rates remain static despite experience and qualifications. One program manager responded to a request for more hours with the comment that I was earning plenty and that should suffice. I wonder if she would have liked to live on my annual salary. Having judgements made about one’s income is part of the infantilising nature of casual work.

Part of the mental patient’s recovery or socialisation is ‘learning to live under conditions of imminent exposure and wide fluctuation in regard, with little control over the granting or withholding of this regard’ (Goffman, 1972, p. 99). Equally the casual lecturer learns to live with uncertainty and lack of control over his/her working life. No matter how they run their classes, how good a job they do, how they relate to other staff, in the end they may still

\textsuperscript{26} I have searched for this flier but it was printed by a particular lecturer at a particular college and it seems no copies of it exist now.
not have a job. While the ward system may build up or destroy the patient’s self, the patient eventually learns that they can survive this treatment. So those casuals who remain in the system whose self image may be attacked constantly in the beginning by their work circumstances learn ways of surviving and managing in the situation.

While the patient can move up or down in the ward system depending on how well they are perceived to be doing, so the casual has a chance to move up or down. The granting of a contract, no matter if it is only for three months reflects an improvement not only in status but in pay and conditions whilst moving down would be losing work. With such short contracts though, it is quite easy to slip back into the casual world much as the mental patient may face set backs in their career through the ward system.

Conclusion

Cut backs in public spending and changes in attitudes about the desirability of incarcerating mental patients, have meant that access to various forms of treatment for mental illness are problematic. It is not unknown for people who might need treatment to be refused admission to an institution or to be returned to the community when they might prefer to remain in the mental hospital. Casual TAFE lecturers are also victims of cuts in public spending first because some of them would probably prefer to have permanent full time jobs at TAFE with all the benefits that these accrue and secondly because at least some of them will already have been displaced by cuts in the public sector and so are seeking whatever work they can get.
While the teachers’ union is concerned to protect the jobs of its members who are the permanent staff and thus would like to see the use of casuals severely restricted or even converted into permanent positions, management is pressing for the right to use even more casual staff. Meanwhile casuals struggle to retain hours and make the best of their situation like mental patients dealing with mediators, next of kin and the hospital staff in an alienative coalition. It would seem that the casual TAFE lecturer has no protection other than what they can arrange for themselves through the patronage of the program manager.

There is also an ideological trend, part of the enterprise culture, which sees the need for flexibility in staffing as the key to making TAFE colleges financially accountable (VEETAC, 1992). This of course is part of a broader trend which sees the use of casual, temporary and contract labour as highly desirable in the pursuit of profit and global competitiveness. The emphasis is on people making themselves employable and on them taking charge of their lives so that they become individual enterprises.

This chapter and the thesis overall illustrate that the reality of the casual’s life may be very different from the rhetoric espoused by management gurus such as Peters or Handy. Like the mental patient learning to deal with the mental hospital and its staff, life as a casual means a constant front stage performance to convince people that they should choose you. It is a delicate series of negotiations and interactions with others designed to convince that the casual is deserving of employment. It is a moral career which is not acknowledged by those who run the institution.
In the following chapter the concept of career is considered in more detail and I examine whether it is possible for casual lecturers to see themselves as having careers. I also point to literature which questions whether a career has ever existed except for the minority.
CHAPTER FIVE

Career and the Casual TAFE Lecturer

Career now doesn't mean what it used to mean. Career now – I don’t think there is such a thing as the word career because nothing is forever, nothing is long term (participant).

This chapter questions whether the normal concept of career is as strongly embedded in the working world as it might once have been. The concept of career is examined in its historical context and in its moral aspects; it also considers the rise of managerial/organisational style careers over professional/vocational ones especially in TAFE and notes how the current work environment and the growth of casual employment affect the notion of career. Finally it analyses how casual TAFE lecturers reconcile their positions as people presumably without careers.

Until recently, if you asked people what they thought a career was they would be likely to reply that it was about a series of progressions in one’s work life which took one further and further up in a hierarchy.

More generally it is applied, with some conscious and unconscious class distinction, to work or a job which contains some implicit promise of progression (Williams, 1983, p. 35).

This is the usual 20th century view of a career used widely to promote a bureaucratic style of progression frequently within the one organisation such
as the public service or banks. It implies a progression or advancement towards an increasingly more desirable and powerful state of employment. It separates out work which is desirable from work which is undesirable especially on a class basis (non career type labour) and is based on a masculine view of a career (Smith & Hutchinson, 1995). By masculine I mean a career that follows a more or less straight trajectory uninterrupted by breaks for childbearing and raising. It has also provided a comforting structure for many providing a ‘sense of coherence in their working lives’ (Watson, 1987, p. 137).

It is also worth noting that commentators on generations x and y, like Heath (2006) and Mackay (2007, p. 6) increasingly regard the straight line career path as ‘a fate too tedious to contemplate’. The cohort of respondents in this research though, tends, with a couple of exceptions, to be from an earlier generation which expected some sort of certainty in the workplace.

The respondents are only too aware that they have been cut out of the career progression at least temporarily and their comments demonstrate how they attempt to reorder their lives and to redefine their working lives in order to salvage some notion of career. Some will do this by finding a permanent position at TAFE and rejoining the career path and some will do it by reframing their experience to make it more palatable. At the same time it is worth questioning whether the concept of the career was anything more than a 20\textsuperscript{th} century aberration, which will increasingly disappear for all but the most privileged.
What is a Career?

The word career appeared first in the 16th century and derives from French and Latin words for a race course. Thus in the first instance, it had racing connotations and came to mean any rapid and uninterrupted activity (Williams, 1983). It is really only in the 19th and 20th centuries that it came to be associated with work activities though in the 19th it had more to do with a sense of vocation than work progression.

Using this racing analogy can give us some interesting ways to view a career. Certainly the idea of rapid and uninterrupted progress characterises what many people view as the ideal model of a successful career. People can be marked as winners by streaking out and staying ahead of the crowd early in their race. Any contender who takes a side turn is not following the rules of the race and so can be regarded as an also ran. So, people who take a tumble in the career stakes either by leaving to have and rear children or who have some other misadventure such as redundancy when they are too old to be seen as a serious contender, may find that they only get the occasional start at a country race meeting.

We also have the view of career as careering around, a definition that suggests chance, wildness, accident and randomness, an implication of being out of control. It may be that a regulated economy and the forces of modernism have given way to neo liberalism, global forces and unbridled capitalism. We are told that globalisation is irresistible, that reform is necessary while critics claim:
the global operation of the economy is sapping the foundations of national economics and national states, unleashing sub politics on quite a novel scale and with incalculable consequences (Beck, 2000, p. 2).

While we still view a career as something that comes to the deserving, the randomness of events which can affect lives suggests that for some there are fewer chances than there once were. In Australia the recent emphasis on both downsizing and ageism, have meant that middle range, middle aged managers who have lost jobs may no longer find it easy to get the sort of job they once had. It is these people, who may retire if they have sufficient money, start small businesses with varying degrees of success or may end up lecturing on a casual basis at TAFE. In a report by the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT, 1999) it is pointed out that the 1990s were a time of a loss of proper jobs and increasing trend towards non standard and precarious employment. In Western Australia, with the surge of jobs in the resources boom, some of these people may wish they had taken up a trade rather than their chosen occupation.

Careers in the Post 1990s

When we examine careers in the contemporary context we may divide them into two types, vocational or organisational. In vocational careers which commonly are professional occupations such as teacher, doctor, lawyer etc, typically there are various stages through which a member may pass. Thus in law, a lawyer may progress from junior lawyer to judge over time. Secondly, there are organisational careers in which the individual progresses through a series of positions in a fairly specified sequence such as in the public service.
(Watson, 1987). What might be seen to distinguish these two types of career is the power exercised by the individual. In a professional type of career, the individual must market his/her services to the community while in the organisational career, the individual is an employee subject to those higher up in the hierarchy. This organisational type of career may now subsume professional workers when they work in the public sector. So a doctor working in the public health sector may have to give up medical practice and become a bureaucrat in order to be promoted beyond a certain level. At TAFE, lecturers’ promotional opportunities are limited to a couple of teaching positions whose numbers are strictly controlled making them unavailable to most; if they are interested in ‘climbing the ladder’, they must become a manager and give up lecturing.

It is also worth noting that this definition of career is very much a masculine model of starting young and remaining focused. For various reasons women may not have the linear approach to building a career that is typical of those men who do so following the bureaucratic model. Such reasons range from career breaks for child rearing to entrenched structural discrimination. In addition, there are women who do not consider having a career as desirable until later life when they undertake further study and are thus perched on the lower rungs with perhaps little opportunity of rising right to the top because of their age. Mackay, (2007) points out that women hold about 45% of the jobs in the workplace and that number is reflected in managerial and professional positions. It is only when you look further up the career ladder that you see that women account for only 10% of executive managers, 8.6% of board directors and 2.3% of CEOs.
We should also note that our notions of career are comparatively recent. As Savage (1998, p. 66) points out ‘for Weber (1978) the career was a generic feature of a modern, rational society.’ It was expected that people who were offered the chance of moving between jobs, presumably to jobs higher up the ladder, were less likely to regard their jobs as a sinecure and would accordingly adopt a more vocational approach to their work. The career is not only a way of securing efficiency and of structuring an organisation; it is also a disciplinary device. Those who expect to be promoted are expected to behave in certain ways. In fact, the notion of career could be seen very much as self surveillance; employees are encouraged to develop a career ethos and to behave in ways appropriate to their organisation. Jordan, a public servant, cited in Aungles and Parker (1992, p. 70) writes ‘great stress is placed on ‘efficiency’, by which is meant regularity, predictability, dependability and responsiveness to organisational demands.’ This is how things were expected to be done in the bureaucracy and not conforming to those standards is likely to lead to non promotion.

Savage sees the notion of career emerging in tandem with modernity and there is congruence between the idea of a society progressing to become the best that it could and the idea of a bureaucratic career where by following the rules both written and unwritten, you progressed up the career ladder. Now writers like Heath (2006), Mackay (2007) and Buchanen et al (2003) are increasingly accepting that that there is a decline in the number of permanent, full time and waged jobs: these are the ones which were linked to careers. There is also an increase in impermanent work of all sorts.
The problem is that many only know the rules that applied before and do not realise or try not to realise that they will never get a ticket to the starting posts again. In a time of dwindling numbers of fulltime, permanent jobs, and the increase in precarious forms of employment, the concept of a career is no longer as relevant as it once was.

This is by no means confined to Australia or to current times. Loveridge and Mok (1979, p.1) assert that ‘the pattern of long-term unemployment that has resulted during the 1970s has reaffirmed, rather than disproved, the continuance of differential career opportunities based on discriminatory employment practices.’ Their descriptions of the dual labour market suggest that the labour market can be divided into two segments, one paying better than the other with mobility between the two groups restricted. Higher paying jobs and career opportunities are tied to advancing up the hierarchy and these higher paying jobs are more stable than the lower paying ones.

It might be seen that TAFE has been a classic internal labour market where specialised labour (lecturers) have developed organisationally specific skills, undergone significant on the job professional development which has been encouraged by unions and the certified agreements. Once a lecturer is admitted to the ‘firm’, they are trained in ways suitable for the organisation, have access to seniority, custom and practice and to specific regulations which encourage them to remain with the firm. This is a form of labour market which has suited both employer and worker (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Loveridge and Mok, 1979) because of its security and stability. However, when an organisation is looking for flexibility, then this internal
labour market may not provide the best model. While TAFE is not about to abolish its permanent workforce, the employment of a cohort of casual lecturers gives it more flexibility and a buffer of disposable labour when costs need to be reduced.

The project of enterprise and excellence which is associated with writers such as Handy (1994), Peters and Waterman (1982), Peters (1988) Kanter (1985) etc, has led to a new career discourse through which the idea of career is being subsumed in the notion of self enterprise. As Miller and Rose (1990, p. 330) observe the ‘autonomous subjectivity of the productive individual has become central economic resource’. Companies are employing programs designed to affect organisational culture and to align it with company objectives since as they point out ‘becoming a better manager is to become a better self’ (Miller and Rose, 1990, p. 330). Other writers such as Fournier (1996) and Du Gay (1996a) have taken up the same theme.

The enterprise discourse contains a strong didactic tinge. There is no room for the person who does not adopt this credo. As Dent (1995, p. 27) writes:

The motif of the new workplace is: No more jobs, only businesses. People get a life, a mission, a business – not a job. They have customers. They must deliver results. Their monetary rewards are based on real, measured results in their own work domains; their psychic rewards come from solving problems, creating value and making customers happy. The key trend is restoring decision making and accountability to the individual, not in merely reengineering overly engineered large scale business processes.
This declaration is certainly prescriptive and seems to leave little room for those who do not fit this mould. But Dent is not alone; Tom Peters (1994, p. 117) gives the following advice:

You’re as good as your Rolodex, your drive to achieve towering competence, your will to create your own job and abolish your sense of powerlessness, your nerve when it comes to seeking out exciting assignments that call for a downward or sideways shift. That’s the story in a futzed-up marketplace where nothing (person, organization) sits still for more than a few nanoseconds.

The debate about the market economy has also both a moralistic and an ideological tone. Deeks (1993, p. 35) writes:

It has been argued, for example, that the market economy is not simply a more efficient system for the creation of wealth and the distribution of goods and services. It is also a necessary condition for a democratic society.

There is also a strong element of morality in saying that people’s psychic rewards will come from making customers happy or from enthusiastically embracing change. Du Gay (1996a) writes that Margaret Thatcher argued as early as 1975 that the economic revival of Britain would involve a moral crusade since economic problems are never caused solely by economics.

This moral aspect to people’s employment is not just a product of contemporary work mores. It was certainly part of the modernist project though it has not always applied before that. Savage (1998) in his analysis of
the Great Western Railway from 1833-1914 points out that job promotion did not appear to be linked to meritorious behaviour. He suggests ‘that punishment was geared to specific offences and not to long-term careers’ (p. 74). This was especially true of the early days of the railway. Records show that there were a wide range of jobs that workers could be promoted to although this did not happen in any systematised manner and that disciplinary offences were no bar to this. However, from 1860 punitive discipline such as fines or dismissal was starting to be phased out and that management was looking for other ways of disciplining the workforce. It was about this time that the notion of a systematised career was developed and with that the notion of using career as a form of surveillance. In order to get promotion, it was necessary to behave in certain ways; those ways of course were ways that suited the organisation. Breaches of discipline now might mean that promotion would not happen.

Breaches of discipline for casuals though may mean more than lack of promotion since promotion is not readily available to them; it will probably mean the loss of their job, a much harsher penalty. Wrongful dismissal provisions generally do not apply to casual employees and in any case all that has to be done is that the person is not offered more work, those who have fallen out of favour are easily dealt with.

The Director of a TAFE college would once have come from the ranks of lecturers as would the bulk of the other senior positions. From 1991, for around a decade, the policy was to appoint lecturers only on fixed term contracts with no guarantee of renewal or to appoint them as casual
lecturers; at the same time the number of management positions held by non
lecturers has increased and those lecturers who wish to take up management
positions must accept public service conditions. Of late though there has been
a move to creating permanent positions. At one stage, those lecturers who
had spent continuous time on contracts and who has also been merit selected;
ie going through an interview process for their positions could apply to be
made permanent. This of course has not helped casuals whose appointments
have frequently been made on whim, introduction by another and very rarely
through a merit interview. So, while it is now possible to get a permanent
position, casual lecturers are still a large part of the system and with
fluctuating student numbers, this is likely to remain the case.

Except in very rare cases where a casual lecturer may have rare skills that
cannot easily be replaced, casual lecturers have little real power. They are
employees who in some ways are reapplying for their jobs every time that
they work. It is not unknown for a casual who believes they have a class for a
certain period of time to be sacked on the spot when other lecturers need
more hours. As one respondent said after having her classes taken from her
because a permanent staff member needed more hours:

  there is no security for a start. I have just had a very bad experience,
  I was given the sack on Friday with not even a thank you.

For people such as these, the distinction between employment and
unemployment is increasingly blurred. Having a casual job is not the same as
having a real job; that is, one that is ongoing and predictable. You may be
working but your occupation of that position is precarious; a casual never
owns a job in the way that a permanent employee does. Casual employment is always transitory and can disappear as in the following case. This respondent tells of being called to the program manager’s office and not even getting in the door before she was told that she was no longer needed. It had nothing to do with her teaching ability. Losing a job may have little to do with performance but rather with numbers of students or permanent staff members needing more hours. One of the things which rankles most is that along with the ungracious termination of work, there is rarely any thanks expressed or even acknowledgement that these people might face hardship or be inconvenienced. It is almost as if these lecturers do not register as real people with real lives and needs. At another campus, the program manager put off signing the paperwork which would get casuals paid for several weeks causing considerable hardship to some, as she was not sure whether she wanted to cut back their hours.

In any case it is difficult to make long term plans since much work comes at the last moment and as a semester ends, the lecturer may be unsure whether to sign on for unemployment benefits or to trust that the work will turn up again. Maybe there will be enough hours to survive on or maybe welfare payments might be necessary to supplement a reduced income. These factors do not fit into the structure of the hierarchical career.

The majority of casual TAFE lecturers who have participated in this study are over 40 (69%) so their idea of career has been established for some time. This is not unusual since the average age of TAFE lecturers is over 40. One way of categorizing these participants was to divide them into those who had other
sources of income or other priorities and those who were making their living from this work. The first category included people who had basically retired but who wanted some work to supplement their income or to keep their hand in, those both male and female who had family commitments and so only wanted part time work at this stage of their lives and a few who just taught a subject as an industry specialist while they maintained their full time career and it is to this group that the idea of career is most problematic.

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Yet even with this division, only 28% of those interviewed saw themselves as having no career. For some this was because they were in semi retirement and had no desire for a career, or they had family responsibilities or other interests which were more important to them than work or even because they had given up hope of having one. The remainder believed that they had a career though some saw no prospect of that being at TAFE and others already had a career elsewhere and were only teaching at TAFE as an extra. However 44% defined themselves as having a career in teaching even though they were in precarious employment with little prospect of even security let alone advancement in the TAFE system.

It is this latter group which is particularly interesting. TAFE lecturing is essentially part of an organisational career and it is these careers that are most in danger. Casual lecturers have barely got a toe in the water; they may at times be offered short term contracts but with the removal of the limit on hours worked by casuals in the last certified agreement, this may happen less frequently. The Western Australian TAFE lectures’ Agreement 2005 encourages a ratio of casual lecturers to contract and permanent lecturers and while this means that more contracts may be available the other consequence is that there is less casual work available. Ironically the situation that many casuals want, a contract which gives some certainty and security, may also work against their interests, if they personally miss out on getting a contract. They may find that the amount of casual work available to them has diminished as the new position takes others’ hours.
It may be thought then that a group of casual TAFE lecturers accept that they do not have a career but the need to be recognised as a person of worth means that a career is still part of the participant’s self view. Over and over again the response when asked how they defined their career was as follows:

Education – working with people to encourage them to learn.

I guess you could say a blanket umbrella statement my career is teaching but it is teaching in lots of different areas.

One of my careers is a housewife and mother and wife. That’s one of my careers. Another is teaching and teaching is something that I’m very good at and very passionate about and I love to teach adults and it is something that I am going to do for the rest of my life in some way or another.

Education and training with probably the preferred option being TAFE because I did try to set up my own business.

As a teacher in a wide range of – the only area I don’t see myself as a teacher is high school teaching. In just about any other area in the community, in community centres, in workplaces, in factories, in TAFE colleges, in primary schools, in workshop situations. All of those I am very happy to think of myself as a teacher.

And I think I’m a teacher and I will always be a teacher. I think it’s whether it’s a one on one thing or in a classroom or sitting under a
tree with a group of Aboriginal people which I have done and talking and learning on health issues.

These people had a very strong identification with the identity of teaching in a vocational sense. Now it is clear that the opportunity for a career in an organisation such as TAFE is extremely limited unless official entry into the system can be gained via a contract and preferably a long-term one. While it is technically possible for casual lecturers to apply for promotional positions such as an ASL1, the likelihood of getting one is extremely remote. Casual lecturers are on the fringes of the system and may occasionally gain temporary entrance but they can just as easily lose it as well. Reconciling their ideas of a career with the fact that they really do not have one can be difficult. Even worse, there may be status issues. Probert (1989) writes that in a country like Australia, which regards itself as a meritocracy in which career and status are commonly understood to be determined by individual merit, not to have a career or even a job suggests individual failure. People do not like to regard themselves as failures nor do they appreciate others regarding them as inferior because of their employment status especially when like this group they are tertiary educated and generally well experienced and probably never foresaw that they might be reduced to scrabbling for casual work at TAFE. Many in this group do not admit to others that they are casually employed nor do they themselves afford casual work a high status.
A way of dealing with this loss of status is to define oneself in a vocational manner as in ‘my career is as a teacher’. Those interviewed overwhelmingly defined themselves as professionals who were working as professionals in their casual jobs. Whether this means a definition of professional as someone who approaches his or her job with dedication or as a member of an acknowledged profession is up for debate. In any case there might be some discussion about whether teaching is regarded as a profession. Probert (1989) points out that professionals, such as doctors or lawyers, have succeeded in retaining control over the specialised knowledge and control over who is admitted to the practice of the profession. This is often done by establishing a professional body which only admits those who have reached certain standards in their profession. There is no professional body for TAFE lecturers whether casual or part time though some in the Education department would like to see them become members of the Western Australian College of Teachers (WACOT). And in Western Australia, no licensing is required though lecturers are expected to have a Certificate 1V in Training and Assessment and the few promotional positions require further qualifications. Teachers’ unions have made attempts at various times to have teaching regarded as a profession but it has not necessarily worked.

In any case, it is impossible in most cases to be a teacher and to retain control over your own working conditions since centralized bodies such as Curriculum Support Services Network (CSSN) and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) dictate what you teach, how it will be assessed

27 While the AMA (Australian Medical Association) is a professional body, it does act much like a strong union.
and how you will report it. They do not dictate how it will be taught in your classroom but the Training Packages do dictate underpinning skills and knowledge as well as elements of learning and performance criteria. Much professional development is given to ensure that people adopt the current approach and comply with its dictates. An emphasis on standardization and quality control has reduced the professional control of the individual making it more difficult to claim professional status.

Some casuals attempt and succeed in establishing themselves as tutors, generally for school students, and this is often one of the occupations held by those who see themselves as having a portfolio of jobs; it is also a poorly paid and generally lowly regarded occupation. On the whole it is impossible to be a teacher without being an employee and it is impossible to have a career when you are employed on a casual basis. While a doctor or a lawyer can establish practices and decide what fees they will charge and when they will work, a casual TAFE lecturer must hope that they are offered work. They cannot opt even to be a contractor and must be an employee with no bargaining power over their hours or pay. If there is no work available or if they fall out of favour with the program manager, they do not work at TAFE. No amount of defining themselves in a vocational manner will get around that fact.

It appears that for this group at least, no amount of reframing of experience or apologia can hide the fact that they are not currently on a career track. Through no fault of their own, they have fallen out of the permanent workforce and have little hope of re-entering it unless TAFE management
decides to reintroduce permanency on a more full scale basis. Some casual lecturers will apply for the rare permanent position that does occur and will be successful. This may make the career path open to them except for the fact that as they are aging like many of the permanent staff, colleges will likely be more interested in encouraging those who are younger in order to develop a succession plan.

Can the TAFE situation can be applied to other forms of work? Anecdotal evidence suggests that it can; certainly some participants at National Social Policy Conference in 2001 confirmed that the experience of these lecturers matched their own. Economic rationalist policies, tendering requirements and other policies that lead to downsizing and cut backs are affecting the career goals and possibilities of many and making work a far more precarious experience. The career may not be dead but it is definitely wounded and its recovery may see it take another form.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the history of the career and shown that it is a quite recent project in the working world. It is therefore not so surprising that some groups of people, due to changing work circumstances, might find themselves alienated from career progression through having a series of insecure jobs. Viewed more optimistically, they could also be portfolio workers, which implies a greater control over their work lives (Handy, 1994). For those who have been brought up with the idea that their education, career choice and experience should mean that whether or not they actually want one, that the opportunity is there to climb the career ladder, this can
be a disturbing realization. It is important to remember though that for many women, the career climb has always been limited because of family responsibilities or prejudice in the workplace and it is men who are less prepared when they realise that this choice is not available to them\textsuperscript{28}. The respondents who did find some lack of ease in not having a career, tended to reframe their work lives so as to describe themselves as having a career as a professional educator. This is a term which sounds clear enough to be accepted as meaningful by the person with whom they are communicating but which is sufficiently vague to hide a very insecure and perhaps unsatisfying reality.

While the absence of a career structure raises difficulties related to self esteem and other such matters, the following chapter will discuss how the allocation of space in the staff room has meaning and indicates both management’s and other staff’s perception of the needs of the casual lecturer. It also examines the importance of space to the individual worker and how it is used to confer status.

\textsuperscript{28} It is possible that generation x and y may have very different attitudes towards career because of their more recent introduction to the workplace and its mores.
CHAPTER SIX

Homeless at Work

In her book Resilience, Anne Deveson (2003) writes that her mother used to say that she could make a home anywhere so long as she had a jam jar full of wild flowers. Deveson goes on to claim that:

This need for home lies deep within all of us. It’s hard to be resilient if there is no safe base from which to journey forth. But home doesn't have to be brick walls and a picket fence. I comfort myself with this thought. Nomadic people carry their homes with them. Aid workers make themselves at home in some of the most remote or dangerous places in the world simply by pinning up photographs, bringing along pieces of cloth, musical instruments, toys, favourite drinking mugs – anything that will help ground and nurture them (Deveson, 2003, p. 200).

This chapter, the last part of the section on features of the casual lecturer’s job, focuses on how the provision of space for the casual worker defines their lack of status. It also discusses the relevance and importance of having a dedicated personal space at work and examines how people colonise their work spaces and what this might mean for the casual. It also asks whether it is possible or even safe for a casual to find this sort of territorial security at work and can it happen anyway? Some of the issues arising from territoriality and from not having appropriate designated space at work are also addressed.
The Importance of Home Space

Most of us will relish a place or places where we are welcomed and known or even just feel secure. This may be the actual home or it might be the local café where we are part of a morning community or it may be a place at work, made familiar and homelike through constant use. People may have only one place where they feel at home or they may have many. After all many adult children with their own homes, still regard their parents’ house as still their own and feel affronted when changes are made or their parents sell up. We like to make our homes to varying degrees in all sorts of places which we visit on a regular basis and which we can mark as our territory.

Work Space

So we come to the work location: if we regard a ‘home’ as being some sort of connection between people and their environment; an organisation of space which involves place, process and experience, (Olivieri, 2002) then there are aspects of the desk space which demonstrate some home like tendencies. It is also possible to see an office as the ‘front region’ (Goffman, 1959), the place where performances take place. In terms of TAFE though, the office/staffroom can be both the front region and the back region at the same time though for different groups of people. Lecturing itself must be a front region activity as the lecturer is performing for a group of students. The retreat to the staffroom for contract and permanent lecturers is basically for back room activities. However for casual lecturers, this is also a performance space, a front region where they have to demonstrate that they are suitable for ongoing employment. Some casuals, as they become better known and
have some longevity, may be able to relax more and treat this space as back region.

Many employees like to make themselves a home like base at work whether it is just a place where they regularly leave their possessions and the seat that they regularly use or perhaps the plush office decorated to reflect the personality and status of its occupier. If they do not have a desk, it might be their seat in the canteen or some other regular site that is seen as their space. People tend to make their surroundings predictable and familiar. For example, people on a bus tour often take the same seats for every stage of the trip. This becomes their seat and others are expected to respect this, so to take someone’s seat without permission may be seen as an act of aggression.

In her thesis ‘Migration, Frequent Moving, and Committed Dwelling: An Exploration of the Relationship Between Home and Self Production in the context of Post Modernity’, Helen Olivieri (2002) presents a model of home which incorporates three concepts: that home is essentially both a geographic and social place, that it includes set of practices by which it is produced and finally it has a set of key experiences which people associate with that home. Using that model, it is possible to claim that the desk space at work for the permanent or contract lecturer is a form of home. It is certainly a geographic location, lecturers go to a particular office, to a particular desk and are seated next or nearby to the same colleagues. Lecturers colonise their desks, arranging their books and papers in certain ways and access available storage. While these ways are not set in stone and may be subject to reorganisation or
tidying up, nevertheless there is usually a certain pattern of occupation. And finally there are a set of key experiences that happen in this space. While they are not necessarily completely the same as those practised at home, they may involve eating, socialising, relaxing and setting boundaries.

It may seem contradictory to think of a workspace as a variant of home but when people have an office or a space that is allocated to them on an ongoing basis, they have ways of making that space their own. If all the ‘occupied’ desks in an office were examined, it would be highly unlikely that these spaces were homogeneous. The ‘occupiers’ would have their belongings arranged in certain ways and a whole variety of methods of defining their spaces and their boundaries. For example, where desks are set next to each other with no dividing space, occupiers of those desks may well feel quite upset if their neighbour’s possessions leach over onto their desk. People develop a form of ownership of their spaces and may resent intruders who encroach upon that space in some way. As well given the amount of time that people may spend at work, it seems quite reasonable to think of this space as a form of home. In fact for some people it may be that they feel more at home in their designated space at work than they do in their own homes particularly if they are sharing that home space with others or if that home space is not safe in some way.

