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An Adult Accelerated Degree Program: Student and Instructor Perspectives and Factors that Affect Retention

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A dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

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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.

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by

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Abstract

This was a blended qualitative and quantitative study, which investigated adult student and instructor perspectives, motivators, factors and life events that have affected adult students as they pursue their degrees. This study also examined the environment, format, and course content of accelerated degree programs. This study focused solely on undergraduate degree programs. The null hypothesis of this study was that accelerated degree programs for adult students will not result in higher retention rates than traditional day programs. The null hypothesis was rejected. This study is significant because, as pointed out in Stephanie Armour's June 12, 2003, *USA Today* article, adults are returning to colleges and universities in unprecedented numbers. Adult learning habits, motivations, and life circumstances differ substantially from those of the traditional student, and the differences must be understood if the higher education community is to properly serve their adult students. This study examined the adult student from a variety of aspects, and for the purposes of this study, only undergraduate students were surveyed. Data were gathered from student surveys and a focus group discussion. Surveys showed relationships and development of trust were important to instructors and students and that a variety of external factors, including financing the degree, academics, advising and classroom location, all were important to the adult student. Retention data from both traditional and accelerated programs at the study university were analyzed to determine if any significant differences in retention existed between these varied programs. The study did find a significant difference between the programs. An accelerated program of undergraduate degrees was examined in-depth. Results from the examination indicated that the accelerated program was highly regarded by adult student participants, the adult

students felt respected, the students felt the academic requirements of the program were challenging, but not impossible to achieve, and that the education they were working to achieve was of utmost importance to future career prospects and to their personal self-efficacy. Institutions of higher learning considering implementation or revision of existing accelerated programs targeting adult students will benefit from this study by the insights provided and from the review of a successful accelerated program.

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Chapter One – Introduction

Background of the Problem

Adults are returning to college in unprecedented numbers. Adult students are defined in this paper as students over 22 years of age, and they currently comprise approximately 44% of the postsecondary students in the United States (Chao, DeRocco, & Flynn, 2007). The higher education system cannot afford to ignore this market segment, as it constitutes nearly one half of their potential market. According to Siebert and Karr (2003), the colleges most effective at attracting, retaining, and graduating adult students are those colleges that are highly resilient and demonstrate excellent emotional intelligence with adult students. The resilience of these institutions fosters adaptability to change, and their emotional intelligence demonstrates the acute awareness and ability to assess and manage the emotional needs of their students in a productive manner. The traditional attitude of academic nobility with an elitist separation between teacher and student is slowly dissipating. It is this resilient institutional focus and the need to get outside of the traditional mentality that has forced many of the colleges and universities to begin considering accelerated programs for their adult students. Accelerated programs allow for faster completion of degree requirements than traditional programs, hence providing more quickly the solution adult students are looking for to advance their career potential.

The lagging economy, along with an abundance of other motivators, is compelling adults to challenge traditional academic programs and their structure. Traditional academic thinking and planning has historically been focused on the 18-year-old student who comes directly to college from high school with little or no

college credit. Programs for these students have been structured for classes to take place from 8:00 a.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Colleges and universities have sporadically offered classes in the evening hours without much thought given to what was actually needed by whom. Then entered the adult student, and a whole new academic mindset focused on the needs of the adult learner began to evolve. Traditional academic services and programs did not meet the adult student's unique needs. The traditional system has been challenged, and that challenge is the basis upon which this dissertation was conceived.

Just as stress increases as life-changing events accumulate, the motivation to cope with change through engagement in a learning experience increases (R. Zemke & Zemke, 1984). The decision to enter higher education as an adult learner is often predicated and motivated by life transitions (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Transitions with which adult students are typically coping often include major life events, such as changes in job status, marital status, or becoming parents. The adult student wants to make sure that whatever avenue of education he or she chooses is adaptable to his or her lifestyle or that necessary accommodations can be made to his or her lifestyle while working to complete the desired degree.

Adults over the past 20 years have been entering the higher education system with varying levels of work experience and previous education (Diefenderfer, 2009). Some students have decided to go to work directly out of high school, be it for necessity or other reasons. Students may have had to seek employment directly after high school because school had been a struggle for them, and they did not want to continue that struggle. Some students have chosen to start their families at a young age, while others

have decided to go directly into the military. Whatever the decision may have been, they were either delaying college entry or not giving consideration to going to college at all. As the economy, and industry along with it, began to fluctuate, many employers began demanding workers with more developed skill sets. Adults still needed to work; however, they were seeking venues to develop the skills needed to further their careers and, ideally, increase their income.

