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Exploring How Andragogical Principles May Enhance Doctoral  
Students' Persistence to Dissertation Completion

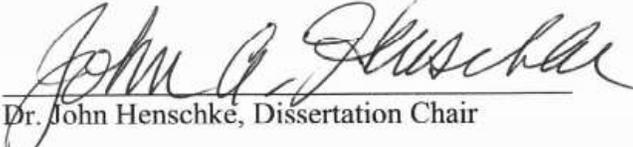
by  
Bernice Bush

A Dissertation Submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Doctor of Education  
School of Education

Exploring How Andragogical Principles May Enhance Doctoral  
Students' Persistence to Dissertation Completion

by  
Bernice Bush

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Doctor of Education  
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

  
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Date

## Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Bernice Bush

Signature: Bernice Bush Date: 12-18-20

## **Acknowledgments**

First and foremost, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God. Knowing my thoughts and purposes, He gave me the words to compose my doctoral experiences into a viable research study and qualifying dissertation. I am so grateful!

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## **Abstract**

The Doctorate is a terminal degree, in that, a student has accomplished the ultimate academic achievement within an educational field of domain. Although industries worldwide continually demand ever-advancing scholarly workforces and the innovation developments of higher thinkers, this degree has been impeded by a staggering 50% attrition rate among colleges and universities for decades. Also obstructive to degree attainment has been the phenomenological trend of the All-But-Dissertation (ABD) phase experienced by multitudes of candidates within their courses' timelines. Researchers have studied these issues over the last century, specifically seeking relevant sources of influence among dozens of student attributes and pursuing all indications with corresponding collegiate remedies. Yet, the statistics have remained steady. Through the qualitative study model of triangulation, the Research Investigator explores the sentiments of collegiate experiences for commonalities which undermine dissertation accomplishment and the possibilities within the Andragogical principles for bolstering students struggling with project progress. The three angles highlighted are the prior sentiments as reported of students from previously researched studies, the transcribed testimonies of several current-era doctoral graduates and former students who opted to drop out, as well as the future-focused narratives of this Author as the candidate persisting toward degree achievement. The Andragogical principles of a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students is being explored as a potential attempt to resolve the outstanding issues of doctorate degree attrition among educational institutions. It is believed that each of these three characteristics are powerful means for developing positive modes of communication. Combined together, empathy,

trust, and sensitivity are the staples of lasting relationships. When shared in reciprocity through the focused efforts of independent research, the tenets of scholarly mentorship will be achieved, and students will be rallied to persistence in their degree pursuits.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem**

The dissertation is the writing assignment within the research project of a doctoral degree program (Katz, 1995). The parameters of this project are so specific that a dual application process is necessary to screen for qualifying doctoral candidates. Students vying for a doctoral degree will have several prerequisite classes to attend prior to conducting a personal research study and writing the corresponding dissertation. It is imperative that the topic of this investigative endeavor be relevant to the objectives underlying the host degree while focusing on a gap within the literature encompassing the subject. This is a crucial point in the doctoral degree program as each student becomes an individual researcher working independent of other classmates. Some doctoral candidates will navigate the processes of their research undertakings, write their dissertations, present a defense of their findings, and successfully complete their degree programs in a timely manner. Other students will spend much more time at the process as they flounder between the responsibilities related to their personal roles in life, as well as the requisites encountered through this extended educational experience. This period of limbo has been deemed the All But Dissertation (ABD) phenomenon (Allen & Dory, 2001; Bair & Haworth, 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Blum, 2010; Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Brill, Balcanoff, Land, Gogarty, & Turner, 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Green, 1995; Green & Kluever, 1997; Holmes, Robinson, & Seay, 2010; Jimenez, Gokalp, Pena, Fischer, & Gupton, 2010; Johnson, Green, & Kluever, 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley & Salisbury-Glennon, 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Long, 2018; Miller, 1995).

The regulation course length of the doctoral program affords a generous amount of time to complete each degree, with appropriate extensions granted upon formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) request. Yet, nearly half of all struggling doctoral students will succumb to attrition and drop out of their programs. This tragedy held constant for more than 50 years, as revealed through prior research findings (Astin, 1972; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Faghihi, Rakow, & Ethington, 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 1994, 2000, 2005; Green, 1995; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Iffert, 1958; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Morrison, 2014; Pauley, Cunningham, & Toth, 1999; Rigler, Bowlin, Seat, Watts, & Throne, 2017; Schneider, 2015; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962). Several of these studies concluded that there remains a need to explore the ABD status doctoral students (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont, Meert, Galand, & Nils, 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Gagne, 2017; Grant, 2018; Hunter et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2016). It is believed, if the ABD plight could be understood, the universities could bolster their doctoral candidates through appropriate program remedies, and subsequently, boost their student retention rates (Bair et al., 1999; Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Iffert, 1958; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Summerskill, 1962; Tinto & Cullen, 1973).

Countless educators spent immense amounts of time and wealth contemplating and initiating just such program remedies within the universities over the last several decades, and yet, the statistics continue to hold. Until recently, the focus remained on the lacking academic measures associated with doctoral students lingering within their time-to-degree (TTD) (Archbald, 2011; Bowen et al., 1992; Golde, 1994, 2000, 2005; Iffert,

1958; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962; Tinto et al., 1973). Research conclusions have continued to recommend exploring the *perceptions* of doctoral students with ABD status for their insights into what the issues are surrounding such delays, or ultimately when dropping out of their programs (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Gagne, 2017; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Hunter et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2016; Summerskill, 1962). While these associated issues remain relatively elusive, it is obvious that the perceptions of these students are closely linked with their satisfaction of their doctoral degree programs, as well as to the universities' retention rates (Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Schneider, 2015).

The dissertation is meant to be achievable, albeit a life-stressing endeavor which produces individual learning, academic knowledge, and personal growth (Katz, 1995). With so large a margin for attrition, universities are pressed to provide improvements to remedy the situation. Educational researchers spent several decades investigating the ABD phenomenon and their resulting emergent themes continued to evolve slowly (Allen et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Blum, 2010; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Green, 1995; Green et al., 1997; Holmes et al., 2010; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Long, 2018; Miller, 1995). The difficulty in analyzing this phenomenon quantitatively has been due to the lack of Attrition records; there have been no data bases monitoring incomplete student degrees (Brill et al., 1999). Likewise, no one wants to highlight his or her experiences encompassing an unsuccessful educational program when the stigma represents a personal failure within the academic community (Blanchard, 2018). The conclusions of many studies relating to ABD status and university retention

have called for more qualitative research into the perceptions of struggling doctoral students and their reasons for dropping out of their degree programs (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Gagne, 2017; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Hunter et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2016; Summerskill, 1962).

The dissertation process is the point in the course of the program that faculty members expect each doctoral student to rouse him- or herself into the independent study pursuits. For a majority of these students, there becomes a disconnect between what they currently know about conducting independent research, what they still need to learn to direct their own, and how much they are capable of accomplishing alone (Long, 2018). These self-determining studies have left some struggling doctoral students feeling isolated from the cohort of group classes, as well as feeling abandoned from mattering by the university (Dupont et al., 2013; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Schneider, 2015). This is when a fortifying relationship with the advisor and Committee Chair is meant to be invaluable to doctoral students (Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; Brill et al., 2014; Faghihi et al., 1999; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Reedy & Taylor-Dunlop, 2015; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015). Yet, not all faculty members have been well-prepared to lead novice researchers and, therefore, have been less-effective mentors, or even harmful antagonists (Allen et al., 2001; Dinham & Scott, 1999; Golde, 1994, 2005; Rigler et al., 2017). When a doctoral student succumbs to attrition and drops out of their degree program, personal and university resources will have been wasted, prospective students will have been diverted away to other campuses or delayed in their endeavors with higher education, as well as the missed opportunities for society to benefit from educational leadership and scholarly workforces (Allen et al., 2001; Combs, 1966;

Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 2005; Green, 1995; Green et al., 1997; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Lenz, 1995; Rigler et al., 2017; Tinto et al., 1973).

### **Purpose of the Study**

With such an abundant need for graduates in higher education, it is essential to invest the time to explore the perceptions of doctoral students for what they believe will positively impact their ability to persist to the accomplishment of their dissertations, and ultimately complete their degrees. Unfortunately, the reasons underlying persistence and attrition within the doctoral degree program are as vast and unique as the multitudes of college-faring adults. There is no one-size-fits-all answer for accomplishing a dissertation and completing this independent study. There are benchmarks within human behavior, though, which highlight the strongest pathways toward personal success. Legendary psychologists have mapped their interpretations of the courses of maturation for people as they continued to grow toward the human pinnacle of self-actualization (Erikson, 1980, 1989; Maslow, 1970, 1999, 2011). Simply put, success has been achieved by imitating the best models accessible until becoming another living example to emulate.

“*[A]ndragogy . . . [is] the art and science of helping adults learn*” (Knowles, 1990, p. 54). As an art, the techniques are simple applications of common sense and compassion which fortify individuals through the known Assumptions of Adult Learners [Appendix D]. The science within this ideal relates to the intentional lesson planning by means of the Process Elements [Appendix E], which are to be facilitated within the most conducive Climate for adults to learn [within Appendix E]. Helping adults to learn requires active involvement: personally, meeting with students, enthusiastically listening

to their ideas, directing their inquiries toward relevant scopes of solution, sharing experience-gained information, and aligning their ongoing needs for knowledge and growth with a lifelong appetite for continual learning. Academically, Andragogical theory is the schematic for navigating educational adventures into positive outcomes (Cercone, 2008; Gagne, 2017; Henschke, 1998; Henschke, Cooper, & Isaac, 2003; Henschke, 2009; Henschke, Chapter 30 in Wang, 2013; Henschke, 2014, Chapter 8; Henschke, 2016; Knowles, 1996, Chapter 12; Moore, 2013; Risley, 2012; Ross-Gordon, 2011; Smith, 2010). Psychosocially, Andragogues cultivate student development through learning opportunities, which simultaneously foster relationships built around practices of generosity and reciprocity (Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Knowles, 1983).

### **Rationale of the Study**

Innovation results when curiosity and imagination grapple for solutions within existing needs, which in turn advances industries with developments in agriculture, medicine, and technology. America has long thrived on homegrown commerce created in a free market. Yet, some of these pioneering processes and groundbreaking products presented new demands for manufacturers, as well as brought more hardships to struggle under for the workforces. Subsequently, this has been the driving force many people utilized to reach up for the higher education essential to secure their careers, while ultimately growing their skill sets toward future advancements (Archbald, 2011; Ghafar, 2020). For many of these academic hopefuls, this would be their first encounter with formal adult education, and with such time lapses since having attended school, every aspect of the endeavor would appear daunting at first. Personal purpose, however, has

always been a motivator, and when coupled with perseverance, individuals have accomplished much.

Overall, though, many more people have struggled to contend with the added complications when attending college classes. Most adults have responsibilities like managing a home and working a job, along with priorities such as caring for family and paying bills. Introducing a class schedule into the weekly agenda had been harrowing enough, however the actual book studying and written assignments would eventually take a toll, having consumed all their remaining free time. Without a reprieve, consecutive semesters of elevated stress would continue to wear these students down, draining their wills to push through the mounting pressures and demands to the completion of their degrees. Largely, pursuing the trappings of a higher education while sustaining a home and lifestyle becomes an ordeal, causing many students to linger longer than the colleges' degree program timelines.

Normally, Undergraduate, Bachelor's and Masters' courses have been demanding degrees; albeit, the Doctorate has proven to be exponentially challenging for the candidates, as its culmination entailed conducting a personal research project and subsequently, writing a book-long dissertation. These prerequisites are high aspirations for ascending scholars, and as such, the programs have been designed to provide direction through leadership. Sadly, humanity is flawed and fragile; all too often, people on either side of the desk have been unaware of the needs, unavailable for engaging solutions, or unprepared to prevail over resistance. A failure at this point to accomplish the qualification and advance oneself in the workforce is a loss to society as a whole (Allen et al., 2001; Combs, 1966; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 2005; Green, 1995; Green et

al., 1997; Johnson, et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Lenz, 1995; Rigler, et al., 2017; Tinto et al., 1973). The ultimate focus of this research project at hand was exploring the perceptions doctoral candidates had regarding the positive and negative aspects of their academic adventures, and the ways, if any, that Andragogical principles may be utilized to enhance students' potentials to successfully complete these degrees.

### **Questions Addressed in Research**

In a research of prior studies (Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; Dupont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015) concerned with improving university retention measures amid high rates of dropout, the Research Investigator amassed large lists of 'reasons' for attrition and persistence from among their findings. Through the study at hand, the Research Investigator intended to explore the attestations of former students within other previously reported analyses (Dinham et al., 1999; Golde, 1994; 2000; Golde et al, 2001; Hunter et al., 2016; Jimenez et al., 2010; Sigafus, 1998) for alignment with either positive or negative connotations attributed to their academic experiences while pursuing collegiate degrees. Essentially, the study is designed to triangulate these findings with the interview responses of several doctoral graduates and several former students who opted not to finish their programs, as well as with the direct experiences encompassed by the Author, as a doctoral candidate persisting in the writing of this dissertation. These responses will represent the perceptions of students: the viewpoints from their collegiate encounters and the opinions they garnered through enduring conflicts. The Research Investigator endeavored to answer the Research Questions by aligning these categorically associated perceptions with Andragogical principles in a venture to offer remedy to the staggering statistics for ABD

doctoral dropouts. As such, the values embodied within a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students offer relevant resolutions through significant associations for doctoral students struggling to complete a dissertation and accomplish their degrees.

The exact Research Questions addressed herein are as follows:

How may, if at all, the principles of Andragogy (Teacher empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward learners, as accredited by three (3) of the seven factors measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance the potential of doctoral students with the All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation projects through meaningful advisory relationships?

- A. What are the reasons that research indicates why many doctoral students remain at the All But Dissertation phase despite high rates of attrition?
- B. What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students seeming to spend an inordinate amount of time at the All But Dissertation phase will persist to the accomplishment of the dissertation and completion of the doctoral degree?
- C. What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students remaining at the All But Dissertation phase will succumb to attrition and fail to accomplish the dissertation and complete the doctoral degree?
  1. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher empathy with students (as attributed through five (5) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?

2. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher trust in students (as attributed through eleven (11) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?
  3. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher sensitivity toward students (as attributed through seven (7) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?
- D. How, if at all, do the responses of the interviewees align with the data gathered through other previously researched studies?
- E. How, if at all, do the reflections of the Author's experience as an All But Dissertation status student persisting to dissertation completion align with the responses of the interviewees, as well as the data gathered through other previously researched studies?

### **Definition of Relevant Terms**

**All-But-Dissertation (ABD):** Doctoral students “who have completed all degree requirements except for the dissertation” (Allen & Dory, 2001, p. 1).

**Andragogy:** “[T]he art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43, as cited in Klepper, 2017, p. 18).

**Assumptions:** The defining common qualities of every adult capable of a learning experience (Knowles, 1990, p. 57).

**Attrition:** A gradual wearing down or weakening of the doctoral student psyche through prolonged attack, pressure, or friction (Brill et al., 2014, p. 27).

**Climate:** The etiquette, emotions, and environment most conducive to positive adult learning experiences (Grant, 2018, p. 3).

**Completers:** Herein describing doctoral students who have successfully persisted in completing their dissertation projects and satisfying their doctoral degrees (Bair & Haworth, 1999, p. 13).

**Critical Friend:** Colleagues with vital insight and helpful support in conjunction to the research undertakings of other scholars (Reedy & Taylor-Dunlop, 2015, p. 39).

**Design:** The combination of adult assumptions, classroom climate, lesson material, and pace of curriculum which is most beneficial to student success (Vatcharasirisook, 2011, p. 24).

**Developmental Stages:** From infancy to old age, humans respond to physiological challenges in distinct categories, as they grow and mature (Pam, 2013).

**Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of someone else (Oxford American Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2010).

**Ideal Helper:** Any associate offering crucial insight or information which assists or promotes the research investigator in the independent study project (Knowles, 1990, p. 84).

**Letter Launch:** A term used by Lindenwood University's Supervisor of Graduate Research with regard to the Letter of Introduction to Interviewees being forwarded to qualifying students across the campus (Personal Communication, Wisdom, 2019).

**Maturation:** A physiological and psychological ascension through ages and corresponding challenges of human beings, culminating with the pinnacle: Self-Actualization (Gall, Beins, & Feldman, 1996, p. 10).

**Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI):**

Henschke's (1989) Instructional Perspectives Inventory (IPI) was used to measure the beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of adult learners and their educators in academic settings. The MIPI . . . was adapted to fit the needs of . . . specific stud[ies] (as cited in Klepper, 2017, p. 9).

**Mentor:** A wise and trusted teacher, guide, and friend; many instances being an elderly monitor or advisor (McNeeley, 1937).

**Needs: (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs):** “[H]uman motives are *hierarchically* structured, and their arrangement within the hierarchy is defined by their respective levels of urgency/intensity/priority” (Maslow, 1999, p. viii).

**Needs: (Self-Direction):** “[People] make up their own minds, come to their own decisions, are self-starters, are responsible for themselves and their own destinies” (Maslow, 1970, p. 161).

**Non-Completers:** “Doctoral students that are noncompleters of the final product of the dissertation process” (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Kerlin, 1995; Tinto, 1993, as cited in Garbarini, 2017, p. 8).

**Non-Traditional:** People engaging learning experiences beyond grade school and high school. Anyone seeking to learn or teach something needful or meaningful. (Oxford, 2010).

**Other Previously Researched Studies:** [Dinham & Scott, 1999; Golde, 1994, 2000; Golde & Dore, 2001; Hunter & Devine, 2016; and Jimenez, Gokalp, Pena, Fischer, Gupton, 2010; Sigafus, 1998] (Author herein).

**Persistence:** The quality of continuing to do something in spite of difficulty or opposition (Schneider, 2015, p. 14).

**Prior Research Findings:** [Bair & Haworth, 1999; Blum, 2010; Dupont et al., 2013; Holmes, Robinson, & Seay, 2010; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Miller, 1995; and Reedy & Taylor-Dunlop, 2015] (Author herein).

**Process:** Andragogy is a “Process Model” and not a “Content Model” for adults engaging a learning experience. Such a model is based in compassion for adult learners’ needs through classroom climate control and lesson design planning (Knowles, 1990, p. 118).

**Phases of Adult Learning:** All the aspects of a learning experience which must be met, worked, and completed for curriculum to be satisfied by each adult learner (Taylor, 1986, p. 59).

**Readiness to learn:** The immediate and successful response of an adult learner to the curriculum when beginning a learning experience (Cercone, 2008, pp. 144-145).

**Self-Actualization:** The pinnacle of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, as well as Erikson’s *Life Stages*: To be the best version of one’s self possible as experienced through thoughts, words, and deeds (Maslow, 1999, p. 32).

**Self-Directed Learning:** To be so fully engaged in one’s learning experience as to be responsive to and responsible for the successful completion and full achievement of each endeavor (Cercone, 2008, p. 148).

**Sensitivity:**

The andragogical teacher/facilitator: Makes certain to understand the learner's point of view[;] Takes pains and time to get her/his point across to learners[;] Exercises patience in helping all learners progress[;] Overcomes any frustration with learner apathy[;] Will use whatever time learners need to grasp various concepts[;] Thoroughly allows learners to ask all question they need addressed[;] Resists in her/himself any irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting.

(Henschke, 2016, pp. 21-30)

**Teaching Concepts:** “[T]heories of teaching deal with the ways in which a person influences an organism to learn” (Gage, 1972, p. 56, as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 66).

**Time-to-degree (TTD):** “Total time-to-degree is the number of years between the awarding of the BA and the awarding of the PhD” (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992, p. 140).

**Triangulation:** “[C]onsidered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 154).

**Trust:** “[W]hen a person has confidence that what another person says is true” (Vatcharasirisook, 2011, p. 10).

**Limitations Within Study**

The aim of the study at hand is to seek out and explore the perceptions surrounding the collegiate experiences of several former students who have reached the status of ABD during their doctoral degree programs, in an attempt to remedy the high rate of dropout. Human beings will perceive multitudes of episodes and events simultaneously across their lifetimes. As Dr. Phil (E.D.) famously professes, “Perception

is reality;” to which, each person’s perceptions become the unique basis of their personal opinions. When those views are positive or productive, a person can rally for available resources to reinforce themselves through times of stress or needs. Yet even one significant negative or destructive incident can undermine a person’s confidence and strap them with painful memories, resentments, and regrets. Generally, perseverance becomes tenuous at best when trying to relieve stress and resolve needs from a standpoint of avoidance. Individually held opinions foster the attitudes which ultimately shape the personality. In order to reduce the negativity or correct the inaccuracy within their viewpoints, people require fresh insights which align with their faulty philosophies.

Perceptions may be erroneous in nature; however, to judge them as wrong only fortifies the adverse impact upon their host. In fact, judgement itself generates from a state of perception. When a person surmises the perceptions of another, they are merely speculating. Which is exactly the dilemma faced herein by the Research Investigator. The student experiences expounded upon within the multitude of prior research literature lending to the amassed list of ‘reasons’ for attrition being explored herein have already been cherry-picked for the impressions evoked within those specific studies. Most of those students were not noted as having been involved in doctoral programs, nor did all recollections mention an ABD status prior to the TTD, and whether they had successfully completed or ultimately dropped out. It is the intention of the Research Investigator to seek out and compile the sentiments of students which will be drawn from other previously researched findings. As these featured narratives may contain the personal accounts of unidentified learners of varying degree programs and academic disciplines, the Research Investigator will stretch beyond the primary focus of this study’s ABD

doctoral student status, so as to establish a greater pool of life experiences from which to investigate these ‘reasons’ for attrition. The sentiments of personal experience resound within humankind, whether enamored by positive outcomes or alienated by negative connotations. Nonetheless, the ‘reasons’ surrounding collegiate dropout amassed by the Research Investigator from prior studies’ findings were recognizable and reiterate, generating several strong themes from which three categories were derived:

Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts.

Even though these ‘reasons’ for attrition have categorical similarities, the collegiate experiences from which they are drawn have spanned across decades, as well as continents. This time and distance bear significantly differing relevance when analytically considering the successes enjoyed or the stresses endured by students, especially in light of diverse cultural protocols and uninformed interpretations.

Technological advancements along with internet access continue to revolutionize higher learning, thrusting concepts toward the future while drawing a vast array of inexperienced learners into an established institution of intellectual conventions. Yet, the frailties of humanity remain nearly as consistent, whether a student had to drudge through a library in search of information or tap into the World Wide Web with their keyboard. Much as affluence and accomplishment would benefit any student, these advantages pale in worth when the academic experience becomes tainted by human foibles.

Principally, a doctoral research project is conducted to investigate a gap regarding issues or concerns within a field of the host degree through a study design aimed at expounding the knowledge of the subject. Across this path of study, unforeseen discoveries and emerging insights commonly present, adding valuable nuances to the

information gathered. Even the most articulate of expectant assumptions will shift under the torrent of scrutiny within analytical interpretation. Simply put, the investigation proceeds with an unknown outcome. Such is the conflict grappled with herein by this study's Research Investigator, whose own dissertation quest represents the intended pursuit for persistence to doctoral degree completion in this triangulation model.

### **Delimitations**

In addressing the presenting limitations within the study at hand, the Research Investigator will be honest and forthcoming with the information garnered through sources of prior research. Although most of the 'reasons' for collegiate dropout found within the prior research lacked in the descriptions the specific association with doctoral degree programs and the achieved status of ABD, three clear categories emerged within the assemblage: Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts. While reporting the perceptions of students engaged upon personal speculation, the Research Investigator intended to diligently focus on identifying any alignment of these experiential views with the amassed 'reasons' for collegiate attrition. And as such, initiated a triangulated investigation beginning with the compilation of student narratives found within other previously researched studies. These were analyzed along with more current sentiments from the transcribed interviews of three (3) doctoral degree graduates and three (3) former students who ultimately opted not to finish their programs. The third angle of the triangulation design examined within this study model explored the personal academic experiences of this Author as a doctoral candidate at the ABD phase persisting to the completion of the dissertation project and the

accomplishment of the Instructional Leadership, Emphasis in Andragogy, doctoral EdD degree.

All perceptions gathered, whether from the student sentiments of other prior research studies or more recently divulged from personal interviews, will be honestly reported and equitably analyzed as to any alignment with the amassed 'reasons' for attrition. To the extent that any distinct timeframes, as well as all continental locations, can be deciphered from the student narratives of other prior research studies, the Research Investigator included the information within the description and propounded upon the variances with those of the current representations within the analysis. The same considerations were implemented for any noted issues of accessibility from former students regarding opportunities to engage technological support or enjoy internet availability. Finally, as a participant within this triangulation study model, the Author will report only what was prompted by the Research Investigator, allowing the outcome to manifest, despite the hankering notion that it would culminate with successful persistence.

### **Methodology of Study**

The focal point of this research study involved the phenomenon of students of higher education reaching the conclusion of their degrees' coursework, while floundering to complete the writing assignment in what became known as the ABD phase. In an attempt to fully explore the trend, three angles of encompassment were investigated in what was qualitatively recognized as Triangulation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 154). Initially, this project began with an investigation into prior research findings with regard to the topic of ABD phenomena, which also highlighted an association with the high rate

of collegiate dropout at this degree level. This probe garnered an extensive amount of prior research findings regarding ‘reasons’ for attrition, which were found to cluster around three categorical themes relating to collegiate experiences: Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts. The majority of these prior research endeavors, however, were not noted as having studied doctoral candidates specifically. Further research was conducted to uncover the sentiments of previously interviewed doctoral students at the ABD status from other prior studies’ findings. Also, the Research Investigator sought out six (6) ABD qualified candidates for their participation as Interviewees. This angle of the study sought to discover the academic and life experiences surrounding the degree programs of three (3) doctoral graduates who successfully defended and completed their degrees, and three (3) former students who ultimately chose to discontinue their efforts and drop out of their doctorate programs. The final experiential perspective considered was that of the Author, as a doctoral candidate at the ABD phase, persisting to the completion of this dissertation. Thus, the triangulation model was designed to encompass the past, present, and future-focused viewpoints of this phenomenological academic experience.

While this information is incredibly interesting, it does not warrant a doctoral study without the inclusion of an association with the host degree. Once all the sentiments were analyzed for any opportunities of shared relation with the ‘reasons’ for attrition, the specific research questions were answered through a filter of Andragogical principles. The Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI), composed and copyrighted by Dr. Henschke (1989), presents 45 statements, which were weighted by a five-choice Likert-scale [Appendix H]. There were seven factors within this assessment

tool for the evaluation and discernment of a Teacher's (supervisor's or anyone interested in personal growth) readiness to facilitate education toward another learner. The study at hand utilized three (3) of those factors and the 23 aligning elements as Andragogical principles, defining and clarifying a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students. It was the intended hope of the Research Investigator that the insights garnered would expose elemental concepts underlying the supportive relationships necessary to bolster novice researchers and boost university retention rates through increased doctoral degree completions.

### **Data Collected**

As aforementioned, the actual data collection process in this triangulation design model was derived through a series of specific student interviews. Namely, each student would have been actively enrolled in a doctoral degree program and reached the phenomenological status of ABD. The design model sought interview input from three (3) ABD doctoral students who successfully graduated, as well as three (3) former students operating from the ABD phase who ultimately decided to forego completion of their doctoral degrees. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved pathway for this process initiated as the "Letter of Introduction to Interviewees" with accompanying "Lindenwood University Adult Consent Form" launched through the campus email system by Lindenwood University's Supervisor of Graduate Research. While there were no respondents for months across four separate letter launches, an ironic effect of the global Covid-19 pandemic lockdown (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.) roused all six (6) essential interviewees within three weeks after the fifth letter launch. Continuing forward as proposed, these scheduled interviews were transcribed by the

Author and forwarded on to each participant for their thorough review and ultimate consent for inclusion in the study at hand.

### **Summary**

There is a close relationship within the sustainability focused on business economics and the ongoing need for higher education among workforces. Some people will learn how to develop toward scholarly workforces, while others will advance their industries through intellectually higher concepts (Archbald, 2011; Ghafar, 2020). As an ambassador toward this cause, the Research Investigator proposed to explore the sentiments of doctoral students who reached the phase of ABD for their perceptions of having navigated this academic adventure, as it has crossed their life courses. The student sentiments garnered from other previously researched studies was triangulated with more current views of six (6) specifically pursued doctoral candidates, as well as those rendered by the Author in persistent quest for degree completion. These personally-held opinions were categorically affiliated under the three themes of Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts, which emerged from within the list of 'Reasons' for Attrition [Appendix A], amassed from prior research findings. Then three (3) factors and 23 definitive elements of a Teacher's readiness to facilitate learning through empathy, trust, and sensitivity were utilized as a filter of Andragogical principles. The proposed intention of the Research Investigator was to reveal the elements essential to resourceful relationships, thus offering supportive alternatives to bolster struggling students to rally their causes and complete their degrees. An increase in doctoral degree achievement will improve

universities' retention rates while simultaneously reinforcing society with educational leadership and scholarly workforces.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### Itinerary of Exploration

This endeavor has been the requisite research project for a doctoral degree in *Andragogy*, “[t]he art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43, as cited in Klepper, 2017, p. 18). The Research Investigator invites the reader to experience an exploration into the background of Attrition within college degrees and the perceptions of doctoral students having reached the status of ABD, for which principles of Andragogy will be assessed as an ‘answer’ to the fallout of dropout. This adventure begins by looking back to the origins of Attrition rate statistics garnered through initial studies investigating educational outcomes (Iffert, 1958; Summerskill, 1962). Further research delved deeper into defining and clarifying terms and variables; yet the rate of dropout remained steady (Tinto et al., 1973). The Research Investigator sought out ‘reasons’ for Attrition and Persistence from among student perceptions reported within prior research findings, as well as the psychological assumptions surrounding dropouts (Allen et al., 2001; Astin, 1972; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Blum, 2010; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 1994, 2000, 2005; Green, 1995; Green et al., 1997; Holmes et al., 2010; Hunter et al., 2016; Iffert, 1958; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Lenz, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Morrison, 2014; Pauley et al., 1999; Rigler et al., 2017; Ronco, 1994; Schneider, 2015; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962; Tinto et al., 1973). There will be an examination of Erikson’s Life Stages (1980; 1998) and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1999) along with a Clinical Vignette from Blum (2010) in quest for insight regarding the maturation development of learners. Knowles’ (1989) own

development as an emerging theorist in adult education releasing the creative energies within learners will be tracked across several decades. Considerations will be made of Knowles' work in Andragogy as it was cultivated from the discoveries of Lindeman, Rogers, Houle, and Tough (Knowles, 1990). The six Assumptions of Adult Learners will lead into theory of self-direction in higher education (Klepper, 2017). Characteristics of ideal helpers, critical friends, and mentors will be presented as qualities of relationships with the potential to bolster struggling students (Reedy et al., 2015). The transition of Henschke from Knowles' mentee to the premier mentor of Andragogy worldwide will be highlighted (Personal Communication, J. Henschke, 2019). Finally, the effects of a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward learners will be investigated through the 23 elements encompassing these three (3) factors within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI), the educator evaluation tool developed by Henschke (1989).

### **Background of Attrition Studies in General**

The world in which we all live has continued to grow in population and the direct need for specific industrial advancements. It has become vital for adults to frequently update their working knowledge just to operate a phone, engage audio/visual entertainment, or configure security systems. How much more crucial will that need for updated working knowledge be when it pertains to the advancing or emerging theories of agricultural, academic, medical, or technological developments arising daily on a global basis (Archbald, 2011; Ghafar, 2020)? It has certainly been important enough to warrant a higher graduate success rate than the cliché 50% slated for university doctoral students over the last several decades (Astin, 1972; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Bowen et

al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 1994, 2000, 2005; Green, 1995; Hunter et al., 2016; Iffert, 1958; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Morrison, 2014; Pauley et al., 1999; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962). This institutional loss continued to have broad consequences as each dropout has suspended college revenue, wasted valuable resources, and squandered another student's chances to have attended that course (Allen et al., 2001; Blanchard, 2018; Bowen et al., 1992; Combs, 1966; Garbarini, 2017; Green, 1995; Green et al., 1997; Golde, 2005; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Lenz, 1995; Rigler et al., 2017; Ronco, 1994; Smith 1981; Summerskill, 1962; Tinto et al., 1973).

As for the non-completing student, losses included extensive financial debt, deep-seeded shame for the failed attempt, and remorse for ever having begun the doctoral program (Blanchard, 2018; Dinham et al., 1999). In essence, each dropout has had to contend with the burden of such a negative life experience, often times hampering the abilities for further achievement through the discontented psyche (Allan et al., 2001; Brill et al., 2014; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Garbarini, 2017; Lenz, 1995; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998; Tinto et al., 1973). Notwithstanding, the inevitability that half the students who attended a doctoral program have already succumbed to attrition and ultimately dropped out, has continued to drive the potential for ailing adults floundering in the workforce (Hunter et al., 2016).

In contrast, the student who persisted unto his or her graduation has since been enjoying the sweet fruit such success bears. Somewhere between curiosity and confidence, challenges became opportunities; stress set the pace of the agenda; and

academic deadlines were deemed hope-filled goals. This adult had drawn from a cache of personal resources time and again to have met the curriculum for each class and satisfied the criteria for the doctoral degree (Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Dinham et al., 1999; Holmes et al., 2010; Kluever, 1995; Schapiro & Livingston, 2000; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998; Tinto et al., 1973; Vatcharasirisook, 2011).

Moreover, there has been a significant portion of doctoral degree candidates who have satisfied the course curriculum, yet lingered beyond the program timeline when conducting the independent research. The nature of this phenomenon has held as constant as the 50% attrition rate and has long since been coined the ‘All But Dissertation (ABD)’ phase (Allen et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Blum, 2010; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Gold, 1994; Green, 1995; Green et al., 1997; Holmes et al., 2010; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Long, 2018; Miller, 1995; Sigafus, 1998). When reviewing the perceptions of college dropouts as reported within prior research studies, three specific areas of concern emerged around the common theme: *lacked support* (Allan et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 2005; Grant, 2018; Green et al., 1997; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Lenz, 1995; Long, 2018; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015; Rigler et al., 2017; Sigafus, 1998; Tinto et al., 1973). Explanations regarding attrition seemed to rally most around ‘reasons’ related to advisory relationships, topic choices, and to the students, themselves (Pauley et al., 1999). This research study at hand was intended to explore how, if at all, struggling doctoral students could be bolstered to persist through the academic experience.

### **Andragogy as An Answer**

“*Andragogy* . . . [is] the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1990, p. 54). The theory incorporates the benchmarks of educational receptivity as the ‘Assumptions’ of adult learners (Klepper, 2017, p. 18; Knowles, 1990, p. 57; Vatcharasirisook, 2011, p. 22). “[In his 1950 book, n.p.] *Informal Adult Education* . . . Malcolm Knowles organized [his] ideas around the notion that adults learn[ed] best in informal, comfortable, flexible, nonthreatening settings” (Knowles, 1990, p. 54). Yet, no assumptions could ever be made with respect to the comprehensiveness of teachers to educate those learners. Dr. Henschke, a former student of Knowles and accomplished educator, spent two decades “drawing upon the adult education literature, observing the practice of others in the field[,] as well as developing and testing ideas of his own” (Henschke, 1989, p. 83) to create such an assessment instrument. The Instructional Perspectives Inventory (IPI) has been an Andragogical tool for self-evaluating the beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of an educator toward adult learners (Klepper, 2017). Within this assessment are 23 elements within three (3) factors regarding a “Teacher[’s] [e]mpathy with, . . . [t]rust [in], . . . [and] . . . [s]ensitivity toward [their students]” (Henschke, 2014, p. 152). It has been the Research Investigator’s goal to explore the impact these three specific factors could bear in relation to enhancing the potential of struggling doctoral students to complete their dissertations and accomplish their degrees.

### **Student Perceptions as Contributing Condition of Attrition**

Scouring through prior research analyses, the Research Investigator found that the studies concerning the conditions contributing to attrition exhausted the variables surrounding age, gender, ethnicity, proximity, and financial status without a conclusive

association or absolute resolution (Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Iffert, 1958; Summerskill, 1962). The reasons students have dropped out have been complex, compounded, and convoluted, while all-inclusive solutions remained elusive (Allan et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; Bowen et al., 1992; Combs, 1966; Dinham et al., 1999; Faghihi et al., 1999; and Garbarini, 2017; Iffert, 1958; Sigafus, 1998). These afore-cited sources began to suggest a review of the perceptions of these struggling students (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Summerskill, 1962). As the Research Investigator scrutinized several meta-studies in prior research to decipher the ‘reasons’ multitudes of doctoral students ultimately dropped out of their degree programs, themes began to emerge. There appeared to be three sets of student-perceived ‘reasons’ for doctoral program attrition, which could be construed as pertaining to the investigation within this study: Faculty/University Complaints; Topic/Project Issues; and Personal Life Role Conflicts (Bair et al., 1999; Blum 2010; Dupont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Hunter et al., 2016; Jimenez et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015).

As the need for graduates in higher education has remained a societal priority (Ghafar, 2020), the potential to enhance struggling doctoral students, especially those at the ABD phase, to persist to the completion of the dissertation and ultimate degree achievement is a worthy call to study (Bair et. al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Blum, 2010; Brill et. al., 2014; Dinham et al., 1999; Faghihi et. al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Kelley et al., 2016; Long, 2018; Lunsford, 2012; Reedy et al., 2015; Rigler et. al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998). It is the purposeful goal and sincere expectation of the Research Investigator to utilize these supportive elements in the quest to complete this dissertation

at hand and accomplish the Instructional Leadership, Emphasis in Andragogy doctoral degree.

### **Origins of Attrition Rate Statistics**

As the enrollment into higher education programs continued to increase within universities across America in the 20th century, so did the rates of student dropout. The intensity of the situation warranted researching the variables between the university and the student for insight into the actual issues involved. “The first of these [major studies] was supervised by McNeeley of the U.S. Department of Education and concerned dropouts and failures among 15,535 students who entered 25 universities in 1931 and 1932” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). Initially, the findings highlighted a 62.1% loss of students within these institutions across the next four years. McNeeley’s research (1937) was able to decipher that 17% of these students had transferred to other colleges and universities. Thus, the actual loss suffered by higher education was 45.2% (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630).

In a similar study sponsored by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and directed by Iffert, the measure of attrition was sought “among a sample of 12,667 students who entered 149 institutions of higher learning in 1950” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630).

The central findings indicate[d] that these schools lost approximately half their students in the succeeding four years and graduated only 39.5% in four years. By extrapolation, Iffert arrive[d] at a rough estimate of “59 percent as the probable maximum percentage eventually graduating.” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630)

Iffert and other researchers were able to discover that “[a]pproximately half the total withdrawals [had] occur[ed] before the sophomore year[;] . . . undoubtedly[,] freshman year serve[d] a screening function for many colleges” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). Less than 40% of matriculated students would remain at their original institution beyond the first year to graduate three [or more] years later. Twenty percent of these scholars would eventually transfer to other institutions and graduate in three or more years (Smith, 1981, p. 3).

These initial studies “undertaken by agencies of the federal government” were slated to address the “institutional and administrative concerns” of colleges with regard to the high attrition rates among their student populations (Summerskill, 1962, p. 628). One major focus was directed at the concept of colleges as “organized . . . training center[s] rather than as . . . intellectual center[s];” meaning, college curriculum was the preparatory course toward entering careers in “business or industry, science or technology, medicine or law, homemaking or community service” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 628). Another view measured the overall efficiency within institutions experiencing high student attrition rates. “[F]or . . . students and colleges, these withdrawals mean[t] a waste of time, of energy, and of money” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 628). Universities were quite reliant upon the stability of their budgets. “No matter what the nature and size of other income sources, most colleges depend heavily on student fees (or state appropriations on a per student basis) for unrestricted income with which to pay faculty salaries and certain operating expenses” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 628).

Another pertinent research undertaking conducted by Summerskill (1962, p. 630) was a review of 35 studies between 1913 and 1962. The two aforementioned studies

were included within the parameters of this attrition investigation. The median values for universities' student loss over four years was calculated at 50%, while the student populations that persisted to graduation within those same four years was a mere 37% (Iffert, 1958; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962). In retrospect, the outstanding 13% of students could have lingered longer in their degree pursuits than the studies' four-year measure accounted. Summerskill (1962) was able to illustrate a strong holding pattern in attrition rates over a 40-year period. "Four studies conducted at different colleges in the 1920s showed a loss of 53% of entering students after four years [;] . . . six other studies in the 1930s was 50%; for eight studies in the 1940s – 49%; and for five studies in the 1950s – 51%" (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). There were many individual and combinations of factors of influence being investigated within these studies: age at enrollment, gender, economic status, social background, hometown location and size, secondary school preparation, scholastic aptitude, academic performance at college, motivation or lack of, change or conflict, adjustment, illness and injury and finances (Summerskill, 1962, pp. 631-646).

### **Clarification of Variables Surrounding Attrition**

As the predicament of attrition remained constant through the next decade, Tinto and Cullen (1973) were contracted by the Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation (OPBE) of the U.S. Office of Education to investigate the phenomenon through Contract Number OEC-0-73-1409 (p. iv). There were three separate aims within this report: 1) determining how the dropout rates related to "measures of individual ability and social status," 2) determining in what ways these rates "have changed since 1965," and 3) developing a "theoretical model of dropout" (Tinto et al., 1973, p. iv).

Initially, the terms encompassing this phenomenon, including ‘dropout,’ had to be defined. There were private institutions and public universities; two-year and four-year degree programs; as well as part-time and full-time student attendance, which had to be investigated. Tinto and Cullen (1973) referred to the students in higher education who had failed to return to college after their initial year as ‘voluntary withdrawals’ (Summerskill, 1962; Smith, 1981). Some students had only taken time off from their programs and returned to complete at later dates, which the Carnegie Council coined as “stopouts, . . . in their 1980 report on Policy Studies in Higher Education” (Ronco, 1994, p. 5). Students who had transferred to different institutions to finish their degrees were identified as ‘transfers.’ Of the students who persisted to the point of ABD and yet still opted to discontinue their programs were counted as ‘permanent dropouts.’ Lastly, ‘academic dismissals’ were noted as those students who had been removed from the curriculum for less than acceptable grades or behaviors (Tinto et al., 1973). In Tinto’s Summary, “a modified definition of dropout [was] suggested; namely that dropout represent[ed] the failure of individuals, of given ability and goal commitment, to achieve desired educational goals” (Tinto et al., 1973, p. 78).

Tinto and Cullen (1973), concluded that those students who persisted through the academic experience had a stronger sense of social integration or connectedness; they were involved in quality relationships within their families, society, and their universities. “[T]he ability and social status composition of the individuals in the school affect[ed] not only the individual’s perception of his [or her] own ability, but also the individual’s expectations and aspirations for college education; specifically, his [or her] commitment to the goal of college completion” (Tinto et al., 1973, p. 51). Goal commitment

developed within the parameters of personal accountability; persisting students “[saw] things as opportunities . . . to become . . . more self-actualized [people]” (Katz, 1995, p. 61).

“Vaughan (1968) suggest[ed] that dropouts tend[ed] to be more impulsive than persisters, lacking in any deep emotional commitment to education, and unable to profit as much from past experience” (Tinto et al., 1973, p. 49). “Dropouts also seem[ed] to be more unstable, more anxious, and overly active and restless relative to their successful college counterparts” (Tinto et al., 1973, p. 49). However, Coker (1968, n.p.), Hanson and Taylor (1970, n.p.), Rossman and Kirk (1968, n.p.), and Vaughan (1968, n.p.) discovered “voluntary withdrawals [had] often score[d] higher on various measures of ability and/or grade performance than [did] college persisters” (as cited in Tinto et al., 1973, p. 55). Yet, Spady (1970, n.p.) discerned that “college dropouts seem[ed] to be less “mature” than persisters” (as cited in Tinto et al., 1973, p. 49).

### **Recommendations to Seek Student Perceptions**

Academic rigor within universities and colleges needed to become more effective; “the higher educational system should [have] serve[d] to maximize the potential of each individual in the system” (Tinto et al., 1973, p. 79). “[N]o single variable explain[ed] doctoral student attrition or persistence; rather, several variables [were always] at play” (Bair et al., 1999, p. 27). “While there [had not been anything] magical about a six-year plan for the humanities, [it was] believed that such a model [came] closest – in light of [Bowen’s and Rundenstine’s] (1992) research and other studies – to a norm that [was] realistic, potentially affordable, and consistent with educational results of high quality” (p. 282). To be clear, this study at hand was intended to encompass only those students

enrolled in doctoral degree programs, which had generally warranted academic engagement of periods longer than four years.

Researchers began to realize “a strong need for qualitative research that [would] seek to gain directly from students [his or her] thoughts, feelings, and behaviors regarding continuation or attrition” of his or her doctoral programs (Bair et al., 1999, p. 28). Studies began to amass these student responses to the perceptions encompassing the doctoral experience as being ‘reasons’ for attrition and ‘reasons’ for persistence (Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; DuPont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015). The hope having been: to identify problematic patterns, as well as initiate successful interventions for ABD status students pursuing doctoral completion. Many of the prior research studies reviewed herein compiled lists of ‘reasons’ for attrition and persistence based specifically in their own findings which, when combined with the others, rendered enormous reiteration (Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; DuPont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015). The Research Investigator focused exclusively on the ‘reasons’ for Attrition at this point within the literature review. The compilation of ‘reasons’ for Persistence are slated to be reviewed later in the study. Following is an abbreviated synopsis of the list of Reasons for Attrition [Appendix A] as pertaining to the doctoral experience. (The unabridged versions of each listing have been included in the Appendices.)

### **Reasons for Attrition.**

#### **Relating to faculty/university complaints.**

- Inadequate or inaccurate advising (Bair et al., 1999).

- A negative relationship or even conflict between the student and advisor/faculty (Bair et al., 1999).
- Very little support after course work (Katz, 1995).
- Lacking inspirational relationships (Reedy et al, 2015).
- Not having mentor or critical friends throughout the doctoral dissertation process (Reedy et al., 2015).
- Not having a guide through the process (Reedy et al., 2015).
- Not receiving timely feedback (Reedy et al., 2015).

**Relating to topic/project issues.**

- Number of times the dissertation topic changed (Bair et al., 1999).
- A poor topic choice or inaccessible subject (Bair et al., 1999).
- Dissertation courses didn't help with the actual project (Katz, 1995).
- Lack of structure in dissertation stage (Bair et al., 1999).
- Students disappointed in or dissatisfied with their doctoral programs (Bair et al., 1999).
- No perception of belongingness to university (Dupont et al., 2013).
- Greater number of stressful events as graduate student (Blum, 2010).

**Relating to personal life role conflicts.**

- Personality factors such as perfectionism and depression (Bair et al., 1999).
- Higher level of procrastination (Blum, 2010).
- Lack of motivation (Dupont et al., 2013).
- Lack of accountability (Reedy et al., 2015).
- Low frustration tolerance, rebellion, and self-denigration (Blum, 2010).

- Role conflicts (Dupont et al., 2013).
- Time constraints (Tough, 1979, as cited in Knowles, 1990).
- Family issues (Miller, 1995).

### **Doctoral Perceptions Aligned with Reasons for Attrition.**

The Research Investigator found an assemblage of quoted graduate responses to an email survey regarding doctoral experiences within the report, *The Doctorate: Talking About the Degree*. Dinham and Scott (1999), conducted a “qualitative study [which] examined [the] experiences of 139 individuals with doctoral degrees to identify factors that inhibit[ed] and/or facilitate[ed] students’ success in doctoral programs” (Abstract). Although this collection lacked narratives directly related to doctoral dropouts equated with ABD status, the responses lent an enlightened perspective when aligned with some of the ‘reasons’ for attrition.

Students [were] relatively powerless, while supervisors/[advisors] [had] the power to block, guide, push and divert. . . . They [(supervisors/advisors)] [could] build obstacles more easily than they could remove them in many cases, yet ultimately, it [was] the student who [had to] accept the responsibility for his or her success or failure. (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 2)

### **A negative relationship or even conflict between the student and advisor/faculty.**

- “In retrospect, it seems to me that supervisors were content to let students go their own way – very laissez-faire – and so the quality of supervision received depended very much on how demanding one was as a student.” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 47)

- “My supervisor read what I sent him, usually saw me when I requested a consultation, provided minimal commentary and less than minimal encouragement. I was very much left to my own devices.” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 47)
- “[T]he faculty in the department did not get along well with each other” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46).
- “I didn’t particularly like him personally, . . . [b]ut I was stuck with him” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46).
- “Faculty advisors were worthless because they didn’t take their role seriously” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46).

**Students disappointed in or dissatisfied with their doctoral programs.**

- “I selected the topic late in the process because I had very little input from faculty. That is, I brought them many topics, but they wouldn’t support or reject them.” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 34)
- “NO assistance of any kind was provided with the exception of consultation from faculty members” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 41).
- “The university supplied nothing except library space” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 41).
- “Doctoral students were generally held hostage to the internecine fighting, petty jealousies and outright wars between faculty, and between departments” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 44).

- “Our relationship kept worsening as I approached completion, with him delaying completion with endless requests for additional work” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 51).

**Family issues.**

- “I was not treated well by anyone, including my family” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 68).
- “I missed my kids grow up and lost my marriage for nothing” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 80).
- “My family was not very supportive. . . . My parents, especially my mother, thought it was ‘foolishness’ for me to devote so much time to this undertaking” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 23).
- “The PhD meant that my personal time was almost non-existent. This wasn’t easy on my family” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 23).
- “My family was not supportive of my work, and we were always on the brink of bankruptcy” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 54).

These few responses reflect thousands of students’ doctoral experiences. Even with the probability that time polished or jaded people’s memories, these recollections seem to have been within their tolerable limits, as each respondent was eventually a degree recipient. How much more daunting would the experiences have been when reported by those doctoral students operating at the ABD status who opted to drop out of their programs? Many times, the answer has been revealed in presentation of the problem. It has been the Research Investigator’s intent to interview several former students for their personal perceptions surrounding the specific experiences they each

encountered before choosing not to complete the doctoral degree. The Research investigator also intended to interview several completing doctoral students for insight into the choices each made in their personal pursuit to persist to the accomplishment of their degrees. Accompanying these academic accounts, the Research Investigator has purposed to include the experiences of the Author, as derived along the doctoral degree journey which this dissertation project at hand has encompassed.

### **Psychological Assumptions Surrounding Dropouts**

Most students who chose to drop out of their educational investment had become isolated from aspects of socialization at their universities, and therefore, had already discontinued communication, as well as contact, with anyone on the campus. Without closing complaints or feedback, it has only been possible to speculate on what could have helped each learner prevail over his or her daunting challenge. More needs to become known about doctoral dropouts, and subsequently, how to have bolstered them through their harrowing experiences with personal research and dissertation writing (Bair et al., 1999; Brill et al., 2014; DuPont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Green et al., 1997; Kelley et al., 2016; Lunsford, 2012; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998; Summerskill, 1962).

Among the psychological characteristics that have been attributed to unsuccessful students are immaturity; . . . rebellion and nonconformity; . . . worry and anxiety; . . . social inadequacy; . . . nonadaptability; . . . [and] lack of independence and responsibility. (as cited in Summerskill, 1962, pg. 643)

Webster's dictionary (2004) defined 'maturity' as, "[t]he state or condition of being mature: fully developed in character and powers." Therefore, immaturity would

include the condition of not being fully developed in relation to a scholastic framework or an academic skill set. Lacking sufficient development of such personal characteristics as self-discipline (Combs, 1966; Long, 2018) and time management (Brill et al., 2014; Green et al., 1997) would definitely hamper a doctoral student's ability to persevere through stressful situations. Yet, collegiate etiquette would not have been the first challenge encountered by measures of immaturity from these adults. It is to be expected that rebellion and nonconformity would have been addressed early in a person's childhood through parental training and encouragement, thereby circumventing nonadaptability, as well as inappropriate worries and anxiety often associated with feelings of social inadequacy. However, even the best-intended parent has fallen short, time and again, of the optimal mark along the continuum of child rearing.

### **Consideration of Erikson's Life Stages theory**

Nevertheless, it has always been intended for children to grow-through-learning into responsible adults capable of independent living, ultimately able to work in society and foster the ongoing generations.

Somewhat generalized . . . [the *epigenetic principle*] . . . state[d] that anything that [grew had] a *ground plan*, and that out of this ground plan the *parts* [arose], each part having [had] its *time* of special ascendancy, until all parts [had] arisen to form a *functioning whole*. (Erikson, 1980, p. 53)

Child training, in creating a particular ratio of emphasis on such organismic modes as incorporation, retention, assimilation, elimination, intrusion and inclusion, [gave] the growing being a character basis suited to the main modes of later life tasks. (Erikson, 1980, p. 37)

[Erikson (1980)] present[ed] human growth from the point of view of the conflicts, inner and outer, which the healthy personality weather[ed], emerging and re-emerging with an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase of good judgment, and an increase in the capacity to do well, according to the standards of those who [were] significant to him [or her]. (p. 52)

He also posited that the [p]ersonality [could] be said to [have] developed according to steps predetermined in the human organism's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with, a widening social radius (Erikson, 1980, p. 54). . . . [That] "everything that [made] for a strong ego contribute[d] to its personality." (Erikson, 1980, p. 38)

Erikson's Life Stages [Appendix F] attested to personal development through experience and growth. Present successes lifted a person above his or her former self which simultaneously opened the future for opportunities through higher thoughts and corresponding actions. Anything less than total success, whether unsatisfactory, incomplete, or failed life experiences, left a person more poorly equipped to sustain themselves or further develop. The 'identity crisis' of any life stage was the frontier of maturity each person would have to navigate to develop further. When a person floundered or failed in response to the presented challenge, the result would create a gap in the developmental advancement, subsequently causing him or her to misstep through decisions and corresponding actions again (and again), whenever similar incidents would be encountered in future situations (Erikson, 1980).

Erikson developed a theory of ego development . . . thought to develop in a planned sequence of stages . . . . [each] . . . [N]ot a catastrophe but a turning point

of increased vulnerability and enhanced potential. The more an individual resolves these crises successfully the healthier their development will be. (Sheehy, 2004, p. 75)

### **Consideration of Blum's Clinical Vignette**

Yet, successful mastery of any life stage could still be gained in later ages through learned proficiency over the daunting obstacle which hindered the adult's psychosocial progress (Erikson, 1980). Blum (2010) presented such a case in his clinical Vignette regarding the experiences of student "A." "Her topic interested her, but she could not get herself to work on it . . . [having] found every means of avoiding her work and [also] having found that she got anxious when she did the dissertation work" (Blum, 2010, p. 80). After completing her course work in four years, "A" sought the help of a therapist to unblock her writing abilities toward the independent research project (Blum, 2010, p. 80). Through her journey of self-discovery, "A" experienced childhood recollections, which spurred deep feelings of disaffection and bitterness with her family, especially her mother (Blum, 2010, p. 80). At times, she projected similar resentments toward her therapist, not aware that she covered these emotions with irritation and aloofness (Blum, 2010, p. 81). Yet, this was the reactionary pattern which alerted her therapist to the unresolved issues of "A's" longstanding anger with and competitive tendencies toward her mother (Blum, 2010, p. 82). Once the stumbling block was identified, the childhood memories could be addressed as a series of stepping-stones in her adult development, ultimately highlighting the path for her maturity (Blum, 2010, p. 83).

### Consideration of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Blum (2010) cited in his Discussion section that “conflicts pertaining to the research and writing of a dissertation [were] always part of, and never isolated from, the rest of a person’s conflicts and concerns” (p. 83). Erikson knew that “[a]ctive, purposeful behavior [was] needed to cope with . . . challenges . . . [and that] most guilt [, as well as aspects of self-degradation, were] quickly compensated for by a sense of accomplishment” (Sheehy, 2004, p.76). Maslow had also grasped the seriousness of this developmental concept of accomplishment within his Hierarchy of Needs [Appendix G]. However, in contrast to Erikson and others, “Maslow took an optimistic approach to human behavior that emphasized developing one’s full potential” (Gall et al., 231).

Instead of basing his psychological model on people with mental and emotional problems, he used as his point of reference a collection of exceptionally dynamic and successful historical and contemporary figures whom he considered “self-actualizers,” including Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), Jane Addams (1869-1935), Albert Einstein (1879-1955), and Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962). (Gall et al., 1996, p. 231)

While this slant in analysis offered a refreshing new perspective to psychoanalytical theorems,

Maslow [had] grounded the development of his theory on his personal impressions of self-actualized people. . . . The difficulty with this approach [was] that . . . [he had decided by] *a priori* who were and who were not self-actualizers” (Sheehy, 2004, p. 165).

A priori: Using facts that are known to be true in order to decide what an unknown effect or result will be (Oxford, 2010).

Within Maslow's theory of motivation, "human motives [were] hierarchically structured, and their arrangement within the hierarchy [had been] defined by their respectful levels of urgency/intensity/priority" (as cited by Lowry, 1999, p. viii).

Maslow considered these "linked properties" . . . to be "prepotent" (as cited by Lowry, 1999, p. viii.) . . . [having] exist[ed] only in a potential fashion in the sense that they may [have] emerged again to dominate the [person] if they were thwarted. But a want that [had been] satisfied [was] no longer a want. The [person would be] dominated and its behavior organized only by unsatisfied needs. (Maslow, 1970, p. 38)

By the time a person entered an extended educational endeavor, he or she would have not only met many of life's basic needs along the way toward developing into an independent adult, each individual would have established a lifestyle meant to secure the satisfaction of those needs going forward.

We would "never have [had] the desire to compose music or create mathematical systems, or to adorn our homes," or to seek beauty in any other way, "if our stomachs were empty most of the time, or if we were continually dying of thirst, or if we were continually threatened by an always impending catastrophe. . . . But, . . . [having] satisf[ied] *all* of the more prepotent motives—the higher human motives [*would*] come to the fore and take their turn on stage" (Maslow (1954), as cited by Lowry, 1999, p. ix).

Satisfying a need has always involved work, albeit; people have sought out answers, corrected mistakes, and changed behaviors when a specific outcome was required. Most adults have already dedicated and expended much time and effort toward the procurement of the needs-satisfied lifestyle as individuals, when they have expanded into families. For many parents, dreams of personal achievement or desires to create would have to simmer awhile or fade away as the needs of each family member compounded against the availability of constrained resources. Yet in other homes, comfortable living quieted the curiosity, relaxed the drive to develop, and suppressed the abilities to overcome obstacles in light of an attainable achievement. How much more would the struggle be to persist in the doctoral dissertation writing and degree program completion when a student's life was inundated with such hardships while enduring the isolation of academia off campus?

### **Consideration of Knowles' work "Releasing the Energy of Others"**

For many adult education scholars, Malcolm Knowles continued to be hailed as the architect of Andragogy in America. However, his initial "academic discipline [was] history" (Knowles, 1989, p. 60). As such, "whenever [he] enter[ed] into a new field of endeavor, [his] instinctive impulse [was] to find out whatever [he] could about its historical background" (Knowles, 1989, p. 60). "As a new participant in the adult education movement [in the mid-1930s], [Malcolm] wanted to find out who its heroes were": [those] "people who serve[d] as role models for the [social system's] culture" (Knowles, 1989, p. 60). His passion was to discover the essential threads associated with teachers' conduct, which was woven throughout the fabric of educational advancements, in his quest to amplify adult learning techniques.

Effective leaders, [he] had been taught, were those who were able to get people to follow their orders. The consequence of this doctrine was, of course, that the output of the system was limited to the vision and ability of the leader. . . . [I]t gradually came to [Malcolm] that the highest function of leadership [was] *releasing* the energy of the people in the system and managing the processes for giving that energy direction toward mutually beneficial goals. (Knowles, 1989, p. 52)

Basically, “*creative leadership* [was] that form of leadership which release[d] the creative energy of the people being led.” Knowles identified the potential this mode of academic instruction would present in his “propositions regarding the behavioral characteristics of [such] creative leaders” (Knowles, 1989, pp. 52-53).

1. Creative leaders [made] a different set of assumptions – essentially positive – about human nature from the assumptions – essentially negative – made by controlling leaders.
2. Creative leaders accept[ed] as a law of human nature that people [felt] a commitment to a decision in proportion to the extent that they [felt] they [had] participated in making it.
3. Creative leaders believe[d] in and use[d] the power of self-fulfilling prophecy.
4. Creative leaders highly value[d] individuality.
5. Creative leaders stimulate[d] and reward[ed] creativity.
6. Creative leaders [were] committed to a process of continuous change and [were] skillful in managing change.
7. Creative leaders emphasize[d] internal motivators over external motivators.

8. Creative leaders encourage[d] people to be self-directing. (Knowles, 1989, pp. 53-58)

Knowles' self-directed learning adventure traversed across several decades.

“After graduating from Harvard in 1934. . . . [and subsequently] passing the Foreign Service Exam [at the] Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, [he faced] . . . a three-year wait [for employment within the State Department] (Knowles, 1989, p. 6). Shortly thereafter, “the federal government . . . establish[ed] the National Youth Administration [(NYA)] as a work-study program for unemployed youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five” (Knowles, 1989, p. 7). Malcolm’s age and experience with instruction qualified him to serve as the Director of Related Training “from 1935 – 1940” (Knowles, 1989, p. 7).