Organisational aspects of the desk and its immediate environs are key features of the production of self by the occupier. Goffman (1959, p. 17) writes:
When an individual plays a part he (sic) implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they actually see possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be.

The workplace thus is a setting for the impression/performance that the individual wishes to present to this world. So one woman of my acquaintance who wished the others in her office to know how busy and sought after she was, kept a supply of message slips which she strewed around her desk as if they were current.

The workspace or alternate home provides opportunities for proclivities to be expressed; the arrangement of papers and pens, the photographs of loved ones, the arrangements of cuttings, cartoons, timetables on dividers, the arrangement of drawers all are part of the production of space and through that the production of the self that is proclaimed to the public. It is not uncommon for these aspects to be controversial; sometimes they can be locations for power struggles. I heard one manager in a non TAFE organisation boasting about how he would check the desk drawers of his subordinates and if he did not consider them tidy enough, he would tip the contents onto the floor. While this is seen as extreme, and most people would regard going through someone’s desk drawers as being off limits, as an invasion of privacy, there are other examples of power relations over the organisation of work space. There is one exception to this in some offices; the top drawer of a desk
is frequently the one in which office tools such as staplers and scissors are kept. When the occupant is not there to give official permission, it is acceptable to look quickly in this top drawer for the tools you wish to borrow. This search though should be conducted quickly and on a surface level only. If these tools are not readily available, the search should be abandoned.

People who have occupancy/ownership of the work space may give permission for others to use it but there is an implied understanding that the desk will be left as the owner likes it. An article from The News & Observer claims that people who are sharing space need to mark their territory to protect it and that this is a basic human instinct (Fonte, 2003). Just as dogs or cats spray to mark their territory, humans will mark their own space through physical or psychic means. While not being quite the same sort of space as home, workspace becomes ‘secondary territory’, a place which while not really owned is occupied frequently (John Aiello cited in Fonte 2003). Any decision by management to alter that workspace without consultation can cause enormous angst just as if someone came into our own homes and made decisions about how we were to arrange our furniture without reference to us; it would be seen as an invasion and an affront.

We know there are conflicts about how the desk and workspace should be used, whether they should be strictly work oriented or whether it is appropriate to have photos and other thing that personalize the spaces. A dispute with Australia Post was based on an issue over personal photos which one employee was instructed to remove. She was entitled to have only three personal photos on her desk and she had four. When she refused to remove
the fourth photo, she was docked two pay increments, equivalent to a $3000 fine. In the very public dispute that followed, Australia Post argued that it had management prerogative on its side (Marr, 2002). A massive campaign persuaded Australia Post to rescind its decision. That the employee saw fit to fight the directive, demonstrates that it was an issue with powerful meanings.

One of the contradictions about home is that it is an icon of safety and security and yet at the same time it can be a very dangerous place. When we feel at home, we feel safe; our home is our castle and protects us against the world. Yet this is not necessarily so. The incidence of domestic violence and general safety hazards such as faulty appliances, dangerous chemicals, slips and trips mean that the safety and security of the home is violated. This violation is not necessarily by an intruder but from those who inhabit the home. There is a higher duty of care legislated in the workplace; under occupational safety and health legislation, management is required to provide a workplace where their employees are, as far as is practical, safe from the risk of injury or harm. But there are many issues both psychic and physical which are not always recognized as being harmful in the workplace.

Space and the Casual Lecturer

One of the problems with being a casual TAFE lecturer is that of staffroom accommodation. It is an issue because there seems to be no set standards of accommodation provided not only for casuals but in fact for any other lecturers. It is usual for lecturers to be provided with a desk and some shelves in an open plan staff office. Access to computers varies with some campuses providing computers on each desk and some providing a bank of computers
instead. One thing that is usual though is that casuals are not given their own individual desk. Conditions vary according to the space available but sometimes only one desk is allocated for use by casuals no matter how many casual lecturers are working out of that office. Also if more desks are needed to accommodate other lecturers, then the space available for casuals is reduced.

In one department, without any diminution in the number of casuals employed, the desks available were reduced from three to one though the organisation of space in that rather large room has not been changed for many years. It obviously seemed easier to allocate the desks used by casuals to other staff who needed accommodation than to consider if there were any better ways of distributing the space. The idea that this might cause some form of harm or concern to casuals was either not considered or disregarded. There was of course no discussion or consultation; it was presented as a fait accompli. Either way it demonstrates that casual lecturers are not given the same respect as other lecturers who at least would be told before it happened so that they could clear out their desks.

It is not unknown that when there is a change going on, for casuals’ possessions to be tipped into a box so that they have to sort out what belongs to whom later. In a particular case, one longstanding casual arrived back at work after a holiday break to find that the desk she shared had been allocated to someone else and that most of her possessions were mixed in a box and some of her text books which she had purchased herself, had been allocated to other people. In this case this was a disregard of space requirements and
also of ownership and an invasion of privacy. When she enquired as to why she had not been rung and informed of the changes so that she could pack up herself, the response was that the program manager did not have time to make the call; a case of being invisible, unrecognised and disregarded.

It does not matter if there are several casuals in the department at the one time; they just have to share the space available and storage space is rarely provided. One of the reasons for this is that space is usually at a premium and the offices of lecturing staff are never big enough to accommodate everyone in any degree of comfort or privacy.

This looking to improve the use of space for the lecturers’ benefit does not always happen: one facilities manager was heard to query why lecturers would need office space when they would be spending all their time in the lecture rooms. Yet TAFE lecturers spend 44% of their official work time (37.5 hours per week) in activities other than face to face delivery. These activities involve student interviews, marking, staff meetings and liaison, lecture preparation, training plan preparation, research, preparation of teaching aids and the almost limitless paper work resulting from TAFE’s involvement in the Australian Quality Training Framework. Even face to face delivery time may be traded off for project work or coordination work so the actual hours spent in the class room may be fewer than thought. As well, lecturers may return to their desks during breaks in classes.

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29 According to the Western Australian TAFE lecturers’ certified agreement 2005, lecturers work a 37.5 hour week of which 21 hours is spent in delivery, 12.5 hours are spent in activities related to delivery and 4 hours are to be spent on professional duties.

30 Lecturer duties from Western Australian TAFE lecturers’ certified agreement 2005.
Lecturing is an accessory laden occupation. Lecturers have class notes and handouts, overheads, books, and marking as basic tools of the trade. Those who work in areas such as hospitality or the trade areas may have other tools as well. Lectures do not spring fully formed from the head but need to be developed and researched and changed constantly. It is not possible for casual lecturers or any lecturers to prepare a set of lectures once only and then use them for the rest of their teaching career; the constant changes and revisions in training packages make this impractical. This is not to say that a volume of resources that may be recycled, is not built up, it is but given that no storage or only limited storage is made available at work, casuals need to keep their resources at home and to carry those that they do need with them. It is not uncommon to see casual lecturers make a couple of trips to the car to bring in the marking that they have done at home or to have a trolley to carry their goods. These trolleys are becoming increasingly popular, they are convenient but at the same time they add to the casual lecturer’s cost of work.

The Meaning of Space

While there are some very basic reasons for the shortages of accommodation based on a belief that those who are there all of the time, those who belong there, should have the allocated space, there are some deeper issues such as inclusion, recognition, visibility and territoriality that are worth examining. Office space is not just space without meaning, it is a form of personal space.

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31 On average, training packages are updated every five years: this updating may be minor or it may mean a complete change in focus. The Community Services Training package CHC02 is about to be phased out and its replacement will require courses to be rewritten.
As Painter (1991) points out the use of personal space in the workplace is part of the ranking of groups and people through socially constructed means. Higher rank means that you are rewarded with larger and more luxurious offices and furniture. It may be that the organisation has rules on what sorts of furniture you are entitled to as a result of your status just as they have rules about the size of your company car and its accessories. In one small non-government organisation, the director got the new computer even though he used it little while his secretary worked with inadequate equipment. This goes far beyond what might be thought of as having any practical or functional purpose. What then are we to think of the status of those who are allocated no space or who are only allocated space as an afterthought? That the allocation of space is probably thoughtless rather than being deliberate makes no difference, it still has meaning and that meaning adds to feelings of lack of value and worth.

Research on workplace organisation (Hubiak and Banning, 1994) has in recent times been focusing not only on the structural/ physical dimensions of workspace; it has also been examining the cognitive and affective aspects of space. Davidson and Cotter (cited in Hubiak and Banning 1994) suggest that organisational success may depend on a sense of belonging to the organisation and that sense of belonging may then develop in the ‘belongee’: a sense of obligation to participate. While this may be seen as manipulative, the theory is that encouraging place attachment ie the emotional bonding of a person to a place, in this case the workplace may enhance productivity.
Desey and Lasswell cited in Hubiak and Banning (1994) suggest that there are three particular dimensions that are important in developing a sense of place in the workplace: personal space, personal status and territoriality. They suggest that these dimensions can be encouraged by the following measures aimed at increasing the worker’s control over their environment: (a) identify each individual’s work space (b) provide lockable personal space (c) allow the workplace to be approachable from the front (d) avoid spaces that have a high concentration of other workers, (e) provide local control over light and heat, (f) provide window views, (g) provide flexible furnishings, (h) provide for personalisation and (i) provide for ease of cleaning.

Human behaviour and the design of spaces are inextricably linked. We respond to aspects of our environment without even knowing it. In fact, our responses to the environment are so ingrained that it is difficult to tell they are actually responses to something other than internally motivated behaviour (Painter, 1991, p. 1).

Hubiak and Banning (1994) also suggest that ‘providing spaces that have personal status contributes to a feeling of status within the organisation’. Status can be provided by having things like a chair for visitors which demonstrates that the incumbent is important enough to expect visitors. So what can we conclude if there appears to be an indifference to the needs of one sector of the workforce? They are after all carrying out the same work as other lecturers but their needs are not recognized. It must be admitted though that TAFE in general is not very good at providing appropriate space for any of its lecturers in the metropolitan colleges but casual staff who do
not have the status required to risk complaining are treated less well than other lecturers.

This lack of space also means that casuals must do much of their preparation and marking at home which means that it and they are unseen. While this is no different to most permanent and contract lecturers, the latter are constrained to remain on campus for nine hours longer than their 21 hours of lecturing\textsuperscript{32}. I have heard comments from permanent lecturers that casuals have an easy job and do little or no work since they can leave the campus once they have finished their lecturing. However, given that the permanent lecturers’ job responsibilities are largely the same as those of casual lecturers except for the requirement to do 4.5 hours of professional duties on campus,\textsuperscript{33} this would seem to be a peculiar attitude. The problem is that the work and doing of it is unseen as it is done off campus. While access to computers may be possible in the workplace, the fact that facilities are limited makes it difficult for casuals to carry out their non-teaching work. This is not an issue for some and in fact may be seen as an advantage as one casual said:

When I finish here I can actually go home and prepare my lectures at home as opposed to always being on site. So yeah, it really does work for me.

Nevertheless, the fact is that it is unseen and if not seen, maybe it does not exist\textsuperscript{34}. Yet the reality is that casuals are having to provide their own

\begin{small}
\textsuperscript{32} Western Australian TAFE lecturers’ certified agreement 2005.
\textsuperscript{33} Casual lecturers may undertake some of these duties however in their own time since reading college emails is classed as professional duties.
\textsuperscript{34} TAFE management, in the latest round of certified agreement negotiations, have targeted the right to work off campus for 7.5 hours per week. I have been part of the negotiating team and have been told by management negotiators that this time off campus is a ‘bad look’.
\end{small}
workspace at home which means that a computer is a necessity but the storage of resources can take up a large amount of space which is space that does not have to be provided by TAFE\textsuperscript{35}. It also means that because they are not provided with a home at work, they have to work at home.

We could look at the first issue as a transfer of costs from TAFE to the individual. The whole point of employing casuals is that the flexibility provided by having employees to whom you owe no more than the statutory liabilities means that you can save money by employing more or fewer as circumstances require. As well, the hourly rate paid to casuals though giving the impression of being a lot means that a full time casual’s pay is only likely at best to be equivalent to the midrange of the pay scale no matter how much experience they may have. Casuals are cheap to employ which is part of their attractiveness but besides this, if you are able to transfer the costs of a designated workspace to the individual, then even more money is saved by the organisation. These costs may include desk, computer, storage space for files and reference books, preparation time, stationery, computer software and more. While individual costs may not amount to much, when aggregated, with say 20\% of lecturers employed on a casual basis, the savings may seem considerable. The biggest savings though would be in not having to have bigger staff office space and thus being able to save on overheads.

There has been a belief in workplace design that moving from private offices to open space offices save money though this is a view that is contested.

Those who consider only the non-human aspects of arranging office space see

\textsuperscript{35} For some years, my shed at home stored several boxes of resources I prepared in case I had need of them again.
the issue as getting more for less (Bennett, 2005; Brown; 1996; Davies, 2003; Pristin, 2004). They see removing permanent space as a good thing which motivates staff and reduces cost though Davies does admit that it requires a culture shift while Brown (1996) asserts that workers must be weaned off what zoologists refer to as the territorial imperative. These writers and others like them choose to ignore those ways that workers like to arrange their space and instead talk about the savings that can be made by hot desking or sharing desks. It is an approach which makes the changes from the top for perceived savings without considering what this might do to morale and thus to productivity. Perhaps if office space could be outsourced for all then savings really could be made.

On the other hand, there are others who warn that the savings might come at a cost. Van der Voordt (2004), in an investigation of productivity and employee satisfaction in flexible workspaces, found that job satisfaction in a flexible space provided mixed benefits and certainly did not suit everyone. As he writes ‘the extent to which a balance is found between efficient and effective working and the fulfilment of all kinds of psychological needs’ is a critical factor in how the flexible space will affect productivity. One point that he does make is that desk sharing may give a feeling of freedom to some particularly when it is of the hot desking variety but basically it is at odds with the human need for territoriality and personalization of space. Other problems arise with people’s needs for privacy and their lack of control over their environment with regards to lighting, sound and temperature control.

36 From Robert Ardrey (1966) who wrote of animals of the same species fighting over territory.
Spragins (2003) claims that even the cost savings may be overrated. She cites a survey of businesses by Bosti Associates, a workplace design firm in the USA. They point out that around 80% of an organisation’s costs are due to staff costs ie paying recruiting, retaining and training, while less than 10% are due to workspace and operating costs. While this may vary from industry to industry, it is likely to be fairly accurate in a highly labour intensive operation like TAFE. This leads one to wonder why minor savings, which may result in considerable damage to staff morale and effectiveness, are pursued.

While working at home is touted as freeing the individual from the necessity of being bound to the office, this sort of home working has both advantages and disadvantages. Though contract and permanent lecturers have the opportunity to work at home, they are provided with time at work for seeing students, preparing classes and other activities. As part of the certified agreement\textsuperscript{37}, they are permitted to spend seven and a half hours per week in activities related to delivery which may be carried out off campus if they so wish. The point here is that that work is at home by choice, if they wished it could be carried out at their office. By having no real space made available to them, casuals are more or less forced out of the workplace and into some other space, usually the home. This can be a very isolating experience.

By isolation I mean not only the physical isolation of being away from the workplace but also the psychological isolation of being apart from what is happening, of being out of the ‘loop’. One interviewee described it like this:

\textsuperscript{37} The Western Australian TAFE lecturers’ agreement 2005 states that 7.5 hours of activities relating to delivery may be taken off campus.
It's a bit like being a tourist in some ways just because you are seasonal so the season closes and you are out. You are out in summer and you are out (indistinct) And because of this lack of interaction that I was talking about at the outset and the lack of involvement, you are not involved in what happens in the college on a regular basis so I see myself as an outsider. Again I would still like to see us more involved.

This respondent had been working consistently at the same campus for three or four years and yet he still did not feel part of the community of lecturers, in other words he did not feel at home there. More than that, he also felt that his skills and experience were not recognised or valued but constantly he returned to the issue of involvement. He went on to say:

I would like to see casual lecturers more involved with what happens in the college because it is an advantage to come in, you lecture and you leave, no questions asked which is very easy so that is the advantage - you come in, deliver the lecture and walk away. But I would like to see more interaction between the managers and some of the lecturers as to what issues are there that we should understand because I don't even know if they meet with the full timers. I don't even know if they meet on a full time basis to discuss these things. If they did, I wish we were invited - every so often, not once a week or something but every 2-3 months. Perhaps some of the senior lecturers could tell us these are the issues that have been raised by people. If I were a manager here, that is what I would do with my casuals because
you don't seem to belong like you are like a foreigner coming in or a tourist.

Other lecturers also felt a lack of inclusion. One who was also tutoring at a university said when asked if she thought she was given the same status as permanent lecturers:

Well you're not anyway because you're casual and you're not included in whole heaps of things because you just come in and out. I find that no, I am not given the same status. But that's the same here. (names the university).

Health Issues

There is also an occupational safety and health issue which has been largely ignored even when reported to safety representatives. The lack of storage facilities for casual staff means that many are carrying heavy loads from home to car to classroom and back. While today there is a greater reliance on trolley cases and carts, these are a fairly recent phenomenon. One respondent described her injuries:

The other thing I find is not even having a locker where I can put stuff. I have carried stuff around for such a long time that I have actually damaged my shoulder and back and now I have a trolley. I think all casuals, with the amount of stuff the lectures generate should have somewhere to leave their stuff.
Casual lecturers, because of their insecure tenure, may well feel reluctant to do anything which may jeopardise their chances of retaining work and making a fuss about space and health and safety issues, may well be one of the issues that is approached cautiously. I suspect that few would think to make a complaint about this sort of injury. Even if they did make a complaint it might not be taken seriously. I once made a report to the safety representative about the lack of storage space and its possible consequences. He did indeed investigate even if a bit perfunctorily but was told by the Program Manager that there was no space available to provide storage for casual lecturers so the issue was dropped.

To me this illustrates a number of issues. First, that in general, the space needs of lecturers are not taken seriously by anyone and that second, the space needs of casual lecturers are taken even less seriously. This safety representative was a fellow lecturer but of course a full time and permanent lecturer and was not really conscious of issues that affected casual lecturers’ wellbeing and health. He may also have been a poor safety representative but other permanent lecturers who knew what the complaints were did not rally to the cause. Perhaps if casuals are not seen as part of the team, there is no need to give them support.

It is not that there is any official campus policy about the ways in which casual lecturers should be treated mostly it depends on the particular program manager and how she/he views casuals. In my own experience, on one campus, I have had a program manager ensure that I have a desk almost to myself while I have been allocated no space at all at another campus which
then means that I have been allocated no computer access and at the third campus, there was only one desk allocated to the many casuals who worked in that department which meant in effect that the first in got the desk while the others just milled around.

At the time that these interviews were done, the TAFE lecturers’ certified agreement prevented casual lecturers from working more than eight hours per week at one college\(^{38}\). If more hours than this were done, then casual lecturers were supposed to be given a contract. The intention of this policy was to improve conditions for casual lecturers but in fact what happened was that colleges would only employ each individual casual lecturer for a maximum of eight hours. Therefore in order to get enough work to survive, around one third of lecturers took jobs at more than one campus. This of course tends to exacerbate the problem of not being visible. Travelling from campus to campus on the same day means that casual lecturers do not have time to hang around and because they do not hang around, there is no need to provide space for them and because there is no space provided for them, there is no incentive to hang around. It also meant that there were more casuals coming and going and it was harder for them to relate to other staff. That ruling was rescinded in the next certified agreement.

One lecturer reported that while travelling between sites generally did not give him too many problems:

\(^{38}\) Lecturers (Public Sector, Technical and Further Education) Certified Agreement 1996. This restriction was lifted in the TAFE Lecturers’ Certified Agreement 2000.
One problem with one of the sites was that no one knew me. So I just walked in, did the job, walked out and no one knew I was there. No one knew if I had been there and I didn't know my way round, where the library was, things like that.

There is another problem though about casual lecturers making a home at work. It does not matter how hard you work, how well you get on with staff, how much you try to have yourself included in what goes on, your work is not protected. At any time a class can be cut, numbers of students may decrease from one semester to another so that the work just is not there. Longevity is not any protection either. While a casual lecturer may think that they are comfortable enough at work to be part of the furniture, the reality is that casuals are expendable and you may lose your work quite unexpectedly as in the following situation:

For many years I was asked to find all the retail lecturers as a casual, I was only a casual lecturer myself. I did that and I did all that organisation and had a good group of people and one day the senior lecturer came into my class at the end of the day, leaned up against the wall and said we won't be doing any retail stuff so we won't need you and your people next year. And that was all he said. So I had to go to those people and say thank you very much for the contribution you have made to TAFE and that's it.

Situations like this rankle and go on rankling. Perhaps it is not really appropriate for a casual lecturer to become too much at home at work since eviction is always possible.
Conclusion

This chapter, the last of the three in the section on job structure, has examined the allocation of space in the workplace and its implications both for permanent and casual lecturers. It acknowledges the territoriality of humans and the way that they colonise those spaces which they ‘own’ at work and resent those who intrude upon them. It also acknowledges that space and its dimensions can attest to status in the workplace and thus those who have no space of their own have little status. The casual lecturer who has to share a space with others and who has nowhere to store anything is categorised as an unstable and rootless individual.

The next chapter, Chapter Seven is the first of the two chapters which constitute the discussion on the global context of casualisation. Risk management has become a hot topic in managerial writing and this risk management has had its consequences for the casual worker.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Risk and the Casual TAFE Lecturer

Risk can bring people together, creating communities of shared fate. Yet risk can also split people apart. Societies have dealt with risk in many ways, and not all of these responses involve public solutions or broad insurance protections. Personal misfortune can be blamed on improvidence and irresponsibility. It can be chalked up to the workings of mystical forces beyond human control. It can be dealt with through private market institutions or through communal frameworks, through localized government action or through the immense powers of the nation state, or through some combination of all these. And, of course, risk does not have to be ‘dealt with’ at all. It can simply be left to individuals and families to cope with, as best they can, on their own (Harker, 2006 n.p.).

This chapter is the first of two that deals with more global matters of risk and insecurity, topics which are intertwined. In the late twentieth century the study of, control of and management of risk has permeated society focusing in the beginning on ecological, environmental and probability risks (Beck, 1999; Rosa n.d.). In my examination of risk though, I wish to move away from environmental risk to focus on how the transfer of risk has become part of the neo-liberal project which shields some from risk by transferring it to others until it reaches those who are the most powerless to avoid it. I propose to examine risk and work through the more detailed examination of two of the
current approaches, risk as probability and the McDonaldization of risk (Ritzer, 1993). I will also look at the part risk plays in the lives of casual TAFE lecturers.

We live in a risky world. By that I do not mean it is necessarily any more risky to be alive today than it was in some notional time in the past, but this is a society that focuses on risk to a considerable degree. We are urged to cut risks, to take risks, we see risks all around us, we employ risk managers, we have risk policies and our insurance is affected by the degrees of perceived risk to which we are exposed. Risk affects every part of our lives from the everyday to the commercial to the international. Even our children’s playgrounds have had to be modified because they pose too much of a risk; even in our homes, we are at risk from terrorists.

Occupational Health and Safety legislation, which covers the workforce comprehensively, was only introduced to Western Australia in 1984; before that only 40% of workers were covered by a variety of industry specific legislation39. This legislation led to companies employing Occupational Safety and Health Officers/Managers. In the last few years the additional focus on risk has seen many of those occupying such positions become risk managers. A whole new category of employment has been created in the past twenty years and the roles upgraded as well. It is a sign of how risk has come to play a prominent role in our lives.

39 Information provided in a phone conversation with an officer at WorkSafe WA on December 16, 2008).
However, the role of risk in our lives these days is not easy or straightforward; nor is risk a simple concept to grasp since it travels through society with a myriad of meanings. Its current usage is no longer neutral, it is invested with danger, morality, politics, blame, entrepreneurialism, insurance and even quasi certainty and even more relevantly to this project, it is applied to work. It is both good and bad and the individual is expected to be both risk taker and risk averse sometimes without having much choice in the matter. Those who take risks may be lauded for example those who are entrepreneurs or racing drivers, whilst others who take risks such as young males driving cars too fast are seen as irresponsible and dangerous.

Where has all this risk been all of our lives? According to Giddens (1999), the concept of risk did not really take hold in society until the 16th and 17th centuries when it was used by sailors setting off on epic voyages into uncharted waters. Its next incarnation was as a financial term where it has implications for the term of an investment and its expected returns. Douglas (1992) claims that the word risk had its origin in the context of gambling; it was a neutral word that took account of the probability of losses or gains and the magnitude of either.

In many ways risk now seems to be more about the danger of something happening than its earlier more positive meaning of chance (Neff, 2002). We are far more aware of the risks of environmental damage of various kinds. With the increasing emphasis on occupational safety and health, we are taught to spot the hazard, assess the risk and make the changes. The Department of Foreign Affairs now issues travel advisories about which
countries it is too risky to travel to whether for fear of terrorism, civil unrest or even illness. Genetic researchers are increasingly able to predict the risk of undesirable health factors in our lives (Wright, 2008; Department of Health, 2003) and it is expected that people should take account of the results of their tests.

Improvements in medical science have meant that many more diseases can be cured and people expect to live longer. We do not expect to have adverse results from medical treatment; preparation for surgery now includes a lengthy and documented list of possible outcomes so that the patient can give informed consent and the doctor can lessen the chances of being blamed if something goes wrong. We have accepted the dramatic reduction in child mortality as normal and thus we expect our children to reach maturity without mishap and if they do not, we look for someone to blame. Yet deaths still occur.

Stories in the media suggest that we have become an increasingly litigious society, expecting the right to sue someone for any mishap; we have an expectation that we can and should be protected from all possible dangers. There have been a number of cases reported in the media of young men diving either into the sea or some other waterway without checking the depth of the water and later making claims for damages from whatever local authority applies. These cases have had mixed results with some complainants being awarded massive damages and some in similar circumstances having their claims rejected. Such cases remain controversial.
with the question of whether or not we should be warned that a dangerous activity is dangerous before it is undertaken remaining unassessed.

However the collapse of HIH Insurance, as well as the apparent increase in claims has led to insurance companies clamouring for negligence cases to be severely limited in scope and payout. Already substantial changes have been made to workers’ compensation legislation to limit workers’ access to large compensation payouts, especially under common law provisions. In the meantime some insurance companies have opted out of providing public liability insurance or made it so expensive that it is unaffordable causing many organisations in both the public and private sectors to either close or to limit their activities. Insuring against activities has become the norm as no one wants to bear the cost if anything goes wrong so individuals holding street parties who would once not have bothered to insure are now are being urged to insure if they can obtain it. Individual householders may also take out policies to protect against injury to cleaners and others who work on their premises. There does though seem to be a connection between insurance companies selling insurance for activities which once would not have been insured and people realising that they can take legal action for something that would once have been regarded as an unfortunate accident.

The Government and Risk

The government, through a policy of both regulation and education, attempts to ensure that the life of the citizen is free from risks. For example we are expected to vaccinate our children to avoid the risk of disease and sanctions are applied if we do not. As members of the community, we must wear our
seat belts when driving or face a potential fine; we must wear bike helmets when cycling, public health campaigns are carried out to encourage safe sexual practice, driving a motor car is hedged with prohibition and punishment all in the name of cutting the road toll. Road safety trials, such as the Double Demerit Points Campaign 2002-2003 (Office of Road Safety, 2002) are an example of this; we must cut out risky driving or risk potentially losing demerit points at a faster rate.

The government keeps statistics so it can score how well we are doing, monitors our behaviour and decides which behaviour it will next attack. While such behaviour is for our own good and both sides of politics seem to agree that it is so since they never repeal such policies when they are in power, it also has benefits in that the campaigns may, if successful save the expenditure of public funds at some later date.

There are both positive and negative aspects to being regarded as a risk taker. On one hand, young people who drive too fast, take drugs and engage in other risk taking behaviour are at best tolerated with the view that they will grow out of it if they survive and at worst loudly condemned as being out of control. At the same time, the idea of the entrepreneur being rewarded for taking risks has had some currency in the media but recent events and evidence of corporate malfeasance may once again dim the lustre somewhat. In financial circles the idea of high risk high return has been imperfectly understood. The mortgage brokers’ scandal in Western Australia (The West Australian, 2007) cited many aging and vulnerable people who had invested in mortgages for commercial developments of over inflated value on the advice
of brokers who promised higher returns than were available generally in the market. When things went wrong, these people naturally wanted vengeance and their money back, yet it might be said that they should have been suspicious of such generous promises in the first place.

Suggestions are increasingly being made that the individual should bear more of the risk and cost for the activities that they undertake including health care and retirement. The emphasis on ‘user pays’ is part of the neo-liberal project that sees the individual as primary over the community (Marginson, 2004; Horton, 2007). While this might seem to be an economic issue there is a case to be made that individuals and their families are increasingly responsible for looking after themselves without relying on the community or the government and thus they are to face the risks of illness, accident and unemployment that may occur in their lives.