Adults have been motivated by many factors to either begin or finish a degree program, and the challenges they faced may have seemed insurmountable at times. Motivations for adults returning to school include improvement in finances, job promotion, career change, and lifestyle changes. Lindeman (1925) stated,

> Adult education is a co-operative venture in non-authoritarian, informal learning the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique of learning for adults which makes education coterminous with life, and hence elevates living itself to the level of an experiment. (pp. 7–8)

The cooperative venture of adult education is challenged by the traditional academic view of what a college education and a college student should look like. These challenges are forcing traditional programs to rethink their options and become creative with alternatives that are tailored to fit the unique needs of the adult student. The creativity and uniqueness of these nontraditional and often accelerated education program structures are causing them to undergo scrutiny by traditional academics who question the integrity of such programs. The traditional system of academia cannot ignore adult

students, nor can it expect them to conform to traditional academic schedules and program structure.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of the study was to examine adult student and instructor perspectives and to investigate motivators, factors, and life events that have affected adult learners as they pursue their degrees. The second purpose of this study was to examine the environment, format, and course content of accelerated degree programs to determine if these programs are more conducive to adult students' wants and needs than traditional programs, thus enhancing student retention. Theoretical explanations coupled with real-life application were used to explain and correlate evidence to substantiate claims made by the principal researcher regarding the adult student population. Very few in-depth studies have been performed regarding adult higher education and even fewer regarding accelerated programs. The study's results provide an in-depth view of the Lindenwood College for Individual Education (LCIE) program at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri, that could be used as a basis for other institutions in building and examining their own accelerated adult-focused programs.

The principal researcher examined not only adult learning styles and academic rigor, but also investigated another integral part of any higher education program: advising. Via written surveys distributed to students of the LCIE program at Lindenwood University and via focus groups conducted with these same students, questions were asked regarding the advising that students have experienced while enrolled in the program. Through these surveys and focus groups, valuable information was attained that

may help structure faculty advisement to operate in the most efficient way in order to benefit both the educational institutions and their students.

The results of this study will serve the higher education community in that it examined in depth why adult students return to school and what keeps them there until completion of the degree. The study examined both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for students to complete their degrees. Adult students who have chosen the traditional program of study were compared and contrasted with adults who have chosen the accelerated format for study. The purpose for this contrast was to determine what factors propelled the students toward one program or another and what effect time toward completion had in their program decision.

Importance of the Study

The composition of the student body at colleges and universities today is not the same as it was 20 years ago, and the evolution of higher education continues. The importance of this study is evidenced by the aforementioned numbers of adult students—44% of all undergraduates—who are returning to higher education to begin or complete a previously started degree program (Chao et al., 2007). This statistic shows that adult students comprise a market segment that is worthy of the attention of institutions of higher learning. Challenging economic times are forcing institutions of higher education to either establish accelerated and evening programs of study or revise the programs they are currently offering.

The United States has long been recognized as one of the world's most prosperous and successful nations. Roughly 39% of Americans hold a 2-year or 4-year degree (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] 2008). This

statistic is being overshadowed by the fact that degree attainment rates in other nations continue to climb, while the degree attainment rates of the United States remain stagnant. In other leading countries, nearly half of all young adults (25–34-year-olds) have college degrees (OECD, 2008). The United States simply cannot afford to fall behind and compromise its economy and its citizens. If the United States is to keep pace with the rest of the world and be able to educate the adult student population, universities and colleges must provide the solutions. This will require challenging the traditional academic thinking and images that have permeated the American society for a number of years.

The technological advances and economic demands of the current economy necessitate a well-prepared and educated workforce. Evolutions in industry that force many people to make career path alterations later in life corroborate the need for degree programs to fit the adult learner. This study examined the thought process of adult learners and factors that are important to them. By looking more deeply into the motivations for the adult learner and attempting to understand how they best absorb the necessary information, colleges and universities can provide the most viable and well-managed means of education to help adult students reach their goals. It is of utmost importance that while the institutions of higher education are striving to meet these goals, they retain the academic integrity necessary to provide a worthy education. Consistent review and scrutiny of accelerated programs is needed to ensure this is accomplished.

Definition of Terms

Academic integration – the degree to which students feel they fit into the academic life of an institution (Brown, 2002).

Accelerated degree programs – degree programs composed of courses that are provided in a non-traditional format, usually in the evening. Students can earn their degrees often by only attending class one night a week or on weekends. Programs are typically tailored for working adults as their primary audience, blending experience with education and teaching in an interactive format.

Adjunct professor – the title of a person who teaches on the college level but is not a full-time professor. He or she may teach only one or more courses during a semester, and future courses are typically not assured. Adjunct professors usually do not receive benefits such as health, life, or disability insurance, nor do they receive employer contributions for retirement.

Adult students – for the purposes of this study, are those students entering a college or university at the age of 22 years or older at the time of admission.

Andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn (Clardy, 2005).

Cognitive learning – the process of enabling people to learn by using their reason, intuition, and perception. This technique is often used to change a person's behavior. A person's behavior is influenced by many factors, such as culture, upbringing, education, and motivation. Cognitive learning involves understanding how these factors influence behavior and then using this information to develop learning programs (Martin, 2009).