Moving on, Knowles became the “Director of Adult Education in the YMCAs of Boston and Chicago from 1940 - 1951” (Knowles, 1989, p. 73). “During the 1950s, [his] energies were focused on founding and managing the Adult Education Association of U.S.A., [(AEA)] and . . . was only peripherally thinking about adult learning theory” (Knowles, 1989, p. 77). That was his intent until spending two vacations, in 1952 and 1954, “participating in the human relations training sessions of the National Training Laboratories [(NTL)] in Bethel, Maine” (Knowles, 1989, p. 77). Once becoming “deeply interested in group dynamics and its implications for adult learning,” Malcolm

was especially impressed with the NTL’s conceptualization of the role of trainer as a facilitator of the analysis of the group’s here-and-now experience[;] . . . the extraction from group members of insights and self-understanding[;] and

principles of effective interpersonal relations and group processes. (Knowles, 1989, p. 77)

After receiving his MA in adult education in 1949 and his PhD in 1960 (Knowles, 1989, p. 14), Knowles continued to “keep up [his] reading” with regard to research in adult education; a list far too exhaustive to review herein (Knowles, 1989, p. 77). “In 1960, . . . [he] was invited to Boston University to establish a graduate program in adult education” in distinct correlation with his creative leadership skill set (Knowles, 1989, p. 78). Although his “theoretical framework of adult learning” was still “evolv[ing] in [his]mind,” the emerging concepts were recognized and confirmed by a visiting Yugoslavian adult educator (Knowles, 1989, p. 79). Dusan Savicevic was a participant in a summer session, in 1966, which was conducted by Knowles at Boston University. “At the end of [the program], Dusan came up to [him] with his eyes sparkling and said, “Malcolm, you are preaching and practicing Andragogy.” [To which Knowles] replied, “Whatagogy?”” (Knowles, 1989, p. 79). For Andragogues everywhere, the rest is history.

#### **Knowles’ Consideration of Lindemann.**

Malcolm dedicated decades of his education-oriented career to studying the learning theories of researchers of psychosocial science and the teaching concepts which were subsequently developed. Not only did he read everything published by accomplished researchers, many of them were his personally known associates. “[He] regard[ed] [Edward C.] Lindeman as . . . [his] first real mentor . . . [and] the prophet of modern adult educational theory (Knowles, 1989, p. 8).

In short, [Lindeman’s] conception of adult education [was] this: a cooperative venture in nonauthoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which [was]

to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which [dug] down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique of learning for adults which [made] education coterminous with life and hence elevates living itself to the level of adventurous experiment. (Lindeman, 1926, p. 160, as cited in Knowles, 1989, p.74)

Several of these researchers made lists of key assumptions regarding the adults they observed as learners. Lindeman (1926) posited that adults were motivated to learn as they experienced needs and interests, as the orientation to learning for each person would be life-centered. 'Life,' for each person, encompassed innumerable experiences; these became unique and valuable resources which had the potential to aid any adult with a similar need or interest (pp. 8-9, as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 29). Human beings as a species are innately self-directing. However, provisions should be mindfully applied to the psychosocial climate of classrooms as each individual would ultimately present "differences among needs in style, time, place, and pace of learning," (Lindeman, 1926, n.p., as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 31).

### **Knowles' Consideration of Rogers.**

Rogers (1951) would later expound on this learning theory with a "student-centered approach to education" procured from basic hypotheses he developed through researching adults in therapy (pp. 388-391, as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 41). His initial viewpoint: "therapy is a learning process," would inspire him to align his client-centered concepts to the issues confronting adults as learners (Rogers, 1951, p. 132, as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 41). No one can "teach another;" knowledge fails at wisdom when driven like a spear at a target. Adult learners needed help learning, and a good teacher

could facilitate the essentials of any curriculum by aligning with what the students found relevant. “Significant learning [was] often threatening to an individual, and [he] suggest[ed] the importance of providing an acceptant and supportive climate, with heavy reliance on student responsibility,” (Roger, 1951, p. 144, as cited in Knowles, 1990, pp. 41-42).

### **Knowles’ Consideration of Houle.**

Houle’s (1961) research into why adults engaged in continued education highlighted aspects of how they were learning. He concluded with the concept of three types of learners: “goal-oriented” (p. 18), “activity-oriented” (pp. 23-24), and “learning-oriented” (pp. 24-25, as cited in Knowles, 1990, pp. 46-47). The key assumptions derived from the ““fundamental system” of education design” reflected upon what was known of adult learners. “Learning occurred in specific situations and was profoundly influenced by it.” “The educational activities had to be based on realities of human experience and change.” “Education was a practical art;” “it was cooperative, not operative.” “Any design of education would be a complex of interacting elements managed by the facilitator; not a sequence of events” inflicted upon adult learners (Houle, 1972, pp. 32-39, as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 82).

### **Knowles’ Consideration of Tough.**

Tough assisted in Houle’s research and later would develop a theory regarding how individuals “organized [his or her] learning efforts around “projects” (1979, p. 6, as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 48). In the initial phase, an adult “decided to begin, . . . [which entailed] setting action goals, assessing interests, seeking information on certain opportunities, choosing the most appropriate knowledge and skills, establishing the

desired level or amount, and estimating the costs and benefits.” Phase two encompassed all the applicable resources when “choosing the planner” for the educational endeavor: “(programmed texts, workbooks, tape recordings), an individual learning consultant, (instructors, counselors, resource persons), groups,” or even him- or herself. The final phase recognized the “learner engage[d] in learning episodes” (Tough, 1979, n.p., as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 50).

### **Assumptions of Adult Learners**

Whether facilitating the lesson as a teacher or engaging new learning as a developing adult, humans strive for security and thrive in comfort. As aforementioned, Erikson deciphered the levels of learning each individual would have to navigate as he or she advanced in age towards personal maturity. Maslow envisioned a rising pyramid as a self-actualized adult when he contemplated the growth met through learning how to satisfy life’s presenting needs. Knowles recognized significant similarities among all these theories of the higher thinkers. Comparing and contrasting between the conclusive findings of other psychosocial researchers and his own career-spanned observations, “Knowles . . . precisely defined Andragogy as a “model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serve[d] as a basis for emergent theory”” (Klepper, 2017, p. 18). The Six Assumptions of Adult Learners in this emergent theory revealed the innate attributes humans manifested throughout his or her lifetime.

1. *The need to know.* Adults need to know [a reason that makes sense to him or herself] why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
2. *The learner’s self-concept.* Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives.

3. *The role of the learners' experience.* Adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youths.
4. *Readiness to learn.* Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their situations.
5. *Orientation to learning.* Adults are life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning.
6. *Motivation.* While adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like), the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like). (Klepper, 2017, p. 25-27; Knowles, 1990, pg. 57-63)

In Andragogy, these Six Assumptions of Adult Learners represented a compilation of the theories of learning. Knowles aligned these insights with the best practical applications of existing teaching theories, which in turn emerged into a “process model” for all educational endeavors (Knowles, 1990, p. 120).

[He posited that] [t]he andragogical teacher (facilitator, consultant, change agent) prepare[d] in advance a set of procedures for involving the learners (and other relevant parties) in a process [which] involve[ed] these elements:

- (1) Prepare[d] the learner for the program;
- (2) Establish[ed] . . . a climate conducive to learning;
- (3) Create[d] . . . a mechanism for mutual planning;
- (4) Diagnose[d] . . . the needs for learning;

- (5) Formulate[d] . . . program objectives (which is context) that will satisfy these needs;
- (6) Design[ed] . . . a pattern of learning experiences;
- (7) Conduct[ed] . . . these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and
- (8) Evaluate[d] . . . the learning outcomes and re[-]diagnos[ed] learning needs.

(Knowles, 1990, p. 120)

In essence, the principles of Andragogy were designed to diminish students' resistance to change, increase the drive for individual self-directedness, reduce unnecessary obstacles within the course, and elevate the potential for continued learning.

### **Self-Direction within Adult Learners**

Adults have always had needs: those unique to him- or herself, and those which reoccurred for everyone. Corresponding response to those needs with a timely 'readiness to learn' has been dependent upon the level of maturity from which each person functioned.

Erikson (1998), posited that "[t]he specific strength [which emerged] in adolescence – namely *fidelity* – maintained a strong relation both to infantile trust and to mature faith. As it transferr[ed] the need for guidance from parental figures to mentors and leaders, fidelity eagerly accept[ed] their ideological mediatorship." (p. 73)

Unless of course, the elements of trustworthiness were underdeveloped or sabotaged in the earlier childhood, having resulted in the "counterpart of fidelity . . . *role repudiation*", (Erikson, 1998, p. 73) which could manifest in the form of *diffident* ("meek, insecure,

unassertive,” (Oxford, 2010)) or *defiant* (“resistant, uncooperative, insubordinate,” (Oxford, 2010)) student behaviors, (Erikson, 1998, p. 73). Maslow (2011) theorized “that basic needs and self-actualization [did] not contradict each other any more than . . . childhood and maturity. One pass[ed] into the other and [was] a necessary prerequisite for it” (p. 24).

Having consistent stability throughout the journey of personal growth has always been a human ideal. Genuine growth, however, has been realized through the adaptation and alignment within the processes of self-stabilization experienced each time a “meaningful crisis” (Erikson, 1998, p. 66) presented, as “different capacities [have used] different opportunities,” (Erikson, 1980, p. 57). As pertaining to the maturity expended by a doctoral student, “the individual [has been] an active agent in a cyclical process of self-regulation” (Kelley et al., 2016, p. 89). “Self-regulation [has been referred to as] an active process in which learners [will have] analyze[d] tasks, set goals, and then attempt[ed] to monitor and regulate [his or her] cognition, motivation, and behavior in support of [those] goals” (Kelley et al., 2016, p. 89).

Fundamentally, self-regulation has been the concept of “be[ing] responsible for” (Oxford, 2010) one’s own outcomes. As “self-direction [has been] learned from experience” (Combs, 1966, p. 248), adult learners have entered into doctoral studies with significantly differing levels of academic independence.

[T]o achieve the objective of greater self-direction, . . . [there must have been] the . . . acceptance of students into partnership in the educational endeavor. . . . [The] modern goal for education, “the optimal development of the individual,” cannot [have been] achieved without this. Such an aim [has] require[d] participation of

the student and his [or her] wholehearted cooperation in the process. This [will] not likely . . . be accomplished unless students have [had] the feeling they matter[ed] and their decisions [have] count[ed]. (Combs, 1966, p. 248)

A doctoral degree, regardless of field of study or career discipline, meant thorough saturation of currently held knowledge of a specific subject by a candidate. Successful completion of independent research was evidenced through the written dissertation, a literal book. To have achieved these levels of academic accomplishment, each “doctoral candidate . . . [would have had to] be self-motivated, self-disciplined, and self-directed” (Kelley et al., 2016, p. 88). “Learning itself [has been] dependent upon the capacity for self-direction [innately possessed within each person]. . . . The effectiveness of learning must be measured [through] behavior change: whether students *behave[d] differently* as a consequence of [his or her] learning experience (Combs, 1966, p. 245). Knowles recognized “[t]he ultimate goal of the educational system [was] to shift to the individual the burden of his [or her] own education,” when he cited Gardner, (1963, pp. 11-12), within his own review of initiating self-directed learning as a facilitator” (1975, p. 69).

Knowles (1984) knew “that adults want[ed] to know exactly what to expect. Knowing what to expect ahead of time provide[d] a sense of control over what [would] soon occur” (n.p., as cited in Sigafus, 1998, p. 5). Personal control aligned with self-direction and “the most successful students [were] those who [had] a propensity to control [his or her] own effort to learn” (Schapiro et al., 2000, p. 23). None the less, while “self-direction [has been] seen as part of the cognitive endowment of adults, it [has] need[ed] to be nurtured” (Cox, 2015, p. 29, as cited in Long, 2018, p. 85) within some learners, or cultivated intermittently as a student attempted independent research

endeavors. As Knowles saw it, Andragogy was the art of *helping* adults learn, and “the first responsibility of a facilitator of learning [was] to help students develop competence as self-directed learners” (Knowles, 1975, p. 39).

[Yet, students did] not always know what they [did] not know about their journey (Long, 2018, p. 85). . . . [W]hat they [did] not know [was] all of the information that they [would] need in order to get there (Long, 2018, p. 86). . . . Andragogy show[ed] that the best way to teach adult learners [was] through a shared responsibility model in which the professor and the adult learner partner[ed] to determine . . . what need[ed] to be learned [to achieve a goal, and] how to go about teaching the materials.” (Long, 2018, p. 104)

An integral element of the ‘art’ of Andragogy has been the rallying relationships which developed between the facilitator and the learner. Pursuing the doctoral degree has been an educational experience which required guidance, compassion, and patience to successfully navigate. Whether a fellow-student peer, a teacher, or advisor, the ideal helper became a “[c]ritical friend [who] help[ed] guide the [doctoral degree] process, model[ed] leadership skills, and provide[d] [essential] feedback” (Reedy et al., 2015, p. 38).

### **Ideal Helpers**

Even independently pursued learning endeavor included input and assistance from ancillary attendants. Tough (1979) observed, defined, and clustered the characteristics he interpreted of such an ideal helper. This would be a “warm and loving” person who “accepted and cared for each learner or project.” “He [or she] would regard the learners as equals, . . . willing to spend the time” necessary to care for, approve of, offer support

toward, and encourage the friendly exchange of learning experiences. With his or her “confidence in the learner’s ability to make appropriate plans” for the learning encounter, “the [ideal] helper holds high regard for [the learner’s developing] skill as a self-planner.” Each learner interaction would exercise give-and-take dialog. True help would be “tailored to the needs, goals, and requests” of the adult learners. An “ideal helper [would be] an open and growing person, . . . spontaneous and authentic, . . . a frequent learner” his- or herself. In “seeking [further] growth and new experiences, . . . [he or she would] listen [intently], accept [graciously], understand [whole-heartedly], and respond” willingly to the quest of adult learners (Tough, 1979, pp. 195-197, as cited in Knowles, 1990, pp. 83-84).

For Rogers, ““if there [was] one truth about modern man, it [was] that he live[d] in an environment which [was] *continually changing*,” and therefore the aim of education was to be the *facilitation of learning*” (1969, pp. 104-105, as cited in Knowles, 1990, p. 77). He felt that the “personal relationship between the facilitator [of education] and the [prospective] learner . . . [was] dependent upon the facilitator [having] three attitudinal qualities.” First, a facilitator had to be perceived as possessing a “realness or genuineness” about his-or herself. Secondly, he or she would display “non-possessive caring” for the learners and their projects through exchanges of “trust and respect. Lastly, a teacher, as well as the adult learners, would be bolstered by the facilitator having “empathetic understanding” and the ability to “be a sensitive and accurate listener” (Rogers, 1969, pp. 106-126, as cited in Knowles, 1990, pp. 77-78).

### Critical Friends

“A key process in support . . . [of] doctoral candidates [has been] the role of the mentor and critical friends through the [dissertation undertaking]” (Reedy et al., 2015, p. 38).

The role of a critical friend . . . generally . . . [has been] based on the recognition that both professional and organizational improvement [has been] impeded when people and groups [have] avoid[ed] facing hard truths, emotionally difficult subjects, and frank assessments of their own performance. At the same time, the critical-friend role [has been] based on the recognition that people [have] tend[ed] to continue avoiding hard truths, emotional subjects, and frank assessments of performance if these issues [have not been] handled constructively, supportively, and professionally. (Critical friend, 1994, n.p.)

In education, the term *critical friend*, was introduced in 1994 by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (<http://annenberginstitute.org/>), which began advocating a teacher-led approach to professional development (Professional Development, n.d.) called *critical friends groups* or professional learning communities (Professional Learning Community, n.d.) – groups of educators who meet regularly, engage in structured professional discussions, and work collaboratively to improve their school or teaching skills. . . . The term *critical friend*, however, is also used more broadly outside of professional learning groups. (Critical friends, 1994, n.p.)

“Critical friends [have] view[ed] themselves as mentors and realize[d] that learning require[d] constant feedback” (Reedy et al., 2015, p. 39).

This assessment feedback . . . [has been crucial for doctoral students at the writing and reviewing stages of their dissertations, . . . by having] provide[d] a clear vision about the learning performance in the eyes of the learner. . . . By [having] ask[ed] meaningful and thought-provoking questions, . . . [having] provide[d] essential feedback[,] . . . [and having] examine[d] various types of data[,] . . . [c]ritical friends [have] allow[ed] individuals to reflect and re-assess their current beliefs and practices in order to [have] improve[d] their craft . . . (Reedy et al., 2015, p. 39)

With regard to the research study at hand, ‘craft’ would imply the completed dissertation. “Critical friends [have] help[ed] guide the process, model[ed] leadership skills and provide[d] [essential] feedback” (Reedy et al., 2015, p. 38). Such a friend “already hold[s a] doctoral degree and . . . can support [ABD] candidates through the doctoral process;” a critical boon for lesser accomplished students (Reedy et al, 2015, p. 40).

### **Mentors**

“Effective mentors are like [Critical] friends in that their goal [has been] to create a safe context for [student] growth” (Bell, 1996, p. 8). Albeit, “[a] mentor [has been] partly a coach, leader, advisor, counselor, teacher, guide, and friend but none of these alone or completely” (McNeeley, 1937).

The word “mentor” comes from *The Odyssey*, written by the Greek poet Homer . . . . [In preparation for years-at-war, Udyseus] hire[d] a trusted family friend named Mentor to be [his son,] Telie’s, tutor . . . [and] coach [him on] how to “king” while Daddy [was] off fighting. (Bell, 1996, p. 8)

Mentors [have] practice[d] their skills with a combination of never-ending compassion, crystal-clear communication, and a sincere joy in the role of [having been] a helper along a journey toward mastery; “a journey that [will have] forever change[d] the way in which [these adult learners have thought] and act[ed]” (Reedy et al., 2015, p. 39). . . . [M]entors love learning; not teaching. . . . They treasure sharing [in life-long learning adventures]. . . . [T]hey are loyal fans of the dream of what the protege can become with their guidance. (Bell, 1996, p. 8)

“The successful mentor [has been] able to circumvent resistance” (Bell, 1996, p. 8), by “encourag[ing], nudg[ing], and critiqu[ing] the work of [these] students as they [have] acquire[d] the skills and knowledge necessary to become change agents in the field of education” (Reedy et al., 2015, p. 39). Knowles learned through exhaustive research and from his own academic experiences that, “creative leaders [had] faith in people, offer[ed] them challenging opportunities, and delegate[d] responsibility to them” (Knowles, 1989, p. 52).

The personal attributes of ideal helpers, critical friends, and mentors aligned well with the process elements of the Andragogical education model, in that strong, positive relationships inspired students to pursue continued learning encounters. In fact, just such a meaningful relationship was fostered between Malcolm Knowles and John Henschke at Boston University.

Knowles’ (1995) conceptual foundation of the [Andragogical] design theory is based in a process. . . . [of] eight components . . . [which] help the learner acquire whatever content is needed: (a) Preparing the learners for the program; (b) setting a climate that is conducive to learning (physically comfortable and inviting; and

psychologically – mutually respectful, collaborative, mutually trustful, supportive, open and authentic, pleasurable and human); (c) involving learners in mutual planning; (d) involving learners in diagnosing their learning needs; (e) involving learners in forming their learning objectives; (f) involving learners in designing learning plans; (g) helping learners carry out their learning plans; and, (h) involving learners in evaluating their learning outcomes. (Henschke, 2009, n.p.)

### **Henschke: Mentee to Mentor**

John Henschke graduated college in 1955, from Bob Jones University, in Greenville, South Carolina. Immediately following in that fall semester, he began a Bachelor of Divinity degree. The course work for this degree extended his studies into 1958. Initially, this was a graduate degree which was developed into a Master of Divinity degree, and later renamed for all recipients. Continuing on in his educational endeavor, Henschke launched into the Master of Theology degree, completing the course work from 1958 through 1959. He then took his time writing the thesis, as he was working in active pastoral ministry with the Southern Baptist and American Baptist Churches. Albeit at this time, his primary responsibilities were to his beautiful wife and the first two children of his family of three lovely young daughters. He eventually graduated the Master of Theology degree when his paper was finished in 1963 (Personal Communication, J. Henschke, 2019).

In the spring of 1965, Henschke attended an Experiential Education T-Group (training group) at a Laboratory Education Experience sponsored by the National Council of Churches, in Greenlake, Wisconsin. He began to “get a nudging in [his] spirit to pursue the possibilities,” which were being introduced to him through this seminar. John

and his wife, Carole, attended a Laboratory Education Experience early in 1967, his second and her first, at which both were feeling a “calling” toward educational ministries. When in discussion with a trainer (ideal helper) about this, John was advised and encouraged to apply himself full-time to this career direction through a doctoral degree in a related discipline (Personal Communication, J. Henschke, 2019).

Soon after, the Henschkes attended the American Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During a missionary dedication service for new appointees, the Lord confirmed His promptings to each of them as the opening hymn of the service was, “Once to Every Man and Nation Comes the Chance to Decide.” “Individually and simultaneously,” the Lord spoke to them that they were to “seek another field of service.” John attended another Laboratory Education Experience in Bethel, Maine, with the National Training Laboratories Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, while he synchronously reached out for contact acknowledgment with four universities which had been suggested by the trainer. Boston University was first to welcome Henschke when Malcolm Knowles’ personal assistant phoned to ask him, “How can we help you?” (Personal Communication, J. Henschke, 2019).

“[Knowles] was in the early stages of developing his theory of Andragogy and [work regarding] self-direction” in adult education when Henschke began his doctorate at Boston University. Despite rousing general disgruntlement among his faculty peers for drawing in such large classes, Malcolm exuded respect and attention toward the students, which was richly reciprocated. He constantly gave them “opportunities” to grow through learning (critical friend). Although Knowles would write his book regarding Learning Contracts years after Henschke graduated, he was always stirring encouragement among

his adult audiences (mentor). One day in particular has been well remembered by John: each student was given a 3” x 5” card and instructed to write down their name and the grade they wanted to earn in his class. When Knowles had collected all of the cards, he tied them together and announced, ““Now there’s the grade you’re going to get for this course. So, what do you want to learn?”” (Personal Communication, J. Henschke, 2019).

Malcolm was Henschke’s Major Advisor throughout the doctoral coursework and was initially slated to be John’s Dissertation Committee Chair. He was always ready to listen, eager to engage, and selflessly helpful toward all students; yet for John, his attention and involvement meant so much more (mentor). Malcolm became a bridge which reached across the gap in Henschke’s life course, leading him along a fresh pathway of learning and service. The two men grew in knowledge and friendship as the theory of Andragogy solidified. Henschke decided his dissertation topic was to focus on the contributions Knowles had made to the theories and practices of adult education. Regardless of the backlash each received through academia, Malcolm gratefully resigned his position as Committee Chair and became the Information Resource Contributor for John’s dissertation endeavor (Personal Communication, J. Henschke, 2019).

For Henschke, learning the theory of Andragogy through a direct, mentored relationship with Knowles (mentee) was a life-enhancing experience he would cherish in payment forward (mentor). Since the completion of his dissertation and graduation from his doctoral degree, John carried the torch of Andragogy into 19 other countries. Having collaborated with other Andragogues across 96 countries (Henschke, 2014), he wrote the chapter *Nation Building through Andragogy and Lifelong Learning: On the Cutting Edge*

*Educationally, Economically, and Governmentally* (Henschke, 2013). His writing continued to reach beyond his voice from four websites containing 320 documents. Henschke's works have been downloaded 34,055 times all around the world from 1,971 institutions, in 175 countries, with 869 referrers. *Considerations Regarding the Future of Andragogy* has been his most sought-after writing to date, with 5,386 total downloads (Henschke, short resume, 2020).

The theory of Andragogy advanced by the hand of Henschke; yet it was the call in his heart to serve the needs of others and the curiosity within his psyche which would draw him toward opportunities of human benefit through lifelong learning adventures. In the early 2000s, John was a vital contributor to building a school, community bathrooms, a sanitary birthing center, and a pure water system in Mali, West Africa (Henschke, personal notes, n.d.). Growth and connection continued because relationships are human opportunities. Henschke met Archanya Siriyananda at University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL) in 1983; she was a Thai Master and Doctoral student who returned to Thailand after graduating with her Doctorate and worked her way up to faculty member of Chulalongkorn University (CU), in Bangkok. Through collaborations between Chulalongkorn and Lindenwood Universities, 33 Thai Master and Doctoral students have been able to study Andragogy abroad with him at Lindenwood University (Henschke, personal notes, n.d.). They came to America inspired with hope and curiosity; they returned with experience and creativity. Lifelong Learning (LLL) has been the catalyst for human development and benefit.

Having finally officially retired from Lindenwood University December 31, 2016, Henschke continued to spend himself helping adults learn. He personally Chaired 57

completed dissertations, as well as being an active Committee member for 55 others encompassing five different universities (Henschke, short resume, 2020). Along his journey of adult education, Henschke developed a weighted questionnaire which measures the readiness of facilitators toward educating their adult students.

The Instructional Perspectives Inventory [IPI] “include[d] seven factors: [1] Teacher Empathy with Learners; [2] Teacher Trust of Learners; [3] Planning and Delivery of Instruction; [4] Accommodating Learner Uniqueness; [5] Teacher Insensitivity to Learners; [6] Learner-Centered Learning Processes (Experience-Based Learning Techniques); [and] [7] Teacher-Centered Learning Processes.”. . . The original IPI was changed by Stanton (2005) from a four-point Likert Scale to a five-point, [and again by Vatcharasirisook when ‘Supervisors and Subordinates’ was substituted for ‘Teachers and Learners’ . . . to] becom[e] the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI). The MIPI [has been] validated numerous times . . . three of which are Stanton (2005), Moehl (2011), and Vatcharasirisook (2011), [while also having been used in 30 doctoral dissertations at five different universities]. (Henschke, 2014, p. 151)

The research project at hand is slated to explore how the Andragogical principles of a Teacher’s empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward learners may enhance doctoral students to persist to the completion of their dissertations. “To be effective, an Andragogue [has] need[ed] to combine the reciprocity of empathy, trust, and sensitivity in concert with the ability and potential of learners for the same to have underst[ood] the learning process and interact[ed] with facilitators effectively” (Henschke, 2016, p. 10). The MIPI remains a monumental tool for measuring the current readiness of Teachers to

educate learners. It is a survey of “45 statements reflecting beliefs, feelings, and behaviors [which] beginning or seasoned teachers of adults may or may not possess at a given moment” (Henschke, 1989, p. 7). The MIPI should not be viewed as a test of worth evaluating a teacher’s failure, rather as a measure of personal capacity: how much empathy, trust, and sensitivity is readily available, and where is the room for further growth?

Within the three (3) factors of a Teacher’s empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their adult learners are 23 elements which define the parameters encompassing each component.

Empathy – “[T]he ability to understand and share the feelings of someone else” (Oxford, 2010). [An educator exuding empathy at an optimal level expands learner’s awareness to opportunities for human benefit.]

- Feels fully prepared to teach;
- Notices and acknowledges to learners positive changes in them;
- Balances her/his efforts between learner content acquisition and motivation;
- Expresses appreciation to learners who actively participate;
- Promotes positive self-esteem in learners.

Trust – “[The] firm belief in the truth, reliability, or ability of someone or something” (Oxford, 2010). [Honesty manifests confidence which is essential for promoting self-direction in adult learners.]

- Purposefully communicates to learners that they are each uniquely important;
- Believes learners know what their goals, dreams and realities are like;
- Expresses confidence that learners will develop the skills they need;

- Prizes the learners to learn what is needed;
- Feels learners' need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings;
- Enables learners to evaluate their own progress in learning;
- Hears learners indicate what their learning needs are like;
- Engages learners in clarifying their own aspirations;
- Develops a supportive relationship with learners;
- Experiences unconditional positive regard for learners; and,
- Respects the dignity and integrity of learners.

Sensitivity – “[T]he quality of . . . appreciating the feelings of other people”

(Oxford, 2010). [Insensitivity inaudibly stomps over hearts and dreams, stunting growth and development.]

- Makes certain to understand the learners' point of view;
- Takes pains and time to get her/his point across to learners;
- Exercises patience in helping all learners' progress;
- Overcomes any frustration with learner apathy;
- Will use whatever time learners need to grasp various concepts;
- Thoroughly allows learners to ask all questions they need addressed;
- Resists in her/himself any irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting. (Henschke, 2016, p. 10)

Together, these factors fortified a Teacher's potentiality to enhance a learner's abilities to grow through learning. Will such success result when the purpose has become enhancing a doctoral student's ability to persevere to degree accomplishment? This research project

attempts to explore these factors for insight into how, if at all, to bolster ABD doctoral students' capacity to persist through the completion of their dissertations to the accomplishment of their degrees.

### **Summary**

This research project endeavored to explore how Andragogical Principles may enhance doctoral students' persistence to dissertation completion. To this end, the background of Attrition within college degrees and the perceptions of doctoral students with All But Dissertation (ABD) status has been investigated. Initial research examined Attrition rates statistically, while subsequent studies defined and clarified the encompassing terms and variables involved with college dropouts. Lists of 'reasons' for Attrition and Persistence, as well as the psychological assumptions surrounding dropouts were gleaned from hundreds of noted student perceptions within prior research findings. There was an examination of Erikson's Life Stages, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and a Clinical Vignette from Blum regarding the maturation development of learners. Knowles' own development as an emerging theorist in adult education releasing the creative energies within learners was tracked across several decades. Considerations were derived of Knowles' work in Andragogy, as it was cultivated from the discoveries of Lindeman, Rogers, Houle, and Tough. The six Assumptions of Adult Learners were reviewed, along with the theory of self-direction in higher education. Many characteristics of an ideal helper, critical friend, or mentor were presented as the resounding qualities essential for a meaningful relationship with a struggling student. This was reinforced through highlights of Henschke's transition from Knowles' mentee to the foremost mentor of Andragogy worldwide. Lastly, an attempt to resolve the

research questions regarding the effects of a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward learners has been investigated through the 23 elements surrounding these three (3) factors within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI).

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### Procedures of Method

As industries and technologies continue to develop and advance, there becomes a need to build and replenish scholarly workforces, subsequently prompting the pursuit for higher education among inspired adults (Gagne, 2017; Ghafar, 2020). Of the college degrees obtainable, the Doctorate is considered terminal (Katz, 1995). This is not to imply the recipient has learned all there is to know in a given field, but rather that the student has learned all the university has to offer along that subject line. These doctoral programs are designed to cultivate a learner's self-direction by leading him or her toward developing independent research skills. Life is already demanding; college courses are challenging. Trying to coalesce personal responsibilities with academic requisites through time management capabilities is a formidable undertaking.

This is why many doctoral candidates flounder within their individual projects after finishing the classes or fail to complete the dissertation writing and drop out of their degree courses. This plight is commonly referred to as the All But Dissertation (ABD) phase, and as such, represents a phenomenon (Allen et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Blum, 2010; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Green, 1995; Green et al., 1997; Holmes et al., 2010; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Long, 2018; Miller, 1995). The study at hand investigated the ABD phenomenon in the anticipation of ascertaining a possible remedy to the high rate of dropout at the doctoral level within universities (Bair et al., 1999; Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Iffert, 1958; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Summerskill, 1962; Tinto et al., 1973). As a

phenomenological study, the research design attempted to encompass the occurrences through the investigation of the surrounding elements and experiences. Therefore, the Triangulation design method was chosen by the Research Investigator.

### **Research Study Design**

Initially, the literature review conducted by the Research Investigator sought the origins and findings within prior research studies concerning college Attrition rates. This investigation revealed a long-held belief that a cliché 50% of doctoral students would ultimately drop out of their degree programs (Astin, 1972; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 1994, 2000, 2005; Green, 1995; Hunter et al., 2016; Iffert, 1958; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Morrison, 2014; Pauley et al, 1999; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962). This platitude was then examined for any specific influence upon ABD status doctoral candidates and was found to diminish in dropout effects by 30% or more once the phenomenon was attained (Bowen et al., 1992, p. 112). Conclusions within modern research suggested an investigation into the perceptions of ABD status students, so as to determine any significant obstructions to persistence being presented through behavioral tendencies or mindsets (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Gagne, 2017; Garbarini, 2017; Grant 2018; Hunter et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2016; Summerskill, 1962). This endeavor would be sought through a brief probe of recent doctoral experiences, those of successful completion and those resulting in failure to complete. The specific review would be conducted through interviews with a few ABD status doctoral graduates and former students.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted approval of the Research Investigator's application regarding the ethical treatment of the adult participants to be included within this study, based on the method of informing and the pathway to the recipient audience. As the method of informing, the Research Investigator wrote a Letter of Introduction to Interviewees acquainting prospective participants with the phenomenon, as presented in prior research literature. The intent was expressed as, "[a] focus [ . . . ] on the All But Dissertation status doctoral candidate, historical rates of dropout, and the perceptions struggling students have experienced pursuing a degree, for which [ . . . ] Andragogical principles [will be explored] as a bolster to project completion through relationship building" [Appendix J]. The Letter of Introduction to Interviewees was to be accompanied by Lindenwood University's Adult Consent Form. Together, these were attached to an email, "request[ing] [ . . . ] participation in a study by one of Lindenwood's EdD students," which was launched by Lindenwood University's Supervisor of Graduate Research, as the IRB approved pathway (2019, 2020).

### **Research Project Process**

In general, once the IRB grants their approval of an application which includes the ethical treatment of human participants within a college research project, the doctoral candidate has one calendar year to complete the collection of intended data. This essential authorization is an outstanding feature within the dissertation project and is a focal point of every class offered within the doctoral degree programs. From the first day of any doctoral class given, students are instructed by the facilitators to aim to fulfill the prerequisites within the initial Prospectus application. These responses greatly contribute to the organization of ideas being proposed within each particular research study design.

When all the criteria are adequately addressed, facilitators direct students to utilize these answers to satisfy the final stipulations outlined within the IRB submission.

The Research Investigator was granted IRB approval of this study's application in July of 2019. Once the Letter of Introduction to Interviewees accompanied by Lindenwood University's Adult Consent Form was compiled and forwarded to the Supervisor of Graduate Research, the first email pursuit for prospective participants was launched across the campus' qualifying student body. Without any responses at all, the Supervisor of Graduate Research implemented two more email-initiated 'letter launches' across the next several months toward doctoral candidates who were lingering within their programs. At the beginning of the new year and spring semester, 2020, there remained no active student interest to participate within this research study. The Research Investigator requested permission of the IRB to submit, for the purpose of a fourth 'letter launch,' a limited list of former professors and colleagues which had been in attendance of the prerequisite classes within the degree program associated with the study at hand. This entailed an IRB Modification to be opened and addressed within the original application. At the same time, the Research Investigator edited the Letter of Introduction to Interviewees and the Adult Consent Form to reflect the recent change in personal phone contact information, essential for the prospective participants' communications. This attempt also failed to reap any participant responses.

As a doctoral student, the Research Investigator was attending the final course class of Capstone III, as an on-campus class for the Spring semester beginning January 2020. By mid-March the world was being alerted to Covid-19 (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.), a virus outbreak which was devastating whole

populations globally. In a concerted effort to ‘flatten the curve’ of potential victims overwhelming the American hospital systems, it was advised that all people nationwide remain in their homes. At that time, the university closed the campus, and all students were to finish their semester through virtual classes. The Capstone classes were designed to focus doctoral student awareness on specific project features essential to particular junctions within their projects. As such, the Research Investigator was able to work on this dissertation writing and check in weekly with the class facilitator through email updates on the progress.

### **Respondents as Interviewees**

Shortly after the Covid-19 lockdown (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.), the Supervisor of Graduate Research received a concise list of potential study participants from a fellow Capstone III classmate of the Research Investigator. A fifth and final launch of the Letter of Introduction to Interviewees with accompanying Adult Consent Form was initiated through the university’s email system by the Supervisor of Graduate Research. The response this time was immediate and positive: five doctoral students requested to participate in the research study. One of those original five doctoral students, however, had not reached the ABD status and had to be eliminated for lack of qualification. Of the four remaining respondents, one student was able to recommend two other potential participants who ultimately joined the grouping, completing the six (6) essential experiences required. Through several email exchanges with each individual respondent, the Research Investigator was able to acquire all six (6) signed Adult Consent Forms and subsequently set the dates and times convenient for their interviews. As the

university campus was closed to student visitation, the Research Investigator chose to conduct the interviews as audio-recorded phone calls.

The line of inquiry within the interview agenda consisted of seventeen (17) predetermined questions, which aligned with the three (3) emerging categories from prior research findings as to the ‘reasons’ for attrition: Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts. Each main question was poised with several following inquiries which were designed to probe deeper into the responses of each participant for more thorough information regarding their particular experiences or perceptions [Appendix K for Doctoral Graduates, and Appendix L for Former Students]. If the participant covered these subdivided matters within their initial response, the following inquiries were not sought. While the basis of the seventeen (17) predetermined questions and the following inquiries were held to a neutral standard, there were two positions of nuance which posed a distinction between participants who graduated with degrees and those who had dropped out of their programs. As these interview responses represent confidential information and each participant’s identity was cloaked within the study, the Research Investigator designated the respondents as either Doctoral Graduates (DG1, DG2, and DG3) or Former Students (FS1, FS2, and FS3). Each participant was alerted to this categorical distinction and asked whether they felt it was insensitive language or unacceptable labeling. Every respondent agreed with the distinctions and approved of their formal codification.

### **Participant Responses as Data**

Each participant received a phone call from the Research Investigator at their specifically pre-appointed time. After a brief introduction of pleasantries, the Research

Investigator turned on the recorder and began the audio documentation with an announcement as to the date of the occasion. As each interviewee narrated their personal encounters surrounding their doctoral degree experiences, a general banter ensued between the Research Investigator and them, individually. While a conversation was not the intended aim of this dialog exchange, the isolation fatigue resulting from the recent pandemic lockdown loosened up the tensions commonly associated with speaking engagements. All respondents spoke candidly and at great length, in detailed fashion. Although some of the stories related to negative connotations, the respondent narrating such an episode seemed to relish the opportunity to share and release the memories. In fact, there were a few participants who expressed their gratitude for the chance to rant and vent.

Initially, the Research Investigator flagged two hours for which to conduct each interview; albeit, still allowing each participant's responses to manifest spontaneously. Surprisingly, even though the responses to the predetermined questions and following inquiries were inundated with corresponding chatter, the average length of each interview was approximately an hour, with two exceeding that general timeframe by 10 to 15 minutes. At the end of the inquiry of predetermined questions, the Research Investigator asked each participant if there "were any final comments, closing remarks, or beneficial recommendations now that [he or she had] reflected on [his or her] doctoral degree experience" [Appendices K & L]. Most of the respondents took pause to answer and were able to associate their viewpoints in a simple synopsis of their prior narratives. A couple of interviewees took the opportunity to lend advice to the Interviewer as the Research Investigator working on a dissertation project. One participant left the option

open, so as to ponder more fully when assessing their responses. Upon return of the reviewed transcription, their non-response remained open.

These six (6) transcribed interview narratives represent the data collected for the study at hand. As stated in the Letter of Introduction to Interviewees, his or her “confidentiality [was to] be protected by the use of a pseudonym” [Appendices K & L]. Although it had been offered for each participant to choose their own pseudonym, no one seemed interested and all agreed to the codification of ‘Doctoral Graduate’ (as DG1, DG2, and DG3) or ‘Former Student’ (as FS1, FS2, and FS3). “There [was to] be no compensation paid to [him or her] as a participant” [Appendices K & L]. In the email message forwarding each transcription to its narrator for review, the Research Investigator reminded each interviewee he or she would “have the discretion to alter, add, omit, re-take, or withdraw any or all of [his or her] recorded [ . . . ] responses” (2020). “Upon [his or her] approval [of the narratives, each would] receive a final hard copy of [their] transcribed interview and [those] recollections [would be] included within [this] exploration of the perceptions of All But Dissertation status students” (2020). The Research Investigator “will keep all audio files, paper files, and computer-generated materials locked in storage and will destroy [ . . . ] after three years” (2020). “The collected information will not be offered as secondary data for use in other studies” (2020).

### **Intended Alignment of Data**

As aforementioned, this triangulation method design focused on the findings of prior studies researching attrition rates in light of ABD status students, having recommended an assessment be conducted of the perceptions encompassing the doctoral

experiences encountered (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et a., 1999; Gagne, 2017; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Hunter et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2016; Summerskill, 1962). The Research Investigator discovered many such sentiments embedded within prior research findings regarding studies of attrition and persistence (Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; DuPont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015). When these were compiled, a notable amount of reiteration appeared and three distinct categories emerged as:

Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts.

The Research Investigator condensed the reiterations into single points of view and separated the conglomerate into “Reasons for Attrition” and “Reasons for Persistence” [Appendices A & B].

As the first angle of triangulation model, the Research Investigator sought out actual sentiments of ABD status doctoral students from other previously researched studies (Dinham et al., 1999; Golde, 1994, 2000; Golde & Dore, 2001; Hunter et al., 2016; Jimenez et al., 2010; Sigafus, 1998). While these featured narratives were rich with emotion and experience, some of the personal accounts lacked the essential association with a noted doctoral degree and accompanying ABD status, both of specific focus herein. Nonetheless, the Research Investigator included them, so as to establish a greater pool of life experiences from which to investigate these ‘reasons’ for attrition. As the second angle of the triangulation model, these sentiments found within other previously researched studies were intended to be analyzed with the experiential perceptions of current-era doctoral students. To this end, the Research Investigator pursued the personal interviews of six (6) doctoral candidates: three (3) actual graduates

and three (3) former students who ultimately opted to discontinue their programs and drop out. As the objective of the investigation was to seek any agreement among the compiled sentiments as to their subsequent alignment with the ‘reasons’ of attrition and not to quantify an accuracy of experiences through weighted measurement, the Research Investigator determined the smaller sample size to be intimate and sufficient. The third and final angle of the triangulation model was slated to report the experiences as perceived of the Author as a doctoral candidate in the quest of persisting to the accomplishment of this dissertation at hand and the completion of the Educational Leadership, Emphasis in Andragogy doctoral degree.

The actual analytical coding process began by highlighting each categorical theme identified under the lists of ‘Reasons’ for Attrition and ‘Reasons’ for Persistence with distinct and separate colors. The opinions expressed in each student sentiment found within other previously researched studies, the six (6) transcribed interviews of current-era doctoral candidates, and the recorded perceptions of the Author, were color coded to match the corresponding categorical theme under the ‘Reasons’ for Attrition heading. Every correlation between the pre-existing perceptions of collegiate experiences within other previously researched studies with those of the current-era and future-focused sentiments recently collected through interviewing were reported through the answers given to the research questions herein. A brief examination for any alleged lack of development or interrupted maturation process within the participants’ responses were addressed through an assessment with Erikson’s Life Stages and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. All distinct character weaknesses uncovered were aligned with their counterpart

of strengths as a remedial contribution offered through the Andragogical principles of a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students.

### **Addressing Trustworthiness of Research**

In quantitative analysis, validity refers to “the degree to which something measures what it purports to measure,” while reliability represents “the consistency with which it measures it over time” (Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 176). With regard to qualitative research, the focus on the logic of the method remains sharp, yet the focal points are often less crisp in distinction and more Monet in interpretation; hence, the association of studying phenomenon through the model design of triangulation. Lincoln and Guba (2000, n.p., as cited in Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 176) addressed these issues of “trustworthiness of a qualitative study [through] use [of the] terms *credibility*, *dependability*, *confirmability*, and *transferability*.” “The criterion of *credibility* [concerns] . . . how well matched the logic of the method is to the kinds of questions . . . being posed and the kind of explanation that the researcher is attempting to develop [in what is referred to as]. . . . Methodological validity” (Mason, 1996, n.p., as cited in Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 176). Coupled with “Interpretive validity, [qualitative analysis]. . . . goes further in that it directs attention to the quality and rigor with which the researcher interprets and analyzes data in relation to the research design” (Mason, 1996, n.p., as cited in Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 176).

While “[r]eliability in the traditional sense [has referred] to the extent . . . research findings can be replicated by other studies[,] . . . Lincoln and Guba . . . argued [in regard to *dependability*,] . . . the more important question [became] one of whether the findings [were] consistent and dependable with the data collected. . . .

[T]he goal [was] not to eliminate inconsistencies but to ensure that the researcher [understood] when they [occurred].” (2000, n.p., as cited in Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 177)

“The implication . . . [within] [t]he concept of *confirmability* . . . [was] that the findings [were] the result of the research, rather than an outcome of the biases and subjectivity of the researcher. To achieve this end, a researcher [needed] to identify and uncover the decision trail for public judgment” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, n.p., as cited in Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 177). “With regard to *transferability*, Patton (1990, p. 491, as cited in within Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 177), [promoted] . . . “context-bound extrapolations,” which he [defined] as “speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions (p. 489).” Schram (2003) “[provided] the basis for a qualitative account’s claim to relevance in some broader context . . . [as being the] [d]epth, richness, and [detail of] description” (n.p., as cited in Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 177).

As to addressing the *credibility* within the study at hand, the triangulation model design was chosen to examine any commonalities within the ‘Reasons’ for Attrition and ‘Reasons’ for Persistence which had emerged in prior research findings with testimonies from other previously researched studies, current-era doctoral students, as well as with the personal sentiments of the Author. Simply put, the Research Investigator sought whether these ‘Reasons’ were of a common nature among doctoral students operating from the status of ABD, in general. The results of the examination were intended to be analyzed for any possible alignment with the Andragogical principles of a Teacher’s empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students, in an attempt to offer

potential remedy to floundering doctoral candidates at the ABD phase. It is believed that methodological validity will be achieved within this study process, while the interpretive validity remains the constant intent.

With regard to the *dependability* of the study, it was the ultimate objective of this research endeavor to seek out any consistencies occurring among the student perceptions surrounding doctoral degree program experiences. As for the concept of *confirmability*, the emergent categorical themes of Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts were the direct result of an examination of prior research findings (Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; DuPont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015). The “outcome of . . . biases and subjectivity of [this] researcher” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, n.p., as cited in Bloomberg et al., 2016, p. 177) within this study would more likely manifest when attempting to align the commonalities of collegiate encounter with the relationship building tenets developed within Andragogical principles. As proposed in Chapter One, Delimitations, “[R]eporting . . . perceptions . . . engages . . . personal speculation, [for which] the Research Investigator intends to diligently focus on identifying the shared features within these experiential views” (p. 17). The matter of *transferability* is addressed within any findings of commonality among the perceptions of doctoral students as triangulated through historical, current-era, and future-focused data. Any findings within examination of the research, every proposal for alignment within Andragogical principles, and all conclusive summaries are expressed in rich language, depth of terms, and detail of descriptions.

**Research Questions Presented**

The exploration of student sentiments surrounding the phenomenon of the ABD phase besetting such significant numbers of doctoral students is set forth as the itinerary of inquiries following:

How may, if at all, the principles of Andragogy (Teacher empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward learners, as accredited by three (3) of the seven factors measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance the potential of doctoral students with the All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation projects through meaningful advisory relationships?

- A. What are the reasons that research indicates why many doctoral students remain at the All But Dissertation phase despite the high rate of attrition?
- B. What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students seeming to spend an inordinate amount of time at the All But Dissertation phase will persist to the accomplishment of the dissertation and completion of the doctoral degree?
- C. What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students remaining at the All But Dissertation phase will succumb to attrition and fail to accomplish the dissertation and complete the doctoral degree?
  1. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher empathy with students (as attributed through five (5) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?

2. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher trust in students (as attributed through eleven (11) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?
  3. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher sensitivity toward students (as attributed through seven (7) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?
- D. How, if at all, do the responses of the interviewees align with the data gathered through other previously researched studies?
- E. How, if at all, do the reflections of the Author's experience as an All But Dissertation status student persisting to dissertation completion align with the responses of the interviewees, as well as the data gathered through other previously researched studies?

### **Presenting Andragogical Principles**

Once the phenomenon of the ABD phase was examined for human commonalities through the viewpoints of other previously researched students, former doctoral candidates, as well as those of the Author, the sentiments were scrutinized for any alignment within the specific Andragogical principles of a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students. To this end, the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI) was utilized as bearing the measure indicative of the "beliefs, feelings, and behaviors" (Henschke, 1989, p. 7) of facilitators of education

toward their assigned learners. These three (3) factors reflect the compassion afforded and the confidence attained through the reciprocity of meaningful relationships, considered by the Research Investigator as a potential remedy to the staggering rate of attrition in universities among doctoral candidates. As “*Andragogy* . . . [is] the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1990, p. 54), the human opportunities provided through such significant associations present a bolster of support and motivation for such struggling students. It is the hopeful intent of the Author as an ABD status, future-focused doctoral candidate to embrace these elemental factors pertaining to a meaningful relationship and engage their reciprocity with this dissertation’s Committee Chair as a resource of persistence toward degree completion.

### **Summary**

As industries continue to advance, workforces will be sustained through instructive development (Gagne, 2017; Ghafar, 2020), hence, the ongoing need for adults to reach up for their higher educational feats through degree-level accomplishments. The findings within prior research presented two distressing issues faced by older learners: a cliché 50% of all doctoral candidates were known to have dropped out of their programs before completion (Astin, 1972; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 1994, 2000, 2005; Green, 1995; Hunter et al., 2016; Iffert, 1958; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Morrison, 2014; Pauley et al., 1999; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962) and the All But Dissertation (ABD) phase was a common phenomenological predicament endured by many struggling students (Allen et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blanchard, 2018; Blum,

2010; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Green, 1995; Green et al., 1997; Holmes et al., 2010; Jimenez et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2000; Katz, 1995; Kelley, 2016; Kluever, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Long, 2018; Miller, 1995).

In the literature review of Chapter Two, the cliché regarding the 50% attrition rate among universities was investigated and found to improve by 30% once a learner achieved the ABD status (Bowen et al., 1992, p. 112). Yet, there still remained an excessive number of students floundering at this phase within doctoral degrees. The conclusions of more modern research recommended an exploration be made into the perceptions of doctoral candidates with regard to their academic experiences encountered during these periods (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Gagne, 2017; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Hunter et al., 2016; Kelley et al., 2016; Summerskill, 1962). This examination beginning with the findings of prior research studies garnered a notable amount of student sentiment surrounding “Reasons for Attrition” and “Reasons for Persistence,” from which emerged three categorical themes: Faculty/University Complaints, Topic/Project Issues, and Personal Life Role Conflicts [Appendices A & B].

The intent for the study at hand was to explore the issues encompassing the ABD phenomenon, as represented by the ‘reasons’ for attrition found within prior research studies. The Research Investigator chose the Triangulation model design with the objective of investigating any commonalities within the perceptions of current-era ABD status doctoral students, the future-focused sentiments of the Author, and the opinions garnered from other previously researched studies, aforementioned. This topic was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) as being a relevant pursuit within the host degree, while the project design was accepted for the protections afforded the human

participants. The actual method of informing prospective participants was the Letter of Introduction to Interviewees accompanied by Lindenwood University's Adult Consent Form. These documents were launched across the campus' email system to qualifying candidates by the Supervisor of Graduate Research, as the approved pathway for the study model. After several unsuccessful launches, the lockdown resulting from the recent Covid-19 pandemic (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.) inspired the participation of the six (6) interviewees required to perform this analysis.

Once all of the Adult Consent Forms were signed and forwarded to the Research Investigator, the appointments were made for each individual phone recorded interview. After all six (6) audio-recorded interviews were given, each commentary was transcribed, forwarded to their narrator for review, returned to the Research Investigator, and approved for inclusion within this study. The analytical coding process for these responses entailed highlighting each sentiment by distinct and separate colors, matching their counterpart within the categorical themes under the list of "Reasons for Attrition" [Appendix A]. The Research Investigator explored and reported any alignment among the historical, current-era, and future-focused opinions, subsequently examining the same for any alleged lack of development or interrupted maturation processes noted within the participants' responses. All apparent character weaknesses were addressed through an assessment of Erikson's Life Stages and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Following this investigation, any known vulnerabilities were aligned with strengths offered through the Andragogical principles of a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students. These are three (3) of the seven factors assessed within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI), an evaluation tool for measuring the beliefs,

feelings, and behaviors of facilitators toward their assigned learners (Henschke, 1989, p. 7). The Research Investigator intended to promote these factors through 23 characteristic elements, as having the potential to remedy the high rate of collegiate attrition through the bolstering support of reciprocal relationships.

The study at hand is a qualitative research endeavor, and as such, sought to explain the issues surrounding the phenomenon of ABD in rich language, depth of terms, and detail of descriptions. The *credibility* within this venture relied on the alignment of the triangulation model design with the information garnered through the exploration of three time-oriented sets of student sentiments. *Dependability* was sought out by inclusion of any and all commonalities found to occur among the doctoral perceptions. As the data collected aligned with the emergent themes of prior research findings, *confirmability* within the evaluation was achieved. This also lent to the intended trustworthiness of the *transferability* of these findings as probable among other doctoral candidates floundering at the ABD phase of their degree programs.

## **Chapter Four: Results of Investigation**

### **Driving Needs for Higher Education**

Every day holds problematic issues, breakthrough findings, and innovative advancements. Sometimes the drive is a desperate need for solution, other times the initiative is a curious notion regarding access or improvements (Ghafar, 2020).

Ultimately, learning happens continually, whether it be as populations understanding the lessons within their histories or as individuals developing benefits through discoveries. Knowledge presents opportunities; precisely the desire of multitudes of people reaching up for higher education (Archbald, 2011; Gagne, 2017). The experiences encompassing such academic endeavors are as full of information and insights as the subjects being studied.

At the time of this writing, the world was being affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.). Most people were aggravated that the social activities associated with their lifestyles were suspended and that their general contact between each other was replaced with safety protocols. For far too many others, the reality was catastrophic as their health and that of their families' was assaulted by this devastating illness; not even death was able to obliterate this virus. Vast teams along numerous professions worldwide were working non-stop to isolate and annihilate this health crisis. Yet, for everything that was known, learning was still abounding. Inspiration will surge long beyond the remedy, influencing minds to seek answers and hearts to reach out in consolation.

While the pandemic protocols interrupted the normal routine of attending degree courses on the university campus, the Research Investigator managed to persevere with

the work entailed in the study at hand. As the Author, also, the writing project continued despite the distraction of numerous responsibilities scheduled into every summer season. Initially, the Research Investigator sought a topic which appealed to an internal passion; albeit, this was quite a challenge as ‘everything was interesting.’ Yet, the advice of a Critical friend led to a probe into the obstacles of completing a dissertation. It was within the first article regarding the ABD status student that the Research Investigator found the personal connection with the topic herein. As education is an art, the Research Investigator designed a study of perception and persistence which coincided with the academic adventure of this doctoral degree of Educational Leadership, Emphasis in Andragogy.

### **Answering the Research Questions**

The exact Research Questions being addressed herein are as follows:

How may, if at all, the principles of Andragogy (Teacher empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward learners, as accredited by three (3) of the seven factors measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance the potential of doctoral students with the All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation projects through meaningful advisory relationships?

- A. What are the reasons that research indicates why many doctoral students remain at the All But Dissertation phase despite the high rate of attrition?
- B. What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students seeming to spend an inordinate amount of time at the All But Dissertation phase will persist to the accomplishment of the dissertation and completion of the doctoral degree?

- C. What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students remaining at the All But Dissertation phase will succumb to attrition and fail to accomplish the dissertation and complete the doctoral degree?
1. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher empathy with students (as attributed through five (5) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?
  2. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher trust in students (as attributed through eleven (11) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?
  3. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher sensitivity toward students (as attributed through seven (7) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?
- D. How, if at all, do the responses of the interviewees align with the data gathered through other previously researched studies?
- E. How, if at all, do the reflections of the Author's experience as an All But Dissertation status student persisting to dissertation completion align with the responses of the interviewees, as well as the data gathered through other previously researched studies?

**Question A.: What are the reasons that research indicates why many doctoral students remain at the All But Dissertation phase despite high attrition rates?**

Initially, the U.S. Department of Education began investigations into the growing rates of student attrition within higher education programs early in the first half of the 20th century (McNeeley, 1937, n.p.; Iffert, 1958, n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). It was found that nearly half of all enrolled students ultimately dropped out of their doctoral programs before completion of the degree (McNeeley, 1937, n.p.; Iffert, 1958, n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). The aim of this research focused on “institutional and administrative” measures as American colleges were “increase[ing] in . . . size and complexity,” while “dollars [were leaving] the income side of the budget when students [left] the college” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 628). “Since the objectives of colleges [were] to educate and graduate the students . . . admit[ted], academic failure must be viewed . . . as failure on the part of the institution as well as . . . the individual student” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 637). “[I]n most existing studies [of this time,] . . . the largest proportion of dropouts [were] typically attributed to “lack of interest,” . . . “marriage,” “transfer,” “entered military service,” “accepted job,” and so forth” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 638). “Feder (1950) [had] note[d]: “[the] need to know more about what really motivate[d] the successful college student, whether . . . personal and essentially affective or academic and essentially rational” (n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 648). Soon after, Craven (1951) recommended that, “[as] the student [had been] classified rather than understood”[,]. . . future research might well “attempt insight into the frame of reference of the student him[- or herself]” (n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 648).

By the second half of the 20th century, studies of collegiate attrition had investigated many individual and combinations of factors of influence, such as: age, gender, aptitude, motivation, conflict, illness, and finances without revealing a clear path of remedy (Summerskill, 1962, pp. 631-646). Even after defining the “measures of individual ability and social status” surrounding these institutions and students, Tinto and Cullen (1973, p. iv) found that those who persisted had a stronger sense of “social integration” (p. 60) or connectedness, having already been involved in quality relationships within their lives. Bowen and Rudenstine’s (1992) investigation heralded yet more distinctions regarding collegiate dropouts. They believed that “[e]arly attrition [was] much to be preferred to late attrition” (Bowen et al., 1992, p. 282), when considering the findings of other researchers who had discovered “[a]pproximately half the . . . [student] withdrawals . . . occur[ed] before the sophomore year” (Iffert, 1958, n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) were able to decipher the doctoral completion rates as having risen from the cliched 50% into the eighty percent (80%) ranges once the students reached the ABD status (p. 112); which upon consideration, could be inferred as the longer a student could prevail in their academic adventure, the greater his or her prospects to persist to the completion of his or her dissertation.

Even with the best of intentions, and apparent mutual understanding, the entire dissertation process [would] often [go] awry because it [was] so deeply structured on a personal apprentice-model, with both the professor and the student [having been] given very broad latitude (p. 260). . . . Students [did] in fact often drift without guidance for considerable periods of time, while faculty members

continue[d] to operate on the presumption that [the faculty's] declared accessibility, and . . . genuine interest in students [were] sufficient to make the process work (p. 261) . . . [However, Bowen and Rudenstine would conclude that] [t]he design, oversight, evaluation, and careful monitoring of graduate programs [made] an enormous difference to the quality of the educational experience, the morale and progress of students, and the extent to which human and financial resources [were] to be used effectively (p. 267). [They would ultimately recommend that] the number of major hurdles [besetting doctoral students be minimized], since each one create[d] new anxieties and new possibilities for postponement, and [for faculty] to be as clear as possible about the nature of each hurdle [encountered]. . . . [They felt] the need for regular, scheduled meetings between students and dissertation advisors (or committees) throughout the process, [coupled] with clear expectations about [the] work schedule and [the] timetable for completion of drafts . . . [were] difficult to overemphasize. . . . Faculty [was to] take the initiative in creating and managing this process or structure, . . . [o]therwise, many students [would] drift, or simply be lost[,] [suspended in time]. (Bowen et al., 1992, p. 284)

While “no single variable [ever] explain[ed] doctoral student attrition or persistence, . . . several variables [were always found to be] at play” (Bair et al., 1999, p. 27). “Although . . . [e]mployment [has been] related to student financial concerns[,] . . . it [has] provide[d] [that] source of needed income . . . at the expense of time commitments [which had to be] directed to the job rather than the dissertation [research and writing] (Kluever, 1995, p. 11). Financial constraints, in general, had long been

proclaimed to be one of the foremost explanations for student attrition, as well as why candidates floundered longer at their project completions once reaching the ABD phase (Bair et al., 1999; Bowen et al., 1992; Brill et al., 2014; Dinham et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Iffert, 1958; Jimenez et al., 2010; Miller, 1995; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962).

The dissertation assignment as a whole project was quite daunting for most doctoral students, especially those who were not ready to conduct independent research (Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017; Sigafus, 1998). “This lack of preparation or competence [in independent research] presents a challenge for degree completion . . . and extend[s] the time needed to complete [the dissertation project]” (Rigler et al., 2017, p. 12).

In [the standard] educational setting, “highly structured contexts [have] provide[d] clear expectation[s] for action and sometimes even instructions for enactment; [have] provide[d] consistent feedback, . . . and . . . [have] gear[ed] . . . [the] challenges [to be confronted] . . . at a level appropriate to the individual’s competence. (Skinner, 1995, p. 56, as cited in Sigafus, 1998, p. 5)

Yet, without the academic structure of the classroom setting, writing such a long and detailed paper alone “can [bring about] a sense of frustration, loneliness, self-doubt, and anxiety” (Faghihi et al., 1999, p. 2, as cited in Garbarini, 2017, p. 4).