Green and McClelland (2003) assert that the changes that are taking place in society are causing material insecurities to those who are the weakest in society. They contend:

that in a period of profound change, the management of risk currently delivers certainty to those with social power and inclusion, at the expense of those unable to control their own participation in today’s economy (p. 76).

In the debate on the market economy that has taken place in many parts of the world. Douglas suggests that:
A culture needs a common forensic vocabulary with which to hold persons accountable and further that risk is a word that admirably serves the forensic needs of the new global culture (Douglas, 1992).

The ongoing discussion of bulk billing and the constant pressure to take out private health cover instead of relying on services from Medicare are examples of this. Yet people who pay for private health insurance may find themselves paying more for procedures than those without cover because their gap fees are not covered. There are also suggestions that the community may not be able to afford to pay an old age pension in the future and people are being encouraged to provide for their own future through both employment sponsored superannuation and their own investments. At the same time, the public has seen at times revisions in the stock market leading to loss of value in both private shareholdings and superannuation funds which have on occasions gone backwards rather than sustaining the fairly dramatic increases they have shown over the past few years. Just ask the purchasers of the second tranche of Telstra how they feel about being a nation of shareholders and whether they realised the degree of risk they faced when they were encouraged to invest (Quiggan, 2005). It may well be that people have little real understanding or appreciation of the nature of financial risk and how it might affect their futures.

The Work Choices legislation placed the risk faced by employees negotiating a workplace agreement solidly on their own shoulders (Work Choices Legislation, 2006). Moving away from awards means that the individual must inform themselves of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace and
attempt to negotiate their own agreement. In this situation, risk is disguised as choice. If the worker is offered a deal which they do not find satisfactory, then they have the choice to go elsewhere for work where once their basic conditions and entitlements would be established by a centralised award. The current idea is that an empowered and self reliant employee is readily able to undertake the risk of negotiating their own deals in the workplace.

We are used to the government providing us with a degree of security through welfare systems and governmental policies; for example under the Reserve Bank Act 1959, Section 10 (2), the Reserve Bank was expected, amongst other things, to manage monetary policy in such a manner as to ensure the maintenance of full employment and to ensure the economic prosperity and welfare of the people. This has been interpreted in later years as controlling inflation while the maintenance of full employment seems to have diminished in importance (Mitchell, 2004).

Edwards and Glover (2001, p. 3), suggest that:

The traditional model for extensive or developed welfare states is an institutional nation-state response to coping with unforeseen but

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40 The Reserve Bank Board’s obligations with respect to monetary policy are laid out in Sections 10(2) and 11(1) of the Act. Section 10(2) of the Act, which is often referred to as the Bank’s ‘charter’, says:

“It is the duty of the Reserve Bank Board, within the limits of its powers, to ensure that the monetary and banking policy of the Bank is directed to the greatest advantage of the people of Australia and that the powers of the Bank … are exercised in such a manner as, in the opinion of the Reserve Bank Board, will best contribute to: the stability of the currency of Australia. (a) the maintenance of full employment in Australia; and (b) the economic prosperity and welfare of the people of Australia (Reserve Bank Act 1959)”.

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broadly predictable consequences, based on actuarial principles and collectively shared rights and responsibilities.

However there is evidence that the protection of the welfare state is breaking down due to a number of factors such as globalisation, technological changes and changes in political and economic ideologies (Beck, 1999; Joffe, 1999; Giddens, 1999). Nowhere is that more obvious than in the world of work, where not only has the easy access to full time, continuing work in Australia disappeared but so have many of the traditional jobs. While in Western Australia, there are now high employment levels, this was not so at the time of these interviews. While employment statistics include those who have at least one hours paid work per week as employed, the official unemployment figures will not include those who are underemployed and those who are discouraged from seeking work41.

Demands from shareholders for continuing and increasing dividends may lead to retrenchments in the workforce to cut costs and to seek greater flexibility

41 Employed
All persons aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or business, or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers); or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers); or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
  - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
  - on strike or locked out; or
  - on workers’ compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were employers or own account workers, who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work (ABS, 2008).
in the workforce. Many employers see the need for flexibility ie the employment of casual rather than permanent staff as the answer to increased profitability and as a way of minimising the problems of having to lay off staff when demand is low. This need for flexibility seems to have been construed as a reluctance to employ permanent staff coupled with an increasing trend to employ people as long-term casuals. Among reasons given for this are that by this means you can avoid wrongful dismissal cases and avoid on-costs (May, Campbell, Burgess, 2005). This increased insecurity in employment is justified by many writers on the economy as providing opportunities for women with family responsibilities, older workers and also for providing choice and opportunities to workers!

In an article in the Sunday Times in 1999 on the world of casual work, the chief economist for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA, claimed that having a series of casual jobs created greater learning opportunities for employees and gave them the opportunity to pursue different interests. In the same article, the Chamber’s Director of Operations denied that there was any less security in the workforce and said that it was employees who were seeking the change as they wanted diversity in their employment rather than remaining loyal to the one employer. This makes it sound as if precarious employment is a satisfying and life enhancing experience. I argue that for those who have secure income from other sources such as a partner, this may be true but for many, casual employment means worry, uncertainty and a real risk of exploitation and potential poverty. This is true for some of the casual lecturers at TAFE.
The McDonaldization of TAFE

The concept of McDonaldization may seem to have little to do with the workings of TAFE but there are comparisons which can be drawn through the packaging of training and the packaging of fast food. The neo-liberal project has seen not only the rise of the idea of user pays but has seen also the development of the consumer works principle.

In his books The McDonaldization of Society (1993) and The McDonaldization Thesis (1998), George Ritzer outlined the trend towards a Weberian rationality in society and likened it to the practices and influence of the fast food outlet McDonalds. In this chapter I would like to demonstrate how Ritzer’s framework can be applied to the working conditions of the casual TAFE lecturer and how this practice of rationalization has led to the outsourcing of risk and the increasing Taylorism in the workforce\(^\text{42}\).

Ritzer explains, ‘to Weber, formal rationality means that the search by people for the optimum means to a given end is shaped by rules, regulations, and larger social structures.’ (p. 19). In other words, the individual is not left to find their own way through the possible choices of how they might set about their work but are guided by a set of prescribed procedures that are imposed from above. While the rationality of having procedures to follow in every conceivable situation is clear, there are at times consequences that are not always apparent in the beginning and the consequences and meanings for

\(^{42}\) Frederick Winslow Taylor developed a ‘science’ of management to improve worker efficiency. This science involved breaking a work task into its elements, eliminating what was not necessary, working out the best way to do the task and timing it so that it is possible to calculate how much production is possible in a given amount of time (Taylor cited in Bartol et al 2003).
society emerge later. It is these consequences that I wish to examine in the case of rationalized employment.

In the fast food outlet example, Ritzer demonstrates how the pursuit of rational systems has led to the four principles which may briefly be described as:

- efficiency, using ‘the best possible means,’ (Ritzer, p. 35) to perform a task much as in scientific management, that is Taylorism.
- calculability is the pricing of inputs, the use of quantity as a measure instead of quality.
- predictability ensures that those inputs are the same no matter in what location they occur and so theoretically are the results.
- control is the use of non-human technology wherever possible to carry out tasks such as providing self-serve drink dispensers which for a fee, the pressing of some buttons, and some simple labour by the consumer, dispenses drinks from a small range of options.

These four principles provide benefits to the organization and its pursuit of profitable activities through controlling costs and minimizing the labour that is needed and increasing efficiency. While this rationalization has proved worthwhile in terms of increased profits for shareholders, it has provided a mixed range of benefits and costs for the consumer and the employee.

For the consumer, while the McDonaldization experience has a notional efficiency and ease, it has transferred to the consumer several disadvantages such as having to leave your home to queue for food instead of preparing it at
home in greater comfort. Banking has become more of a ‘do it yourself’ project as we bank from home via the internet or queue at an Automatic Teller Machine. We are punished for entering a bank through increased charges and rewarded with free or lower charges for using an ATM or on line banking. This leads to a situation at a local bank branch at the university of a long queue of customers outside the bank waiting to use an ATM, while inside the bank there are one or two customers at the most. One has to query what the advantages are to the consumer in this process? Even the experience of supermarket shopping relies on the customer hunting for the required goods, taking them to the checkout, carrying them out to the car and loading it and then taking the goods home. The technology already exists for shoppers to do their own scanning of their trolley of goods thus obviating the need for checkout operators. A supermarket no longer needs the same numbers of staff as the work is being transferred or outsourced to the customer. Yet we frequently do not realise how much we are doing ourselves since the process is justified on the grounds of choice, efficiency and flexibility.

One of the features of the fast food industry is that it employs large numbers of unskilled young people on a casual basis and gives them sufficient training to get by. Since all processes are standardised, workers have only to be trained in these processes and no more. They are given scripts to use in their dealings with the customers so interaction is prescribed. Certainly when there is an accepted process such as in a fast food outlet, there is less choice in the way a job is approached. With the influences of efficiency, finding the one best way to do a task and predictability making sure that the task is repeated in exactly the same way over and over again, does not require much from an
employee other than the ability to learn and follow a routine, in other words a contemporary version of Taylorism. The implication of this is that you can employ younger and therefore cheaper workers reducing your labour costs. These young people are easily replaceable as there is a constant supply of young people looking short term casual work to supplement the costs of their studies. When the task is so simplified, age, experience and initiative have a diminishing value, so much so that teenage workers often lose shifts once they reach eighteen and become more expensive to employ. Their experience and knowledge is worthless against the increased cost of their wages.

The emphasis in the TAFE system is on training rather than education even though TAFE means technical and further education. With the introduction of competency based education and training packages in the 1990s, there has been a much greater emphasis on meeting the curriculum criteria, in other words of having predictability and control. The Australian Quality Training Framework provides a means to audit what training providers are doing and to ensure that standards are met and deviations from the norm are not accepted. Competency based training is packaged in modules with students having to demonstrate competence in a number of performance criteria. If a student can show that he/she already possesses certain required competencies then he/she can apply for recognition of current competencies. The idea is that you do not have to start at the beginning of a course and work though all subjects regardless of whether you have experience in that area or not, you can pick or choose what bits you need to complete your training. The modules may be very short or they may run for a whole semester if being presented in a traditional TAFE classroom. The training is
aimed at providing what you need right now to do your job and not to provide a general education. We could say that these modules are a bit like purchasing items of fast food; they satisfy an immediate need.

For the lecturers, the implications are that while approaches may be left to the individual, the content and its assessment are to be standardised. Yet even teaching styles are approaching standardisation with training plans outlining what material is to be covered in each session. If more than one lecturer is teaching a subject then they will all work from the one training plan and set of assessments. The principles of adult learning as applied in the Certificate 4 of Workplace Training and Assessment provide an acceptable method of how lecturing is to be approached. Whilst these principles are guidelines, significant deviation from them by the lecturer would see doubts cast upon their lecturing ability. Certainly new lecturers, both casual and other, are tutored and mentored in order that they might reach the appropriate standard by using these methods.

The implication of this is a McDonaldized approach to learning with material that is packaged in neat little burger type packages. Unlike McDonalds, the amount of pickle on the burger may vary marginally from lecturer to lecturer, but the burger remains essentially the same. If the training plan is sufficiently detailed, then in many cases it might be taught by anyone in the general subject area; lecturers, both casual and other, will find themselves teaching subjects outside of their particular area of expertise. Some managers adopt the managerial approach to lecturing that an experienced lecturer should be able to teach anything since the required lecturing should
be predictable, controlled, efficient and calculable. On a personal note, I have lectured in over 60 different subjects at TAFE. Whilst some of these are modifications and rebadging of the same material, some have certainly been outside my area of expertise.

The implications of this for the casual lecturer are of course complex, but one aspect does stand out which is that the individual lecturer becomes less important and more replaceable when the subject matter is packaged in this way. While someone is doing a competent job in the accepted manner, there is less risk that they will be replaced as that requires either finding someone already trained in the method or training someone else to deliver in the accepted manner. Of course if student numbers decline or if other staff need to be redeployed, then that casual lecturer is disposable just as is the detritus from a McDonald’s meal.

We can see that the McDonaldization of courses and lecturers creates opportunities for flexibility for managers. By having casual lecturers trained in the appropriate method, they can employ them or not as needs be. Of course in a time of high employment, there are other opportunities for those who are qualified to be casual lecturers and those who face the constant risk and uncertainty of not having ongoing work and enough hours, may now find work in other areas.

Risk as Probability

Looking at risk from a different perspective, it is interesting to investigate the implications of probability. Probability is the chances of some event
happening. So if we were to calculate whether it might rain today, we would take into account the circumstances and the weather map and forecasts. Probability is really the calculation of risks or in the racing industry calculating the odds for a race.

Gina Neff, in a paper about risks in the new economy claims that ‘rational actors take risks in exchange for possible rewards’ (Neff, 2002, n.p.). One of the underlying facets of capitalism is that financial rewards are available for those who are prepared to take the risks. In this case we focus more on the positive aspects rather than the negative aspects of those risks. Those who take the risks are somehow more deserving and therefore have more rights than those whose labour provides the profits. Thus it is not uncommon for companies who are making good profits to announce that they are downsizing in order to increase profitability or in the discussion on the new Industrial Relations legislation for small to medium business owners to claim that their risking of capital makes them more deserving than those who provide them with labour. This particular way of framing events implies that it does not matter if someone is badly affected by these decisions: they are business decisions not personal ones.

Both Dietz et al (1998) and Douglas (1992) point out the attractiveness of risk analysis in the probabilistic sense. While apparently the use of risk analysis can be traced back to the Babylonians and is mentioned in the code of Hammurabi (Dietz et al, 1998), it has really only come to prominence in the 20th century. ‘The calculation of risk is deeply entrenched in science and manufacturing and as a theoretical base for decision-making.’ (Douglas, 1992).
Rosa (n.d.) claims the development of the nuclear industry and the space industry led to risk’s greater prominence. These risk analysis techniques or probabilistic risk analyses (PRA) as Rosa describes them have also encouraged the emergence of a whole host of new complex financial instruments such as derivatives.

While financial instruments such as derivatives make many people’s heads spin, there are some useful concepts arising from them. Richard Breen (1997) discusses three concepts of particular interest to an examination of risk; the hedging of risk, the transferring of risk and recommodification. Breen is using risk in a different context to that proposed by Beck and Giddens et al. Beck (1999, p. 3) defines risk as ‘the modern approach to foresee and control the future consequences of human action, the various unintended consequences of radicalized modernization.’ He sees the risk society as global and concerned with ecological, technological, medical and terrorist events and with the limited controllability of such dangers.

Breen on the other hand is looking at the more traditional forms of risk that involve some form of control and calculability. Using the analogy of financial markets and instruments, he examines how the loss of traditional societal hedging techniques has impacted on sections of the workforce. Risk in financial terms is diversifiable or non-diversifiable. Non-diversifiable risk or risk which cannot be insured against in any way is generally rewarded with potentially higher returns. Diversifiable risk can be insured against through the use of financial instruments and techniques such as hedging and is
rewarded with lower returns. In other words for a fee a risk can be transferred, you can pay someone to take on your risks for you.

This financial concept needs some explanation:

Hedging is an insurance technique. The hedger is looking for protection against future price changes in the physical market. Hedging involves taking opposite and equal positions in the physical and futures markets, with the aim of minimizing or preventing loss. The theory of hedging is to compensate in one market for the potential losses in another (Carew, p. 217).

Thus a farmer may try to offset the possibility of an adverse move in the price of wheat by using a futures contract to guarantee a particular price for his/her commodity. This is a form of both insurance and gambling. If the price does fall the farmer is guaranteed the higher price that he/she had negotiated but if it does go above this price, then they lose potential income. It is used frequently in the commodities market and especially in the agricultural area. Taking out a futures contract guarantees a farmer a specific price on his/her crop. If there is a bumper crop and the price of wheat drops, then the farmer will get the hedged price and has made an extra profit. However if rain destroys the crop, and the prices of wheat rises due to scarcity, the farmer will still only get the hedged price which will be less than s/he would get on the open marker.

TAFE management can offset an adverse move in the numbers of students by employing disposable lecturers and keeping their costly permanent lecturers
to a basic core. Management hedges against changes in numbers of students by employing casual lecturers who can be employed when student numbers rise and dismissed when numbers fall. Here the risk of employment has been transferred from management to lecturer.

Breen believes that until recently the welfare state and the family and the firm provided hedges against market risk so that between the three the individual was cushioned from the effects of unemployment. There was a generalized or quasi-generalized reciprocity which existed within families, firms and the institutions of the welfare state (Breen, 1997). In this relationship, the exact amount contributed by one party to the relationship is not counted, but they are expected to contribute when needed and when possible just as they receive when they need it. Breen’s example is the family where parents look after children when they are young with the expectation that they will be cared for when they are old and or infirm. In the same way governments in Australia have provided a welfare system where people contribute through tax payments with the expectation that in the event of some misfortune such as illness or unemployment they will be recipients of that welfare. There is a general acceptance that some people will contribute and receive little and some people may receive more than they contribute but that it will all balance out in the end; though this acceptance may be changing in our current society (Saunders, 1998).

However, with the current emphasis on user pays and the welfare project being increasingly contested combined with a breakdown in families, the hedging that society provided for individuals is becoming more problematic.
Now jobs are often part-time or temporary and welfare is harder to get and the concept of mutual obligation applies. A greater emphasis is placed on the individual to retrain, to repackage ie to recommodify themselves to make themselves job ready yet this has not necessarily dealt with the problems of the long term unemployed, who no matter what their skills or lack of them and their training or lack of it, remain firmly at the bottom in the employment stakes with little hope for the future. It also does not help those people who lose their jobs and then are deemed too old to be employed. Anyone over 50 is at risk of becoming long term unemployed. The paradox is that there has been a shift in emphasis from the government regarding the increasing need in an ageing society with relatively full employment levels to keep the elderly in employment of some form and the purported advantages to employers of doing so.

Recommodation of the individual occurs whenever it is possible to hedge ie jobs are secure and plentiful, the welfare system is easily available and families are strong, but with the weakening of hedges, the individual is more likely to be recommodified We might say that the way an individual is able to package themselves determines their fate in the market. In this era of precarious employment, individuals need to sell themselves firstly in the job selection process and then in the type of self they display in the workplace. It is very difficult to get as far as the short list for a position as a TAFE lecturer unless you have attended a workshop on how to write applications. These applications require the addressing of selection criteria designed to demonstrate skills and experience which are relevant to the particular job
being applied for where once a resumé and covering letter would have done (Bartol et al, 2003).

These days employers deal with more uncertainty than they once might have. Markets fluctuate, there are terrorist attacks, new technologies are developed and new management theories from behavioural to quantitative to enterprise resource planning are espoused (Bartol et al, 2003). This uncertainty makes the hiring of casual labour more attractive since employees can be hired or fired as the employer sees fit. Contingent asymmetric commitment means that the employer has the option of withdrawing from the relationship at any time while the other party must comply with what the option purchaser wishes. The difference is that in this case there is little in the way of compensatory factors since the power lies mainly with the employer. Some people will suggest that the higher hourly rate that casuals receive is to compensate for this just as it is to compensate for holiday pay, leave loading, sick pay, long service leave and in the case of those such as TAFE lecturers for their preparation, marking and administrative time. The casual loading is expected to go far further than it can reasonably be costed out as so doing.

This transfer of risk contrasts with times in which larger firms in particular that had a long term commitment to their employees, may not have been so hasty to lay people off and were more willing to absorb losses in the hope of better times to come. Even now some employers may prefer to build a long term commitment to their staff, especially if those staff are difficult to replace, but as can be seen with TAFE, the training packages adopted and the
accepted teaching practices make replacing one lecturer with another a relatively simple matter.

Casual employees generally do not have the same power as their employers who have sought greater flexibility in their employment practices. In other words, employers have obtained an option over the supply of labour retaining them when they have need and dispensing with them when they do not. It is the employer who holds the option in this situation. In the option relationship, one party to the agreement retains the option to withdraw from the relationship should circumstances so require while the other party can do nothing about it. It is common to find that because of a pre-existing inequality of power between the actors, risk can be shifted without any compensating exchange. We can see that this is a loss of welfare for one and an increase in welfare for the other.

The use of casual lecturers is useful for calculability. Casual lecturers are paid for the level of the class that they teach so lecturers teaching Certificate III classes are paid less than those teaching Certificate IV or diploma level. This rate is a flat rate no matter how experienced the lecturer is so a long term casual lecturer will be paid at the same rate as a new casual lecturer teaching the same subject. Casual lecturers are paid only for time in front of the class, so all preparation, student advising and marking is theoretically included in the hourly rate which must also compensate for sick leave, holidays and the like. Thus the elements of the job that are unpredictable have been removed from the calculation. In some cases, there is pressure to
employ casual lecturers only for the lower level subjects so that costs can be reduced even further.

A significantly increasing proportion of the risk of employment has been transferred from the employer, in this case the Department of Training to the employee, the casual lecturer. The Department has been able to operate flexibly putting people on and off as they need and sometimes in quite upsetting circumstances. Employment is thus based on insecure provisions as even the contracts have get out clauses which may be as little as two weeks.

Casual employees have very little real power unless they can offer special skills or trades that are in short supply\textsuperscript{43}. Whilst most are employed for a set period which depends on the length of the particular modules they are teaching, it is not unknown for people to be suddenly replaced if numbers drop or a permanent or contract lecturer needs more hours. In my interviews with casual lecturers, one of the things that rankled most was the frequently ungracious termination of work without any acknowledgement that it might cause hardship or inconvenience. Another example, as previously mentioned, is the delaying of payment with no care as to the financial hardships it might cause to people. Or if work was cancelled at the last minute, it might mean that other work had been turned down and was not now available.

\textsuperscript{43} Skills shortages in trades areas have meant that during the recent boom in Western Australia, trades people could earn much larger wages working at their trade than they could as a lecturer at TAFE making it both hard to recruit and to retain trades lecturers. Figures on starting salaries broken into gender and area over the period July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008 show that lecturers in male dominated trades areas are frequently given starting salaries at level 7 compared to lecturers in childcare or community services who commence on average at levels 1 - 3. These figures were provided to the State School Teachers Union of WA in September 2008 by the Department of Education and Training in Western Australia. Because of the difficulty in retaining trades lecturers, casual trades lecturers are highly prized as well.
The enjoyment of risk taking did not seem to be a great motivating factor in those lecturers who are employed precariously; rather they were worried about insecurity and lack of involvement in what was going on at TAFE. One lecturer when asked what were his concerns about working at TAFE, replied:

Lack of continuity of employment, lack of consultation, not being involved at all, the big pictures at work. You can’t get involved, because you only count in as a tiny part of what’s going on.

And another:

Most important, the work fluctuates so much that, well, it is at the moment my single source of income, so it is a bit difficult to survive on two or three hours of work. Especially because I have limitations as to how many TAFE colleges I can get to reasonably per week. Yeah, so I say that most important issue at this time is the fact that, you know, I could survive on eight hours work per week. I know how to live economically, but I just cannot survive on two, three or four hours of work per week. Yeah, I think that would be the single most urgent issue. I need work, I need part-time work, I need more work, whatever. I definitely need more than what I’ve got at the moment.

One lecturer described his work with TAFE as being like a tourist because even though he had been working at one campus for four years, he did not feel that he was accepted as part of the staff and nor were his views ever sought about anything relevant to his teaching. He also felt isolated from other staff as did this woman who when asked about issues which were
important to her cited the problem of no income over the holidays and the lack of contact with other staff:

The key issue is the breaks, the holiday breaks where you just don’t get any pay. So the pay has been reasonable while you are actually employed but there’s school holidays, without any money. That has always been the main issue. Some of it has been working and feeling like working in isolation, because you are only there and unless you actually make time to go there, to catch up with people, you don’t actually catch up with people at all.

In this brief discussion, we see that far from the transfer of risk from employer to employee being an unmitigated blessing for all concerned, casual employees have serious concerns about insecurity, lack of involvement, unpaid work, exploitation, the possibility of not getting enough work. While the union has recently started to focus on the issue of casual employees, management so far have been resistant to converting casual employment to even contract work. Yet my research shows that some campuses have employed some casual lecturers for up to 10 years. While many of these people have adapted to living on the edge, many of them expressed concern about their ability to provide sufficiently for their future. They do not receive increments, get sick pay, long service leave and can be sacked at a moment’s notice. While they are entitled to the government superannuation guarantee, their financial circumstances may leave them unable to make further personal

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44 Information provided by the Department of Education and Training in Western Australia to the SSTUWA show that at some colleges the average length of employment of casual lecturers is over three years. In my particular department, we have casual lecturers who have been working in this department for eight years.
contributions. The financial savings through flexibility for the colleges has meant that many people feel they are unable to provide effectively for their future and are even at times recipients of social security to make ends meet. These are not young people who want casual work while they study, or people with family responsibilities or even those who just want a bit of pin money. They are well qualified, experienced lecturers who are needed by the TAFE system but yet who are treated with a lack of respect and consideration. They do not want to be risk takers, they want certainty, involvement and recognition of the valuable services they perform.

Ritzer’s (1993) claim that McDonaldization benefits the organisation and few others would seem to be applicable to the casual lecturer and even to the consumer of TAFE services. With the advent of the AQTF training plans and prescribed learning outcomes, the role of the expert is seemingly being reduced. Once lessons are prepared, then theoretically anyone with the required teaching skills can deliver them; subject content knowledge becomes less important than delivery skills. This means that relatively unskilled lecturers could be handed prepared material that met all the criteria to deliver lessening the need for the permanent members of staff. While TAFE management have at times expressed some interest in pursuing this idea, so far the State School Teachers Union which covers TAFE lecturers has managed to limit this option.

As for the casual lecturers, risk has been transferred to them. As they are usually given little in resources at work, they must find those resources elsewhere, generally in their own homes. As well, they take the risk of not
having the work that they need. Having been a long term casual does not mean that much consideration will be given to your plight if TAFE decides that under the demands of flexibility, your work can be done by someone else.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a discussion of risk has shown that by packaging work in quantifiable, reliable packages, the work of the lecturer can, from management’s point of view, be made predictable making it possible for TAFE colleges to reduce risk of overspending on salaries by employing flexible or casual lecturers. It also outlined how financial hedging to avoid risk can be applied on a global scale with the risk of under employment being transferred to the individual rather than being faced by the organisation. In the following chapter, the issue of risk transmogrifies into insecurity. Risk and insecurity go hand in hand and if the risk lies with the individual so must the resultant individual insecurity; the chapter examines the role of insecurity in lecturers’ lives.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Stigma in the Workplace

I think that the full timers or the permanent teachers look down on you like you're casual; you're not one of us - not being in the mainstream. That kind of feeling. And also you as a casual don't feel as comfortable with those - for example when I move from one campus to the others I don't feel that I belong to any of them. There is no sense of belonging, I'm not really sure what to do for example in the staff room or photocopying, you feel a little bit uncomfortable as if you don't really belong there. Even in the office in the 205, I feel a little bit uncomfortable because it's not really my office. I haven't got anything there. I just go there to pick up the roll and take it back. I never sit there to work.

This is the voice of an outsider; in this case a casual TAFE lecturer, a worker who feels alienated in the workplace not just from management, but also from other workers. In this chapter, the first one of the section on the subjective experience of casual lecturers, I intend to suggest that stigma is alive and well in the workforce based on workplace status. Furthermore I intend to show that stigma does have consequence both for the stigmatised and for the employers and that in fact stigma can be a way of infantilising the work and person of the casual lecturer. While stigma might not be noticeable to those who do not suffer from it, those at the bottom are aware that it does exist and that it does affect them.
It is not possible to record the attitudes of the permanent lecturers on any but an anecdotal basis as they were not researched as part of this study, but there is some indirect evidence that they do not perceive casual lecturers as having the same status as they do. On the other hand, casual lecturers themselves have some ambivalence, perhaps even suffer some denial about this nomenclature but I will show their responses demonstrate that casual TAFE lecturing is indeed a stigmatised occupation. Stigma is a strong word and those who both experience it and those who use it against others may not be conscious of doing so and so may think that it does not deserve to be used in this situation.

Why Stigma?

(Goffman, 1963, p. 2) points out that ‘society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for the members of each of these categories.’ Those who do not meet those natural and ordinary attributes can be said to be stigmatised. In other words, people are used to making rules and categories of behaviour and being that become acceptable in a particular context. These are not only recognised by the non-stigmatised group but also by those who are stigmatised. Thus someone can be stigmatised if they do not meet these accepted standards. ‘Stigma, then, will be used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting’ (Goffman, 1963, p. 3).

Stigma commonly includes physical or mental disabilities, something that is visual like a limp or a facial disfigurement; something that potentially makes you turn away from the stigmatised or something that is deeply discrediting.
But it can also be something which offends the norms of the culture in which you live so for example a Bikie who gave up his Harley Davidson motor bike in favour of a pale pink Hyundai Excel would probably be stigmatised to the extent that he was expelled from the club or worse. You may be stigmatised for following a less than desirable occupation such as prostitution or something that is regarded as a dirty job and stigma certainly applies to people such as paedophiles.