Experiential learning – the knowledge and skills acquired through life, work experience, and study which have not been formally certified through any educational or professional certification.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) – a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the National Center for Education Statistics

(NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in federal student financial aid programs. Required reporting is supported by the Higher Education Act of 1965, which requires all institutions that participate in federal student aid programs to report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Institutions of higher learning – those universities, community colleges, vocational technical schools, and liberal arts colleges that provide degrees or certificates for individuals who have completed high school education requirements prior to entering the higher education programs offered by these institutions.

The Lindenwood College for Individualized Education (LCIE) – is the accelerated course format that provides both graduate and undergraduate degrees at Lindenwood University.

Lifelong learning accounts – employer-matched, portable, employee-owned accounts used to finance education and training. These accounts encourage the creation of a partnership between workers and employers to effectively leverage resources to increase productivity, improve recruitment and retention, and meet the changing needs of our economy. These accounts are intended to supplement, not replace, existing employer-supported tuition assistance programs (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning [CAEL], 2005).

Lumina Foundation for Education (Lumina Foundation) – an Indianapolis-based, private, independent foundation, that strives to help people achieve their potential by expanding access to and success in education beyond high school. Through grants for

research, innovation, communication, and evaluation, as well as policy education and leadership development, Lumina Foundation (2009a) addresses issues that affect access and educational attainment among all students, particularly underserved student groups, including adult learners.

Persistence – If a student is continuously enrolled for more than two successive terms, then they are said to be persistent.

Retention – a method of measurement which tracks a student through a degree program over time to determine if the student has completed the program.

Student Departure – when a student leaves a degree program and does not ever return to complete the degree. According to Tinto's theory of departure, students depart because they do not separate themselves from their families and past and socially integrate themselves to the college or other institution (as cited in Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000).

Traditional students – for the purposes of this study, are those who go to college either directly from high school or shortly thereafter and are typically 17–19 years old.

Transferrable skills – are those reasonably developed skills, knowledge, and abilities attained through both training and experience (civilian and military) that relate to current employment opportunities in the labor market (Fugleberg, 2004).

Limitations of the Study

Accelerated learning and degree programs were investigated to determine if they are more conducive to adult learning styles, thus contributing to student retention and greater actual degree attainment. Only undergraduate degrees were examined. Adult students who were contacted were enrolled in either traditional or accelerated programs at

Lindenwood University. The principal researcher discovered a limitation as this study developed.

The evident limitation for this study was the comparison of traditional and non-traditional adult students. At Lindenwood University in spring 2009, there were only 12 students who fit the definition of adult student as established by this paper enrolled in traditional day programs. There were approximately 728 valid written responses received to the survey distributed to the adult undergraduate students in the accelerated programs.

Delimitations of the Study

This study is not about the average 18–22-year-old traditional college student who goes directly into college from high school. A definition of *adult student* is contained within the "Definition of Terms" section of this chapter. Only research related to adult students and adult learning styles as encompassed in the defined term was utilized.

This study excluded any type of degree attainment that does not involve the classroom setting. Online institutions of higher education, where a degree is attained without setting foot in a classroom, were deliberately excluded from the literature review and this study. The principal researcher chose to focus on the classroom method of delivery, because the primary group used as participants in this study was the LCIE students, and the method of instruction in the LCIE program utilizes only the classroom setting.

Assumptions

Results of the surveys, focus groups, and other findings discovered via research will be shared with the administration and faculty at Lindenwood University. It is assumed that changes to the accelerated and/or traditional classroom practices and

curriculum programs in which the adult students are currently participating may be implemented as a result of this study. To this researcher's knowledge, an in-depth examination of the undergraduate adult students and their motivations for choice of program has not been conducted at Lindenwood University. This study and the assembly of secondary research that was reviewed and is discussed in detail in chapter 2 will provide insight and information toward understanding the adult undergraduate students and their motivations. The insights provided will also result in the identification of areas where Lindenwood University both excels and needs improvement.

The accelerated program at Lindenwood University thus far has been very successful in terms of enrollment and degree completion. Since the inception of the LCIE program in 1975, growth has been fairly consistent. From 2006 to 2009, the LCIE program has averaged a growth rate of 10–20% per term with an overall average rate of 15% (B. Barger, personal communication, September 23, 2009). The LCIE program has undergone revisions in the past regarding formats and requirements and has demonstrated the ability to evolve as the needs of area employers and students have evolved. This study attested to the academic rigor presented by the accelerated program and demonstrated the importance of universities being keenly attuned to their environments and the needs of the students that they serve.

It is assumed that while this study focuses on the accelerated program at Lindenwood University(LCIE), the assertions made and information discovered will be valuable to other institutions of higher learning that are seeking to implement or revise existing programs focused on the adult learner. The LCIE program was one of the first accelerated programs in the St. Louis, Missouri, metropolitan area.