As doctoral “students are expected to work alone to create new knowledge” (Allen, 2001, p. 1), “the amount of self-efficacy [each] possess[es] can affect the amount of effort . . . put [forth] into completing the dissertation, how they deal

with setbacks during the . . . process, and the amount of time spent working through [those] problems.” (Pajares, 2001, p. 6, as cited in Long, 2018, p. 84)

Candidates became “insecure and discontented with their academic experience[s] when the faculty-student relationships change, and [they] are expected to exercise more control over their research proposals and dissertation [projects]” (Sigafus, 1998, pp. 21-22). The “social isolation” experienced within this degree pursuit was “one of the main factors associated with . . . attrition” (Rigler et al., 2017, p. 7; Allen et al., 2001; Brill et al., 2014; Dinham et al., 1999; Long, 2018; Sigafus, 1998). For the ABD status students performing in such isolation, “confusion about the doctoral process or requirements . . . [has lead to] [c]ommunication breakdowns . . . between students and faculty,” . . . as well as overwhelming their “abilities to finish their dissertation projects [alone]” (Brill et al., 2014, p. 28).

“[E]mpirical evidence [has] suggest[ed] that . . . ineffective coping strategies [by students] when faced with difficulties . . . [often resulted in] a personal tendency to procrastinate, . . . lead[ing] to delays in completing the [final dissertation] (Dupont et al., 2013, p. 620; Garbarini, 2017, p. 34).

Procrastinators have been found to be more test anxious, depressed, pessimistic, and perfectionistic, to have less self-efficacy, perceived control, frustration tolerance, and self-esteem, and to have greater fear of failure. (Garbarini, 2017, p. 19; Green, 1995, p. 17)

While “Milgram et al., (1993) [had] found . . . procrastinators [to be] more likely to endorse reasons for [their] procrastination [which they] considered nonthreatening to [their] self-esteem [rather than those] reasons reflecting more directly on personal failings

(n.p., Green, 1995, p. 17), “Burka and Yuen (1983) [had] suggest[ed] [a decade earlier] . . . that procrastinators place[d] unrealistic demands on themselves” (n.p.; Green, 1995, p. 17). This would align with the personality feature of “[p]erfectionism . . . [which had] often . . . [been] an explanation for procrastination . . . [as well as having been another] noted . . . barrier to project completion” (Green, 1995, p. 17). It is “[n]ormal [for] perfectionists [to] set high standards for themselves[,] [yet allowing] . . . enough . . . flexib[ility] . . . to let the situation guide [their] reasonable behaviors (Hamachek, 1978, n.p., as cited in Lenz, 1995, p. 29). The obstacles ensue when “perfectionists set very high standards but allow little latitude for mistakes (Hamachek, 1978, n.p., as cited in Lenz, 1995, p. 29).

It was quite common for doctoral students overall to perceive their personal dissertation project “as a Magnum Opus rather than simply a competent piece of work” (Green et al, 1997, p. 1). One of the “major issue[s]” each doctoral candidate must address is “[s]electing the right dissertation topic” (Katz, 1995, p. 56). “Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) stated that many students spend one to two years looking for a research topic” (n.p., as cited in Katz, 1995, p. 56; n.p., as cited in Miller, 1995, p. 45).

“Some [of the other] factors related to [student struggles at the] . . . dissertation phase of [the] study were [related to] the number of times the . . . topic [had] changed, . . . [the] difficulty [in] reducing the topic . . . [to] mak[e] it [more] manageable in scope, . . . [the] lack of an appropriate [and] strong . . . topic, . . . and a poor topic choice or [an] inaccessible subject . . . (Bair et al., 1999, p. 16) As “[e]ngagement is “the energy in action; the connection between the person and the activity”” (Dupont et al., 2013, p. 623), faculty has long promoted carefully picking the

dissertation topic early in a doctoral student's degree program. "It is important [that] the student and professor share [in] a common interest of [such a] topic so that both mutually engage in the collaboration [of the] work" (Brill et al., 2014, p. 30).

Herein, another challenge was presented as "[t]he most important relationship for a doctoral student is with an advisor, faculty [member], or [committee] chairperson" (Brill et al., 2014, p. 27). "Sorenson and Kagan (1987) . . . conclude[d] that the personality of the student and the adviser must match on the levels of (a) dependence versus independence, (b) nurturance versus distance, and (c) epistemological preference . . . [in order to reduce potential] conflicts" (n.p., as cited in Miller, 1995, p. 45). "O'Meara, Knudsen, and Jones (2013) emphasize[d] the influential role faculty in doctoral education serve[d], [in that] "advisors most often shape[d] students' dissertations"" (p. 315, as cited in Schneider, 2015, p. 3). "Doctoral students [have often] reported human factors such as faculty-student relationships and collegial support [to have] contributed significantly to their [dissertation] completion" (Schneider, 2015, p. 3).

In fact, relationships in general, or the lack of such timely interactions, were often cited by doctoral students floundering at the ABD phase of their degree programs as an essential affiliation or a detrimental association (Allen et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; Brill et al., 2014; Cohen, 1995; Dinham et al., 1999; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 1994, 2005; Grant, 2018; Green et al., 1997; Klepper, 2017; Kluever, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Reedy et al., 2015; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Tinto et al., 1973; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). As much as one's family should be considered his or her prime asset, any lack of support derived through personal life role conflicts rendered sabotage upon an already struggling student performance (Allen et al.,

2001; Brill et al., 2014; Dinham et al., 1999; Gabarini, 2017; Green et al., 1997; Lenz, 1995; Long, 2018; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998). These reasons why doctoral students remained at the All But Dissertation status were reflected upon in sentiments found in other previously researched studies, as well as through interviewing current-era graduates and former students.

*Sentiments: Financial*

\*'There were financial barriers . . . I worked three jobs during my first year while going to school full-time. I was working over 70 hours a week to pay my \$16,000 tuition plus living and expenses.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 22)

\*'For financial reasons, I had to continue to maintain full-time employment. This meant that my personal time was almost non-existent. This wasn't easy on my family.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 22)

\*'The major problems were financial – the whole family had to adjust to a lower standard of living. I was not prepared for how much the PhD would dominate my life for such a long time.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 55)

\*'I was poor most of the time and had to borrow money (student loans) to eat. Now I have a lot of debt that is going to be difficult to repay.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 40)

\*'The need to work 20-30 hours a week along with a full course load made our home life almost non-existent.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 40)

\*'I think that this workload inevitably slowed my thesis completion, but who can support a family on a scholarship?' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 40)

*Sentiments: Lack of Preparation*

\*'The university supplied nothing except library space.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 41)

\*'It was almost a 'now what do I do?' feeling. I'm to begin my dissertation . . .'

(Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

\*'As long as you're having a class you're committed but when there is no structure you lose it.' (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

\*'I'm still a little bit hazy about how to put this [dissertation proposal] thing together.' (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

\*'I'm in the sixth re-write of my proposal and I don't know how to make it any better!' (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

\*'There are ambiguous remarks on my drafts which don't give me any direction.'

(Sigafus, 1998, p. 20)

*Sentiments: Isolation*

\*'I was so unhappy, it was a month and a half into the quarter, more than halfway through the quarter, I walked into Jim's office, and he said "Well how are you doing?" and I burst into tears. He is the only person who ever asked me the entire year how I was doing. None of the faculty, [they] just didn't give a shit. They didn't care what the students are doing. Some of them don't recognize me. I have been in the department and they don't know who I am.' (Golde, 1994, p. 4,

Case #1: Sally)

\*[T]his sense of not mattering] 'was part of my not doing well in the orals.

Because I felt that no one there really cared if I did well or not, if I stuck around

and did the project or not. And that makes a big difference.’ (Golde, 2000, p. 209, Case #1: Don)

*Sentiments: Procrastination*

\*‘Class was a part of me and a part that I miss, I’m on my own now!’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

\*‘Now I can’t find the time to get back to [doctoral] work.’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

\*‘Before we had a definite routine. I know I need to get back in that rut to get this done, but it was so hard and I just don’t want to do that to myself and my family.’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

\*‘I needed a break.’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 20)

\*‘Yes, I felt I wanted to finish but obstacles kept getting in the way of me working on it.’ (FS1)

\*‘Towards the end, actually after the classes, I was working only on the research and writing for the dissertation [when] . . . one of my sons [was going through a medical crisis]. . . . [Then I was focused on] [t]rying to get my youngest son to go to school every day; having to fill in and work a little bit; having to leave because we were trying different school schedules; . . . [t]hen getting my oldest into college and having to drive down there.’ (FS2)

\*‘It was amazing; once you stopped attending classes, your regular life demanded time, too.’ (FS3)

*Sentiments: Perfectionism*

\*‘What’s frustrating is when I write something and I get it back and they have written more that I have! That makes you just want to throw it away and not go back to it.’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 21)

\*‘Upon coming to graduate school I knew I wanted to be a professor. During the course of my studies, it has become clear to me that the overhead associated with that is too much for me. Partly these changes in career goals were driven by my desire to have a family in a workable and balanced way. This is not possible (in my view) as a professor.’ (Golde et al., 2001, p. 15)

\*‘[My boss] wanted me to finish my dissertation, but he also wanted me to work for him. I’d been having a lot of fun, being in Silicon Valley, working 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Getting paid tons of money to do it. I said “Sure I can do this. I can work and do my dissertation and bang bang bang it will all be perfect.”’ (Golde, 1994, p. 10, Case #2: Nathan)

\*‘I spent a month, two months, working on my first paragraph in my proposal; rewriting it, sitting at the desk, confused because it’s got to be right.’ (FS3)

*Sentiments: Dissertation Topic*

\*‘I chose to select another topic rather than be at odds with a committee.’

(Dinham et al., 1999, p. 32)

\*‘I worked on one topic suggested by my advisor for 2 years. It didn’t pan out.’

(Dinham et al., 1999, p. 33)

\*‘I selected the topic late in the process because I had very little input from faculty. That is, I brought them many topics, brought they wouldn’t support or reject them.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 34)

\*'Change in topic required change in supervisor (Dean) who questioned the integrity of my initial program. Subsequent supervisor was forthright in his disinterest in my topic, but accommodating nonetheless, hence a supervisory marriage of convenience.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 33)

\*'If I had been doing my own research, I would not have chosen this topic. Anyway, he drags me along on this – with me barely understanding either the topic, or the design. Then 3 weeks before the defense he decides to have a nervous breakdown and resigns from the university. So, I was left to finish this thing and defend it on my own. Since he was my dissertation chair, I had to reconstitute the committee, appoint a new chair, finish the damn dissertation and defend the thing all in 3 weeks. I defended on the last possible day to meet my target graduation date.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 35)

‘[My advisor . . .] wanted me to redo my written proposal without really giving me much information on what should be changed.’ (Golde, 2000, p. 206, Case #1: Don)

*Sentiments: Advisor/Faculty*

\*'Faculty advisers were worthless because they didn't take their role seriously.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46)

\*'My adviser was mostly involved . . . Needed support from others besides my adviser. But he didn't really involve anyone else and I felt like I couldn't really go ask them on my own.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46)

\*'I didn't particularly like him personally, but I was stuck with him.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46)

\*'In retrospect, it seems to me that supervisors were content to let students go their own way – very laissez-faire – and so the quality of supervision received depended very much on how demanding one was as a student.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 47)

\*'Faculty support during my dissertation was poor at best . . . the faculty have no time or interest to work with students.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 47)

\*'My supervisor read what I sent him, usually saw me when I requested a consultation, provided minimal commentary and less than minimal encouragement. I was very much left to my own devices.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 47)

\*'Our faculty actively discouraged students from pursuing any other interests except research in a narrowly defined area of the field, research that would directly benefit the faculty member's vitae.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 43)

\*'Doctoral students were generally held hostage to the internecine fighting, petty jealousies and outright wars between faculty, and between departments.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 44)

\*'I had an idea for research. I told my supervisor . . . and we came up with some ways of testing it. . . . He told me he decided to submit the manuscript as the only author. . . . This experience has left me not trusting my supervisor and I will not share research ideas with him again.' (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 50)

\*'My supervisor says that he pushes me harder because I can do more. It can be demoralizing never to hear any good feedback.' (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 49)

\*‘Overall, I have an incredibly poor relationship with my co-supervisors . . . what made a great impact on me was that they purposefully closed an elevator door in my face to avoid having to ride in the elevator with me.’ (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 49)

*Sentiments: Relationships*

\*‘[D]id not feel that I had much support or understanding from those around me. Felt extremely alone.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 56)

\*‘My family life suffered, I bitterly regret missing my children grow up, my wife had an affair with a bloke she worked with and left me four days after I was told to rewrite it.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 56)

\*‘My family was not very supportive at first . . . My parents, especially my mother, thought it was ‘foolishness’ for me to devote so much time to this undertaking.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 23)

\*‘I didn’t read a newspaper or watch TV for two years. This was the biggest problem. I also lost a sense of my identity. I am still trying to regain it.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 54)

\*‘I worked with nationally-known professors who had great reputations in the literature, and who were painfully lopsided, socially dysfunctional people who felt they had only their intelligence to offer. These were not happy well adjusted people, and their ability to influence the lives of grad students was personally horrible.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 80)

\*‘This was the other bad thing. My friends in the department didn’t want to deal with this. Because they didn’t want to hear about their colleague who was this

high-powered student, starting to quit. I think it was a very bad time, they distanced themselves from me, and I probably distanced myself from them, because it is threatening. I remember needing to talk to someone, and people just weren't around. I think it was too dark.' (Golde, 2000, pp. 216-217, Case #3: Jane)

**Question B.: What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students seeming to spend an inordinate amount of time at the All But Dissertation phase will persist to the accomplishment of the dissertation and completion of the doctoral degree?**

Although many of the 'Reasons' for Attrition emphasize the 'lack' of an essential resource in the academic experience of a student, the presence of those resources as listed among the 'Reasons' for Persistence does not necessarily correspond to the contrasting polarity of a dichotomous relationship. Simply put, just giving a financially strapped student more money will not necessarily 'fix' their problems. Many times, the issues regarding financial problems associated with a doctoral pursuit are dependent upon the level of maturity and managerial attributes of the individual student.

For those who [have been] more autonomous and independent, [managing a financial balance] may not [have been] a great difficulty; while others who have maintained intense underlying feelings of needing someone or, in the absence of *someone*, *something* else to help, problems . . . [have] arise[n]. (Blum, 2010, p. 77)

The path to doctoral student persistence has been paved by the "control [of] their own learning" (Holmes et al., 2010, p. 4). Enrollment into the doctoral degree program

began with a student's continued interest in the deeper learning of higher education (Dupont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Schapiro et al., 2000). His or her interest was forged from curiosities inspired through former learning or requirements necessitated within presenting needs. Many times, it has been a complex combination of intertwining factors of each. Ryan and Deci's (2008) "self-determination theory . . . focus[ed] on the reasons why people engage[d] in an activity. . . . [They] argue[d] that different reasons produce[d] distinct consequences[,]” such as pursuit of employment advancement through attainment of degrees in higher education (n.p., as cited in Dupont et al., 2013, p. 622). Following in much the same vein, theories of

[s]elf-regulation [have aligned specifically with academic activities] . . . and [have] refer[red] to an active process in which learners analyze[d] tasks, set goals, and then attempt[ed] to monitor and regulate their cognition, motivation, and behavior in support of [those] goals. (Kelley et al., 2016, p. 89)

“[S]elf-regulation [has] involve[d] an internal disposition that [has driven] interest, curiosity, risk-taking, enthusiasm, and persistence as a means for stimulate[d] learning” (Schapiro et al., 2000, p. 24). “The need for self-discipline and self-motivation [has been] seen as the major personal factors reported by . . . ABD students” (Green et al., 1997, p. 1) as a means of increasing project focus and productivity while reducing distractive stressors and periods of procrastination (Kelley et al., 2016; Long, 2018).

While there are many external factors spurring on a student's doctoral pursuit, such as: “future employment (p. 16), . . . career aspirations (p. 20)” (Bair et al., 1999), “rewards, [or] social approval” (Dupont et al., 2013, p. 622), the real drivers motivating perseverance despite dissertation project obstacles are internal and self-gratifying (Allen

et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Blum, 2010; Dupont et al., 2013; Knowles, 1989, 1990; Miller, 1995; Schapiro et al, 2000; Sigafus, 1998; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). “Students who [were] intrinsically motivated seem[ed] to have [had] more interest, positive emotions, and confidence in their ability to succeed in the task” (Dupont et al., 2013, p. 622). “A high perceived task value (i.e., a task which is perceived to be important, interesting, and useful) has repeatedly [been] found to be related to persistence and achievement” (Dupont et al., 2013, p. 622).

Accomplishing a dissertation project was an academic task which held a high value for those learners who strived to complete their doctoral degree programs (Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Kelley et al. 2016). This correlates with “Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (1977) [in that] individuals [would be] more likely to engage in a given behavior or task that they believe[d] they [had] the ability to complete successfully” (n.p., as cited in Faghihi et al., 1999, pp. 2-3).

Successful engagement of an independent doctoral research project is initiated through “set[ting] time-oriented goals for completion” (Miller, 1995, p. 46). Doctoral programs begin with advisors assisting their new advisees in “setting realistic goals [through his or her course] schedules” (Katz, 1995, p. 59). In “Tinto’s (1975) [review of student attrition], . . . [he suggested] [t]he greater the similarity between the student’s and the institution’s goals, the more likely the student [would be] to persist” (n.p., as cited in Miller, 1995, p. 43). In his 1993 “model of undergraduate persistence,” Tinto listed “initial student goals and commitments: intention to persist, goals regarding the institution, and external commitments [as second, following] . . . pre-entry attributes . . . [among the] five factors which ultimately [led] to the decision to persist or leave” (n.p.,

as cited in Miller, 1995, p. 43). Garcia and Pintrich (1992) found “intrinsic goal orientation associate[d] with deeper cognitive processing and learning” (n.p., as cited in Schapiro et al., 2000, p. 25).

Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) . . . discovered . . . a high correlation between students who [were] self-regulate[d] and [those] who [were] high achieve[rs]. In the self-regulating academic environment, students [were] taught to focus on the goal to be achieved and to develop the cognitive strategies and control mechanisms [necessary] to achieve the desired goals. (n.p., as cited in Holmes et al., 2010, p. 4)

Motivational psychologist Heidi Grant, PhD (2011) . . . post[ed] [in] *Nine Things Successful People Do Differently*, . . . that successful people reach[ed] their goals not simply because of who they [were], but more often because of what they [did]. (n.p., as cited in Blanchard, 2018, p. 23)

This outlook resonates with scores of academic advisors as “[s]tudents [have been] urged to set goals for themselves, establish a schedule, and work consistently toward [those] goals” (as cited in Allen et al., 2001, p. 13) (Brill et al., 2014; Combs, 1966; Dinham et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Holmes et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Klepper, 2017; Sigafus, 1998).

As “students working in cooperation generally tend to produce higher achievement than students working alone[,] . . . the ability of doctoral students to function interdependently facilitates positive relationships, critical skill development and resulting academic success [in what]. . . . Johnson and Johnson

(1998) refer[red] to as “promotive interaction.” (p. 6, as cited in Holmes et al., 2010, p. 2)

“The most important relationship for a doctoral student is with an advisor, faculty [member], or chairperson” (Brill et al., 2014, p. 27) (Allen et al., 2001; Faghihi et al., 1999; Holmes et al., 2010; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015). In fact, “[s]tudents that had positive relationships with advisors or faculty were significantly more likely to complete their degrees” (Schneider, 2015, p. 2) (Bair et al., 1999; Kelley et al., 2016; Lenz, 1995). “Sorensen and Kagen (1987) concluded that [aspects of a positive faculty relationship included a] match . . . [in] personality of the student and advisor . . . on the level of (a) dependence versus independence, (b) nurturance versus distance, and (c) epistemological preference” (n.p., as cited in Miller, 1995, p. 45). Correspondence in these traits has lent resilience when “students themselves . . . [have] acquire[d] more knowledge about the narrow subject of their dissertation[s] than the faculty advisors possess[ed]” (Allen et al., 2001, pp. 1-2).

“[D]issertation advisors . . . [have been] the role models and support system for doctoral students (Katz, 1995, p. 60), [having] help[ed] not only academically but also with emotional support” (Blum, 2010, p. 78).

[A]dvisors [have been] defined as assigned faculty members who [have] guided [doctoral] students through the program and helped them meet [their] degree requirements[,] . . . [m]entors [have been] faculty members who [have] established a more personal relationship with the students and [have been] more meaningful in the contribution to the students’ professional socialization. (Garbarini, 2017, p. 25)

There are different types of mentoring[,] [however,] and each has [had] a distinct path and outcome. . . . Kram, (1985); Levinson, (1979); [and] Vaillant, (1977)[,] speculated . . . two kinds of mentoring. . . . Career mentoring involve[d] sponsorship, coaching, protection, and [provision of] challenging assignments[,] [while] psychosocial mentoring involve[d] role modeling, acceptance, counseling, and friendship. (Kram, 1985, n.p., as cited in Lundsford, 2012, p. 252)

A student who [was] having difficulty[,] [such as an ABD student,] may [have been] able to drift longer while needing and receiving more psychosocial support from their advisor. (Lundsford, 2012, p. 266). Thus, . . . suggest[ing] . . . advisors . . . focus[ed] on providing specific kinds of mentoring support depending on their discipline and desired student outcome. (Lundsford, 2012, p. 266)

“Mentors [have] practice[d] their skills with a combination of never-ending compassion, crystal-clear communication, and a sincere joy in the role of [having been] a helper along a journey toward mastery” (Bell, 1996, pp. 7-8). As such, the

mentor behavior [has] not [been] intended to minimize the accountability of the mentee as a learner but rather to [have] maximize[d] the contribution of the mentor as a vital participant in the learning process – to highlight what the mentor [has done] as an influence. (Cohen, 1995, p. 18)

“From the mentee’s perspective, the effective mentor would usually [have been] experienced as [having] demonstrate[ed] concern and [having] offer[ed] assistance through appropriate observable behavior” (Cohen, 1995, p. 19).

Among many opportunities of observable behaviors, “[c]ommunication and honest feedback [have been distinguished as] two important responsibilities of a mentor” (Rose, 2005, n.p., as cited in Brill et al., 2014, p. 32) (Cohen, 1995; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Holmes et al., 2010; Reedy et al., 2015; Schapiro et al., 2000; Sigfus, 1998).

[M]entor[s] [have] need[ed] to recognize when a student has delayed his or her work[,] . . . provide[d] support to motivate the student to continue with their research[,] . . . [and] to [have] encourage[d] [him or her] to be active in their learning community, . . . by keeping an open line of communication [with] the advisor. (Brill et al., 2014, p. 32)

Students at all levels [have] want[ed] and need[ed] timely, constructive feedback of their progress. . . . [which they have then likened to] validation and confirmation of the value of their work and the approach they [have] take[n] to accomplish it (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 109).

As much as feedback has lent encouragement to a struggling student, it has gone a long way to communicate a sense of mattering (Schneider, 2015).

“Doctoral students [have] reported human factors such as faculty-student relationships and collegial support [as having] contributed significantly to their completion” (Stallone, 2004, n.p., as cited in Schneider, 2015, p. 3). In fact, supportive relationships of any kind have been a welcomed boon to a bewildered ABD student. “At such times in life, support from others [has] aid[ed] in rebuilding lost confidence and removing some uncertainty” (Sigafus, 1998, p. 7).

Brailsford's (2010) research showed the importance of third parties that included friends, colleagues, and family [members] as well as academics as an incentive for students to start the doctoral program. . . . [Yet,] more consideration [was] needed to be paid to [those] third parties as important [stimulating and stabilizing] factors . . . [toward the] completion of the doctoral degree (Gill & Hoppe, 2009).  
(n.p., as cited in Garbarini, 2017, p. 17)

For many struggling ABD students, “[f]amily and peer support were important [elements] to the completion of [their] dissertation[s]; . . . [the] support proved to be very enabling” (Lenz, 1995, p. 35). These reasons why ABD status doctoral students have been able to persist to the accomplishment of their dissertations and the subsequent completion of their degrees has been reflected upon in many positive sentiments found in other previously researched studies, as well as through interviewing current-era graduates and former students.

*Sentiments: Self-Regulation*

\*‘My advisor has been great but he has not communicated with us very well. If we don’t contact him, we will never hear from him. Thank GOD I am self-motivated because I would have been so delayed if I needed more guidance from my advisor.’ (Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 9)

\*‘I decided that I wanted to study with him and his colleagues.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 25)

\*‘I particularly wanted to work with one of my supervisors.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 25)

\*'Regular psychotherapy helped me to cope with issues surrounding my committee. At first, I was ashamed to go to it because of the stigma surrounding mental health counselling, but I soon came to recognize that it is a strength to recognize that the doctoral process is a lonely one and that psychotherapy and counselling are just another kind of resource.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 57)

\*'*[T]he discipline that you have to have or acquire to do a major piece of research.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 58)

\*'*Teaches one self-sufficiency, the need to network with others, to work smart, and to not give up hope.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 59)

\*'*I became more efficient.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 54)

#### *Sentiments: Intrinsic Motivation*

\*'*Stubborn persistence.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 84)

\*'*No, once I made up my mind to pursue my degree I was able to move ahead. I had tremendous support from family and friends.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 24)

\*'*I was so focused that I didn't notice problems – just went and did it.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 24)

\*'*A determination to continue on, even when benefits are unclear.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 84)

\*'*Perseverance and a burning thirst to KNOW and to UNDERSTAND about something.*' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 85)

\*'In all honesty I had some ambivalence about the Ph.D. before I came here, but I thought, "Well, I am just going to do the degree and be a professor." I am going

to do the degree because I want what is at the end of the road.’ (Golde, 2000, p. 214, Case #3: Jane)

*Sentiments: Task Value*

\*’This one was the only doctoral program that was available . . . in the immediate area. I had looked into . . . a doctorate in manufacturing construction technology, but they were too far, and their entrance requirements were kind of silly.’ (DG1)

\*’I was finishing up at two universities[;] . . . doing Ed Specialist at . . . [one] through the online and finishing up the PhD and the research assistantship at [another]. . . . Then I had six months to finish writing that dissertation and defend. I did that. Then I started working over at [a third university] as a research assistant.’ (DG2)

\*’I did not need it to continue, there was no requirement. But to get promoted, it was helpful to have more graduate school hours. It has worked in my favor where some of the courses that I took actually qualified me to teach beyond the original range I was hired for.’ (DG3)

*Sentiments: Goals*

\*’*I know I can reach my goals.*’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 93)

\*’*A person needs to be goal-oriented and willing to make sacrifices to attain those goals.*’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 85)

\*’I was initially discouraged by the program chair because of my limited experience in the field – to overcome this, I just worked hard and proved him wrong.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 28)

*\*'The experience that I gained shapes the way I look at myself and my work.'*

(Dinham et al., 1999, p. 79)

*\*'I find myself studying late at night when everyone is asleep and I can concentrate. . . . I need the quiet, so I have to work at night when the phone won't ring, the kids aren't in and out, and the TV isn't on.'* (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

*\*'Generally, what I had to do with studying was just commit all my weekends and time off to it.'* (Sigafus, 1998, p. 19)

*Sentiments: Advisors*

*\*'My Prof. was euphoric when I told her about my research plans.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 33)

*\*'I got the idea from talking with faculty members. The specific idea came from the person who became my Research Advisor.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 34)

*\*'I know my chair has high expectations and knows how to push me to do well. I also know she would never let me move on to the next step of the process without having completed quality work.'* (Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 10)

*\*'He has really been there for me to go through the growing pains of learning how to think and learn differently.'* (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 49)

*\*'My supervisor defended me to my committee when my old supervisor had doubts about my ability to succeed in the program. My 'new' supervisor told me "I believe in you, you can do this." It was a life-changing moment and no one had ever told me that before. I needed that support and encouragement to keep going.'* (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 50)

\*[My advisor] treated me wonderfully. He thought I did well, he gave me the highest grades. . . . A real looking-out-for-us kind of thing. . . . When he thinks you are going to be doing his kind of work, he really makes opportunities appear for you. Meeting pretty important area artists. Making sure there is money in the summer, that kind of thing. Opening his files to you. It was pretty major. He pulls a lot of weight. And he tries to do for you.' (Golde, 2000, p. 21, Case #3: Jane)

*Sentiments: Mentors*

*\*'What a stroke of luck to find a compatible supervisor who knew me from my Master's work and was willing to take me through to the PhD level! . . . an absolutely excellent role model.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 25)

*\*'The relationship was excellent. As mutual respect and trust grew over time the relationship became more open and relaxed. My supervisor was always supportive and loyal, was a critical friend (never undermining confidence), provided excellent and fast critical feedback on writing and was a wise and diplomatic mentor and friend. A lasting friendship has resulted from the experience.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 50)

*\*'My supervisor is still a friend and mentor.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 54)

*\*'Support . . . an exacting supervisor, a good peer network . . . mentoring as far as being strategic about doctorate and career.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 87)

\*'Seek out the advanced students in the program and utilize them as mentors.

The best and most useful information comes from other students, as they have just

accomplished what you will need to do. They are often more direct, honest and realistic about current conditions.’ (Golde et al., 2001, p. 47)

\*‘[M]y second advisor was someone who became someone who I would consider not only my mentor, my advisor, but somewhat of my friend, who understood what was important to me and would spend time with me discussing not only . . . my dissertation . . . but discussing what I wanted to do, what was happening . . . in the industry. . . . I liked him much better as a person. . . . He has a good relationship with every one of his students because of that.’ (Golde, 1994, p. 10, Case #2: Nathan)

*Sentiments: Feedback and Communication*

\*‘*My adviser gave me political tips and tried to put together a friendly, but sufficiently critical group to assure my work would get a careful review and be maximally credible.*’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 44)

\*‘*My doctoral adviser made suggestions as to who would be good on my committee and he suggested that another faculty member be co-chair with him on the dissertation.*’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 44)

\*‘*[T]his was a person who never failed to express enthusiasm for any progress, which I needed.*’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 45)

\*‘*My supervisors stretched me with provocative and stimulating conversation and gave me unsolicited guidance and advice when they deemed it in my best interests.*’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46)

\*‘*Competent faculty, who can stimulate students to think.*’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 87)

*\*'My current supervisor often praises my work, which I find significant every single time . . . [she] will critique as well . . . and helps me see where the weaknesses in my argument lie.'* (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 50)

**Sentiments: Relationships and Support**

*\*'The relationship was first class and fully supportive before, during and after the course of study.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 49)

*\*'I had a good relationship with my adviser that became closer during the course of the doctorate.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 51)

*\*'I truly believe that the relationship you have with your chair is the key to finishing the program. I am lucky to have an outstanding chair. . . . Others are not so lucky and I have heard horror stories from some of my colleagues.'*

(Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 10)

*\*'I received good info and support because my chair knew all the ropes and how to get things done to standard.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 47)

*\*'[M]y family was able to be supportive.'* (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 57)

*\*'My department was wonderfully supportive in ways that I needed . . . My parents and my children were also supportive in their own ways.'* (Dinham et al.,

1999, p. 93)

**Question C.: What are the reasons that research indicates why some of the doctoral students remaining at the All But Dissertation phase will succumb to attrition and fail to accomplish the dissertation and complete the doctoral degree?**

Initially, the U.S. Department of Education through the supervision of McNeeley, investigated the growing rates of student attrition within higher education programs,

which were increasing in universities across America (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). While the research findings of 15,535 students attending 25 universities in 1931 and 1932, highlighted a 62.1% loss across four years, McNeeley was able to decipher that 17% of those students actually transferred to other colleges and universities. Thus, the actual loss suffered by higher education was 45.2% (McNeeley, 1937, n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). A similar study was sponsored by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in which Iffert measured the attrition “of 12,667 students . . . entered [in] 149 institutions of higher learning in 1950” (Iffert, 1958, n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). “The central findings indicate[d] . . . these schools [had] lost approximately half their students in the succeeding four years. . . . Through “extrapolation, . . . a rough estimate of “59 percent (sic) [was found to be] the probable maximum percentage eventually graduating”” (Iffert, 1958, n.p., as cited in Summerskill, 1962, p. 630).

One interesting discovery of Iffert and other researchers was that “[a]pproximately half the total withdrawals [had] occur[ed] before the sophomore year . . . . [;] undoubtedly[,] freshman year serve[d] a screening function for many colleges” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). As these federal studies were slated to address the “institutional and administrative concerns” of colleges and their high attrition rates, a major focus was directed at the concept of these institutions as “organized . . . training center[s] rather than as . . . intellectual center[s].” Meaning, college curriculum was the preparatory course toward entering careers in “business or industry, science or technology, medicine or law, homemaking or community service” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 628).

Summerskill (1962, p. 630) conducted a review of 35 studies between 1913 and 1962, which included the two aforementioned investigations. The median values for universities' student loss over four years was calculated at 50%, while the student populations that persisted to graduation within this same period was a mere 37% (Iffert, 1958; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962). In retrospect, the outstanding 13% of students could have lingered longer in their degree pursuits than the four-year measure.

Summerskill (1962, p. 630) was able to illustrate a strong holding pattern in attrition rates over a 40-year period, which lent greatly to the cliché of 50% dropout among college degree programs. Three decades later, Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) would add more clarity as their study found “[s]tudents who had achieved ABD status had roughly an 80% chance of finishing a dissertation and receiving a PhD” (p. 112).

There were many individual and combinations of factors of influence being investigated within these studies: age at enrollment, gender, economic status, social background, hometown location and size, secondary school preparation, scholastic aptitude, academic performance at college, motivation or lack of, change or conflict, adjustment, illness and injury, and finances (Summerskill, 1962, pp. 631-646).

Continuing to investigate the phenomenon, Tinto and Cullen (1973) were contracted by the Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation (OPBE) of the U.S. Office of Education to determine how the dropout rates related to “measures of individual ability and social status” (p. iv), for which the encompassing terms, including ‘dropout,’ had to be defined. This entailed investigating private institutions and public universities; two-year and four-year degree programs; as well as part-time and full-time student attendance.

Even the students were defined by the circumstances surrounding their collegiate conclusions. Tinto and Cullen (1973) referred to students failing to return to college after their initial year as ‘voluntary withdrawals’ (Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962); those who had transferred to other institutions to finish their degrees were identified as ‘transfers;’ ABD-status candidates which ultimately discontinued their programs were counted as ‘permanent dropouts;’ and ‘academic dismissals’ were those who had been removed for less than acceptable grades or behaviors (Tinto et al., 1973). They found that those students who persisted had a stronger sense of “social integration” (p. 60) or connectedness, having been involved in quality relationships within their families, society, and their universities (Tinto et al., 1993). “Vaughan (1968) [had already] suggest[ed] that dropouts tend[ed] to be more impulsive than persisters, lacking in any deep emotional commitment to education, and unable to profit as much from past experience” (n.p., as cited in Tinto et al., 1973, p. 49). In fact, “[d]ropouts . . . seemed to be more unstable, more anxious, and overly active and restless relative to their successful college counterparts” (Grace, 1957, n.p.; Grande & Simmons, 1967, n.p.; Vaughan, 1968, n.p., as cited in Tinto et al., 1973, p. 49). Overall, Spady (1970) discerned that “college dropouts seem[ed] to be less “mature” than persisters (n.p., as cited in Tinto et al., 1973, p. 49).

Two decades later, Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) completed their research and published their findings as a book, *In Pursuit of the PhD*. Their focus was academically administrative in that they were “concerned with graduates adding to staffing pools” (Bowen et al., 1992, p. 2). Of the six fields (sic) studied; “English, history, political science (EHP), mathematics, physics (MP)” across “10-major universities” (p. 6), the

“completion rates and time[s]-to-degree [were] combined into a single measure [which they] (called the student-year cost or SYC)”. . . . As these [SYCs] would represent “the average number of years invested by an entering cohort of students in earning one doctorate” . . . they had “obtained figures of 12 years per doctorate in the EHP fields and 8 years per doctorate in the MP fields”. . . . Along with this, they found that “scale matter[ed], especially within the EHP fields where student-year-cost of a doctorate averaged more than 15 years in the Larger programs as compared with about 10 years in the Smaller programs” (p. 12). Ultimately, they would conclude that

[w]hile there [was] nothing magical about a six-year plan for the humanities, [they] believed that such a model [came] closest – in the light of [their] own research and other studies – to a norm that [was] realistic, potentially affordable, and consistent with educational results of high quality. (p. 282)

Although research in general concentrated on the “distinction between “voluntary” and “involuntary” attrition, . . . [ Bowen and Rudenstine were more] “focus[ed] on when attrition occur[ed]” (1992, p. 113). They articulated completion of the doctoral degree as a measure: “Total time-to-degree (TTD); Elapsed time-to-degree (ETD); and Registered time-to-degree (RTD) (p. 140). They believed that “[e]arly attrition [was] much to be preferred to late attrition” (p. 282), as other researchers before had been able to discover “[a]pproximately half the total [student] withdrawals [had] occur[ed] before the sophomore year” (Summerskill, 1962, p. 630). As aforementioned, Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) were able to decipher the doctoral completion rates to have risen from the cliched 50% into 80% ranges, once a student had reached the ABD status (p. 112). So, the longer a student could prevail in their academic adventure, the

greater his or her prospects to persist to the accomplishment of his or her dissertation and the completion of the doctoral degree. Their opinions regarding these students lent insight into their perception of persistence.

Even with the best of intentions, and apparent mutual understanding, the entire dissertation process [would] often [go] awry because it [was] so deeply structured on a personal apprentice-model, with both the professor and the student [having been] given very broad latitude (p. 260). . . . Students [did] in fact often drift without guidance for considerable periods of time, while faculty members continue[d] to operate on the presumption that [the faculty's] declared accessibility, and . . . genuine interest in students [were] sufficient to make the process work (p. 261). . . . [However, Bowen and Rudenstine would conclude that] [t]he design, oversight, evaluation, and careful monitoring of graduate programs [made] an enormous difference to the quality of the educational experience, the morale and progress of students, and the extent to which human and financial resources [were] to be used effectively (Bowen et al., 1992, p. 267). [They would ultimately recommend that] the number of major hurdles [besetting doctoral students be minimized], since each one create[d] new anxieties and new possibilities for postponement, and [for faculty] to be as clear as possible about the nature of each hurdle [encountered]. . . . [They felt] the need for regular, scheduled meetings between students and dissertation advisors (or committees) throughout the process, [coupled] with clear expectations about [the] work schedule and [the] timetable for completion of drafts . . . [were] difficult to overemphasize. . . . Faculty [was to] take the initiative in creating and managing

this process or structure, . . . [o]therwise, many students [would] drift, . . . [or simply be lost]. (Bowen et al., 1992, p. 284)

To explain doctoral student Attrition beyond the ABD status they focused on the actual programs being studied. “The weight of the research evidence suggest[ed] strongly that doctoral student attrition and persistence rates differ[ed] by field of study and even more by program of study” (Bair et al., 1999, p. 7).

Sauer (1986) suggested that lower attrition rates in the sciences may [have been] related to the “exacting structure imposed on [science] students by the laboratory sciences and by financial support of their students,” whereas higher attrition rates in the social sciences may [have been] “due in part to less structure, more ambiguous expectations, and less financial support (p. 3).” (as cited in Bair et al., 1999, p. 7)

The work doctoral students engaged in through the ‘physical and life sciences’ was directly correlated with cohort projects directed by the faculty advisors of the specific departments. Every day students participated as teams in activities of laboratory research, which advanced their investigations and added to their scholarly writings. Students waning in drive or direction were spurred on by the collective flow within the departmental projects. Having operated within a constructive movement of ongoing research kept many ABD students on-task and connected with their dissertation timelines. Plus, the financial perks offered through tuition reimbursements and outright student stipends were a boon to any candidate. Yet, the doctoral programs of humanities and social sciences bore a stark difference as, “research . . . [was] done in solitude and often in the field. Ph.D. candidates [were] less in contact with their advisors and Ph.D. counterparts, less supervised, and there [was] less day-to-day awareness of the passage of

time and attainment of project timelines or milestones” (Sauer, 1986, p. 167, as cited in Bair et al., 1999, pp. 7-8). Without perception of a clear path and workable plan for dissertation accomplishment and degree completion, floundering in isolation would be enough adversity for some moderately goal-oriented candidates to fold up and quit their programs. Success at the ABD phase of a humanities or social science program was dependent upon the doctoral students reaching out for support.

More than ever, a solid relationship with their advisors was critical to ABD status doctoral students. By this phase, “[a]dvisors should [have already] assist[ed] [their] students in selecting manageable topics and in [having set] . . . realistic time line[s]” (Katz, 1995, p. 56). However, stagnant or drifting learners do not always recognize what it is that they need, whether to delve further into the research of a topic, to begin focus in a new direction, or to reach out for insight through graduate assistance (Long, 2018). This was precisely when an advisory relationship was intended to lend the essential support needed to continue with a dissertation project and ultimately complete a doctoral degree (Bair et al., 1999; Brill et al., 2014; Dupont et al., 2013; Garbarini, 2017; Katz, 1995; Lenz, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Reedy et al., 2015; and Schneider, 2015). Nevertheless, this has also been the period when doctoral students found their advisors lacking in personal concern of their work or deficit of the knowledge necessary to offer informed assistance with their projects (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013). In fact, studies of attrition . . . [have] found . . . the student’s departure was . . . due in part to inadequate or inaccurate advising, lack of interest or attention on the part of the advisor, unavailability of the advisor [or] faculty to students, or a negative

relationship or even conflict between the student and advisor [or] faculty. (Bair et al., 1999, p. 10)

Addressing adversities such as avoidance, abandonment, and antagonism have been formidable hardships for any student. However, when animosity turned their advisors into adversaries, doctoral candidates having already labored at the ABD phase chose to quit rather than fight.

Students investing such vast amounts of time and expense to the fulfillment of a doctoral degree want, if not need, to feel they ‘matter’ to the educational institutions they attend (Combs, 1966; Dupont et al., 2013; Grant, 2018; Schneider, 2015). Many students who had disappointing experiences conducting their research projects or felt dissatisfied with their programs have also lacked a perception of belongingness to their universities (Bair et al., 1999). “[T]he university should [have been] responsible for reconnecting and supporting [their] doctoral students until graduation” (Katz, 1995, p. 58). Some ABD status students “felt they had very little support after course work was completed . . . [and that the] dissertation courses [did not] help with the actual project[s]” (Katz, 1995, p. 58). Numerous complaints have been assessed against the subject of choosing dissertation topics, in that many doctoral students “lack[ed] an appropriate [or] strong topic; have had a difficult time “reduc[ing] the topic[s] and making them manageable in scope;” and have had to change their topics numerous times because of “inaccessible subject[s]” or eventual disinterest (Bair et al., 1999, p. 16). While it was commonplace for novice researchers to be unprepared to work on independent projects in isolation, less recognized have been those students who struggled with “inadequate language preparation,” in general (Miller, 1995, p. 45). Sadly, there has been a disunity of program features and

requisites among institutions offering doctoral degrees. As Tinto (1993) theorized decades ago, “[t]he institutional academic and social experience [has been what has led] directly to the integration of the student with the program” (n.p., Miller, 1995, p. 44). Even a goal-oriented student would succumb to attrition under the struggles of a constant barrage of barriers, challenges, and obstacles.

Doctoral students in the ABD phase had to navigate many institutionally associated issues within the timelines of their degree programs. Another dimension to the challenges each student had to confront aligned with his or her personality traits.

The amount of self efficacy [each] student possessed [has] affect[ed] the amount of effort [he or she has put] into completing the dissertation, how [he or she has dealt] with setbacks during the . . . process, and the amount of time [he or she] spent working through problems . . . encounter[ed]. (Pajares, 2001, 6, as cited in Long, 2018, p. 84)

“[W]hen self-efficacy [has been] low, failure [has been] perceived as [the] likely outcome, and students [have been] more prone to give up” (Dupont et al., 2013, p. 622). Even aspects of perfectionism have stalled out research progress through bouts of depression and procrastination (Bair et al., 1999; Johnson et al., 2000; Sigafus, 1998). In fact, “low frustration tolerance” (Blum, 2010, p. 75) coupled with periods of varying intensities of intrinsic motivation (Dupont et al., 2013; Reedy et al., 2015) have disrupted the psyches of struggling students and limited their capacities to coordinate a plan of perseverance. Also debilitating to doctoral students striving under stretches of elevated stress have been the illnesses and health-related conditions, which have befallen many. While unknown to the Research Investigator whether this tragedy has ultimately resulted

in a candidate dropping out of a degree program, it certainly would extend the timeline of completion through the effects of essential recovery for those afflicted.

Among the multitude of hindrances having impeded a doctoral student's dissertation timeline, personal role conflicts have been correlated to obligations, such as employment duties and family responsibilities (Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Green et al., 1997). While "age per se [has] not affect[ed] attrition . . . older [students have] encounter[ed] more obstacles to graduation" (Summerskill, 1962, p. 631). For those older students having had more pre-existing commitments to attend during their degree encounters, "it [has always been] more about 'fitting [the] university into one's life'" (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 1). Many times, a doctoral student had already been employed and their degree pursuits aligned with an intended or required job advancement (Dinham et al., 1999). Although these students had maintained a stream of income, it may not have been adequate to cover their expenses, hence the need for promotion (Ronco, 1994). Added to the strain on their budgets would be the long-distance travel costs incurred when attending campus classes (Green et al., 1997). Mounting financial debt has been a critical factor for floundering ABD students who have ultimately opted to discontinue their degree programs before completion (Smith, 1981).

Financial hardships, such as debt have tormented countless students. Yet, the distress endured when having lacked sufficient funds has paled in comparison to the agony experienced when one's children and family have had to suffer want, especially at the expense of a degree pursuit (Dinham et al., 1999). This is precisely why older women have had to postpone their doctoral studies; they were required to free up the time needed to appropriately care for their families (Allen et al., 2001; Bair et al., 1999; Iffert,

1958; Miller, 1995; Ronco, 1994; Smith, 1981; Tinto et al., 1973). As “[t]ime dedicated to doctoral studies and the time away from family resulted in feelings of guilt, worry, and anxiety” (Garbarini, 2017, p. 33), these “feeling[s] [of] vulnerab[ility] [and] insecure[ity] diverted [their] energy from learning” (Grant, 2018, p. 34), research, and dissertation production. Even with the added familial support of a spouse or partner, women have been more likely to drop out of their programs in consideration of their domestic responsibilities (Astin, 1975, p. 45, as cited in Smith, 1981, p. 13; Iffert, 1958). Paradoxically, it has been the reverse for male students in partnerships; they have been bolstered by their counterparts’ support to spur on and complete their degrees (Astin, 1975, p. 45, as cited in Smith, 1981, p. 13).

Such has been the calamity of older students; they have had to direct their attention and divert their energies to address their personal life roles and the conflicts which have ensued (Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018). Maintaining employment has put a huge limitation on available time, as it required most of the day, even for single people (Green et al., 1997). For those students raising families, the constraints abounded, as each child had their own needs and individual agendas to attend (Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Lenz, 1995). Add to wit, the recent Covid-19 lockdowns affected elementary education, in that, some families had to homeschool their children (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.). Although many daily chores can be postponed during strenuous periods, grocery shopping, meal preparation, washing dishes, and doing laundry have continued to be essential household duties (Lenz, 1995). While striving to maintain a status quo within their families, many doctoral students have had to delay their scholarly pursuits amid health-related conditions, as aforementioned.

However, in some instances, students have been required to administer caregiving to members of extended families in multi-generational homes (Dinham et al., 1999; Sigafus, 1998; Smith, 1981). Sadly, just when a struggling ABD doctoral student was in need of advisory and moral support to continue on in their academic adventures, they were called to the duty of their personal life roles within their homes and families (Dinham et al., 1999; Smith, 1981). Without having received a timely reprieve or sufficient intervention, many of these strained scholars dropped their doctoral degree pursuits. The tragedies are reflected in many of the student sentiments following:

*Sentiments: Specific Programs*

\*'I had rubbed several senior faculty the wrong way by raising serious methodological concerns about their entire research programs in my comprehensive exams. I was told that I had grounds to challenge the ruling, but that it would be a living hell if I decided to stay.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 43)

\*'There needs to be a major rethinking of what a doctorate, and a doctoral program is, and what it could/should be. Until the academy acknowledges the personal lives, and particularly for women, the family/mothering roles in our lives as a CRITICAL and VALIDATED part of WHO we are and what is IMPORTANT.' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 91)

\*'Holing up in a Ph.D. program in the humanities is the perfect way to insulate yourself from alternative career opportunities. Faculty members in my program acknowledge that there is a job shortage and make this clear to incoming students, but do precious little else to encourage students to consider just what else they might be good for outside the ivory tower. I wish I had done more to prepare

myself for alternatives outside of college/university teaching.’ (Golde et al., 2001, p. 12)

\*‘You only find out after you get there, that Eastern deliberately created the program such that a certain percentage of the students will leave after the first year. It was very, very, very hard. . . . We all saw that weeding out process.’ (Golde, 1994, p. 9, Case #4: Nathan)

\*‘The university started this program and gave us a break on tuition. It was something I always wanted to do; had applied to programs over the years; and it just didn’t work out. There was a cohort of people I work with who all did it at the same time. . . . I’m the only one in my group that didn’t get their doctorate.’ (FS1)

\*‘I started and spent about two years before that in a Political Science doctoral program. I had approximately three or four classes from finishing the doctoral classes, and I was just not happy with the department or where it was heading. So, I totally changed doctoral areas to Adult Ed.’ (FS3)

*Sentiments: Advisors*

\*‘I worked on one topic suggested by my advisor for 2 years. It didn’t pan out.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 33)

\*‘In my proposal meeting [my Advisor] rarely said a word.’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 20)

\*‘Students should be encouraged to broaden their network of advisers so that there are other supporters to stand up for them. No qualified student should ever leave a program because of bad advising. There should be mechanisms, at all levels and in all departments, to protect students. Students in my program

generally feel respected, valued, and are happy. I know this is not the case for everyone, but it should be.’ (Golde et al., 2001, p. 39)

\*’My advisor was going on sabbatical for the fall semester and did not properly notify her advisees. I learned of it through an email to the listserv.’ (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 50)

\*’I found out I didn’t particularly like [my advisor], nor did I particularly like the way he worked . . . and I somewhat quickly became a little disenchanted with what I had chosen to do.’ (Golde, 1994, p. 9, Case #4: Nathan)

\*’[My advisor . . .] wanted me to redo my written proposal without really giving me much information on what should be changed.’ (Golde, 2000, p. 206, Case #1: Don)

*Sentiments: Universities*

\*’The university supplied nothing except library space.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 41)

\*’It’s not about the university; it’s about a person who originally caused me to lose my momentum. I really was uncomfortable pushing my application through because I knew the outcome. Even though she’s only one person when they vote, she’s very persuasive.’ (FS1)

\*’In 2012, the university was a lot smaller than it is now and everybody knew everybody. How do I know the person I’m talking to doesn’t have any bias toward this other person? A lot of things happened since then to discount her power.’ (FS1)

\*' If I would have done this somewhere else, I would have totally finished it. But I would tell anybody not to take the program where you work because of those other factors which come in.' (FS1)

\*'When I got done with all the classes and did the research, that took a year. Everything was fine then. When it came to the writing part is when the university changed a lot. A lot of the professors that I had a lot of respect for were leaving or were pushed out. The professors taking over [the program] had no idea what [the program] was. The way the staff was being treated there was disgusting, and I pretty much lost a lot of respect for the university.' (FS2)

\*'[O]nce I finished all of my studies and I had already veered pretty much from my dissertation, you're just out. You are not pending; you're not talking to people; you're not around anyone in the program; it's just you. I think both [the university] and I dropped the ball there. . . . They were pretty much in the process of doing away with their Adult Ed program. I had several people in my Committees who retired or moved. . . . I think if he would have stayed, I would have a doctorate today.' (FS3)

*Sentiments: Personality Traits*

\*'There really wasn't anyone else there I felt I could work with without my completely changing the direction of what I was doing. It just wasn't worth trying to do at that late stage. Essentially, I would have three months to come up with a different project that would interest someone else, who barely know that I existed – and yet having to come to an agreement with that person about what to work on.' (Golde, 2000, p. 206, Case #1: Don)

\*‘I had trouble feeling that I was in the right place and feeling comfortable there . . . just didn’t feel welcome.’ (Golde, 2000, p. 209, Case #1: Don)

\*‘To essentially have no encouragement – it just felt worse and worse the whole time I was there. Which can be as bad as things actually being worse.’ (Golde, 2000, p. 209, Case #1: Don)

\*‘I spent a month, two months, working on my first paragraph in my proposal; rewriting it, sitting at the desk, confused because it’s got to be right. You have to make sure you don’t say anything that you can’t back up. And the minute you back it up, then that becomes a real problem.’ (FS3)

\*‘Reaching an emotional part where you were like, “Crap, I’m posting major work out here; it’s going to be in publication. Do I deserve this; am I worthy of this?” Those insecurities . . . it was very nerve wracking.’ (FS3)

\*‘The . . . issue that became a big one was that I had collected and read a tremendous amount of data, underlining it, highlighting it, putting notes on it. . . . I had six separate file boxes full of research out there that I had read. Now you have to put all that stuff together.’ (FS3)

*Sentiments: Personal Life Role Conflicts*

\*‘The PhD meant that my personal time was almost non-existent. This wasn’t easy on my family.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 22)

\*‘Family commitments were (and are) highly time consuming.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 23)

\*‘My biggest challenge is finding time to complete all of the work (reading assignments and written projects) because I am working fulltime as a teacher.

There are lots of things I have to do for my students and my school which impact my time.’ (Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 8)

\*‘It’s just tough trying to hold a full-time job as an administrator, be a mother to a young child, and carry my other responsibilities along with writing the dissertation.’ (Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 8)

\*‘Trying to get my youngest to go to school every day; having to fill in and work a little bit; having to leave because we were trying different school schedules with him going in later; or doctors appointments. Then getting my oldest into college and having to drive down there. Having to do all the visits; he went through some stuff, too, so I had to go down there, to Rolla, S&T.’ (FS2)

\*‘I work for a non-profit; I’m on the board. Actually, it’s pretty much full-time; we put on national conferences and workshops, help a lot of families with fund raising. . . . I actually do not get paid. So, that’s a struggle. . . . We do still have to pay the bills, so I do have to work part-time. . . . So my only serious employment is about five hours a week at minimum wage.’ (FS2)

*Sentiments: Family Responsibilities*

\*‘There were a lot of problems with my family and no holidays during those eight years experience.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 40)

\*‘I think that this workload inevitably slowed my thesis completion, but who can support a family on a scholarship?’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 40)

\*‘I work full-time and have many work and personal responsibilities, i.e., caring for an elder parent, spouse with health problems.’ (Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 8)

\*‘I had a 10 month old when I started the program and I gave birth again 8 weeks ago!’ (Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 8)

\*‘We are waiting for my wife to have heart surgery and I have two toddlers.’ (Jimenez et al., 2010, p. 8)

\*‘That’s what helps with working with my friend and having our own thing is it’s very flexible for the kids. There’s no way I could have held down a steady-paying employment with what was happening.’ (FS2)

*Sentiments: Lacking Support*

\*‘I was not treated well by anyone, including my family.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 68)

\*‘My family not only could not help with my support but I needed to help support them.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 39)

\*‘My major physical crisis was that I needed my gall bladder removed in an emergency procedure shortly after I defended my dissertation. I couldn’t finish the corrections on time and had to graduate several months later because of it.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 56)

\*‘I got sick a lot – pneumonia, chicken pox, etc. – I got pretty run down.’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 56)

\*‘[T]he only time that my family was home was on Sunday and I would go and write because my husband was home with the kids. I couldn’t do that on Saturday because he worked. I didn’t abandon my family to do this; maybe that’s why I didn’t get it done. But it wasn’t a line I was willing to cross.’ (FS2)

\*'I've had both hips and both knees replaced over time, but I did those over the summer. I never had any interruptions for health issues.' (FS3)

**1. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher empathy with students (as attributed through five (5) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?**

In an attempt to offer a practical remedy to the high rates of attrition among doctoral students in universities, especially those who've struggled at the ABD phase, the Research Investigator explored the potential of a Teacher's empathy with their students. Straightway, several obstacles present, such as: "multiple definitions for empathy," "the variety of professions that use the term empathy," "the variety of purposes for studying empathy," "the difficulties in measuring empathy," and the "very limited empirical research conducted on the phenomenon of empathy," because of those challenges (Bouton, 2016, pp. 16-17). "Psychologist Carl Rogers in *Freedom to Learn* (1969, pp. 157-158) was the first to conceptualize teacher empathy, saying that, "a high degree of empathy in a relationship is possibly the most potent factor in bringing about change and learning'" (Meyers, Rowell, Wells, & Smith, 2019, p. 160). While "[e]mpathy is a personal and emotional trait that occurs inside of a person's mind and being (p. 17). . . . [t]here are three central elements to consider" when describing the attribute (Bouton, 2016, p. 17).

From the cognitive component it, "refers to one's ability to take the perspective of others, (sic) and see the world through his or her perspective." The second, from an affective component which, "involves experiencing the feelings of another

person.” The third, the behavioral component, “involves verbal and non-verbal communication to indicate an understanding of an emotional resonance with another person.” (Lam, Kolomitro, & Alamparambil, 2011 p. 163, as cited in Bouton, 2016, p. 17)

Any teacher who can empathize with a student on these multiple levels will have a greater stance at building a relationship in which learning will abound. “Hoffman (2014) noted that positive student-teacher relationships resulted in . . . higher level[s] of contentment, increased effort[s], and greater student engagement with better outcomes for students” (n.p., as cited in Grant, 2018, p. 18). Successful education was a collaborative cooperation between a teacher and the students. The Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI) is a self-assessment tool developed by Dr. Henschke (1989), which appraises a teacher’s “beliefs, feelings, and behaviors” toward their students when engaging a class or learning experience (Grant, 2018, p. 11). The study at hand is slated to discern three of the seven factors, namely: empathy, trust, and sensitivity. Each of these factors is outlined by specific elements, which further describe its propensity. Under the heading of Empathy, an Andragogue:

***Feels fully prepared to teach.***

Andragogy is an educational theory based in several constructs, one of which is expressed within the Assumptions of Andragogy [Appendix D]. As Relevance of Learning equates to

[a]dults . . . need[ing] to know a reason that makes sense to them as to why they should learn something particular[,] . . . one of the first tasks of the educator of adults is to develop a “need to know” in [their] learners.” (Risley, 2012, p. 40)

This is affected by each learner's Readiness to Learn which "can [be] trigger[ed] [by] . . . adult educators . . . inducing . . . developmental tasks associated with moving from one stage of development to another" (Risley, 2012, pp. 41-42). This response was rendered through the shared Climate of Respect, one of the important elements of Climate Setting in a classroom, which are among the important aspects of the Andragogical Process Design [Appendix E] (Knowles, 1996). Respect is an ideal approach to activating empathy for another, in that

teacher empathy is the degree to which instructors work to deeply understand students' personal and social situations, feel caring and concern in response to students' positive and negative emotions, and communicate their understanding and caring to students through their behavior." (Meyers et al., 2019, p. 161)

Ensuring a student feels understood is an important way to communicate empathy to individual students, particularly when prioritizing student learning makes it impossible to make an exception to a course policy (p. 161). . . . Instructors high in teacher empathy do not lower standards; they identify and remove obstacles to learning. (Meyers et al. 2019, p. 162)

*Sentiments:*

*\*'Over the course of my doctorate, we got to know each other quite well and I feel that he came to respect me as a scientist' (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 51).*

*\*'It went beyond scholastics; there were a couple of times that I had family problems that she listened to. It went beyond the professional environment; it went into the personal realm, too' (DG1).*

The empathetic Andragogue:

*Notices and acknowledges to learners positive changes in them.*

When a teacher takes the time to get to know the social context of each student, they have a better understanding when misbehaviors and “incivilities [such as:] . . . sleeping in class, acting bored or disinterested, not attending class, disrupting class by arriving late or leaving early” (Knepp 2012, [p.] 34), have presented in some learners (as cited in Meyers et al., 2019, p. 163). It is quite reasonable, as aforementioned, for older students to have employment and family responsibilities to address while striving to continue their educations. An empathetic teacher would do well by these students to introduce time management exercises to increase this skill set when implementing their syllabus assignments. Likewise, feedback from teachers has always been a positive reinforcer for academic engagement.

Students at all levels want and need timely, constructive feedback of their progress. . . . [as it goes a long way to lend] validation and confirmation of the value of their work and the approach[es] they [have taken] to accomplish it.

(Dinham et al., 1999, p. 109)

*Sentiments:*

*\*‘He has really been there for me to go through the growing pains of learning how to think and learn differently’ (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 49).*

*\*’[My Committee Chair] had already been one of my former teachers, as well as one of my former advisors. [H]e [was] very open and trie[d] very hard to make that connection where [we were] on the same page. Because it [was] going to be far easier to move me to where he need[ed] me to be if he [was] right there where I [was].’ (PDS)*

An empathetic Andragogue:

*Balances his or her efforts between learner content acquisition and motivation.*

Also debilitating for student success has been “academic anxiety . . . [and the] fear of failure” which has presented in strategies of assessment avoidance, as when students “refrain from class discussion; avoid talking with the instructor; [and] fail to submit work to be graded” (Meyers et al., 2019, p. 163). This response is considered to be “stereotyp[ical] threat” and interferes with student performance through the “fear of confirming a negative stereotype about one’s group” (Meyers et al. 2019, p. 163).

Women especially have experienced academic disengagement when pursuing careers in what had formerly been a male-dominated career field. Empathetic teachers have been able to reduce feelings associated with stereotypical threat through meaningful assignments, in which students have identified and explained the values that were important to them. Through these assignments, teachers have made new discoveries into the social contexts of their students, as well as have gotten confirmation regarding initial understandings surrounding learners’ negative preoccupations as individuals among a new grouping (Meyers et al. 2019).

