

*Abstract for Adjunct Instruction at Salt Lake Community College*

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In 1969 part-time instructors (adjuncts) made up 27% of the total faculty in US community colleges; in 1989 the number had climbed to 52% and was approaching 70% by 2003. Such heavy reliance on adjunct teaching naturally prompts a question: Does instruction by adjunct faculty influence student performance differently than instruction by full-time faculty? This study investigated the scope and associated outcomes of adjunct teaching at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC). The main findings of the study included the following:

1. Adjuncts made up about 80% of the academic faculty at SLCC and taught about 62% of FTE in each academic year.
2. Adjuncts awarded modestly higher grades, even after adjusting for a variety of other factors in a statistical model. But the average grade difference varied strongly by course, with some of the larger courses showing little difference. This may point to a lack of shared grading standards between adjuncts and full-time instructors in some departments and courses.
3. Students who took courses from adjuncts were no less likely to persist into the next semester or to graduate.
4. Student performance in a subsequent course was no different for students who took the first course from an adjunct instructor compared to those who took the first course from a full-time instructor. The two course sequences examined were English 1010 to English 2010 and Math 1010 to Math 1050. However, while the persistence of students to a higher English course was not associated with instructor employment status in English, in Math it was: students who took Math 1010 from adjunct instructors were more likely to repeat Math 1010 or not continue on to complete the QL requirement.
5. A survey of adjunct instructors conducted by the School of Arts Communication and Media found that two of the most commonly identified self-reported challenges to delivering effective instruction at SLCC were last-minute scheduling changes and lack of prep time, and poor communication from administration.

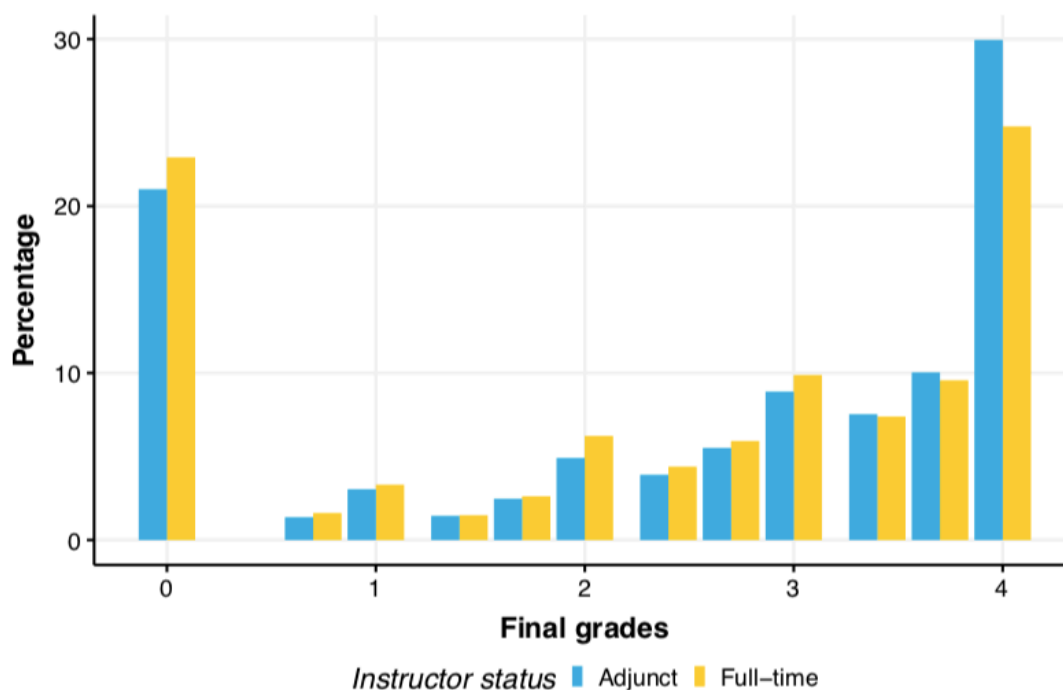


Figure 2: Distribution of grades at SLCC by instructor status. Academic classes only, 2011 - 2018.

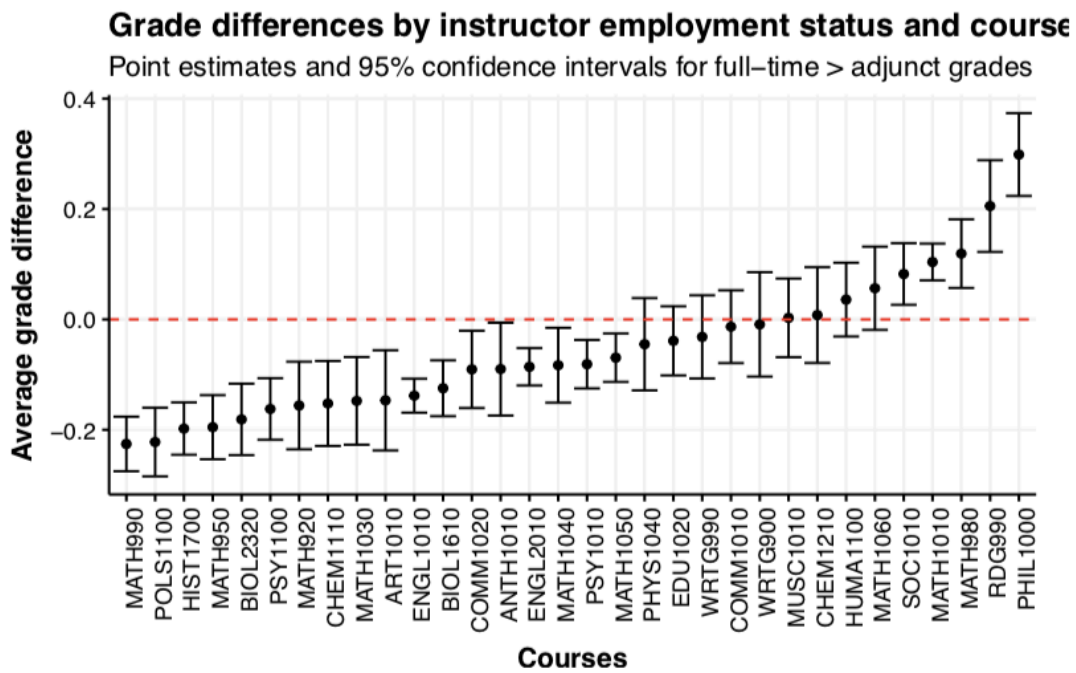


Figure 3: Model estimated average grades at SLCC, 2011 - 2018.