Blake and Kreiner (1999) in an article on Dirty Work discuss the way that dirty work has been marginalised in society. And citing Hughes (1958) they define work that is dirty as having physical, social or moral taint. Physical taint occurs generally when the work is directly connected with death, effluent, garbage etc. Social taint is for people who work with groups of people regarded themselves as stigmatised such as prisoners so a prison officer would be a stigmatised occupation. It can be extended to those in servile relationships such as shoe shine boys or domestic servants and the like. Moral taint is for occupations that are of dubious merit such as prostitution, tattoo artist, exotic dancer and the like. It may even have to do with the level of occupational prestige that an occupation attracts and then within that occupation there is a hierarchical differentiation; the prison governor has far more prestige and less stigma than the prison officer. The prison governor may well have professional qualifications and attributes that the prison officer does not and will associate with professionals from other areas which the prison officer is unlikely to do.
Stigma in the Workplace

Stigma exists within certain work groups and it may exist in the one workplace between different levels of employees when they are viewed from outside of the organisation. However it is my contention that stigma can also exist in the one organisation between people who are doing the same work and that stigma is based on employment status ie whether you are permanent, contract or casual staff. One explanation of this could be found in Adams’ equity theory (Robbins et al, 2003) where those who perceive that they are being treated better than others for doing the same work, reframe the situation to see themselves as more deserving or the other as less deserving for some reason. Anecdotally, permanent and contract lecturers will argue that casuals just have to come and go and teach their classes and for that they are paid a large hourly rate. In reality casuals teach, prepare classes and materials, mark and record those marks, counsel students, prepare assessments, consult with other staff and some may even attend staff meetings. Because the work is done mainly off the premises and thus is not seen does not mean that it is not done and many spend unpaid hours in the workplace entering marks and working on Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) requirements.

Permanent lecturers see their conditions as ‘normal’. In their world, the casual lecturer is the abnormal, the ‘other’ and as there is no obvious physical taint and no social taint since they all teach the same students, there may well be a moral one. There is little doubt based on the evidence generated
through this research that the casual lecturer feel that they are not
recognised as professional equals by permanent staff at TAFE.

There is only the slightest hint of visual difference. It is not possible to look
at a lecturer and to know whether they are casual, contract or permanent. It
might be that the standards of dress are different though in my experience,
that is hard to pick. I would think that if there were any difference, it would
be the casuals who were better dressed since they were the ones with the
threat of not being reemployed hanging over them. Perhaps as they enter the
campus, they could be seen to be the ones who are carrying more since they
frequently have no storage space allocated to them on campus, but as they
move from classroom to classroom, they would be carrying the same amount
of baggage as other lecturers. There is also no way for a student to know
what the employment status of any lecturer is unless they have been told or
they might make an assumption of casual status based on the lecturer being
available only on a restricted basis. It is also unlikely that there is anything in
the individual’s classroom practice which indicates their employment status.

Goffman claims that in a certain context we impute meaning to certain
categories in particular contexts to ‘create a virtual social identity’.
Someone who does not fit into that category in that specific context may
seem to have some failing or even worse:

The term stigma, then, will be used to refer to an attribute that is
deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of
relationships, not attributes, is really needed (Goffman, 1963, p. 3).
It is necessary to think of relationships rather than attributes since not having a particular attribute in one situation may be seen as a failure while it may not in another. A criminal record may be seen as a stigma in the wider community but inside a bikie gang it may be seen as a badge of honour. Being a casual employee in one industry may be the norm so being a casual employee in the fast food industry may be seen as a rite of passage for young people who are students while if it were possible, working as a permanent employee in a fast food outlet might not seem so creditable. In fact there might even be stigma for those young people who do not get themselves a casual job. The expectations in society are that young people get short term casual jobs not only to support themselves but to prove that they can learn job skills and be useful. So while they may not be helping in the house, they are seen to be doing something important for the economy.

There is also an issue of at what stage of life the casual work is done and for what duration. A young person who takes on casual work at a supermarket or at a fast food outlet is doing the right thing so long as this work is merely to help support them while they study and is of limited duration. A woman with family responsibilities is seen as thinking of her family when she works a job with ‘flexible’ hours and no career structure: this is after all what conscientious mothers might do. Casual work might also be seen as appropriate for those who are unemployed and trying to get off any form of government benefit; people who are prepared to do anything are thus not seen to be ‘dole bludgers’, a highly pejorative term which reeks of stigma.
Continuing from this is the length of time that a person, who might otherwise be expected to have full time permanent work that is a ‘proper job’, spends doing casual work. If it can be seen as transitory, then it is unlikely to attract stigma. It is merely a step in going from here to there, a blip in the career that might or might not appear on the resumé depending on how it can be framed. Someone though, who can only get casual employment over a number of years, is not on the employment/career track and may not be regarded as being sufficiently serious or committed to their work. Thus the student who takes a temporary job over the holidays and returns to study the next semester is being enterprising. The graduate who can find only casual work after graduation will be seen as a failure if this casual work continues for some time without leading to career type work.

There is a current body of thought which sees the post baby boomer members of society as being especially comfortable with flexibility, change and technology. Heath (2006) claims that adapting to change is a core skill of ‘generation Y’ which is happy with its multi-tasking, its use of temp agencies and its belief that stability, certainty and truth probably do not exist. He is of course writing of a group that is generally well educated, mobile and middle class. It is a group which he describes as omnipotent individuals who are in charge of their own destinies. He does not acknowledge those of his generation who are not doing so well and who have not had quite the same access to a university education. He, and those of his world view, reframe casual work as empowering and as giving choice and flexibility to young capable workers who have the world at their feet.
Somebody who is well qualified and older and who falls outside of the previous categories may attract interest if they are working as a casual. They may be seen as eccentric, as someone who does not wish to engage with the ‘system’ or if they are known to have other work interests such as being a ‘resting actor’, then that is understood. If it is seen though that this casual work is all they can get, there may be a feeling of disquiet\textsuperscript{45}. By older I mean those who are over forty and who might be expected to be firmly on the property, career and investment ladder. There are many examples of those who have professional occupations and have precarious working conditions and income but stigma will not apply to them because they may be able to call themselves consultants or be seen to have their own businesses. Thus, an architect or an accountant in private practice, who is not getting much work and finding it difficult to earn enough income on which to live, may have a higher status than an unemployed arts graduate. They can go to a place of business, even if that place is in their own home office. They can put on a ‘performance’ or ‘front’ for the world (Goffman, 1959).

There is a significant difference between being a consultant and being a casual employee. A consultant is seen as a business person with their own business and as having a certain degree of control over how and when they work no matter what the reality is. A casual employee is seen as being hired or fired at the whim of an employer. They are not regarded as having their own business; they are an inferior type of employee. The tax system recognises the difference with consultants who run their own businesses being

\textsuperscript{45} A permanent lecturer at one of the TAFEs was heard to say ‘well if casual lecturers were any good, they would not be casuals would they?’
able to make a variety of tax deductions which are not available employees and so cannot be used by those who are employed casually.

Stigma at TAFE

At TAFE where the norm had been for lecturers to be employed on a permanent basis, those who were not employed under these conditions, could possibly be considered to be doing dirty work not in content but in context. Hughes (1952) cited in Blake and Kreiner (1999) used the description dirty work to describe tasks that might be labelled degrading or disgusting. Dirtiness itself is socially constructed so in the TAFE context, it is arguable that casual employment which can be viewed as threatening the very basis of employment conditions for lecturers could be construed as dirty work though perhaps only as a metaphor. The increase in the use of casuals preceded by a couple of years a change in working conditions where lecturers found their lecturing hours were increased, their hours of ordinary work sharply increased and thus their access to overtime minimised and their conditions in general weakened. It would not be surprising if the two actions were linked in permanent lecturers’ minds.

While if asked directly, many people may deny that they think less of casual lecturers; however, what is important is how people feel about it. While I have no responses from the permanent staff, I have many from the casuals. I asked a series of questions exploring the concept of stigma and how people felt about it. Early in the interview I asked people if they felt that there was a stigma attached to being a casual TAFE lecturer but did not dwell on this issue. I returned to it towards the end to explore it further by asking
questions to find out whether the respondents told others that they were working as a casual to see how that might relate to what they had said previously as there is a question in my mind about the attitudes of someone who claims that there is no stigma in being a casual employee and yet does not tell people that they are working on a casual basis.

When I asked people if they thought there was a stigma in being a casual TAFE lecturer, 60% said that they saw no stigma, however some of those replies denied specifically that any stigma exists, while others were more qualified. So one lecturer while not exactly saying that she thought there was stigma, certainly hints at it in her response:

I am not into status much anymore. I'm not actually affected by it. I'm just surprised how it has dropped out of - you know it's like I don't envy or feel lack of because I'm a casual where once I might have thought it was less legitimate. I guess I'm not affected by it so I'm only extrapolating; it's not in my experience.

This respondent had had an executive position in another industry from which she was retrenched. This had led to her having a complete change in lifestyle and focus so she was no longer career focused. As she says the question of status is not important to her anymore. Can we interpret this response as saying that there is no stigma attached to being a casual TAFE lecturer or is she saying that it is there but it is not relevant to her situation? I suspect it is the latter. If I were to count those who hint at the possibility of stigma but who say that it does not apply to them, then the balance does change with
58% claiming that there is a stigma associated with working as a casual TAFE lecturer.

What is interesting about this group who are showing signs of ambivalence is that in some cases they are reframing their experience. One woman who is consistent in her denials that there is any stigma, who tells people that she is casual, which is rare in itself responded:

I don't feel it. I think probably there is in some areas but I just tell people that I have a really interesting time and I really enjoy doing different things.

Another who had been a permanent TAFE lecturer and who now did a bit of casual work in her old department just for interest and to help them out responded:

No I don't think so. I think casual TAFE lecturers tend to sometimes say I'm only a TAFE lecturer but that doesn't worry me because if I had to work as a casual TAFE lecturer I might see something in it. And there is a problem in that you don't know all the things going on. You don't know the directive from head office; you don't know where to get the spare paper and all that sort of thing. That's hard for casual TAFE lecturers but for me personally no.

On the other hand one felt very strongly that there was no stigma because things had changed. Now that flexible work was more a part of society all stigma had vanished. Her response was:
Many years ago there may have been but I don't think there is so much now because there is so much more casual work not just in training and development but generally in the workplace so previously casuals may have been thought of as lesser but not now.

Those who felt strongly that there was a stigma in being a casual lecturer mentioned like the respondent at the beginning feeling left out of things, not knowing what was going on. Some saw the attitude that if you did not have a permanent position, then there was something wrong with you:

I'd have to say that there definitely is some stigma. Some who are permanent lecturers may suggest that those who are happy being casual haven't got the wherewithal to secure a permanent job.

This is an attitude which I have seen in the workplace and have heard others talk about. In one meeting I attended with management, in a committee that was looking at ways to recruit, and retain the workforce, I suggested that one potential source of permanent staff were the many casuals who were employed. The immediate response from a director was that you would only want them to apply if they were competent. It was a careless, off the top-of-the-head remark since the purpose of an interview short listing process is surely to weed out the unsuitable applicants, but it is indicative of an attitude that casual can be equated with lack of competence.

It also seems to be a frightened response. If the casual can be deemed incompetent, then it must be their fault that they are not in permanent employment: cast them as the other and maybe you feel safer, label them as
incompetent and you feel safer. It is almost as if the person in continuing employment needs to deny the arbitrariness of being employed as a casual by viewing the casual as somehow not up to the job. Their own ideas of competence contain elements of status that imply that those who have not achieved their work position must somehow be at fault otherwise they would have to face the inequity of the situation. The fact that people, who once would have been employed as permanent staff, are now employed casually is an industrial fact that is unpleasant to face especially when those same people are doing the same work as you but not being paid and recognised for it.

Another point is of course that the college through its program managers should not be employing incompetent casuals. In their standards for registered training organisations, the Australian Quality Training Framework requires that lecturers be qualified to teach their subjects as part of maintaining quality. Standard 7.3.111 requires that training be delivered by a person who ‘is able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level of those being delivered.’ (Australian National Training Authority, p.9). This same document also requires that where a lecturer has the vocational competence but does not hold a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, they are to be under the direct supervision from someone who does and they should receive appropriate guidance direction and support. Given these requirements, any department that is home to incompetent casuals has not been doing its job effectively and since it is presumably an easy matter to replace those casuals who are not doing a good job, they should do so.
Before the current economic boom in Western Australia, the level of unemployment of older workers was such that there were numerous qualified candidates who had been displaced from quite senior position in business seeking work as casual TAFE lecturers (Watson et al, 2003). This was especially true in areas such as management where I worked with former senior bank managers, police prosecutors and a range of other executives who were unlikely to get other management positions because of their age or who had decided to take other paths in life. These people though, were qualified in what they taught, at levels not easily attained by those who had been in TAFE for many years.

One respondent suggests another reason for stigma:

And I think people were angry. The staff was angry because I was casual, because the casualisation of the workplace and them having to apply for their jobs was a very difficult time. But I had no other choice, there were not a lot of jobs available for me to get so that made it difficult.

Some staff who were unionised saw casual lecturers as a threat. They worried and not without reason, that management was planning to totally casualise the staff in the interests of cost cutting and flexibility. However instead of seeing casuals as people who were being exploited by the system and who might be allies in the fight for better conditions, some saw them as the enemy. They often campaigned against them rather than with them and made little effort to get them to join the union. The former respondent said when asked if she thought that union represented her interests:
I know the union wants to work on not having casualisation of staff and I agree with the union. But no I don't think that they do represent us. I think the trouble with the union is they're still in their old fashioned ideas, they still haven't caught up with that some people are forced to work casually. They, I think, take on the traditional view to some degree that perhaps women are working for pin money and they are a homogenous group and until more men work casually I doubt the union will ever represent my interests.

And when asked what she would like the union to do for her, she replied:

I would like the union to first of all approach me and encourage me to join and I probably would have joined actually. And to talk to me about pit falls of being casual and talk to me about what it might do to change the situation, to better the situation and ask me what I would like done.

It should be noted that the union approach has changed in recent years and there have been membership drives to get casuals to join the union and the union itself has taken up the fight for the improvement of casual conditions. Some attitudes remain in place though; at a recent union TAFE committee meeting discussing a new log of claims, the role and conditions of casuals was up for discussion. I suggested that since even long term casuals can be sacked or rather given no more work on the whim of a team leader without any recourse, then there should be some appeal process. One team leader defended her right to drop people at will not for operational reason but if she thought she had someone better in the wings. This is despite the fact that
there is no way she could do that to contract or permanent staff\textsuperscript{46}. So, even some union activists may not recognise the issues.

Some in turn saw stigma as not being the right term as in the following:

\begin{quote}
I can't think of any stigma that's been attached to me as a casual lecturer. Personally I don't feel that's there's been any stigma attached to my status as a casual lecturer. Possibly there is because casual TAFE lecturers totally get overlooked in the scheme of things. They don't get included in anything whatsoever so if you call that a stigma. I would say a stigma is more negative than that; rather that we are overlooked.
\end{quote}

I suspect that is a rather benign explanation of the phenomenon. While Goffman (1963) refers to stigma as being an attribute which is discrediting and one might say that just being overlooked or not included in anything is not discreditable, yet it seems that if someone were creditable, then they would not be overlooked and ignored. The stigma exists in that in a busy staffroom, those whose attributes are different are not worth noticing and as discussed in another chapter; this is reflected in the desk and storage space made available to them. It is more than that though: lecturers may or may not have specific lunch rooms and these seem increasingly to be either a luxury or unused because lunch is eaten at the desk. Lunch and socialising arrangements are made between people who are there constantly and it is easy to exclude those who just come and go.

\textsuperscript{46} This was a personal response by a member of the TAFE committee during discussions and is not recorded anywhere.
Goffman makes the point that the ‘stigmatised’ individual tends to hold the same beliefs about identity that we do (Goffman, 1963, p. 7). After all stigma might not work if the individual did not have the same values and beliefs as the group who are doing the stigmatising. If you have a strong and invincible belief in yourself then you might not be vulnerable to others’ perceptions that you are stigmatised. It is necessary to have an awareness of inferiority for it to apply to you. There are three additional questions I asked so that I could explore whether respondents felt vulnerable to the perception of stigma. These were whether they told people they were casual employees, whether they felt any less of a person for being a casual and whether they perceived that there was a stigma in general in being employed as a casual.

I did discover six individuals who seemed to perceive no stigma in any form by the way they answered these questions. Only one of them was making his living solely from working at TAFE and he had once been a full-time permanent lecturer who had in effect downsized for lifestyle reasons. He did not want to work more than three days per week and had a range of other interests that formed a major focus in his life. One seemed to dislike ever being confined to one job and stressed in her answers how much she liked variety:

I don't like to be on a conveyor belt heading towards something in particular because interesting things happen or come along and because I've always been flexible and done casual well not always but a lot of my life has been, it means that I feel comfortable about shifting off that path and going in other directions. So I think it gives me more
flexibility than someone who goes in and says ok I'm going to become this for the rest of my life and put on blinkers. I'm always interested in having lots of different areas within the teaching that I'm doing like with the children, migrants, the drop in centre, reading and writing and in the workplace because I know with this sort of career if you like, casual workers, that one of those can go down the drain at any time. And I'm very aware of that. It doesn't concern me because I know there are other little areas that I've still got work in and it would have to be fairly drastic to not have any work at all apart from Xmas and the holidays and I take that into consideration. One day they might all disappear and I would be in trouble but I could sweep floors - that's ok.

This lack of commitment to anything that seems to approach the normal concept of a career colours her answers throughout. It makes her very different to others in the survey who as previously described in the chapter describing the respondents fall largely into four groups; those making a living from TAFE, those who only wanted part time work because of family responsibilities, those who have a career somewhere else and bring industry experience to their part time lecturing and those who have retired and are just keeping their hands in. Of the other four who saw no stigma in any form, two had full time jobs in industry, one was retired from a full time TAFE lecturing job and the other was only doing it while she sorted herself out to travel.
Five of them actually felt less of a person for being a casual lecturer so they had not only accepted the stigma label but internalised it. One in particular used words like worthless which is a strong indication of self stigma:

That's a difficult one. Not so much less of a person in that yes I'm a human being but certainly you feel worthless. Because you have not got anything settled, because you can't make any commitments, you just feel like you are worthless and especially when you go for months without getting anything.

One of the others though has a greater sense of injustice and lack of equity – there may be loss of self esteem but there is still fight remaining though it is interesting that this respondent has not joined the union and sees no point in doing so:

Now that you ask the question, I think yes, I do. Especially when I see the inequality in the workplace, in my workplace, without being elitist, I can honestly say I am better qualified than some of the people who work there and they have jobs and I don't, yes there is that …

Another question was whether they actually told people they were casual and here the results were interesting. Some thought that there was a stigma in being casual but still told others that that is how they were working. One woman commented that she made jokes about it to her friends. Others reframe the situation and call themselves consultants or in one case:
Sometimes I use portfolio - most people don't know what it means. I said what do you know about portfolio of shares? I said I work here and there.

And another putting a good face on her situation says:

No. I don't either. I say here's my card. I lecture at TAFE. They don't need to know and call me on my mobile. Don't call me there I'm hardly ever there.

I also asked people if they thought that there was a stigma in general in being employed as a casual not referring specifically to their own experience and 66% were certain that there was. This question was aimed not at their own situation but at how they saw the world of employment in general and I think that here is further evidence of Goffman's stigmatised individual holding the same beliefs as the normal group. One respondent points out:

O yes, I mean there's no doubt that there is. Only because so many people, the whole casualisation of the workplace hasn't really hit the mainstream people and those people see that there must be something wrong with the individual as opposed to the system. And also casual work is seen to be women's work and that's not the case of course because there's many men who work casual work. Maybe that's changed slightly but it often seen as women just getting pin money, hobby money. So I could be constructed in those terms which really annoys me.
And one lecturer whose main job was in real estate pointed out:

Yes. Well I know how it is in our industry; we can't get finance for anybody who has casual written on their application. It's difficult to get finance for them so there is definitely a stigma.

So even those who were inside the experience themselves to varying degrees, recognised that casual work was not highly regarded.

Consequences of Stigma

In Western societies, work often defines us; we are what we do (Bessant and Watts, 2007). If our work identity is stigmatised, then surely we are too. It is true that some jobs are regarded as less desirable than others and that a greater degree of status attaches itself to some jobs rather than to others and people accept that. It seems unfair though that people doing the same job are regarded differently through no fault of their own. Of course, to the outsider the difference is not likely to be known but in the general context, casual is not likely to highly regarded.

I would contend that being stigmatised denies the stigmatee recognition and autonomy. It lessens their powers in the workplace and means that they are treated in different ways to those who are valued. They receive less pay, fewer opportunities, less collegial support and may become prone to anxiety and stress because of their situation as shown in the previous chapter. At the same time, employers may not get the most productive workforce that is
available to them since they do not recognise or tend to discount what they have available.

There are a number of consequences such as lack of power, lack of consultation, lack of access to information that are common to many at the lower end of the workforce, so what is different about casual TAFE lecturers? At one level, we might say that all workers, no matter what their jobs, should be treated with consideration and respect but in this particular case study, we are also looking at people who are highly qualified and skilled who are not being recognised for what they can contribute and who are in effect infantilised in the workplace. By using this metaphor, I mean that they are not able to develop and wholly use their professional skills but are rather just at the beck and call of their TAFE parent/program manager/head of programs. It is a metaphor with some weaknesses since it ignores the power which casual lecturers have both in their classrooms and over their students.

One of the significant issues in the workplace is that casuals, like children in society in general, have no real access to power in the organisation. They are not generally amongst the decision makers even when the decisions are being made at the lecturer level. Of course even permanent TAFE lecturers have little power to influence the ways that things happen at TAFE and decisions are often made by management which have deleterious effects on lecturers and their work without lecturers having any input into these decisions. For example, at one TAFE the bulk of permanent lecturers had a desk with a computer. Management did a calculation that as lecturers supposedly spent two thirds of their time in class and the equivalent of a day a week off
campus, then allocating a computer to each lecturer was a waste of resources. In fact, it would be good resource management to have one computer between every three lecturers. They were also influenced by the fact that other TAFE colleges did not allocate a computer to each lecturer.

Now what was not taken into account was the effect on staff morale when they were to lose a resource they had taken for granted; the fact that lecturers were often in the classroom at the same time and thus out of the classroom at the same time and wanting the computers at the same time and that while management envisaged banks of computers in staff rooms, most staff rooms were too small to permit this and computers were by necessity on particular staff members’ desks. It was an unpopular decision which has limited the access to computers of some staff. In the natural way of things, permanent lecturers get the available computers though of course some do miss out but casual lecturers definitely miss out. Access to computers for casuals depends very much on the attitude of the particular sections - some provide at the most exceptionally limited or even no access and some do their best to give support and access. There is no set access pattern; it depends on the whim of the head of programs or whoever is the line manager.

Permanent lecturers do have some limited decision making power at a department or section level. Decisions may be made on an informal basis in the staff room or they may be made formally at a staff meeting. There is also the case where decisions are made unilaterally by a team leader/head of programs but usually permanent staff members would have been consulted in some way and if they did not agree with the decision taken, could have their
views considered. A casual lecturer may also be consulted but not necessarily so; they are there to fill a gap in the workforce not to participate in all its activities. If consulted, they need to be careful about how they express their view as it can work against them. Children have a very limited role in society and lack autonomy. The same can be said of the casual lecturer.

Casual lecturers are at the mercy of the program manager/team leader who has the power to ‘grant the living’ like in the English villages where the local lord of the manor decided who should be the parish priest without regard to any application process. Casuals may have to be careful about being seen to be too pushy as in asking for too much work and this is a bit like a child being taught that they are not to ask for anything to eat when they go out to visit but must wait to be asked. I can remember asking one woman if there was a possibility of any more work and she told me that as I had 16 hours of work allocated to me, I should be able to live on that. That was a judgement with moral implications. Her pay was far more than I was earning but I should be able to make do with what she had allocated to me.

If a casual staff member is championed by a permanent staff member in good standing then they are likely to be more secure or at least to have their access to work preserved. This though feeds back into the notion of infantilisation as the casual gets the work not on their own personal merits but because they have a powerful sponsor.

Another consequence of not attending staff meetings is missing out on information. While much information comes through the college intranet system, other official information is delivered through staff meetings and
memos. Casual staff usually do have a pigeon hole and so will receive hard copy memos but may have no or little access to the intranet and their access often depends on them making the approach rather than it being part of the normal induction process. Of course the other form of information delivery is through the staff room grapevine but unless they have made close contacts, this will not work for them. One of the consequences of not receiving information is that casuals might not hear of relevant jobs becoming available that they might otherwise have applied for. There is of course much other relevant information which might be missed.

Part of this information might be about professional development. While professional development is encouraged for lecturing staff, it is not pushed for casuals who generally have to do it in their own time. For example, one lecturer had been asked by the Head of Programs to attend a two day seminar as there were places that the section had to fill. She would not be paid for her hours of attendance but it was seen as encouragement and an opportunity for professional development. She discovered however, that she would not be paid for the classes she was missing during that period and so would lose income.

Generally casuals do not have to pay for their professional development though it can happen. For example when the first flush of training for the Certificate Four of Workplace Training and Assessment was being offered, lecturers had access to it free of charge though of course casuals had to do it in their own time. These days, while they are encouraged to get it, they are
given no real support or assistance and are expected to make their own arrangements and to pay for it themselves.

The majority of casual staff in the case studies reported that they attended professional development ‘when they could’. Issues of cost and time were constantly cited as reasons for nonparticipation. Teachers (along with managers) reported that casual staff were expected to fund and attend professional development in their own time and at their own expense (Stehlik et al, 2003, p. 33).

The package has since been revised and enlarged; it will be even more difficult for casuals to get this qualification. While it is not essential for casuals to have this qualification, they do have to be supervised by someone who does and if they ever want to obtain a position as a permanent lecturer, they need to have it. I have heard of some people not being able to get work until they obtain it and not being given advice about how and where to go about it, being forced to pay $2000 at a business college for it.

This of course is not the only type of professional development available to TAFE lecturers; they also need to retain currency in their subject area and to engage other appropriate professional development such as computer skills and the like. In fact the current certified agreement rewards permanent and contract lecturers with extra leave for undertaking professional development but not casual lecturers. Being a casual lecturer can be a major barrier to professional development. Stehlik et al (2003) comment that most short term

47 At my own college, only permanent lecturers are entitled to free tuition for the Certificate 4 of Training and Assessment; both contract lecturers and casual lecturers must pay for it.
contract and casual staff perceived that professional development was not readily available for them or if it was, they were expected to undertake it in their own time. Dickie et al (2004) in the final report of the Enhancing the Capability of the VET Professional Project allude to this issue and makes as one of their recommendations ‘promoting an inclusive approach to workplace development that provides for broader participation across the workforce, regardless of mode of employment, individual role or type of RTO.’ (p. 28)

One of the casuals who is a management lecturer, commented:

Personally, I spent twelve and a half thousand dollars on my professional development last year. I had to go to Sydney to do some of that, I couldn't get the training here. TAFE don't know about it, it is not taken care of. There's no offer of attending conferences like full timers and presenting. But the bigger picture is to do that, is to actually which is what I am doing' I'm doing 6 hours a week paid work but I'm putting in more than what my wife is for 40 hours a week.

Another consequence of not being at staff meetings and not being around in the staff room all that much is the lack of peer to peer relationship which can be an essential part of sustaining and nurturing in the workplace. Frequently permanent staff know little about casual lecturers and vice versa and they know little about their skills, abilities and experience because of the general lack of communication and the relegation of casual lecturers to the periphery. This means of course that casual lecturers may never feel the support of their peers that can be essential in the workplace. Since other casual lecturers may well be your competitors in the quest to obtain and retain work, it is not
always advisable to disclose much to them and if permanent lecturers regard casual lecturers as their inferiors or as in some way inept, then they are less inclined to help. In any case, some may see it as easier to get rid of someone who has problems and to replace them with someone else rather to mentor them to improve skills. Someone who is employed as a casual lecturer is expected to be job ready or they may be regarded as being too much trouble.

In an ideal peer-to-peer relationship, casual lecturers would be consulted not only about section policy and developments but also about what work they might like and about their ideas on pedagogy and they would be included in social events. They would also be mentored on the way that the section worked and encouraged to undertake professional development to ensure that they are fully contributing members of the section. Now while an effort is made to include casual lecturers in formal social events such as the end of semester dinner or activities like that, they are often excluded from the informal activities. While this may be a result of circumstance and happenstance and not from any malicious intent, it does cut them off from the main life of the department.

Another problem that used to arise is the development of training plans and teaching materials. This is not such an issue since the introduction of the Australian Quality Training Framework and the regular auditing of training plans and assessment procedures made keeping thorough records and having training plans on file, imperative. It used to be that some permanent lecturers were unwilling to share their resources since they felt that casuals get paid outrageous amounts of money for doing very little and thus did not
deserve their assistance. But it also indicates that casuals were not regarded as being as deserving as permanent staff. A practical result of this stigma is some casual lecturers have to spend extra hours recreating materials that already exist for a course which they may only teach once. Collegiality and reciprocity are not necessarily extended to casual lecturers by permanent staff.