*Sentiments:*

\*’The teacher should meet the students at their level. I don’t even like that word, “student.” They should meet the person that they’re trying to work with and support them at their level, whether it be international, American. No matter what age, you are trying to help someone find what they need and meet them at their level. Don’t try to fit a ball into a square.” (DG2)

\*'[F]ind out what the student doesn't know in order for them to complete the goal. So, it's about supporting, filling in the gaps, in order for that student to reach the goal. . . . I will say, "Here's some suggestions on how you can move forward to make this a complete final draft." And, maybe that's what I expect, as well. You don't have to tell somebody what to put, you can just say, "You're missing some research here." So, I guess, empathy to me is recognizing what the student needs to accomplish what you want them to accomplish.' (DG3)

An empathetic Andragogue:

***Expresses appreciation to learners who actively participate.***

Aside from direct feedback to individual students for specific endeavors, there are other ways a teacher can convey their appreciation of class involvement and contribution. As "the tone of the syllabus and course policies can communicate empathy[,] . . . suggestions . . . have [been] offered . . . [regarding] late work, rewriting assignments and retaking exams, and tokens" (Meyers et al., 2019, p. 165).

Submitting work on time [has been] an important skill for students to master prior to graduation, but students [have] need[ed] help to develop that skill. . . . A policy that explicitly allows students to request one 48-hour extension communicates empathy and relieves the instructor from having to evaluate the legitimacy of specific excuses. (Meyers et al., 2019, p. 165)

Another way to reduce the workload teachers experience when timely receipt of assignments is staggered would be to

offer students tokens. . . . Each student [would] receive a set number of tokens at the beginning of the course, . . . [which could be] exchange[d] [when they needed]

to redo assignment[s], submit work a day late, or forgive an absence. (Meyers et al., 2019, p. 165)

The true success in this venture has been the absolute articulation of such course policies and their transparency in conjunction with the assignments as listed in the syllabus.

*Sentiments:*

*\*‘The assistance I have received in the past when I have submitted my papers for review have been terrific’ (Jimenz et al., 2010, p. 10).*

*\*‘My current supervisor often praises my work, which I find significant every single time . . . [she] will critique as well . . . and helps me see where the weaknesses in my argument lie’ (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 50)*

An empathetic Andragogue:

***Promotes positive self-esteem in learners.***

When a teacher demonstrates empathy towards the students in their class setting, it “tend[s] to create a safe and encouraging [environment], [in which] positive relations with their students [as well as between those students is] foster[ed]” (Goroshit & Hen, 2014, p. 26). Students who are known and valued by their instructors as individuals, will have much more confidence, as they begin a new learning endeavor in an unknown group. As empathetic teachers are able to inspire empathy among their students, the “reciprocity, interrelatedness, mutual assistance, give and take, aiding and abetting, mutuality, interplay, cooperation, and collaboration” developed will stimulate the potential for learning (Henschke, 2014, p. 153). “[I]t is the relationship that teaches – the closer the relationship is [between the instructor and students and among the students], the more learning will occur” (Henschke, 2014, p. 153).

*Sentiments:*

\*'[T]o me Andragogy and spirituality go hand in hand. It has helped me develop into who I am as a human being. It's about being a decent person and doing good for yourself and others' (DG2).

\*'There was one group of about four students. . . . It wasn't so much what they said, it was that we had an easy way of comparing notes about theoretical stances or comparing notes about the issues we were going through; it was a friendship group. We were very supportive and attentive. . . . We could talk. I do think it's about shared goals and making friends within a group of shared goals.'" (DG3)

"Researchers [have] describe[d] empathy as the moral feeling concerning the welfare of others, facilitating inter-personal relationships and influencing people to engage in pro-social and altruistic behaviors" (Goroshit et al., 2014, p. 26). This is certainly a platform from which to begin an educational endeavor. With exposure to this attribute, students will be enriched and fortified by the compassions extended through the lessons shared. Teachers exuding empathy within their classes and studies will advance the tenets of an education as floundering students will find the wherewithal to finish their learning endeavors. It is the Research Investigator's belief that empathy definitely provides an essential factor necessary to bolster ABD students to accomplish their dissertations and complete their degree programs.

- 2. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher trust in students (as attributed through eleven (11) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?**

Trust is the emotional response to exposure to trustworthiness within another person, consumer product, medicinal treatment, political policy, philosophy, or any number of situational constructs experienced by individuals constantly. “There seems to be an inherent relation between trust and risk as . . . trust always ‘operates in environments of risk’” (Giddens, 1990, p. 54, as cited in Webster, 2018, p. 153). Perception of risk generates the concept of vulnerability within a person experiencing what they believe to be the probability of personal threat. With all of the aforementioned calamities confronting the psyches of ABD doctoral students through their personal life role conflicts, any arising complaints with their advisors or universities, especially coupled with dissertation topic and project issues, will certainly alert the panic of their vulnerabilities to successfully navigate adversities alone. Hence the necessity of a Dissertation Committee Chairperson to alleviate their vulnerabilities while guiding them through the doctoral process through individual learning. This is the point where empathetic insight aligns with compassionate guidance in the persona of a mentor. Research supports the theory that “maintain[ing] a good relationship with a mentor or the chair of the doctoral committee [has been] crucial to the successful completion of a doctoral program” (Kelley et al., 2016, p. 88) (Bell, 1996; Brill et al., 2014; Cohen, 1995; Dinham et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Green et al., 1997; Holmes et al., 2010; Lundsford, 2012; Miller, 1995; Reedy et al., 2015; Rigler et al., 2017; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). As “[c]hair, advisor, and mentor [have] often [been] used synonymously” (Rigler et al., 2017, p. 4), the Research Investigator through this study at hand is in agreement, and will emphasize whomever is being addressed as the focus of authority sought out for their

vital support by struggling students, when reflecting upon other previously researched studies surveyed herein. Thereby, an Andragogue steeped in trustworthiness:

*Purposely communicates to learners that they are each uniquely important.*

This statement gives credence to the contribution each of the three student-supportive factors of empathy, trust, and sensitivity has upon the other two, in that, while they can be invoked independently, they are much more effective when operating in concerted effort with each other. For a doctoral chair to appreciate the uniqueness of his or her candidates, he or she “must use empathy to embrace each of [them] . . . and their ways of knowing, being, and feeling each [visit]” (Bouton, 2016, p. 20). “Students [have]reported that [their] mentors conveyed caring through a variety of means, such as [having been] empathetic, [having] use[d] an appreciative tone, and [having] provided timely feedback” (Rademaker, O’Connor Duffy, Wetzler, & Zaikina-Montgomery, 2016, p. 59). Linking positive regards with “perceived similarities in attitudes, values, and goals [was] associated [by mentees] with higher levels of trust . . . [and that having felt] cared for by the [mentor] was a significant motivator” (Rademaker et al., 2016, p. 59). A feeling of importance is equivalent with a perception of mattering which aligns as the cornerstone when a dissertation chair begins building a reciprocal relationship with each student through focused caring based in empathetic insights (Combs, 1966; Dupont et al., 2013; Grant, 2018; Schneider, 2015).

*Sentiments:*

*\*My supervisors provided just the right amount of assistance and advice that I required, and we had no problems that could not be resolved amicably’ (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 46).*

*\*‘The faculty – well they worked at building trust and understanding . . . they established trust in us’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 21).*

A trustworthy Andragogue:

***Believes learners know what their goals, dreams and realities are like.***

Surely it is appropriate to consider, by the time a scholar is beginning to write his or her dissertation, he or she would have had to be responding to some predetermined idea, intention, or goal. However, doctoral students may still be experiencing “a great deal of ambiguity regarding the expectations [at particular] . . . phase[s] of their development” (Garbarini, 2017, p. 30), as “they do not always know what they do not know about their journey[s]” (Long, 2018, p. 85). A trustworthy mentor would recognize that the uncertainties presenting were distress signals beckoning for offerings of essential nurturance. Knowingly, lost students would seek out the guidance they needed from a leader they felt they could trust. Such would be the timely feedback from their mentor; reassurance would enable distraught mentees to reflect on their original intentions, adjust their dissertation progress with program phases, and realign their outlooks toward their ultimate goals (Archbald, 2011; Brill et al., 2014; Cohen, 1995; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Reedy et al., 2015; Schapiro et al., 2000; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998). This philosophy would align with Cohen’s (1995)

Six Behavioral Functions . . . of The Mentor Role . . . .[Appendix J], [in that, within the] [p]urpose . . . of Factor 3: Facilitative Focus, [the mentor would have] assist[ed] mentees in considering alternative views and options while [mentees

would have] reach[ed] their own decisions about attainable personal, academic, and career objectives.” (p. 30)

*Sentiments:*

*\*'He's probably more interested in what I have to say than anybody else he talks to on a daily basis. Um, he's genuinely interested in my work even though it's not super similar to his, and he's generally interested in me as a person . . . he has pretty much accepted me as a peer on my subject field, and not only my subject field but a lot of others that have to do with [the field of study], and um, when we are in class together, he's teaching his undergrad class, and subjects come up, he turns it over to me to discuss with the students, and it's very obvious that he is the one paying more attention to what I am saying than any of the students do. He is actually very much attentive to what it is I have to say, and has discussed, would discuss situations in the world with me that were going on, and generally want my opinion of what is going on.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 98)

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Expresses confidence that learners will develop the skills they need.***

“While trust contains the presence of some confidence, . . . it also has an existential dimension [in that] . . . [t]here is something very personal about extending or giving trust to another” (Webster, 2018, p. 155). The reciprocity within a trust-bearing relationship has been the manifestation of mutual respect between persons and of the faith they have connected within the interests that they shared (Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018). Most dissertation chairs and committee members have been steeped in academic experiences, insomuch that they are the chosen representatives to guide novice

researchers through their doctoral degree encounters (Cohen, 1995; Garbarini, 2017; Kelley et al., 2016; Reedy et al., 2015; Sigafus, 1998). Whether a candidate needed specific directions for program compliance or required advice for navigating personal hardships, his or her mentor trusted he or she would prevail over the obstacles and advance in knowledge. Students would profit psychologically if they considered their experiences in higher education as learning adventures, brimming with skill set developments and expertise attained through shared wisdom.

*Sentiments:*

*\*'I think he's interested in what I have to say. We have definitely had meetings where we meet to discuss a specific thing, finish that and then kind of chat about the state of our field for an extended period of time. Like what was supposed to be 15 minutes meeting turns into an hour-long meeting because we're having a good conversation. So, that demonstrates to me that he's interested in what I say.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 102)

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Prizes the learners to learn what is needed.***

Doctoral students have been instructed in each class to proceed with the coursework as it would affect and align within their dissertation projects. This concept modeled Andragogical Assumptions [Appendix D], in that, a learner would learn what it was that they needed to know, when they needed to know it (Knowles, 1990). However, while the university expected the

[s]tudents . . . to have taken an educational research course . . . in the specific requirements of APA 6th edition style of writing . . . prior to beginning the

program[,] . . . [the students] were still woefully underprepared to write a dissertation using this format.” (Long, 2018)

Apparently, under this assumption, most students had “put off acquiring this knowledge until some . . . time in the future . . . [rather than at] the time it [was] taught” (Long, 2018, p. 101). Nevertheless, committee chairs and mentors, alike, have spurred on their candidates and mentees to continue their dissertation writing even, as they were being trusted to pursue knowledge of, as well as implement application of the “style rules . . . of scholarly writing” (APA 6th, 2011, p. 3). This would align with

Factor 6: Student Vision, . . . of The Mentor Role . . . [as] mentees’ critical thinking [would have been] . . . stimulated . . . with regard to envisioning their own future[s] and to developing their personal and professional potential[s]. (Cohen, 1995, p. 31)

*Sentiments:*

*\*‘So I haven’t had too many successes since I’ve been here, but he seems to be pretty enthusiastic when I do something right. Which is good, or if I have a good idea or something like that he applauds it, just interpersonally.’ (Schneider, 2015, p. 80)*

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Feels learners’ need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings.***

Expounding further on the premise that students “do not always know what they do not know” (Long, 2018, p. 85), there have been those occasions when students were psychologically blocked, or otherwise hindered from ongoing scholarly performance by

the overwhelming feelings associated with their uncertainties regarding project progress amidst definite doctoral parameters. As a promotion of best practices for doctoral degree interventions, universities have advocated the importance of maintaining scheduled meetings between committees and candidates throughout the process (COGS, 2008). So, when struggling students would miss an appointment or lack headway with dissertation writing, chairpersons were sensitive to the urgency for consultation. Regardless of railings against the rules or rantings of suffered anguish, once a student would have begun to vent, their true issues would have been brought to the light. With such enlightenment, a trustworthy committee chairperson would have been able to advocate on the student's behalf by presenting their accomplishments thus far and reminding them of their ultimate goals (Cohen, 1995; Brill et al., 2014; Garbarini, 2017).

*Sentiments:*

*\*'She came to me, and suggested that we meet bi-weekly regularly to help me stay on track. She seems to be pretty engaged in making sure that I make progress towards my dissertation. Currently we've agreed to me defending my prospectus in the fall, and she's making sure I move along in the process. She gives me pretty much enough attention.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 77)

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Enables learners to evaluate their own progress in learning.***

Attaining a doctoral degree has been a personal achievement of academic accomplishment. Successful and influential dissertation chairs have built reciprocal "trust and respect . . . [within their doctoral relationships by having] allow[ed] [their candidates] to take responsibility for their own learning. . . . When [students took]

responsibility for their own learning, they [had] commitment for their success”

(Vatcharasirisook, 2011, pp. 42-43). This corresponds with

Lindeman[‘s] (1925) [view regarding] adult education[;] [he felt it] . . . represented . . . “a new technique of learning . . . a process by which the adult [would] learn to become aware of and to evaluate his [or her] experience.”” (n.p., Vatcharasirisook, 2011, pp. 21)

As “[a]dults have [had] a deep need to be self-directing and [to] take responsibility for themselves” (Vatcharasirisook, 2011, p. 23), their prior knowledge through experiences [has] provided credence when assessing their own dissertation project progress. This is agreeable with Cohen’s (1995)

Factor 4: Confrontive Focus, . . . of The Mentor Role . . . [in which the trustworthy mentor would have] helped mentees attain insight into unproductive strategies and behaviors and to [have] evaluate[d] their needs and capacity to change. (p. 30)

*Sentiments:*

*\*Well the only thing that didn’t quite go as planned is I was hoping to have already finished my thesis proposal at this point, and I had set that goal for myself, like end of winter break, that’s when I’m going to have it done. And I didn’t even come close, like I don’t have a first draft completed yet. Um, and whenever I’ve brought it up with him, he’s very much been like, ‘you know you’re setting pretty ambitious goals for yourself, and you’re still, I mean the fact that you have a large portion of a draft done is very far ahead of pretty much every*

*other student, so don't feel bad, you're still doing great.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 103)

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Hears learners indicate what their learning needs are.***

One of the simplest ways to initiate a relationship of respect and caring has been through listening (Garbarini, 2017; and Grant, 2018; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). “Effective mentors [have been] like friends in that their goal [has been] to create a safe context for growth” (Bell, 1996, pp. 7-8). It was through active listening that the dissertation chairperson had “the ability to [have been] ‘with’ another” (Grant, 2018, p. 27) and to have garnered the initial insight necessary to empathize with their doctoral student. As the relationship solidified and deepened, hearing continued to be the most effective sense by which the learner was able to be perceived, understood, and known by their committees and mentors.

This has been an echo of Cohen’s (1995) “Factor 1: Relationship Emphasis . . . of The Mentor Role. . . . [as mentors would have] [c]onvey[ed] through active, empathetic listening a genuine understanding and acceptance of mentees’ feelings. . . . [The] [p]urpose . . . [has been] [t]o create a psychological climate of trust that [would] allow mentees to honestly share and reflect upon their personal experiences (positive and negative) as adult learners.” (Cohen, 1995, p. 29)

*Sentiments:*

*\*I would say they've led me to confirm my commitment to completing my PhD. . . . The more I interact with my advisor, I guess that's the best way to sum it up, the more I interact with my advisor the more I feel I am in the right place, and the*

*better I feel about continuing on this path to get the PhD. In fact the only downside, I think, of getting the PhD will mean it's over and I have to move on.'*

(Schneider, 2015, pp. 83-84)

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Engages learners in clarifying their own aspirations.***

Within a Climate of respect [Appendix E], dissertation chairs have reached across the desks, opened the dialogs, and met their doctoral candidates where they were (Garbarini, 2017). Many times, the students were versed in their program protocols and ready with ideas and designs. Yet, everyone who has strived toward this terminal degree has had to 'tweak' their work at some point of production. Having developed relationships from these conversations, chairpersons have been able to prod their mentees through questions and reflections as to their ultimate research objectives (Vacharasirisook, 2011). The purpose of the doctoral committee has always been to guide candidates through the program process while encouraging their efforts to complete their dissertations (Cohen, 1995; Garbarini, 2017; Kelley et al., 2016; Reedy et al., 2015; Sigafus, 1998). This has followed the leadership offered within

Factor 2: Information Emphasis . . . of The Mentor Role . . . [in which mentors have] [d]irectly request[ed] detailed information from and offer[ed] specific suggestions to mentees about their current plans and progress in achieving personal, educational, and career goals. (Cohen, 1995, p. 29)

*Sentiments:*

*\*'Yeah, so just over the summer, last summer, he invited me and knew that I was around and invited me in to talk about dissertation topics, and so that one was out*

*of the blue. And so, went in and spent 45 minutes just chatting about different ideas of where he thinks it could lead, where I could have difficulties. And so that was nice, I thought, of him to take that time to do that.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 97)

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Develops a supportive relationship with learners.***

Most universities allowed their doctoral students to choose their dissertation chairpersons and committee members, while there still have been those institutions which required committees be appointed to their candidates (Kluever, 1995; Rigler, et al., 2017). Regardless of the origins of their assignments, committee members already achieved their own terminal degrees amidst many of the same adversities, which have continued to plague students yet today. Traversing stormy seas of doctoral research demanded the safe routing set by seasoned navigators, such as committee chairs and mentors. Which has been why the reciprocity of empathy, trust, and sensitivity has been so important, as dissertation accomplishment and degree success would have hinged on mentor and mentee having both been engaged in a supportive relationship (Blum, 2010; Brill et al., 2014; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Katz, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Reedy et al., 2015; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). This has been conceptualized by Cohen's (1995)

Factor 5: Mentor Model . . . of The Mentor Role . . . [as committee members would have] share[d] (self-disclose[d]) life experiences and feelings as a role model to mentees in order to [have] personalize[d] and enrich[ed] [their] relationship[s]. (p. 30)

*Sentiments:*

*\*'Both of them would be what you call mentors, who really kind of not only challenged me, but showed me special consideration, and really said, "you should be one of us" kind of thing. "You have the ability to be one of us."' (Schneider, 2015, p. 114).*

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Experiences unconditional positive regard for learners.***

Psychosocial, developmental theory [has] focused on mentoring as an intense one-on-one relationship. . . . Researchers from the psychosocial, developmental perspective [have] suggest[ed] that individuals [have] most benefit[ted] from a mentor during the period of identity development (Erikson, 1968). (n.p., as cited in Lundsford, 2012, p. 253)

“[A]dults [have been] for the most part voluntary learners and [have] disappear[ed] [when] . . . their needs [had not been] met” (Henschke, 1987, p. 414).

“Individuals must have [had] a need, which [could have been] met by a more experienced person, before they [would have sought out or accepted] mentors” (Lundsford, 2012, p. 253). Hence the absolute necessity of students and dissertation chairs sharing in reciprocal relationships built on empathy, trust, and sensitivity (Bair et al., 1999; Brill et al., 2014; Cohen, 1995; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 1994, 2005; Grant, 2018; Green et al., 1997; Kelley et al., 2016; Lundsford, 2012; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). As each individual learner had an unknown and unlimited capacity for academic growth and personal development, trustworthy chairpersons have purposely fostered the bonds of

such relationships. By having opened dialogs, listening to the students, and responding with the appropriate support in timely manners, many candidates were rescued from ruin by the caring concern of their committee chairs.

*Sentiments:*

*\*'And then after that committee meeting we had a good discussion on, you know, he said, "if this is too much or the whole research area is too overwhelming or too scary to figure out what you're going to do for your dissertation, we can narrow it down," or at least he can provide some more direction for narrowing it down, but he said, "you know if you're okay with just having it kind of broader for now and figuring out what directions you want to go, I'm okay with that." . . . So yeah, actually, after that committee meeting I was just feeling so much better in terms of okay, I'm actually doing okay for the most part when it comes to research related stuff.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 77)

The trustworthy Andragogue:

***Respects the dignity and integrity of learners.***

For a relationship to have been esteemed as reciprocal of respect, a mentor endowed with the quality of integrity would have regarded the mentee as having possessed the same measure, through which virtue each would have been graced with dignity. Grant (2018) "[d]escribe[d] trusting relationships as "[u]nmitigated goodwill in a relationship among individuals [which had] assist[ed] in developing an assurance that one [would] not exploit the vulnerability of the other"" (p. 43). Mastery of any quality or skill has best been cultivated by having stimulated the potential to develop through examples of proficiency and proposed belief in oneself.

[W]hen learning [has been] understood as a process which has [had] a number of manageable steps in which the learner [has] become deeply involved, then teaching [has] become the vehicle and road map for helping the learner internalize, develop, practice, and refine proficiency in the application and use of that knowledge.” (Henschke, 1987, pp. 416-417)

It has been the definitive purpose of mentors to establish a trustworthy rapport with their mentees which would have provided the basis of relationships to have kept their students “yearning, learning, earning, and returning” (Henschke, 1987, p. 417).

*Sentiments:*

*\*‘My supervisor is able to accept that I am discouraged and does not judge me for it. He focuses on moving forward and encourages me to do the same’ (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 49).*

*\*‘I told my Chair my topic idea and he said, ‘Let’s work on that.’ I thought I’d died and gone to heaven!’ (Sigafus, 1998, p. 21).*

Trustworthiness in relation to educational relationships is essential, in that, no one could perform well in a climate which left them feeling leery of pitfalls and sabotage. Doctoral students, especially those working at the ABD phase, need honest feedback, dependable guidance, and reliable support to navigate their first independent research endeavors. Seasoned committee chairpersons and mentors alike appreciate the rigors of research and prosper in gained knowledge along with their candidates and mentees. Filling the pre-existing gaps of literature with the new findings of investigation elevates the frontiers of education rather than appeases them. The Research Investigator believes trustworthiness is an essential characteristic within reciprocal relationship building when

committee chairs and mentors focus on bolstering their ABD doctoral students to dissertation accomplishment and degree completion.

**3. How could the andragogical principle of Teacher sensitivity toward students (as attributed through seven (7) elements measured within the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]) enhance a doctoral student with All But Dissertation status complete their dissertation project?**

Although sensitivity is an innate human characteristic, each person's development was distinctly unique. Most people have been endowed with five natural senses with which to experience their space in life. Unfortunately, some people lacked in one sense or another. Within the resilience of the human body, however, compensatory interpretations have been enabled through the heightened awareness among the remaining senses. As sensitivity has been harbored within the psyche, it can be nurtured and developed. Or, in the cases of insensitivity, a person can assess and redirect their feelings amidst the values of other people, as well as their values among other peoples' feelings, when sensing better outcomes to be needful. Truly sensitive people have been able to appreciate their psychological inclinations and how they correlated with the dispositions of others. This has been an especially important attribute within the relationship building qualities of an educator engaging a student in an independent learning project. While looking from two different sets of eyes, each must see the same vision to begin traversing an academic adventure together. Responding to the call of compassion, the sensitive Andragogue:

*Makes certain to understand the learner's point of view.*

Initially, doctoral chairs opened discussions with their pending candidates in order to have discovered their research ideas and study designs (Bell, 1996; Bowen et al., 1992; Dinham et al, 1999; Grant, 2018; Klepper, 2017; Long, 2018; Rigler et al., 2017; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). The sensitivity within these mentors prompted them to ask probing questions intended to uncover more information about the topics and investigative focus, yet also having revealed the passions and inspirations of their mentees. As “the degree and nature of students’ contact with their advisor[s] and committee members[,] [as well as] . . . their level[s] of confidence in conducting research [could have] enhance[ed] or detract[ed] from their academic success” (Faghihi et al., 1999, p. 16), the personalized attention had been interpreted as they ‘mattered’ to the university and faculty of the offered degree (Dupont et al., 2013; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Schneider, 2015). Most people appreciated interested listeners and usually responded by immersing their audiences in a dialog rich with insights and anecdotes. Through these discussions, mentors and mentees began to perceive the other, and from then trust ensued, empathy formed, and a relationship of respect and caring developed (Grant 2018; Golde, 1994; Lenz, 1995).

*Sentiments:*

\*’A good sensitive teacher will also be able to interpret whether someone needs to be pulled by that teacher or that someone has the high enough ego to not want to be pulled by the teacher, but the teacher allows them to pull themselves. Because they need that reinforcing confidence.’ (DG1)

The sensitive Andragogue:

*Takes pain and time to get her/his point across to learners.*

“Learning [has been] a shift of the mind, and [has been] what goes on inside learners as they [have] undertake[n] to gain or acquire new knowledge, understanding, skill, attitudes, values, and interests” (Henschke, 2014, p. 326). As aforementioned, the Assumptions of Adult Learners [Appendix D], reflected adults’ increasingly self-directed orientation to learning, which had been triggered by a need to know something new. Yet, students have not appreciated or engaged everything that needed to be learned along with what they initially sought in their degree pursuits. This has been especially difficult for committee chairpersons when attempting to instruct struggling students regarding the incorrect writing style or lacking research within their dissertation drafts (Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Katz, 1995; Kelley et al., 2016; Lenz, 1995; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015). The sensitive chairperson has

learn[ed] [from] . . . the reactions he [or she] produce[d] in others as he [or she] [had] interact[ed] with them. . . . Out of these he [or she] develop[ed] new images of potentiality in himself [or herself] and [sought to] help . . . others [after having] convert[ed] [those] potentialities into actualities. (Roberts, 1967, p. 2)

As strength would counterbalance weakness, a sensitive chairperson would meet presenting challenges with appropriate resources.

*Sentiments:*

\*“I’m thinking of some folks I’m working with right now that I teach writing to . . . online. Just know that you’ve been there: “What do you need?” “How can I help you?” I make sure that when I write an email or grade a paper, I always error (sic) on the side of the learner and I make certain that I do not ever insert

negative energy. I'll always write with positive energy, positive mindset. I don't want to put any negative energy towards them; I can see that a lot of them have their own stressors, and they don't need anybody else's nonsense.' (DG2)

The sensitive Andragogue:

*Exercises patience in helping all learner's progress.*

Although ABD status doctoral students have lagged in their project processes, their dissertation writing progress has ebbed and flowed. The sensitive chairperson recognized these intervals and aligned their committee support to stimulate their candidates beyond these periods of stagnation (Brill et al., 2014; ; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Katz, 1995; Lundsford, 2012; Reedy et al., 2015; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998; Vatcharasirisook, 2011). As these academic stragglers were overwhelmed with complaints against their advisors and universities, inundated with issues regarding topic choices and project progress, as well as besieged by the ongoing conflicts presented in their personal life roles, committee chairs remained patient in their purposes to intercede. These sensitive stalwarts kept the communication open through timely consultations and listened attentively for any shifts in their students' demeanors. When they sensed their candidates were waning in productivity, they suggested the students reduced the intimidating projects into manageable tasks, thereby alleviating their self-induced, debilitating stress (Katz, 1995).

*Sentiments:*

*\*'He's always been very supportive. He's always told me good job on things, and will list things that I've done well before, and things I haven't done as well, and always phrases them in a very supportive way. And I've had him as a teacher*

*before, so I've done well in his class so far, and yeah, so I guess, he never makes me feel like I'm not going to be good enough to complete it. He always makes me feel like I'm on par. He's also, sorry, very involved with the timeline of everything, so I feel like I'm not going to drag on like some people do that never actually finish a thesis, or kind of linger at the dissertation too long. I feel like I am going to finish in the appropriate amount of time, like he'll keep me on track.'*  
(Schneider, 2015, pp. 111-112)

The sensitive Andragogue:

***Overcomes any frustration with learner apathy.***

In the instances that doctoral students disengaged from productivity and lapsed into indifference toward their projects and progress, dissertation chairpersons remained positive (Bair et al., 1999; Cohen, 1995; Dupont et al., 2013; Faghihi et al., 1999; Garbarini, 2017; Golde, 2005; Grant, 2018; Klepper, 2017; Lundsford, 2012; Rigler et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015). The sensitive mentor did not 'push' harder toward a floundering student and their degree timeline; they initiated interventions which 'pulled' the candidate back into their project focus and process flow (Cohen, 1995; Johnson et al., 2000; Schapiro et al., 2000). At these periods, having offered research resources, such as feeder articles, other aligning dissertations, and direct consultation with supportive personnel have gone a long way to bridge phases of production (Reedy et al., 2015). It has not been enough to simply prod their candidates on; by having emulated sensitivity toward the dissertation cause, mentors modeled responsiveness and inspired the same in reciprocity within their mentees (Brill et al., 2014; Cohen, 1995; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018; Holmes et al., 2010; Katz, 1995; Knowles, 1989; Lundsford, 2012; Reedy et al.,

2015; Schapiro et al., 2000). Just as every day has ended, yet life has gone on, stagnant writing periods have run their course without actually having terminated the degree option.

*Sentiments:*

*\*'So, one or both will email me articles, research articles that have recently come out that are relevant to my work. They do this to everyone, the whole lab gets sent out [subject specific] stuff, but I will get sent particular research articles that deal with my area of research by just them. Maybe asking a question in a lab meeting, or saying this would be of interest to you. More through email communicate is them saying, 'hey, this may be of interest to you', or 'hey, this is related,' or 'hey, do you want to start a project on this' kind of thing.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 101)

The sensitive Andragogue:

***Will use whatever time learners need to grasp various concepts.***

'Age' per se has not been found to be statistically significant in prior research findings when having focused on issues of attrition (Astin, 1972; Dinham et al., 1999; Dupont et al., 2013; Smith, 1981; Summerskill, 1962). Yet, the personal life roles of older students have been more challenged than younger cohorts, in that, they have had more conflicts to address and appease as spouses, parents, home managers, and business associates (Bair et al., 1999; Dupont et al, 2013). As such, "[r]esearch [has] suggest[ed] that [older students] prefer[red] single concepts and [were] less able than younger students to [have] integrate[d] information that [would have] conflict[ed] with what they already [knew]" (Dupont et al., 2013, p. 632). Sensitive mentors versed in the

Andragogical Assumptions of Adult Learners [Appendix D] would have presented the benefits of the prior knowledge held within these older students, while simultaneously having promoted their abilities to grasp new concepts (Dupont et al., 2013; Garbarini, 2017; Grant, 2018). Older students have been able to achieve comprehension of new concepts through the patient persistence of their committee chairpersons and the sensitive mentoring relationships they shared (Bell, 1996; Cohen, 1995; Garbarini, 2017; Green et al., 1997; Lundsford, 2012).

*Sentiments:*

*\*I feel like he pays a good amount of attention to me. Partly, the two other students he has right now are working on their dissertations, so they're relatively independent for the most part. So I feel like I get a lot of attention from him. And he always seems, whenever I need a meeting, or need to talk to him, he always seems to be available.'* (Schneider, 2015, p. 95)

The sensitive Andragogue:

***Thoroughly allows learners to ask all questions they need addressed.***

“Communication and honest feedback [have been] two important responsibilities of a mentor,” as well as a committee chairperson (Brill et al., 2014, p. 32).

[S]tudents [have] want[ed] their questions answered and they [have] want[ed] to be treated as . . . [individual[s] in a humane manner. Because of the mystique of the doctorate, many [have been] unsure of themselves and [have] need[ed] sympathetic guidance and helpful, accurate advice.” (Dinham et al., 1999, p. 105)

Through focused conversations, mentors have been able to query candidates regarding their dissertation concepts and productivity (Long, 2018). In the cases that mentees were

not sure how to proceed, these consultations would have presented opportunities for modeling investigative inquiries to such novice researchers. The reciprocity within their relationship would have allowed the mentor and the mentee to raise their concerns through questioning and to have expected honest and thorough answers in response (Klepper, 2017).

*Sentiments:*

*\*[He] . . . was always there and willing to help. And so, it was, a lot of the times it was contingent upon my going to seek that help out, but I never took that as a bad sign, I took that as he had a lot of stuff on his plate. So, he, I liked the latitude that he gave me, but then also was always there and never made me feel intimidated or bad for coming to ask him for assistance.’ (Schneider, 2015, p. 95)*

The sensitive Andragogue:

***Resists in her/himself any irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting.***

As aforementioned, doctoral students, especially those older candidates performing at the ABD status, commonly experienced ebbs and flows with regard to their research efforts and writing productivities. Sometimes, the personal life roles of these students conflicted with their abilities to hold to a study schedule (Dupont et al., 2013); in other instances, apathy and general lethargy have been the disengaging culprits (Rigler et al., 2017). Regardless, the absolute mission of the committee chairperson was to align their candidates in attitudes and practice to more productive outcomes (Grant, 2018; Lundsford, 2012). As most doctoral students were novice researchers, it has been necessary for chairpersons to have met them where they have been, engaged them to

share the benefits of reciprocal relationships, and to have added timely instruction to their lacking initiatives (Grant, 2018). Negative outlooks and responses at this time would have only hampered the potential for higher learning amid project progress (Garbarini, 2017). Sensitive chairpersons have not taken the sporadic inattentiveness of their candidates as a personal affront; they have understood and empathized with the experiences of stress overload (Rigler et al., 2017).

*Sentiments:*

*\*'[W]ell, in general for all the graduate students he's had us all over at his house several times to have lab meetings where it's just all about socializing, and he can talk to you individually about your personal life and things like that that maybe at school or while you're working you don't get into those types of things.'*

(Schneider, 2015, p. 127)

The doctoral degree has been considered terminal, in that, a scholar would have accomplished an independent research investigation and attained the knowledge necessary to qualify a level of expertise within their field of study. While the academic adventures of degree pursuit have initially been individual endeavors for students, they were never on their journeys alone. Advisors, committee chairpersons, mentors, and critical friends definitely interceded through insights and assistance. The greatest contributions toward degree persistence have been affiliated with the meaningful mentor relationships, which were forged through empathy for each student's passage, trust in their developing abilities, and sensitivity for the growth realized. As each doctoral recipient sought the trappings of higher education, they have had to adapt to their shifting

psychologies, stay the course of institutional protocols, and survive the grueling experiences associated with their personal development.

**Question D.: How, if at all, do the responses of the interviewees align with the data gathered through other previously researched studies?**

The student sentiments highlighted herein were found within eight other previously researched studies (Dinham et al., 1999; Golde, 1994, 2000; Golde et al., 2001; Hunter et al., 2016; Jimenez et al., 2010; Schneider, 2015; Sigafus, 1998). Not all of the quotes contained within those papers were included in this one. As Golde's (1994, 2000) research involved case studies, there were quite a few written segments which stand as individual sentiments, yet overall were garnered from four personal testimonies. With having calculated each of the testimonies as a single sentiment, the study in hand tallied 301 separate student reflections. The Research Investigator grouped these individual sentiments under the same categorical headings as those of the 'Reasons for Attrition' [Appendix A] and 'Reasons for Persistence' [Appendix B]. Technically, the headings remained the same in each list; however, the disposition of the opinions regarded as 'attrition' have been identified as 'negative' and those aligning with 'persistence' have been identified as 'positive'.

While there were three main headings within the lists of 'Attrition' and 'Persistence', each segment was further divided into three subheadings. Which were as follows:

As aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

Advisor/Faculty:	92-N	78-P
Program/University:	11-N	3-P

Mentor/Support:	5-N	2-P
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As aligning with Topic/Project Issues

Topic:	6-N	2-P
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Project:	10-N	5-P
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Student:	1-N	3-P
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As aligning with Personal life role conflicts

Student:	32-N	24-P
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Resources/Location:	9-N	1-P
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Home/Support:	11-N	6-P
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Representing opposing qualities of expression, each division under the subheading ‘Advisor/Faculty,’ within the segment ‘Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints,’ held the most student sentiments. The next largest yield of opinions coordinated under the subheadings of ‘Student’ within the categories, ‘Aligning with Personal Life Role Conflicts.’ At a glance, one could presume there were more than twice as many ‘faculty complaints’ as there were ‘personal conflicts.’ However, as aforementioned, the study at hand was not completely inclusive with all the sentiments available within the eight other previously researched studies. Nor were the categorically headlined selections and alignments synchronized to any predetermined, academic standard. The appraisal herein was assessed through the discernment of the Research Investigator and was intended to represent a blanket portrayal of student opinions regarding doctoral course completion or degree dropout.

Beginning with the three ‘former students’ (FS1, FS2, and FS3), each interview transcript was examined for any correlation to the student sentiments of other previously researched studies, as well as an alignment with the ‘reasons for attrition’.

***Former Student - 1***

FS1 was already working full-time as an Associate Professor when beginning the EdD program. There were over three decades between this and the last degree attained. This degree pursuit began with a cohort of fellow scholars and was fueled by a university tuition break. Achieving a doctorate had been on FS1’s bucket list and the ease of attending classes after work at the same campus was a boon. Although FS1 was married with one child, the offspring was independent and living away at another college. There were no home issues raised as the spouses worked as partners and shared in the household responsibilities. Nor were there any health-related concerns or personal tragedies suffered during the program timeline. Throughout the first two years, FS1 had no problems with the coursework and felt determined to finish. It was during the IRB (Institutional Review Board) application phase that FS1 began to lose enthusiasm for the topic and experience reluctance to continue. A member of the IRB was definitely slated to turn down the application, so FS1 held back submission for a year to wait out their appointment to the Board. The first committee chairperson had been too passive; the second choice was more supportive yet lacked comprehension of the dissertation focus. Even though FS1 was working as a teacher and attending courses in a cohort of fellow professors, there was a deficiency regarding advisory support. FS1 had reached out on occasion, however had expected more assistance than was given. As time wore on, FS1 lost momentum to continue and determination to complete. While the university was

encouraging terminal degrees, FS1 was already within the last years of an academic career. Ultimately, FS1 concluded the course by accepting an EdS (Education Specialist) degree instead. Satisfied with the outcome and undaunted by the journey, FS1 reflected more on the necessity to speak up for oneself, to seek out the appropriate support when needed, and how the support garnered through a mentor relationship would have made the difference.

*Former Student – 2*

FS2 had just satisfied a Master's degree by co-developing an educational program in lieu of writing a thesis. When presented to the faculty, the Dean recommended pursuing a doctorate. Intrigued that Andragogy was related to self-directed learning, FS2 enrolled in the program and began attending classes. At that time, FS2 was also working at a non-profit agency amidst a toxic environment. Given the choice to 'die on that mountain or move off,' FS2 quit that job and began a non-profit company with a friend and fellow Andragogue. There was definitely more work than income, so FS2 had to seek out paid, part-time employment, as well. In the home, FS2 shared rearing of two children: one beginning college away and the other beginning adolescence. Both children had experienced personal hardships, for which FS2 had intervened through much attention and effort. One child had a pre-existing condition which flared up during phases of physical growth. This in turn led to trying different school schedules, additional physician appointments, and pharmaceutical adjustments which strained FS2's own agenda. During FS2's dissertation writing, the university went through a major shift in faculty as many of the professors were retiring or leaving for other institutions. FS2 found this quite unsettling, as none of the remaining professors in the program had any

grasp of the concepts within the degree, much less any ability to convey the attitudes through reciprocal relationships. The educational department was split in a rift as some professors were being treated poorly, which FS2 discerned to be minimally acceptable respect. This was around the same time that one of the beloved family pets passed away, simultaneously causing one child to spiral into depression. FS2's focus was again pulled into a family intervention and away from the demands of dissertation writing. As time spent can never be reimbursed, the personal investment required by the doctorate cost more than the benefits of a completed degree and FS2 ultimately chose to satisfy the EdS (Education Specialist) in conclusion to the program.

*Former Student – 3*

FS3 was working out of one college campus and attending classes through another, enjoying the tuition reimbursement as the extended education promoted career opportunities and salary income. It was a welcomed reprieve when half of the classes being conducted were online, as FS3 suffered hearing loss and could appreciate not having to drive 45-minutes-to-an-hour in commute to the campus. Although having had both hips and knees replaced while in the doctoral program, FS3 did not miss any curriculum, since having sought the procedures and rehabilitations during the summer sessions. However, making the time to continue exercising and reconditioning became harder with the schedule constantly filled with priorities. As the children were already grown and moved out, FS3's spouse remained the greatest source of pride and support during the endeavor. FS3 had become disheartened by the direction the program was taking and had begun researching the most viable options for transfer. The university responded by trying to steer FS3's focus toward Community College Management. FS3

had no desire to become a college supervisor and chose to speak with a prominent professor about joining the Adult Education program. Even though it was late on a Friday, this professor agreed to the two-plus-hour meeting and was able to push the acceptance through on the program transfer that same Saturday afternoon. FS3 was impressed by the compassionate demeanor of this professor and felt a connection with the new field of study. That is, until the university began shifting the faculty and programs. FS3 had nearly completed the Proposal and had already begun a thorough research of data when this significant professor, as committee chair, left the program and university. This would be the first of three committee chairperson replacements. Each professor leaving had been substituted with another faculty member; however, none of them exuded the compassion and human effort as had the first. As time wore on, FS3 decided to retire from teaching, which in turn altered the financial responsibilities and rendered an economic strain. Ultimately, FS3 chose to let the doctoral pursuit go unfinished and accepted a position as an Adjunct professor helping adults complete their high school diplomas. Remaining personally satisfied with that decision, FS3 still believes the degree would have been achieved if the supportive professor had been able to stay with the program.

Each of the Former Students experienced significant Faculty/University Complaints which led to their ultimate decision to discontinue pursuing the doctoral degree. In two of the cases, the learners chose to accept an EdS (Education Specialist) degree instead. It was not evident from the interview information whether the third adult learner had been offered that opportunity. Two of the Former Students felt they could have completed the program with more direct support; FS1 literally recommended a

mentor relationship, while FS3 recognized the intervening professor as having embodied those qualities. None of the students declared any issues regarding topic choices or project setbacks, although FS1 chose to withhold IRB submission beyond the Board term of the potentially antagonistic faculty member. Two of the Former Students enjoyed the convenience of being close to their campuses; yet FS3's two-hour roundtrip commute strained an already full agenda. All three candidates reflected an enjoyment for pursuing higher education and were quite able to satisfy the required curriculum. Regarding supportive relationships in their homes, each adult learner was involved in a meaningful marriage, with at least one declaring shared household responsibilities with their spouse. While FS1 proclaimed no health-related issues or family crises, FS3 had undergone four major joint replacements, as FS2 intervened in both children's lives and administered treatment interventions several times to one in particular. Overall, each of these Former Students spoke calmly and with civility regarding an unintended outcome from their initial plan for doctoral pursuit despite their personal costs and losses.

In contrast, many student sentiments found within the other previously researched studies were quite brusque in their responses associated with their doctoral experiences. Quite a few learners lamented missing out on their children growing up, as others bemoaned the complete dissolution of their marriage relationships. Several of those students suffered medical illnesses and hardships during their degree pursuits, while some became emotionally overwhelmed and alerted colleagues to the benefits of campus counseling opportunities. As a great number of the sentiments complained about the advisory relationship, or lack thereof, an image of a desirable resource of support was framed. It is quite possible that the starkest doctoral experiences were chosen for their

severity when compiling the sentiments contained within other previously researched studies.

In either set of responses, the Research Investigator did not discern any characteristics directly relevant to issues of immaturity. Every adult, especially those pursuing terminal degrees, have met stages of developmental crisis throughout their lives with personal growth and acceptance as a natural response to their life's evolution.

[Erikson (1980) posited that] . . . the form of the ego identity [was] more than the sum of the childhood identifications. It [was] the inner capital accrued from all those experiences of each successive stage, when meaningful identification led to a successful alignment of the individual's *basic drives* with his[or her] *endowment* and . . . *opportunities*. (p. 94)

The sense of ego identity, then, [was] the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity . . . [would be] matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others. Thus, self-esteem, confirmed at the end of each major crisis, [grew] to be a conviction that one [was] learning effective steps toward a tangible future, that one [was] developing a defined personality within a social reality which one [understood]. . . . [T]he accruing of ego identity gain[ed] real strength only from wholehearted and consistent recognition of real accomplishment, that is, achievement that [had] meaning in their culture. (Erikson, 1980, pp. 94-95)

[This outlook seems agreeable with Maslow's (1970) view of personal 'Acceptance' along the journey of self-actualization, in that] healthy individuals [have found] it possible to accept themselves and their own nature without

chagrin or complaint or, . . . even without thinking about the matter very much. They [have] accept[ed] their own human nature in the [tolerant,] stoic style, with all its shortcomings, with all its discrepancies from the ideal image without [having felt] real concern. It would [have] convey[ed] the wrong impression to say that they [were] self-satisfied. What . . . [must be said] rather [was] that they [could have] take[n] the frailties and sins, weaknesses and evils of human nature in the same unquestioning spirit with which . . . [each had] accept[ed] the characteristics of nature. (p. 155)

So as each person has had to grow beyond personal crisis into a stage of identity he or she could accept with confidence, he or she had also developed a ‘mindset’ (Blanchard, 2018; Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015).

In a fixed mindset . . . a person believes he or she [has been] born with a certain number of fixed traits and talents. . . . [and they have felt] humiliated [whenever] they fail[ed] or [were] rejected. . . . Having a growth mindset is the belief that [a person’s] abilities can be developed . . . through hard work, good strategies, and good mentoring . . . from others. . . . [A] person [with a growth mindset] relishes learning, embrace[s] challenges, sticks to their goals, and experiences fulfillment when improving. (Blanchard, 2018, p. 24)

This person exudes “[g]rit [which also] entails working strenuously toward challenges, [by] maintain[ing] effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress” (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). Since success [has been] a result of the growth mindset, every time [a person has] push[ed] through a challenging task, neurons in the brain form[ed] new connections, and the individual [has] become

smarter (Blanchard, 2018, p. 24). “Faculty can [and should] help students develop grit and a growth mindset to increase their chances of reaching long-term goals [such as a doctoral degree], by internalizing the motivation to persist” to the accomplishment of their dissertation (Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015, p. 49).

Personal grit and a mind set on growth are definitely characteristics of students who persisted beyond the pitfalls of lacking resources and the setbacks of antagonistic relationships. Concluding the review of participant interviews within this study at hand, the Research Investigator appraises the successful degree experiences of three Doctoral Graduates (DG1, DG2, and DG3) for any correlation to the student sentiments of other previously researched studies, as well as an alignment with the ‘reasons for persistence’.

#### *Doctoral Graduate – 1*

DG1 had already decided to stay busy in retirement when satisfying the requirements of a Master’s degree. That academic accomplishment had been totally reimbursed through the GI Bill. Starting the doctorate just six months later had kept DG1 stimulated, and although that educational expense was compensated at 98%, the offset was still enjoyed as a major boon. While not involved in an active marriage during this degree pursuit, DG1 had a service dog for support of a PTSD condition, along with five other dogs. These canine companions were the constant source of emotional support and members of the family. The dogs would stay close by during all-night writing sessions, keeping a watchful eye on the safety of their home amidst a peaceful atmosphere. Just prior to the beginning of the coursework, one of the dogs, as well as DG1’s father, passed away. Then the service dog herniated a disk on the first day of class and had to be taken to another city for surgery and rehabilitation treatments the very first weeks of the course.

Needless to elaborate, this doctoral degree pursuit began with a stressful start. DG1 had been diagnosed with ADD in grade school and subsequently treated with Ritalin and classroom isolation. Even though these memories remain clouded with regrets, DG1 learned how to learn, a lesson which continued to serve well. Through personally attained insights, DG1 “learned to think more positively and stay focused . . . [was] able to [redirect thinking of] the hard work required to achieve a goal and concentrate more on the end results.” The only continuing attention problem was the necessity to work at an accelerated pace, something the faculty and university were not ready for or able to accommodate. DG1 credits the dissertation chair as being the “go-to source, [the] motivation, . . . [and] everything [needful].” The support in that relationship “went beyond scholastics, . . . beyond the professional environment; it went into the personal realm, [also].” With the support of this mentor and friend, DG1 was able to address the program protocols aside from the long arduous waiting periods between chapter writings and dissertation reviews. DG1 wanted to complete this project and make the dissertation chair proud of the efforts involved by both. The struggle paid off for Dr. DG1; thank you for your service.

### *Doctoral Graduate – 2*

DG2 finished three separate degrees along with a doctorate in Philosophy of Education within a mere 10-year period. While strenuous levels of advanced curriculum had never been daunting, it was the “mind patterns and [ensuing] abuse” inflicted by departmental faculty, which gave rise to struggle for DG2. Finishing the Bachelor’s in Psychology, DG2 started a Master’s degree through the honors program. Once having started the Master’s in Counseling program, DG2 ran into problems with the egos of

these faculty members and their exploitation of the students within their departments. Eventually tiring of the antagonistic treatment, DG2 transferred everything applicable into a Master's in Adult Education and was able to successfully complete. Working the entire time at this university's campus as a research assistant and receiving tuition reimbursement along with a stipend, DG2 was simultaneously earning an Ed Specialist (EdS) in Counseling Psychology degree through their online university. After completing these three degrees and all the required PhD coursework at this campus, DG2 moved onto another institution to work as a grad student toward another doctorate in Adult Education while finishing the dissertation writing. DG2 was fortunate, in that, this doctoral degree was headed, taught, and chaired by the same professor who had accepted the Master's program transfer at the original college. Not only had this educator left the former university based on similar complaints of faculty sabotage, the philosophy within Adult Education and his personal demeanor engaging its principles exemplified the benefits of a positive mentor relationship. Although working under the tutelage of this academic guru resulted in psychological healing, it was during this same time DG2 also experienced several traumatic family crises and home disruptions. First, the Stepmother passed away, then the father had heart surgery and was required to recuperate at DG2's home for six months, during which time an emotionally unstable nephew also had to move in and receive assistance. As DG2 had four dogs in the immediate family, adding new houseguests with specific health-related issues and visiting homecare interventions, bombarded the previously peaceful routine. Eventually, DG2's father passed away, with the arrangements and burial coinciding with the dissertation defense. Still somewhat jaded by the overall experience of one campus and faculty, DG2 continued to personally

pursue educational advancement, as well as teach the benefits of mentorship to six separate sets of online students.

### *Doctoral Graduate – 3*

DG3 was already a Composition and Literature teacher with a Master's in Creative Writing when having decided to advance the career direction with a doctorate in Adult Education. The same year the coursework began, DG3 was diagnosed with an early stage of cancer. Although the treatment lasted a month beyond an initial two-week hospital stay, the time away coupled with the recuperation required several coworkers to intervene as substitute teachers. The harrowing experience led DG3 to reprioritize aspects of life, having begun by showing the two young offspring how to be more independent around the house. Even though the marriage had dissolved, DG3 and the spouse continued to work toward a family relationship and were ultimately remarried. At one point, DG3's Father experienced a heart attack while visiting and had to convalesce nearby until healthy enough to return to Texas. DG3 continued to work as an educator and attend the listed courses of the degree plan, as well as taking available online classes. While enrolled in the EdD degree, the actual Adult Education program at the university ended and the advisor was switched over to another position. Eventually, Adult Education returned to the curriculum; however, it was increasingly difficult for DG3 to recognize the actual discipline pursued. This struggle for clarity among course labels would linger for years. DG3 had formed an advisory committee, yet did not have a designated topic to pursue. The system required DG3 to send off the manuscript to the chair each half-year term; however, it would take all semester to receive it returned with feedback. There was another cancer-related health stint, which required radiation

intervention. DG3 responded successfully and was able to continue teaching classes and attending doctoral courses. Then DG3's Mother became ill and, even with a sibling's enduring efforts of caregiving, had passed away. During a Quantitative Research course in a theater classroom with stadium seating, DG3 took an awful tumble down the stairs which resulted in a broken arm. Despite every effort to finish the course, the educator moved out of state after the summer session and DG3 finally succumbed to having failed the class. These setbacks only fueled the incentive to forge on and complete the program directives. Along with all the modes of curriculum, DG3 ultimately learned to become self-directed in defining the discipline of Adult Education being pursued and how to proceed through the dissertation process with committee assistance.

Each of the Doctoral Graduates experienced some Faculty/University complaints, yet all were well able to complete their degrees. DG1 felt the university was unable or unwilling to push faculty toward accommodating the academic pace of accelerated students. DG2 was actually inundated with antagonistic faculty behaviors amidst a toxic environment which led to a transfer of degree program and educational department. DG3 lingered for years in limbo as the Adult Education program lagged in a definitive discipline to the doctorate pursued. None of the Doctoral Graduates referred to any problems with topic choices; however, all three experienced issues overall with their programs and abilities to follow an expedient dissertation timeline. While these setbacks presented challenges each graduate met with success, it was the health-related conditions experienced within their homes, selves, and families which cost the most in personal investments. All three Graduates had lost a parent during the doctoral quest. DG1 and DG2 had to intervene with medical caregiving to family members and houseguests. DG3

received life-sustaining interventions through two courses of cancer treatments, as well as having mended a broken bone. Neither DG1 nor DG2 were married, which limited any personal assistance received in their homes. DG3 remarried, yet the family could have been as much a source of support as it was a cause for distractions and interruptions. None of the Doctoral Graduates referenced any problems with long commutes to campus and all three enjoyed tuition reimbursements. It seems to the Research Investigator that the overwhelming health issues which presented in each Doctoral Graduate's experience wrought the personal 'grit' needed to persevere the academic endeavor and prevail over the obstacles.

The student sentiments regarding 'reasons for persistence' found among the other previously researched studies reflected an overwhelming degree of advisory and committee chairperson support. There were no references made to faculty-created obstacles or barriers to university protocol compliance. While there could have been unreported hurdles, each student spent the effort in praise and adoration for the leadership and guidance with which these professors assisted in their degree pursuits. Simple focus of the redeeming qualities shared and enjoyed by these learners frame the demeanor of a relished mentor. With attitudes, such as 'it was a positive relationship,' 'there was mutual respect,' 'they were available for attention,' 'she was supportive.' 'he was informative,' 'they were an advocate,' they interceded,' 'always a provision of appropriate resources,' and 'they made opportunities accessible,' it is obvious how beneficial these academic relationships were for novice researchers. All regards made by the students toward the subjects of topic choices and project issues were positive. Even the perspectives surrounding their Personal Life Role Conflicts were presented with a

level of achieved maturity, in that, the students had worked through it, learned from it, and prevailed over it.

In regard to what a ‘Teacher’s empathy with their students’ meant, all of the Former Students, as well as the Doctoral Graduates, believed an educator must meet the students where they were, find out their needs, help them complete their goals, and guide them with support through their academic adventures. FS3 and DG1 reminisced of actual encounters of compassion conveyed through mentor experiences, DG2 and DG3 both engaged teaching examples when recalling instances of their own students’ endeavors, while FS2 cautioned extending efforts beyond the advantageous mark of empathy into the realm of enabling helplessness. When presented with a ‘Teacher’s trust in their students’, all of the Former Students and Doctoral Graduates agreed that a teacher had to have a reciprocal relationship built on trust with each of their students. Every individual learner would present different levels of academic maturity at various stages of their degree pursuits. FS3 gave an example of being shown trust when the dissertation topic chosen would be in philosophical opposition to the chairperson’s views yet was allowed to proceed. DG1 wanted the chairperson to trust the authenticity in writing and the complete lack of plagiarism regarding citations and references within the dissertation. DG2 was confident the committee and chair trusted the results would manifest when the learner was ready. DG3 offered a teacher truism from experience, in that, the knowledge attained was trusted to grow with the student’s maturity which may have extended beyond that particular classroom. With regard to a ‘Teacher’s sensitivity toward their students,’ there remained a consensus among the Former Students and Doctoral Graduates. FS1 expressed the importance of understanding students as individuals, while

DG1 expounded on the necessity to interpret each learner's need to either be 'pushed' or 'pulled' along their academic journeys. FS2 believed it was an extension of trust as an educator listened, heard, and allowed the learners to talk. FS3 presented an example of how a teacher had known the nature of the student was deeper and more intrigued than the stark look upon the face indicated. DG2 and DG3 elaborated on such instances within their own teaching experiences as to recognizing needs and offering responsive efforts while contributing positive inflections in every opportunity.

While the personal reasons for beginning a doctoral degree are as vast and unique as the graduates pursuing a higher education, the opportunities and misfortunes presented in life seem to follow indiscriminately. More times than not, the student sentiments found within other previously researched studies, as well as those of the six interviewees of the study at hand, were noted as experiencing negative encounters with their faculty advisors, committee chairpersons, or universities. Historically, academic institutions sought out major concerns within the scholars' experiences in initial attempts to remedy problematic issues within their programs (Iffert, 1958; Summerskill, 1962; Tinto, 1973). Numerous interventions have been established as a result of such research, with more improvements proceeding to endorsement continuously (Reedy et al., 2015). Regardless of the hurdles scattered amongst course timelines, students became resilient as they grew in knowledge and learned how to prevail in goal accomplishments. Even the challenges presented to learners through family obligations or health-related predicaments had been met with the 'grit' of a growth mindset and the tenacity for achievement. The Research Investigator feels strongly that there is a genuine alignment between students and institutional issues, between learners and their own personal life role conflicts, as well as

the ability of human beings confronting adversities to set their minds, stay their courses, and complete their missions. It is also believed that the personal support fostered through mentor relationships is invaluable and relevant to bridging gaps between students and their doctoral degree pursuits.

**Question E.: How, if at all, do the reflections of the Author's experience as an All But Dissertation status student persisting to dissertation completion align with the responses of the interviewees, as well as the data gathered through other previously researched studies?**

At this point of the study in hand, the focus shifted from what has been known about attrition at the doctorate level of universities to what can, if at all, contribute opportunity for persistence to the goal accomplishment of dissertation completion. In an effort to simplify these forthcoming responses, the Author referred to self as the Persisting Doctoral Student with the acronym PDS. To assert to the 'reasons for persistence', the Author has addressed each of the three factors: empathy, trust, and sensitivity, through a review of PDS's academic experiences, which have been aligned with each of the 23 elements contained therein. Following this compilation, the Author compared these reflections with the 'reasons for attrition,' as well as with those sentiments expressed through the six acquired interviewee responses and then with those garnered through the other previously researched studies. It has been the intended hope of the Research Investigator that revelation of potential remedy to the high rate of university attrition among doctoral students would be divulged through the rigors of this exploration.

**The Empathetic Andragogue feels fully prepared to teach.**

PDS began the doctorate degree of Educational Leadership, Emphasis in Andragogy, immediately upon completing the Master's in Gerontology degree within the same university system. While the Bachelor's and Master's degrees were both through their accelerated programs with four sessions per year, the doctorate was regular spring, summer, and fall semesters. Dr. Henschke was the advisor, teacher, and chair for most of the student population attending the Andragogy degree. Dr. Isenberg, his former protégé, was the second advisor, teacher, and chair choice in the Andragogy program. PDS was assigned to Dr. Isenberg as an advisee. Both of these academic icons were absolute Andragogue titans in the field, steeped in the principles of Andragogy and deeply sensitive to their students' needs.

When having first met Dr. Isenberg, PDS had already decided to take the Statistics course during the summer session. Dr. Isenberg was a bit taken aback as the typical first choice of classes had been Foundations of Andragogy. When asked why so adamant to begin with a statistics course, PDS expressed a desire to meet the most challenging of classes early, when the level of enthusiasm was highest. This response intrigued Dr. Isenberg, who opted to allow the course choice, while strongly suggesting 'Foundations' or 'Building Blocks' be one of the first classes taken in the coming fall semester. Dr. Isenberg knew the course curriculum and the best approach to teach incoming students; the shift in class sequence did not daunt the educator.

*Sentiments:*

*When I began, I just wanted to be in school learning. I wanted that my learning would actually accumulate into something like a degree, a real*

*point toward a career. I just stayed with the same university, just looking each time at what they were offering in the next degree. (PDS)*

**The Empathetic Andragogue notices and acknowledges to learners positive changes in them.**

The next time PDS met with Dr. Isenberg, it was to register for two classes in the fall semester. Having successfully completed the Statistics course and with the newly attained understanding still fresh in mind, PDS chose Quantitative Statistics and Building Blocks of Andragogy next. Dr. Isenberg complimented PDS on passing the Statistics course with an 'A.' The advisor conversed a bit at this meeting, getting better acquainted with the new advisee and discussing potential combinations for duet class semesters. PDS felt more like a colleague than simply a class attendant as the advisor shared anecdotes of former students and their paths to degree completion.

*Sentiments:*

*In the beginning, I had focused on trying to blend Gerontology with the Andragogy. I had lots of ideas, but no one else in the Andragogy program was on that page. My advisor had been an RN, but she never really picked up on the conversation and took it anywhere. She was just happy that I was doing well, and said it sounded interesting. The second year when she retired, I realized she knew she wasn't going to be there, even though I thought she would. I thought I had time. (PDS)*

**The Empathetic Andragogue balances her/his efforts between learner content, acquisition, and motivation.**

Most of the Andragogical classes were taught by Dr. Henschke. In his doctoral pursuit, he had actually studied directly under Malcolm Knowles. Both educators became very close friends and confidants over the following years. Dr. Henschke has long since carried Malcolm's torch, illuminating the principles of Andragogy in America and countries all around the world. Dr. Henschke's initial calling as a pastor coupled with his wisdom as an authority in adult education has been an absolute gift to the students who have been graced with meeting him. Tales abound from former students who witnessed the hallways and classrooms crowded with people waiting to speak with him before and after lessons, as well as to simply listen to his comments to others. Each question was answered, even if he would have to research the subject to address an appropriate response at a later gathering. On occasion, the answer would be another question which prompted the inquirer to seek out solutions Dr. Henschke knew to be within his or her reach.