Summary

Education is of vital importance to the continued existence of a fully functioning society. Adult education is of even greater significance due to continually progressing professional needs shown throughout various industries. It is imperative that the adult student be understood and that institutions of higher education take note of this important part of their student population. Programs tailored to meet the adult student's needs are not only important, they are an absolute necessity for colleges and universities. The principal researcher supports this claim through evidence obtained via focus groups and surveys.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

There are three focuses of this literature review. First, adult learning habits, motivations, and challenges for seeking a college education later in life were examined. Second, due to the increasing phenomena of accelerated adult degree programs, accelerated learning programs were examined to determine what motivates adults to choose these types of programs. Third, various aspects of these accelerated programs were examined to determine if they are indeed more conducive to adult learning styles. A review of literature has yielded much information regarding adult learning styles and motivators for adults returning to school; however, the literature on accelerated programs is somewhat limited, and there have been few in-depth studies conducted.

A substantial amount of literature was found regarding the barriers to returning to school for adults and how colleges and universities are attempting to corner the adult market through programs that are more conducive to adult learning styles and lifestyles. It is important to note that the area of accelerated education is not a new approach to education, though it has received more attention within the past 10–15 years. Education researchers and economic experts attribute this fact to the aging of the population and the factor that in an economic downturn, people tend to return to school in hopes of securing better employment (Stevens, 2009). Only by educating more people past high school will the challenges that the United States faces in the future be able to be addressed. Specialized knowledge and technical skills lead to higher incomes, greater productivity, and generation of valuable ideas (Bernasek, 2005).

The culture, economy, and workplaces in the United States have all experienced dramatic changes. When a steel plant that has supported three generations of a family

suddenly closes, or a process that once required 12 skilled workers now only requires 2 workers, people are forced to rethink their futures and options. These people seek out ways to secure a future, and one of those ways is often perceived to be additional education. Finding a way to fit that education into their lives and to pay for it often presents a great challenge for these adults.

Evolution of Adult Education

The one constant in the field of adult education has been change. Changes in adult education have been predicated based on numerous factors, including economics, challenges to the process, and students' needs and societal expectations. Some students have been successful in attainment of their degree, while others have not. This section will discuss those changes and the drivers of success of the non-traditional student.

Economic changes. While this review of literature was taking place, the economy began to force some changes in service delivery and financing. In 2006 then-U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings indicated that sweeping changes were needed to make higher education more affordable, accountable, and understandable to Americans who were shelling out tens of thousands of dollars annually to pursue college degrees (Spellings, 2006). According to Cook (2004), displaced workers account for nearly 27% of the growth at the community colleges. The $787 billion economic stimulus law also provided $1.7 billion for adult employment services, which includes education and training. Many colleges instituted grants and discounts to laid off or displaced workers as an incentive to return to school. Unique methods of financing led adults back into the classroom in hopes of a better future.

A relatively new concept initiated by the CAEL (2005) is Lifelong Learning Accounts. These accounts allow employees to make regular pretax contributions for tuition, books, and other education expenses through payroll deductions; these contributions are then matched by the employer. These accounts also allow employees to make an investment in themselves, and according to CAEL, these investments are good for both workers and businesses (CAEL, 2005). Innovative financing methods are necessary to ensure that the education adult students want is not only available, but attainable.

Challenges to the process. Educating adults in the United States represents a unique set of challenges. According to "Measuring Up 2006, the National Report Card on Higher Education" (Callan, 2006), the United States is among the world leaders of 35–64-year-old adults who have college degrees. Many of the gains reported in higher education in the past 40 years were largely due to the G.I. Bill and the population explosion of the baby boomers (Callan, 2006). The original G.I. Bill, passed in 1944, gave servicemen or women the opportunity for college or vocational training reimbursement with some additional opportunities for other types of funding. Colleges and universities were seeking new and innovative ways to help the adult segment of their student population attain their degrees, and the G.I. Bill helped to facilitate some of their growth. In times of increasing economic difficulties, it is imperative that educational institutions assert their continued value to the marketplace and make overall contributions to society.

In the past higher education has placed more emphasis on cognitive learning as opposed to transferrable skills. This emphasis could be partially attributed to the fact that

the typical traditional student learns things anew without much life experience. The need to provide students with more transferrable skills is being driven by both employers and non-traditional adult students increasingly seeking a college education (Chao et al., 2007).

Adults, fueled by their capabilities and motivation, can accomplish quality learning through a variety of formats (Wlodkowski, Gann, & Maulding, 2001). Life challenges and a wide background of varied work experiences give many adults the complex cognitive processing abilities they need to learn quickly and comprehensively. Adult students tend to reflect on rich and extensive personal experiences and draw on their previous knowledge and wisdom to "make meaning" of new material (Donaldson & Townsend, 2001).

Adult students are referred to as "non-traditional" students throughout education-focused literature. The non-traditional/adult learners who are over age 24 currently comprise about 44% of the U.S. postsecondary students (Kasworm, 2008). Increasing numbers of adults are participating in postsecondary and work-related courses, and as many as 37 million more adults are interested in attending college but are unable to participate (Chao et al., 2007). A study by Mathematica Policy Research found four consistent and powerful barriers to further education for working adults (Silva, Cahalan, & Lacireno-Paquet, 1998):

- The lack of time to pursue an education
- Family responsibilities
- The scheduling of course time and place
- The cost of educational courses (p. 97)

If adults cannot overcome these barriers, then a college education becomes an unrealized dream. That will be costly for those individuals in the future. Non-traditional students drop out at a much higher rate (38.9%) than do traditional students attending full time (18.2%) (Silva et al., 1998). This statistic alone is cause for great concern in the academic and professional communities.