Some casuals feel a sense of rejection. As one reports:

Some of them I think couldn't care less when they see us walk in and out. Some of them are like machines to walk around, they don't talk to you, you don't talk to them. Some of them might acknowledge you, a minority would normally bother to say hello to you; the majority would not bother.

And another:

Now I would probably be accepted by the majority but before because I was a female teaching in management and because a lot of the old school guys did not want casual lecturers, the process was difficult.

This sort of attitude can make casual lecturers feel less valued and more isolated and not part of a team. And of course in an industrial sense, it fosters a ‘them and us’ attitude and does not foster staff cohesion when it comes to workplace matters especially issues of employment.

This lack of recognition and empathy in the workplace can lead to feelings of stress, of working in a vacuum, of not being valued and can lower morale.
But the most stressful part of this working mode, is not knowing at the end of each semester whether you are going to get enough work or even any work at all, is illustrated by this response when asked about insecurity and getting enough work:

I have no idea, if you said next year what are you going to be doing in teaching, I have no idea. I am totally at the hands of other people....I constantly worry about having enough work.... I have hours that I would get more on the dole than I would have done for three hours a week, for driving to Carine and back. I live in South Freo and I only have 3 hours, it's cancelled out by my petrol, but I've still done it, you do it because you want to appear as willing and hoping that something would happen.

The constant worry about getting enough work, especially if TAFE is your major source of income, can be very stressful and along with that are the problems of rejection. When people do not get the work that was hoped for through no fault of their own but for operational reasons, there is frequently a feeling of rejection. The consequences of stress are well documented. Any kind or level of teaching has its own stress factors but the addition of insecurity about getting work just adds an extra layer to this. From a personal point of view, I had always thought that I coped very well with the uncertainty of being casual and not knowing if there would be enough work at TAFE for me and whether I would have to make other arrangements. When I obtained a permanent position, my life was transformed. I gained a level of
security that I had forgotten existed and the stress levels that I took for

Another problem with casual work being stigmatised is that is can lead to

unwillingness to disclose your work status. If people know your status, then

they are likely to look down on you, so if they do not know your status, it is

best to hide it. If you are looking for work, being a casual TAFE lecturer is not

what you would wish to put on a resumé unless you had an industry based job

and went into TAFE once or twice a week as an industry expert; that could be

seen as a plus. Those people who were still looking for other jobs would not

mention on their resumés the fact that they were working casually; it would

be described as TAFE lecturing without any reference to the casual status.

The casual status would tend to diminish the work in the eyes of a prospective

employer especially if the person is past the age when casual work is

acceptable.

The same goes for disclosing to friends and family. While casual work is a lot

more common these days, and likely to continue to be so even with the

removal of the coalition’s IR legislation, it is not high status work. The

resilient may cope well and make jokes about it but others may suffer. While

a professional approach can be expected from all lecturers, higher standards

are expected from casuals since they are so easily dismissed or in truth just

not reemployed. Yet these higher standards are often implied and not made

overt. The casual lecturer needs to keep in favour with the person who is

responsible for allocating work. Some people may call this impression

management (Goffman, 1959) whilst others might say it is ‘sucking up’;
whatever description is used, it is imperative to be nice to this person and to make sure that they like you and think you do a good job.

Team leaders, program managers and TAFE management have less compunction about getting rid of those with whom they have made no real connection as they are not valued as much as other staff and maybe they are not even seen as real people. If they are not valued as much as other staff members then getting rid of them is not as important emotionally. Managers can do it with less emotional impact on themselves. One casual lecturer at my current college was encouraged by permanent staff to ask the program manager for more work. The program manager was quite upset that he would have dared to do this and annoyed with us for encouraging him to do so. Allocating work was her prerogative and she did not think he was up to it, no matter what the rest of us thought. He, understandably, was very upset as he had been encouraged by our support and then rejected.

Casual lecturers are in no position to oppose the system since their tenure is so precarious and they must rely on goodwill to survive. The pressure in the 1990s for the increased use of casualls, if it had succeeded for any length of time, would have brought about a highly compliant and docile body of lecturers. Whilst this might have made management’s job seem simpler, compliance does not necessarily make a good TAFE lecturer and both students and society might have missed out.

How do you treat someone who is valued in the workplace? You seek their opinions and you give them consideration. You consult them, you give them encouragement and praise. If you can make their work life easier, you will.
You value their input; you use their skills. You mentor them if necessary. You collaborate with them, you acknowledge them, and you give them a space in which to work. You are concerned about their comfort. You have high expectations of them and you want the best for them. None of this is guaranteed for casuals. (Robbins et al., 2003; Bartol et al., 2003).

In treating casual lecturers as expendable resources, TAFE is not recognising and valuing the skills and experience that they have. Since many have better qualifications and more recent work experience than many of the current permanent workforce, they bring talents and knowledge that might not otherwise be available to the students. A consequence of this may be that talented people search for work elsewhere since security is important to many just as is being recognised for what you do. So, as the unemployment level falls and the economy booms people who might formerly have looked for work at TAFE now have options which provide greater security, recognition and opportunity for advancement (ABS, 2006).

Another problem that faces TAFE is the aging of the workforce and the fact that many of its lecturers are approaching retirement (Junor, 2005; Selby Smith et al., 2001). The salaries paid to TAFE lecturers do not match those that are available in business though the conditions for those who are permanent have their attractions which militates against the low pay to some extent. However young people are unlikely to stay if they are appointed as casuals. The lack of a career path and the insecurity mean that unless they are able to gain permanency quickly, they will seek other opportunities in better paid industries.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined different forms of stigma experienced by casual TAFE lecturers at work. Many at TAFE may deny that any form of stigma in relation to casual lecturers exists: if you have never experienced it, then it may be difficult to recognise since permanency is the normal way of life for many. Just like the feminist consciousness raising sessions of the 1970s, maybe there needs to be stigma raising sessions in the present. Treating some lecturers as less important staff members does not improve the education and services that a TAFE college is meant to deliver.

In the next chapter, the second on the personal experience of being casual, I intend to see how the insecurity and stigma faced by casual TAFE lecturers affects their commitment to the job. While the word ‘casual’ suggests a certain flippancy or even a tendency not to take work seriously, I propose to demonstrate that casual lecturers are committed to their work.
CHAPTER NINE

Insecurity at Work

Job security has been endangered since the latter part of the twentieth century. Standing (1997) claims that during the period from 1945 to the middle of the seventies, ‘the ‘welfare state’ and the march towards some notion of ‘equality’ were seen as the dominant trends.’ (p. 8). Policy makers saw the major form of the labour market as one that was based on the principle of male, full-time, secure employment with women’s work being supplementary to the main income. Labour market relations were essentially ruled by pro-collective regulations.

Change happens. The influence of Keynesian economics\(^{48}\) gave way to supply side\(^{49}\) economic theory and to the monetarism of Milton Friedman\(^{50}\). Rather than full employment, the targeting of inflation became a prime concern and markets were freed to promote economic growth. As part of this process, there was move towards deregulation of labour markets and greater flexibility in how people were employed. Full employment was no longer seen as such

\(^{48}\) An economic theory stating that active government intervention in the marketplace and monetary policy is the best method of ensuring economic growth and stability. It is a ‘theory of total spending in the economy (called aggregate demand) and its effects on output and inflation’ (Blinder, 2008, n.p.).

\(^{49}\) Supply side economics describes how ‘changes in marginal tax rates influence economic activity. Supply-side economists believe that high marginal tax rates strongly discourage income, output, and the efficiency of resource use.’ (Gwartney, 2008, n.p.).

\(^{50}\) Friedman stated that in the long run, increased monetary growth increases prices but has little or no effect on output. In the short run, he argued, increases in money supply growth cause employment and output to increase, and decreases in money supply growth have the opposite effect (The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics, 2008, n.p.).
an important objective (Mitchell, 2004; Standing, 1997) and some jobs became insecure.

Job Insecurity

Standing (1999) claims ‘employment insecurity is partly a perception of risk’ (p. 168) In other words, employment insecurity depends on whether you expect to lose your job. In the 1990s, ‘perceived employment security is the aspect of jobs that deteriorated most.’ (p.169). Perhaps some people feel insecure when there is no need to but nevertheless, the insecurity exists.

Job insecurity is intuitively expected to be a bad thing for those who are experiencing it and to be one of the downsides of the push for flexibility. In this chapter, I intend to investigate a number of issues concerning the insecurity which may affect casual lecturers, and to examine their feelings about this insecurity. Of course not all of the respondents report feeling insecure which is in itself of interest and these feelings of insecurity are self reported and not examined through any sort of psychological testing. Nor is there any examination or discussion in this thesis of how health is affected by the insecurity they face.

The Literature

In general the literature on job insecurity looks at those in jobs which become insecure through the possibility of job losses (May, Campbell, Burgess, 2005; Quinlan, 2003). Those surveyed in the literature are generally self nominated as feeling insecure because of what has happened in their workplaces or what is likely to happen in their workplaces. It is a problem which Burchell et al
(1999) in their report on Job Insecurity and Work Intensification for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, suggested that:

The extent to which people worry about losing their jobs depends not only upon their perception of the likelihood of job loss but also upon their anxieties about the consequences of such an event (p.19).

A majority of studies of job insecurity are cross sectional though a report by Ferrie et al (2002) is longitudinal and considers the effects of chronic job insecurity on a group of people over a number of years. In this study, the workers go mainly from job to job. The lecturers in this survey are working in positions that by their nature are insecure regardless of whether the particular lecturer has held same position for a number of years. Just because someone has taught a certain subject to a certain group for a number of years, does not mean that it cannot and will not be taken away from them and given to someone else.

Having a job that is insecure may promote feelings of insecurity in job holders. It is possible to claim that those whose jobs are insecure may be being harmed by government policies which promote these conditions. The question is whether insecurity can be said to be a condition which harms the individual when there are jobs or professions that cannot be called secure and which rely on an element of chance to bring in the business which funds the employment as those such as trades people and some professionals who run their own businesses well know.
The literature in general associates job insecurity with both mental and physical symptoms. Ferrie et al (2002) found that job insecurity not only had adverse effects on health but that those effects increased with the degree of job insecurity and that furthermore there were residual effects even when workers gained job security. Greenglass et al (2002) in a study of Canadian nurses reported that job insecurity through downsizing and outsourcing led to higher levels of stress and a decrease in psychological well being and job satisfaction. A cross sectional survey of 1188 professionals in two adjoining cities in South Eastern Australia between the ages of 40-44, D'Souza et al (2003), found high correlations between job insecurity and job strain with adverse mental health outcomes and other poor health outcomes.

A report carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a large social policy and research organisation in the UK, by Cambridge University found that in the UK job insecurity amongst professional workers had increased by 28% in the years 1986 - 1997. This might have been just the professional workers catching up with changes which had already occurred in other sectors of the workforce but nevertheless it is a significant change in an area where workers would expect that their education and professional training would guarantee them secure work. Other major findings were that fears of losing their jobs were only part of the issue of job insecurity; other aspects involved loss of status, the loss of control over how they performed their work and the diminished opportunity for promotion. Another finding was that more than 40% of employees thought that management could not be trusted and 75% believed that management and workers were on different sides in the workplace.
Overall the report found that job insecurity and work intensification had a strong correlation with poor general health and stressful family relationships with physical and mental health deteriorating the longer someone continued in a situation of job insecurity.

Not everyone agrees with these findings. A review of this report by www.flexibility.co.uk, (2006) a site which promotes flexibility in the workplace and sees it as something that is desired as strongly by workers as by management, suggests that the very factors which promote job insecurity, ie the breaking up of businesses may at the same time provide opportunities for workers in new jobs which take up the slack. It cites as an example the outsourcing of work by organisations like telecoms where downsizing large numbers of jobs provided opportunities for those workers in the areas where job functions had been outsourced. They comment that individuals with the right skills will always have a high level of employability. Of course what defines the right skill will depend on the current needs of the market. One of the respondents to this research, one of the most highly qualified people, is the one who has had the greatest trouble in finding work suited to his qualifications. His qualifications are not only highly specialised, they are not very marketable; a PhD in astronomy is not in great demand in the workforce. This approach would seem to have elements of ‘blame the victim’. If someone does not succeed in getting work then it is because of some fault within themselves, they have not kept their skills current or been prepared enough to take the right sorts of entrepreneurial risks.
This review also points out that feelings of insecurity may be dependent on factors outside of the workplace and that most people would give up working if they won the lottery. It claims that job insecurity is often the top level manifestation of life insecurity so if people in insecure jobs are feeling insecure it may be that the fault lies with them individually. Also ‘if flexible working has engendered an increase in job insecurity, perhaps it’s because as a society we haven’t got the other things right’. In other words, daily life and its financial aspects such as bill paying and mortgage repayments are predicated on a regular and predictable income so while public policy encourages flexibility, it does little to ease its burdens and the problems it may cause. This is certainly one of the problems faced by casual lecturers who rely solely on their TAFE employment for income.

Wallulis (2002 n.p.) criticises this approach claiming that business literature has the tendency to ‘dismiss worker insecurity through psychologizing it in terms of anxiety and treating it as an irrational and disproportionate reaction that fails to comprehend the larger economic picture’. He also claims that another approach is to regard any insecurity as a failure of nerve that will disappear when the ‘transitional economic period is over’ and when the real economic recovery happens. There are those who obviously do prosper in the regime of flexible work practices but the question is, who are those people? For him, the Bill Gates of this world, are not having to develop new skills constantly but rather having to refine the ones they already have in order to maintain and transform their businesses into more stable institutions. There are also those who choose to accept the world of the self-directed and self-empowered portfolio worker as described by Handy (1994), the golden
model of the flexible capitalism movement. There are also those who are less powerful, who can be seen to be much lower down the working chain and subject to uncertainty and powerlessness. They might be seen to be cast adrift by flexible capitalism, buffeted by the whims of the economy and the employer.

Other issues of job insecurity may leach into job performance. Ameen et al (1995) in a study of academic accountants found that job insecurity was directly linked to an intention to change jobs through its consequences of lower job satisfaction and a decrease in job commitment. The job insecurity was linked to the volatility of the American academic job market where the demand for accounting courses was decreasing. A group of assistant professors were surveyed with the major result being that as job insecurity increases, then job satisfaction decreases which in turn increases the intention to look for other employment. A worker who is dissatisfied and who is intending to leave whether or not they ever do is not likely to be the most motivated of workers.

A corollary of this is the issue of trust. The Rowntree Report claims that trust is vital to maintaining a sense of security and that ‘relationships of trust play a vital role in maintaining the flexibility, morale and motivation of employees.’ (p. 58). But when workers were surveyed, their distrust of management was very high. 44% of them had no belief that managers could be relied upon to do their best for their employees and 53% indicated some feelings of powerlessness in the workplace (p. 37). This indicates a perceived lack of control over their working environment and their future.
There is some strong evidence that insecurity has effects on people’s health. The British Household Panel Survey cited in Rowntree has used the General Health Questionnaire, a measure of mild symptoms of depression and anxiety since the early 1990s. When people are feeling insecure their GHQ scores worsen and if they remain in insecure employment, rather than adapting, their GHQ scores continue to worsen. This supports the research referred to earlier.

The evidence is fairly strong that stress is a factor in physical health issues. While the effect of stress on the individual varies, it is clear that those effects are generally not beneficial. Some people treat symptoms of stress through self medicating with alcohol and other drugs; others find it hard to sleep or neglect to exercise regularly. But research also indicates that stress may cause rises in cholesterol levels (D’Souza et al, 2003) and that it increases the risk of cardio vascular disease (Cheng et al, 2000). The Whitehall 11 study (Ferrie et al, 2002) found increases in blood pressure in women whose jobs became insecure and in general an increase in self rated poorer health. This latter factor, a self rated deterioration in physical health was common to many of the studies especially when insecurity was combined with low job control. Cheng et al (2000) Zeytinoglu et al (2004) Sparks et al (2001).

Many of the lecturers interviewed for this research also had more than one job and often on the same day which can in itself be tiring. Another physical factor for some is the issue of driving from job to job and the tiredness and sometimes stiffness that this causes. Zeytinoglu et al (2004) in a study of stress in part time and casual workers in the retail trade found that holding
multiple jobs because there were not enough hours of work available in one location along with split shifts was a source of stress especially for those who had family responsibilities and for those concerned about a work life balance.

There are difficulties with making direct correlations of stress with specific symptoms but it is clear there is a link and it is also clear from studies that job insecurity and poor job control increase stress. As the participants in this research have insecure jobs and their job control is limited, it might be expected that they were all stressed and suffered from psychological and physical health problems. There have been some suggestions that stress and its severity is linked to personality factors and that those with particular personalities will survive better. Indeed the business literature which touts the benefits of flexibility sees those who fail to cope with its demands as being somehow lesser than those who appear to. This is a simplistic response and measuring stress by outward appearances alone is not valid. Roskies et al (1993 n.p.) in a study on personality and coping mechanisms for job insecurity came to the conclusion that they could find only minimal support for the idea that ‘personality aggravates or alleviates the stress of job insecurity via the selection of healthy or unhealthy coping strategies.’

Not everyone agrees. Hellgren and Sverke (2003) argue that while job insecurity as a cause of stress has been frequently examined with findings that indicate that there is a link between job insecurity and negative employee reactions, these studies have assumed the direction of the relationship. They suggest that rather than job insecurity causing mental
problems perhaps we should consider that workers who suffer from feeling insecure may have pre-existing health problems.

The suggestions for dealing with this insecurity focus on the individual rather on any structural responses. Burchell et al (1999, p. 46) see social support as being ‘an important contributor to good well-being and to feeling positive about one’s job.’ This support can be from family or friends or from supervisors and managers. Sparks et al (2001) are looking for management to manage the impact of a flexible workplace in a way that maximises employee well-being through good communication while Greenglass et al (2002) suggest that consultation and information sharing are some of the ways to reduce stress. On the other hand, D’Souza et al (2003) sees the impact of insecurity on employee’s health to be serious enough that it should be taken into account when industrial relations legislation is formulated.

Insecurity and Casual TAFE Lecturers

Relating this to casual TAFE lecturers means differentiating them from others in the community who might be said to face job insecurity. For example, it is not uncommon for tradespeople especially in the private sector, to have been forced out of their particular trade because of a slump in the economy or if they do have work in their trades area, to have to accept lower wages than they might otherwise expect. Recently Western Australia had a resources boom that flowed on to the rest of the economy, (Gome, 2008) the housing market was buoyant and tradespeople were being paid premium wages while the government and industry (Australian Mining, 2007) talked of a skills shortage and employers considered importing skilled labour to fill the gaps.
This is the way of the market economy and supply and demand. Now that boom appears to have ended and people are losing their jobs again (Uren, 2008).

Others who establish their own business whether it is as a professional such as a solicitor or a retail outlet or a consultancy are likely to face insecurity in the early stages at least of their business (ABS, 2007) and even many public sector jobs are now on short term contracts which may or may not be renewed (Office of Public Employment, 2006). Academia, once a secure and tenured profession, is now increasingly insecure. Indeed an article in The Higher Education supplement to The Australian (February 6, 2006) discussed the lives of casual academics. Baranay (2000) reported widespread anxiety amongst these casual academics and a reluctance to rock the boat in case it affected their chances of getting work. Whilst many were paid minimal rates in comparison with their tenured colleagues, it had been seen as a way to gain a more permanent position.

While we might like to look back to some age when there was supposed certainty and people could expect to have a continuous job from the time they left school until the time they retired, this has only ever been the case for particular jobs. The fact is uncertainty has been with us always. There have always been uncertain jobs. The difference now is that those uncertain and insecure jobs have spread to include not only manual and service but professional areas as well.

This is the flip side of flexibility. The business literature (Handy, 1994; Dent, 1995; Peters, 1994; Business Victoria, 2006) frequently assumes that flexibility
is a benefit to both worker and employer allowing them to negotiate mutually acceptable working hours. But job insecurity often accompanies flexibility if the hours offered are casual and uncertain and if the employee feels unable to reject work offered to them when it is not convenient without being penalised. For the casual TAFE lecturer, there is no guarantee that work will be available for the next semester even if the lecturer has been teaching a particular course for some time and as is noted in other sections of this work, there are a number of factors including a decline in student numbers, changes in management or even the need to find work for a redeployee that may affect access to lecturing hours. Also, if for some reason a casual lecturer is unable to teach a course for a short time and that course is given to someone else to teach, then the likelihood is that the second lecturer will retain the course. Many casual lecturers then are reluctant to ever say ‘No’ for fear of losing their work.

The question is what if anything is different now and what if anything is different between the status of the small business person or tradesperson and the casual TAFE lecturer that might affect this potential feeling of insecurity? There is one element that does make a difference; the casual lecturer can generally only obtain work at certain times of the year and there is a selection process of sorts which needs to be undergone\textsuperscript{51}. This process, as discussed elsewhere, has no consistency and may vary within the same college from a written application to a verbal recommendation from another lecturer to even in one case, co-opting a family member. The important factor though is that usually lecturers are only employed from the beginning of the semester.

\textsuperscript{51}The issue of obtaining work is discussed in Chapter 4.
or term. If someone is looking for lecturing work then they have to wait for the appropriate time to apply and that time is not clear cut; it may be towards the end of the previous semester or it may be just as the semester begins and student numbers are known. Occasionally, it is even during the semester if another lecturer has left for some reason, though this is less common.

The issue is that it is not certain that work will be available, and there are only a limited number of vacancies at any one time and all of these factors are outside of the casual lecturer’s control. Lecturers can market or promote themselves strongly but this may not result in their getting any work. On the other hand, a business person can offer a special or a promotion to generate more business or a tradesperson can seek work on their own account if there are no vacancies in companies ie an electrician who might normally work for a building company has the option of advertising for work in the local paper when there is a downturn. A casual TAFE lecturer has insecure options for employment in the TAFE system which is why some have other sources of income.

It needs to be made clear of course that not every casual lecturer who participated in this research reports feeling insecure even if they recognise the work as precarious. Those respondents who have other sources of income either through other work or through their spouse or partner are obviously less inclined to feel insecure. Given too that their feelings of

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52 Continuing employment depends on the class being run again, the numbers of students, other permanent or contract lecturers needing hours, the whim of the program manager, college policy etc.
insecurity were self reported, there is always some room for error or obfuscation. But among others there were those who not only said that they did not feel insecure but as reported in a previous chapter, that they enjoyed being a casual.

I asked a series of questions about job insecurity to see how people reacted to the either perceived or real insecurity. The questions asked do not measure any health issues but in general give some indication of what the respondent was feeling about their work role. Where people already have another job or a partner with a sufficient income or are already in retirement mode, it might be thought that these issues are not so prominent. As well, those who were personally resilient with a good tolerance for ambiguity might find the issue less stressful. However this is to individualise the issue of insecurity and to blame the individual for not being sufficiently resilient and in any case how might we judge the effects of insecurity on those who to all appearances seem to be coping well?

For a start I asked the following question: casual work is commonly referred to as precarious employment, is this how you see it? On the whole most people regarded it as precarious with only two people saying outright that in their experience, the work was not precarious. Interestingly one was giving up casual lecturing in real estate as his work was now becoming far too busy for him to make time for it and the other has since been offered a long term contract. One of these people had never had to rely on their TAFE lecturing for an income while the other had excellent networking skills and had never been short of work. It is interesting that as a single parent, she was the main
support of her family but this might have made her even more determined to get and maintain work. When asked what she had to do to get work, she responded:

Be nice to people and as one of my program managers said, I am always available and flexible, and that she knew she could ring me up at seven o'clock in the morning and I would be there at seven thirty. Willing, able, helpful and cheery. I also get on well with the other staff members at the various places I work. That helps more than qualifications, to be part of the team and to be able to fit in is what it takes to be able to get work as a casual lecturer.

Now that approach certainly worked for her but it seems to me that the definition of flexible in her case meant to come running whenever the program manager called. This was a single parent with three adolescent, school attending sons so being at the ready to respond to a call to work, could conceivably have been problematic.

The others certainly regarded the work as precarious to varying degrees. One respondent with a high flying wife said:

I don't but my wife does. It put me through uni, it paid for my first car. So nothing comes up next week, if I worry about that, I am going to stress.

He of course knew that there was at least one reliable income in the household. Another ran his own consultancy business which provided him with a satisfactory income:
If I depended on it, my answer would be yes but because I have my salary from my work, I don't think it applies to me.

While another replied:

It's probably less precarious than running your own small business.

One woman while admitting that casual work could be regarded as precarious went on to say:

Well a lot of people might see it that way and I guess I do too but it doesn't have that bad connotation. I know that I might be out of a job at any stage; it doesn't worry me. I'm not going to lose sleep over it. So I am not one of those people who really wants to have very definite - know that money is coming in all the time. I've learnt to live with it, well I've never had to learn, it has been part of my life for a long time. I don't want permanency, they've tried to do that with me and I've just pedalled backwards fast and if I had, if they told me I had to become permanent, I would be out of that system immediately.

Her response is fairly extreme in contrast to other responses especially as she was the sole income earner in her household and like some others used tutoring to bolster her income. Most people though simply agreed with the proposition and their ability to cope with it depended on their circumstances and perhaps on their tolerance of ambiguity.

With most respondents regarding casual work as precarious, my follow up question was whether they themselves felt insecure. Now this question was
couched in general terms without regard to any particular area of insecurity. It might also be that there is some short term relief from insecurity once the work is granted and the numbers seem to be sufficient to support the class. Of course towards the end of each semester the issue of whether there will be work arises again. Half of the respondents denied feeling insecure and of those who did feel some sort of insecurity, some were able to say that it was not personal. As one lecturer put it:

Personally no, but financially I do.

However fifty percent of those who answered this question regarded themselves as insecure in a work sense; as one put it:

Within that area, very much so. I have no idea, if you said next year what are you going to be doing in teaching, I have no idea. I am totally at the hands of other people.

This response indicates that the respondent feels that he has little control over how much he works. And another long term respondent agrees:

The thing that can make it precarious is if your program manager decides to leave and you get someone else who doesn't know you. You may miss out on work for an entire semester. This work hinges on contacts.

Once again there is the element of lack of control.

People use a variety of strategies to cope with this lack of control. Some people try to reframe the situation:
Well I think I reframe it by telling - I do a sort of reframe of thinking what is permanent in life. I do that sort of astral, cosmic reframe which works sometimes after a glass of wine. It does bother me the lack of permanency and the lack of predictability in my future but I tell and reassure myself that I will be ok, and that works sometimes. I have the same cycle (my discussion about worrying about work at the end of each semester) coming up to it now I heard that they will be doing timetabling for next year, late October/November and you get that anxiety O god I hope I get some hours, I hope I get some hours. And it's absurd. And the constant, the constant rumours and little titbits that you sort of hear or overhear the permanent staff conversing about, about the shake up that's happening, the rationalisation and you sort of hear this and think ... I remember being told last year casuals are finished and that happens if not every semester at least every 2 semesters.

Another one used a social support mechanism, in this case his wife:

When I left Telstra in particular, I had the feeling that I had done the right thing but wasn't entirely sure and both Morag (my wife) and I were quite happy to discuss it. Have I done the right thing and that sort of thing and she - that's the main way of overcoming insecurity, we would talk it through and she'll see options. Likewise at times she will feel insecure about her studies and I can help her through those.

And another uses the power of positive thought:
Well I do a lot of positive talking to myself and I tell myself that my time will come.

Respondents were asked whether they felt in control of their working lives and if not what needed to be done to make them feel in control. There were some differences in response as to whether control was seen in a macro or micro sense. One respondent who took a micro-approach related control to how he managed his classes. He did not see himself as having any control in the workplace and felt that he needed more warning of what he might be teaching to get that control. His reasoning was:

I would have to have some advance notice of what I am teaching. This year I did but I know there's a possibility I could have an extra one or two units next semester but I don't know now. There's a unit I might get and I might not get which is a fairly hefty unit. I have taught in that area before but as for this unit I would like to have time to research to make sure I have the program prepared for students, the reading done, bibliographies, handouts all those sorts of things take time to prepare.

Those with a more macro-approach saw control having more to do with whether they were likely to get more work or even any work at all. As might be expected, those with other support were more likely to feel in control. This particularly applied when they had another job and were teaching only as industry subject experts and to a lesser extent when they had a financially secure partner. Those with family responsibilities were more ambivalent. One mother reported:
To a certain extent yes because I haven't really wanted to work more than casual but now because the kids are a bit older I could work more so in that sense my hours are restricted. I will have to put out a few feelers at another TAFE college and I could to one of the Elicos type places. Yeah to me I could have applied for a contract last year but it would have meant I would not have had as much flexibility so.

So yeah I do I'm choosing to be a casual at this stage.

For others though, the lack of control was an issue and what they wanted was to be offered some permanency. One lecturer wanted:

A contract, a part-time, full time contract. Someone to sort of acknowledge and accept that I have a few things to offer and use it, use me to do what I know what I can do and hopefully everyone benefits.

There is an indication here that the lecturer is feeling undervalued and is not being given the opportunity to work to the full extent of her ability and experience.