Every class began with an introduction from each attendant, heralding the current status of the pursued goal. Students connected in camaraderie, sharing in the individual successes and uplifting each other through the trials. Lessons were a process of content overview, followed by group exercises, discussions, debates, and presentations. PDS was as entertained with collegial conversations as educated with acquired knowledge in these class settings. Everyone enjoyed 'learning in the round' as the desks were arranged to form a circle in the room; a task for which most students volunteered.

*Sentiments:*

*"[Andragogy classes were different; people enjoyed gathering with each other and learning together.]"* (PDS).

**The Empathetic Andragogue expresses appreciation to learners who actively participate.**

While Dr. Henschke has known a lot of things and enjoyed the total recall of a near-perfect memory, he still did not know it all. Nor did he ever profess ultimate wisdom. One of the key Assumptions of Adult Learners [Appendix D] has been the reservoir of personal knowledge held within each individual. Andragogy classes to passersby would appear to be open conversations; however, to the attending participants, they were deep think tanks of experience and ideas: the ingredients of greatness in any venture. PDS witnessed many times Dr. Henschke's overview of the class curriculum become quickly absorbed into enthusiastic discussions, churning vigorously around the room, sometimes without a break for the evening.

*Sentiments:*

*[As an educator, you are] [n]ot just bring[ing] your product to a room; you're actually engaging a life-learning experience with another person. Everybody is an individual, so they're coming and they're going with completely different circumstances and stories. [T]hose are very important characteristics that will help you navigate unforeseen waters. [Dr. Henschke's] absolutely the living example of all of these [Adult Assumptions]. (PDS)*

**The Empathetic Andragogue Promotes positive self-esteem in learners.**

Initially, PDS was warned by the advisors that there was a real difference between regular classes and Andragogy. It had been advised to pair an Andragogical course selection with a conventional class whenever possible. Dr. Henschke and Dr. Isenberg knew their courses' subject matter and 'shared' the messages with their class attendants

rather than spewed rote learning content across the desks. It has always been very important to meet each student where they were in order to acclimate them to the process of adult learning. Understanding increased learner confidence, which has been the barometer for self-esteem and positive outlooks. PDS's social demeanor flourished under Andragogical tutelage, as well as did the wellspring of personal intellect.

*Sentiment:*

*"I love being up at the school, being around adults who are learning. It's a positive energy, experience" (PDS).*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue purposefully communicates to learners that they are each uniquely important.**

There have been so many instances PDS observed Dr. Henschke's ability to connect personally with his students. He has always exuded a natural knack of warming into a basic association with Andragogy newcomers and then building upon the shared tenets of cordial interactions to create a relationship burning with passion for learning. During his personal interview within the study at hand, he had inquired of the Research Investigator as to what had been learned. The response included the thought that in wanting to "keep . . . the experiences going," the doctoral degree may have been "started for the wrong reasons." He quickly rectified the harsh judgment and, in turn, offered his appreciation for any reason to pursue lifelong learning.

*Sentiments:*

*He sees me and hears me and sees the other things I've produced. He felt like I was ready to start writing because he knew I'd be starting with a draft. I was considering the final project and thinking I wasn't ready to start at all. So, he waited with me. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue believes learners know what their goals, dreams, and realities are like.**

As each learner has embodied a wealth of preexisting knowledge, every occasion in course content instruction has been an opportunity to expand the wisdom of the educator as well. Even when a lesson would get derailed by an enamored monologue or break-out group debate, Dr. Henschke would listen attentively. He was always ready to learn something different, and after years of accumulating knowledge, new insights were refreshing. Many novice scholars have been inspired in dissertation topics, yet have lacked the research expertise to correctly design study models. Once Dr. Henschke understood the academic desires underlying PDS's research ideas, he was able to offer a mode of investigation which aligned with those concepts.

*Sentiments:*

*I tried marrying Gerontology into my Andragogy, and it was beyond what I knew at this time to be able to do by myself alone. To pick a chair and a committee that know nothing about that was going to be even harder to align. Andragogy is in the School of Education, so I decided to stay in the education [field] and focus only on the subject. I'm having a much better time going forward. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue expresses confidence that learners will develop the skills they need.**

As aforementioned, Dr. Henschke would always answer the questions posed to him. As he was quite saturated in fore-gained knowledge, the responses generally followed the inquiries. However, there were those extraordinary instances when the query had piqued his interest to review relevant information in search of an appropriate

reply to be presented at a later appointment. PDS recalled how many of the students had often tried, and were ultimately delighted when they were able, to have ‘confounded’ Dr. Henschke. Although an intellectual pursuit would ensue, he relished every opportunity to model personal development through continued learning.

*Sentiments:*

*[O]ne day I walked in and handed him a couple of pages. I said, “I’m not sure this is the beginning; I’m not sure this is going to stay at the beginning, but I wrote a few pages.” He was very pleased. He knew I was ready to start writing. I really felt the trust then. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue prizes the learners to learn what is needed.**

At the beginning of every course in Andragogy, Dr. Henschke and Dr. Isenberg gave an overview of the concepts to be covered by the curriculum of the class. As each student was performing from a different point on the dissertation timeline, these educators advised scrutinizing personal projects to align with the incoming information. In this approach, students were better prepared when abstracting ideas into dissertation topic choices, as well as when formulating a study design model. Students were encouraged to fulfill assignments with the actual subjects and theories, which they were otherwise already researching. The advice was a twofold success as the assignments were satisfied in a timely manner and more work had been accomplished toward the dissertation projects.

*Sentiments:*

*“They started every class by telling the students, “Keep in mind what topic you’re going for. Keep in mind how this class can line up and be utilized for your*

*dissertation work. Keep the end in mind as you're starting and as you're going through it."* (PDS)

**The Trustworthy Andragogue feels learners' need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings.**

The actual classroom settings of Andragogy courses were visually unique, in that, all of the desks were removed from their stacked row layouts and rearranged into circular design formations. Much like the Round Table of King Arthur's Camelot, everyone was intended to share an equivalent perspective within the circle. Notwithstanding, even observable efforts to offer fairness in a group setting were not enough to satiate disconcerted attendees. Sometimes class had screeched to a halt as surly students blustered about many of the matters they felt uncomfortable with or issues that angered them. As PDS recalled, Dr. Henschke allowed the time necessary for the outburst and permitted the space for disagreement within the setting. What could be resolved, would be; however, the choice to stay and proceed was always the individual's.

*Sentiments:*

*Sometimes you have to stop complaining, decide on a solution, and just work at it. It may not work; but it's better than just complaining. You have to learn how to persist in a particular situation. Sometimes you have to learn how to push yourself; you have to learn how to let yourself go and release yourself from some things that you bind yourself up with. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue enables learners to evaluate their own progress in learning.**

As a self-directed learning guide, Knowles (1986) incorporated the Learning Contract as curriculum's lesson plan and assignment evaluation form. There have been five columned categories, which each student aligned with his or her personal program requisites, as well as any independent projects endeavored. The categories have been listed as follows: first column: "What are you going to learn? (Objectives);" second: "How are you going to learn it? (Resources and strategies);" third: "Target date for completion;" fourth: "How are you going to know you learned it? (Evidence);" and fifth: ".How are you going to prove that you learned it? (Verification)" (Knowles, 1986, pp. 33-36). This has been an invaluable tool for individualizing learning, in that,

[s]tudents with widely different learning styles, backgrounds, paces of learning, and other idiosyncrasies began to plan strategies and use resources for learning[.] . . . began to understand course objectives more clearly and . . . [became] committed to them more deeply. (Knowles, 1986, p. xi)

PDS's initial reaction to submitting to this new form of syllabus had been less than excited; yet, once the actual work began performing those assignments as listed, it was realized as a positive experience.

*Sentiments:*

*[Dr. Henschke] has successfully chaired dozens, dozens of dissertations. He has helped develop lots of the things that make Andragogy definable. It's always been there; it is what it is. He's one of the educators who understands it, can articulate it and put it out there in such a structure that it can become a learning tool to another adult. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue hears learners indicate what their learning needs are.**

Dr. Henschke has been involved with over one hundred dissertations and committees in his academic career. While confident in his own abilities to navigate novice research endeavors across the established parameters of university doctorate protocols, the actual progress of each mission has been built upon the steel within the independent student. Some learners needed a ‘nudging’ along at times, others yet required themselves be pulled back into position with their project designs. For PDS, spaces were necessary to simulate idea streams, develop topic routes into categorical pathways, and articulate the message through precise verbiage. Up until the Covid-19 campus restrictions (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.), this dissertation venture advanced through personal conferences every other week. Dr. Henschke recognized the abundance of communication over written content at various meetings as an essential ‘layover’ within PDS’s academic journey.

*Sentiments:*

*Several times . . . Dr. Henschke thought I should start writing. I was like, “Oh no, I need to read this, or I need to type up my notes. Oh no, I’m not ready yet.” In my studies, some of the reasons that the people have dropped out is because of procrastination due to their ideas of perfectionism. I didn’t think I was ready to write because I considered that my writing level should be a finished product, not just writing a draft product. I wasn’t in a clear mindset about writing at all, and yet I made a determination that I wasn’t ready. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue engages learners in clarifying their own aspirations.**

PDS had already worked over a year in isolation pursuing a topic ambition no one shared when confronted by Critical friend, Somanita Kheang, for a project update in an opportune meeting. What had begun as a visit soon became a rescue, as PDS was roused to research the specific obstacles involved with this dissertation venture. The search uncovered the All But Dissertation phenomenon, which provoked further investigation as the explanatory elements appeared to align with PDS's own life course. PDS actually saw the position from where the project would have to pivot to prevail. Having already articulated a passion toward purpose for the anticipated paper, PDS decided to explore the academic adventure as incurred.

*Sentiments:*

*I didn't even know about the 'all but dissertation' phase until after talking to Somanita. She suggested I go home and contemplate what my obstacles were. What are the real barriers for me to move forward or to complete this? I went home with that in mind, looking. An article came up and talked about 'all but dissertation'. It's a thing! It's a real thing! I found something in literature that I could relate to. I found that there were still plenty of gaps in it and some that align with where I'm at. . . . When I found this, it seemed to align with me, with my subject, with my needs. It just all seemed to click. I'm going to be able to finish this degree based on how to finish this degree. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue develops a supportive relationship with learners.**

The theories of Andragogy were likened to a schematic for positive adult learning outcomes, as it has addressed the naturally occurring aspects for personal development. For Andragogy alumni everywhere, continual learning has become a lifestyle. When elders in education assist struggling students through bounties of attention and insight, they have set forth the spiritual force of generosity. As such, this selfless charity has been communicable in reciprocity, inspiring all to share with others. Dr. Henschke has been a stalwart mentor for countless learners across decades and campuses around the globe. PDS has succeeded thus far in the academic adventure of this doctoral degree as a direct consequence of the supportive relationships endowed through Critical friends, like Dr. Henschke.

*Sentiments:*

*It's just been great. It's just been the missing thing in my life, to continue to learn. To strive to share what you've learned with other people and inspire them to dig into things and learn something for themselves. I learned about myself. I'm actually pretty bright; I'm actually a great student and a great scholar. I wouldn't have known that about myself if I stayed home cleaning my house. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue experiences unconditional positive regard for learners.**

Accomplishing a written dissertation of the investigative research endeavors of an independent study has been a daunting task; one which was never intended to be navigated solely by any student. Hence, the necessity of a Committee of qualified scholars to lead a novice researcher through the academic parameters of an educational degree. These intellectuals have been versed in the methods of research, per se, and not

necessarily knowledgeable in every given topic choice. PDS's initial ambition had been to combine the current degree pursued, Andragogy, with that of the prior achieved Masters, Gerontology. During the beginning semesters of the doctoral course, the degree program in Gerontology had been disbanded quite discretely. Without any of the former teachers to advise and guide, it became increasingly harder for PDS to propose an ethical study model. Having been apprised of these ideas and intents within the short duration as acting advisor for PDS, Dr. Henschke was undaunted by his lack of knowledge in the field of study and was willingly supportive of finding an acceptable issue to investigate.

*Sentiments:*

*I was struggling to find the right topic that would actually qualify and satisfy the dissertation requirements for Andragogy but using Gerontology as the subject. I couldn't put the two together in a way I could form a study that would fill a gap. I just seemed to be reading articles and collecting paper. It just wasn't going anywhere. [Dr. Henschke was my advisor for a short time and we had talked about my intentions for combining Andragogy in a topic study with Gerontology. He had no idea what I was talking about but was willing to try and ready to start. Yet, I was still rather on my own.] I was still learning; I was learning why it wasn't working. The more I thought about moving my thoughts into a study, it seemed like an unethical venture because I was focusing on the senior citizens and Alzheimer's. (PDS)*

**The Trustworthy Andragogue respects the dignity and integrity of learners.**

As the governmental response to the Covid-19 pandemic began as outlined restrictions and instigated quarantines (Government of the District of Columbia, DC,

n.d.), PDS was constrained from bringing the disabled spouse home for visits from the nursing facility, or even entering that premises. After months of physical separation from this partner, coupled with a barrage of other economic misfortunes amidst an industry lockdown, PDS fell into dark despair. The heightened anxiety impeded the ability to think, much less compose, and the dissertation progress stalled. On several occasions PDS reached out to Dr. Henschke with tearful messages of the anguish experienced. Although he did not actively intervene, Dr. Henschke's response was respectful and non-judgmental as he allowed the time for communication and the space for healing.

*Sentiments:*

*This year with the onslaught of Covid-19, I've had more available time to study and write as my [spouse's] nursing home and my industry were locked down for months. However, the shift from general seclusion to utter isolation gripped me with fear and depression. [I reached out to Dr. Henschke for some spiritual fortitude; his response wasn't a sermon on faith, but his stance was to stand in steadfast hope.] It's been hard work to reassert myself and keep moving forward with this project, but at the same time, the project has provided me with a source of personal fulfillment and life course direction. (PDS)*

**The Sensitive Andragogue makes certain to understand the learner's point of view.**

After having retired from the university, Dr. Henschke was persuaded to work with PDS on a new dissertation topic as the acting Chair. The protocols of the doctoral degree allow for one off-campus expert to assist in the Committee processes. Dr. Henschke was intrigued by the fresh perspectives to an epic issue which continued to

plague colleges and students. PDS had decided to approach this huge endeavor as an independent study, breaking down the book-writing assignment into manageable tasks. As the first few months of meetings were centered on deliberating the focal points and directional pathways, Dr. Henschke began to envision PDS's scope of investigation. His suggestion was to include the three factors of empathy, trust, and sensitivity as a benchmark for relationship building, an essential association when bolstering a struggling ABD student to successful dissertation accomplishment.

*Sentiments:*

*I was reminded of Dr. Henschke working with certain students on independent projects before, that weren't the dissertation. That's when I decided I was going to begin to work with him and meet with him at least every other week. . . . Right now, I like the way it's going. I would highly suggest this type of an independent study as a structure which should be stressed more. You need to be completely connected with your committee. You cannot allow lapses of time; that's a horrible distance. (PDS)*

**The Sensitive Andragogue takes pains and time to get her/his point across to learners.**

Andragogy classes were enjoyable experiences for all in attendance. There were always good discussions and debates among the learners. On a few occasions, students were involved in individual activities or group demonstrations, which rallied everyone out of their seats and onto their feet. However, there had been instances when a student or two would be inundated with hardships and unable to attend every scheduled class. PDS observed Dr. Henschke make special arrangements with each returning learner for a

convenient time to meet and catch up on all the concepts that had been missed in their absences.

*Sentiments:*

*When the students are quiet and invisible, they're just forgotten. So, you really need to be seen; you need to be talking and heard. Even if you're wrong or off the course, it doesn't matter; it's the fact that you're being recognized. In that, someone can support you. If they don't see you, they don't know you need support. If they don't hear you, they don't know that you're troubled or that you're lacking or you're needful. (PDS)*

**The Sensitive Andragogue exercises patience in helping all learners' progress.**

Evening classes in Andragogy were more akin to a departmental cohort or study group as all the students grew to know each other and constantly chattered in personal updates. Although everyone maintained civility during the course, people operated from different background degrees, paces of learning, and varying stages of dissertation progress. Nonetheless, Dr. Henschke was undaunted by the challenging audience, met each student's development individually, and still managed to create an atmosphere of harmony. Each learner knew he was completely committed to their assimilation of the lessons. Some nights when he would choose another student to answer a question, PDS perceived his decision did not necessarily mean anything negative. On those occasions, he usually felt confident that PDS understood the material and grasped the concepts.

*Sentiments:*

*Dr. Henschke was the scholar that produced the Instructional Perspectives Inventory. It's a tool to help you understand how ready you are in all actuality to being able to teach another adult. Not just bring your product to a room; you're actually engaging a life-learning experience with another person. Everybody is an individual, so they're coming and they're going with completely different circumstances and stories. As an educator, those are very important characteristics that will help you navigate unforeseen waters. (PDS)*

**The Sensitive Andragogue overcomes any frustration with learner apathy.**

There have always been those individuals which strayed just beyond the boundaries of group camaraderie. Occasionally people have been sullen for a while; other times they have preferred to be loners. Dr. Henschke has naturally been able to make a personal connection with everybody, welcoming them and engaging each learner as an integral asset to the class setting. He was willing to counsel any deficits they were experiencing in life or learning encounters while establishing the rapport for further support. PDS trusted Dr. Henschke's discretion with these personal insights, having confided hardships with him on several occasions.

*Sentiments:*

*Dr. Henschke knew me in my classes, retired, and still knew that I was in this: struggling, trying, wanting to finish. He was very willing to commit to me. There's been a couple of times where he's flat asked, "Do you really have to do this?" Yes, I really do; I have to finish this. It's for me. I started it; I want to finish it. I'm learning, and I want to express in my dissertation what I have learned. (PDS)*

**The Sensitive Andragogue will use whatever time learners need to grasp various concepts.**

Several professors at this university were proficient in Andragogical principles and had applied practice of the same in their class settings. PDS observed a Capstone instructor work tirelessly with a large group of advanced doctoral students regarding the lesson specifics of APA (American Psychological Association) 6th edition, the then-current, acceptable writing techniques for dissertations. There were many rules associated with this methodology and having simply added or omitted a comma or period had qualified as a punctuation error. Some students had excelled in one facet only to be stumped by another feature. PDS recalled having been graciously assisted with a reference citing inquiry on more than one occasion over timely phone calls with this instructor.

*Sentiments:*

*I think all of it counts. All of it counts. Even the days where you've done the wrong assignment or "That's what you meant; I didn't know." Even when you just really mess it up, it's all part of your learning, developing, maturing. It's your process. If you're not growing, what are you doing? (PDS)*

**The Sensitive Andragogue thoroughly allows learners to ask all the questions they need addressed.**

Two of PDS's Committee members have already earned their Doctorates in the study of Andragogy while the third colleague has been incorporating this teaching style to learners. They have been a wealth of insight and information regarding the precise prerequisites of the dissertation structure, as well as the specific writing techniques.

Every one of the Committee members has assured PDS that they would support the effort to complete the dissertation, having gone through the same stressful agenda and experienced similar anxieties while pursuing their own doctoral degrees. Individually, these three scholars have utilized their personal areas of expertise to review and refine the structure of this dissertation at hand. Each member of the Committee has accepted numerous phone calls and email outreaches from PDS, diligently answering countless questions pertaining to the goal accomplishment herein.

*Sentiments:*

*Once I got into the school, I felt very comfortable. . . . I'm getting everything any other college would be offering. Sometimes maybe more because it's not just about programs, it's about people, about relationships. They have never failed at expressing a genuine concern for me being in their educational programs. (PDS)*

**The Sensitive Andragogue resists in her/himself any irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting.**

The Capstone Classes (I, II, and III), were initiated to instruct doctoral students regarding particular junctions of their application endeavors and dissertation processes. Capstone I focused on the work involved with composing the Prospectus and using its information to complete the IRB (Institutional Review Board) petition. The second Capstone course centered on the specific requisites of writing style, as approved by the APA (American Psychological Association) 6th edition. The final Capstone was intended to concentrate on the remaining elements necessary to finish a dissertation; yet due to Covid-19 restrictions implemented this spring semester (Government of the District of Columbia, DC, n.d.), the class had to be converted into an off-campus, virtual

setting. In each course, PDS observed several of the learners working independently on their own projects with personal laptops. None of the educators were annoyed by the seeming inattention as these students were grounded in the writing concepts and working toward their own progresses.

*Sentiments:*

*Right now, Dr. Henschke is my chair; I do have two professors willing to be my committee. I'm not looking for a lot of input from them at all; I'm very hopeful to have solid blocks of writing to show them. I'm working closely with Dr. Henschke because once I have his approval on it and it goes to someone else, it's going to have a much better chance of getting their approval also. (PDS)*

Overall, PDS experienced many of the 'reasons' listed for attrition and persistence. Concerning the category encompassing Faculty/University Complaints, PDS had one advisor briefly who had been rather indifferent and remained detached throughout the period. PDS regarded this as the only real negative encounter throughout the entire doctoral pursuit. It had seemed that there was very little support after the coursework was complete; however, this had coincided with a major shift in the Andragogy program resulting in a direct loss of associated faculty. These issues accounted for the temporary dissatisfaction with the university. Yet, PDS had several other advisors which were great guides through the process, having always been accessible by personal meetings, phone calls, or email messages. They genuinely cared about their students and kept the communication open and welcome. Once the university settled into normalcy again, PDS perceived an institutional commitment and a sense of belongingness as the students were treated as growing professionals. Dr. Henschke has

been the best Committee Chairperson, exuding all the behaviors conducive to a meaningful mentorship. Through this relationship, PDS has been able to overcome some of the procrastination toward writing and the subsequent perfectionism in drafting the paper. Dr. Henschke has remained an excellent leader and role model throughout this process as he has maintained regular communication with PDS, given timely feedback, and has provided essential printed resources. The rapport shared has added to PDS's psychosocial development.

With regard to the category of Topic/Project Issues, PDS's initial ambition to blend a theme between Gerontology and Andragogy had to be scrapped as there were no qualifying faculty available to assist with articulating an ethical study design. After much effort had been put forth in trying to establish a viable topic within this subject field, the quest was eventually abandoned. Fortunately, a timely conversation with Critical friend, Somanita Kheagh, highlighted areas of interest which evolved into addressing an important issue encountered within doctoral programs everywhere. While PDS had entered this degree pursuit as an older, non-traditional student who worked at a job within another industry and paid the tuitions directly, the challenges were met with a high level of goal engagement, internal strength, and personal accountability toward the dissertation completion. Influenced by Dr. Henschke's mentored guidance, PDS took control of this learning endeavor through explicit focus of the ultimate goal commitment, development of essential cognitive strategies, as well as the management mechanisms involved with a structured and disciplined approach to the writing tasks. The personal enlightenment gained through this academic adventure has continued to edify as content within the dissertation at hand.

The category involving Personal Life Role Conflicts reflected, by far, the most challenging of obstacles, stumbling blocks, and setbacks for PDS to navigate. Prior to beginning this doctoral degree pursuit in the summer session, PDS had worked an externship as an Administrative Assistant and wrote of the experience in a comprehensive essay as early satisfaction of the final quarter in the Master's of Gerontology program. It was within this hectic period that PDS's Mother, a staunch source of family support, passed away quite unexpectedly. Every weekend of the entire summer, PDS and siblings cleared and cleaned her out-of-state, three-story home, to prepare for sale. This left precious little time to attend the new degree program's Statistics course and fulfill the requisite assignments while also completing hours of yard work each week, at home and at church. Time was the premium asset as PDS lived thirty-five miles from the university campus and had to add a two-hour commute with the four-hour, semi-weekly classes. Somehow, PDS had also managed to continue bringing the spouse home from the nursing facility for three-hour visits on the other evenings. Although this entailed exhaustive physical effort and increased guardian responsibilities, PDS emotionally thrived as the relationship with the life partner had been retained. These feats were made possible through high levels of self-efficacy, accountability to the strategic management of priorities, and the intrinsic motivation of future career opportunities. PDS's ability to persevere was aligned with an intention to persist despite overwhelming disruptions, having kept focused on the project processes and having maintained passion toward the commitment to complete the dissertation.

In a comparison with the six interview participants, DG1 and DG2 remained unmarried. Of the other four, FS1 and FS3 boasted of their spousal support, FS2 worked

around the partner's schedule, DG3 had divorced and remarried the same person, and PDS was married yet living alone. No one beside PDS had spoken of caregiving for a mate; although, FS2 had to intervene with medical treatments for a child; DG1 cared for the service dog after spinal surgery; DG2 supported a Father's and a Nephew's health; FS3 recovered from both hips and knees having been replaced; and DG3 had undergone cancer treatments twice during the doctoral process. Regarding employment, FS1, FS3, and DG3 were all educators, FS2 educated through a non-profit organization, DG2 had worked as a graduate assistant, DG1 sought education after a lifetime of military service, and PDS worked outside the field of study. All seven research participants were fond of lifelong learning and well able to comprehend the curriculums.

The university issues encountered within these doctoral pursuits posed greater hardships than the life roles and distractions from home as FS1, DG2, and DG3 were all negatively impacted by specific faculty antagonisms. For the others, FS2 and FS3 were adversely affected by the disruption caused throughout the faculty and courses as the university shifted the degree presence within the institution. PDS was working from home during the time and was mildly irritated by the immediate loss of seasoned educators. All participants aside from FS2 and PDS enjoyed tuition reimbursements through G.I. Bills and teaching benefits. However, when FS3 retired and would have to pay tuitions in full, the goal commitment waned.

These interview responses were not complete personal histories nor thorough recollections of all-encompassing experiences within each learner's academic adventure. From the information garnered, the Research Investigator has speculated as to the outcomes of these academic pursuits. FS1 lost interest in the doctoral pursuit and

momentum for completing the project while waiting for an IRB appointment to conclude. FS2 needed the time framed in scheduled writing tasks and the scarce financial resources for the priorities of family members and household needs. FS3 realized the financial demands of attending college had begun to outweigh the advantages of an acquired degree, as retirement shifted the benefits of doctorate accomplishment. DG2 was undaunted by the egos operating within the department faculty, had simply transferred the available credit hours to another field, and overcame the negativity with the success of degree achievement. DG3 forged through years of indefinite degree direction, personal health crises, and marital shifts to eventually satisfy the requisites of an Adult Education doctorate degree. DG1 seemed to be the only participant to successfully complete the degree pursuit unscathed by interference or antagonism; yet the tenacity of a military veteran could have buffered the perceptions of negative obstructions. By all accounts, PDS has continued to persist to the completion of the dissertation at hand and the accomplishment of this doctoral degree.

In contrast, the sentiments garnered through other previously researched studies seemed to teem with negative connotations. As aforementioned, this compilation could have resulted by investigative design, having sought out the most afflicted students for their narratives. Overwhelmingly, the 108 negative responses regarding the complaints of learners with their faculties and universities outlined horrendous issues with approval-lacking advisory interactions and lagging degree program satisfaction. PDS's personal experiences leaned closer to the 85 positive reactions from students enamored by their universities' curricular connections and advisory relationships. There were 17 negative opinions associated with dissertation topic choices and project issues as compared with

10 other views in which it had been positively recognized. PDS's experiences did include a prolonged period with difficulty reducing an inaccessible subject into a manageable topic; however, once redirected to another interesting aspiration, the project proceeded. Of the negative recollections concerning personal life role conflicts, 52 students railed against the arisen adversities, time constraints, and ineffective moral support which hindered their efforts and drained their motivations. While the hardships and misfortunes in life have afflicted randomly, 31 students had responded positively with their capacities to persevere tribulations and prevail beyond obstacles through personal fortitude and supportive relationships. PDS's academic adventure was also fraught with challenges and constraints; however, the camaraderie gained through the mentored relationships with the dissertation Committee members bolstered the resilience to eventually triumph.

It is the Research Investigator's belief that students qualified to begin a doctoral degree program have the academic wherewithal to assimilate new and existing information into research projects, which edify others through the findings within higher education. Aside from the most egregious of antagonistic encounters with universities, faculty members, or colleagues, learners exercise a growth mindset regularly. As adults seek out the solutions they require within their time constraints and financial control, they aspire to the 'grit' in their spirits to overcome any presenting obstacles. All of the interviewees practiced mindset growth, as they worked to meet the prerequisites of each doctoral degree program. Likewise, each research participant herein had exhibited the notions of 'grit,' as evidenced by the tenacity of the three doctoral graduates in persisting to the completion of their dissertations, as well as when the three former students

determined the degree pursuit failed in tangible benefits beyond the efforts expended.

PDS has been 'lit' with 'grit,' as the absence from home visits of the spouse quarantined in the nursing facility has vacated valuable periods of time for dissertation composition.

Despite established institutional protocols and the random interruptions of health and safety crises, students have tapped into intrinsic personal resources to meet their presenting challenges. This is not, by far, an all-embracing reaction to disruptions; however, perseverance is among the measures of human stance. To work solely is not to be an island of self among landmasses of mortals. Even individuals operating independently have attained some knowledge from the collaboration of other scholars. Humanity is created of people in a design, which emphasizes balance being maintained through engagement of strengths and weaknesses. This is evidenced along the range of a person's life course, as there will be instances requiring help from someone just as surely as there will be occasions to be the aid to others. The Research Investigator considers the aspects of empathy, trust, and sensitivity within reciprocal relationships as the means by which people are able to traverse their life's continuum with greater success.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **Exploration Complete**

Everything in this world is in a constant flow of change. Even the ability to hold stasis is a collaboration of subtle changes. Time is a worthy example, as what is ‘now’ will be what ‘was’ tomorrow. Improvement is simply recognizing patterns, studying outcomes, and adjusting the applicable to become the ameliorant. Such has been the crusade for exploring the high rates of student attrition at the doctorate level within educational institutions.

Having held steady for so many decades, the 50% ratio of candidate drop-outs rings as a cliché among students and faculty alike. This predicament, coupled with the circumstances of the All But Dissertation (ABD) phase, hampers the ambition for new graduates to begin a doctorate degree program. In turn, this impedes a university’s financial health, as half of those enrolled will discontinue paying tuitions when terminating attendance and fewer prospective learners will be enticed to embark on such an academic journey. In light of constant change, the unnatural inertia of this phenomenon is unsettling. Better than to question the stationary standards by which it has been able to continue would be to offer viable solutions to remedy, if at all, the capability of scholars to successfully navigate a doctoral degree.

### **Relationship Revelations**

The Research Investigator has presented the ‘Reasons’ as listed in categories of Attrition and Persistence [Appendices A and B] of a doctoral degree pursuit which related to the sentiments of former students found within prior research studies. These responses illuminated a longstanding issue plaguing universities, faculties, and graduates.

The Research Investigator then sought out hundreds of student opinions from many other previously researched studies to review and assess as a point of reference within this Triangulation model design. A moderate sample of personal responses from three Doctoral Graduates (DG1, DG2, and DG3) and three Former Students who ultimately terminated their degree pursuits (FS1, FS2, and FS3) was garnered through phone recorded and transcribed interviews with the Research Investigator as a second point of reference. Finally, the Author as the Persisting Doctoral Student (PDS) answered the same interview queries as a testimony and third point of reference in the investigation herein.

The three factors of a teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students has been epitomized as the fundamental qualities of a supportive rapport. When shared in a reciprocal relationship, each associate initiates the opportunities to be encouraged to excel beyond any deficient attributes, as well as to be engaged as a fortifying resource to others. As every adult is a wealth of attained experience and knowledge, even educators will be continually prompted to growth mindset through the exposure to these new sources of thought. The elements of meaningful interactions have always been present; the distinction for successful outcomes is reliant upon their timely engagement. Simply put, struggling students can be bolstered by the camaraderie of their colleagues and Committees to work through their project challenges and accomplish their dissertations.

In an effort to provide a potential remedy to this outstanding problem, the three factors of empathy, trust, and sensitivity have been elaborated on through their 23 elementally affiliated statements; first, as a general overview and secondly, as an

assessment of the academic encounters experienced by PDS. Each of the interviewees' narratives were articulated individually through their categorical representations as either Doctoral Graduates or Former Students. Then each grouping was appraised collectively in comparison to the 'reasons' listed as attrition or persistence; and lastly, each category was evaluated comparatively with the sentiments found within other previously researched studies. While each participant answered every query posed, these transcribed responses have provided less than complete information to individually address each of the 23 elemental statements pertaining to the three factors of empathy, trust, and sensitivity. Remaining committed to thoroughly exploring the possibilities of bolstering struggling students toward degree success, the Research Investigator collaborated the sentiments of the Former Students in a synoptical alignment with the 23 elementally affiliated statements.

With consideration toward each of the Former Students and their academic experiences with educator empathy, no one succinctly mentioned any of their 'previous teachers' or whether he or she had perceived them as having been 'prepared' to 'teach.' FS1 and FS3 were actually teaching their own classes during their doctoral pursuits and FS2 began giving Psychological Evaluations to clients through the non-profit business. None of the participants had discussed having been 'noticed' or 'acknowledged' by any faculty as pertaining to the 'positive changes' happening to them. FS2 and FS3 were working closely with Dr. Henschke at times during their degree activities and did boast of his academic involvement and consistent 'motivation' toward their endeavors. FS1 did not reflect on having received any tangible assistance, yet had, in fact, stated a dire need for a 'mentored relationship' to have successfully completed the degree. No one reported

having been given any ‘appreciation’ for their ‘active participation’ within their courses; although, FS3 did relate an experience of a teacher correctly interpreting the stern look as intense concentration and not extended anger. As there was no educator communication to decipher, it would seem that no one ‘promoted positive self-esteem’ to these Former Students. However, FS2 and FS3 retained Dr. Henschke as Committee Chair for a short period; he, no doubt, would have definitely engaged their self-confidence in their personal worth and academic abilities.

With regard to the trust which a teacher expends toward each student, there were no comments made by the interviewees as to receiving ‘purposeful communication’ of his or her ‘unique importance’ as an attendee within their classes. None of the Former Students mentioned any faculty members ‘believing’ he or she ‘knew what their goals, dreams, or realities’ were. FS1 was a colleague among the doctoral educators and, therefore, was left alone, considered to be capable of working independently. FS3 noted a third Committee Chairperson who had a different academic philosophy toward Adult Education having accepted the dissertation project while not believing in the topic. There had not been any ‘confidence expressed’ to the Former Students that they would have ‘developed’ the ‘skills necessary’ to accomplish a dissertation, nor were any of them ‘prized’ for having ‘learned’ what ‘was needful.’ Without sufficient consultation between these students and their teachers having been reported, it cannot be assumed that they were adequately ‘aware’ of their then-current ‘thoughts and feelings’ navigating the dissertation process to have ‘communicated such.’ This, in turn, would make ‘self-evaluation’ of each Former Student’s ‘progress in learning’ an ineffective effort overall. While having not been sought after by the advisor or any teachers in regard to the

progress of the dissertation project, FS1 admitted to remaining silent, also; not wanting to start trouble at the campus. FS3 had reached out for assistance on occasion, however the responses were not a unified message as the faculty kept changing, with educators constantly leaving the university. Without the instructors inquiring of the candidates' project statuses, these Former Students' 'learning needs' were not 'heard;' and therefore, never addressed. Likewise, the absence of advisory conversations meant these learners had not 'clarified' their 'research aspirations;' a critical objective when designing an investigative study and assigning the writing tasks to the degree goals. FS1 clearly lacked any 'supportive' faculty 'relationships' during the curricular timeline; albeit FS3 and FS2 enjoyed brief encounters with Dr. Henschke before he left the first campus and retired from the second. Assuredly, Dr. Henschke had 'unconditional positive regard' for FS3 and FS2; unfortunately, the faculty relationships had disbanded when each university canceled their Adult Education doctoral program. As such, Dr. Henschke would have definitely 'respected' their 'dignities' and 'integrities,' as fellow Andragogues while in those academic settings. However, FS1 and FS2 did not recall in their testimonies any other educators extending purposeful respect toward them. FS3 spoke of working with several other educators successfully, though each encounter was short-lived as the faculty rotated out of the program and off of the campus.

Concerning the sensitivity of the encompassing educators toward these Former Students, no one was mentioned as having 'made certain' that any of their 'points of view' were sought or 'understood.' Consequently, this would also mean that no one 'took the pains and time' to get a 'teacher's point of view' 'across' to any of these 'learners.' FS2 experienced a complete lack of 'teacher patience' in 'helping learner

progress' as a Capstone instructor stated an assignment could only be done their way or expect failure. Although each of these Former Students had reached energy-sapping plateaus without having received supportive motivation for their progresses, it was they who had actually suffered 'frustration' with the 'apathy' from their faculties. As none of the educators involved with these candidates were reported as having engaged them in regular consultations, surely no student had been allotted 'whatever time' was 'needed' to 'grasp the various concepts' being taught. Likewise, the lack of consistent discussions would have definitely limited the ability of these Former Students to 'ask all of the questions' they 'needed to have addressed' by their assigned faculties. As FS1 had already known what the project topic would be, the limited participation in the Capstone class would not have likely been deemed inattentiveness. These Former Students were mature adults and working professionals; they were not spending precious time away from their families to dawdle during any classes taken. As the testimonies have recorded an absence of regular advisory involvement, the 'irritation' at 'inattentiveness' would have rested with these students and not their faculties.

### **Relationship Considerations**

As aforementioned, these transcribed sentiments are incomplete histories. There is every possibility that the academic adventures experienced were not as bleak as have been depicted through the acquired statements. However, it is evident that the Former Students considered their doctoral timelines to have lacked essential educator support. One of these Former Students explicitly endorsed the aid of a mentor which would have been able to assist in forging beyond the impasse of the IRB application phase. Another

Former Student had been adamant that degree completion was probable until the mentoring Chair had left the university when the degree program had been discontinued.

The prospect of working under the tutelage of a mentor has been a boon for learners. Once able to transfer into the Adult Education field, one of the Doctoral Graduates received mentored guidance from Dr. Henschke, thus securing the faculty stability necessary to complete the degree. Despite the sanctimonious ‘egos’ entrenched within university departments, this graduate student learned how to navigate the props, as well as the processes of undertaking an independent research study. The empowerment resulting from the meaningful mentor-mentee relationship had been the timely boost in morale essential for redirecting academic focus to a new degree field. As doctorate pursuers have been rescued from academic sabotage and restored to project prowess through the respect and rapport garnered through mentored relationships, it may be conceivable that those candidates who had succumbed to attrition, had ultimately chosen self-preservation over further unadvised anguish.

People generally operate best when truthfully advised and morally supported. Not that anyone would want to be restricted by constant handholding; yet an outstretched, friendly hand-up in time of need is always appreciated. A mentor is a friend with a purpose in another’s period of growth and change, usually being someone who has engaged similar challenges and navigated to successful outcomes. These sages are grafted from their own experiences of development with the aids of other ideal helpers and critical friends. Mentored relationships stand as a tenet of scholar-hood which pervades the one rescued from dropping out of a degree pursuit to serve as a bolster against further suffering and attrition in academic settings.

As important as mentored relationships are to the successful outcomes of dissertation accomplishment and terminal degree completion, the contacts fail the cause without reciprocal interaction. While a Teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students are noble educator attributes, the success of the effort will surely be enjoyed through the connecting power of reciprocity. Students empathizing with their assigned faculties will understand delayed responses are not necessarily derelictions of duty as they develop the time management skills necessary to be as patient for a reply as aggressive when continuing to seek out the answers. Candidates trusting their Chairpersons to oversee an acceptable topic choice progress into a viable study design on their behalf will gain valuable insight into investigative research endeavors. Learners connecting with their Committees and colleagues on deeper levels through compassion and confidence will ascertain the sensitivity associated with meaningful relationships. Two can walk together when united in agreement.

### **Recommendations for Promoting Academic Mentoring**

With such a laudable resolution as mentoring relationships to address and alleviate the ongoing problem of student attrition at the doctorate level, the challenge then becomes standardizing the novel expression through an accessible platform. People need to understand the differences of a mentored relationship as opposed to simply knowing the assigned faculty they would be working with on their projects. As lifelong learners, even educators will prosper with the knowledge of these essential factors involved in such supportive interactions. The concepts are not foreign, by any means; however, all learners would be better served when these theories could be disseminated through modules and allotted the time necessary to be assimilated into acquired capacities.

Coupled with a self-assessment tool, scholars would be able to evaluate their growth beyond then-present stances. Canvas could definitely be adapted to assist with this endeavor, as it already conducts learning formats in this autonomous style of self-directed education.

It is the hope-filled dream of the Research Investigator that such a program would be created and offered free of costs to all universities' staffs and attendees. As for the opus, itself, a collaboration between Drs. Henschke and Isenberg could articulate the module abstracts associated with each elemental alignment of the relationship factors. The Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI) would be the schematic for this venture as it denotes the essential beliefs, feelings, and behaviors necessary for an educator engaging learning encounters. In fact, as MIPI has been previously modified, it is advised that an applicant feature promoting an individualized choice for a specific industry or career field be incorporated into the program, allowing the participant to benefit from a thorough alignment. While each of these professors has long since retired from university employment, they have been fluent Andragogues and remained active practitioners of lifelong learning. Simply tapping into their comprehensions of these aspirations could script a framework for an online instructional curriculum regarding mentored relationships. Any number of willing Andragogues would lend effort to develop this prospective outline into a viable program, including this Research Investigator.

Beyond the high aspirations of developing an online curriculum for acquiring the knowledge necessary to initiate and reciprocate a meaningful academic relationship, the Research Investigator esteems the Committee Chair and members for their relevant

contributions to the successful outcome of this doctorate endeavor. This investigative journey has gleaned a scholarship of enlightenment which will continue to illuminate. The Research Investigator has learned a wealth about personal development and relationship building in light of this dissertation topic, which attempted to address the high rates of attrition among doctoral candidates. It is deemed a worthy mission for advisors, teachers, and Committee Chairpersons to reach out to struggling doctoral students with the rapport and resources necessary for each to cultivate the academic strategies and personal resilience essential to accomplish the challenge of a terminal degree. Every graduate of higher education has the potential to improve society with timely innovations and critical improvements sought through scholarly workforces within industries worldwide.

“We [will] grow forward when the delights of growth and anxieties of safety are greater than the anxieties of growth and the delights of safety” (Maslow, 2011, p. 45).

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## Appendix A

### Reasons for Attrition

#### Faculty/University Complaints:

- Inadequate or inaccurate advising (Bair et al., 1999)
- Lack of interest or attention on the part of the advisor (Bair et al., 1999)
- Unavailability of the advisor/faculty to students (Bair et al., 1999)
- Advisor inaccessible by email, phone, or in person to guide or answer questions (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Negative relationship or even conflict between the student and advisor/faculty (Bair et al., 1999)
- Lack of solid advisor-advisee relationship (Lenz, 1995)
- Periods of major faculty changes (Blum, 2010)
- Lacking confidence and trust in dissertation chair (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Faculty didn't care if you finished (Katz, 1995)
- Lack of supervisor support (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Very little support after course work (Katz, 1995)
- Evaluate the advisor less favorably (Blum, 2010)
- No perception of belongingness to university (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Students disappointed in or dissatisfied with their doctoral programs (Bair et al., 1999)
- Rate priority of PhD lower (Blum, 2010)
- Inadequate language preparation (Miller, 1995)
- Inadequate preparation (Miller, 1995)
- Discontinuity of attendance (Miller, 1995)
- Lacking inspiring relationships (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Not having mentor or critical friends throughout the doctoral dissertation process (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Not having a guide through the process (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Not having a role model to follow (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Lack of coaching (Reedy et al., 2015)

Faculty/University Complaints (continued):

- No one to feed articles and additional information (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Not receiving timely feedback (Reedy et al., 2015)
- No encouragement to mentor as alumnus (Reedy et al., 2015)

## Appendix A

**Reasons for Attrition**Topic/Project Issues:

- Lack of an appropriate strong dissertation topic (Bair et al., 1999; Lenz, 1995)
- Number of times the dissertation topic changed (Bair et al., 1999; Miller, 1995)
- Difficulty reducing the topic and making it manageable in scope (Bair et al., 1999)
- A poor topic choice or inaccessible subject (Bair et al., 1999)
- Nature of the dissertation subject (Miller, 1995)
- Less interested in the dissertation research topic (Blum, 2010)
- Dissertation courses didn't help with the actual project (Katz, 1995)
- Lack of structure in the dissertation stage (Bair et al., 1999)
- Difficulties completely engaging in dissertation project (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Change of field (Miller, 1995)
- Change in Committee (Miller, 1995)
- More likely to do a questionnaire than a laboratory study (Blum, 2010)
- Students having to work at positions not directly related to their research (Bair et al., 1999)
- Forced to rely primarily on their own resources (Bair et al., 1999)
- Students disappointed in or dissatisfied with their doctoral programs (Bair et al., 1999).
- No perception of belongingness to university (Dupont et al., 2013).
- Greater number of stressful events as graduate student (Blum, 2010).
- Older adults take longer to complete FD (field dissertation ?) (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Lack of task value (DuPont et al., 2013)

## Appendix A

**Reasons for Attrition**Personal Life Role Conflicts:

- Personality factors such as perfectionism and depression (Bair et al., 1999)
- Procrastination (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Higher level of procrastination (Blum, 2010)
- Lack of self-efficacy (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Lack of intrinsic motivation (DuPont et al., 2013; Reedy et al., 2015)
- Lack of accountability (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Low frustration tolerance, rebellion, and self-denigration (Blum, 2010)
- Lack of coordination on the part of the student (Miller, 1995)
- Stressful life events may hinder dissertation completion (Bair et al., 1999)
- Greater number of stressful events as graduate student (Blum, 2010)
- Stressful events cause more interference (Blum, 2010)
- Health of student (Miller, 1995)
- Role conflicts (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Time constraints (Tough, 1979, as cited in Knowles, 1990).
- Outside (external) influences, namely family and work, may influence the student to the point of initiating negative role conflicts (Miller, 1995; (Katz, 1995)
- Financial reasons (Miller, 1995)
- Money constraints (Lenz, 1995).
- Significant money problems (Blum, 2010)
- Residing off campus (Miller, 1995)
- Long journeys to universities (DuPont et al., 2013; (Blum, 2010)
- Family issues (Miller, 1995)
- Live with partner (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Have children to care for (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Early separation or loss of parent (Blum, 2010)
- Lack of an active support network (Lenz, 1995; DuPont et al., 2013)

## Appendix B

### Reasons for Persistence

#### Faculty/University Complaints:

- A good advisor (supportive, interested, competent, secure) (Bair et al., 1999; Katz, 1995)
- Frequent contact and deep relationship with supervisor (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Accessible by email, phone, or in person to guide and answer questions (Reedy et al., 2015)
- A caring advisor (Lenz, 1995)
- Confidence and trust in dissertation chair (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Guidance (Bair et al., 1999)
- Communication with students (Bair et al., 1999)
- Quality of the program (Bair et al., 1999)
- Fairness in requirements (Bair et al., 1999)
- Institutional commitment (Miller, 1995)
- Academic integration (Miller, 1995)
- Perception of belongingness to university (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Concern for students as professionals (Bair et al., 1999)
- Efficient completion of coursework and comprehension exams (Blum, 2010)
- Consistence in evaluation of students (Bair et al., 1999)
- More a reflection of the field, or department, rather than the university (Miller, 1995)
- GPA (grade point average) (Miller, 1995)
- Able to overcome the blocking perfectionistic traits with the support they received (Lenz, 1995)
- Seek assistance and guidance (Holmes et al., 2010)
- A guide through the process (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Coaching (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Inspiring relationships (Reedy et al., 2015)
- A role model to follow (Reedy et al., 2015)

Faculty/University Complaints (continued):

- Maintain regular communication with dissertation chair and committee members (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Timely feedback (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Having mentor or critical friends throughout the doctoral dissertation process (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Rapport with mentor (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Encouraged to mentor as alumnus (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Fed articles and additional information (Reedy et al., 2015)
- Engaging in the interpersonal and small group skills needed for effective teamwork (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Giving and receiving feedback on task-related and teamwork behaviors (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Exchanging resources and information (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Challenging each other's reasoning (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Mutually influencing each other's reasoning and behavior (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Advocating increased efforts to achieve (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Processing how effectively group members work together and how the effectiveness can be continuously improved (Holmes et al., 2010)

## Appendix B

**Reasons for Persistence**Topic/Project Issues:

- Good topic choice (accessible, manageable, interesting) (Bair et al., 1999)
- A stimulating, exciting topic (Lenz, 1995)
- High level of engagement in completing dissertation project (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Began dissertation research early in program (Blum, 2010)
- Internal strength (independence, high motivation, ability to endure frustration) (Bair et al., 1999)
- Accepted responsibility for their own dissertations (Lenz, 1995; (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Student controls their own learning (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Self-imposed deadline or goal (Bair et al., 1999)
- Goal commitment (Miller, 1995)
- Focus on goal to be achieved (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Single focus on area of inquiry and continuous scanning for updates (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Explicit visualization of goal and will to attain it (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Develop cognitive strategies and control mechanisms to achieve the desired goals (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Structured and disciplined approach to writing tasks (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Good writers write and re-write several times (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Continuous assessment of skills, motivation, ability levels, and work product (Holmes et al., 2010)
- High level of task value (DuPont et al., 2013)

## Appendix B

**Reasons for Persistence**Personal Life Role Conflicts:

- Accountability (Reedy et al., 2015)
- High levels of self-efficacy (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Intent to persist (Miller, 1995; Katz, 1995)
- Commit to completing the work (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Able to persevere (Lenz, 1995)
- Remain positive at all time (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Intrinsically motivated (DuPont et al., 2013; Reedy et al., 2015)
- High level of internal locus of control (Blum, 2010)
- Avoid external distractions (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Strategic, personal management of self, time, and priorities (Holmes et al., 2010)
- Using time management skills (Katz, 1995)
- Keeping focused and passionate (Katz, 1995)
- Social integration (Miller, 1995)
- Few, if any, role conflicts (DuPont et al., 2013)
- Avoiding or limiting employment (Bair et al., 1999)
- Delaying internship (until completion of dissertation) (Bair et al., 1999)
- Belief in what the doctorate could do for one's career aspirations (Bair et al., 1999)
- Externally-imposed incentives (such as future employment) (Bair et al., 1999)
- Money (Katz, 1995)
- Finance attitudes (Miller, 1995)
- Closer to campus (DuPont et al., 2013; (Blum, 2010)
- Fewer number of personal moves in home (Blum, 2010)
- Family and peer support (Lenz, 1995; DuPont et al., 2013)
- Encouragement from friends and family (Miller, 1995)
- Giving and receiving help and assistance (both task-related and personal) (Holmes et al., 2010)

## Appendix C

### Student Sentiments

#### Direct Quotes from among 139 Doctoral Students

*The Doctorate: Talking About the Degree*, (Dinham & Scott, 1999)  
University of Western Sydney, Nepean, Australia

Author's note: The following narratives have been abridged from the enormous collection of data within this mega-study. Each sentiment was chosen for its inferred alignment with the focal points being presented within this exploration of doctoral student perceptions. While all of these respondents were successful doctoral graduates, it is unknown who or how many had ever reached the All But Dissertation (ABD) phase. *As most of these selected perceptions were attrition-oriented, negative connotations, the more persistence-inclined, positive statements will be set apart in italic typeface.*

One hundred and thirty-nine (139) people completed the electronic survey, 65 men and 74 women. The great majority of participants in this study (84%) were awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), with 11% receiving the degree of Doctor of Education (EdD).

The bulk of the participants were American citizens who had completed their doctorate in the USA, with Australians who studied 'at home' the second largest category.

Most participants were in the 41-50-year age range when they participated in the study. There were more women (12%) and fewer men (2%) in the lowest age range – 20-30 years . . . 41-50 (men = 42%, women = 39%) and 51-60 (men = 25%, women = 23%). Eight percent (8%) of men were aged 61 or more but none of the women were of this age.

Sixty-five (65%) of people mentioned factors or events which they believe hindered them in the initial undertaking of their doctorate. [T]he most common was that of financial difficulties which was mentioned by almost 60% of those who had experienced some form of problem in beginning their doctorate. The next factor most commonly given was related to family life, with such reasons as strain on marriage, having to support others in the family while studying, children to care for, and family health being mentioned.

The reasons most commonly given for choosing a particular university at which to complete a doctorate were: geographic proximity to family (36% of respondents), . . . the desire to work with a particular supervisor (22%).

(T)he factor contributing to doctoral success most commonly given by those surveyed was the supervisor and faculty/department, which was mentioned by 75 people (54%). Other factors given were support of family and friends (28)

(O)verwhelmingly the most common response could be summed up with the words perseverance and tenacity, which 127 people (91%) saw as essential to doctoral success.

#### As aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

##### **Provision of Facilities by Departments and Universities:**

- \*'NO assistance of any kind was provided with the exception of consultation from faculty members.'
- \*'The university supplied nothing except library space.'
- \*'faculty member who provided most support (who was in other dept) provided some equipment.'

##### **Supervision Arrangements:**

- \*'a three-person committee . . . not terribly useful in terms of guidance.'
  - \*'I did not have any say in this arrangement and don't think I ever considered whether I liked it or not – it just was!'
  - \*'Faculty advisers were worthless because they didn't take their role seriously.'
  - \*'My adviser was mostly involved. . . . Needed support from others besides my adviser. But he didn't really involve anyone else and I felt like I couldn't really go ask them on my own.'
  - \*'the faculty in the department did not get along well with each other.'
  - \*'I didn't particularly like him personally, but I was stuck with him.'
- 
- \*'*My adviser gave me political tips and tried to put together a friendly, but sufficiently critical group to assure my work would get a careful review and be maximally credible.*
  - \*'*My doctoral adviser made suggestions as to who would be good my committee and he suggested that another faculty member be co-chair with him on the dissertation.*
  - \*'*she too turned out to be excellent, supportive and approachable.*
  - \*'*this was a person who never failed to express enthusiasm for any progress, which I needed.*

**Choosing a Potential Supervisor:**

\*'I met and worked with (at long distance) my future PhD adviser'

*\*'I decided that I wanted to study with him and his colleagues.'*

*\*'Availability of supervisors sympathetic to the topic.'*

*\*'The particular supervisor's and department's theoretical, ideological and philosophical focus.'*

*\*'I particularly wanted to work with one of my supervisors.'*

*\*'What a stroke of luck to find a compatible supervisor who knew me from my Master's work and was willing to take me through to the PhD level! . . . an absolutely excellent role model.'*

**Relationship with Supervisor:**

*\*'Overall relationship with the supervisor was positive.'*

*\*'The relationship was first class and fully supportive before, during and after the course of study.'*

*\*'Overall, it was good.'*

*\*'The relationship was excellent. As mutual respect and trust grew over time the relationship became more open and relaxed. My supervisor was always supportive and loyal, was a critical friend (never undermining confidence), provided excellent and fast critical feedback on writing and was a wise and diplomatic mentor and friend. A lasting friendship has resulted from the experience.'*

*\*'We were both strong-willed, and not all of her advice during my doctorate was in my best interest. But on the greater whole, I had an excellent supervisor who made me believe that my work was important and worth the agony that I went through to complete it.'*

*\*'It began very positive and remained positive . . . they related to me in a very positive, supportive manner.'*

*\*'The relationship was one of mutual respect.'*

*\*'The overall relationship was very good and progressed well at a professional level.'*

*\*'Our relationship was positive, professional, and collegial.'*

*\*'We had a very friendly relationship.'*

**'Fitting in' to the Department and Faculty:**

*\*'The faculty don't go out of their way to be nurturing and supportive emotionally, but they certainly were intellectually supportive and gave us excellent support in doing research.'*

*\*'Relationships with faculty were fairly close and we interacted frequently on social terms.'*

*\*'It depended on the individual faculty member. Overall, I'd say the faculty was supportive.'*

### **Quality of Supervision Received:**

\*'In retrospect, it seems to me that supervisors were content to let students go their own way – very laissez-faire – and so the quality of supervision received depended very much on how demanding one was as a student.'

\*'Not wanting to look like he favored his own student, I sometimes got less help from him than did other students.'

\*'My chair provided minimal – no assistance. I had tremendous (and sole) support from one committee member'

\*'Faculty support during my dissertation was poor at best . . . the faculty have no time or interest to work with students.'

\*'My supervisor read what I sent him, usually saw me when I requested a consultation, provided minimal commentary and less than minimal encouragement. I was very much left to my own devices.'

\*'I had not much help from my official supervisor and much help from my colleagues'

\*'Initially, my Chairperson was very difficult.'

\*'six months were absolute hell, only saved by my co-supervisor who managed to persuade No 1 supervisor that this was a good thesis and should be submitted.'

*\*'My supervisors provided just the right amount of assistance and advice that I required, and we had no problems that could not be resolved amicably'*

*\*'My supervisors stretched me with provocative and stimulating conversation and gave me unsolicited guidance and advice when they deemed it in my best interests.'*

*\*'If they believed I should be able to work the answers out myself, they always provided me with enough info so that I could do that.'*

*\*'I received good info and support because my chair knew all the ropes and how to get things done to standard.'*

### **Disenchantment, 'Politics' and Other Problems:**

\*'my supervisors were supportive my project did not 'fit' anywhere in the department and the complication of working off campus meant that I had very little contact with anyone other than my supervisors.'

\*'I had rubbed several senior faculty the wrong way by raising serious methodological concerns about their entire research programs in my comprehensive exams. I was told that I had grounds to challenge the ruling, but that it would be a living hell if I decided to stay.'

\*'Our faculty actively discouraged students from pursuing any other interests except research in a narrowly defined area of the field, research that would directly benefit the faculty member's vitae.'

\*'Sometimes, I was forced to take sides with my mentor against other faculty. . . . My mentor was an MD and a tenured faculty member who held grudges.'

\*'Doctoral students were generally held hostage to the internecine fighting, petty jealousies and outright wars between faculty, and between departments.'

*\*'with support from my supervisor'*

### **Pressure on Relationships:**

\*'did not feel that I had much support or understanding from those around me. Felt extremely alone.'

\*'My family life suffered, I bitterly regret missing my children grow up, my wife had an affair with a bloke she worked with and left me four days after I was told to rewrite it.'

*\*'my supervisor was supportive.'*

*\*'I am grateful for the advice my adviser gave me concerning the Counselling Centre at my university.'*

### **Changes in the Student/Supervisor Relationship:**

\*'He is quite a rude person, and I do not really like him personally (to be honest), but I respect him professionally, and was therefore able to work with him.'

\*'It was okay at the beginning but as she began to feel the pressures for tenure, I hardly ever spoke or talked to her and could not get feedback on my work.'

\*'I lost respect for the supervisor over the course of the work. . . . Standards were unclear. There was a lack of direction or 'teaching' during the process.'

*\*'Over the course of my doctorate, we got to know each other quite well and I feel that he came to respect me as a scientist.'*

*\*'I had a good relationship with my adviser that became loser during the course of the doctorate.'*

*\*'We became better friends, and the friendship has continued.'*

### **A Degree of Dissatisfaction and Other Problems:**

\*'During the process of the dissertation, he was exacting, demanding, etc., etc., etc.'

\*'My supervisor was not much real help. I was left alone mostly.'

\*'Our relationship kept worsening as I approached completion, with him delaying completion with endless requests for additional work.'

\*'My supervisor (actually not a professor) was very harmful: he was a gay male and the only other supervisee was a gay male (I'm a straight female). The supervisor consistently discriminated between the two of us, treating the other supervisee quite well and even telling me that he disliked me strongly.'

**Coping with the Pressures of the Doctorate:**

\*'I felt insecure academically.'

\*'periodic clashes with supervisors or poor evaluations were met with entering psychotherapy for brief periods to address misunderstandings or to redevelop goals.'

\*'Regular psychotherapy helped me to cope with issues surrounding my committee. At first, I was ashamed to go to it because of the stigma surrounding mental health counselling, but I soon came to recognize that it is a strength to recognize that the doctoral process is a lonely one and that psychotherapy and counselling are just another kind of resource'

\*'Most of my problems had to do with a certain faculty member and his treatment of graduate students. The faculty tried to intervene'

*\*'The supervisor recognized this and if too long a time elapsed between my producing material he would seek me out and assist in whatever way he could.'*

*\*'My family was able to be supportive.'*

*\*'He was very understanding.'*

**Difficulties Associated with Dissemination:**

\*'Have not received any encouragement from my supervisors – it would have been nice for that relationship to have carried on as a mentoring relationship.'

\*'I get no help from my supervisor.'

\*'My committee members never even suggested to me that my findings were worthy of publication.'

**Little Contact or None:**

\*'I felt lonely.'

\*'There weren't any arrangements, and, in retrospect, they were certainly NOT adequate for my needs.'

\*'No arrangements were made because the faculty do not want to commit any time . . . couldn't even get her attention in these meetings.'

\*'Any intellectual companionship I had was largely self-generated or initiated. At the time, that seemed fine. In retrospect, I feel somewhat cheated.'