Non-traditional students – drivers of success. The success of non-traditional students is of great importance, both to the students, and to the United States as a country. According to a study by Milam (2008),

> the success of nontraditional students is no longer a matter of individual student outcomes, but one for the nation as a whole. The cost of attrition has never been higher in personal or economic terms. As a result, higher education must establish a clearer commitment to institutional effectiveness based on the success of students. (p. 1)

Milam also asserted that "Nontraditional students are uniformly being failed by public institutions that perpetuate an educational system that is constructed to suit the needs and expectations of 18-year-olds and the faculty who teach them" (p. 31). Literature regarding the non-traditional adult student supports Milam's assumptions (Braxton et al., 2000).

The colleges and universities agree with the aforementioned barriers; however, according to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2009), there will be 10 top issues that affect access to higher education in 2009: the fiscal crisis, tuition prices, state student grant aid programs, enrollment capacity, implementation of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Obama Administration, college readiness,

veterans' education, undocumented students, and sustainability. The challenges presented by the economic recession cause diminishing revenue streams, while institutions are faced with increasing enrollment demands. "There are far too many Americans who want to go to college but cannot – because they are either not prepared or cannot afford it." (Spellings, 2006, para. 22). The institutions and their potential students agree that obtaining a college education will not be an easy road for many of them.

What prompts an adult to seek a college degree and why some students are successful and some are not are questions posed in various forums. Adults and traditional students differ widely in their learning habits and the challenges they face when seeking to obtain an education. Adult learning habits relate more to their current life needs. Traditional younger college students are still working to form and accumulate knowledge as they have done in childhood. Lifelong learning and development are influenced by three factors: biological and environmental, historical, and life events (MacKeracher, 2004). Adult learning focuses primarily on modifying, transforming, and reintegrating knowledge and skills rather than forming and accumulating them as done in childhood. Human behaviors are motivated by four primary drives: "(a) to acquire, (b) to bond, (c) to defend, and (d) to learn" (MacKeracher, 2004, p. 131).

Wlodkowski (2008) suggested that there are six major motivation factors that will help instructors of adults navigate through the stages of activities that take place with adult learners: attitudes, needs, stimulation, affect, competence, and reinforcement. These motivation factors can be addressed with attention to purpose and deliberate strategies created by the instructors of adult learners and thus will afford the adult learner a greater possibility of a successful learning outcome.

What motivates an adult learner and what society has come to expect of the adult learner is the subject of much debate. The unique needs of the adult student must first be understood and then the societal perceptions must be examined to ascertain if these two key precepts are indeed working in concert with or against one another.

Students' needs and societal expectations. Adult learners need to feel as if their previous life experience is valued and that what they are attempting to learn will positively affect their lives in some way. "Understanding adults as learners and gleaning insights on them from our experiences will aid us in the journey of enhancing meaningful educational encounters"(Galbraith, 2004, p. 16). Adults are also often affected by situational phenomena, including job and health problems, financial problems, legal problems, and family or personal problems (Grunau, 2005). These consistent and persistent challenges deter many adults' focus and prohibit them from being able to adequately learn. The rapid pace of social, technological, cultural, economic, legal, and educational change throughout the world, combined with the increasingly global interconnectedness of societies and economies, emphasizes the need for people who are adaptable and responsive (Candy, 2005). Adults will learn best in new environments that provide support and safety for testing new behaviors (MacKeracher, 2004). Corporations are also seeking new ways to improve the knowledge of their workforce and to create competitive advantages (Husson & Kennedy, 2003).

Society has the expectation that college graduates will be better rounded and more fully educated than those with a more narrow vocational preparation (Candy, 2005). Self-confidence was found to be an important characteristic for persistence in adult

learners (Castles, 2005). Adults may be motivated to study but lack in confidence, thus making it difficult for them to persist.

Some literature postulates that education is merely an "apparatus for social control" (Cunningham, 1988, p. 7) as opposed to a mechanism for improving society. It is proposed that "the education of adults transmits the dominant culture, and in the process, it reproduces a cultural system which is a force for the retention of the status quo rather than social change" (Jarvis, 1985, p. 18). Motivators for adult participation in education vary, and the aforementioned quotes from Cunningham and Jarvis present that an adult's decision to participate in learning activities has less to do with his or her needs and motives than with their position in society and the social experiences that have shaped his or her life. An understanding of the differing ways that adult students learn is important to the development of an understanding of the reasons for their pursuit of a college education.