Some had strategies for feeling in control that involved being able to teach a broad range of subjects and having contacts in a number of colleges. This increased the opportunities for work. Those who worked the most hours or who gained their living solely from their work at TAFE were far more likely to be working at more than one campus. As one woman, who had great success in getting work, put it when asked if she felt insecure replied:
No - No, but because of the amount of subjects and units I can teach, I never panic. Maybe in the first year or so, I had a bit of a panic. But as it got closer to the end, I never had that. I was never worried, in fact in the end I ended up saying to the human services course at Carine do not put me down any more. Because while I could have Joondalup, Leederville, Carine and Perth, there was such a wide area that I could teach in, it was very easy. No in the end, I was knocking back work as a casual.

One lecturer felt that the base level lecturer could never be in control and that control came from being part of the management team:

I would like to be team leader; that would be control. I can supervise where I am now instead of being just one of the workers. That would give me the control I need there. At TAFE, I don't think I would ever get control there even if I had been there for 10-15 years I don't think I would ever have any control. You are just really a number. It's not very personable; you are a means to an end.

Another lecturer had a more holistic view of being in control:

I would need to have a clear understanding of where I want to be and a clear path of how to get there. Then I would see what I'm doing and which step I take in getting toward that goal. At the moment, even though I have given you that scenario I'd love to be doing this, I mean in two weeks time that might change. From experience I have thought that the end goal is moving all the time.
For the vast majority though, the important factor was to have some sort of permanency even if it was only a contract since on a basic level this delivered some sense of security. One lecturer put it this way about having a contract:

It allows you to settle down in more ways than one, to get established to get to know people. There's a catch 22 - the bad part is you are always trying to find out who to talk to, where to get resources, and you don't know the administrative staff, you don't know how the college operates you've got to learn all those things. The good thing is that if there are any college politics you can just back right out of there. You have nothing to do with it, you don't get involved. I would prefer to work at one college and get established, to get a foot hold there.

An interesting phenomenon is the way that attitudes changed and developed throughout the interview. In the earlier stages of the interview many of the respondents said that they did not want a full time permanent job but in answer to the question about control, more of them said that to feel in control they would need some type of part time permanent position so that it would appear that while they did not necessarily want full time permanent work they did still want permanent part time work. It also suggests that the interview process acts as some form of consciousness raising giving participants an opportunity to clarify their thoughts about their situation. One woman who also had family responsibilities and worked generally the full eight hours per week that was allowed under the agreement said she never wanted to work full time again as:
I am also a housewife and mother and I'm also a taxi driver for children
and this and that and the other thing and I rush round like a wet hen.
And I don't know that I would have enough time for preparation and
marking and enough energy for too many more hours.

But later she comments that though she feels in control in the classroom she
has no control over who offers her work and sometimes she gets her eight hours
and sometimes she does not. It does make the point that security may well be
strongly linked to control and that control for the casual lecturer is problematic
as they generally have no control over the hours that they work but are reliant
on the goodwill of the program manager and the vagaries of student enrolment.
A permanent part time position would see them have a regulated set of hours
to work and probably a regular set of subjects to teach. It would also give
them a feeling of being part of the TAFE community with ideas that should be
listened to. While some claim not to want this and to actually prefer their
freedom to be uninvolved, this may in fact be a rationalisation of their
situation. This is dealt with in greater depth in another chapter.

An aspect of the security/insecurity discourse is the issue of financial security.
Of course, feelings about money are never simple and may well relate to the
personality and the psyche but it is still possible to look at matters of financial
security in relation to precarious employment. While it should be obvious that
uncertain employment relates directly to financial insecurity, what is also
examined here is the way that situation is manifested.

Of those surveyed, the cohort that feels financially secure is divided equally.
Those who do feel secure generally have some sort of other support. For a
couple this was inherited money, for five it was a partner who provided, three were retired and only working for extra income and for the interest of the job and the others had other work which brought in an income. Only one of those who felt financially secure did so because she had confidence in her abilities to find work; at the same time she was the oldest respondent who was still working past the official retirement age. She also wanted more hours of work and would like a permanent fulltime job. Those who felt financially insecure used Centrelink where possible to support them through the breaks and looked for other work to tide them over the holidays. Some bought only second hand clothing and some I suspect just worried.

When people were asked if they thought they could provide for their futures the responses divided much as they did to the former question. However there were a couple of people who felt that while they felt financially secure at the moment, they did not feel they were providing adequately for their futures. As one woman with a partner with a reasonable job put it when asked about providing for the future:

    Not as well as I would like to. Which is again the.. you see possibilities and whatever and then you realise that you can't really commit to them because it is so precarious. It is a fleeting I've gotten by this week, I should be all right until the end of semester, then who knows what?

She is looking at investment opportunities which have to be passed by but for others it is a matter of just not having enough money left over to put aside:
No not compared to if I had a full time position simply because you do not get paid for holidays and over the Xmas period you have 10 or 12 weeks so you really have to budget if you don't want to overspend.

If, as for some of the respondents, TAFE is their only source of income, then stringent budgeting is important. Some people say it is normal for them to budget stringently anyway and for some it is not necessary because of their circumstances but some are very careful. The sorts of strategies adopted range from buying clothes from op shops to one man who was finding it very difficult to get work who responded:

Yes. My ex wife tried to challenge me why I wasn't paying child support and I went into the child support agency, I had to give a full list of my income and my expenditure and for a long while they refused to believe me because my regular expenditure on bread, electricity etc was more than my income. I had to point out that occasionally my parents would give me some money if a bill was there and I could not pay. That's what you do.

Another woman, who currently had a scholarship to undertake a PhD and thought that she was now financially better off than she normally would be as a casual TAFE lecturer, spoke about her life on a budget:

Yes permanently. I do without. I do without a tremendous amount. I don't mind that. I'm good at doing without. It is one of my strengths. I actually do without many, many, many luxuries. I get basic foods. I have friends - we joke about them giving me food parcels. This
particular year is better than some have been. But for example when I earned the $9000, friends joked about dropping off food. My neighbour would make a huge pot of soup and say I've got too much here's some for you. It's not charity because I do plenty for her. And yet there is that element.

This same respondent, though she is poorly paid in comparison to some because she works only in one college and is thus limited by the number of hours she can work, does not choose to seek income support from Social Security. She took some pride in being able to save sufficient money to tide her over the holidays. Seven of the casuals though disclosed that they did apply for social security benefits to tide them over the summer break and another couple would if it were not so difficult. Others who might be entitled to it saw it as a very undesirable thing to do. As one man said:

I have thought about it but I don't feel good about it. It would not help my self esteem.

There does seem to be a stigma attached to having to apply for support from the government. Some are even earning so little from their work at TAFE that they do have to remain on benefits a situation that is not ideal.

At first glance, the money paid for casual lecturing seems generous as it is an hourly rate of approximately $50 per hour for those teaching at Certificate IV and Diploma levels and approximately $40 per hour for those teaching at Certificate II and III levels. Those who teach the lifestyle courses generally
receive around $30 per hour\textsuperscript{53}. Thus a casual lecturer who taught 23 hours, the full time teaching load at the time this research was done would earn $1150 per week if all the teaching was done at diploma level. As the teaching year runs nominally for 40 weeks of the year, this would be an annual income of $46000 for 920 hours lecturing per annum. This would be roughly equivalent to level 5 on the salary scale; someone with a degree and no teacher training would start on level 3. This money, combined with the 12 weeks that no work is available, would seem like a great deal. Either this time could be taken as holiday or perhaps the casual could find some other work.

The reality is different. I have used the model of 23 hours teaching for two semesters of 20 weeks each because that is what a full time permanent lecturer is expected to teach which makes a total of 920 hours of teaching per year. The reality is that I never managed to get 920 hours teaching per year no matter how hard I tried and how many campuses I worked at. Casual staff do not get paid for public holidays or for sick days so those lost hours reduce your earning potential. Then not every course runs for the full 20 weeks; some courses may run for as little as five weeks and then it may not be possible to fill that slot. Another problem is that at the time this research was done, because of the Certified Agreement (1996), a casual could only work eight hours at the one college and that is college not campus. Consequently it would be necessary to seek work at the other colleges and that would involve travelling time so accepting a class at eleven might mean that you lost afternoon work. As an example I once worked at three different campuses in the same day which involved working morning, afternoon and evening and a round trip of 140

\textsuperscript{53} This at the rates paid at the end of the 1990s when the bulk of this research was done.
kilometres. Eating lunch in the car is a common situation for those who work in more than one location.

Of course the other problem is finding the work. Sixty percent of those surveyed wanted more hours of work so they obviously were not getting enough to maximise their incomes. Two of those interviewed already worked close to the full 23 hours and so were not interested in more work but it is possible to claim that few of the others were getting the full time equivalent hours and so their pay would be affected accordingly. It is possible to work more than 23 hours a week and I have done it myself but for the three years that there were restrictions on casual’s hours, it was very difficult. I did come across one lecturer after those restrictions were lifted who regularly worked 30+ hours a week and although those hours were all for the same college, they were spread over 3 campuses from Fremantle to Mandurah.

Another factor which affects pay rates of course is the level at which you are teaching. Where a college is keen to save money, Program Managers may ask that casuals only be given Certificate III classes as the pay rate for these classes is $10 less per hour, it may depend on how the course is structured. In the management area, all students are enrolled to do the Diploma of Management so all the lower level classes were paid at Diploma rate as they were part of the diploma. In contrast in community services students enrol for one level at a time, commencing at Certificate III level so for basically the same subjects, you may be paid $10 less per hour.

So finally, while the ideal of a casual earning $46000 per year for working the equivalent hours of a full time lecturer is hypothetically possible, in reality it is
not likely to happen. Fostering the financial insecurity of casual TAFE lecturers has paid off for TAFE management, as they have been able to employ casual lecturers for far less than they would have had to pay permanent or contract ones.

Conclusion

Insecurity remains a problem in the workplace; it has emotional and physical health problems. It means that many people do not lead a happy and fulfilled life at work since they are concentrating on how they can make their work more secure. This insecurity is a direct consequence of organisations trying to make themselves more financially secure at a cost to their employees. This is the case at TAFE where a lack of solid commitment to staff and a fundamental lack of understanding of the benefits of good teaching to the business side of TAFE mean that the pressures on casual lecturers are not acknowledged. While management makes a narrow case for shedding costs by not investing in staff, this is a very narrow approach which sees TAFE suffer through poor staff morale in a broader sense.

As for the casual lecturers themselves, some recognise that they have feelings of insecurity and some do not. While this project did not focus on psychological and physical effects of insecurity on casual lecturers, it did identify that many were facing financial problems as a result of their mode of work and that many had a strong desire for some certainty in their lives. At the time that this research was done, jobs were not plentiful especially for older workers so TAFE management could really employ as they please no matter what the consequences for their workforce. In the current boom economy in Western
Australia, it is much easier to find alternate work and certainly in the trades areas, casual TAFE lecturing is not attracting potential employees.

There is a flow on in areas which are less in demand but this is countered by there being fewer students applying to go to TAFE since they can obtain jobs more readily. Consequently, the position of casual working in areas such as Management and Community Services remains much as it always has been.

It is debateable whether TAFE will ever recognise the harmful effects of insecurity in the workforce while they remain poorly funded and struggling against increased competition from private providers. Government policy, both state and federal encourages people to seek out flexible work practices and in this case, those employed as casuals bear the brunt of it.
CHAPTER TEN

Casual Commitment

In this chapter I intend to discuss the concept of commitment at work and to examine whether casual workers can be regarded as being committed to their job. There are varied definitions and components of commitment so it is not a straightforward concept. And attitudes to commitment in the workforce vary depending on what position you hold in the hierarchy and how you perceive others. Casual lecturers may, because they are casual, be regarded as not having the same degree of commitment to their work as permanent lecturers. In this chapter, I demonstrate that casual lecturers are committed to their work but that commitment is generally not to the organisation but rather to the students, the objects of their emotional and professional labour. It will also be shown that for some organisations, the concept of commitment is one sided. This chapter raises questions about whether commitment is possible and even advisable for casual TAFE lecturers.

Defining Commitment

Definitions of commitment tend to be rather vague. Young et al (1998) claim that there is little real consensus about the meaning of commitment. Mowday (1982) cited in a paper by Savery and Syme (1996) on the organizational commitment of hospital pharmacists in Western Australia, describes it as the relative strength of an individual’s identification with an organisation as well as his/her involvement with the organisation. The problem is that
commitment is not necessarily as simple as this definition might suggest. The definition relies on the organisation being one homogeneous and monolithic entity. Any large organisation will have a number of subcultures and it is possible that an individual will have varying degrees of commitment depending on their status within the organisation just as he/she may have varying degrees of motivation for working there.

Meyer and Allen (1997) describe a three-part model of commitment. One part is the affective, an employee’s emotional attachment to the organisation. Affective commitment sees the organisation as part of the person’s work identity. This affective commitment redraws identity so that:

We are presented with a model of a new career as a self-managed project through which individuals are empowered to cultivate their self, to realise their dreams, and at the same time contribute to, and share in, the enchantment of organisational excellence (Fournier, 1998, n.p.).

Fournier contrasts those who have bought into this discourse of the enterprise career in an organisation with those in another department who resist it through militancy and an emphasis on their technical and professional skills. In this case those in a sales role who saw themselves as having endless opportunities were most committed to the dream and responded to it on an emotional level while those in a technical branch, service providers, and located separately viewed this dream with great cynicism. They could not see what was in it for them and what there was, they did not particularly desire.
The second element is the normative commitment which sees an employee bound to the organisation from a sense of duty and obligation. This suggests that employees have a moral obligation to do the right thing by their employers particularly while employers are doing the right thing by them but even if they are not. People are socialised into doing the right thing, respecting authority and those who do not may well be regarded as nonconformists both by their colleagues and their managers and not regarded as promotion material. Working well may not be perceived as being good enough if the worker does not attend the appropriate social functions and support other work sanctioned events. A person who does not conform in this way may be regarded as not being a team player.

Finally, there is the continuance aspect in which people show commitment because of the perceived benefits and lack of viable alternatives. It may even be that they feel they have put so much time or effort into an organisation that they have no alternative than to continue. Thus you hear of people who do not wish to take what might be a better job that is offered to them because they might lose their long service leave or some other accrued benefits or because they are so used to doing what they do that they find it difficult to change. It may also be that the level of unemployment is such that it is better to stay with the job than risk unemployment.

An examination of casual lecturer’s attitudes suggests that generally they do not have a strong affective commitment to the organisation though as will be seen later, there is a commitment to their students which is quite strong. It is clear that casual lecturers regard themselves as teacher/lecturers rather
than as TAFE employees. There are elements of normative commitment as these are people who regard themselves as professionals and part of this self image is that they do perform well. The continuance aspect is one that is interesting. It exists so long as other viable employment opportunities do not exist and the working conditions remain bearable. It also exists while casual lecturers hold out the hope of some more secure form of employment at TAFE. But it cannot be taken for granted. Casual lecturers do show commitment but it is not a simple and straight forward concept.

Commitment can also be a means of control. Burawoy (1979) talks of management controlling labour through co-option and subtle coercion. His workers in the piece rate workshop compete with each other to surpass their previous production totals. Given that there is an internal labour market, ie one which promotes largely from within the company, there is motivation to succeed as in the machine shop it generates greater income and in the larger organisational framework, it generates opportunities for promotion.

There are a number of ways in which commitment can be explored and even a number of levels of commitment. Even more importantly it seems evident that commitment is not necessarily equally reciprocated. At one basic level, there is what is known as an exchange transaction; (Young et al 1998) which revolves around the nature of the employment contract. There is an expectation that an employee whether casual or permanent will turn up for work at an agreed time, work for the agreed hours, do the job to the required level and follow any lawful orders. In exchange, the employer commits to paying the employee. The employer less and less frequently commits to
maintaining that employment relationship and we have seen increasingly that commitment, longevity and loyalty from the employee are no guarantee that a job will not be lost as jobs and organisations are restructured. The length of the working relationship and the loyalty demonstrated by the employee have been no barrier to redundancy in times when a company has been restructuring.

Trust

Another important aspect of commitment is trust. It is difficult to commit to an organisation if you cannot trust that organisation to ‘do the right thing’. Richard Sennett (1998) blames the short-term framework of organisations for the corrosion of trust:

‘No long term’ is a principle which corrodes trust, loyalty, and mutual commitment. Trust can, of course, be a purely formal matter, as when people agree to a business deal or rely on another to observe the rules in a game. But usually deeper experiences of trust are more informal, as when people learn on whom they can rely when given a difficult or impossible task. Such social bonds take time to develop, slowly rooting into the cracks and crevices of institutions (p. 24).

The whole basis of the casual employment contract is that there is no ‘long term’ commitment particularly on the part of the employer. When casual lecturers can lose their work at a moment’s notice, there is no long term commitment even if the casual lecturer has been working at a particular college for some time. There may be trust on an informal level where a casual
lecturer may trust a program manager or team leader to treat them equitably, but that depends on the two people building a mutual relationship.

Commitment and Work

For most people paid work is more than just an instrumental activity that fills in the time and provides an income. Its meaning is complex and culturally linked; it is confusing as we can play at our work and work at our leisure. The rise of technology means that it is hard to leave work behind when we return to our homes and in fact our homes may be our workplaces. Mobile phones mean we can be in touch with work wherever we happen to be and the computer means that work can be sent to and fro from work to home and back again. Time is also a factor with those who prefer to work the traditional Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm being seen as inflexible and old-fashioned.

According to the Western Australian TAFE Lecturers’ Certified Agreement 2005, lecturers can be required to work any time between 7:30 am and 9pm Monday to Fridays as ordinary hours of work. Prior to the mid 1990s, work in the evenings was regarded as overtime and many lecturers were able to truncate their working week if they worked a couple of nights per week. Currently the push from management is for greater flexibility and for lecturers to be less choosy about what hours they work since some industries are proposing that a greater level of training should take place in the workplace at times convenient to industry.
In current western societies, we are often defined by our work ie achievement oriented societies rather than for example by our families ie ascription oriented societies, as happens in some other societies. Work is embedded with moral overtones and having a job and working hard is regarded as a good thing, so much so that there is increasing pressure for older people to remain in the workforce, for single parents to be pushed back into the workforce as soon as their children are at school and for the sick and disabled to be made useful. While the rationale for these acts is made in terms of its perceived economic benefits both to society and to the individuals concerned, there is no doubt that the moral imperative is that all who can should be in some sort of paid employment unless they have access to non-government income.

One of the interesting facts about how work is rewarded in Australia is that the greater the component of emotional labour, the less the monetary rewards; the more a job has to do with children and young people, the less well it is likely to be remunerated. Childcare workers may be paid less than truck drivers; carers for those too ill or disabled to look after themselves are paid little more than the minimum wage. Nurses, teachers, TAFE lecturers and university lecturers and even some general practitioners do little better when compared to some in the private sector.

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54 ‘In achievement-oriented societies, social status results from the individual’s own success, whereas in ascription-oriented societies, it is based on factors such as age, sex, family background, education or wealth’ (Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 25).
55 Williams (2003) cites the work of Hochschild on emotional labour which she, (Williams), defines as the way ‘certain jobs require employees to use, but also control their emotions when dealing with clients.’ (p. 23) It is a term which is used specifically with service workers which explains the generally lower pay rates.
56 Data from a site dealing with salaries on offer in Australia quoted the following figures for average pay rates:
  Average Australian salary $88149
  Average mining, oil & gas $138389
  Average registered nurse $68679
The point about emotional labour is that those who have chosen it as their paid work are expected to approach it in an almost vocational manner that is as if it were a calling. Teaching or the like is not just a job; it is an important job, a responsible job, one which involves dealing with the young, the future of Australia. Because of this, society expects their teachers and other care workers to take an almost missionary like approach to their work. Employee commitment while being seen as desirable by employers in general, is seen as an essential part of emotional labour. The teacher who is seen as not being sufficiently caring will attract criticism from parents and society for not having the right attitude. We may not expect this from bank managers in fact the bank manager who does not care for his clients’ problems may well be promoted if this means that s/he can increase profits. Care workers are not expected to fake their commitment, we want it to be the real thing and yet the nature of contemporary employment contracts may militate against this.

Commitment may indeed be basically normative with loyalty to the employer and a commitment to furthering their interests - the notion of the ‘company man’ which supports Mowday’s definition above being important to people. However, there is the kind that is found in those caring jobs where services are being provided for others and in this I include the various types of teaching: commitment to the clients or students. While some may claim that this commitment to the clients is much the same as customer service, in the caring roles, ie the ones which require emotional labour, there are significant

Average education $65258
Average courier/driver $56098
Average childcare $47254
(salary information, 2009)
differences. Much customer service is of a transient nature though where transactions are of an ongoing nature, that relationship may change. In the caring roles, the relationships are frequently longer term especially for teachers working for an Education Department or nurses working for a hospital. Their commitment can be focused in at least two areas, their professional responsibilities and their commitment to the organisation.

Commitment and Casual Lecturers

The casual lecturers when asked if they saw their work as just a means to an end, ie earning an income, responded in similar ways. One lecturer who had been treated quite badly by TAFE but who was still lecturing responded:

I would like to think it was, but unfortunately, I can't help but get involved. Like I take students on trips and have them down to the studio the other day outside college because they were interested in what I was doing. I can't help but do that.

Or another:

Yes but qualified yes I but I also enjoy it most of the time. I actually enjoy teaching. It wouldn't obviously have to be in the TAFE context but I enjoy teaching. So yes it is a means to an end, independence, money all of that but I actually do enjoy it.

And another:

No I would go and continue to work as a typist if all I needed was money. I love it.
At the most basic level of employment contract commitment, the commitment I suspect is largely to be shown by the employee. In the general workforce, a casual employee who does not turn up when they are expected can be readily dismissed. In some cases nothing need be said, the phone call offering the casual hours of work just never comes. This is a not uncommon situation when young people who are employed in the service and hospitality industries turn 18 and become more expensive to employ (YWAS, 2004). My informal discussions with my students at TAFE show that rather than sacking them for being too costly, their employers just gradually reduce their hours. The same can happen when managers change: some young people find that while their shifts were plentiful under a previous manager, the new manager has other priorities and can reduce their hours without consultation. While of course young people can ask why they are not getting more work, many are not confident enough to do so.

The whole point of employing people on a casual basis is that an employer does not have to have a long term commitment to them or their needs. In a recent article by Elisabeth Wynhausen, a journalist for The Australian who took a year off to work in low paid and causal jobs and to then write a book about it, she points out how the notion of flexibility is to the advantage of the employer not the employee. She writes:

Permanent work can be hard to find especially in retail, but the casuals soon to comprise half the industry may be put on permanent standby, unable to make so much as an appointment in advance without cancelling at the last minute.
The company’s hold over casual employees struck me as a reversion to the time 70 or 80 years ago when men went to union halls and stood around waiting each morning to see if they would get work that day. The big retailers have tidied up the process so that management barely has to deal with the messy human element. They just leave you waiting at the other end of a phone (Wynhausen, 2005, p.31).

In the hospitality area; it is not uncommon for employees to be sent home if there is not enough work or for shifts to be cut short. At TAFE, casuals may find that a class does not run for as long as they had expected as numbers of students have decreased. This is one of the areas where commitment for casual lecturers can be difficult. At the beginning of each semester, if they are working for more than one TAFE College, they have to make a decision about which institution will give them the best deal, which courses are the more guaranteed and which subjects have the most hours and therefore the better pay. Some lecturers are quite strategic in their responses:

If someone asks me to do a four hour class and I have already told another program manager I will do a hour and a half class, I have no qualms about getting back to them and telling them I'm not doing it. I have done that many times. I think this is bad for them, because they then have to run around and get someone else. But, they are not loyal to us (casual teachers) so we are not loyal to them. But they are saving money doing it this way. I think the quality of their teaching suffers in that way because they may have to put someone else on that is not so qualified.
Others are just grateful to get work where they can. With work being allocated by a Program Manager or Head of Programs it is not advisable to get them offside. As discussed elsewhere in this project, the getting and keeping of work depends very much on the personal relationship with the decision maker and if work is refused, it may not be offered again. It is not uncommon for lecturers to commit to more hours of work than they would really like as to refuse might mean that the work was not offered again:

Most then just deal with what they are given. For example once I was told at very short notice that due to the low numbers I should finish the class and that I could ring the students and tell them not to come back even though there were only two more weeks to go and the fee that these students had paid was based on a certain number of hours of tuition which would not have been met in the first place and would certainly not be met now. In this case I taught a final class without pay in order to round things off.

Now even at the most basic level of commitment, I suspect that employers expect certain standards from their employees. If you are paying someone to do a job then presumably you want them to take it seriously; you require a certain degree of engagement from them, you would like them to do more than to just turn up on time and not to leave without your say so and to perform the duties they have been allocated. In retail for example there is potential for emotional labour where the employee cares enough about the needs of the customer to go out of their way to fulfil those needs. The role of the customer is given such importance that even government departments
produce booklets on customer service guidelines in which customer service is defined as ‘consistently doing something of value for customers in the way customers want it done’. Or more simply - ‘Always doing the right things right.’ (Byrne, p.4). At TAFE students are defined as ‘customers’ in official publications. It is supposedly to the employees’ advantage that customers are pleased so that they return to do business again thus ensuring that the employer prospers and the business remains open. Yet this prosperity is no guarantee that the employee will maintain their hours or even share in the profits by way of increased wages.

Casual TAFE lecturers are paid only for the nominal hours of teaching and yet there are many teaching associated emotional duties besides the usual marking and preparation. The committed lecturer needs to make time to advise students and to assist them with their work. This labour takes place out of hours and does not receive payment and yet if it were not done, the casual lecturer would be regarded as not doing their job well. It is important to be accessible to students if a lecturer is to be regarded as committed. Currently in order to get a permanent or even longer term contract position as a TAFE lecturer, the applicant must go through a merit selection process which presupposes some teaching or training experience (Western Australian TAFE Lecturers Certified Agreement 2005). It is difficult to get a job without experience though that experience could come from being a trainer in the private sector and these days if someone has a trade qualification, that need for training experience is ignored. In general though, the casual lecturer, if
they are considering trying to obtain permanency, must show commitment by working to improve their training skills.

It would seem evident that employers do not want their workforce, no matter what their terms of employment, to take their work casually. So perhaps the types of jobs which employ casuals may demonstrate something about the amount of commitment required. Large numbers of casual workers are to be found in high turnover service industries especially the fast food industry which utilizes generally unskilled and cheap youthful labour. They are also to be found in retail, caring work, certain manufacturing jobs, primary industry and various manual labouring jobs. These people fit the common profile of the casual worker. However there are other areas where other highly trained and skilled people are also employed on a casual basis whether by choice or involuntarily. In hospitals there is an increasing use of casual or agency nursing staff; many teachers cannot obtain permanent positions and exist on a mixture of contracts and relief work, and of course so do TAFE lecturers. Universities also employ large numbers of lecturers on a casual basis. By no means can these workers be called unskilled. The reasons for their employment status are ideological and economic. Can we assume that all of these workers are not committed to their work? Some may have made the choice to work on a casual basis to allow time for other activities in their lives but others would dearly like permanency.

The long-term receptionist at my physiotherapist is employed on a casual basis as are the attendants at my local gym. Their employers say it is easier to do this than to employ people on a permanent basis. These positions, if their
holders were to investigate industrially, might not actually be casual but people are still not ready to take industrial action for fear of what might happen to them. A gym attendant who has completed training at a tertiary institute may not be any less committed to the health and fitness of the clientele because they are employed casually due to general industry conditions than someone who happens to have a permanent job.

While some cafés in the coffee strip in Fremantle pride themselves on the quality of their baristas, there are also a number which employ younger workers without much experience. In my café of choice, there are baristas who are well known around Fremantle, since they have made coffee at a number of locations over the years. They take their coffee making very seriously, regard themselves as professionals and have been at it for years and are surely valuable employees to those cafés which are trying to build or maintain a reputation for quality. Yet these employees are frequently casual though they work regular hours over a long period. It is just the way things are done: the fact that they are employed on a casual basis does not mean then that they do not take their work seriously, that they do not regard themselves as professional coffee makers. I would suspect with these long term baristas that they take their work very seriously. I have no objective evidence for this except for personal conversations about coffee and its qualities and their personal pride in the coffee they make.

I suspect that they are valued employees, because in a certain range of cafés there is always work for them but tradition has it that staff are employed on a casual basis and there is relatively little turnover amongst this group. Yet
other staff in the same cafés are employed on much the same basis but come and go with great frequency. These cafés have a consistent turnover of waiting staff many of whom are students or young people who find it hard to find other more predictable and secure employment or who may not have any idea of what else they might do but still have to earn a living. Casual jobs in hospitality are easy to get if you are young, attractive and cheap to employ.

The literature on commitment in the workforce suggests that commitment is intrinsically, that is internally, motivated and is not necessarily dependent on employment conditions. Inman and Enz (1995) in an article examining attitudes of workers in the food service industry, found that while casual workers might be regarded as somehow inferior to permanent workers which, however, did not prevent employers using them because of the perceived economic advantages; critical work attitudes and behaviour were as strongly exhibited by these workers as by permanent workers. Their study contrasted the work ethics of part time that is casual and full time workers to test various management assumptions including that part time food service workers are less competent than full time ones and that part time workers do not have as strong a work ethic as full time ones. Their research found that the commonly accepted managerial beliefs were wrong. Furthermore they found that treating part time workers better by providing more training, better compensation packages and access to a greater range of jobs would do a lot more to prevent the turnover that is a feature of this industry.