**Not Helpful or Lack of Formal Requirements:**

\*'Needed more mentoring.'

\*'No other mandatory aspects. This lack of institutionalized opportunities for discussion on a department-wide basis did not serve the graduate students well.'

\*Fighting the faculty.'

### **Mainly Negative Feelings:**

\*'I was recovering from being ill and having surgery when I finished, so I can't separate how bad I felt physically from how I felt emotionally. All I am at this point is angry and disgusted that no one worked very hard getting me a job. They wrote OK references, but they didn't go out of their way to call anyone.'

\*'I felt physically and emotionally drained on the submission of my thesis.'

\*'When I started graduate school I lost my self-esteem, confidence, identity, and any sense of happiness. The longer I was in school the worse it got. As a graduate student you are treated as worthless and ignorant. Even as I received national awards acknowledging my competence, I could not shake this sense of inferiority. I had to work hard to re-gain my identity by working out, going to church, reading (unscholarly works) and spending time away from Academe but even after a year of trying to renew myself I am far from complete. The doctorate actually stunted and regressed my growth as a whole person. I am not sure it was worth it to obtain this degree.'

\*'I felt abused by the process and by certain members of my faculty.'

\*'I was not treated well by anyone, including my family.'

### **Other difficulties:**

\*'I yelled at the graduate director because he hadn't been upfront with me about how much the fees were and he wasn't going to give me the full tuition waiver that he'd promised – it took me 2.5 years to recover from that!'

\*'Actually the only hindrance that I had was a professor at my undergraduate college who refused to write me a letter of recommendation for my application to graduate school . . . he refused saying that it was a big mistake for me to pursue the PhD and that I should get an MD instead.'

\*'It took about two years to identify the appropriate supervisor'

*\*'I called my adviser, told him I was afraid the next letter would be a denial of admission, he called to intervene on my behalf and I was accepted.'*

### **Mixed Feelings:**

\*'I can't say that my Doctoral adviser did much for me. My Research adviser was more helpful, but hasn't been any real help or particularly friendly'

\*'Faculty, to some extent, treated us 'older' scholars the same as if we were undergraduates.'

- \*'Faculty were not especially eager to be accepting or supportive.'
- \*'I got great support from some, sabotage from others.'

### **Informal Arrangements:**

- \*'Basically it was up to me to initiate meetings as and when I needed to discuss things.'
- \*'*My supervisor was approachable and available when needed.*'
- \*'*The supervisor was always prepared to meet when asked and we saw each other regularly.*'

### **Meetings:**

- \*'Fairly formal arrangements – meetings when needed.'
- \*'*Were adequate because they were timely, and extremely useful.*'

### **Lifestyle and Other Effects:**

- \*'I had no life beyond school and reading. This is problematic because it distorts your academic thinking, you become incredibly myopic.'
- \*'*I don't look back on it negatively.*'
- \*'*The university was very supportive.*'

### **Positive Aspects of the Doctoral Process:**

- \*'*My supervisor is still a friend and mentor.*'
- \*'*The discipline that you have to have or acquire to do a major piece of research.*'
- \*'*Teaches one self-sufficiency, the need to network with others, to work smart, and to not give up hope.*'

### **Other Factors Contributing to Doctoral Success:**

- \*'There needs to be a lot more support.'
- \*'There needs to be a major rethinking of what a doctorate, and a doctoral program is, and what it could/should be. Until the academy acknowledges the personal lives, and particularly for women, the family/mothering roles in our lives as a CRITICAL and VALIDATED part of WHO we are and what is IMPORTANT.'
- \*'I don't think it is an adviser's duty to be a parent figure . . . advisers should treat students fairly and equitably.'
- \*'*An understanding family wouldn't hurt.*'
- \*'*A supportive and understanding network of family and friends.*'
- \*'*Supportive friends or family.*'

- \*'Competent faculty, who can stimulate students to think.'*
- \*'Support . . . an exacting supervisor, a good peer network . . . mentoring as far as being strategic about doctorate and career.'*
- \*'I had great support.'*
- \*'I didn't allow the program to take over my life – I had too many other things going on to allow that.'*
- \*'I think faculty support is really the key.'*
- \*'The important thing, is that I could get up and move on.'*
- \*'just how important choosing the right supervisor for you is.'*
- \*'I know I can reach my goals.'*
- \*'My department was wonderfully supportive in ways that I needed. . . . My parents and my children were also supportive in their own ways.'*
- \*'A 'program' is perceived by each individual in terms of the perspective one brings to it.'*

#### As aligning with Topic/Project Issues

##### **Reasons for Selecting the Topic for Investigation:**

- \*'I chose to select another topic rather than be at odds with a committee.'*
- \*'I worked on one topic suggested by my advisor for 2 years. It didn't pan out.'*
- \*'Three months of agonizing thinking.'*
- \*'I selected the topic late in the process because I had very little input from faculty. That is, I brought them many topics, brought they wouldn't support or reject them.'*
- \*'Selecting the field had no direct difficulties other than the absence of supervisors with specialist knowledge in the technical field.'*
- \*'Change in topic required change in supervisor (Dean) who questioned the integrity of my initial program. Subsequent supervisor was forthright in his disinterest in my topic, but accommodating nonetheless, hence a supervisory marriage of convenience.'*
- \*'If I had been doing my own research, I would not have chosen this topic. Anyway, he drags me along on this – with me barely understanding either the topic, or the design. Then 3 weeks before the defense he decides to have a nervous breakdown and resigns from the university. So, I was left to finish this thing and defend it on my own. Since he was my dissertation chair, I had to reconstitute the committee, appoint a new chair, finish the damn dissertation and defend the thing all in 3 weeks. I defended on the last possible day to meet my target graduation date.'*
- \*'I was already working on a research project with my advisor.'*
- \*'My Prof. was euphoric when I told her about my research plans.'*
- \*'I got the idea from talking with faculty members. The specific idea came from the person who became my Research Advisor.'*

- \*'I selected my topic with the guidance of my supervising professor.'*
- \*'A faculty member in sociology approached me and asked if I was interested in working on his research agenda (nonverbal communication). I was and became his research assistant for a year and then did my own work.'*
- \*'A process that was assisted in the final stage by an enthusiastic supervisor.'*
- \*'Coming up with a topic that both my dissertation adviser and I were interested in.'*

#### **Limited background in the Study area:**

- \*'I was initially discouraged by the program chair because of my limited experience in the field – to overcome this, I just worked hard and proved him wrong.'*

#### **Difficulties in Gaining Approval for the Research Project:**

- \*'No one in my department does qualitative research or works outside a functionalist paradigm so I had great difficulty.'*
- \*'Two of the four committee didn't really understand it and gave me problems'*
- \*'My diss. Chair and other faculty members on my committee in my own dept. did not understand my statistical methods at all and knew little about the theory/investigation involved.'*
- \*'Dissertation committee not in agreement.'*
- \*'A personality conflict with my supervisor . . . tried to divert me into something more akin to his own research.'*

#### As aligning with Personal Life Role Conflicts

#### **Family Hindrances and Problems:**

- \*'My family was not very supportive at first. . . . My parents, especially my mother, thought it was 'foolishness' for me to devote so much time to this undertaking.'*
- \*'The PhD meant that my personal time was almost non-existent. This wasn't easy on my family.'*
- \*'Personal – my parents were against it. Other members of my family told me I was 'running away from life'.'*
- \*'Family commitments were (and are) highly time consuming.'*
- \*'Two kids at once, ie, a dissertation and a real baby.'*
  
- \*'No, once I made up my mind to pursue my degree I was able to move ahead. I had tremendous support from family and friends.'*
- \*'I was so focused that I didn't notice problems – just went and did it.'*

#### **Financial Support During the Doctorate:**

- \*'My family not only could not help with my support but I needed to help support them.'*

\*'There were financial barriers. I worked three jobs during my first year while going to school full-time. I was working over 70 hours a week to pay my \$16,000 tuition plus living and expenses.'

\*'For financial reasons, I had to continue to maintain full-time employment. This meant that my personal time was almost non-existent. This wasn't easy on my family.'

\*'Yes, the government went through financial difficulties – I tried to hold down university jobs, but they kept cutting them. In addition tuition costs went through the roof!'

\*'I had a new baby and was working fulltime as was my husband so I had to be made!'

\*'Began rather late, as I was employed full-time, and it took quite a leap to quit [employment] and become full-time student.'

*\*'My employers were extremely supportive, allowing me to use their resources.'*

#### **Other Means of Support:**

\*'Parental support was sporadic but helpful.'

\*'I relied on parent support.'

#### **Financial Adjustments and Problems:**

\*'The major problems were financial – the whole family had to adjust to a lower standard of living. I was not prepared for how much the PhD would dominate my life for such a long time.'

\*'It was a little tight in the finance aspect.'

\*'My family was not supportive of my work, and we were always on the brink of bankruptcy.'

*\*'We lived on nothing, but my husband was unfailingly supportive.'*

#### **Financial Hardship:**

\*'I was poor most of the time and had to borrow money (student loans) to eat. Now I have a lot of debt that is going to be difficult to repay.'

\*'The need to work 20-30 hours a week along with a full course load made our home life almost non-existent.'

\*'There were a lot of problems with my family and no holidays during those eight years experience.'

\*'I think that this workload inevitably slowed my thesis completion, but who can support a family on a scholarship?'

**Personal Adjustments and Changes:**

\*'I didn't read a newspaper or watch TV for two years. This was the biggest problem. I also lost a sense of my identity. I am still trying to regain it.'

\*'My family was not supportive of my work. . . . I just did the best I could, persisted'

\*'My supervisor(s) were wisely attempting to make me independent of them.'

\*'My supervisor is still a friend and mentor.'

\*'The ability to do two or three things at once was a positive outcome.'

\*'I became more efficient.'

**Mixed or Predominantly Negative Personal Effects of the Doctorate:**

\*'I missed my kids grow up and lost my marriage for nothing.'

\*'I worked with nationally-known professors who had great reputations in the literature, and who were painfully lopsided, socially dysfunctional people who felt they had only their intelligence to offer. These were not happy well adjusted people, and their ability to influence the lives of grad students was personally horrible.'

**Health Problems Associated with the Doctorate:**

\*'My major physical crisis was that I needed my gall bladder removed in an emergency procedure shortly after I defended my dissertation. I couldn't finish the corrections on time and had to graduate several months later because of it.'

\*'Actually, I had far more epiphanies and several nervous breakdowns during my second and fourth years of graduate study. These arose from several factors – being in a new political climate, being far away from my family and close, trusted friends.'

\*'I got sick a lot – pneumonia, chicken pox, etc. – I got pretty run down.'

**An Enjoyable Experience:**

\*'My family tell me that they share ownership of the degree, and I think they do – we all had an interesting couple of years.'

\*'The experience that I gained shapes the way I look at myself and my work.'

\*'I grew into somebody I can be proud of.'

**Personal Qualities Needed to Succeed:**

\*'A determination to continue on, even when benefits are unclear.'

\*'ability to say 'no' to anything unrelated to the study.'

\*'Stubborn persistence.'

\*'Believe in oneself as a learning being.'

\*'Perseverance and a burning thirst to KNOW and to UNDERSTAND about something.'

**Clear Goals and Purpose:**

*\*'A person needs to be goal-oriented and willing to make sacrifices to attain those goals.'*

*\*'Consider the obstacles before you start the process (there are many).'*

*\*'Part of learning is keeping an open mind and listening to other's viewpoints.'*

*\*'There is no optimal set of skills or personality traits that lead to success.'*

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**Narratives surrounding Qualifying Examinations**

*The Creation of ABDs: A Turning Point in Educational Doctoral Programs?* (Sigafus, 1998)

Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Diego, CA)

The study was based on a review of 25 students' records in the University of Kentucky's Department of Educational Administration, where less than half of the students who complete the comprehensive exam earn the EdD.

**Structure**As Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

'It was almost a 'now what do I do?' feeling. I'm to begin my dissertation'

'As long as you're having a class you're committed but when there is no structure you lose it.'

'I think that there is not anything pushing it. There's not any . . . there is no deadline.'

As Aligning with Topic/Project Issues

'Referring to one course, we wrote what . . . four pages a week? That's got to be close to 50 pages. Those four pages were about what I could handle in a week.'

'I'm still a little bit hazy about how to put this [dissertation proposal] thing together.'

'I'm I the sixth re-write of my proposal and I don't know how to make it any better!'

As Aligning with Personal Life Role Conflicts

‘I find myself studying late at night when everyone is asleep and I can concentrate. . . . I need the quiet, so I have to work at night when the phone won’t ring, the kids aren’t in and out, and the TV isn’t on.’

‘I have so many other things to do [at the office] that I always worked at home.’

‘Generally, what I had to do with studying was just commit all my weekends and time off to it.’

‘Class was a part of me and a part that I miss, I’m on my own now!’

‘Now I can’t find the time to get back to [doctoral] work.’

‘Before we had a definite routine. I know I need to get back in that rut to get this done, but it was so hard and I just don’t want to do that to myself and my family.’

**Pressure**As Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

‘It was such a relief, a feeling of relief, when all of this was off my back.’

‘The relief of that being over was like two tons falling off my shoulders.’

‘There is no question that we were pushed in classes. We really were. I think when we look back, it’s ‘How did we do all that work?’’

As Aligning with Personal Life Role Conflicts

‘I’m trying to teach school, buy a house and a farm, and work on the doctoral program. I’m balancing a lot of things: everybody wants a piece of me.’

‘I felt that to be successful in this program I had to give up part of my life. I think it was part of my family life . . . I regret that.’

‘I needed a break.’

‘when we started the proposal writing class we were sort of ready, but at the same time just worn out, just exhausted. Most of us slacked off and have slacked off for a year!’

‘I felt like I don’t care what I do, I’m not ready to get done.’

*‘When you get to the point of finishing the oral part it’s like ‘I’m done, I’ve climbed to the top of the mountain!’*

*‘I feel strongly about finishing my course work each semester. No matter what I had to do as far as work or outside activities I made time to get my course work done. It was important for me to do what I had to do, when I had to do it and do a good job on it.’*

## **Support**

### As Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

‘There were 12 people in my cohort, and there was no one else that knew what I was going through.’

‘We have gone our separate ways. In some ways that’s unfortunate, but it can’t be helped.’

‘We don’t meet now because we are too spread out. We’re just too busy.’

‘There was no support system [after the Qualifying Examination] so we let everything else take over.’

‘Some problems occurred, you couldn’t get to people [faculty]; it wasn’t a matter of they didn’t want to [return our calls] but they were gone for a week or more at a time.’

‘In my proposal meeting [my Advisor] rarely said a word.’

‘There are ambiguous remarks on my drafts which don’t give me any direction.’

*‘The friendships I made in classes are very important to me. Sometimes that was my only interaction with friendly adults!’*

*During the examination, “not being in a room by myself, having friends in the room, helped me feel comfortable.’*

*‘One thing I can unreservedly say is none of the faculty ever turned down any request to meet with me. No one ever said, “I don’t have time for you.”’*

### **Authority**

#### As Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

‘Without someone standing over you saying this has to be done by a certain time, it’s easy to take that break for a long, long time!’

‘What’s frustrating is when I write something and I get it back and they have written more than I have! That makes you just want to throw it away and not go back to it.’

‘It seems the more I send it in the more comments I get about it. It’s almost like I went from almost good to this is not very good at all.’

*‘I told my Chair my topic idea and he said, ‘Let’s work on that.’ I thought I’d died and gone to heaven!’*

*‘The faculty – well they worked at building trust and understanding . . . they established trust in us.’*

### **Doctoral Student Sentiments**

#### *At Cross Purposes: What the Experiences of Today’s Doctoral Students Reveal About Doctoral Education* (Golde & Dore, 2001)

Wisconsin University, Madison

A national study was conducted to provide a snapshot of the experiences of doctoral students in the arts and sciences. . . . Students in 11 arts and sciences disciplines from 27 institutions and 1 cross-institutional program (the Compact for Faculty Diversity) were surveyed. Responses were received from 4,114 students, a response rate of 42.3%.

#### As aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

‘Holding up in a Ph.D. program in the humanities is the perfect way to insulate yourself from alternative career opportunities. Faculty members in my program acknowledge that there is a job shortage and make this clear to incoming students, but do precious little else to encourage students to consider just what else they might be good for outside the ivory

tower. I wish I had done more to prepare myself for alternatives outside of college/university teaching.'

'Our department puts out very specialized students with little knowledge beyond their research and lab experience, unless you choose to take classes both in and out of our department.'

'My department is very focused on churning out researchers and does not encourage students to excel at teaching nor to investigate other career options, even though the majority of students completing the program do not go on to high-octane research positions, and instead teach at four-year institutions or go into other fields.'

'There are a couple of factors that could have made my time in the Ph.D. program better. I wish I had been better prepared as a junior faculty member, especially in regard to service and departmental politics.'

'It is extremely important to visit prospective graduate schools to look for a fit with the faculty and potential advisor, the research and the atmosphere in the department and school. You want to make sure you will be happy where you are, otherwise your research and performance will suffer. The best way to ensure this is to go visit, talk to students and faculty, and just get a feeling for the place.'

'Students should be encouraged to broaden their network of advisers so that there are other supporters to stand up for them. No qualified student should ever leave a program because of bad advising. There should be mechanisms, at all levels and in all departments, to protect students. Students in my program generally feel respected, valued, and are happy. I know this is not the case for everyone, but it should be.'

'Seek out the advanced students in the program and utilize them as mentors. The best and most useful information comes from other students, as they have just accomplished what you will need to do. They are often more direct, honest and realistic about current conditions.'

'It is impossible to overestimate the significance of the student-advisor relationship. One cannot be too careful about choosing an advisor. This is both a personal and professional relationship that rivals marriage and parenthood in its complexity, variety, and ramifications for the rest of one's life.'

### As Aligning with Personal Life Role Conflicts

‘I don’t think I understood how tough the job market was when I entered the program. I’ve also realized that being at a high-power research university will not give me the kind of life that I want (too many hours, too much stress, not enough value placed on teaching). This realization – along with my enjoyment of teaching – has led me to want a faculty position at a liberal arts college.’

‘Take time off between your undergraduate program and your graduate training. You need the time to develop your ideas and interests. My graduate program and current interests are much different than when I first graduated with my bachelor’s degree. Consider doing a separate master’s degree, and take the opportunity to work on separate projects and diversify your training.’

‘Upon coming to graduate school I knew I wanted to be a professor. During the course of my studies, it has become clear to me that the overhead associated with that is too much for me. Partly these changes in career goals were driven by my desire to have a family in a workable and balanced way. This is not possible (in my view) as a professor.’

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### **Edd. Student Experiences**

#### *Exploring Effective Support Practices for Doctoral Students’ Degree Completion*

(Jimenez, Gokalp, Pena, Fischer, & Gupton, 2010)

University of Minnesota

This study explored the barriers and challenges EdD. students face while pursuing their degree along with the effectiveness of a doctoral support center (DSC) in assisting doctoral candidates. A survey administered to 103 students inquired into participants’ experiences with their program, dissertation chair, and the DSC. In addition, nine students volunteers participated in focus groups and responded to questions related to the DSC, the program, and the advisor.

### As Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

‘Once coursework is completed, it has been difficult to get in touch with my chair. Perhaps if it was required to meet monthly, it would give shared responsibility between the student and chair to meet regularly to better the lines of communication in the final stages of dissertation process.’

‘My advisor has been great but he has not communicated with us very well. If we don’t contact him, we will never hear from him. Thank GOD I am self-motivated because I would have been so delayed if I needed more guidance from my advisor.’

‘It has been very frustrating to try and keep the communication ongoing [with my chair].’

‘[My relationship with my chair] deeply affected me. I can go into detail but it affected my health, motivation, and confidence in the program.’

*‘I know my chair has high expectations and knows how to push me to do well. I also know she would never let me move on to the next step of the process without having completed quality work.’*

*‘I truly believe that the relationship you have with your chair is the key to finishing the program. I am lucky to have an outstanding chair. . . . Others are not so lucky and I have heard horror stories from some of my colleagues.’*

*‘Without my chair, I would not have been able to come this far.’*

*‘The assistance I have received in the past when I have submitted my papers for review have been terrific.’*

#### As Aligning with Personal Life Role Conflicts

‘I work full-time and have many work and personal responsibilities, i.e., caring for an elder parent, spouse with health problems.’

‘I had a 10 month old when I started the program and I gave birth again 8 weeks ago!’

‘We are waiting for my wife to have heart surgery and I have two toddlers.’

‘For me obviously, time probably is the number one challenge just because I think, you know, having a family. My wife works full time and having no family here, working substantial hours, I have no social time. All my free time is put towards just going on the time of having opportunities to figure out when I can write.’

‘My biggest challenge is finding time to complete all of the work (reading assignments and written projects) because I am working fulltime as a teacher. There are lots of things I have to do for my students and my school which impact my time.’

‘It’s just tough trying to hold a full-time job as an administrator, be a mother to a young child, and carry my other responsibilities along with writing the dissertation.’

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### **Doctoral Student Responses**

*Doctoral Students’ Emotional Exhaustion and Intentions to Leave Academia* (Hunter & Devine, 2016)

International Journal of Doctoral Studies

The primary aim of this study was to better understand the antecedents of doctoral students’ emotional well-being, and their plans to leave academia. Based on past research, antecedents included departmental support, the quality of the supervisory relationship, and characteristics of the supervisory relationship. We used a mixed-methods study, and surveyed 186 doctoral students from nine countries.

### As Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

#### **Negative Supervisor Experiences**

‘He is unable to keep everything in order; he has hired too many graduate students and cannot look after their projects.’

‘My supervisor says that he pushes me harder because I can do more. It can be demoralizing never to hear any good feedback.’

‘Overall, I have an incredibly poor relationship with my co-supervisors . . . what made a great impact on me was that they purposefully closed an elevator door in my face to avoid having to ride in the elevator with me.’

‘My supervisor is a very intelligent researcher, but was often verbally abusive, used public humiliation as a control technique’

‘I was trying to run some analyses in another lab. The professor in charge of that lab was willing to help me out, however he requested collaborative work in exchange (i.e. to be co-author). My supervisor didn’t like the idea and the samples were not analyzed.’

‘My dissertation director approved my chapter and later removed approval after another member of my committee did not like the chapter. I felt betrayed by his failure to stand up for me.’

‘Being an international student, I had a number of challenges to face. The worst was working with a supervisor who preferred to support trainees from certain countries but not others.’

‘I had an idea for research. I told my supervisor . . . and we came up with some ways of testing it. . . . He told me he decided to submit the manuscript as the only author. . . . This experience has left me not trusting my supervisor and I will not share research ideas with him again.’

‘My advisor was going on sabbatical for the fall semester and did not properly notify her advisees. I learned of it through an email to the listserv.’

‘Printing 200 exams in my office the night before a final at 2 am. It showed me again my supervisor’s consistent disorganization’

‘She was a terrible human being.’

‘The first supervisor I worked with was a bully. . . . I realized that to continue in academe that I had to change supervisors. It was messy’

‘The abuse I experienced is hard to characterize, especially in a survey form. It took me a long time to understand what was going on because its style was so insidious – being told that to survive in this profession one had to sleep 4 hours a night, or give one’s whole life, 12-hour days at full speed to the profession.’

### **Positive Supervisor Experiences**

*‘My supervisor is able to accept that I am discouraged and does not judge me for it. He focuses on moving forward and encourages me to do the same’*

*‘After spending ages working on a paper which he was incredibly fussy about the quality of the writing, I made some comment about his being a tough reviewer. He said that he went easier in journal reviews but that he wanted me to be able to look back at my PhD papers and be proud of them. That idea has always encouraged me to take that kind of pride in my papers and put effort into writing them well.’*

*'He has really been there for me to go through the growing pains of learning how to think and learn differently.'*

*'My supervisor was very willing to be flexible with working hours, so that I could 'build up' time by working extra hours one month in order to get paid consistently during the following month when I was out of town.'*

*'My continual interactions with my supervisor inspire me.'*

*'My supervisor really helped me to develop skills outside my area of expertise and to develop 'soft' skills like organizing conferences'*

*'My supervisor always gave full credit to the graduate students for the success of their research program'*

*'My current supervisor often praises my work, which I find significant every single time . . . [she] will critique as well . . . and helps me see where the weaknesses in my argument lie.'*

*'My supervisor defended me to my committee when my old supervisor had doubts about my ability to succeed in the program. My 'new' supervisor told me "I believe in you, you can do this." It was a life-changing moment and no one had ever told me that before. I needed that support and encouragement to keep going.'*

### **Reasons for Change of Supervisor**

*'(My) former supervisor left the university.'*

*'My project expanded out of her area of expertise'*

*'Poor treatment, lack of communication, supervisor lost interest in me and led me down the wrong path.'*

*'He treated me very poorly overall to the point where I was literally afraid of him.'*

*'Incompatible sense of ethics; was tired of being lied to and directed to do unethical things.'*

*'He would leave the country for several weeks/the entire summer without informing me about his absence.'*

‘First supervisor was too busy and their research was poor quality.’

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*Perceptions of Mattering in the Doctoral Student and Advisor Relationship,*  
(Schneider, 2015) University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Preliminary research including measures of psychosocial factors on doctoral student success found faculty-student relationships and collegial support contributed significantly to doctoral completion more so than individual factors including motivation, career goals, procrastination, financial security, an external demands such as family. . . . The current study draws on the psychosocial construct of mattering . . . to examine doctoral students’ perception of mattering to their advisors and the influence on their commitment to complete their PhD.

#### As Aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

*\*‘She came to me, and suggested that we meet bi-weekly regularly to help me stay on track. She seems to be pretty engaged in making sure that I make progress towards my dissertation. Currently we’ve agreed to me defending my prospectus in the fall, and she’s making sure I move along in the process. She gives me pretty much enough attention.’*

*\*‘My advisor has put in, I know of at least one proposal that relates to what I would be doing. So he is, as far as funding the research group, he has put in a proposal that would generate funding for my position and my research. I am on his radar, even if it doesn’t always seem like that.’*

*\*‘So I haven’t had too many successes since I’ve been here, but he seems to be pretty enthusiastic when I do something right. Which is good, or if I have a good idea or something like that he applauds it, just interpersonally.’*

*\*‘I would say they’ve led me to confirm my commitment to completing my PhD . . . The more I interact with my advisor, I guess that’s the best way to sum it up, the more I interact with my advisor the more I feel I am in the right place, and the better I feel about continuing on this path to get the PhD. In fact the only down-side, I think, of getting the PhD will mean it’s over and I have to move on.’*

*\*‘Also, mentors from my previous schooling experiences that believe in me, and I have, I would love to be able to tell them that I finally graduated and I no longer need a letter of*

*recommendation for another school, but I need it for a job now. But they've put a lot of effort and faith into me, and I just don't want to see that go to waste.'*

*\*[He] . . . was always there and willing to help. And so, it was, a lot of the times it was contingent upon my going to seek that help out, but I never took that as a bad sign, I took that as he had a lot of stuff on his plate. So, he, I liked the latitude that he gave me, but then also was always there and never made me feel intimidated or bad for coming to ask him for assistance.'*

*\*I feel like he pays a good amount of attention to me. Partly, the two other students he has right now are working on their dissertations, so they're relatively independent for the most part. So I feel like I get a lot of attention from him. And he always seems, whenever I need a meeting, or need to talk to him, he always seems to be available.'*

*\*He's probably more interested in what I have to say than anybody else he talks to on a daily basis. Um, he's genuinely interested in my work even though it's not super similar to his, and he's generally interested in me as a person . . . he has pretty much accepted me as a peer on my subject field, and not only my subject field but a lot of others that have to do with [the field of study], and um, when we are in class together, he's teaching his undergrad class, and subjects come up, he turns it over to me to discuss with the students, and it's very obvious that he is the one paying more attention to what I am saying than any of the students do. He is actually very much attentive to what it is I have to say, and has discussed, would discuss situations in the world with me that were going on, and generally want my opinion of what is going on.'*

*\*I think he's interested in what I have to say. We have definitely had meetings where we meet to discuss a specific thing, finish that and then kind of chat about the state of our field for an extended period of time. Like what was supposed to be 15 minutes meeting turns into an hour long meeting because we're having a good conversation. So, that demonstrates to me that he's interested in what I say.'*

*\*He's very happy about my successes, and has invested in me that my successes – not that my successes are his successes, but just prideful, very prideful. . . . The success would be my first publishing. He very proudly told me that he, well he's very well-published, but because he's kind of a pioneer in his field, that almost all of his publishing was not peer-reviewed, he was invited to do stuff. So, when I got my first article it was peer-reviewed, he said, 'congratulations, you've done something I never did, was peer-reviewed, and that shows that you really belong.'*

*\*He's always been very supportive. He's always told me good job on things, and will list things that I've done well before, and things I haven't done as well, and always*

*phrases them in a very supportive way. And I've had him as a teacher before, so I've done well in his class so far, and yeah, so I guess, he never makes me feel like I'm not going to be good enough to complete it. He always makes me feel like I'm on par. He's also, sorry, very involved with the timeline of everything, so I feel like I'm not going to drag on like some people do that never actually finish a thesis, or kind of linger at the dissertation too long. I feel like I am going to finish in the appropriate amount of time, like he'll keep me on track.'*

*\*'Both of them would be what you call mentors, who really kind of not only challenged me, but showed me special consideration, and really said, "you should be one of us" kind of thing. "You have the ability to be one of us."'*

*\*'well, in general for all the graduate students he's had us all over at his house several times to have lab meetings where it's just all about socializing, and he can talk to you individually about your personal life and things like that that maybe at school or while you're working you don't get into those types of things.'*

#### As Aligning with Topic/Project Issues

*\*'And then after that committee meeting we had a good discussion on, you know, he said, "if this is too much or the whole research area is too overwhelming or too scary to figure out what you're going to do for your dissertation, we can narrow it down", or at least he can provide some more direction for narrowing it down, but he said, "you know if you're okay with just having it kind of broader for now and figuring out what directions you want to go, I'm okay with that." . . . So yeah, actually, after that committee meeting I was just feeling so much better in terms of okay, I'm actually doing okay for the most part when it comes to research related stuff.'*

*\*'Yeah, so just over the summer, last summer, he invited me and knew that I was around and invited me in to talk about dissertation topics, and so that one was out of the blue. And so, went in and spent 45 minutes just chatting about different ideas of where he thinks it could lead, where I could have difficulties. And so that was nice, I thought, of him to take that time to do that.'*

*\*'So, one or both will email me articles, research articles that have recently come out that are relevant to my work. They do this to everyone, the whole lab gets sent out [subject specific] stuff, but I will get sent particular research articles that deal with my area of research by just them. Maybe asking a question in a lab meeting, or saying this would be of interest to you. More through email communicate is them saying, 'hey, this*

*may be of interest to you', or 'hey, this is related,' or 'hey, do you want to start a project on this' kind of thing.'*

*\*Well the only thing that didn't quite go as planned is I was hoping to have already finished my thesis proposal at this point, and I had set that goal for myself, like end of winter break, that's when I'm going to have it done. And I didn't even come close, like I don't have a first draft completed yet. Um, and whenever I've brought it up with him, he's very much been like, 'you know you're setting pretty ambitious goals for yourself, and you're still, I mean the fact that you have a large portion of a draft done is very far ahead of pretty much every other student, so don't feel bad, you're still doing great.'*

*\*Well, I guess what I can think of is, because he does have all the administrative responsibilities, he's not very active in his own research right now, so I'm working with one of his post-docs on this project, his samples of course, but we're kind of doing the grunt work with it. So of course his name will be on those publications, and his name will be on publications that come out of my research as well.'*

*Student Descriptions of the Doctoral Student Attrition Process*, (Golde, 1994)  
Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (19th, Tuscon, AZ)

This study, part of a larger project on doctoral student attrition, presents an in-depth account of the educational experiences of three doctoral students who dropped out. [Only two of which are included herein.]

### **Case #1: Sally**

#### As aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

'I was so unhappy, it was a month and a half into the quarter, more than halfway through the quarter, I walked into Jim's office, and he said "Well how are you doing?" and I burst into tears. He is the only person who ever asked me the entire year how I was doing. None of the faculty, [they] just didn't give a shit. They didn't care what the students are doing. Some of them don't recognize me. I have been in the department and they don't know who I am.'

'She said that I wasn't fully engaged and that other faculty had complained to her about me, and that it was her role to let me know that I was not doing well. And I was totally

floored by this. . . . It was such a bad experience. It was really bad. . . . She was yelling at me, and . . . I was trying really hard not to cry, and I just left.'

[Sally tried to address this problem by approaching each of her professors in turn and asking the if they perceived her as engaged. When faculty did not know what she was talking about she realized that the complaint was] 'just this one psycho, and that it had nothing to do with me.'

'I am not really sure about an advisor in particular, . . . but the faculty showed no interest in the students. They didn't really care what we were doing. And I don't need friends among the faculty, but it would be nice if somebody asked how you were doing. Something like that. Or when you went to ask for help on the statistics problem that they would happily give it to you and not tell you that they were busy and come back another time. . . . And my advisor was willing to do that . . . she was more than happy to help me talk about courses and stuff like that. But I don't think that a lot of students in the department get a feeling of interest from the faculty.'

'And in some ways you would think it would be a priority for the faculty, to keep their students around, and to help them out, and to make them good sociologists or whatever they happen to be. . . . But it seems like they don't care.'

'I really think there is this whole feeling in academia that it should be rough. It should be hard. And no graduate student should be happy. You should be poor, and you should slave. . . . But I really think it doesn't have to be that way. There have to be ways to get through to people on this issue. I think that once people become faculty members they have too many other things on their minds, they just don't care.'

'When I told them I was leaving I didn't get much, no one really asked me why. . . . They kind of viewed it as "This person didn't fit in with us." . . . They may have asked why, but it wasn't like "Why are you dropping out?" It was like "Oh well you didn't fit, you don't think your interests match with ours?" or "What do you think you are going to do next?" It wasn't really an inquiring "Why? Did you have any problems? What were the issues surrounding your decision?"'

'I totally think it was the department and not me. And they definitely framed it as an issue of the student, something being wrong with the student for not fitting with the department.'

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*Student Descriptions of the Doctoral Student Attrition Process*, (Golde, 1994)  
Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (19th, Tuscon, AZ)

## Case #2: Nathan

### As Aligning with Personal Life Role Conflicts

‘I chose Eastern because it had this mystical appeal about it. It was very funny. It was the smallest of the programs, it was probably not the highest regarded of the programs, but it had this mystical appeal of being in [state], and had this reputation of being this really, really good university. They were anxious to have me come there, gave me a nice fat stipend, and all of those good things. So I was very excited about the program.’

‘You only find out after you get there, that Eastern deliberately created the program such that a certain percentage of the students will leave after the first year. It was very, very, very hard. . . . We all saw that weeding out process.’

‘I found out I didn’t particularly like [my advisor], nor did I particularly like the way he worked . . . and I somewhat quickly became a little disenchanted with what I had chosen to do.’

‘I decided I didn’t want to be an academic, I want to go into industry. I was making these radical changes. I started working with this other professor . . . and we started doing consulting research projects. I have to admit that I became a little enamored of the fact that I quickly became the highest paid graduate student in the department. Because . . . I was being paid by a major software company . . . it was really lucrative, it went over really well, we got papers out of it . . . and I was completely sucked into this, and I loved it, I really loved it.’

‘[My second advisor] knew you, he knew what your life was about, you spent time with him doing things, whether it was working late into the evening, or having dinner, . . . he broke down the faculty-student wall. . . . It yields to the graduate student a greater sense of accomplishment if they are treated as more of a peer, a junior peer, but a peer. . . . My first advisor kept that wall up. I was a student-person. He had his life, I had mine. He would give me direction and we would meet, and that was it. Whereas my second advisor was someone who became someone who I would consider not only my mentor, my advisor, but somewhat of my friend, who understood what was important to me and would spend time with me discussing not only . . . my dissertation . . . but discussing what I wanted to do, what was happening . . . in the industry. . . . I liked him much better

as a person. . . . He has a good relationship with every one of his students because of that. I don't know many people that have as good a relationship with some of the other faculty members there. . . . Work and school is more than just producing some product, it is about forming relationships with people. And I valued that when I got it from my second advisor.'

[At first Nathan was about to "talk weekly" on the phone with his advisor. However, Nathan points to two events which reduced his ties to Eastern. First, a few months before he left for California Nathan decided to leave his wife. Second, after the summer, Nathan's boss offered him a full-time job. . . . At the time Nathan was confident that he could both work and do a dissertation:]

'[My boss] wanted me to finish my dissertation, but he also wanted me to work for him. I'd been having a lot of fun, being in Silicon Valley, working 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Getting paid tons of money to do it. I said "Sure I can do this. I can work and do my dissertation and bang bang bang it will all be perfect."

'And I was getting pressure at the same time from my family "Are you going to finish that degree?" It was important to them. So I continued under the increasingly stronger façade of working on my dissertation stuff,, when in fact I was spending less and less time working on it, and was having less and less frequent conversations with my advisor, and I was spending more and more time working on my work, . . . until the point came, like a year or so after I started as a full-time employee . . . that I sort of said, "Well, I am not going to finish this." . . . And the department had been sending me increasingly frequent letters saying "Are you working on this?" "What are you doing?" And I am saying "Yea, yea – oh maybe – no." And then I actually had to withdraw from the program. . . . And they said "Well we are really sorry that happened."

'I probably would have been equally successful. But at the time you don't know that. You think "If I don't take this opportunity now, when will there be another equally good opportunity in the future?" You try to grab hold, when you are young and foolish . . . you try to grab hold of the opportunities, and you don't think that those opportunities will be there in the future. It only comes as you are a little older and wiser.'

'I am not sure if the faculty considers me a success or a failure. . . . I think some of them probably consider me a success, because I have been successful in the field, and I have found opportunities both as interns and real jobs for other students coming out of the department. And some of them may consider me a failure, because I didn't finish up what I started there. And I should have done that, so I am really a failure to them.'

‘I had a pretty good time in graduate school. I was pretty successful, and I got a lot of benefits from it, and the I came out here and I got a job. . . . I would not call it a tale of woe, by any means.’

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*Should I Stay or Should I Go? Student Descriptions of the Doctoral Attrition Process*  
(Golde, 2000)

The Review of Higher Education

Seldom is any information gleaned from departing students; their reasons for leaving doctoral study and institutional factors that exacerbate attrition remain hidden. This paper explores the process of attrition, by “undisappearing” some of those who have left doctoral programs without a degree. Specifically, I present accounts of three people who dropped out of Ph.D. programs, whose stories illustrate and expand current theory. [Only two of which are included herein.]

**Case #1: Don**

As aligning with Faculty/University Complaints

‘I knew pretty much what I wanted to do, and where I wanted to do it. And that had seemed fine to her.’

‘I knew that this woman was one of the hardest people to work with in the field. [But] I figured it was worth the gamble. She is very good at the science she does and she’s very smart, and I liked very much the previous work of hers that I had seen published. I thought it was the kind of approach that I would need to take. She seemed a very good person to try to work for even though I knew that it would be difficult to be her student.

‘I showed her what I was doing and what really disappointed me was that she didn’t really seem to want to work much with the students in terms of giving us assistance or advice on the best approaches to things.’

[Don believed that his written proposal was satisfactory, as Heather had never questioned the science in it. Nevertheless, he failed his orals.] ‘Part of it was simply that by then my self-esteem was pretty low and that can be a real problem when it comes to defending oneself.’

‘[My advisor] wanted me to redo my written proposal without really giving me much information on what should be changed.’

‘No matter what, even if I had redone my orals and passed with flying colors, she would not be my advisor.’

‘There really wasn’t anyone else there I felt I could work with without my completely changing the direction of what I was doing. It just wasn’t worth trying to do at that late stage. Essentially I would have three months to come up with a different project that would interest someone else, who barely know that I existed – and yet having to come to an agreement with that person about what to work on.’

‘It seemed like after a certain time that she didn’t care what I was doing. Didn’t care if I was around or not. . . . She didn’t give the kind of answers or assistance that I felt was owed to me as her student. She was [supposed] to guide me, to advise me, and I really didn’t get that. . . . She didn’t seem to want to give me the time or the interest that I thought she should have.’

‘It seemed like the other things that Heather had to do were so much more important to her that my time with her was very minimal.’

‘I tend to get along well with people.’

‘I had trouble feeling that I was in the right place and feeling comfortable there . . . just didn’t feel welcome.’

‘To essentially have no encouragement – it just felt worse and worse the whole time I was there. Which can be as bad as things actually being worse.’

[this sense of not mattering] ‘was part of my not doing well in the orals. Because I felt that no one there really cared if I did well or not, if I stuck around and did the project or not. And that makes a big difference.’

‘I never had encouragement from people. I specifically remember the two times that Heather complimented me. . . . She didn’t seem to have an interest in encouraging people, at least most of her students. . . . I wasn’t to bother her with what she called “little problems.” That was so different from how it has been at Southeastern. People’s doors here are always open. If I have something I want to talk about, I’m welcome.’

‘It became clear that what the faculty most wanted to be able to do with graduate students was mold them into the images they really wanted their students to be – how they dealt with data, how they approached problems, what they automatically believed in. Since I’d had training as a master’s student elsewhere, I couldn’t be so easily molded. I also had papers that I was co-authoring with other people. So in that sense I was already an outsider. They couldn’t treat me like the other students who were coming fresh from their bachelor’s degrees.’

‘I learned a lot in terms of geology, not just in terms of life lessons. . . . It would have been nice not to have all that trouble and then have to come back [to Southeastern]. . . [But] I don’t feel that those were two years that were completely wasted.’

‘I don’t regret that I went to Midwestern. I regret that things went the way they did.’

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*Should I Stay or Should I Go? Student Descriptions of the Doctoral Attrition Process*  
(Golde, 2000)

The Review of Higher Education

### **Case #3: Jane**

#### As Aligning with Topic/Project Issues

‘In all honesty I had some ambivalence about the Ph.D. before I came here, but I thought, “Well, I am just going to do the degree and be a professor.” I am going to do the degree because I want what is at the end of the road.’

‘[My advisor] treated me wonderfully. He thought I did well, he gave me the highest grades. . . . He was like the guy I had as an advisor at [undergraduate institution] at the beginning. . . . A real looking-out-for-us kind of thing. . . . When he thinks you are going to be doing his kind of work, he really makes opportunities appear for you. Meeting pretty important area artists. Making sure there is money in the summer, that kind of thing. Opening his files to you. It was pretty major. He pulls a lot of weight. And he tries to do for you.’

[Jane passed the initial hurdles with ease, but tensions began to emerge as she struggled to formulate a dissertation proposal, a major milestone in her department. He advisor supplied the topic. . . . Although the topic initially interested her, she “struggled” to write her proposal. She began to write about selected artists “as women,” although overall she

could not see “how this would come together.” Jane’s advisor did not agree with her gendered analysis of the artists. Ultimately, this disagreement escalated into an altercation in his office, which she calls their “mutual falling out.”]

‘We had a meeting where he basically said, “I don’t think you have the capacity to do this kind of work. I don’t think you can actually do a dissertation.” . . . This is the man who was giving me A+++ . . . and really developing me as a scholar, and suddenly he told me in this meeting that he didn’t think I was capable. . . . it was horrible. I was just sitting there going, “Huh?” And the reason I said it was a mutual falling out is that at the same point, I was thinking: “This guy – his mind is shut. I am not stupid. I know I can do a dissertation. It’s just that he doesn’t think one can think if they start doing women’s stuff.” Basically. So that was that.’

[The next two months Jane spent in a “funk” in which she “sat at home and did nothing.” In addition to the argument with her advisor, she was suffering residual physical pain from a bad car accident as well as “getting dumped by a boyfriend. . . . It just sucked,” she concluded. It helped when she met with a therapist at campus Psychological Services. By January, Jane began to regroup . . . in addition to the therapist at Psychological Services, she talked with a counselor in the Career Planning Office: ]

‘I started talking with this woman, because I was starting to think about future careers, and between her and the Psychological Services person, I actually was the one who said, “I am just going to quit this thing.” But I felt like they were there [for me].’

‘Before I was quite finished with the proposal, I just decided I didn’t want the whole thing. It was really weird. It’s like, I am going to get it all the way I want it to be. I am going to get my own dissertation topic, a good advisor, and then when it is all set, when all the ducks are in a row, I make the decision not to do it. . . . I quit and I have never regretted it at all.’

‘This was the other bad thing. My friends in the department didn’t want to deal with this. Because they didn’t want to hear about their colleague who was this high-powered student, starting to quit. I think it was a very bad time, they distanced themselves from me, and I probably distanced myself from them, because it is threatening. I remember needing to talk to someone, and people just weren’t around. I think it was too dark.’

“‘[T]he advisor thing, . . . the car thing, [and not having] a support network. . . . I don’t know if I can say there is one overriding force.” So, I think it was a bigger thing about deciding not to dedicate myself to this field.’

‘I learned to think in a more analytical and theoretical way than I ever had. . . . I don’t regret it at all, because I have learned to think. It became a part of my identity that I learned to be this pretty good thinker. And that is big. So, got some good stuff out here.’

## Appendix D

### Assumptions of Adult Learners

#### Exploring Congruency Between John A. Henschke's Practice and Scholarship

(Risley, L., (2012, October 19)

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Facility of Lindenwood University

#### **Relevance of learning:**

Adults have a need to know a reason that makes sense to them, as to why they should learn something particular - why they need to learn the subject matter [being taught]. Therefore, one of the first tasks of the educator of adults is to develop a - need to know in the learners - to make a case for the value in their life performance or [for the] relevance of their learning what [is being offered] . . . [T]his case should be made through testimony from the experience[s] of the teacher . . . by providing real or simulated [encounters] through which the learners [are exposed to] the benefits of knowing and the costs of not knowing [the subject matter].

#### **Concept of the Learner:**

Adults have a deep psychological need to be self-directing - to be perceived . . . and treated by others as able to take responsibility for [themselves]. . . . [A]dults feel resentment and resistance[,] . . . [w]hen [they] find themselves in situations where . . . others [are] imposing their wills on them without [the learner's] participation in making decisions that [ultimately] affect them. Educators of adult learners need to know and use the strategies that have been developed for helping adults . . . make a quick transition from seeing themselves as being dependent learners to becoming self-directed learners.

#### **Role of the Learner's Experience:**

Adults enter into an educational activity with a greater volume and a different quality of experience than youths. The . . . longer we live, the more experience we accumulate . . . [through life role performance]. This difference in experience affects the planning and conducting of an educational activity. [As] adults are . . . [their] richest

### **Assumptions of Adult Learners**

learning resource[,] . . . the greater emphasis in adult education [focuses] on such techniques as group discussion, simulation exercises, laboratory experiences, field experiences, problem solving projects, and interactive media.

#### **Readiness to Learn:**

Adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know [something new] or [a need to] be able to [perform] something . . . more effectively in some aspect of their lives. . . . [T]he developmental tasks associated with moving from one stage of development to another. . . [(marriage, . . . birth of children, . . . loss of a job, divorce, . . . death of a friend or relative, . . . change of residence, . . . or entering a program of study specific to professional career goals),] can trigger a readiness to learn. . . . [E]ducators . . . can induce readiness by exposing learners to more effective role models, engaging them in career planning, and providing them with diagnostic experiences to assess the gaps between where they are now and where they want and need to be in terms of their personal competencies.

#### **Orientation to Learning:**

[As] . . . adults are motivated to learn after . . . [experiencing] a need, they enter an educational activity with a life-, task-, or problem-centered orientation to [such] learning. The chief implication of this assumption is the importance of organizing learning experiences (i.e., the curriculum) around life situations, rather than according to subject-matter units.

#### **Motivation to Learn:**

[While] . . . the andragogical model acknowledges that adults will respond to some external motivators [(chance for promotion, change of jobs, or change in technology),] it proposes that the more potent motivators are internal - such [as the] benefits [of] self-esteem, recognition by peers, better quality of life, greater self-confidence, self

### **Assumptions of Adult Learners**

actualization, and so on. However, the model also recognizes that adults may not be motivated to learn what educators have to teach them. Consequently, [as this echoes in characteristic aspects of readiness to learn,] educators of adults need to focus their . . . subject matter [toward such] . . . internal motivators [through lessons directly engaging learning experiences].

## Appendix E

### Andragogical Process Elements

#### Exploring Congruency Between John A. Henschke's Practice and Scholarship

(Risley, L., (2012, October 19)

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Facility of Lindenwood University

#### **Preparing the Learners for the Program/Course:**

A common course introduction for [adult learners] . . . is sharing the purpose, objectives, meeting time and place, potential benefits, [and] the participatory nature of the learning design. [In so doing] . . . the . . . learners develop some realistic expectations about how they will be involved . . . and [the] things [they will] . . . think about, such as . . . [any] special needs, [pertinent] questions, [specific] topics, and [presenting] problems.

- The first question an [A]ndragogue asks [when] constructing a process design . . . is: *What procedures should I use to help prepare the adult learners to become actively involved in this course and to meet their expectations?*

#### **Setting the climate:**

A climate conducive to learning is a prerequisite for effective learning. Two aspects of climate are important: physical and psychological.

#### **Physical climate:**

The typical classroom setup, with chairs in rows and a podium in front, is probably the . . . least conducive to learning. . . . It announces to anyone entering the room, . . . [this] is [a] one-way transmission - the proper role for the student is to sit and listen to the professor. The effective educator of adults makes a point of getting to the classroom well before the learners arrive[,] . . . [rearranging] the chairs in one large circle or several small circles. . . . [This reduces the implication of an authoritative figure reigning over a group while increasing the potential for comfortable participation of each individual.] A bright and cheerful classroom is [always] a must.

### **Andragogical Process Elements**

#### **Psychological climate:**

[P]sychological climate is even more important. The following characteristics create a psychological climate conducive to [adult] learning:

✓ A climate of mutual respect. Adults are more open to learning when they feel respected. If they feel that they are being talked down to, ignored, . . . regarded as incapable, or that their experience is not being valued, . . . their energy [will be] . . . spent dealing with these feelings at the expense of learning.

✓ A climate of collaboration. [As] . . . earlier school experiences [were inundated with] . . . competition for grades and the teacher's/professor's favor, . . . adults tend[ed] to enter into any educational activity with rivalry toward fellow learners. Because peers are often the richest resources for [expanded] learning, . . . competitiveness makes these . . . inaccessible. [For this reason,] [t]here are climate-setting exercises . . . to open courses which put the learners into a sharing relationship from the beginning.

✓ A climate of mutual trust. People learn more from those they trust than from those they aren't sure they can trust. [This is when] . . . educators of adults . . . are at a disadvantage. . . . [T]raditional schools [have presented teachers/professors] . . . as authority figure[s,] [with the] power over students . . . to give grades, . . . determine who passes or fails, and to hand out punishments and rewards . . . Professors will do well to present themselves as a human being[,] . . . to trust the people they work with[,] and to gain their trust [through shared learning experiences].

✓ A climate of support. People learn better when they feel supported rather than judged or threatened. Teachers of adult learners . . . try to convey their desire to be supportive by demonstrating their acceptance of them [through] . . . positive regard . . . . [By] empathizing with [learners'] . . . problems or worries, [adult educators] . . . defin[e] their role as that of [an ideal] helper.

### Andragogical Process Elements

✓ A climate of openness and authenticity. When people feel free to say what they really think and feel they are more willing to examine new ideas and risk new behaviors than when they feel defensive. [As] . . . professors demonstrate openness and authenticity in their own behavior, [it] . . . will [become] a model that the adult learner[s] will want to adopt.

✓ A climate of pleasure/fun. Learning should be one of the most pleasant and gratifying experiences in life; . . . after all, [it is] the way people . . . achieve their full potential. Learning should be an adventure, spiced with the excitement of discovery. It should be fun.

✓ A climate of humanness. Learning is a very human activity. The more people feel they are being treated as human beings, the more they are likely to learn. This means providing for human comfort - good lighting and ventilation, comfortable chairs, availability of refreshments, frequent breaks, and the like. It also means providing a caring, accepting, respecting, and helping social atmosphere.

- The second question an [A]ndragogue asks in constructing a process design is:  
*What procedures should I use with this particular group to bring these climatic conditions into being?*

### Involving learners in mutual planning:

The andragogical process model emphasizes learners sharing the responsibility for planning learning activities with the facilitator. [The] . . . basic law of human nature [being:] . . . [‘]People tend to feel committed to any decision in proportion to the extent [with] . . . which they have participated in making it.[‘] The reverse is even [more relevant:] [‘]People tend to feel uncommitted to the extent they feel . . . the decision or activity is being imposed on them without their having a chance to influence it.[‘]

### Andragogical Process Elements

Learners need the security of knowing that the professor has a plan, [and that] . . . this process plan is open to their influence.

- The third question the [A]ndragogue answers in developing a process model, . . . is: *What procedures will I use to involve the learners in planning?*

#### Diagnosing their own learning needs:

At the . . . simplest level, learners can share in small groups what they perceive their needs and interests to be regarding the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, skill, attitude, value, and interest in a given content area of the course. . . . A learning need is not a need unless perceived so by the learner. It is possible to induce a deeper and more specific level of awareness by having learners engage in . . . self-diagnostic procedures [such] as simulation exercises, assessment techniques, competency-based rating scales, and videotape feedback.

- [T]he fourth question the [A]ndragogue asks in constructing a process design is: *What procedures will I use in helping the participants diagnose their own learning needs?*

#### Translating the learning needs into objectives:

Having diagnosed their learning needs, participants now face the task of translating them into learning objectives - positive statements of directions [for] . . . growth. Some kinds of learning [such as identifying criteria for various steps in accomplishing a particular task] lend themselves to objectives stated as terminal behaviors that can be observed and measured. Others [such as decision-making ability] are so complex that they are better stated in terms of direction of improvement.

- The fifth question the [A]ndragogue asks is: *What procedures can I use for helping involve the adult learners in translating their learning needs into learning objectives?*

### **Andragogical Process Elements**

#### **Designing a pattern of learning experiences:**

Having formulated the learning objectives, the professor and the adult learner then have the mutual task of designing a plan for achieving them. This plan will include identifying the resources most relevant to each objective and the most effective strategies for utilizing these resources. Such a plan is likely to include a mix of total group experiences [including input by the professor], subgroup [learning-teaching team] experiences, and individual learning projects. A key criterion for assessing the excellence of such a design is[:] . . . How deeply are the learners involved in the mutual process of designing a pattern of learning experiences?

➤ [T]he sixth question the [A]ndragogue asks is: *What procedures can I use for involving the learners with [myself] . . . in designing a pattern of learning experiences?*

#### **Helping adult learners manage and carry out their learning plans:**

Learning contracts are an effective way to help learners structure and conduct their learning. . . . [Adult learners] contract with the professor to meet the requirements of the university courses in which they are enrolled. [Incidentally, even though there may be a number of non-negotiable requirements in university courses, the means by which learners accomplish the required objectives can be highly individualized.] Students going out on a field experience, such as a practicum, internship, or clinicals, will contract with the professor and the field supervisor. Contracts may also specify how the learner is going to continue to learn on their own[; being useful] . . . for [ongoing] . . . personal and professional development.

➤ The seventh question that [A]ndragogue asks is: *What procedures can I use to make certain the learners are fully engaged and involved with me in managing and carrying out their learning plan?*

### **Andragogical Process Elements**

**Evaluating the extent to which the learners have achieved their objectives:**

In many situations[,] institutional policies require some sort of - objective (quantitative) measure of learning outcomes. However, the recent trend in evaluation research has been to place increasing emphasis on - subjective (qualitative) evaluation[;] finding out what is really happening inside the learners and how differently they are performing in life [as a result of their learning]. . . . [T]he andragogical model requires that the learners be actively involved in the process of evaluating their learning outcomes.

- The eighth question, therefore, the [A]ndragogue asks is: *What procedures can I use to involve the learners responsibly in evaluating the accomplishment of their learning objectives and meeting the course requirements?*

By answering these eight sets of questions, the . . . [the facilitator of adult learning] emerges with a process design - a set of procedures for facilitating the acquisition of the course content by the adult learner (adapted from Henschke et al., 2003, pp, 2-5; Knowles, 1973/1990, n.p., as cited in Risley, 2012, p. 64).

## Appendix F

### Erikson's Life Stages

Identity and the Life Cycle, Erikson, E. H. (1980) [: Stages]

The Life Cycle Completed, Erikson, E. H. and J. M. Erikson (1998) [: Strengths]

#### **Basic Trust versus Basic Mistrust: Infancy**

[T]he first component of a healthy personality . . . a sense of *basic trust* . . . is an attitude toward oneself and the world derived from the experiences of the first year of life. By “trust” I mean what is commonly implied in reasonable trustfulness as far as others are concerned and a simple sense of trustworthiness as far as oneself is concerned (p. 57) . . . .In describing this growth and its crises as a development of a series of alternative basic attitudes, we take recourse to the term “*a sense of*” . . . such “senses” pervade surface and depth, consciousness and the unconscious (p. 58) (Erikson, 1980).

#### **Basic Mistrust vs. Trust: Hope:**

[W]ithout basic trust the infant cannot survive (p. 106). It follows that every living person has basic trust and with it, to some degree, the strength of hope. Basic trust is the confirmation of hope, our consistent buttress against all the trials and so-called tribulations of life in this world. Although survival would be difficult without a modicum of mistrust to protect us, mistrust can contaminate all aspects of our lives and deprive us of love and fellowship with human beings (p. 107) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

#### **Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt: Early Childhood**

The over-all significance of this stage lies in the maturation of the muscle system, the consequent ability (and doubly felt inability) to coordinate a number of highly conflicting action patterns such as “holding on” and “letting go,” and the enormous value with which the still highly dependent child begins to endow his autonomous will (p. 68). . . . This new dimension of approach to things . . . [a] general ability, indeed, a violent need develops to drop and to throw away and to alternate withholding and expelling at will (p. 69). . . . This whole stage, then, becomes a battle for *autonomy*. For as he gets ready to stand on his feet more firmly, the infant delineates his world as “I” and “you,” “me” and

“mine.” . . . This stage, therefore, can be decisive for the ratio between love and hate, for that between cooperation and willfulness, and for that between the freedom of self-expression and its suppression (p. 70). From a sense of *self-control without loss of self-esteem* comes a lasting sense of autonomy and pride; from a sense of . . . loss of self-control, and of parental overcontrol comes a lasting sense of doubt and shame (p. 71) (Erikson, 1980).

**Shame and Doubt vs. Autonomy: Will:**

Surely all parents remember how, when their children were quite young, two years of age or so, they became surprisingly willful grasping spoons and toys, ready to stand up on their own feet. Their stance is playful but firm and self-satisfying. They will to do, and they demonstrate that they can. The stronger the will, the more they undertake. Since growth happens so fast and with such satisfaction, parents can only wonder and hope for their success. But there are limits; when these are overstepped and things get out of control, there may be a reversion to insecurity and a lack of self-confidence that ends in shame and doubt in their capacities (p. 107) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

**Initiative versus Guilt: Play Age**

Being firmly convinced that he *is* a person, the child must now find out *what* kind of person he is going to be. [H]e wants to be like his parents, who to him appear very powerful and very beautiful, although quite unreasonably dangerous. He “identifies with them,” he plays with the idea of how it would be to be them. Three strong developments help at this stage, yet also serve to bring the child closer to his crisis: (1) he learns to *move around* more freely and more violently and therefore establishes a wider and, so it seems to him, an unlimited radius of goals; (2) his sense of *language* becomes perfected to the point where he understands and can ask about many things just enough to misunderstand them thoroughly; and (3) both language and locomotion permit him to expand his *imagination* over so many things that he cannot avoid frightening himself with what he himself has dreamed and thought up. Nevertheless, out of all this he must emerge with a sense of *unbroken initiative* as a basis for a high and yet realistic sense of ambition and independence (p. 78) (Erikson, 1980).

**Guilt vs. Initiative: Purpose:**

To initiate suggests a moving out into a new direction. It may be a lonely trip and still be successful, or it may be a move that catches the interest and participation of others.

Initiative is brave and valiant, but when it misfires, a strong sense of deflation follows. It is lively and enthusiastic while it lasts, but the initiative instigator is often left with a sense of inadequacy and guilt (p. 108) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

**Industry versus Inferiority: School Age**

One might say that personality at the first stage crystallizes around the conviction “I am what I am given,” and that of the second, “I am what I will.” The third can be characterized by “I am what I can imagine I will be.” We must now approach the fourth: “I am what I learn.” The child now wants to be shown how to get busy with something and how to be busy with others (p. 87). . . . Between childhood and adulthood, then, our children go to school; and school seems to be a world all by itself, with its own goals and limitations, its achievements and disappointments. . . . [C]hildren at this age *do* like to be mildly but firmly coerced into the adventure of finding out that one can learn to accomplish things which one would never have thought of by oneself, things which owe their attractiveness to the very fact that they are *not* the product of play and fantasy but the product of reality, practicality, and logic; things which thus provide a token sense of participation in the real world of adults (p. 88). . . . This stage differs from the others in that it does not consist of a swing from a violent inner upheaval to a new mastery. The reason Freud called it the latency stage is that violent drives are normally dormant at that time. But it is only a lull before the storm of puberty (p. 93) (Erikson, 1980).