Adult Learning

Adults learn differently than children. These differences are exhibited when one examines the child versus adult learning characteristics as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Adult and Child Learning Characteristics

CHILDREN	ADULTS
Rely on others to decide what is important to be learned.	Decide for themselves what is important to be learned.
Accept the information being presented at face value.	Need to validate the information based on their beliefs and values.
Expect what they are learning to be useful in their long term future.	Expect what they are learning to be immediately useful.
Have little or no experience on which to draw, are relatively "blank slates"	Have substantial experience on which to draw. May have fixed viewpoints.
Little ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the teacher or fellow classmates.	Significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the trainer and fellow learners.

Note. From the NVAA Instructor's Manual, U.S. Department of Justice – National Victim Assistance Academy, 2002, p. AL-3.

Developing an understanding of these differences is just one factor that must be considered. Another factor of vital importance to overall understanding of the adult learners is motivation.

Styles and motivators. Malcolm Knowles' conceptualization of andragogy discusses the art and science of helping adults learn based on crucial assumptions about the difference between children and adults as learners (as cited in Clardy, 2005). Andragogy has been the primary model for adult learning for close to 30 years. Andragogy assumes that adults have different learning characteristics and requirements than children; hence, education procedures must be different from the pedagogical procedures used to educate children (Clardy, 2005). According to the andragological

approach, instructors of adults should have technical and interpersonal skills that are required for them to be effective instructors (Galbraith, 2004). This skill set is of utmost importance if the multifaceted aspects of the adult student are to be truly understood.

Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) asserted two criteria for evaluating if a learner should be considered an adult:

1. The person occupies roles (such as a parent or worker) that have been traditionally defined as adult roles.
2. The person becomes an adult at which time his or her concept of self changes from one of dependence to one of autonomy. The adult would be more self-directing. (p. 5)

Central to the discussion of andragogy is an understanding of the differences between andragogy and pedagogy. One must fully understand differences in instruction for teaching adults and children so the needs of both adult and child learners can be addressed properly.

Table 2

Andragogy and Pedagogy – Differences Explained

	Andragogy	Pedagogy
Demands of learning	Learner must balance life responsibilities with the demands of learning.	Learner can devote more time to the demands of learning because responsibilities are minimal.
Role of instructor	Learners are autonomous and self directed. Teachers guide the learners to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts.	Learners rely on the instructor to direct the learning. Fact based lecturing is often the mode of knowledge transmission.
Life experiences	Learners have a tremendous amount of life experiences. They need to connect the learning to their knowledge base. They must recognize the value of the learning.	Learners are building a knowledge base and must be shown how their life experiences connect with the present learning.
Purpose for learning	Learners are goal oriented and know for what purpose they are learning new information	Learners often see no reason for taking a particular course. They just know they have to learn the information.
Permanence of learning	Learning is self-initiated and tends to last a long time.	Learning is compulsory and tends to disappear shortly after instruction.

Note. From http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/andragogy/index.htm, para. 5

Far-reaching affects. Responsibility is the cornerstone of adult motivation (Wlodkowski, 2008). Adults are motivated to learn when they are shown that learning is relevant. Adults will learn more when they care about the topic. If they are engaged, they will actively pursue this knowledge (Wlodkowski). Confidence for many adults starts when they know they have become proficient at something.

Education is the greatest determinant of one's literacy skills, job status, and income level. Literacy and level of education are highly correlated and literacy increases as education increases (Smith (Ed.), 1998). The majority of jobs with the highest rate of

growth (e.g., technology and healthcare) require some form of postsecondary credential. Between 1980 and 1997, 34 million new jobs were created that required some form of postsecondary education, while, at the same time, 7 million jobs that required only a high school diploma were eliminated (Education Commission, 2009).

According to the OECD (2008), the United States ranks tenth among industrialized nations in the percentage of 25–34-year-olds with an associate's degree or higher, and the United States stands as one of the only nations where older adults are more educated than younger adults. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) (2007) estimated that the nation will produce approximately 48 million new undergraduate degrees between 2005 and 2025. According to the NCHEMS analysis, the United States needs to produce approximately 64 million additional degrees over this period to match leading nations in the percentage of adults with a college degree (estimated at 55%) and to meet domestic workforce needs (Paulson & Boeke, 2006). This is a gap of 16 million degrees. The United States must find a way to raise the education level of the workforce if it is to keep pace with global evolution.

Chao et al. (2007) postulated that the economy rewards skills and credentials. In 2003 the median earnings of an American worker with only a high school diploma was $30,800, which was 38% less than the $48,800 median for those with a bachelor's degree. In all cases it appeared there was a significant return when a student increased his or her educational level. It indicated above there is significant economic incentive for adult students to complete their educations. A worthy question to ask is: Why don't more adults attend college and get a degree? Mental and financial barriers often create what appear to be insurmountable obstacles. The key to success for both adult students and

institutions that wish to serve them is for both to understand the basis from which the adult student learns and then work to fill the gap so that needs are met and students can be successful.