An article by Jane Pickard (1995) discusses the employment of casuals by Beeton Rumford a London based catering company. The managing director,
Richard Tate, has a commitment to the development of all staff especially the casual staff. At any one time Beeton Rumford has up to 500 temporary staff employed versus 105 permanent staff. These casual staff were employed on an ad hoc, cost cutting basis often by being friends or family members of people who already worked there. Downturns in business would see the loss of trained staff who were unlikely to return. Tate, who saw that this way of employing people had an impact on continuous improvement efforts, has surveyed casuals to see what they like about their jobs and has now restructured the employment pool to include about 200 ‘full time temps’ who are no longer subject to being laid off at 24 hours notice. As well, a company leaflet given to all staff promises an on-going training program for all combined with commitment to their development if they can demonstrate an equal commitment of their own.

Another article by Feather and Rauter (2004) studied what they have labelled Organisational Citizenship Behaviours or OCBs. Organisational Citizenship Behaviours are behaviours which help the organisation but which may not be recognized in a formal reward system. An example of this is staying late to finish some work without receiving overtime or any other recompense. The target group was 154 teachers in Victoria of whom 101 were permanently employed while the rest were on fixed term contracts with no guarantee of further employment. Amongst other issues they investigated was whether the employment basis of the teachers would effect their organisational commitment and their identification with the organisation, their levels of job satisfaction and their work values. One important issue in this study is that they were studying involuntary contingent workers; these were workers who
were not working on a casual basis by choice and who presumably would wish to convert to permanent employment.

What the study discovered was that these involuntary casual teachers engaged in many OCBs. One theory is that their levels of job insecurity led them to engage in many OCBs in order to make themselves more attractive candidates for permanent employment. Another theory proposed was that since involuntary contingent employees may not be able to satisfy their work related goals such as control, work variety, skill utilization and security they might turn to other OCBs in order to demonstrate their skills and to also maintain some control over their environment, in other words a sort of compensation factor:

We would expect the contract teachers to undertake extra-role behaviours and voluntary duties that would help their schools and improve their prospects of obtaining permanent employment as teachers, a goal that was clearly important to them (Feather and Rauter, 2004, n.p.).

They found no evidence that permanently employed teachers demonstrated greater affective commitment to their school than did the others and it might even be seen that in the light of this research that keeping people hoping for a permanent position might indeed be a way of getting more performance from them for less financial and organisational commitment from Education Department management, a version of the treat them mean and keep them keen philosophy.
To a large degree I suspect that this would also apply to TAFE lecturers if there were any positions available. At the time that this research was conducted, there were no permanent positions being offered though there were some contract positions. However, good performance in a job could get you only a very short term contract with limited renewal possibilities as in general positions had to be based on merit selection. This merit selection ignores your current performance in a job and is based on other criteria. The first hurdle to be overcome was to write a job application in the accepted public service style. In assessing these applications, how that person has actually performed in the job cannot be taken into account as this is deemed to give that candidate an unfair advantage. Thus someone who might have been working in the position and who might have been acknowledged as doing an excellent job might not even get an interview if their application was deemed not to have been competitive. Thus working hard and demonstrating your suitability for the job may actually lead to a greater sense of disappointment if an interview is not obtained. Certainly my own observations of the workplace have given me examples of this situation. However I suspect that trying to make an impression was still a factor in some people’s approach to their jobs as in this response. One respondent comments:

I think if I can prove to the manager or whoever is in charge that you keep in touch with the program and you show you make a good lecturer and you maintain that relationship…… The other problem is that if there is a new manager, then he or she doesn't know you and you may or may not have a job. So that is a concern.
Research on commitment in the workplace sees it as generally a positive attribute which generates feelings of obligation by workers to the employer (Meyer and Allen, 1977). However this feeling of commitment is not straightforward and one dimensional since workers can demonstrate commitment to a range of groups and subgroups in the organisation such as to the organisation and the top management itself, or to the work group in which the worker is involved. Workers can see them selves as committed to their immediate boss or to a particular project or in education to their students without necessarily being committed to management or to the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1977) call these global or local foci.

In seeking to examine commitment, I asked the casual lecturers I interviewed whether they were committed to their jobs and only one gave a flat ‘No’ with no explanation. However he was only lecturing as a sideline and because he had just been promoted at work and would therefore be working even longer hours was giving up his teaching at TAFE. Others tempered their response as follows:

No, not really. I'm committed in as much as if you ask me to teach a course and I say yes, then I will see the course through and I will. And I am not going to say to you after 3 weeks, I've got a better offer, you can find some one else. As a casual I have a right to do that but I am not going to do that because it is not professional. But committed to TAFE as being the only thing I do, no.
In other words, if you make a commitment to something, then you carry it through. Two lecturers, one cited earlier, made their responses to commitment on a more business like basis as in:

No. Three hours a week, how can you get commitment out of that? If I was getting more hours, I would be putting more into it. I would but three hours a week with one class a week ...

The three respondents, all women, were in a minority. The rest expressed their commitment to their work, some in quite strong terms. As one lecturer put it:

O yes, whether I am casual or full time, I'm committed to my work because I am committed to the idea of teaching and the principles and also to whether I'm casual or fulltime I'm still always gaining experience so it is important to act on that.

And another:

Oh, definitely. I think in some ways, to me it is quite important that I present well to students and they get that information. I think I have become much more aware that they actually pay to have me; they're the ones who are paying my wages. And I think if I was paying big bucks like some of them are, I'd expect a certain standard, so yeah.

These women demonstrate a strong sense of commitment but it is to teaching and to their students not to the institution. Another reports:
I feel a responsibility towards my students and I want to let them have the - enable them to learn as much or develop themselves or have the best opportunity at the time.

Others have an intrinsic approach to commitment; if they take a job on they are going to do it well because that is what they do. To examine this a bit further I also asked the lecturers whether they just saw their work as a means to an end, just a way of earning money. Now obviously of course, if they were not being paid, they would not be doing the job but that is common throughout the workforce. Typical responses were:

No. No it doesn't only provide money; it also provides satisfaction in doing it.

No I would go and continue to work as a typist if all I needed was money. I love it.

No I don't think it ever reached that stage because when I started out with one or two subjects a week then it was a way of developing an alternate stream of income but even then there was just so much more that I was picking up from it, it wasn't just the financial rewards.

No I am not that struggling that I have to do that. I just think as a teacher if that is your attitude, then perhaps you are in the wrong job. It wouldn't be fair to the students.

Perhaps the most negative comment was:
Yes, primarily it is at the moment. However I have learnt from past experience that quite often we do things to meet a particular need at that time but then a couple of years down the track that in turn provides you with a lot of things that you - skills etc and you didn't realise that you have been putting building blocks together.

The majority of lecturers had some sort of commitment either to doing a job because they had committed to it or to the idea of teaching or to the students so their commitment was at the very least normative but probably affective as well. When it came to TAFE the institution, I separated TAFE the institution from their Program Manager. I have used program manager here interchangeably with head of programs or team leader as terms vary from campus to campus. It is the first line manager who runs the department and who decides which casuals are to be employed. A good relationship with this person is certainly an aid to continuing employment though there are other factors which are very important like the number of enrolments, the number of permanent staff and contract staff and whether they have full teaching loads and of course whether a particular course is being grown or reduced. These structural elements may over come whatever good relationships exist.

Becker and Billings (1993) cited in Meyer and Allen (1997, p. 18) described four types of commitment that might be found in the workplace. These four profiles were the locally committed or those who are committed to their immediate supervisor and to their work group, the globally committed who are committed to the organisation and to top management, the committed
who are committed to both and the uncommitted who are committed to neither.

I asked the respondents if they were loyal to their employer and if so who was their employer, TAFE the institution or their program manager? Those with a local focus I took as seeing their program manager as their employer. This was the largest group; 17 of the respondents expressed loyalty to the program manager sometimes in quite strong terms:

The program administrator is my - I regard her as my boss. I'm not rushed about the department but she's, she's the person whom I trust and I respect and she really does the best she can because if there is work going she gives it to me and she supports me in my endeavours and also encourages me. She allows me to stand in for her at functions when she doesn't want to go. She doesn't do breakfasts so she allows me to go and represent xxxx TAFE and she also signs the chits for me to go to any professional development I wish to go to.

Another one reported:

For me the program manager because I can identify with her. I have a face, a person I can interact with. Whereas TAFE to me is just the institution, it is the body but it is a faceless body.

Not all were so enthusiastic so while they reported loyalty, it was definitely tarnished. This respondent when asked if she was loyal to her employer replied:
I suppose - to a point.

And asked who her employer is:

I suppose it’s the team leader. I guess to them I’m just a number anyway. I’m nothing to TAFE overall, I’m not even a drop in the ocean. With the hours I’ve got a week, I couldn’t be.

The globally committed were represented by 15 of the respondents of whom a few were very straightforward in their response. When this respondent was asked about being loyal his response was:

Yes always have done regardless place of employment. Despite what some past employers have done.

and about whom he saw as his employer:

TAFE the institution. The program manager is an instrument of that employer.

This is not entirely a whole hearted loyalty but more I suspect a particular approach to life and the workplace and others were also more guarded about their response as in the following:

Oh, that’s a sticky one. Yes, I think up to a point, in the sense I certainly would not display any disloyalty. Say I was talking to my students, I wouldn’t complain about treatment I was getting or anything. So, yes, I am conscious of the public image to uphold and
things like that. So yes, it may not be with my heart, but it is there, there is a degree of loyalty to my employer because they employ me.

For others their response was even more tenuous:

Well after what happened on Friday, you know 50 % maybe. I think it takes 2 people both sides. If they give you satisfaction, then you will do a very good job but if one of the parties fails, then you start thinking O well!

The institution I think. I think the program manager is just a pawn. I mean they just follow what the institution decides. They don't have a say really. They are just dictated to by the ones above.

As for the uncommitted, it was hard to find someone who could be called uncommitted in all forms and I would suppose that this response would come the closest:

No in terms of if someone else offered me a job that I wanted to do, I would do that but not when I had committed myself to a course. But loyalty to an employer, the old fashioned term of I'm going to stick by this firm, not that sort of loyalty to TAFE.

Or a more conditional response:

I am loyal to the person who gives me work but loyalty slips away when you feel you are being undermined.
Equally I could find only one who was committed in the sense that there was straightforward commitment to both TAFE the institution and to the Program Manager.

This person saw themselves as committed and reported:

> It is both because the institution has the facilities and the work and the manager is the person who decides who gets it.

What I did find, though, were those whose primary commitment was to their students. As I suggested earlier, commitment in the ‘caring professions’ is often to the clientele. This adds to the complexity of commitment and can add an extra dimension to Becker and Billings’ categories, a form of triangulation between local, global and client.

Commitment to the students was an important category. One straightforward response was the following. Asked if they were loyal to their employer they replied:

> Reasonably.

And then asked who their employer was, the response was:

> The students I teach.

Others had a more expansive response:

> No because I don't have a loyalty to my employer, I have a loyalty to the students and that is the same thing I did with Telstra. In the end I was so disillusioned with them. As far as I was concerned my loyalty
was with the student, to produce the student irrespective of the way in which the administration behaved. And for me that's the only thing that really mattered is that the standard of work I did for that student and the way in which he - if he's paid his money he is entitled to that and that to me is where some people fail. When you pay money, you expect something for your money. If you can't meet that, then you are not servicing the needs of your customer and that's where a lot of lecturers make a mistake. They don't believe we are in the game of providing a supply to a customer. That customer is a student. He is the one you have to satisfy and all this other stuff is just a lot of rigmarole. The only real measure is what your student thinks of you.

I would suspect that casual TAFE lecturers differ little from other TAFE lecturers in their approaches to commitment. TAFE the institution is not necessarily the sort of institution which breeds unthinking loyalty in its employees and certainly recent unpublished internal surveys of staff satisfaction have suggested that morale is low. In these surveys, only permanent and contract staff are surveyed; an example of how management does not necessarily recognize casual employees as being a countable part of the institution. Being casual does not prevent lecturers from seeing themselves as committed even when in their own self interest, it might be better not to invest so much into an organisation which does not reciprocate.
Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined various forms of commitment and shown that Meyer and Allen’s (1977) three part model of commitment, affective, normative and continuance certainly do apply to casual lecturers but it is rare to find those who are committed to TAFE the institution. In the cases of those who do profess loyalty to TAFE, it is due to a normative approach that sees duty and obligation owed to the employer but by far the greatest source of commitment is affective where people have an emotional response to doing the best for their students. In other chapters, many of these people have seem themselves as professional educators who pride themselves on doing a good job for their students.

As continuance is the most nebulous of the aspects of commitment, it is rarely mentioned strongly in responses. At the time that this research was started, the continuance factor was likely to be greater since unemployment for older people was high so they were likely to cling on to whatever sort of work they could get even if it was insecure; but now there are more options. Some though will stay on for the life style aspects of the job, others are long gone to better paid and more secure opportunities.

The following chapter will discuss the reasons why some people find working as a casual TAFE lecturer an attractive option. While much of this project has found negative aspects of the work, it is not like that for everyone. Chapter eleven will tease out the positive aspects of the work and which groups in particular find the working conditions attractive.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Why People Prefer Casual Work

I go in and I teach and I don't get involved in any of the politics, I don't get involved in any of the stuff that you are necessarily involved with if you are a public servant. And another point, I have been a public servant for many years in the welfare department and other departments. It is much easier; you do a good job, you devote your time and energy to the product and not to the bulldust and you come home. (One of the respondents explaining why he loved to be a casual).

Since the material I have presented so far has taken a rather negative view of the life of a casual TAFE lecturer, in this chapter I propose to investigate the opinions of those respondents who enjoyed being a casual lecturer and to see what it was that made them respond positively to casual work. It becomes evident that some people have good reasons for preferring to work as a casual just as others might see it as exploitation. It will also become clear that when some people say that they enjoy working as a casual, what they are talking about is enjoying the work not necessarily enjoying the conditions.

When it comes to feelings about casual work, responses depend on the individual’s personal circumstances. The most enthusiastic are those who do not want any more work and who have income from other circumstances. Others who enjoy it are those who do not wish to make a commitment to the
TAFE in that they do not wish to be involved with the total experience of dealing with the extra administration and the bureaucracy. For some though, it is clear that permanent part time work would suit them just as well.

It is quite understandable why employers like casual employment. In a paper for the IPA Work Reform Unit, Peter Anderson, the Director of Workplace policy for the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry writes:

The world of work has changed significantly over the past generation. Employment regulation needs to be flexible to allow businesses to respond to clients, consumers and competitors. Employees are more skilled, more mobile, and one size does not fit all. Preferences over how, where and when to work differ markedly. One staff member might want to maximise earnings, whilst another will maximise time off for family, for parenting, for personal study or simply for leisure.

Whilst the traditional concept of a full time job remains a large part of our labour market we have to develop new ways of working - part time work, casual work, job sharing, multiple jobs, fixed term work, self employment and independent contracting (Anderson, 2004).

Numerical and functional flexibility is the key issue for employers. It enables them to use or remove staff at will and it reduces their wages even though casuals are paid a premium to make up for loss of annual and sick leave. Business Victoria in advice to employers counts the advantages and disadvantages of employing casuals as:
• the flexibility it allows to respond to increases and decreases in workload
• the flexibility that it offers to employees
• reduced cost because of reduced employee entitlements
• reduced risk under unfair dismissal legislation
• less risk of temporarily 'losing' employees because of leave entitlements
• the need to pay a greater hourly wage
• the possibility that employees will be less committed to your business than permanent employees
• the need to keep track of your need for staff and to make sure that you have enough staff to address your needs
• the possibility that staff will on occasion be unavailable to work the hours you want them to (Business Victoria, 2006)

Employers like to employ casual staff as they want the flexibility that enables them to cut costs and increase profits. This is of course a natural desire for businesses which need to maintain a competitive edge. The point of this project has been to analyse whether employers’ desires for flexible employment conditions are matched by those of the employed. In general, this project has shown that there is a mismatch of desires however for a minority of employees, it is an ideal match.

In their report ‘Only a Casual …’, Pocock et al (2004a) surveyed 55 casual workers who were selected from those who replied to publicity in the newspaper or flyers distributed at universities and workplaces and some who
were randomly chosen from names submitted by unions with the majority coming from the Shop, Distributive and allied Employees’ Association. They sought to ascertain the views of casual workers about casual work.

Their findings divided casual employees into three groups; the positive, the ambivalent and the negative because of their views on casual work. The negative group far outweighed the positive group numerically. The positive group had certain characteristics of interest: all bar one of the positive workers were female and all were part time and most had either study or family commitments so they did not have the desire to work full time. As well, there were two other factors which most of them had in common; first, that they had some other source of income such as a parent or a partner or a pension and second, they were in a position to negotiate with their supervisor about their working hours. The nature of the employer is an important feature in flexibility; some casuals report being able to negotiate but others see themselves as being in a ‘take it or leave it’ situation. These positive respondents are also working part time at a time of their life cycle when it suits them to do so and they are also in a position to have some input about the hours that they work. They do not necessarily expect or want this form of work to continue throughout their working lives.

In the Pocock et al. study, those who were the most negative about casual work found the unpredictability of hours to be one of the biggest issues they faced. Far from having mutual flexibility, there was a feeling from many that they lacked control over their working lives and that the flexibility was one sided. They felt that to knock back work when it was offered could lead to a
reduction in shifts and that while some fortunate workers had some say over the hours that they worked, the majority did not. This also led to some of them going to work sick since they could not afford to lose the income and also if they did not attend they might also find their future hours given to someone else. Three quarters of those interviewed indicated that they would prefer to be permanent and some had tried to obtain permanent work without success and for many it appeared that casual work did not eventually lead to permanent work but was rather a constant, a ghetto where conditions were poor and uncertainty was high. Watson et al (2003) refer to this process of moving from one casual position to another as ‘churning’.

I will compare Pocock et al’s group of positive workers with the positive group of casual TAFE lecturers whom I have identified from their responses. To qualify for the positive group, I checked their responses to question 12 of the survey, ‘Do you enjoy working as a casual?’ Some of those who replied affirmatively though went on to complain about conditions at TAFE so it might be that they enjoyed the teaching work but not the work conditions and in hindsight my questions could have been clearer. Some of these then were placed in the ambivalent group rather than the positive group.

I shall compare the positive group that I have identified with the positive group from Pocock et al (2004a) in order to examine the range of elements that have been identified as features of that positive group. For the Pocock study these elements were:
• all female bar one respondent
• generally a young group
• working part time
• have family or study commitments
• have other sources of income such as a pension, a partner or a parent
• some control and input over the hours that they work

Generally Female

I have identified 16 respondents who are generally positive about being employed as a casual. Ten of these are male and six are female so there is a major difference with the results of Pocock et al’s group. One reason for this would be the sort of work that is being done and the fact that the group interviewed for this research are generally older and TAFE does employ older workers. It is also work which is professional or skilled and which requires post-secondary training and work experience. However, given that the forty interviews undertaken were divided equally between male and female respondents, it does seem remarkable that a significantly larger proportion of males were happy to be casual than female when the common image of the casual worker is of a female working part time with family responsibilities. In the case of my research only a minority of the females, 6 out of 20 were happy to be casuals.

Generally Younger

Only one of the respondents was in her twenties and she was a student who looked forward to a full time job when she completed her PhD. Another male
respondent was in his thirties and he was also a student so while those two would match the Pocock study, the bulk of the group would not. This difference of course may be due to differing selection techniques and to the nature of TAFE lecturers who as a group are older workers.

Working Part time

All of the positive group were working part time at TAFE bar one male who sometimes worked more than a full time load but did it in three days. Of the other five women, one woman had a full time job, one had retired and was only working a little as part of her transition from full time work, one had a wealthy husband and the other two were reluctant to be tied down to full time work. Of the ten men, four had retired from full time work, one was a student and so needed part time work, one had a full time other job and the other three had their own businesses or consultancies and one male worked only at TAFE. All of them however, bar the one male who worked only at TAFE were part time lecturers.

Only one of them wanted a full time job at the moment and he was also working elsewhere part time; he worked as a chef in an industry that was notoriously casual so casual was what he expected:

I think so yes but I took this job (in sailing club) with thoughts that reasonably with my casual teaching and this being a flexible job, I would take this lower paid job which this is because I could rely on my TAFE, my casual teaching. But that isn't always the case; things change from semester to semester. It's all a bit dicey but we chefs are
used to moving around and taking the good with the bad so it is not really lots of hardship. I go in cycles of having a really well paid job and then it doesn't work out and you move on. You manage.

Though I count him as being positive about being casual, he has a rather contradictory approach as in one part of the interview he reports liking having more than one job as he likes the variety but there is a hint in the response above that the precariousness of the TAFE work does worry him. However it would seem that his working life had been full of changing jobs so I do not know if he would really like to be in one job for any length of time. As he was the main breadwinner and could only do eight hours at TAFE because of the provisions of the certified agreement, he needed to have other work.

Having Family or Study Commitments

While there are two students in the group and one woman who cites family responsibilities as one of the reasons for liking casual work, this does not seem to be a major issue for this group though of course the group is very small. However since this group is older than the control group, and is at a different life stage, this is not surprising.

Other Sources of Income

All bar the one male who worked full time or more at TAFE had other sources of income whether from a partner, another job, superannuation or a scholarship. Some did not appear to need the income from TAFE and lectured because they enjoyed it and for some it was part of a portfolio of income generating activities.
Some Control and Input Over Their Hours

This was not a question in the survey but some lecturers at one college who were the retirees did mention it. As one said:

I enjoy working as a casual because I can do the subjects I want virtually when I want them. And as I am not in a position where I have to have the money, if A.....(program manager) ever said do that at the wrong time then I just would not do it.

I do not believe that this is true for all casual lecturers and even others who are positive about being casual may not have the same flexibility. This case depends on the management style of one particular program manager and the fact that the respondent was a retiree from that department whose skills were valued. His personal relationship with that program manager gave him advantages which might not follow if the manager left.

In General

The differences so far are that there are more men than women who are positive about being casual and while all of them do work on a part time basis, nine or half of the positive cohort have other work which includes two having fulltime jobs. It is not possible to say how many hours those with their own businesses work. The one person who does not have an alternative source of income from any source is the one who has actively chosen to work as a casual. He had a fulltime position working as a lecturer at TAFE but resigned to become a casual after the loss of conditions in the mid 1990s:
I work casually because I like the hours and the flexibility it gives me. I’ve got the conditions that full time lecturers used to have but don’t have any more. I don’t get caught in the politics and I don’t have unreasonable demands placed on me, I can just turn around and say ‘No’.

He is a single male with no dependents and manages to fit his teaching load into three days per week. As a trades lecturer his skills are in demand and he can afford to say no to work that he does not wish to do.

These differences of course arise from the nature of casual TAFE lecturers as outlined in a previous chapter. They fall into five main categories: women with family responsibilities, retirees, those with another job, those studying fulltime, those who have a portfolio of jobs and those who make their living solely from TAFE. They are older and better educated than the general range of casual workers and an examination of individual responses would reveal a range of factors that link them to working as casuaxs. For example, one man had been working in the mining industry as a Human Resources manager. He had left that work and established his own business and to support it in the first years, he took on work at TAFE though he had previously worked at TAFE as a full time lecturer. Now as he says of his casual TAFE lecturing:

It’s an extra but it has been in my portfolio since 1998. I like coming here, I like it very much. I like the college; I have access to resources and things.
He goes on to say that as there are peaks and troughs in his work, he finds this income useful.

There is only one person with family responsibilities who is an enthusiastic casual. She has a financially secure husband and while her children are still young, it seems that the stronger motivation for working as a casual is that while she enjoyed the work, she did not need the money and need not get involved:

So yeah, it really does work for me. Casual suits me plus the money side of things it's better paid although I don't have the other benefits or that, it's not a real issue for me because my husband works. Financially, I don't really need to work; I work because I enjoy it which is a lovely position to be in.

Later in her interview she comments that she enjoys not having to work on campus and being able to do her preparation at home. She also did not have the requirement to undertake professional duties which was part of the duty statement of permanent and contract TAFE lecturers. Not having to undertake extra work is seen as an advantage by many casual lecturers as is seemingly not getting caught up in the ‘politics’ of the office. Others really did enjoy the perceived flexibility:

I can choose the days the hours that I want to teach which is very attractive.

Three of the positive are retirees, two of whom worked at the same TAFE in the same department before they retired. Their retirement was also recent
enough for them to retain strong links with their permanent colleagues. Their work was providing them with an interest and was part of their transition to another life stage. The other retiree came from real estate and was lecturing as an industry expert although he had worked for two years as a full time TAFE lecturer. He worked for an average of eight hours a week and did not want more work. He said ‘my purpose is to teach people, to educate them to a point where I am contributing back to industry.’

Two of the respondents had fulltime jobs and taught like the real estate lecturer in order to give something back to the industry and one of those was about to give his lecturing up because of the demands of his job. Another six had other sources of income which generally meant that they were running a business or consultancy of their own. One of them was an accountant who had given up a high pressure job to take on a few clients and do a bit of lecturing; he emphatically did not want more work and liked the freedom and flexibility of his life. He also enjoyed his experience of working at TAFE:

In the sense of discovering something that I didn't realise how much I would enjoy, the satisfaction I get from doing the job. What annoyances there are, are very minor. The main thing is that I have discovered something that I really enjoy doing. I'm very pleased about it.

He had been offered fulltime work but did not want it as he liked his life as it was. TAFE lecturing was an enjoyable part of his working life. One woman also ran a tutoring business and another was working seriously in multi-level marketing and another respondent had his own training business. Two of the
respondents were studying fulltime and casual lecturing pays better than much of the other casual work they could get. For these two it was definitely of the right job at the right life stage.

The person cited at the beginning of this chapter is an ex-public servant who also does some work at a university. He is happy to work the way that he does and reports that one of the reasons he likes working as a casual is:

> It's to do with being allowed and being given the opportunity to have other times to do other things. So, so long as you work reasonably efficiently, you can teach 8-10-12 hours a week easily and do your other things.

His initial response though does raise an issue that hypothetically makes casual lecturing attractive, the ability to opt out of bureaucratic involvement. This is a theme which runs through a number of responses no matter whether they fall into the positive, ambivalent or negative groups. In this chapter though, I am only examining the responses of the positive group.

A female respondent, who had many jobs and options for a variety of careers in her life reported:

> I actually really love being a casual. I'm a casual by choice because I don't like the structure of being permanent, I don't like - I like to go in and work at the coal face and that's the way I like to do it. I go in teach, I don't want to be involved in structuring classes or writing the course or that sort of thing. I don't like being involved in the politics at all. Being a casual I can go in there and I can do my work and I
always do - it's my conscience that keeps me doing the work as best I can other than someone outside watching me and wanting a report and you having to spend hours sitting down and writing it. If they want a report then I will do it and that's fine and that's ok. But I just go in there and I work and when I finish if I want to see somebody or I have some queries I do it then after my time and then I go home. So I don't feel tied to it. I did try it for 3 months. Someone said you are better off because you get holiday pay and you get sick pay and all that sort of thing so you would be better off if you were a part time staff member And I said look I will try it for 3 months and just as you said I was in there typing in the extra hours and doing little bits of this and little bits of that nothing to do with the actual teaching. I don't like that sort of thing, I am not a secretary, it's not my role in life and I don't like doing it. So I find as a casual I've got to do some sort of report writing obviously because the workplace I work in you do do a lot of workplace stuff as well and for that you have write reports and that's fine, I'm happy to do that but I don't want to get involved in all the rest of it. And you know what TAFE is like and how you can get involved in all sorts of stuff.

This lengthy quote is important because I suspect that it holds the key to what it is about casual lecturing that appeals to people even when they do not like the conditions otherwise. It is a comment that is made in many occupations by people in all sorts of working conditions; they do not like to get involved with the bureaucracy, they just want to do their jobs and to be left alone. It seems to me that this aspect of the work is far more important than any
notion of flexibility since casual TAFE lecturers are only casual in terms of
their conditions. They accept a class which may run for up to a semester but
it does run every week at a certain time and lecturers are expected to be
there. Furthermore they may teach the same subject at the same time the
next semester and the semester after that. Much of the work is not really
flexible and it would seem that permanent or contract part time work would
fulfil the same purpose. If a casual lecturer does decide not to accept a
subject one semester and it is given to someone else, it is likely that the new
lecturer will retain the subject when it is offered again.

Flexibility is possible and the response of some of the casual lecturers does
indicate that it is an issue for some people and certainly a lecturer can
indicate whether they are available for work on a certain day or at a certain
time but this is within limits. If it is an occasional occurrence, then obliging
program managers will go along with this. Someone who had frequent
absences would probably be regarded as unreliable and efforts might be made
to find others to do the work. Casual lecturers do always have the opportunity
and choice to say that they are not available on a certain day but it would be
extremely rare for a course that they might otherwise have taught to be
changed to another day for them. The point of employing casual lecturers is
that they take classes that have been timetabled on a particular day and a
particular time.