**Inferiority vs. Industry: Competence:**

Industry and competence are aptitudes we all know about in this competitive country, this land of the free and home of the innovative. What are you good at, what are you good for are the first queries of a fellow human being. Our schools start us off that way, and we seldom recover the playfulness that led into original creativity. We all are graded on our competence. . . . In truth everything one does or attempts to do demands a standard of competence in order to be acceptable and understandable. It is not necessary to be original or inventive, but it is mandatory to be competent in order to excel in our practical

world. . . . [W]hen the challenge pushes you on, you are forced to accept your inadequacy (p. 109) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

### **Identity versus Identity Diffusion: Adolescence**

The growing and developing young people, faced with this physiological revolution within them, are now primarily concerned with attempts at consolidating their social roles. They are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the earlier cultivated roles and skills with the ideal prototypes of the day. In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, some adolescents have to refight many of the crises of earlier years, and they are never ready to install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity (p. 94). . . . They may have to accept artificial bolstering of their self-esteem in lieu of something better, but what I call their accruing ego identity gains real strength only from wholehearted and consistent recognition of real accomplishment, that is, achievement that has meaning in their culture (p. 95) (Erikson, 1980).

### **Identity Confusion vs. Identity: Fidelity:**

Identity marks, acclaims, and distinguishes each infant at birth and is immediately confirmed by naming (p. 109). . . . There are any number of names that we can then respond to or disavow. The greatest problem we encounter is who we think we are vs. who others may think we are or are trying to be. Who does he or she think I am? is a troublesome question to ask oneself, and it is difficult to find the appropriate answer. We play roles, or course, and try out for parts we wish we could play for real, especially as we explore in adolescence. Costumes and makeup may sometimes be persuasive, but in the long run it is only having a genuine sense of who we are that keeps our feet on the ground and our heads up to an elevation from which we can see clearly where we are, what we are, and what we stand up for. To be confused about this existential identity makes you a riddle to yourself and to many, perhaps even most, other people (p. 110) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

### THREE STAGES OF ADULTHOOD

#### **Intimacy and Distantiation versus Self-Absorption: Young Adulthood**

[I]t is only after a reasonable sense of identity has been established that real *intimacy* with the other sex (or, for that matter, with any other person or even with oneself) is possible. . . . The youth who is not sure of his identity shies away from interpersonal intimacy; but the surer he becomes of himself, the more he seeks it in the form of friendship, combat, leadership, love, and inspiration. . . . Where a youth does not accomplish such intimate relation with others – and, I would add with his own inner resources – in late adolescence or early adulthood he may either isolate himself and find, at best, highly stereotyped and formal interpersonal relations (formal in the sense of lacking in spontaneity, warmth, and real exchange of fellowship), or he must seek them in repeated attempts and repeated failures (p. 101) (Erikson, 1980).

#### **Isolation vs. Intimacy: Love:**

The years of intimacy and love are bright and full of warmth and sunlight. To love and find oneself in another is to bring fulfillment and delight. Adding offspring to the circles is joyous enrichment. To see them grow and become qualified to take hold of their own lives is wonderful and gratifying. Everyone is not so lucky and so blessed (p. 110). A sense of isolation and deprivation attacks those for whom this rich period is not realized. . . . Some individuals are happily and completely devoted to their work, their calling and creativity (p. 111) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

#### **Generativity versus Stagnation: Adulthood**

Generativity is primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation, although there are people who, from misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this drive to offspring but to other forms of altruistic concern and of creativity, which may absorb their kind of parental responsibility. The principal thing is to realize that this is a stage of the growth of the healthy personality and that where such enrichment fails, together, regression from generativity to an obsessive need for pseudo intimacy takes place, often with a pervading sense of stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment. Individuals who do not develop generativity often begin

to indulge themselves as if they were their own one and only child (p. 103) (Erikson, 1980).

### **Stagnation vs. Generativity: Care:**

The stage of generativity claims the longest stretch of time on the chart – thirty years or more, during which one establishes a working commitment and perhaps begins a new family, devoting time and energy to furthering its healthy and productive life. During this period work and family relationships confront one with the duties of caretaking and a widening range of obligations and responsibilities, interests and celebrations. When this is satisfactorily cohesive, all can go well and prosper. It's a wonderful time to be alive, cared for and caring, (p. 111) surrounded by those nearest and dearest. . . . Toward the end of this demanding period one may feel an urge to withdraw somewhat, only to experience a loss of the stimulus of belonging, of being needed. . . . Generativity, which comprised the major life involvement of active individuals, is no longer necessarily expected in old age. This releases elders from the assignment of caretaking. However, not being needed may be felt as a designation of uselessness. When no challenges are offered, a sense of stagnation may well take over (p. 112) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

### **Integrity versus Despair and Disgust: Old Age**

[*I*ntegrity. . . .] is the acceptance of one's own and only life cycle and of the people who have become significant to it as something that had to be and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitutions. It thus means a new different love of one's parents, free of the wish that they should have been different, and an acceptance of the fact that one's life is one's own responsibility. It is a sense of comradeship with men and women of distant times and of different pursuits, who have created orders and objects and sayings conveying human dignity and love. Although aware of the relativity of all the various life styles which have given meaning to human striving, the possessor of integrity is ready to defend the dignity of his own life style against all physical and economic threats. For he knows that an individual life is the accidental coincidence of but one life cycle with but one segment of history; and that for him all human integrity stands and falls with the one style of integrity of which he partakes(p. 104). . . . Ego integrity, therefore, implies an emotional integration which permits participation by followership as well as acceptance

of the responsibility of leadership: both must be learned and practiced in religion and in politics, in the economic order and in technology, in aristocratic living, and in the arts and sciences (p. 105) (Erikson, 1980).

**Despair and Disgust vs. Integrity: Wisdom:**

In our final definition of “wisdom” we claim that wisdom rests in the capacity to see, look, and remember, as well as to listen, hear, and remember. Integrity, we maintain, demands tact, contact, and touch. This is a serious demand on the senses of elders. It takes a lifetime to learn to be tactful and demands both patience and skill; it is all too easy to become weary and discouraged (p. 112). . . . In encounters between syntonic and dystonic, the dystonic elements win out as time goes on; despair is “in attendance.” Life in the eighth stage includes a retrospective accounting of one’s life to date; how much one embraces life as having been well lived, as opposed to regretting missed opportunities, will contribute to the degree of disgust and despair one experiences. . . . From the beginning we are blessed with basic trust. Without it life is impossible, and with it we have endured. As an enduring strength it has accompanied and bolstered us with hope. Whatever the specific sources of our basic trust may be or have been, and no matter how severely hope has been challenged it has never abandoned us completely. Life without it is simply unthinkable. If you still are filled with the intensity of being and hope for what may be further grace and enlightenment, (p. 113) then you have reason for living. . . . [A]n individual life cycle cannot be adequately understood apart from the social context in which it comes to fruition. Individual and society are intricately woven, dynamically interrelated in continual exchange. Erik notes: “Lacking a culturally viable ideal of old age, our civilization does not really harbor a concept of the whole life.” (p. 114) (Erikson & Erikson, 1998).

## Appendix G

### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

#### Motivation and Personality

(Maslow, A. H., 1954)

#### **The Basic Needs:**

The needs that are usually taken as the starting point for motivation theory are the so-called physiological drives (p. 35). . . . [T]hese physiological drives or needs are to be considered unusual rather than typical because they are isolable [separate], and because they are localizable [assigned to] somatically [of the body]. . . . [A]ny of the physiological needs and the consummatory behavior involved with them serve as channels for all sorts of other needs as well. . . . Undoubtedly the physiological needs are the most prepotent of all needs (p. 36). . . . If all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by the physiological needs, all other needs may become simply nonexistent or be pushed into the background. It is then fair to characterize the whole organism by saying simply that it is hungry, for consciousness is almost completely preempted by hunger. . . . Capacities that are not useful for this purpose lie dormant, or are pushed into the background. . . . Another peculiar characteristic of the human organism when it is dominated by a certain need is that the whole philosophy of the future tends also to change. For our chronically and extremely hungry man, Utopia can be defined simply as a place where there is plenty of food. . . . Anything else will be defined as unimportant (p. 37). . . . It is quite true that man lives by bread alone – when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there *is* plenty of bread and when his belly is chronically filled? *At once other (and higher) needs emerge* and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new [and still higher] needs emerge, and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency. One main implication of this phrasing is that gratification becomes as important a concept as deprivation in motivation theory, for it releases the organism from the domination of a relatively more physiological need, permitting thereby the emergence of

other more social goals. The physiological needs, along with their partial goals, when chronically gratified cease to exist as active determinants or organizers of behavior. They now exist only in a potential fashion in the sense that they may emerge again to dominate the organism if they are thwarted. But a want that is satisfied is no longer a want. The organism is dominated and its behavior organized only by unsatisfied needs. If hunger is satisfied, it becomes unimportant in the current dynamics of the individual (p. 38).

**The Safety Needs:**

If the physiological needs are relatively well gratified, there then emerges a new set of needs, which we may categorize roughly as the safety needs (security; stability; dependency; protection; freedom from fear, from anxiety and chaos; need for structure, order, law limits; strength in the protector; and so on). All that has been said to the physiological needs is equally true, although in less degree, of these desires. The organism may equally well be wholly dominated by them. They may serve as the almost exclusive organizers of behavior, recruiting all the capacities of the organism in their service, and we may then fairly describe the whole organism as a safety-seeking mechanism. Again, as in the hungry man, we find that the dominating goal is a strong determinant not only of his current world outlook and philosophy but also of his philosophy of the future and of values. Practically everything looks less important than safety and protection (even sometimes the physiological needs, which, being satisfied are now underestimated) (p. 39). . . . Safety needs can become very urgent on the social scene whenever there are real threats to law, or order, to the authority of society. The threat of chaos or of nihilism [nothingness] can be expected in most human beings to produce a regression from any higher needs to the more prepotent safety needs. . . . This tends to be true for all human beings, including healthy ones, since they too will tend to respond to danger with realistic regression to the safety need level, and will prepare to defend themselves (p. 43).

**The Belongingness and Love Needs:**

If both the physiological and safety needs are fairly well gratified, there will emerge the love and affection and belongingness needs, and the whole cycle already described will repeat itself with this new center. Now the person will feel keenly, as never before, the absence of friends, or a sweetheart, or a wife, or children. He will hunger for affectionate

relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group or family, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal. He will want to attain such a place more than anything else in the world and may even forget that once, when he was hungry, he sneered at love as unreal or unnecessary or unimportant. Now he will feel sharply the pangs of loneliness, or ostracism [exclusion], or rejection, of friendlessness, or rootlessness (p. 43). . . . In our society the thwarting of these needs is the most commonly found core in cases of maladjustment and more severe pathology. Love and affection, as well as their possible expression in sexuality, are generally looked upon with ambivalence and are customarily hedged about with many restrictions and inhibitions. Practically all theorists of psychopathology have stressed thwarting of the love needs as basic in the picture of maladjustment. . . . One thing that must be stressed at this point is that love is not synonymous with sex (p. 44). . . . Ordinarily sexual behavior is multidetermined that is to say, determined not only by sexual but also by other needs, chief among which are the love and affection needs. Also, not to be overlooked is the fact that the love needs involve both giving *and* receiving love (p. 45).

**The Esteem Needs:**

All people in our society (with a few pathological exceptions) have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others. These needs may therefore be classified into two subsidiary sets. These are, first, the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for mastery and competence, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. Second, we have what we may call the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, or appreciation. . . . Satisfaction of the self-esteem needs leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, or weakness, and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends. An appreciation of the necessity of basic self-confidence and an understanding of how helpless people are without it can be easily gained from a study of severe traumatic neurosis (p. 45).

**The Need for Self-Actualization:**

Even if all these needs are satisfied, we may still often (if not always) expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what *he*, individually, is fitted for. A musician must make music, and artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man *can* be, he *must* be. He must be true to his own nature. This need we may call self-actualization. . . . It refers to man's desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming. . . . At this level, individual differences are greatest (p. 46).

**The Preconditions for the Basic Need Satisfaction:**

There are certain conditions that are immediate prerequisites for the basic need satisfactions. Danger to these is reacted to as if it were direct danger to the basic needs themselves. Such conditions as freedom to speak, freedom to do what one wishes so long as no harm is done to others, freedom to express oneself, freedom to investigate and seek for information, freedom to defend oneself, justice, fairness, honesty, orderliness in the group are examples of such preconditions for basic need satisfactions. Thwarting in these freedoms will be reacted to with a threat or emergency response. These conditions are not ends in themselves but they are *almost* so since they are so closely related to the basic needs, which are apparently the only ends in themselves. These conditions are defended because without them the basic satisfactions are quite impossible, or at least, severely endangered. If we remember that the cognitive capacities (perceptual, intellectual, learning) are a set of adjustive tools, which have, among other functions, that of satisfaction of our basic needs, then it is clear that any danger to them, any deprivation or blocking of their free use, must also be indirectly threatening to the basic needs themselves. Such a statement is a partial solution of the general problems of curiosity, the search for knowledge, truth, and wisdom, and the ever-persistent urge to solve the cosmic mysteries. Secrecy, censorship, dishonesty, blocking of communication threaten *all* the basic needs (p. 47).

**Appendix H****Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory [MIPI]**

As approved for inclusion through

**Dr. Henschke's Letter:**

7/3/2020

Ms. Bernice Bush  
Doctoral (EdD) Student  
School of Education, Lindenwood University  
St. Charles, MO 63301

Dear Ms. Bush:

I am delighted to know that you wish to use my Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI) in your Doctoral (EdD) Dissertation Research Study at Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO. I understand that the title of your research study is: *"Exploring How Andragogical Principles May Enhance Doctoral Students' Persistence To Dissertation Completion."*

This letter is to officially give you permission to use the Copyrighted MIPI in your dissertation research study. I expect that you will cite the MIPI in any publication that may come from your dissertation.

I wish you every success in completing your study and receiving the academic doctoral (EdD) degree. If I may be of additional help in this pursuit, please call upon me.

Most Sincerely,  
John A. Henschke, Ed. D.

*John A. Henschke*

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INSTRUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE INVENTORY  
FACTORS

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
4 _____	7 _____	1 _____	6 _____	5 _____	2 _____	3 _____
12 _____	8 _____	9 _____	14 _____	13 _____	10 _____	11 _____
19 _____	16 _____	22 _____	15 _____	18 _____	21 _____	20 _____
26 _____	28 _____	23 _____	17 _____	27 _____	24 _____	25 _____
33 _____	29 _____	42 _____	37 _____	32 _____	35 _____	34 _____
	30 _____		38 _____	36 _____		
	31 _____		40 _____	41 _____		
	39 _____					
	43 _____					
	44 _____					
	45 _____					
TOTAL						
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Scoring process

A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, and E = 5

Reversed scored items are 3, 5, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27, 32, 34, 36, and 41. These reversed items are scored as follows: A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1.

<u>FACTORS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>POSSIBLE MINIMUM</u>	<u>POSSIBLE MAXIMUM</u>
1. Teacher empathy with learners.	_____	5	25
2. Teacher trust of learners.	_____	11	55
3. Planning and delivery of instruction.	_____	5	25
4. Accommodating learner uniqueness.	_____	7	35
5. Teacher insensitivity toward learners.	_____	7	35
6. Experience based learning techniques (Learner-centered learning process).	_____	5	25
7. Teacher-centered learning process.	_____	5	25
Grand Total	_____		

## Appendix I

### Three Factors Within MIPI:

#### A Teacher's Empathy With, Trust In, and Sensitivity Toward Their Students

##### Leadership Ethics in Higher Educational Administration: An Andragogical Perspective

Henschke, J. A. (2020). (pp. 345 – 346)

##### Reciprocity of Empathy, Trust, and Sensitivity

To be effective, an Andragogue needs to combine the reciprocity of empathy, trust, and sensitivity in concert with the ability and potential of learners for the same, to understand the learning process and interact with facilitators effectively in making the right choices [with respect to their individual needs]. This reciprocity takes the form of the facilitator initiating and maintaining the combination of twenty-three (23) elements of the following three (3) MIPI factors: Empathy, Trust, and Sensitivity. *Insensitivity may get in the way and block the process of modeling reciprocity.*

##### **Empathy** - The Andragogue:

- Feels fully prepared to teach;
- Notices and acknowledges to learners positive changes in them;
- Balances her/his efforts between learner content, acquisition, and motivation;
- Expresses appreciation to learners who actively participate; and,
- Promotes positive self-esteem in learners.

##### **Trust** - The Andragogue:

- Purposefully communicates to learners that they are each uniquely important;
- Believes learners know what their goals, dreams, and realities are like;
- Expresses confidence that learners will develop the skills they need;
- Prizes the learners to learn what is needed;
- Feels learners' need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings;
- Enables learners to evaluate their own progress in learning;
- Hears learners indicate what their learning needs are;
- Engages learners in clarifying their own aspirations;

- Develops a supportive relationship with learners;
- Experiences unconditional positive regard for learners; and,
- Respects the dignity and integrity of learners.

**Sensitivity** - The andragogue (with reciprocity, leans much more toward sensitivity):

- Makes certain to understand the learner's point of view;
- Takes pains and time to get her/his point across to learners;
- Exercises patience in helping all learners' progress;
- Overcomes any frustration with learner apathy;
- Will use whatever time learners need to grasp various concepts;
- Thoroughly allows learners to ask all questions they need addressed; and,
- Resists in her/himself any irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting.

**Insensitivity** – The insensitive educator (without reciprocity, leans toward insensitivity):

- Has difficulty understanding learners' point of view;
- Has difficulty getting her/his point across to learners;
- Feels impatient with learner's progress;
- Experiences frustration with learner apathy;
- Have difficulty with the amount of time learners need to grasp various concepts;
- Gets bored with the many questions learners ask; and,
- Feels irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting.

## Appendix J

### The Mentor Role: Six Behavioral Functions

Cohen, N. H. (1995). *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 66, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

#### Factor 1: **Relationship Emphasis**

Conveys through active, empathetic listening a genuine understanding and acceptance of mentee's feelings

Purpose: To create a psychological climate of trust that allows mentees to honestly share and reflect upon their personal experiences (positive and negative) as adult learners

#### **Mentor Behaviors:**

- *Responsive listening (verbal and nonverbal reactions that signal sincere interest)*
- *Open-ended questions related to expressed immediate concerns about actual situations*
- *Descriptive feedback based on observations rather than inferences of motive*
- *Perception checks to ensure comprehension of feelings*
- *Nonjudgmental sensitive responses to assist in clarification of emotional states and reactions*

#### Factor 2.: **Information Emphasis**

Directly requests detailed information from and offers specific suggestions to mentees about their current plans and progress in achieving personal, education, and career goals

Purpose: To ensure that advice offered is based on accurate and sufficient knowledge of individual mentees

#### **Mentor Behaviors:**

- *Questions aimed at assuring factual understanding of present educational and career situation*
- *Review of relevant background to develop adequate personal profile*
- *Probing questions that require concrete answers*
- *Directive comments about present problems and solutions that should be considered*
- *Restatements to ensure factual accuracy and interpretive understanding*
- *Reliance on facts as an integral component of the decision-making process*

#### Factor 3.: **Facilitative Focus**

Guides mentees through a reasonably in-depth review of and exploration of their interests, abilities, ideas, and beliefs

Purpose: To assist mentees in considering alternative views and options while reaching their own decisions about attainable personal, academic, and career objectives

***Mentor Behaviors:***

- *Hypothetical questions to expand individual views*
- *Uncovering of underlying experiential and information bases for assumptions*
- *Presentation of multiple viewpoints to generate more in-depth analysis of decisions and options*
- *Examination of seriousness of commitment to goals*
- *Analysis of reasons for current pursuits*
- *Review of recreational and vocational preferences*

**Factor 4.: Confrontive Focus**

Respectfully challenges mentees' explanations for or avoidance of decisions and actions relevant to their development as adult learners

Purpose: To help mentees attain insight into unproductive strategies and behaviors and to evaluate their need and capacity to change

***Mentor Behaviors:***

- *Careful probing to assess psychological readiness to benefit from different points of view*
- *Open acknowledgment of concerns about possible negative consequences of constructive (“critical”) feedback on relationship*
- *Confrontive verbal stance aimed at primary goal of promoting self-assessment of apparent discrepancies*
- *Selective focus on most likely behaviors for meaningful change*
- *Attention to using least amount of carefully stated feedback necessary for impact*
- *Comments (offered before and after confrontive remarks) to reinforce belief in positive potential for growth beyond current situation*

**Factor 5.: Mentor Model**

Shares (self-discloses) life experiences and feelings as a role model to mentees in order to personalize and enrich the relationship

Purpose: To motivate mentees to take necessary risks (make decisions without certainty of successful results) and to overcome difficulties in their own journeys toward educational and career goals

***Mentor Behaviors:***

- *Offering of personal thoughts and genuine feelings to emphasize value of learning from unsuccessful or difficult experiences (as trial and error and self-correction and not as growth-limiting “failures”)*
- *Selection of related examples from own life (and experiences as mentor of other mentees) based on probable motivational value*
- *Direct, realistic assessment of positive belief in mentees' abilities to pursue goals*

- *Confident view of appropriate risk taking as necessary for personal, educational, training, and career development*
- *Use of statements that clearly encourage personal actions to attain stated objectives*

**Factor 6.: Student Vision**

Stimulates mentees' critical thinking with regard to envisioning their own future and to developing their personal and professional potential

Purpose: To encourage mentees as they manage personal changes and take initiatives in their transitions through life events as independent adult learners

***Mentor Behaviors:***

- *Statements that require reflection on present and future educational, training, and career attainments*
- *Questions aimed at clarifying perceptions (positive and negative) about personal ability to manage change*
- *Review of individual choices based on reasonable assessment of options and resources*
- *Comments directed at analysis of problem-solving strategies*
- *Expressions of confidence in carefully thought out decisions*
- *Remarks that show respect for capacity to determine own future*
- *Encouragement to develop talents and pursue "dreams"*

## Appendix K

### Letter of Introduction to Interviewees

and accompanying

### Lindenwood University Adult Consent Form

To my Fellow Learners,

Good day; my name is Bernice Bush. I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University, St. Charles, in the School of Education, Educational Leadership, emphasis in Andragogy doctorate program. I am working on my independent research study project and written dissertation with my Committee Chairperson, Dr. Henschke. I have decided to focus my study on the All But Dissertation status doctoral candidate, historical rates of dropout, and the perceptions struggling students have experienced pursuing a degree, for which I explore Andragogical principles as a bolster to project completion through relationship building.

The “All But Dissertation (ABD)” phase is phenomenological in nature; the cause is unknown while the outcome is obvious. Prior research has held to the statistics of 40%-60% doctoral student dropout due to attrition (Kelley & Salisbury-Glennon, 2015) (Bair & Haworth, 1999) (Faghihi, Rakow, & Ethington, 1999). Decades of research has measured the most dominant variables in hopes of framing the issues and rendering resolutions. Yet, the circumstances have remained as vast and unique as the doctoral students; there does not appear to be a clear explanation for the phenomenon. Hence, the recommendations have been to *explore the perceptions* of these ABD status doctoral students for the purpose of lowering their dropout ratio (Kelley & Salisbury-Glennon, 2015) (Bair & Haworth, 1999) (DuPont, Meert, Galand, & Nils, 2013).

This field of doctoral student perception is rich with response! Whether positive or negative, students have had solid opinions regarding their experiences within their doctoral degree pursuits. Two of the strongest categories regard aspects of “motivation” and “support,” or the lack thereof. These are the crux of Andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn. The Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI) measures twenty-three elements related to a teacher’s empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students. I plan to use these elements as a filter to sift and clarify the essential factors necessary to foster a successful relationship between a teacher and a doctoral student, thereby enhancing the prospects for degree completion.

I propose three aspects to my research study: the findings of prior research literature; the personal recollections of a select few All But Dissertation status students who graduated, as well as a few who ultimately dropped out; and the reflections of my personal quest in persisting to accomplishing my dissertation. I believe the Andragogical principles of a teacher’s empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students has the potential to benefit struggling doctoral students. Focusing attention on fostering

supportive relationships surrounding doctoral pursuits stands to improve the success ratio of academic outcomes. Graduates advance, universities thrive, and society is enhanced through growth.

I am requesting the opportunity to record and transcribe an interview with both former doctoral students who have completed their dissertations and those who opted to ultimately drop out of their degree programs. *Your story is relevant; your insights will be valuable to my research study.* I will be inquiring of your recollections as a former doctoral student with the All But Dissertation status. Specifically, I will need to know (a) your age at the time you were a student, (b) time devoted within the course of your program, (c) your living proximity to the campus, (d) employment status if you were working, (e) all sources of moral support, (f) any role conflicts or obstacles you perceived to have hindered your progress to persist, (g) and what ultimately changed your mind if you decided to drop out of your degree program.

Your confidentiality will be protected by the use of a pseudonym, which you may choose. There will be no compensation paid to you as a participant. You will have the discretion to alter, add, omit, re-take, or withdraw any or all of your recorded interview responses. Upon your approval, you will receive a final hard copy of your transcribed interview and your recollections will be included within my exploration of the perceptions of All But Dissertation status students. I will keep all audio files, paper files, and computer-generated materials locked in storage and will destroy it after three years. The collected information will not be offered as secondary data for use in other studies.

Thank you very much for your time and attention as this is a pressing matter for my research. Accompanying this letter is Lindenwood University's Research Study Adult Consent Form. I will need a signed and dated paper copy to begin the data collection of my study. Please call or text me at 618-XXX-XXXX, so I may acquire your postal address. Then I will send you a hard copy of this letter and the consent form, plus include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please read the whole document, sign, date, and print your name on the last page, and return to me as soon as is possible. Feel free to call or text me at 618-XXX-XXXX, or email me at bbb647@lindenwood.edu, with your questions or comments. I look forward to talking with you about learning adventures

Sincerely,  
Bernice Bush  
618-XXX-XXXX  
bbb647@lindenwood.edu

Enclosure

# LINDENWOOD

## Research Study Consent Form

### EXPLORING HOW ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES MAY ENHANCE DOCTORAL STUDENTS' PERSISTENCE TO DISSERTATION COMPLETION

Before reading this consent form, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available, if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

*Basic information about this study:*

- We are interested in learning about your personal perceptions encompassing your dissertation writing experiences as you navigated your doctoral degree process.
- You will be invited to express your sentiments and experiences of your doctoral dissertation writing assignment through a recorded interview.
- Risks of participation include becoming downhearted following reminiscence of unfortunate or unpleasant experiences surrounding your doctoral dissertation project.

# LINDENWOOD

## Research Study Consent Form

### EXPLORING HOW ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES MAY ENHANCE DOCTORAL STUDENTS' PERSISTENCE TO DISSERTATION COMPLETION

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Bernice Bush under the guidance of Dr. Henschke at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

#### **Why is this research being conducted?**

We are doing this study to explore the perceptions of doctoral students during their dissertation writing projects and how, if at all, the Andragogical principles of a teacher's empathy with, trust in, and sensitivity toward their students may enhance the potential for doctoral students' persistence to dissertation completion and, ultimately, degree accomplishment. We will be asking about five (5) other qualifying people to answer these questions.

#### **What am I being asked to do?**

Should you be agreeable to participate, you will be interviewed at your convenience by the Researcher. It is anticipated that the interviews will require up to two hours of conversation. Initially, the interviews are slated to be conducted in a quiet room within the Library & Academic Resource Center on the Lindenwood University, St. Charles campus. In the event that this location is not convenient for you, the Researcher will find a more accommodating setting or offer an appointment for recording your interview over the phone.

Once the Researcher has transcribed your interview, you will receive a draft for your review. You are free to make any edits, revisions, or omissions that you desire. You are welcome to withdraw your input from the research data at any time. Upon completion of

the final transcription, you will receive your own hard copy to keep on file. All audio files, paper files, and computer-generated materials will be locked in storage at the residence of the Researcher for a three-year period and destroyed thereafter. This data will not be offered to any other research studies. There is no monetary compensation being offered for your voluntary services.

**How long will I be in this study?**

Your complete participation includes the recording of your doctoral program experiences in an interview, the mindful review of your transcribed interview, the editing process of drafts to final copy, and your receipt of a final hard copy of your interview contribution.

**Who is supporting this study?**

This is an unfunded undertaking. Your participation is greatly appreciated; however, it remains voluntary and uncompensated.

**What are the risks of this study?**

- Privacy and Confidentiality

We will not be collecting any information that will identify you. Your confidentiality will be protected by the use of a pseudonym, which you may choose.

**What are the benefits of this study?**

You will receive no direct benefits for completing this interview. We hope what we learn may benefit other people in the future.

**Will I receive any compensation?**

There is no monetary compensation being offered for your voluntary services.

**What if I do not choose to participate in this research?**

It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decide to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from this study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

**What if new information becomes available about the study?**

During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

**How will you keep my information private?**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

**How can I withdraw from this study?**

Notify the research team immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

**Who can I contact with questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at (636) 949-4730 or [mleary@lindenwood.edu](mailto:mleary@lindenwood.edu). You can contact the Researcher, Bernice Bush, directly at 618-XXX-XXXX or [bbb647@Lindenwood.edu](mailto:bbb647@Lindenwood.edu). You may also contact Dr. Sherblom at [Ssherblom@Lindenwood.edu](mailto:Ssherblom@Lindenwood.edu).

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____	_____
<b>Participant's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	
<b>Participant's Printed Name</b>	

_____	_____
<b>Signature of Principle Investigator or Designee</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	
<b>Investigator or Designee Printed Name</b>	

## Appendix L

### QUESTIONS PRESENTED TO PERSISTENT COMPLETERS AS INTERVIEWEES

As outlined in the Letter of Introduction, this study will explore the perceptions of doctoral students who reached the phenomenological phase of All But Dissertation yet were able to complete their degree through persistence.

1. Would you please identify:
  - (a) which doctoral degree you were working toward,
  - (b) which university(ies) you attended within this quest,
  - (c) the length of time it took for you to satisfy the requirements, and
  - (d) what your age was at the start of your program?
  
2. Did you start this degree program immediately upon graduation?
  - Which Master's degree program had you finished prior to starting the doctoral degree?
  - How much time was there between completing the other degree and beginning this one?
  - Did you struggle under the course curriculum when attending that degree program?
  
3. Please describe your fundamental reasons for beginning this particular doctoral degree?
  - Did you need this degree for a career?
  - Were you working toward a different career direction?
  - Did you have a plan in mind for how you would be using this new knowledge when you started this doctoral program?
  
4. Please describe your marital and family status at the time you began this doctoral degree program?
  - Were there any interruptions or changes within your marriage during your time spent pursuing this doctoral degree?
  - Were there any personal crises relating to you or any of the members of your household and family during the course of your doctoral experience?
  - Were there any unforeseen illnesses, devastating injuries, or property disasters which you survived during your degree program?
  
5. Please describe your roles and responsibilities as a member of your home?
  - Were you an active parent?
  - To how many children?
  - How old were the children during this time spent completing this degree?
  - Were you able to stay engaged with your children and their agendas while attending to this program?
  - How did the time and attention spent working on your dissertation affect your children?

- In the case where it was negative, how did that affect you and your dissertation-writing abilities?
6. Please describe your employment status at this time?
- Were you working full-time or part-time during your doctoral degree experience?
  - What was your position and responsibilities?
  - What was your work schedule and when were your shifts?
  - Did the knowledge you were gaining through your doctoral studying aid you in your employment?
  - In what ways, if any, was your dissertation writing impeded by your employment commitments?
  - Were there any incentives from your employment to complete this doctoral degree program?
7. Please describe your course of action in choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university?
- Was affordability a critical element in your choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university?
  - Was financing this degree program an obstacle?
  - Was location a critical element in choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university?
  - Was commuting to this campus an obstacle?
  - Were your other degrees obtained at this same university campus?
8. Please describe your general attitude toward pursuing this doctoral degree at the:
- (a) beginning through first year,
  - (b) the second year, and
  - (c) when you reached the point of All But Dissertation?
- Was there ever a point you doubted your ability to successfully complete your dissertation and accomplish your degree?
  - Did you take any breaks from the flow of the doctoral program?
  - Were you able to keep up with the degree program requisites presented by the university?
9. Please describe your academic experience while attending the course of your doctoral program?
- Did the class subjects prepare you for independent research?
  - What was your experience picking a dissertation topic?
  - Did you have to scrap a topic and start over?
  - Were other doctoral candidates working on projects within your subject?
  - Were you able to study in a cohort group of peers?
  - Were there any supplemental program enhancers provided by the university and faculty which offered support to doctoral students as they proceeded to navigate the course curriculum?

10. Please describe your strongest relationships during your academic experience?
  - Did you have the approval and support of your spouse, children, family, and employment when you began your degree program?
  - Did their approval and support remain constant throughout your doctoral process?
  - Did you have any personal crises which obstructed your research study or dissertation writing?
  - Were there personal losses of loved ones within this period of time?
  
11. Please describe your relationship with your course's advisor?
  - Were you properly advised throughout your doctoral degree program?
  - Did you receive adequate support in your independent study pursuits?
  - Was there ever a time you felt abandoned or sabotaged by your advisor or any of the affiliated faculty members?
  - Were there any critical friends which offered aid or support to you within the course of the degree program?
  - Did anyone stand out to you as a Mentor?
  - Did you actively pursue academic and social support?
  - On campus? Off campus?
  
12. Please describe yourself as the former student?
  - Were you always an overachiever?
  - What were your top three motivators?
  - Could you have still persisted to completion in their absence?
  - When you reached the All But Dissertation phase, did you seek out solutions as you encountered obstacles?
  - What advice would you offer a student considering this doctoral degree program?
  - What was the greatest lesson you learned about yourself?
  
13. In reflection, how would you describe your self-health at the time of your dissertation completion and doctoral degree accomplishment?
  - Were you satisfied with your academic experience?
  - Did you have regrets after your doctoral degree program ended?
  - Do you harbor any regrets yet today?
  - Has the strength gained through your persistence to accomplish your degree continued to benefit your life's achievements?
  - What was your most indispensable resource when crediting your scholastic success?
  
14. Please define your interpretation of "a Teacher's empathy with their students"?
  - What was your experience regarding your advisor's or Committee Chairperson's empathy with you and your particular circumstances during your doctoral process?

- Do you count this as a positive experience?
  - In what ways, if any, could your advisor or Committee Chairperson have been more empathetic with you in their relationship?
  - Did your experience receiving empathy enhance your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?
15. Please define your interpretation of “a Teacher’s trust in their students”?
- What was your experience regarding your advisor’s or Committee Chairperson’s trust in you during the particular circumstances of your doctoral process?
  - Do you count this as a positive experience?
  - In what ways, if any, could your advisor or Committee Chairperson have been more trusting with you in their relationship?
  - Did your experience being trusted enhance your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?
16. Please define your interpretation of “a Teacher’s sensitivity toward their students”?
- What was your experience regarding your advisor’s or Committee Chairperson’s sensitivity toward you and your particular circumstances during your doctoral process?
  - Do you count this as a positive experience?
  - In what ways, if any, could your advisor or Committee Chairperson have been more sensitive toward you in their relationship?
  - Did your experience of Teacher sensitivity enhance your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?
17. Do you have any final comments, closing remarks, or beneficial recommendations now that you have reminisced your doctoral degree experience?

## Appendix M

### Questions Presented to Former Students as Interviewees

#### QUESTIONS PRESENTED TO FORMER STUDENTS COMPLETING EVERYTHING BUT THE DISSERTATION AS INTERVIEWEES

As outlined in the Letter of Introduction, this study will explore the perceptions of doctoral students who reached the phenomenological phase of All But Dissertation, failed to accomplish their dissertation, and dropped out from attrition before completing their programs.

1. Would you please identify:
  - (a) which doctoral degree you were working toward,
  - (b) which university(ies) you attended within this quest,
  - (c) the length of time it took for you to satisfy the requirements, and
  - (d) what your age was at the start of your program?
2. Did you start this degree program immediately upon graduation?
  - Which Master's degree program had you finished prior to starting the doctoral degree?
  - How much time was there between completing the other degree and beginning this one?
  - Did you struggle under the course curriculum when attending that degree program?
3. Please describe your fundamental reasons for beginning this particular doctoral degree?
  - Did you need this degree for a career?
  - Were you working toward a different career direction?
  - Did you have a plan in mind for how you would be using this new knowledge when you started this doctoral program?
4. Please describe your marital and family status at the time you began this doctoral degree program?
  - Were there any interruptions or changes within your marriage during your time spent pursuing this doctoral degree?
  - Were there any personal crises relating to you or any of the members of your household and family during the course of your doctoral experience?
  - Were there any unforeseen illnesses, devastating injuries, or property disasters which you survived during your degree program?
5. Please describe your roles and responsibilities as a member of your home?
  - Were you an active parent?
  - To how many children?
  - How old were the children during this time spent completing this degree?

- Were you able to stay engaged with your children and their agendas while attending to this program?
  - How did the time and attention spent working on your dissertation affect your children?
  - In the case where it was negative, how did that affect you and your dissertation-writing abilities?
6. Please describe your employment status at this time?
- Were you working full-time or part-time during your doctoral degree experience?
  - What was your position and responsibilities?
  - What was your work schedule and when were your shifts?
  - Did the knowledge you were gaining through your doctoral studying aid you in your employment?
  - In what ways, if any, was your dissertation writing impeded by your employment commitments?
  - Were there any incentives from your employment to complete this doctoral degree program?
7. Please describe your course of action in choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university?
- Was affordability a critical element in your choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university?
  - Was financing this degree program an obstacle?
  - Was location a critical element in choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university?
  - Was commuting to this campus an obstacle?
  - Were your other degrees obtained at this same university campus?
8. Please describe your general attitude toward pursuing this doctoral degree at the:
- (a) beginning through first year,
  - (b) the second year, and
  - (c) when you reached the point of All But Dissertation?
- When did you begin to doubt your ability to successfully complete your dissertation and accomplish your degree?
  - Did you take any breaks from the flow of the doctoral program?
  - Were you able to keep up with the degree program requisites presented by the university?
  - Did you seek out any assistance to persist in your program?
9. Please describe your academic experience while attending the course of your doctoral program?
- Did the class subjects prepare you for independent research?
  - What was your experience picking a dissertation topic?
  - Did you have to scrap a topic and start over?

- Were other doctoral candidates working on projects within your subject?
  - Were you able to study in a cohort group of peers?
  - Were there any supplemental program enhancers provided by the university and faculty which offered support to doctoral students as they proceeded to navigate the course curriculum?
10. Please describe your strongest relationships during your academic experience?
- Did you have the approval and support of your spouse, children, family, and employment when you began your degree program?
  - Did their approval and support remain constant throughout your doctoral process?
  - Did you have any personal crises which obstructed your research study or dissertation writing?
  - Were there personal losses of loved ones within this period of time?
11. Please describe your relationship with your course's advisor or your Committee Chairperson?
- Were you properly advised throughout your doctoral degree program?
  - Did you receive adequate support in your independent study pursuits?
  - Was there ever a time you felt abandoned or sabotaged by your advisor or any of the affiliated faculty members?
  - Were there any critical friends which offered aid or support to you within the course of the degree program?
  - Did anyone stand out to you as a Mentor?
  - Did you actively pursue academic and social support?
  - On campus? Off campus?
12. Please describe yourself as the former student?
- Were you overwhelmed as a student in any other academic endeavors?
  - What were your top three obstacles?
  - What was lacking in your pursuit to persist to dissertation accomplishment and degree completion?
  - When you reached the All But Dissertation phase, did you seek out solutions as you encountered obstacles?
  - What advice would you offer a student considering this doctoral degree program?
  - What was the greatest lesson you learned about yourself?
13. In reflection, how would you describe your self-health at the time you were succumbing to attrition and ultimately deciding to drop out of your doctoral degree program?
- What do you believe could have made your academic experience more satisfying and successful?
  - What were your regrets after you decided to drop out of your doctoral degree program?
  - Do you still harbor those regrets yet today?

- Have you gained strength or insight through your academic experience which has benefitted your life?
  - What was your most critical complaint which aided in your decision to drop out of your program before completion?
14. Please define your interpretation of “a Teacher’s empathy with their students”?
- What was your experience regarding your advisor’s or Committee Chairperson’s empathy with you and your particular circumstances during your doctoral process?
  - What, if anything, do you count as positive in your academic experience?
  - Did you experience a lack of empathy from your advisor or Committee Chairperson?
  - In what ways, if any, could your advisor or Committee Chairperson have been more empathetic with you in their relationship?
  - Would more empathy from your advisor or Committee Chairperson have enhanced your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?
  - What would you change if you could?
15. Please define your interpretation of “a Teacher’s trust in their students”?
- What was your experience regarding your advisor’s or Committee Chairperson’s trust in you during the particular circumstances of your doctoral process?
  - What, if anything, do you count as positive in your academic experience?
  - Did you experience a lack of trust from your advisor or Committee Chairperson?
  - In what ways, if any, could your advisor or Committee Chairperson have been more trusting with you in their relationship?
  - Would being trusted more by your advisor or Committee Chairperson have enhanced your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?
  - What would you change if you could?
16. Please define your interpretation of “a Teacher’s sensitivity toward their students”?
- What was your experience regarding your advisor’s or Committee Chairperson’s sensitivity toward you and your particular circumstances during your doctoral process?
  - What, if anything, do you count as positive in your academic experience?
  - Did you experience a lack of sensitivity from your advisor or Committee Chairperson?
  - In what ways, if any, could your advisor or Committee Chairperson have been more sensitive toward you in their relationship?
  - Would more sensitivity from your advisor or Committee Chairperson have enhanced your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?

- What would you change if you could?

17. Do you have any final comments, closing remarks, or beneficial recommendations now that you have reflected on your doctoral degree experience?

**Appendix N****Transcribed Interview with Dr. Henschke**

Good morning; I am with Dr. Henschke and am going to ask him some questions as a persistent completer of the doctoral degree.

Q.\_. = Question within numerical sequence

R.I. = Research Interviewer

Dr. H. = Dr. Henschke

[written description of visual attribute]

Q. 1.: Would you please identify which doctoral degree you were working toward; from which universities you attended; the length of time it took you to satisfy the requirements; and what was your age at the start of your program?

Dr. H.: I may have to take those one at a time. My age at the start of the program, which was in 1967, I would have been thirty-five years of age. That was the fall of 1967.

R.I.: The doctoral degree you were working toward?

Dr. H.: Doctor of Education at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

R.I.: How long did it take you to satisfy the requirements?

Dr. H.: I started in fall 1967, and I finished, completed the whole thing by June of 1973. So, it took me six years, just about six years.

R.I.: Okay. Thank you.

Dr. H.: That's all the classwork, all of the dissertation stuff, and so on and so forth. I started the dissertation and had the proposal approved late in 1969. That's when I left Boston and went to Detroit to take a job at the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies. I was there for a year and then I went to the University of Missouri in 1970.

R.I.: Thank you. Did you start this degree program immediately upon graduation of a different degree?

Dr. H.: I did not.

R.I.: Had you taken a Master's program?

Dr. H.: Yes, I did take a Master's program, actually, two Master's degrees.

R.I.: What were they in?

Dr. H.: One was Bachelor of Divinity. After I finished college in 1955, for my first degree at Bob Jones University, in Greenville, South Carolina, I started the Bachelor of Divinity degree immediately in the fall of 1955. I graduated with that, it was a three-year degree, in 1958. It was later years that they changed that to what is called Master of Divinity, and I got it exchanged simply at a later time when they changed them all across the nation from a Bachelor to a Masters. It was really a Graduate degree and not a Bachelor degree, per se, but that is part of the history of the theological education.

In 1955, I graduated and started the degree in the fall; finished in 1958, and I stayed on for Master of Theology degree. From 1958 to 1959, I did the Resident's work for the Theology degree. We had to write a thesis; it was not until 1963, that I finished the Master's degree. Then it was not until 1967, that I went for the doctoral degree. It was not continuous, with the exception of my going through the Bachelor's of Arts degree - Master's of Divinity degree, and the Resident's work for the Master's of Theology degree. I finished that after working continuously, but then I took time out. After I finished the Resident's work for the Master's degree, I took time out to do the Master's thesis. Then it wasn't until 1967, that I went for the doctoral degree.

R.I.: Thank you.

Q. 2.: Please describe your fundamental reasons for beginning this particular doctoral degree? You did take a little shift in your career paths.

Dr. H.: I was in the pastoral ministry for a number of years, Southern Baptist, during my seminary degrees. I finished the Resident's work for the Master's of Theology. Then also, I was in the ministry with the American Baptist Churches for eleven years, probably. During the time that I was in the pastoral ministry, I went to a Laboratory Education Experience, put out by the National Council of Churches, up in Greenlake, Wisconsin. I went in the spring of 1965; and in the spring of 1967, I began to get a nudging in my spirit to pursue the possibility of doing some of the Laboratory Education Experience. It's called Experiential Education, T-Groups, it was called that for training groups.

I went to a second Laboratory Experience in the spring of 1967; my wife went with me to a basic lab. I said that I'd be interested in pursuing that to become a trainer or an educator regarding that. The fellow that was my wife's trainer, talked with me about that

and he suggested that I do not do it part-time. He said, if I was going to get serious about doing that, I should do a doctoral degree in a related discipline. I talked about that and thought about that, and it was in April of 1967, that we went to the American Baptist Convention in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

The American Baptists had a missionary dedication service for the new appointees at the end of their convention each year. At that particular time, my wife and I had talked about the possibility of pursuing a doctoral degree or whatever. When we went into the missionary dedication service that night at the end of the convention, the opening hymn of the service was, "Once to Every Man and Nation Comes the Chance to Decide." The Lord spoke to my wife and me, individually and simultaneously, that we were to seek another field of service. We talked about that after the service that night. We went home and initiated the process for the possibility of going to take a doctoral degree. I went to a Laboratory Education Experience in Bethel, Maine, with the National Training Laboratories Instituted for Applied Behavioral Science. I went up there and also contacted the four universities that my wife's trainer suggested that I inquire into. One was Temple University in Philadelphia; another one was the Research Center of Group Dynamics at the University of Michigan. Another one was the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the fourth one was Boston University. I wrote to all of them and got a letter from Temple University in Philadelphia, "How can we respond to you?" "What information can we give to you?" I had a telephone call from Boston University; Malcolm Knowles' assistant asking, "How can we help you?" He guided me through the process; told me I had to take the Miller's Analogies Test; I needed to apply to the university; see about housing if I was interested. I'm still waiting to hear from UCLA and the Research Center of Group Dynamics at the University of Michigan; I've never heard from them.

R.I.: They should be calling soon.

Dr. H.: (Ha-ha-ha!) So then, after I went to the Gould Academy at the National Training Laboratories Institute for Applied Behavioral Science Laboratory, I came home after that experience on a Saturday night and on Sunday, I resigned the church. Then we got ourselves together; my wife and I had two children with a third one on the way. We had an auction sale for our furniture and packed up the rest in a U-Haul trailer. Three weeks later, we traveled to Boston University and I got into graduate student housing. When I preached my last sermon and came into the Parsonage, I laid down on the floor and cried like a baby. I said, "I don't know whether I'm really supposed to do this." I felt like I'd turned my back on whatever things were, and I was headed for a new adventure; but we were together in doing that.

That was the first decision that my wife and I had made together, outside of our having our children, since we had been married. She married into the ministry, and I was already committed to it. This was a thing that we decided together, and the Lord spoke to each one of us, individually and simultaneously. It wasn't like me dragging her off to some place she didn't have any commitment to; or that she was telling me that I needed to do something else and I was resistant toward that.

That was the thing that kept our supporting each other during my Boston University experience, the two years I spent doing the Resident's work. After that, it took me four years to do the dissertation. That was the thing that kept us going on track when I would say, "Oh, I don't know if I can do this," or "Will I ever be able to finish this?" I would cry, and she would support me. When she would say, "John, I can't stand to live like this," then I could support her and let her cry on my shoulder. So, we were mutually supportive to each other.

Of course, both of our sets of parents thought we were nuts for doing what we were doing because I already had a job pastoring a church. But that's what we felt like the Lord wanted us to do. That carried us through, and that's how I got into the doctoral degree in Doctorate of Education in Adult Higher Education at Boston University.

R.I.: Great! Thank you.

Q. 3.: Please describe, you kind of already have, but touch down on it again. Please describe your marital and family status at the time you began this doctoral degree program? Were there any interruptions or changes within your marriage during your time spent pursuing this doctoral degree?

Dr. H.: The only interruptions were when each of us would cry on each other's shoulder. Those were just interruptions in the midst of what we were doing.

Q. 4.: Were there any other personal crises relating to you or any of the members of your family, other than changing your address, changing all of your status, your career focus. Was there anything else that popped up along the way?

Dr. H.: I got done with my Resident work for my doctoral degree; I went to the Institute of Advanced Pastoral Studies in Detroit, for a year. I was on the teaching faculty there; it was only meant to be a year-long experience, so I applied to a number of universities to see if I could get a job someplace. By the time I was done with the year up in Detroit, I had garnered a job at the University of Missouri, in the University Extension, as a job. Then we moved from Detroit to Maryville, Missouri, and took the job as the Continuing

Education Specialist. I was in that job for thirteen years. In the first four years, in 1972, is when I finished the degree. I had spent time; my family made the sacrifice of allowing me to spend my weekends to work on my dissertation. It took me four years to do it. My wife and I flew to Boston, in April of 1973, and she sat in on my defense of my dissertation. I finished that and was awarded the doctoral degree in June of 1973.

R.I.: Great! Thanks!

Q. 5.: Please describe your roles and responsibilities as a member of your home? Talk about your parenting; talk about the children.

Dr. H.: We had two children; two girls and a third baby on the way. We didn't know at that time if it was going to be a boy or girl, because they didn't have the means to determine that back in the ancient times.

R.I.: They just had someone take a good look at you and make an educated guess.

Dr. H.: (Ha-ha-ha!) Anyway, we transferred from a seven-room house to a two-room apartment. With my wife being pregnant, I was the bread winner. She had done some work as a secretary for me at the church where I last pastored, First Baptist of Jacksonville, Illinois. Before we determined that we were going to go on to other fields of service, our church burned down. It was set by a juvenile arsonist; he set four fires in the town that night. We were in the midst of a building program, and the secretary who had been with me retired. Carol (wife) had been a secretary; she had worked during school when I met her in Chicago, at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. She was the secretary at the Dolly Company, who made fire equipment. So, she was a good secretary and she worked some before we left Jacksonville, Illinois. She basically took care of the children; she became the Curator of the Laundry room in our Boston University complex and made a few dollars with that. Also, she was secretary for a while at the Massachusetts's Baptist Society in downtown Boston. She did that up to close when she delivered the baby; then she left that job. I took a job at the First Baptist Church in Peabody, Massachusetts, which is up on the North Shore from Boston. It was a part-time thing. That is what I had for my breadwinning during the time that we were at Boston University for two years doing the Resident's work. Then I took the job at the Institute for Pastoral Studies; then the I took the job at the University of St. Louis Extension after that. So, I was the breadwinner, basically, during all that time. I was balancing going to school, being a father, although not much with the family because I was doing a lot of studying, a lot of dissertation work, and so forth during that particular time. Also, Carol got a job later when I finished the doctoral degree. So, I was balancing those things, and the dedication of my dissertation was to my wife and daughters, for

their generous sacrifices during the time that I was getting the doctoral degree. We never, as a family, regretted my having done that.

R.I.: Wow, I thought I was busy. Okay, thank you.

Q. 6.: Did the knowledge you were gaining through your doctoral studying aid you in your employment at all?

Dr. H.: Definitely. Definitely did. One of the things that happened during working on my dissertation and trying to finish it, Boston University had gone through a reorganization. Basically, they were wiping out, finishing up the doctoral degree in Adult Higher Education. Which meant that I was afraid that I might not be able to finish it. In the fall of 1972, I went to the American Association for Adult Continuing Education in Minneapolis. In the Graduate Student section, there were 88 graduate students and their professors. I got to present; I still have what I presented at that conference. I presented the stage of my dissertation at that time, which I was in the middle of it. People were asking, "What are you going to do now that Boston University is going to close down their program?" I didn't realize at the time that I could have launched a lawsuit at Boston University if they weren't going to let me finish, but they set it up, so I could finish it.

In any event, I said at that time, if I don't finish the doctoral degree, no one can ever take the education away from me that I got during the time. It helped me in my work; it has helped me ever since. It has been very much of a benefit to me. I did some pastoral work part time after I was with the University of Missouri, and I found that what I studied in my doctoral degree in adult education, even helped me in the pastoral ministry. So, it was very beneficial; it was not a thing that I did, and after it was done say, "That's all done, so I can't use it." I have used it now for close to 50 years.

R.I.: That's great; thank you.

Q. 7.: Please describe your course of action in choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university?

Dr. H: I had been advised by this guy who had done a doctoral work. He had done his doctoral work at Boston University, himself; he was from Australia. He gave me four schools to think about going to. It happened that I went to the one who had responded to my interest.

R.I.: So, it wasn't necessarily a choice of this is closer to where I live, or this is cheaper, because you definitely had to move to get closer to your campus.

Dr. H.: Yes, halfway across the United States. But I certainly don't regret the choice that I made and the benefits it's been to me.

R.I.: This question aligns with Tinto's findings. Early on, Tinto was a researcher and he felt that different times in your course you will have different levels of persistence. There's the beginning through your first year, the second year, and then the point at which you reach all of your course expectations except finishing your dissertation.

Q. 8.: What was your attitude? Was it about the same through all these points, or was it better or worse during your first year, your second year, and after finishing your courses, but not your dissertation?

Dr. H.: If I can find the book, I shared this whole idea. There was a lady, Sharon Merriam, in our field, that wrote a book on Love, Work, and Learning. She analyzed a number of people regarding that. I did a section in that book. I found the balance of those three things were very much in play. When we went to Boston University, there were about twenty-five couples that we had gotten to know. It ended up that only two of us stayed together, two couples out of the twenty-five couples. The other couple that stayed together, she took her doctoral degree at the same time. She became the Dean of the Nursing School, down in Pennsylvania, I think. That guy was an Episcopal priest. He said, "Well, I've got this figured out; my wife and I stayed together just to give each other a hard time. But you and your wife stayed together because you loved each other." We've now been married sixty years. When we went to Boston University and made that commitment, we said our relationship was going to be the most important thing. Everything else had to take second place to it.

I had some other students and some faculty at Boston University that didn't like that idea that I put my wife and my family first, and the studies were second. We went into it together and we're going to stick together, no matter what. That was the thing that sustained us so much over the period of years: we went into this together. She's not an adult educator, but she was my fan and my support. When she did what she did, I was always her fan and her support. That didn't mean that we didn't have our ups and downs, good times and bad times, wonderful times and not-so-wonderful times. It's just that you stick it through.

Q. 9.: Was there ever a time you doubted your ability to successfully complete your dissertation?

Dr. H.: Definitely. Oh, definitely.

R.I.: Was it early?

Dr. H.: It was when I was doing the Resident's work, especially. In the beginning. Yes, I would come home sometimes after class or whatever else, and I would tell Carole, "I don't know how I'll ever be able to finish this thing. I really don't know if I can do this."

R.I.: And then she would say, "Oh, yes you can!"

Dr. H.: Yes, yes she did.

R.I.: This is what my dissertation is about, is looking at the support during the dissertation process.

Dr. H.: One of the things that I realized, and I tell doctoral students this, this is a test in endurance. This is not a test of whether you can do it or whether you can't do it. If you're determined to do it, you can do it. It was the call of the Lord upon our lives that I finish this. Even in the midst of that, I wondered if I would be able to do it, whether I could finish it, not having gone through a doctoral program before. I didn't know whether I could finish it up. Even during the four years that I was working on my dissertation, I didn't know if it was going to be okay or not. I got to one place in my dissertation, and I sent it on to my Chair. "Here it is; I need some help." He gave me the help that I needed, and I was able to finish it. I can't say that it's the best piece of work in the world, but it got me through my doctoral dissertation. One of my friends said to me, "It's supposed to include the field of adult education, isn't it? You're supposed to influence whatever field you're going into. So, what is this doctoral degree you're getting going to do for the field?" I said, "It's going to get me my doctoral degree."

R.I.: That's right!

Dr. H.: That was my primary thing!

R.I.: That's right; don't get too broad. Focus; just finish it.

Dr. H.: There are times when I just didn't think that I would be able to do it.

R.I.: Yeah, I know those feelings.

Dr. H.: So, all I can say is, you're a member of the club.

R.I.: Exactly! Exactly! You don't have to tell them you're crying; they already know it, they already know it. Okay, now I'm going to move into the academics. You have already touched down a lot on some of this.

Q. 10.: Please describe your academic experience while attending the course of your doctoral program? More specifically, did the class subjects prepare you for independent research?

Dr. H.: Yes, definitely! Malcolm was in the early stages of developing his theory of Andragogy, and the whole business about self-directed learning. He gave us the opportunity. . . . I don't know if you've heard this story or not, but he came into class one day. We had a lot of people going through the program, either part-time or full-time. One day I was a little bit late for class and he was talking to the students. He handed out 3" x 5" cards. He said, "I want you to put your name on this and write down the grade you want for this course." We did that. Then he said, "I want you to hand them all in." We collected them all; he put a rubber band around them; and put those cards in his briefcase. He said, "Now, there's the grade you're going to get for this course. So now, what do you want to learn?"

R.I.: Nice.

Dr. H.: So, he plunged us right smack into the whole business about self-directed learning and demonstrating what his conception of Andragogy is to me.

R.I.: And, started Learning Contracts; basically, that's the bud that grew into a Learning Contract.

Dr. H.: But, you see, at that time, he didn't know anything about Learning Contracts. He didn't publish the book on Learning Contracts until two years after I was finished with my degree. But he had the idea of the self-directed learning; he was very supportive in the whole thing. That was the thing that really kicked my whole business into gear about the way I do my stuff in Adult Education.

Q. 11.: What was your experience picking a dissertation topic? Did you have to scrap any and start over, or were you able to work straight through from your first pick?

Dr. H.: I had no idea what I was going to do. But one of the courses that we had, Malcolm wasn't the teacher, Bob Chin, he was the organizational psychologist. I took his course. We were in the change field; you were a change agent if you were an adult educator, because you're changing people's lives. Or, they're changing when they're

working with you in the process. So, there was a change seminar, and we had it at the professor's home. We didn't have it on the campus, but about seven miles away. We'd start sometimes about 7:30 in the evening, and finish about 2:30 in the morning. We decided we were going to interview any number of change agents. We developed an instrument for raising the questions. We used that set of questions with each one of the change agents we interviewed.

I got the idea along the way that I would like to interview Malcolm as a change agent, because that's what he was in the field of change. So, I decided I was going to explore that as a possibility. We interviewed those people, and I got used to the idea of asking questions about change with all these change agents. So, I went to Malcolm one day and I said, "I think I've got a dissertation topic that I would like to explore with you." I told him about the class and so forth; he knew about it. I said, "I'd like to do a dissertation on you and your work in adult education." He said, "I'd be honored, and I would give you permission to do that. My first order of business is to get off of your Committee." First of all, he was the Chair of my Committee. Then he said, "Not only will I not be your Chair, I'll get off of your Committee and serve you only as an information resource." So, I got the permission to do that. His associate, the guy who called me when I was thinking I would be going to Boston University and said, "How can we help you?," he was the one who became my Chair. Malcolm got off the Committee. Of course, the field heard that he was doing that; it was in an uproar.

Malcolm's mentor at the University of Chicago allowed me to interview him; I did it with a tape recorder. He said, "Now, are you done?" I said, "Yes," as with the interview. He said, "I wanted to say something to you; I don't think what you've got so far as a dissertation topic is worthy of a degree." I listened to him; he had all of his reasons. When he was done, I said, "Well, thank you so much for giving me that information." I picked up my tape recorder, had my suitcase in my hand, and I thanked him for his generosity for giving me the time. He said he wanted to respond to me as fully as he possibly could to the interview questions. I picked up myself, went back to the airport, flew back to Detroit, and went about my business. When I told my Chair, he said, "Just remember this, your Dissertation Committee are the ones who will decide whether or not your topic is worthy of a doctoral degree. We will finalize that and determine that at the end when you come for your defense. But we've already approved that you do that." That gave me the support that I needed, a system of support; I knew that my Committee was the only people I had to answer to. I didn't have to answer to all the other people in the field. I had any number of people who wrote to me and responded to my inquiry; I got all kinds of data from them. I probably got about a 50% return on the surveys I sent out in the mail. He gave me that comment about my topic not being worth a doctoral

degree, but my Chair and my Committee said they'd be the ones deciding whether or not you have a doctoral degree at the end of your defense.

R.I.: Right; so that was, "Thank you for your OP ED, but it doesn't change anything."

Q. 12.: Were there any supplemental program enhancers provided by your university and faculty which offered support to the doctoral students navigating the different course curriculums?

Dr. H.: The deal was that Malcolm Knowles was my Major Advisor and he was the one who determined a whole lot of the things when I would ask him which courses I should take. He gave me what I ought to do as far as courses were concerned. I took the regimen of courses from him and from his associate, Gene DeBois. There were some other faculty that we studied with, but we got the structure of the program and what we needed to do from Malcolm. He supported us all the way.

R.I.: Now we have Canvas and there's structural things in place, but that was too early for those things then.

Q. 13.: They didn't have any groups that would meet for writing? Did the university provide things that were just their structures, there to help support people learning to write independently, research independently?