Models and orientation. It is imperative for those studying reasons why adults return to college to understand the varied theories that have been developed regarding the ways that adults learn. A review of literature indicated that many theorists such as Skinner, Guthrie, and Hall define learning simply as a change in behavior. Further explanation lends to a clearer definition of learning as "a process that brings together cognitive, emotional, and environmental influences with experiences for acquiring, enhancing, or making changes in one's knowledge, skills, values, and world views" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 277). Learning is thought of as a continually evolving process, with slight variances in orientation toward learning.

Behaviorism includes numerous individual learning theories. Commonalities of well-known behavior theorists such as Skinner, Guthrie, and Hull (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) include three basic assumptions about the process of learning:

1. Observable behavior rather than internal thought processes is the focus of the study, and learning is manifested by changes in behavior.
2. The environment shapes behavior; elements in the environment determine what one will learn.
3. The principles of contiguity and reinforcement are central to explaining the learning process. (p. 278)

It was postulated by Merriam and Caffarella in 1999 that behaviorism is the underlying philosophy that best explains adult career and technical education and human resource

development. Human resource development is an area that is inextricably linked to the area of adults seeking additional training to enhance job performance and increase the likelihood of future job promotions. Increasing or improving job opportunities is a primary motivator for adults returning to school to obtain a degree.

This motivation or desire by adults to push themselves toward improvement leads into another learning perspective, the *humanist orientation*, which is the theory that considers learning from the perspective of the human potential for growth. "Humanism emphasizes that perceptions are centered on experience and the freedom and responsibility to become what one is capable of becoming"(Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 282). It is upon these premises that many adult learning theories stress self-directedness of adults and the value of experience in the learning process.

Maslow (1943) proposed a theory of motivation based on a hierarchy of needs. This theory starts with basic physiological needs that have to be dealt with prior to satisfying needs for safety. "After the basic needs like hunger, thirst, security, and protection are satisfied, one can move toward self-actualization, the final need, which is shown in a person's desire to become all he or she is capable of becoming." (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 282) In reviewing literature that discusses adults' motivators for learning, the theory of self-actualization helps explain many of the idiosyncrasies evident in various reasons adults have given for seeking their degrees. Most adults enroll in college based on personal life transitions or catalysts reflecting environmental forces, life changes, or external life transition events (Aslanian, 2001). Events such as divorce, children entering school, recent job loss, or being denied a promotion due to lack of a

college degree are the impetus for change the adult student needs to begin his or her postsecondary education.

The final learning orientation theory to be discussed is that of *social cognitive orientation*. This theory's underlying premise states that people learn from observing others. This theory specifically highlights the fact that much human learning occurs in social environments (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). In the 1960s Bandura (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) proposed that previously discussed social learning theories break away from the behaviorist orientation. "Bandura's theory is particularly relevant to adult learning because it accounts for both the learner and the environment in which he/she operates" p. 289). This theory postulates that behavior is a function of the interaction of the person with the environment. This is a reciprocal concept in that while people influence their environment, it, in turn, influences how they behave. Adult students who have the desire to return to school were one of the primary motivators in colleges and universities developing a new environment that would meet the adult student's needs.

Accelerated Education

The format for postsecondary education for the adult student has evolved into the accelerated program format for course delivery. As previously mentioned, adult students are returning to college in large numbers (Armour, 2003). These adult students' demands for programs that are accessible and affordable resulted in the inception of accelerated degree programs for adult students. Some accelerated degree programs have had success, while others have not, and there are some key factors that play a role in the success. The

academic dissent of those involved in higher education cannot be ignored when discussing the accelerated format for course delivery.

Adult access to education and development of accelerated programs. According the NCES (2009), public and private 4-year colleges and universities have been shown to be the predominant providers of higher education, serving over 10 million students in 2002. These institutions have a powerful impact on the success of the adult student. Resounding themes related to adults completing their degrees focused on three areas: accessibility, affordability, and accountability (U. S. Department of Education, 2009).

In the past educational institutions were organized in a fashion conducive to the needs of the traditional student. Because of this arrangement adult students had more difficulty staying in school than traditional students. Where and when classes are available are key determinants in driving a student's choice of school and program. Adults most often want to maximize the economic value of their education while minimizing the amount of time they actually spend in a classroom. Adults demand flexibility and convenience in whatever degree programs they choose. An educational format that shows increasing promise for adult students being able to complete their degrees is that of accelerated programs. According to Kasworm (2003), adults surveyed in a qualitative study perceived their accelerated degree programs to be "a supportive world defined for adult learners" as compared to their previous experiences, which they deemed "impersonal and bureaucratic young adult collegiate experiences" (p. 9). These attitudes opened the door for development of non-traditional programs that could be completed in shorter time frames and that would cater more to the adult students' needs.

More than 250 traditional institutions have developed flexible programs with accelerated formats, evening and weekend courses, and distance or online options specifically to serve the working student (Wlodkowski et al., 2001). Projections indicate that approximately 25% of all adult college students will be enrolled in accelerated programs within 10 years (Wlodkowski et al.2001). Research conducted in 1992 by Scott and Conrad and in 1999 by Wlodkowski and Westover indicates that the quality of learning and the attitudes of students in accelerated programs are similar or superior to those in traditional programs. However, little research exists regarding how adult learners persist and succeed in accelerated programs or how their progress actually compares with that of adults in more traditional programs. Integrated throughout literature was the common theme of the simultaneous creation of adult accelerated degree programs and the concept of employers implementing tuition reimbursement.