The likelihood of changes being made might depend on market forces; if the
lecturer has specialist knowledge which cannot readily be found in the
permanent staff and if there is a shortage of other potential specialist casual
lecturers, then the program manager is likely to be more flexible in his or her own approach. If, however, the subject is less specialized and there are plenty of potential lecturers around, then it is unlikely that change will be made. It is a classic example of supply and demand. In a time of high unemployment as well there will be more people seeking work at TAFE, so lecturers will have less choice or flexibility as there are potentially more lecturers than there are jobs. As well some program managers who might or might not have extensive lecturing experience, believe that a competent lecturer can teach anything so that lecturers are easy to replace and that specific content knowledge is not important. This of course does not accord with official AQTF guidelines about lecturers needing to be qualified to teach a subject but for some program managers, filling gaps is more important than pedagogy and content. However in times of high employment, casual lecturers are likely to have found other work and to have better paid options than working at TAFE.

On using Nudist to examine the transcripts of the interviews with the positive group for the use of the word flexible or flexibility only eight of the seventeen mention it and one of those says only that it is one of the requirements of a good casual TAFE lecturer and another two agree with him though they use the word in other situations as well. The others do see it as a lifestyle issue as in the following:

Yes, yes, it suits my style. I like flexibility of hours. I like time freedom and that has always been important to me, I had my own business for 10 years because of it.
It is clear that to six of the positive responses, flexibility of hours is important and is a factor in their being happy to work on a casual basis. It is of course interesting with the latter respondent that a permanent full time lecturer will get a day off campus for activities related to delivery ie marking and class preparation so many will have a potential three day weekend in any case. In my own case, I have found the transition from casual lecturer to permanent lecturer has provided me with a much greater degree of flexibility since as a valued member of the permanent staff, my wishes are taken into account far more than they were previously.

For many one of the attractions is that they love teaching and the students:

It's a little bit more than that. I've got some gorgeous lovely classes. There have been times when I've thought I'm out of here and that's what I like about being casual, you can just say I'm out of here and also when someone asks you to do something, I feel quite happy saying no if I don't want to do it or if I think it is something that I would not be able to perform. I'm not into killing myself just to get the money coming in.

Or with some there is also the aspect of giving something as well:

Getting out there in front of a group of people you don't know and passing on some sort of information to them, hoping it makes them better at the end of the semester.
Or:

The fact that I can go there and share what I have with the students and at the end of the 10 weeks the students go away and are satisfied that they've had a good 10 weeks and they've got something out of it.

For some it was not just the teaching but the opportunity to learn as well:

I love my students because I teach migrant English and I've never met such an embracing group of people who just took me on and want to learn. Most of them are enthusiastic about it. They've got a good sense of humour. I reckon I'm learning more from them than they're learning from me.

Or:

As a casual it keeps me in touch with the students and I have access to the library and to journals so the reading means I keep in touch.

Or:

There's two best things, one is my students and the other is the amount of confidence it's given me to get up in front of a group of adults and speak.

One of the lecturers, who is a retiree also mentioned the social benefits of working and recommended:
The cafés in Northbridge. I think for me it is the keeping up with friends and I enjoy helping the students and while I enjoy it, I'll keep going. It's not quite the same as if you've got to do it because you need the money.

And from another retiree at the same college:

I'm only a casual TAFE lecturer when people are desperate. I have no real wish to do it on a permanent part time basis. I have been with TAFE for 18 years and it is part of my life. I don't want to lecture every week. I'm very happy to come in and see old acquaintances and tell myself that I still have something of value to give.

For some it was also the freedom to do other things as well as learning new skills:

For me personally, I guess the combination of it's given me the freedom to do other things and at the same time I have gained extra skills and knowledge.

People contact in the industry, the pay, that's very handy and for me the different environment, it's a stimulus. I've always enjoyed college ever since I went there, not here but in the UK. For me it was a special day when I went to college and it always will be and I try and impart that to the kids today. It's a great environment, I love it.
Conclusion

There is a general theme here of what people enjoy about being a casual lecturer. It would seem for these people that being casual does give them a perceived freedom but what seems even more important is that they enjoy the work and the conditions are not necessarily all that important as they have other forms of income except for the one lecturer whose skills were in demand. Being casual enabled them to enjoy what they were doing without having to be caught up in the bureaucracy and politics of the workplace. For some it has been part of a transition to retirement enabling them to catch up with friends, for others a chance to develop new skills and for the students a reasonable well paid job to support their studies.

The perceived bureaucracy does remain a big issue for people and would apply also to those who are permanent or contract lecturers. The continuing introduction of Competency Based Training coupled with Australian Quality Training Framework audit requirements means that the paper based evidence necessary to prove you are doing your job have increased substantially. Casual lecturers are not immune from providing this evidence and find that inevitably they are being drawn into the bureaucratic quagmire. As for the political shenanigans, they exist in every workplace that employs more than one person and whether one is aware of them or not, they still exist.
CHAPTER TWELVE

The Conclusion

The Purpose

In this thesis, I have examined the working lives of a group of people who are working as casual TAFE lecturers in metropolitan Perth. They are a heterogeneous group of people with a variety of reasons for working as casuals and a diverse range of responses to it. They relate their stories and reactions to their working lives and give some idea of how they would wish their lives to be. Some are happy with the way things are but others would like to have security of tenure even if they are working part time.

My aim in this research was to give voice to a group of people who are too often regarded as some homogenous group who are working as casual through choice. The pundits who proclaim the benefits of the flexible workforce (Handy, 1994; Peters, 1994; Dent, 1995) seem rarely to discuss the impacts of this work style with those who are most affected by it and neither do they report their concerns. This research has been an attempt to rectify that.

In doing this no one voice has been privileged above another. There are disagreements, different experiences and different expectations but all have been given equal value. As someone who spent ten years as a casual lecturer, I sometimes disagreed with what I was told, but as it was the interviewee’s own story, I had to honour it and accept it. In one case a lecturer, even used the interview to work out that she no longer wanted to work as a casual
lecturer as the interview process had helped to clarify her own thinking on the subject; this is one of the possible consequences of getting people to think seriously about their own circumstances.

This thesis was not an attempt to quantify the extent of casualisation in TAFE, it does not focus on casual lecturers as the ‘other’; it rather concentrates on their subjective responses to being a casual lecturer and effect that it has on their lives.

The Background

Watson et al (2003) in their book Fragmented Futures describe a working Australia which is in crisis. They explain how solid economic and employment growth accompanied by an expansion in more diverse forms of employment is occurring at the same time as inequality is increasing. While this juxtaposition may seem strange, it arises as a result of the growth of part time, contract and casual work. While some workers have gained from the economic growth, especially those who work in mining and in ‘knowledge’ industries rather than in manufacturing, others have faced a growth in insecurity with many jobs disappearing or becoming short term contracts, part time or even casual. There are now many diverse modes of work in areas which once were largely permanent, for example in the teaching profession, where while there are still permanent teachers, there are many who have various forms of temporary positions and who may never gain permanent work unless they can win a merit select position.
This thesis provides evidence that supports the proposition that this increasing diversity has had unfortunate effects on some who might once have expected that their chosen profession, education and experience would ensure a secure and comfortable existence. It also provides evidence that for some, the move towards a notion of flexibility in the workforce has resulted not only in uncertainty and insecurity for some workers who would prefer greater security in their lives but also in a lack of opportunity for those who would once have expected to climb the career ladder. It also proposes that for some who are working on a casual basis there is a sense of shame and stigma that is not recognised by those who propose the advantages of the flexible workforce.

For those who judge solely on economic performance, Australia, until the global financial crisis, has done and is doing well. Jobs were being created all the time and the nature of those jobs did not seem to matter. In a state like Western Australia where the mining boom meant that just about anyone who wanted a job could have one, not much attention was given to the fact that while many are doing very well from this boom, those in lower paid jobs have not benefited as much. Barbara Ehrenreich cited in Watson et al (2003, p.5) observes that for the affluent, the working poor are largely invisible.

In Australia in the 1990s, there was an increase in the number of people who were working casually. This increase was not due to an increase in the numbers of women or students entering the workforce but rather to a spread of this mode of employment to all forms of work and for this work to be regular rather than spasmodic. Watson et al (2003) describe this worker as
the permanent casual and claim that the increase is due to employer preference rather than employee wishes.

This research project has given voice to a particular section of the workforce that has been affected by these changes in the Australian economy and industry. While others who carry out the same type of work, with much the same sorts of responsibilities and duties, have secure jobs with all the benefits of long service leave, career promotional opportunities and regular pay increments, those casual TAFE lecturers who work alongside of them, do not. These differences result in significant financial impacts and the difference in treatment cannot be regarded as anything but inequitable. They are the victims of a move towards individualism and towards a one-sided flexibility that sees the employer’s needs take precedence over the needs of the worker. This project focuses on a group of those people whose working lives might have suffered.

The changes at TAFE may well have seemed necessary for its efficient operation but they were changes which devalued certain sections of their staff. Lecturing conditions prior to the early 1990s may have been lenient with some being able to manipulate the system so that they worked minimal hours but the move to a casualised workforce has downgraded conditions for many. There were pressures, as there are now, to make TAFE more responsive to the ‘needs’ of industry, to move from a supply side model to a demand side one, to standardize courses so that they became nationally recognized and accepted training based on a competency model.
In any change process there are people who benefit and people who do not. This thesis asserts that on the whole the move to flexibility by TAFE management has affected and in some cases jeopardized aspects of the lives of casual TAFE lecturers. While there are disclaimers from TAFE management that people are negatively affected by being employed casually when once their work would have entitled them to permanent or at least contract status, there is little evidence that they have ever surveyed casual lecturers themselves to seek their opinions. In fact when surveys of staff satisfaction are done at some colleges, casual lecturers are specifically excluded from these surveys. From my own experience of talking to college directors, they are firmly of the belief that casual lecturers enjoy being casual and that it is their choice to be employed as casuals because it gives them the flexibility that they as workers desire. That this flexibility is frequently one sided is not mentioned or even recognised.

Through this research project, the opinions of the casual lecturers have been reported in order to present that which is so frequently hidden or ignored though the seminal work of Sennett and Cobb (1972) provides an example of giving voice to working class Americans and their lives. This is an area of TAFE which has not been given much attention in the past and this project is an attempt to rectify that situation. Forty lecturers were interviewed about their feelings on being casual, how they ended up with this form of work and whether it is what they really want to be doing. While it does suit a significant minority, such as those who have another source of income or who only wish to be partly in the TAFE system, many found it a difficult situation with financial and emotional consequences. As can be seen from the
material, some of this cohort had already been displaced from some other position when middle managers were retrenched in industry restructures.

The participants in this project came from a variety of backgrounds. While there were those who fit the traditional model of casual workers, women with family responsibilities who were working part time for interest and a bit of extra income, and young people who wanted a bit of part time work while they were studying, they were not the majority. There were those who had been retrenched from occupations such as being a police prosecutor or those who as mature age graduates were trying to find a new career path.

What is particularly clear is that casual TAFE lecturers are not a homogenous group. In general though, they are older ie over 40 and only one lecturer was under 30. They tend to be well educated with two of the forty interviewed already holding PhDs and two studying for them. Higher education of course is to be expected of a such a group of lecturers who on the whole did not come from the trades area\(^{57}\). Roughly half of them saw TAFE as providing their main source of income and for twenty per cent of them, it was their only source of income.

This cohort is not congruent with Kryger’s (2005) profile of casual workers which showed that the majority of casual workers were under 35 and only 38% were older. Their education levels were lower partly of course because many of them were young people still in the education system but on the whole only 11% had a bachelor degree or higher. As a comparison, in the general population, according to figures from the 2001 census, 18.5% of the general

\(^{57}\) I interviewed lecturers in hospitality but in none of the other trades.
post 15 year old population had a bachelors degree or higher with an estimate that the number of people in the workforce with higher education qualifications would reach 26% in 2005 (DEST 2005).

It also seems that many casual TAFE lecturers obtain their work through a form of patronage and retain it for the same reasons. Whilst the selection process for permanent or long-term contract lecturers requires a ‘merit select process’ consisting of an application addressing the selection criteria and an interview, casual lecturers can obtain work on the whim of just one person, the program leader/manager/head of programs. These casual lecturers may do most of the same tasks that the others perform, preparing, planning, delivering training, assessing and marking work over a long term period that involves several years and yet they have no employment protection at all. If they do successfully apply for a merit select position, whether permanent or contract, then their previous work does not count officially as it was not merit selected and yet their work roles may change only marginally. Their previous work does not count when it comes to determining their rights to long service leave or to their starting position on the salary grades, though it might influence the latter.

Work performed as a casual lecturer does not seem to be regarded as proper work or proper teaching since casual lecturers do not need to be selected and can be employed or dismissed on the wish of one person with no particular checks made on them. Nevertheless they are working side by side, performing the same tasks as someone who has been through an arduous process of selection to ensure that they are suitable for the job. They also
need to be applying the same standards of teaching and delivery that others do.

This cohort does not have a career in the traditional hierarchical, bureaucratic sense of the word unless their work at TAFE is secondary to some other occupation. While the notion of a hierarchical career is contested in these times of short term contracts, casual TAFE lecturers are definitely not part of the career ladder at TAFE because of their working mode. It would seem likely then that these lecturers would accept that they are not on the career track. However this does not prove to be the case though with 44% of the respondents seeing themselves as professional educators, a reframing of their circumstances which lessens the link between the organisation and the individual and gives greater strength to the link between the student and the casual lecturer. Of the remaining casual lecturers, 28% saw themselves as having no career but this was generally due to their being in semi retirement or having family responsibilities which took precedence over their working lives.

When they were at work, there were other things which impacted on their status. One of these was the allocation of space; the amount of office space that someone is allocated often underpins his or her status in the workplace. Casual TAFE lecturers are frequently allocated very little space. The actual amount differs from college to college and may range from one desk for multiple lecturers to a desk shared between a couple of lecturers. The decision on how space is allocated depends both on what is available and on the attitude of the program leader/ program manager. It is rare that storage
space is provided meaning that this cohort must carry their work materials with them. Access to computers is limited as well. The reasons for this are that casuals are not expected to work in the staff room, they arrive, pick up their class rolls, go to their classroom and teach and then return their rolls and leave. They are not expected to do their preparation in the workplace but rather to do it off campus which means that they have to provide their own equipment and resources. This is both a considerable saving for the college but it also reflects the invisibility and poor status of the casual TAFE lecturer.

This transfer of costs from the college to the casual lecturer is part of the management of risk that has become part of the neo-liberal project where avoidance of costs sees them transferred along a chain of recipients until they reach the most vulnerable who are less able to transfer them. In this case TAFE management avoids the costs of more full time permanent staff by transferring the risk to the casual lecturers who are readily disposable if times change and courses are not run. At the same time it does not have to provide adequate resourcing for them. This is not confined to the TAFE milieu but can be seen in many areas of commercial life such as banking where by encouraging customers to do internet banking from home using their own facilities, banks can increase their profits.

For the casual TAFE lecturer, this transfer of risk means that their lives are insecure. Empirical research has shown that risk can have adverse affects on people’s physical and emotional health. Ameen et al (1995) in a study of academic accountants found that insecurity was linked directly to lower job
satisfaction and a decrease in commitment to the job. If the social contract between employer and employee is perceived to be one sided then those adversely affected may well look elsewhere for more secure employment. It must be made clear though that by no means all of the respondents felt insecure at work and some were much better at coping than others. Those who had an alternative source of income, whether from another job or from a partner, were less worried about their status than those who relied on TAFE as their major source of income.

While no evidence has been sought in this project of harmful causes to people’s health from facing insecurity, it is clear that this is not a concern for TAFE management who rarely see these people as valued employees who might have much to contribute. Rather, they can be regarded as a stigmatised group though that may not be acknowledged easily by those further up the hierarchy, casuals can be used to shore up staff shortages and can be easily discarded when numbers drop. The fact that this might have an impact on people’s personal lives and mental and physical welfare does not seem to be recognized.

Stigmatised does seem to be a very harsh word to use to describe casual lecturers but it is one which I think can be justified. Goffman (1963, p.2) in defining stigma, writes ‘society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for the members of each of these categories.’ Anyone who does not meet these attributes may well be stigmatised by those around them who do. Permanent TAFE lecturers were generally appointed when that was the way things are
done and when casual lecturers were those who generally had other jobs and just came in to do a little specialist teaching. A new cohort of casual lecturers, who were working more hours, who seemed to rely on these hours to make their livings and who seemed anxious to maintain their hours is an affront to the way things have always been done. For many rather than recognising that the system has become less welcoming to new staff, it was simpler to think that there was something wrong with these lecturers since they had not been given permanent positions.

Casual lecturers admitted to feeling that they were stigmatised and many were reluctant to tell others that they were working on a casual basis. One in particular admitted to feeling worthless:

Not so much less of a person in that yes I'm a human being but certainly you feel worthless. Because you have not got anything settled, because you can't make any commitments, you just feel like you are worthless and especially when you go for months without getting anything.

While the strength of that feeling is likely to be related to how great the necessity was to obtain work and how much the individual depended on TAFE for their income, it is a feeling that exists. If casual lecturers see themselves as being stigmatised and see their permanent colleagues as making judgements about them based on their work status, then it is clear that working as a casual TAFE lecturer is a debased job.
It might be thought that the disadvantages of working as a casual TAFE lecturer would have an impact on how committed casual TAFE lecturers are to their work. This does not seem to be true of this cohort. Commitment can be a rather nebulous term. Meyer and Allen (1997) postulate a three part model of commitment. One part is the affective, an employee’s emotional attachment to the organisation. The second element is the normative commitment which sees an employee bound to the organisation from a sense of duty and obligation while the third element is the continuance aspect in which people show commitment because of the perceived benefits and lack of viable alternatives. Casual lecturers generally seemed to have stronger feelings of the normative and continuance aspects of commitment.

For most people paid work is more than just an instrumental activity that fills in the time and provides an income and this is true of casual lecturers. Casual lecturers were committed to their work and in fact this commitment makes possible the reframing of their experience. A large proportion of those interviewed saw themselves as professional educators and their commitment was not to TAFE the institution but rather to their students and in some cases to their program manager/head of programs who was the person responsible for giving them work. They would strongly deny any lack of commitment but they were also very clear as to the limits of that commitment. There was no reason for them to be committed to TAFE the institution since that institution had never reciprocated in any way.

It might be thought that there are only negatives associated with being a casual TAFE lecturer but this is not so. Every one of the respondents
expressed an enjoyment of teaching and the loyalty to their students but for some there was also much to be gained from working on a casual basis. Some enjoyed the lack of commitment and not having to get involved with the politics of the place. Those of course who were working only on a part time basis because of family or other work or study commitments were also happier with the work than those who relied on it to make their livings. This is of course the crux of the matter; those who had to rely largely on their income from TAFE lecturing were those who were the least happy with their situation. Those who had a partner who provided well or who had income from other sources were less worried about their conditions.

What people did like about their jobs was the fact that they enjoyed teaching and they enjoyed being able to pass on what they knew to others. For some it was a matter of giving back to industry by teaching the coming generation; for others, they really just enjoyed teaching. Another factor that was mentioned by many was that they did not want to get tied up with bureaucracy. People saw TAFE as an overly bureaucratic institution and if that involvement with bureaucracy could be avoided, then so much the better. Of course this aversion towards bureaucracy is probably a common feeling amongst all TAFE lecturers though it was not the business of this project to investigate all lecturers. It was this factor that seemed important rather than any perceived flexibility. Flexibility as an incentive hardly rated a mention probably because for a casual TAFE lecturer, it does not really exist since people have to commit to a class at a certain time, for a certain duration for a specified number of weeks. Of course whether such consistent work can truly be
defined as casual work is questionable and the union is working to have casual as a working definition redefined some time in the future.

Casual lecturing conditions obviously do not suit everyone and many of those interviewed would rather have permanent part time work than casual work. Another issue though is whether it has actually been good for TAFE. Employing staff on a casual basis has a short-term attraction; it means that if student numbers change staff can be laid off without any financial cost to the college. These are not the only costs which should be considered. There are implications for the recruitment and retention of staff. Like many other service areas, working at TAFE is not necessarily the career of first choice since the pay levels are not high and even though casual rates look attractive when they are unexamined, when taken on an annual basis, they are not rewarding. It is also clear that casual work is not necessarily a lead in to permanent work as everyone who wishes to gain permanency must go through a merit select process. Permanent jobs are advertised infrequently and many advertisements these days are for fixed term contracts.\footnote{With the proposed new Enterprise Agreement of 2009, there is a move towards greater permanency and short term contracts for on going work will be discouraged. Casual lecturers will be offered the option of short term contracts if their work extends beyond six weeks.}

When the economy is strong and jobs are plentiful, then other jobs may be far more attractive with better pay and conditions and so those people who find that casual TAFE lecturing is all that they can get when unemployment is high now have other opportunities which offer them more. While I have not specifically searched out those I interviewed to see if they are still working as casual TAFE lecturers, I do know that some have moved on to better paid and
more secure jobs or retirement, some who had family responsibilities now want more work and some have gained permanent positions. Perhaps just as casual work is transitional work for young people; it is also for casual TAFE lecturers who choose other forms of work when opportunities arise.

It is also important to remember that casual lecturers do not form a homogenous group so any assumptions that treat them as so are dangerous. While this particular group do tend to be older, that in itself reflects the age of TAFE lecturers in the general population as it does teachers. Those who refuse to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the casual workforce in general and the TAFE workforce in particular, will have difficulties with the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced staff.

TAFE will have a problem attracting and retaining younger lecturers as the pay has not kept pace with other professions especially for those with graduate qualifications. The cohort of permanent lecturers is aging and there are concerns that as the baby boomers retire, they will be difficult to replace. Currently, TAFE is having great difficulty in retaining trades lecturers as the pay it offers does not match what is available in industry. In the current certified agreement negotiations, TAFE management wishes to curtail conditions by eliminating the right to work seven and half hours off campus for permanent and contract lecturers. Since these trades lecturers are attracted to work at TAFE because of such conditions, this move will lessen the attraction of the job. As well, anyone seeking career advancement must

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59 Though lecturers will be able to opt to work in a ‘flexible hours’ mode for an extra five per cent pay, it was made quite clear in negotiations, that TAFE management are hoping to persuade everyone to adopt this mode of work.
move into management positions since academic leadership positions have been reduced over the years.

There are many questions left unanswered by this research that may be taken up at some other time. Some of these questions relate to issues such as whether the quality of teaching at TAFE is affected by the numbers of casual lecturers employed? Does TAFE management really care about the quality of teaching they provide or are they more concerned with running businesses and how much is this influenced by government policies? Are casual lecturers as effective as permanent or contract lecturers and in fact how do you measure good teaching at TAFE? Does casual TAFE lecturing have an adverse effect on the health of those involved?

On the whole though I consider that the practice of a particular form of human resource management which regards casual lecturers as mere cogs in the system with no concern as to the qualities and skills they bring to TAFE colleges and no concern as to their particular situations as individuals, is not one which serves society well. The increasing insistence on making TAFE a business rather than a public good, means that economies must be made and casual lecturers are a cheap form of labour.

Likewise, the escalation of the casual mode of working throughout the general working population in Australia, (ABS, 2006, 2007, 2008) is not one that leads to the security of the individual or their family except in very particular situations. The consequences of a working mode which discriminates against those who have not willingly chosen it, may one day be recognised by society
through long term costs in areas such as health care, social wellbeing, inferior housing and social areas which are not immediately apparent to those who feel profits are the major focus of society.
APPENDIX ONE

The Questionnaire

1. As a casual TAFE lecturer, what are the issues that concern you?
2. How long have you been working as a casual TAFE lecturer?
3. How many hours do you work?
4. Would you like to work more hours?
5. At how many colleges do you work (ie central metro, west coast etc)?
6. At how many sites do you work?
7. (if more than one )- how does travelling from site to site affect your life?
8. In your household, are you the main breadwinner an equal breadwinner a partial breadwinner?
9. Is TAFE your main source of income ? just an extra? or part of a portfolio of jobs?
10. (if relevant) What occupation provides your main source of income?
11. (if relevant) - Do you enjoy having more than one job?
12. Do you enjoy working as a casual?
13. Would you prefer to have one full time permanent job? why?
14. What job did you do before you became a casual TAFE lecturer?
15. Why did you choose to become a casual TAFE lecturer?
16. How did you get your job as a casual TAFE lecturer?
17. What sorts of things did you have to do to get work?
18. Have you ever had a contract with TAFE? if so for how long?
19. Would you like a contract? Why?

20. Would you like to be a TAFE lecturer with permanent status?

Career

21. What does the term career mean to you?

22. How do you think that society views the concept of career?

23. In general, do you think you have a career?

24. If yes, what is it?

25. If no - do you want a career? Why?

26. What do you see as the difference between what you are doing now and a career?

27. To some, the idea of a career suggests a direction and purpose to life. How does this fit in with the way you view your working life?

28. Can you see a career for yourself at TAFE?

29. Can you see the possibility for you of a career somewhere other than TAFE?

30. If yes, what are you doing to achieve it?

Inside TAFE

31. Are your experiences of working at TAFE positive or negative? Why?

32. If you were asked to think of a metaphor to describe your experience of TAFE, what would it be?

33. What do you think makes a good casual TAFE lecturer?

34. Do you feel there is any stigma attached to working as a casual TAFE lecturer?
35. Do you ever feel exploited?
36. Are there any particular things you feel that you must or must not do as a casual TAFE lecturer?
37. How do you ensure that you keep your job?
38. Do you feel that you are accepted by other TAFE staff?
39. Do you feel that you are given similar status to other TAFE lecturers?
40. Do you feel that TAFE makes the best use of your qualifications and experience?
41. What is the best thing about working at TAFE?
42. What is the worst thing about working at TAFE?
43. Do you feel that you are paid appropriately for what you do?
44. How do you feel you are paid in comparison with permanent or contract TAFE lecturers?
45. Do you ever have trouble with your pay?
46. Do you feel you have to wait longer than you should to get paid?
47. Has this ever affected the way you organise your life?

Work

48. What does work mean to you?
49. What role does work play in your life?
50. Would you prefer not to work?
51. Do you feel that you are working to the full extent of your ability and experience?
52. If not, do you need to compensate and if so how?
53. How would you define professional?
54. Do you regard yourself as a professional?

55. Do you think that you are working as a professional in this job?

56. Do you think your teaching/delivery skills are as good as those of permanent staff?

57. Do you think that permanent TAFE lecturers are professionals?

58. Do you think that there is a particular status in being a TAFE lecturer?

59. Do you think that you are committed to your work as a casual TAFE lecturer?

60. Would you regard yourself as loyal to your employer?

61. Who is your employer - TAFE the institution or the program manager?

62. Do you regard your work at TAFE as just a means to an end ie it just provides money to live on?

63. Ideally what work would you like to do?

64. What is stopping you from doing this? (if relevant)

65. Is this the sort of work you imagined you would be doing when you finished studying?

66. Do you feel in control of your working life?

67. If no - what changes would have to be made for you to feel in control?

68. Do you think your work is valued as much as the work of permanent staff members?

69. Do you feel that you are expected to take on unpaid work?

70. Do you think that permanent staff are expected to take on unpaid work?

71. Do you think that you are defined as a person by your work?
Personal Life

72. Casual work is commonly referred to as precarious employment; is this how you feel about it?

73. What difference has working casually made to the way you live your life?

74. Do you feel less of a person for being a casual employee?

75. Do you tell people that you are a casual employee?

76. In general, do you think there is a stigma in being employed as casual? can you explain?

77. Do you feel insecure?

78. If so, how do you adjust to the insecurity?

79. Do you worry about getting enough work?

80. Have you ever got fewer hours of casual TAFE lecturing than you needed to survive?

81. If yes - what did you do then?

82. Are there ever any particular things you have to do to make ends meet?

83. Do you feel financially secure?

84. Do you have to budget stringently to get by?

85. Do you feel that you are able to provide adequately for your future?

86. Do you ever need to use some form of social security to tide you over the holidays?

87. What difference has working as a casual made to your plans?

88. Do you expect your current way of life to go on forever?
89. What are the best things about the way you work?

90. What are the worst things?

The Union

91. Are you a member of the union? Why?

92. Has anyone ever approached you to join the union?

93. Do you think the union represent your interests?

94. What would you like the union to do for casual lecturers?

95. What sorts of things would persuade you to join the union?

The entrepreneurial self

96. These days we are told that no one can expect a job for life and that people have to create their own jobs? What do you think of this point of view?

97. Do you regard yourself as an entrepreneur in your working life? Why?

98. Do you see yourself as someone with a portfolio of skills to sell to the market?

99. Do you think that life has treated you fairly? Why?

100. Do you think that TAFE treats you fairly?

101. Have you any other comments about being a casual TAFE lecturer?
DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Male Female


3. Educational qualifications

4. Are you currently enrolled in any other course?
### APPENDIX TWO

Summary of participants:

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