Dr. H.: Along the way, one of the recommendations my Chair said to me, "I think you ought to go take a course in writing over in the School of Public Communication. Go talk with Al Sullivan; see if he'll take you in one of his classes. I think that will be helpful for you if you're going to write a dissertation." So, I took Al's course, and I got the hang of writing. Then when I got done with the course, I told him what I was doing regarding what my dissertation concerns. He said, "That sounds intriguing." I asked Gene if I could have him on my Committee and he said, "Yes, by all means, do it." When I went to ask Dr. Sullivan, he said, "I'm so interested in your topic. I accept your invitation and I will be delighted to be part of your Dissertation Committee."

R.I.: Wow! How exciting, for him, too.

Dr. H.: I had gone to somebody else that Malcolm had recommended, a new guy. I can't remember what aspect of education he was in. I went in one day, told him what I was going to do, and met with him for about an hour. As we went to the elevator to leave the meeting, he said, "I was not feeling very good today. I don't know whether I should have come in to meet with you." I thought to myself, why didn't you tell me at the beginning

that you weren't feeling good today. Because he was very much discouraging. He didn't like the idea at all. I was going to ask him to be on my Committee. I thought after that, that I'm not going to ask that guy to be on my Committee.

R.I.: Thanks. You kind of touched down on this; I know that number one is your wife.

Q. 14.: Please describe your strongest relationships during your academic experience? Did you have the approval and support of your spouse, children, family, and employment when you began your degree program?

Dr. H.: Definitely.

R.I.: You kind of touched down on that, but if there were other people. I know this guy in Chicago didn't really support you.

Dr. H.: No. No, no. During the time that we were going through the Resident's work for the doctoral degree, we were a cadre of students that would get together. Sometimes we would get done with class at 8:30, 9:30, at night. A bunch of us would always go over to The Dug Out, which was a pub.

R.I.: And relax.

Dr. H.: Yes, we'd relax. Many of us said that was where the real work took place. We got to talking among each other; we developed some wonderful relationships during the program. So, we were supportive to each other very much.

R.I.: When I was in Gerontology with Tina Grossa, and I had met you, that's when I knew I was going to go into this program. She had said then, when she got off of class, all of the classmates would go somewhere to sit down, have a few drinks and snacks, and unwind. I could never get that going with anybody in my classes. I was from Illinois and they were from out here. They didn't know me; they knew each other. So, I never got that; I'm kind of envious because that was great.

Dr. H.: It was definitely a support system. Then there were other things: we would have laboratory experiences on the weekend. We would go up to Osgood Hill, which was a conference center for Boston University. With this experiential education, we had a real good experience developing support systems within our group.

R.I.: That's pretty much the direction I'm taking mine. It's about Andragogical principles and how they can enhance people to persist through this because it is a

struggle. It's looking at their perceptions, and a huge one is: a lot of people who didn't persist felt like they didn't have the support. The people that did persist, felt like they did have the support, and they made every day count however they could. That's great insight for that.

Dr. H.: That doesn't mean that along the way I didn't have a time or two where I felt like, "If I could just end it all, I would be better off." I never followed through on that, but it was a real heavy burden in terms of trying to find out whether or not I could do this. There were many classes for the Live Laboratory for Learning; we had a course on Advanced Consulting. Malcolm had consulting jobs with various organizations around Boston. He brought in various groups and allowed us to consult with them, help them think about ways in which they could be helped. He would forego his fee to the group so that he could bring them into our class and we were able to test out our consulting skills. So, that was an excellent kind of thing that we were able to do.

R.I.: Great!

Q. 15.: Were there any personal losses of loved ones within that period for you? I lost my Mom right before I started. So, each of you still had parents; everything was well for everyone in the family?

Dr. H.: It was after I finished the doctoral degree is when I had the loss of my parents, and the loss of my two sisters since then. I had the privilege of conducting the memorial services for each one of them: my two sisters, my Mother, and my Father.

R.I.: Wow! That's impressive. I would be crying.

Dr. H.: Well, a couple of times, in preparation for going into the services, I said to my wife, "I didn't know if I can make this." She just put her hand on me and prayed for me. She said, "You'll do okay."

Q. 16.: Please describe your relationship with your course's advisor? Were you properly advised throughout your doctoral degree program?

Dr. H.: Well, not by all of my instructors. Some of them were just kind of detached; it was nothing more than a course that they would do.

R.I.: Well, here we have an advisor. Did you have an advisor?

Dr. H.: Malcolm was my advisor.

R.I.: Okay. Okay. So, you were properly advised by him? Okay.

Q. 17.: Was there ever a time you felt abandoned or sabotaged? I wouldn't say by your advisor, but by any of the other faculty members? You said they were kind of disconnected. Did any of them work against you in your progress?

Dr. H.: No. I can't say that any of them worked against me and said, "You don't belong here."

R.I.: In some of my literature that I've looked up, there are some Horror stories. I don't know if they were just jealous of the student's progress or they didn't feel like the student belonged in "their" college. There are some bad advisors, definitely.

Dr. H.: In the whole group of adult educators, there was a number of professors that Hated Malcolm because he had so many students. They said, "Why can't we have that many students?" Well, they didn't realize that he cared about us; he was concerned about us. They weren't; apparently, they weren't concerned about their students. They figured that, "Somebody tortured me through my doctoral program, and I'm going to torture you through your doctoral program."

R.I.: I had a professor like that.

Q. 18.: Were there any critical friends which offered aid or support to you within the course of your degree program? For me, I would say it was Somanita; she was really a critical friend at a critical junction in my doctoral experience. Aside from your wife, was there somebody that just stepped in, had a conversation, or in anyway, was a critical friend for you?

Dr. H.: No, there were those who said to me along the way, "Here's what I did to finish my doctoral degree. I did this, this, and this; I took this step and that step, and so forth." I did talk to around five or six people like that. When I finally got to the point after about six of these, it dawned on me that I'm only going to finish this dissertation, or this degree, when my internal furniture and my particular sense of timing of finishing it comes together for me. I couldn't depend upon anybody else; I was very self-directed by that particular time.

My first experience, however, in self-direction came when I was three-years old. Did I ever tell about that? Well, I didn't realize it was that way until after I finished my doctoral degree. In Sunday school, we would always have a Christmas program, and all the children would have to get up and say a piece or do whatever. I was three years old,

my parents got the piece, and I memorized it upside down, backwards, and forwards. When the time of the program came, and I was supposed to go up and say my piece, I just sat in the chair, [arms crossed and shaking my head no].

R.I.: You just shook your head and changed your mind.

Dr. H.: There wasn't anybody who could convince me to do it. My parents didn't get over and say, "Now you get up there and do that." I think they were mortified that I didn't get up there and speak my piece, but I didn't. I realized that was my first experience in self-directedness. It wasn't that I wasn't prepared; I decided I wasn't doing that. I don't know why I decided that, whatever the deal was, but I was just not going to do it.

Then one other thing when I was in Seminary, I had a wonderful experience in self-direction which I didn't realize until way later. We had an Old Testament professor, and I was taking Hebrew which was especially difficult for me. I thought I would rather take one of the Acts of Jesus, one of the Bible books from the Old Testament. So, I went to him and I said, "Can I take this instead of the second or third quarter in Hebrew?" I told him I would love to dig into the scriptures. He had a mustache, and whenever he would be thinking he would [purse his lips] and wiggle his mustache around. Dr. Schultz. He said, "Yeah, I think you can do that." And he supported me in doing that. Well, I realized later, he took his doctoral degree at the Oriental Institute at Divinity School at the University of Chicago. He was very conservative. The University of Chicago, Divinity School was so open minded, their brains fell out, as far as theologically. He made it through that place; they could not, not give him his degree even though they didn't believe anything of his position, theologically. He knew what he knew, and why he knew it. He was very, very supportive; that was one of the guys that helped me and gave me good encouragement.

Q. 19.: Well, I ask this, "Did anyone stand out to you as a mentor;" I'm assuming it's Malcolm Knowles, but

Dr. H.: Oh, definitely. No question about it.

R.I.: Was there a list of people over time that you look back as having mentored you?

Dr. H.: Al Sullivan, who is the writer-guy, he was very supportive. Ken Benne, at the Human Relations Center at Boston University, he was very supportive. In fact, he was one of the guys at Boston University who hired Malcolm when he took his first job in Adult Education at the academic level. He was one on the Committee. Then there's one

other guy in the department that was on my Committee. Of course, Gene DeBois, I took a couple of courses from him. He ended up being my Chair. There were enough supportive people around me that I felt like I had sufficient amount of support with my professors.

R.I.: That's good. You really have touched down on a lot of these, but you be more specific.

Q. 20.: Please describe yourself as the former student? Were you always an overachiever?

Dr. H.: Oh, no; no. I was surprised when I got accepted for college and seminary. I didn't realize my grades were not that good. I probably was a C-average student. An average student which is a C grade, and I was not always an overachiever. I've probably been an overachiever on some of the things when I had opportunity to do things. I was an overachiever and been the Chair of about fifty-three doctoral dissertations and on the Committees of fifty-three others who have finished it. There are not many people who have been involved with over one hundred dissertations. I've been very much of an achiever and would spend many hours, in fact I've cheated my family some of the time along the way by not spending as much time with them. But when I finally retired two years ago this December, I decided after the Lord said, "How much time do you think you have left?" I decided I was going to leave the job full-time and I was going to spend, mainly the rest of my life, working with my wife and my family. Those would be the priorities. Basically, this year we've been able to do a lot of traveling with our families. We went to Israel. In any event, what I'm saying is, I've gotten to the point where I said, "I need to spend a good deal of time, and invest myself in my family, in a special way." So, whenever we go to visit them, my daughters think that they're Daddy is "It."

R.I.: That's the way it's supposed to be.

Dr. H.: It's supposed to be, but I don't know that I've particularly earned that. I just love them dearly. I would like to have had a boy, but I didn't spend thirty seconds thinking about it. When our third daughter came along and there wasn't a boy, I never thought about, "Oh, I wish I had a boy." I didn't spend thirty seconds thinking about that; I Adored all of my girls.

R.I.: I met a man who had two daughters. I asked him if he thought he would try to for a son and he said, "I don't think so. If I raise my daughters well, I can all but hand pick my son-in-laws." I thought that was beautiful. He'll get his sons; it's just a matter of time.

Q. 21.: What were your top three motivators? Like: love of your wife; that was a good motivator. Very interested in your subject. . . . What would you say?

Dr. H.: Sometimes people will say, “What is important for buying a house, or getting a job, or whatever?” Location, location, location. I would say my major motivators was the Call of the Lord upon my life. That had relationship with my wife and I because we felt the Call doing what we were doing - together. The subject has motivated me and kept me in the field all this time. I didn’t retire finally until I was eighty-four, two years ago. That’s been a motivator for me. My wife and my family. My job. And now, enjoying every second of my retirement. I’ve never looked back. Even though I spend time with doctoral students, trying to help them finish up.

Q. 22.: Could you still have persisted to completion in their absence? So, if you didn’t have the Call of the Lord; if your wife wasn’t as much of a stalwart supporter; if the subject was interesting, but not gripping?

Dr. H.: Let me say it this way, I don’t deal a whole lot in hypotheticals. That’s hypothetical because that’s not really what happened. They were there. I don’t know that I could have finished it. I don’t know that there would have been that kind of perseverance on my part to do it, but I did have some strong upbringing as far as perseverance. My family were persevere-ors; we went out to the berry patch and picked berries at four o’clock in the morning in the summer when the berry season was there. My mother had hands that could just fly picking berries. We picked black raspberries at my Uncle’s farm. The most berries that she picked in one day was two hundred and twenty-eight quarts of black raspberries.

R.I.: Oh, my gosh!

Dr. H.: She picked two hundred and twenty-eight quarts! My oldest sister that was alive, my oldest sister died two years before I was born; my oldest sister that lived, she picked on that day one hundred and ten quarts. My sister and I who were just a year apart, she was a year older than I was, we picked seventy-five quarts that day. My Mother threw a few handfuls of berries in our quarts, also. But my Mother was a persevere-or. After us kids were gone, she went to work in F.W. Woolworth’s store. She was a sales person. Her boss, the guy who managed this store, said, “Anna Henschke can sell like hell.” She did; she loved sales and she could sell. She was one of the top sales people in the Dime store.

R.I.: Wow! That says a lot.

Dr. H.: There was an example of perseverance that was handed down. My Mother's family came from Germany. They wanted to come to this country for religious freedom because they were Baptists in Germany, religious freedom and opportunity in the United States. My Father's family came to Minnesota. My Mother's people came around Benton Harbor, Milwaukee, Chicago area, down the southern end of Lake Michigan. My Dad's people came to Minnesota first, then his Dad moved to Wisconsin. My Dad was born in Juneau, Wisconsin. He was a pusher, also. My Mother probably was the driving force. He lost his Dad at a year-and-a-half and his Mother at sixteen. In any event, he also was a driver, if you will.

R.I.: That's great!

Q. 23.: What advice would you offer a student considering this doctoral degree program?

Dr. H.: Don't get into it unless you feel it in here [heart]. You'll never finish a doctoral degree if someone else is driving you to work. Now there may have been people who have done that; I can't say that there wouldn't be. But I came to the conclusion that a major reason why I finished it was the Lord's Call upon my life. Yes, but I had to do this. I needed to do this. If for no other reason than I could accomplish that.

Q. 24.: What was the greatest lesson you learned about yourself during that six years?

Dr. H.: During that six years?

R.I.: Yeah, during your doctoral degree, did you learn anything about yourself?

Dr. H.: Oh, yes. How much a system of support is, and was, and still is, as far as what I am doing. I've seen my brother-in-law, who was married to my wife's sister, she died two years ago in September, and ever since, he's been kind of lost. They had a good relationship; they were married sixty-five years. He still has one daughter he's close to, but he lives in Kansas City, and she lives in San Antonio. He's kind of sticking around for her, but it's like he's kind of lost. Well, look at George H.W. Bush. Barbara died in April; you know what he did? I think, in some way, he timed his own going, his own home-going. After Barbara died, of course he felt really bad about that. They were married, what, seventy-three years. He said, "I want to spend one more summer up in Maine." He was from Houston, Texas, and his place was right on Kenney Bunk Port, Maine. He was very happy, had his boat, and a beautiful house right up on the ocean. So, he got to spend one more summer. He also, said, "Since I've been married to Barbara, I've never spent a Christmas without her." I think he decided that he wasn't going to spend Christmas without her. He was going to go and be where she is.

R.I.: You're right; it's a decision between you and the Lord. He'll honor it as long as you're sure.

Dr. H.: Well, it's not as if you take your own life, but it's time for me to go.

R.I.: Right. My Mom did the same thing.

{Dr. Henschke steps away for a break.}

Dr. H.: One of the things that occurred to me was that I'm a late bloomer. Most people, when they are President of the National Organization, I've watched any number of people, most people probably do it in the years around forty-to-fifty. I wasn't President of our Organization until I was sixty-five. The husband in the other couple that stayed together, he finished his degree in two years. Mine took me six years. My motivation ultimately comes. I'm kind of a slow learner. That has figured into all of this stuff.

R.I.: Did they have children, also?

Dr. H.: They had one boy.

R.I.: One boy? Having one child is a much quieter household than having multiples. Plus, you had an infant; that's different, too. That's where I'm finding the struggle is: sooo many roles and responsibilities. I know people will just say, "Just let something go." And I have; my house is dusty, and my floor is dirty. That's absurd; you just have to find a way to manage it and monitor yourself. I'll probably finish in six years, also. But the farther I go in this direction, the more I'm realizing it's all necessary. Even the spots that look blank with nothing produced, still has learning in there. And that's what this was all about, is learning. I wouldn't be here as strong in my finish if I hadn't had that struggle. So, it's the necessary process, for me. Maybe you are somebody that can just skim across the top, and everything is academic, but then, where's the depth in the rest of your life and relationships?

Dr. H.: Right. One of the doctoral students at UM St. Louis, she did a dissertation on: Can a Student be Self-Directed in Their Internship to Independent Studies and Still Meet the University's Requirements for Grades and Do Well? She ended up with a five hundred- and twenty-five-page dissertation. Along the way, she came to a particular point, for one year she did nothing else but stare at the floor. She could not do anything in terms of writing. Finally, it dawned on her what the piece was in her dissertation. It dawned on her that one could do that. What I'm saying to you is, my Resident's work and my dissertation Proposal was done in two years. It took me four years to finish it.

This other guy did his in two years. The point is: everybody has their own internal furniture for getting done what you need to get done. It can't be what somebody else tells you to do; it's got to be what you determine will be the scope of this. To do the pilot in this whole thing, do you feel like it was beneficial to you to interview yourself? And, the second question is, how do you feel about this interview that you have done with me?

R.I.: I'm interviewing completers and non-completers, looking for your perceptions, knowing that I'm really going to be focusing on support as a resource, as a basis to talk about Andragogical principles. So, you're just oozing support; you're a completer, and you talk about your support, your mentors, your family, your drive, your self-direction. That's it; everything is just falling into place. I'm finding everything I'm looking for. So, thank you for that. It was good to interview myself. I did it one day, started to transcribe, and had to finish the transcription on the next day. It was the next day, because I was more disconnected, that it seemed like I was witnessing two other people. I had tried to put some space between asking a question and answering it so that I really seemed like two different people. When I transcribed it, it was a sensation, it was different. It was good!

Dr. H.: I think you ought to make sure to put that kind of stuff in your dissertation when you talk about that.

R.I.: I know this much, at the beginning when I had ideas and I wasn't finding anybody that could relate to those ideas, I struggled at the point. Now that I've changed directions, I'm actually part of my study. I know that they say you can't align your study knowing what the end is. You set up a study and just let it be whatever it is. It's not a failure even if you had an idea what direction it went, and it didn't go there. So, now I'm in this; and because I will be the one striving to persist, I do see some of the things that I'm going to write in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. But I just have to lull those down a little bit, because there's the Chapters 1, 2, and 3 process that I need to go through. It's hard; it's hard not to just jump to a conclusion. I haven't gotten through all this yet.

Dr. H.: I didn't tell you this, but I'm going to tell you now. I did contemplate along the way jumping off the Mystic River bridge, outside of Boston.

R.I.: I think, in a way, and I say that in mind, too, about regrets. There's definitely a second side to that. I think you need to come to the place where you just know, "This is absolutely the bottom; there's no farther to go down. I can choose to go down; I can. I'm self-determined; I can make my choice either way. But once you walk away and you don't, you have to let that go and know that this is the jump start. This is where you just

take it and move forward. You always say, “I could have, but I didn’t. I had more pluses on the board than minuses in that river.”

Dr. H.: Right! Exactly! I was that desperate along the way. It wasn’t long that that thought plagued me. But, there were times that I just felt like: [hands lifted in surrender].

R.I.: The next couple of questions I was going to ask you were kind of right there.

Q. 25.: Were you satisfied with your academic experience?

Dr. H.: No question about it. I talked with a guy who was working on his doctoral degree at the University of Illinois, and he was having a struggling time. His Dad got me to talk with him. I listened to what he had to say, and I talked to him. I said, “One thing I can tell you for absolute surety, if and when you finish this doctoral degree, you will never regret it for the rest of your life. You will never, ever regret it.” He’s told me a number of times since that time, “No, I don’t regret it. That was a helpful kind of thing.”

R.I.: That was my next question.

Q. 26.: Did you have any regrets after your degree program ended? Or, along the way were there regrets? Do you regret making such big changes and sacrifices?

Dr. H.: No. No.

R.I.: That’s good.

Dr. H.: I’m on the journey that I was supposed to take.

R.I.: I know; that’s great. It’s great that you knew. Sometimes there’s a Calling on you and you think, “Is that indigestion? I’m not really sure.” That’s where I’m like, “Speak to me in a Word I can understand.”

Dr. H.: Exactly!

R.I.: We’re getting close to the end. These questions are aligning with the Andragogical principles. So, I’m asking the one who basically invented it.

Q. 27.: Define your interpretation of a Teacher’s empathy with their students? You can put it in a nutshell, because I know any book on Andragogy, you have almost written.

Dr. H.: Empathy is feeling “with” someone. When you say, “Along the way, I just despair; I don’t know whether I’ll ever finish this.” I know what you’re talking about because I was there. I experienced that, also. I don’t say that I experience all the stuff that you are experiencing or have gone through all the things you’re going through. It must be very difficult for you to have your family arrangement the way it is. But the fact is, when you say, “It’s been a horrible week,” or whatever, I hear you. Not for one second do I say, “You should have done such and such, and so on and so forth.”

R.I.: I know asking you I’ll definitely get a different answer than people who haven’t dealt with it. It’s one of your teaching resources.

Q. 28.: Looking back when you were the student, was your experience with your advisor or Committee Chair people, how was your experience with their empathy? Did they show you empathy?

Dr. H.: Yes. Malcolm was exceptional along that line. I still feel like I’m learning with him. He’s still very much a presence in my life because of his caring. His belief system is different than my belief system.

R.I.: In the subject or in God?

Dr. H.: Well, in God. Very much different. Malcolm never had a problem listening and hearing what I was saying or what I was trying to express. He just had an uncanny sense of empathy. But empathy is feeling “with” somebody. Sympathy is feeling “for” somebody, I think; and that’s different. Those two things are different. “There’s been times when I like to smash my head against a wall.” When somebody feels that despairing, I hear that.

R.I.: I know. My family are very empathetic, and we’re so sensitive. I isolate myself a lot because I’m an action person so, if somebody is sitting next to me praying to God for a washer and dryer, I’m going out and buying a washer and dryer and surprising them. So, I can’t afford to be that available; especially now, my time is a real premium. I have to kind of reign it back in a little bit.

A lot of these sub questions will relate more to other people. I can’t ask you because you’ve already answered all already, and you’ve defined these all yourself.

Q. 29.: Please define your interpretation of a Teacher’s trust in their students? Again, what was your experience with your advisor or your Committee members as far as their trusting in you as a student?

Dr. H.: Well, the eleven elements of trust in that factor, that's one of the major things. I was very much supported and self-directed myself through my program. It wasn't that they said to me, "Well, you want to practice Andragogy and you want to do self-directed learning, you can do that sometime after you're done with this thing." I learned that in the midst of doing my dissertation. There were times I was disappointed with myself and felt like I could have done better, or I would have been better off to have left some things undone that I did. I felt like I was supported and encouraged, and I still sense, still treasure my Committee because of the fact that they allowed me to do what I was able to do, not expect me to be doing what I didn't do. One of my persons said, "I had hoped that maybe I would see some things about Malcolm in relation to the field of Adult Education in your dissertation. I didn't see much of that in there." He didn't say, "You have to go back in and include that." He just said, "I didn't sense that you took your research far enough that Malcolm really impacted the field of Adult Education." Now I could; I could sit here and write many things about what Malcolm has represented and has become to the field of Adult Education, because there still are people who are very much interested in his way of doing things. My whole thing, while I have some nuances about Andragogy and self-directed learning that he didn't carry forward and instruct me in, because he demonstrated his willingness to allow me to do what my self-direction told me to do along the way. He was very much in support and I know, if he were alive today and see what I have done, he would be applauding.

R.I.: Absolutely.

Q. 30.: Did your experience being trusted enhance your potential to persist accomplishing your dissertation?

Dr. H.: Oh, yes; yes. I finally realized when they said, "This is going to be your product. This is what's going to be coming out of you." It's what comes out of you that is the most important thing. I had people criticizing me right and left. My Chair said, "You'll be criticized for the rest of your life on that." I realized that people were criticizing, but the fact is, part of my vindication is that there were seven other people since me that have done dissertations on aspects of Malcolm's work in Adult Education. I was the first one. I don't know of any other professor that has had that many dissertations done on aspects of his work.

R.I.: Right; right.

Q. 31.: Please define your interpretation of a Teacher's sensitivity toward their students? What was your experience regarding this with your advisor and Committee? Did they show you sensitivity?

Dr. H.: Yes; yes. They not only showed me, they allowed me to do things according to my tastes. I couldn't do it in the two years that somebody else did it, or I couldn't do it the way those six other people told me that they finished their dissertations. But I was able to do it. The sensitivity is, what I would say, is allowing and accepting that, that is the way it needs to be done by that person. Insensitivity would be, "Your attention span wasn't what it should be.," or "Why are you taking this much time?," or "Why do you ask so many questions?" The sensitivity, though, is to allow whatever needs to be for that person, that individual person.

Q. 32.: Did your experience of Teacher sensitivity enhance your potential to persist to the accomplishing of your dissertation?

Dr. H.: It must have. I don't know that I ever thought of it in that way, and that's the good thing about your questions that you're asking. You see, I didn't know some of these things until you asked the questions. So, you've brought out stuff in me that I never, ever thought about before, or never would have thought about before.

R.I.: I have more questions, but like you said, you are kind of like the pinnacle of trust. So, someone else is going to have a lot more stories of lack or wanting. You didn't, because you're right under Malcolm Knowles, like right at the fountain. That's actually all of my questions. My last one would be open-ended, asking for any final comments or closing remarks or beneficial recommendations now that you've been reminiscing?

Dr. H.: What do you feel like you've learned in your doctoral program thus so far?

R.I.: It's kind of like you said, sometimes you don't know what you know unless somebody's tapped you a little bit. So, some of the Assumptions of Adults, you read them and you're like, "I should know this." When I need to know something, I go find out what I need to know. That just seems so obvious, but you wouldn't have even thought about it unless somebody hadn't already organized those thoughts together. It's just opened up basics of how to be a mature adult and live, accordingly, a healthy relationship with the world you're in. I know when I first came, I probably started for the wrong reasons: just to keep my experiences going and collecting degrees. But still, I'm going to be a student that operates according to the flow; I'm not going to come at it like I'm a visitor, and I want to get the prize at the end. How do I say it? It's a privilege; it's a great experience, but I want to learn lifelong, and I want to know how best to share that with people. I tend to boldly go in and start sharing things, and you need to go in and pick up on the innuendos. You've got to understand if they don't need to know this, they're probably not as open to it. It's helped me be able to go forward, just as an adult on my own. I noticed a couple people asked, "What are you going to do with this?" I do

something with it every day. You don't have to be a teacher teaching this to use it; you could teach anything, you could just share with somebody that's confused at the time, or market. When you understand how adults think and what makes them drive themselves to achieve a goal, you're a resource to them.

Dr. H.: One of my comments on what you said about yourself, though, is don't put down the part where you thought about collecting degrees. Because, that was maybe along the way one of the things that helped to push you along to pursue this one.

R.I.: Right. I think the hardest part was, I say that in my own interview, I did not realize I had already decided to become a lifelong learner until I got here and realized, "Ooh, that's a thing." I'm glad; I'm glad I'm pursuing it; I'm glad I'm fighting the good fight. I'm just going to dive back in and get another Master's after this.

Dr. H.: I have to check on what I need to do, and I'll have to talk to Dr. Sherblom about what I need to do to get your thing moving forward.

This concludes the interview with Dr. Henschke. Thank you very much for your abundant contribution to my research, my education, and my life as a learner.

## Appendix O

### Interview of Bernice Bush as Author and Doctoral Candidate

Good day. These are questions presented to the Research Author having completed everything but the dissertation as an Interviewee. I am the Researcher Investigator. I will be interviewing Research Author, Bernice Bush.

RI = Researcher Investigator/Interviewer

RA = Research Author

Q = Question (in numerical sequence)

Q. 1. Would you please identify which doctoral degree you were working toward; which universities you attended within this quest; the length of time it took for you to satisfy the requirements; and what your age was at the start of your program?

RA: I started with a Bachelor's in Healthcare Management in the spring of 2009, in an accelerated course at Lindenwood University, Belleville, Illinois. It took me three and a half years; I graduated Summa Cum Lauda. I was forty-nine when I started the program. In 2012, I had finished the classes, but hadn't completed the actual graduation ceremony. I then began a Master's in Gerontology; I was just about fifty-three years old. That was also at the Lindenwood University, Belleville campus, but there were some classes that had to be taken out at the main campus in St. Charles, Missouri.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 2. Did you start this degree program immediately upon graduation?

RA: Actually, I had already begun a Master's program, so there was no time between the two. It just felt good; I was in the time sprint for doing accelerated programs. There's thirteen weeks of classes within twelve weeks; one week usually in between, and four semesters in a year.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 3. Please describe your fundamental reasons for beginning this particular doctoral degree?

RA: I already had a career. I was looking at things that aligned with my interests and some of the directions my life was already in. The Healthcare Management and Gerontology aligned well with the fact that I'm a caregiver for my husband who is disabled and lives nearby in a nursing home. I spend a lot of time with people having special needs and a lot of therapies. I felt like that might be a viable career direction/career path should I need one in the future.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 4. Please describe your marital and family status at the time that you began this doctoral degree program?

RA: I was married. My husband had already sustained a couple of different injuries that left permanent damage. He now lives in a nursing home nearby, so there was a lot of adjustments to our home structure and family time together. This actually seemed to work out well; in the accelerated program there was one or two evenings that I would have classes. That was very manageable, and I could do the homework while my husband was at home visiting.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 5. Please describe your roles and responsibilities as a member of your home?

RA: At the time that I started school, I was married to a disabled adult who lives in a nursing home nearby. I'm a full-time guardian. There was a lot of business to attend to with doctors, nurses, lawyers, court, different billing departments. I have one daughter; she is not my husband's daughter. She was five when they met and seven when we married. She adjusted, also; we just did the best we could with what we had. It is very hard. It was easier in the other classes in the other programs because each week the homework goals were concise; they had smaller parameters. Things were done within a few days or a couple weeks. The dissertation is a much different project and far harder to find enough time to manage. My daughter is now an adult and does not live full-time in the house, but visits. It does not seem to have had any negative effects to her at all. I think it's been more of an inspiration for her to continue education life-long for herself.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 6. Please describe your employment status at the time? Were you working full-time or part-time during your doctoral degree?

RA: I work part-time as a hairdresser/cosmetologist. I rent a station for about twenty hours a week. I am a licensed cosmetologist. I start about 10:00 am and work until about 4:00 at the latest on three days a week. I'm in charge of making my own appointments and so I make them within my time frame.

RI: Did the knowledge that you were gaining through your doctoral studying aid you in your employment?

RA: Well, it's a great conversation piece to talk to my customers about, always. They are very interested, and they enjoy hearing and learning themselves. Some of them are a little frightened that I'm just going to graduate and get a new job and they're going to have to get a new hairdresser. But I don't see that; I don't see this as ending my career. I see it as expanding it, and maybe developing another one.

RI: In what ways, if any, was your dissertation writing impeded by your employment commitments?

RA: If I'm very careful, my schedules don't collide. I'll usually do my homework on a day that I have off or in the evenings. Once everyone has had dinner and is settled around the TV, then I'll go to the study and start working on my homework.

RI: Were there any incentives from your employment to complete this doctoral degree program?

RA: No, it's a completely different line. It's simply something I wanted to do, and that was enough.

RI: Okay, thank you.

Q. 7. Please describe your course of action in choosing this doctoral degree program at this particular university? Was affordability a critical in your choosing this doctoral degree?

RA: Actually, before my husband's accidents and injuries, we were considering what classes he would take. He would share what he would learn with me. We were hopeful to have a small business of our own someday, aside from our own jobs, to make extra money at. So, education was definitely something we were looking at investing in for ourselves, but we had very little. Once the settlements came through, then we could afford it, and it was much easier. I still felt comfortable going to a smaller, less of a headliner-type of university. Once I got into the school, I felt very comfortable. Now

that I'm on the main campus more with the doctoral degree, I don't feel like I'm missing anything. I'm getting everything any other college would be offering. Sometimes maybe more because it's not just about programs, it about people, about relationships. They have never failed at expressing a genuine concern for me being in their educational programs.

RI: Was commuting to this campus an obstacle?

RA: Not so much going to Belleville. Sometimes it can take forty-five minutes to get from my home to the Belleville campus simply because there's a lot more neighborhoods to drive through at lower speeds. Going to the main campus, even though I'm leaving and going to another state, it's about thirty-five miles from my house. It's still about forty-five to fifty minutes because it's ninety percent highway driving. So, it's actually about the same length of time for both. I wouldn't want to drive farther than an hour one way.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 8. Please describe your general attitude toward pursuing this doctoral degree at the beginning through first year; the second year; and when you reached the point of all but dissertation?

RA: When I began, I just wanted to be in school learning. I wanted that my learning would actually accumulate into something like a degree, a real point toward a career. I just stayed with the same university, just looking each time at what they were offering in the next degree. One of my teachers that I had had for more than one class in Gerontology had introduced us to her professor as she was finishing her doctoral degree in Andragogy. It was a really impressive show-and-tell. Six of us, upon graduating that Master's program, started at the very same time the Andragogy program under Dr. Henschke. I was really pretty excited, but I was going for completely different reasons than anyone else. It was a great way to spend my time; it makes me feel good about myself; and I just felt like I was accelerating and achieving. I wanted to keep that going. So, the first couple of years were fine; it was just more of the same thing. In the beginning, I had focused on trying to blend Gerontology with the Andragogy. I had lots of ideas, but no one else in the Andragogy program was on that page. My advisor had been an RN, but she never really picked up on the conversation and took it anywhere.

She was just happy that I was doing well, and said it sounded interesting. The second year when she retired, I realized she knew she wasn't going to be there, even though I thought she would. I thought I had time. She retired, then a few months later Dr. Henschke retired. A lot of things were changing: I didn't have an advisor for a while; the advisor I got next didn't really seem to care about me. I was just lost. I was struggling to find the right topic that would actually qualify and satisfy the dissertation requirements for Andragogy but using Gerontology as the subject. I couldn't put the two together in a way I could form a study that would fill a gap. I just seemed to be reading articles and collecting paper. It just wasn't going anywhere. I was still learning; I was learning why it wasn't working. The more I thought about moving my thoughts into a study, it seemed like an unethical venture because I was focusing on the senior citizens and Alzheimer's. Every sixty seconds another person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's, so it's rampant. There are many couples that are at the beginning of their retirement years and one person is facing this fatal, debilitating disease. It changes things in their lives and relationships. I knew I had a group; I knew it was rather new. At this time there is no cure for Alzheimer's. I was just trying to find some way to use what I know about being a caregiver and be purposeful, useful, and helpful. The more I kept trying to move things around the board and create something, it seemed like I would be inflicting what I needed on people to get the answers I needed. I may not realize the damage I could be causing them personally, and that's unethical. You should do no harm in any of your ventures. So, I just couldn't make it work; I let those ideas go. It took awhile to like something different. I started looking more at the developmental psychology aspect. I started looking at people and their development and tried to see where adult education could mend or fill a gap in their lives, a place where I could offer what I'm learning to lend to the expertise. My general attitude: I was alone, isolated, confused, disillusioned, struggling for a direction, a purpose, and a topic, wanting so much to be able to put my energy into something good, and so frustrated when I didn't know what that was. It was harder work trying to start the dissertation than it has been trying to make it happen now that I have the topic and the direction.

RI: When did you begin to doubt your ability to successfully complete your dissertation and accomplish your degree?

RA: In the middle of that time when my advisor retired, and they didn't know who would be stepping in, I was told, "It doesn't matter; your advisor isn't the one who will help you. Pick a chair; they're the one who will help you." A chair will serve you well if your topic aligns with their expertise. So, to pick your chair before you know your topic may not work either. It was kind of a struggle; I didn't want to seem like somebody waiting for everybody to do it for me. I had a lot of confusion as to how to begin and go forward completely alone, off campus.

RI: Did you take any breaks from the flow of the doctoral degree?

RA: Yes, my last class was the summer of 2016, and it was a class rather like an elective: all about pedagogy. What I learned was still valuable toward the degree. Andragogy is adult education, and pedagogy is education for children. Some things are similar, some things are completely polarized. You don't just feed stuff to an adult; they will get what they need when they need it.

RI: Did you seek out any assistance to persist in your program?

RA: Yes. I met Dr. Henschke in the Gerontology program, and when I started Andragogy, he was my professor. He was the all-encompassing professor for that degree. I would talk to him. He had a grad student assistant, Somanita Kheang. She and I got closer as we took classes together and worked on projects together. She is a rare and unbelievably knowledgeable student, and I constantly learned something from her in class. I watched her, listened to her, paid attention to her study habits, her presentation habits from working with her. It was in conversations with her that I was able to get a better handle on the direction I should be moving in. She was very instrumental in me realizing this is an independent study. I was reminded of Dr. Henschke working with certain students on independent projects before, that weren't the dissertation. That's when I decided I was going to begin to work with him and meet with him at least every other week. I would then make the most of the time I had going forward and try not to waste any more time. That's how I see the couple of years I wasn't in any classes. It really wasn't a waste; I didn't have as much produced in those years as I had in the other degrees. I was still learning. Even to unlearn something to be able to learn something new, that's learning. I learned a lot about the things I wanted and why they wouldn't work out. So that's still learning.

RI: Okay, thank you.

Q. 9. Please describe your academic experience while attending the course of your doctoral program? Did the class subjects prepare you for independent research?

RA: I believe they think they will. There's qualitative, quantitative statistics and a regular statistics class, fundamentals, building blocks, trust. They were all good; they all pointed in the same direction and had different strengths to them. They started every class by telling the students, "Keep in mind what topic you're going for. Keep in mind how this class can line up and be utilized for your dissertation work. Keep the end in mind as you're starting and as you're going through it."

RI: What was your experience picking a dissertation topic?

RA: Agony. In your mind you want to go to the rainforest, find the right leaf, cure cancer, tell the whole world. It's very, very hard to stop looking at the Milky Way and simply look at a drop in the bucket. That's part of what I learned.

RI: Did you scrap a topic and start over?

RA: Yes, at least once. I tried marrying Gerontology into my Andragogy, and it was beyond what I knew at this time to be able to do by myself alone. To pick a chair and a committee that know nothing about that was going to be even harder to align. Andragogy is in the School of Education, so I decided to stay in the education and focus only on the subject. I'm having a much better time going forward.

RI: Were other doctoral candidates working on projects within your subject?

RA: There were at least six of us that had started Andragogy right out of Gerontology. There were a lot of them in my classes. I was from Illinois. They already knew each other from their bachelor's degree in Psychology. They already knew each other, were friends, studied, so I wasn't really on the inside loop with them. They were very friendly in class. I don't know any of them now or if any of them have continued or are working or are finished.

RI: Okay, thank you.

RI: Were there any supplemental program enhancers provided by the university and faculty which offered support to doctoral students as they proceeded to navigate the course curriculum?

RA: Oh yeah. Even now, we use Canvas, and there are so many features: alerts, you can email, group talk, there's programs in there, meetings, groups on campus. There're so many things; there are too many things. Where I'm at now, I really need to be home with what I've gathered, putting this together, and writing. A round trip to the campus is definitely two hours, so just going to the campus is going to take away two hours from any potential writing. If I'm in a class for another four hours or even more, again, I won't be producing as much with the distractions of people in classrooms, driving, and parking lots as I would if I stayed home. So, right now, I'm not finding a lot of that useful to me. That's Andragogy; your educational needs will drive you to what it is you need. You have to have a need, and then you go search to satisfy that need. Right now, I need to be home and writing.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 10. Please describe your strongest relationships during your academic experience? Did you have the approval and support of your spouse, children, family, employment when you began your employment?

RA: Yes, my husband's disabled. He actually doesn't notice. Whether I'm sitting next to him on the couch or in my office doing homework, it's the same visit home for him. He sits on the couch, pets the dog, watches TV; he's here for a few hours, then he goes home. He's just fine with it. My daughter, if anything, it's more of an inspiration to her. My brother and sister, I know they're proud of me; they're surprised because I'm the least likely in my whole family to have stretched out and done anything like this. Especially in later life. Most of them, this would have been something they pursued in their early twenties. I get the feeling it's okay for me to do, but it's not something they would have done now themselves. Nobody comes over and does my dishes because I need to write; nobody is mowing my lawn because I need to write. They're like, "Atta girl; that's great. Don't worry, we won't hold it against you if you decided to quit."

RI: Did their approval and support remain constant throughout your doctoral process?

RA: It's not a real support, but they're not trying to sabotage me either. It's been a low effort, but pretty consistent.

RI: Did you have any personal crises which obstructed your research study of dissertation writing?

RA: I'm a guardian, so every year at a particular month I have to gather a certain amount of information, take it to my attorney's office, make copies, leave it, and then I'm audited on two of my husband's accounts by the court. Periodically, there's things to do with settlements, doctors' appointments for him, meetings. My daughter has had a lot of trauma and problems in her life and I've tried to be actively supportive. I get distracted and interrupted a lot by my own responsibilities and then the things that I've committed myself to help my immediate family with.

RI: Were there personal losses of loved ones within this period of time?

RA: My Mom and Dad aren't in the best of health. My Mom passed away in March of 2014. I had not quite finished the master's program, but I had calculated that as I was finishing early so I would be able to start the doctoral program. The Master's program was accelerated, so I was on quarter semesters. The Doctoral is regular college with spring, summer, and fall semesters. I was actually in an externship and writing a paper about that experience so that I would be able to finish early enough to begin the Doctoral program in June before the Master's program even ended. When I lost my Mom, it was a long, hard summer because I was in class, and meeting with my family every weekend to clean out her house. It was a tough time.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 11. Please describe your relationship with your course's advisor or your committee chairperson? Were you properly advised during your doctoral degree program?

RA: I was on my own when I started it. When I met my advisor, I had already decided I wanted to take all of the statistic classes, not just two. I wanted to start with them and start in the summer. That pretty much threw them a curve because they were used to their students starting with the Foundations of Andragogy, Building Blocks of Andragogy. Which I did take those, also, but I took each one with a statistics course. I don't feel like my first advisor engaged me in my ideas, even just to help me realize sooner that they probably weren't going to work out. My second advisor was Dr. Henschke, and he was great! But he knew he was retiring and he had a lot of visits with me so that we could move me into the next semester; make sure my transcript was up-to-date; lined out everything; got all the signatures that I needed. He was very useful, but it was very short lived, only a few months. Then there were months when I didn't have any

idea who my advisor was. I was told that it didn't matter who my advisor was; I needed to pick a chair and start working. I didn't figure it would be Dr. Henschke since he had just retired. I tried to do a lot of work on my own so that when I would pick someone in alignment with my topic, they would be willing to work in that venue. The third one, I don't think he ever really liked me much; he was never warm and friendly around me. So, I just steered clear of him. When he became my advisor, I wasn't even on the campus at all. There was one time I called him on the phone to help me with some problems I was having logging into the online library. He found out I was actually supposed to be paying for these semesters even if I wasn't in any classes. We got that all straightened out. His whole advice to me was, "Just get it done." That wasn't very helpful. Right now, Dr. Henschke is my chair; I do have two professors willing to be my committee. I'm not looking for a lot of input from them at all; I'm very hopeful to have solid blocks of writing to show them. I'm working closely with Dr. Henschke because once I have his approval on it and it goes to someone else, it's going to have a much better chance of getting their approval also. Right now, my advisor is Dr. Sherblom, a professor that I had for my qualitative statistics, which this is a type of qualitative research. He's been very helpful, very easy to talk to. So far, I feel like I have a good combination. I'm just determined; I want to finish this, I don't want to quit. I want to finish this.

RI: Did you receive adequate support in your independent pursuits?

RA: I'm in it now; I've made so much progress in eight months this year. I'm so much farther than I've gotten in two years. Yes.

RI: Were there any critical friends which offered aid or support to you within the course of the degree program?

RA: Oh yeah. Just being in class and watching other students, some as green as me or worse, some that have so much better of a grasp on things. They all are living examples; there's definitely something to learn. Sometimes even helping them learn something is a learning experience for me. I know something because I can actually share it with someone else who knows more after listening to me. The biggest Critical friend is Somanita Kheang. I met her at the college to watch a movie. It was the last couple of hours before she was going to the airport to catch a flight. She had finished her program, passed her defense, and was already graduated. She was going to work on something

completely different at another university and this was going to be the last time I was going to be able to see her. It turned out we ended up having a conversation. That conversation changed everything. I knew I could do it and had already made some decisions that I was going to look into certain things. I was going to ask Dr. Henschke to be my chair, and to set it up as an independent study where I was very actively involved in meeting him at least two times a month.

RI: Did anyone stand out to you as a mentor?

RA: Oh, yeah, absolutely. In my Gerontology degree, it was Tina Grossa; she was a teacher I had had in more than one of my classes. She was the teacher that introduced me to Dr. Henschke. Definitely Dr. Henschke, definitely. There's a lot of people that probably would be mentors, I'm just not activating them myself.

RI: Did you actively pursue academic or social support on or off the campus?

RA: Over time I've talked to people in security because I'm not getting the right responses when I'm trying to do something online with the campus. I've talked to different teachers when I was trying to sort out and find a way to make a topic that would work. A lot of them did a lot to help me, even though they felt like they weren't. Sometimes the right answer is, "I have no answer; I don't know how you can make that connect." That helps me from wasting a lot of time myself. Sometimes you should let something go, and pick something else up. If I'm looking for a topic that I can align Gerontology and Andragogy together, that's great. But not when I have a tight timeline. Right now, I want to do something that satisfies this degree, and finish. Beyond that, I can do so much more by writing a paper or report that doesn't require some type of ethical research.

RI: Alright, thank you.

Q. 12. Please describe yourself as a student? Were you overwhelmed as a student in any other academic endeavors?

RA: The accelerated school was good, but there were times that I looked at the syllabus and thought, "How am I going to get this all done?" Eventually, you do get it all done, and then your happiness is short lived because your next class comes up immediately with another syllabus full of projects to satisfy. With the accelerated program, you're taking three classes at a time with four hours at school. It's great.

RI: What were your top three obstacles?

RA: I guess, my entire schedule. I have things I do for my husband, personally and legally. I take care of my home inside; I take care of my yard and ornamental pond and waterfall with koi, outside. I have a lot of responsibilities; I have some pretty specific roles. I can move the time around a bit, but those things have to happen; I can't just quit them because I'm so busy. I have a tight schedule. Sometimes I want to move something to another day or time, but I can't. Most of my obstacles are fires that blow up and have to be addressed right away. Yet, there's this big agenda with the doctoral program and I have to stay engaged. I have regular exercise classes, and they are very important to me for my overall health. It was terrible to have to give up a night of yoga for a class, but class was the important thing, and I'd just have to work harder when I got to the next exercise opportunity.

RI: What was lacking in your pursuit to persist to dissertation accomplishment and degree completion?

RA: I don't think anything is lacking. Sometimes I feel like I want to quit because I'm overwhelmed, most of the time by my own self. The way I drive myself with my schedule; the way I just won't let go of anything, and make sure it works out. Sometimes you have to stop complaining, decide on a solution, and just work at it. It may not work; but it's better than just complaining. You have to learn how to persist in a particular situation. Sometimes you have to learn how to push yourself; you have to learn how to let yourself go and release yourself from some things that you bind yourself up with. It really is me; I have to learn how to be an independent researcher and an author of a specific writing project. That's what this is really about. Life just gets in the way.

RI: When you reached the all but dissertation phase, did you seek out solutions as you encountered obstacles?

RA: I didn't even know about the all but dissertation phase until after talking to Somanita. She suggested I go home and contemplate what my obstacles were. What are the real barriers for me to move forward or to complete this? I went home with that in mind, looking. An article came up and talked about all but dissertation. It's a thing! It's a real thing! I have found something in literature that I can relate to. I found that there were still plenty of gaps in it and some that align with where I'm at. For someone who is

going to spend her life learning something, everything is interesting! It was really hard to nail down a topic that you could move forward with. When I found this, it seemed to align with me, with my subject, with my needs. It just all seemed to click. I'm going to be able to finish this degree based on how to finish this degree. This year has really been a pleasure because I am learning something. When I produce something, that's very edifying to me. I feel very good about this year.

RI: What advice would you offer a student considering this doctoral degree program?

RA: Analyze your life; analyze your needs, your wants, what kind of goals you would like to have for yourself if attaining them was no problem. What are some of your goals? Try to find something that seems to work with you. You have to be interested in this. You have to feel excited as you learn. You're building something; you're finding it, putting it together. It has to be something that you're interested in, something that you're passionate about. It could be something completely unrelated to anything you've been working with yet, but you just have to find something in it that you love and be able to convey that to people that would read.

RI: What was the greatest lesson that you learned about yourself?

RA: Actually, I had already learned it years before I started school. My daughter has some learning issues: ADD. She just struggles. It was very hard for her to get up and go to school, get there on time, and it was really hard for her to come home and unwind, go to sleep. It was very frustrating for me as a parent who doesn't have those problems, to be able to corral your kid and get them off to school. It wasn't as hard in grade school when there was a bus waiting. When your kid gets in the car and drives forty minutes to a school, it's very much of a struggle. One day, I just couldn't believe that my daughter couldn't just wake up, walk up the steps, go out to the car, and drive to school. It astounded me. She snapped back, "Well, you can't do it!" This resonated with me; why not? Why couldn't I? We got past that point; there's no issue between the two of us. It just resonated with me; I can do that! Why aren't I doing that? I can remember when I went in and talked to the Administrator at Lindenwood University, Belleville. I was trying to convince her I would be a really good student; I would work hard and try my best. I promise, I'm going to give this everything that I have. I didn't need a student loan, so I don't know why I was trying to sell her on the idea of taking me as a student.

She said, “I think you’re going to do just fine. You can articulate. There are people who are starting school who can’t finish a complete sentence speaking, so writing is going to be much harder. I think you’re going to be fine.” Well, yeah, I was, I could, I did. It’s just been great. It’s just been the missing thing in my life, to continue to learn. To strive to share what you’ve learned with other people and inspire them to dig into things and learn something for themselves. I learned about myself. I’m actually pretty bright; I’m actually a great student and a great scholar. I wouldn’t have known that about myself if I stayed home cleaning my house. I’m really glad that I took the dare of my daughter and tried.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 13. In reflection, how would you describe your self-health while embarking on this academic experience of a doctoral degree? What do you believe will make or has made your academic experience more satisfying and successful?

RA: I am a natural guardian, and now I have a life where I am, really, a guardian. I’ve always been somebody who did my part and then lifted up others and helped them with their part. I’ve always strived to be empathetic, useful, and helpful in my life and others’ lives. I can feel the pain, or I can feel the sadness of other people and I use that to make better decisions in my life. You don’t have to make mistakes to learn from mistakes; you just look around, learn from history.

RI: Were you regretful in your doctoral degree program?

RA: Yes, regretful that I didn’t sit down and have longer talks with my first advisor, so that I would have found out sooner that my ideas weren’t going to pan out and go anywhere. I regret not taking something in the fall and staying in school, staying on the campus. I’m really, really glad I didn’t let it go and let it slip away. I’m fighting to finish it. I am; I’m fighting to finish this. I’m fighting the obstacles, the barriers, the distractions, all of it; because I want to finish. I want to complete this and even if I don’t become a professor or get a job on campus. That’s not what I’m looking for. I want success; I want completion; I want to finish this degree and start another one.

RI: Do you still harbor those regrets yet today?

RA: There’s a couple of sides to regret. Sometimes regret is literally just this jagged shank that gigs you right inside and tears you up. No, mine is more of a reflection; a way

that I look at something. I'm not pleased with it, but it changes how I move forward. So, it's not just tearing me up, scarring me up, leaving me damaged. It's actually a way to look at yourself, mature, and redirect, make the needed adjustments. Your regrets can actually be the beginning for solving the problems that you recognized.

RI: Have you gained strength or insight through your academic experience which has benefited your life?

RA: Oh, yeah. Every day, every day. I use what I've already learned. At some point, I stretch and reach to learn something new; I am constantly consciously looking for ways to absorb things other people know, or share with them things they may need to know. It's a lifestyle now.

RI: Thank you.

RI: What has been your most critical complaint along the course of your doctoral degree program?

RA: When the students are quiet and invisible, they're just forgotten. So, you really need to be seen; you need to be talking and heard. Even if you're wrong or off the course, it doesn't matter; it's the fact that you're being recognized. In that, someone can support you. If they don't see you, they don't know you need support. If they don't hear you, they don't know that you're troubled or that you're lacking or you're needful. If you're an advisor, you really should be reaching out at least once a month until you get a chance to talk, to have an exchange. Even text or emails with your students can keep them in the program longer; help them complete the program; start another program; keep them in a positive outlook towards learning for life.

RI: How were you able to push past this and continue to persist to the completion of your doctoral degree program?

RA: That's how I did it; when my friend had a conversation with me, I took the opportunity and did everything I could with it. I'm blessed that my professor, in his retirement, has committed to finish this with me. I don't want to waste any time now; I want my success to add to his successes. I'm just fired up. I'm seeing how you can isolate yourself; you can sabotage yourself. I'm trying not to do those things. If I can step out of my way, I can better step away from the other distractions, too.

RI: Thank you.

Q. 14. Please define your interpretation of “a Teacher’s empathy with their students”? What has been your experience regarding your advisor’s or committee chairperson’s empathy with you and your particular circumstances during your doctoral process?

RA: All of these, the empathy, the trust, the sensitivity, basically, Dr. Henschke was the scholar that produced the Instructional Perspectives Inventory. It’s a questionnaire with weighted answers. It’s a tool to help you understand how ready you are in all actuality to being able to teach another adult. Not just bring your product to a room; you’re actually engaging a life-learning experience with another person. Everybody is an individual, so they’re coming and they’re going with completely different circumstances and stories. As an educator, those are very important characteristics that will help you navigate unforeseen waters. He’s absolutely the living example of all of these.

RI: What, if anything, do you count as positive in your academic experience?

RA: Lindenwood is an awesome college. I love the accelerated programs; I wouldn’t mind teaching in them at some point in the future. I love being up at the school, being around adults who are learning. It’s a positive energy, experience.

RI: Did you experience a lack of empathy from your advisor or committee chairperson?

RA: Dr. Henschke, no, no. In fact, he’s very open and tries very hard to make that connection where we’re on the same page. Because it’s going to be far easier to move me to where he needs me to be if he’s right there where I am.

RI: In what ways, if any, could your advisor or committee chairperson have been more empathetic with you in their relationship?

RA: Going back to Dr. Long, my third advisor, I don’t think he had any reason to know me or understand me or engage me in any kind of academic relationship. It just didn’t hold any necessity for him. So, that’s fine with me, too. You’re not going to like everyone.

RI: Would more empathy from your advisor or committee chairperson have enhanced your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?

RA: When Dr. Long told me to “Just get it done,” I was still searching for things. I had already decided I was going to do it with or without anyone’s help. It always helps.

People want to feel like they’re liked or accepted, they’re good enough. Not that he ever

gave me the feeling that I wasn't any of those, it's just that he never gave me the feeling I was. A lot of time people just assume if it's not the right; it's the left. I didn't get any warm fuzzies from him.

RI: What would you change if you could?

RA: I'm not ready to answer that completely yet. What I plan to do is to be able to offer some wisdom, first hand, when I'm finishing chapter five, Conclusions. It's really hard; you're not supposed to write your dissertation knowing how it ends. It's a study. You're supposed to set it out, what it is, why you think you should be working on it, how you're going to work on it, explain what your results were, and after that, how do you feel about it? What are your conclusions? Being that I'm actually part of my own study: the person persisting to completion, sometimes I do see the end. I just have to let that lay and not pick it up right now. I'm hopeful that I can address the issue of positive relationships, because that's where mentoring comes in; good advising comes in; academic and social support comes in. Those are all positive relationships. Maybe making a recommendation as simple as: the people that you're assigned to as your advisees, you really need to have a more solid connection with them. If they go silent or if they become invisible, you need to find them; you need to put a face on that name and engage them in a conversation. Don't let them float off and be lost.

Q. 15. Please define your interpretation of "a Teacher's trust in their students"? What has been your experience regarding your advisor's or committee chairperson's trust in you during the particular circumstances of your doctoral process?

RA: Several times this summer, Dr. Henschke thought I should start writing. I was like, "Oh no, I need to read this, or I need to type up my notes. Oh no, I'm not ready yet." In my studies, some of the reasons that the people have dropped out is because of procrastination due to their ideas of perfectionism. I don't think I'm ready to write because I'm considering my writing level should be a finished product, not just writing a draft product. I'm not in a clear mindset about writing at all, and yet I'm making a determination that I'm not ready. He's seeing me and hearing me and seeing the other things I'm producing. He feels like I'm ready to start writing because he knows I'll be starting with a draft. I'm considering the final project and thinking I'm not ready to start at all. So, he waits with me. Then one day I walk in and handed him a couple of pages.

I said, "I'm not sure this is the beginning; I'm not sure this is going to stay at the beginning, but I wrote a few pages." He was very pleased. He knew I was ready to start writing. I really felt the trust then.

RI: What, if anything, do you count as positive in your academic experience?

RA: The fact that he has successfully chaired dozens, dozens of dissertations. He has helped develop lots of the things that make Andragogy definable. It's always been there; it is what it is. He's one of the educators who understands it, can articulate it and put it out there in such a structure that it can become a learning tool to another adult.

RI: Did you experience a lack of trust from your advisor or committee chairperson?

RA: No. Not Dr. Henschke.

RI: Would being trusted more by your advisor or committee chairperson have enhanced your potential to persist to the accomplishment of your dissertation and completion of your doctoral degree?

RA: Right now, everything is lined out. I'm good, right now. I'd say, before, yes. I probably needed more focused conversations and a deeper relationship with some of my key teachers and advisors earlier on. I don't feel like they failed me; I just feel like unknowingly, I did not take more advantage of Dr. Isenberg's company when I had it. I thought she was always going to be there. Had I known when I started that she was only going to be there for a year and a half, we would have had a long conversation. When she left, I was just hanging in midair; the floor had dropped.

RI: What would you change if you could?

RA: Right now, there's no sense in looking back on what I would change because even the space in my course process that did not have a class, I was still learning. I wasn't actually producing things; I was letting things go, but it was still needful, it was learning. Sometimes when you're unlearning for yourself, another voice would only get in the way. Sometimes you just need to go through that yourself. I'm just glad it's over. Right now, I like the way it's going. I would highly suggest this type of an independent study as a structure which should be stressed more. You need to be completely connected with your committee. You cannot allow lapses of time; that's a horrible distance.

RI: Okay, thank you.

Q. 16. Please define your interpretation of “a Teacher’s sensitivity toward their students”? What has been your experience regarding your advisor or committee chairperson’s sensitivity toward you and your particular circumstances during your doctoral process?

RA: Dr. Henschke knew me in my classes, retired, and still knew that I was in this: struggling, trying, wanting to finish. He was very willing to commit to me. There’s been a couple of times where he’s flat asked, “Do you really have to do this?” Yes, I really do; I have to finish this. I don’t have to complete this for a job; I don’t have to complete it to satisfy some personal dare with someone. It’s for me. I started it; I want to finish it. I’m learning, and I want to express in my dissertation what I have learned. I feel like it’s a value and I want to finish it, see it through.

RI: What, if anything, do you count as positive in your academic experience?

RA: I think all of it counts. All of it counts. Even the days where you’ve done the wrong assignment or “That’s what you meant; I didn’t know.” Even when you just really mess it up, it’s all part of your learning, developing, maturing. It’s your process. If you’re not growing, what are you doing? You’re wasting away, simmering away like a pot on the stove. Eventually, there’s nothing left to burn.

RI: Did you experience a lack of sensitivity from your advisor or committee chairperson?

RA: No, probably not. There’s nothing that stands out at this time. Right now, with Dr. Henschke, it’s working. It’s a good schedule, a good system. I’m producing, so I’d have to say that’s the proof in the pudding right there.

RI: What would you change if you could?

RA: At this point, I’m looking for larger blocks of time to write. It takes a little bit of time to get to your desk, reread, start hearing your paper, writing. Right now, I don’t even have that time. Christmas is a couple weeks away; I still have Christmas cards to do, still have a lot of wrapping to do; there’s a couple of dates for particular holiday parties; my commitment to bring dishes. My house is dusty, my floors are dirty. I’m trying to keep up with the laundry and the dishes. There’s a lot of things I’m letting slack as I’m putting this first. I just wish I had more time and had all of these things done. They will eventually get done.

RI: Alright, thank you.

Q. 17. In conclusion, do you have any final comments or closing remarks or beneficial recommendations now that you have reflected on your doctoral degree experience?

RA: I'm a collector by nature. Technically, I'm collecting degrees now. It sounds ridiculous to some people; it sounds quite natural to me. I'm sure I started this degree without the right intentions or the best intentions, just to continue to go to school, continue advancing, and get the missing degree for my collection. Those are good reasons for me; they're probably not good reasons for the college. I respect the college; I follow the rules and pay as I go. I feel like I deserve to be there; I deserve my chance even if I'm not going to turn around and become a teacher or use this immediately in my career. I'm learning; I'm learning. It's been a good experience. I think even your worst experiences in life, in the right vein of maturity you can turn any experience around and see the positive benefits. I would tell anybody to continue learning. Have good, healthy conversations with people. Be willing to listen to people that you would not necessarily agree with, but just listen to them. Be open to different ideas. With the empathy and sensitivity toward other people, you'll be able to better understand them. I think relationships are important; they don't have to be life-long, personal relationships. It could just be talking to somebody at a bus stop. Conversations, relationships, associations, those are all really important personal connections. You can have so many of them in a day, so many of them in a life time. They can all be fresh and inspiring and insightful. You should always have something that interests you, be curious, be willing and open to learning something. Even if it's not useful to you, it may be useful to someone else. You don't have to go to college; you don't have to go to a tech school. You simply could go to the library; go to your tablet; go sit down at the VFW hall and talk to a veteran. There're so many ways to learn every day, that there's really no excuse for not spending the rest of your life learning something. I just think more lives would be positively impacted if they could use their attention every day to broaden what they know.

RI: Thank you very much for all of your time; for all of your answers. Have a happy holiday.

RA: Thank you, too.