Creation of programs. The accelerated format was created primarily to meet adult learner needs for convenience, access, and relevancy. The accelerated formats were created under the assumption that adults require and can respond to an abbreviated period for the course learning process (Kasworm, 2008). Because of life experiences and the relevancy of the coursework to their lives, adults can demonstrate proficiency in a subject in a shorter period than traditional students. Parallels exist between the techniques and strategies used in accelerated learning and recommendations that have been made by researchers regarding this approach (Imel, 2002). These similarities include non-threatening teaching and learning environments and the presentation of teachers and learners as equals in collaborative environments. It is also important to use small groups and access the learners' previous experiences as a resource. Accelerated learning stresses

the use of multisensory learning environments that tap into multiple intelligences and make use of the right and left brain (Imel, 2002). Proponents of accelerated learning formats do not approach learning and teaching in the same way as their more traditional academic counterparts.

The Lindenwood University LCIE accelerated program emerged in the mid 1970s due to the increasing demand for education by adult workers who had previously interrupted their education due to family, work, and military enlistment (Lindenwood University, 2009b). These adults were motivated to complete their college degrees but unable to attend traditional format classes. Colleges and universities saw a way to expand their student base and began "thinking outside of the box" for traditional education. A major assumption at this time was also that the student population was "experience rich and theory poor" (Mealman & Lawrence, 2000). Institutions began to consider instructors more as facilitators who served as a source of encouragement for the students to bring these experiences into the classroom and allow others to learn via their experiences.

Traditional academic philosophy tends to question the academic rigor of the accelerated format for education. The prevalent opinions of those who would be considered more traditional academics are those of superiority and dominance over the accelerated format for instruction (C. Manjounes, Field Notes, December 5, 2010). These traditional academics are used to having the average 18–22-year-old student who fits the definition of *traditional student* in their classrooms, and they question whether quality learning can occur in time-intensive formats because of the way the curriculum and breadth of subject coverage must be compressed. These academics may be unaware of the unique needs and attributes of the non-traditional adult student. Accelerated formats

have proven to be more conducive to the adult learner, who does not fit the standard mold for a traditional college student.

According to Kasworm (2001), multiple research studies regarding higher education suggest there are no differences in outcomes between intensive and traditional courses across formats and degrees of intensity. There is still a prevalent belief in the relationship of time to learning within most institutions of higher education. A. Astin and Astin's (2000) 1985 theory of involvement postulates that involvement reflects both a quantitative (time and number of activities) and qualitative (relative intensity, duration, immersion) dimension of both a physical and psychological dimension. In A. Astin and Astin's research, they noted,

> Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The extent of a student's involvement in, say, academic work can be measured quantitatively (how many hours they spend studying) and qualitatively (does the student review and comprehend reading assignments, or does the student typically stare at the textbook and daydream? (p. 7)

Looking at accelerated learning from this perspective gives new credence to the fact that a quality education involves much more that just seat time; it also involves retention of the information.

Success determinants. Accelerated degree programs are not always successful in their academic endeavors and many factors dictate the potential success of accelerated programs. Accelerated adult programs face many of the same challenges as traditional programs. The accelerated programs need to provide quality education, remain true to their purpose, and maintain academic integrity. In their research and review of

accelerated programs, Husson and Kennedy (2003) asserted the following criteria that are critical to the success of accelerated programs:

- Learner focused and market sensitive approach
- Designed for adult learners
- Passion for quality
- Program accessibility
- Various delivery options available at multiple sites
- Excellent customer service
- Commitment of leadership to foster success and mission extension of the accelerated programs. (p. 54)

Academic dissent. Accelerated programs often dispense with conventional academic normalcy, like tenure and full time faculty. The emphasis in many accelerated programs is that students will learn from working professionals (adjunct faculty) who have full-time jobs outside of the academic environment. This shunning of traditions that many institutions have held dear for several years causes the traditional academic thought process to be disrupted and forces ideals that have been ingrained into academic traditions to be called into question. Scott and Conrad (1992) presented six conclusions from their research that refutes the traditional academic assumption:

1. Intensive courses present equivalent and sometimes superior learning outcomes in comparison to traditional length courses.
2. Certain disciplines and fields of study (Social Sciences and Humanities) have presented outcomes favoring intensive over traditional formats.

3. Students are generally supportive of intensive courses and appreciative of convenience and efficiency.
4. Faculty attitudes are the most significant obstacle to intensive courses.
5. Time is not the principal driving force regarding learning; it is a variable, but only when in concert with other factors.
6. Concentrated, in-depth experiences do facilitate student development in ways not yet understood. (p. 413)

Camaraderie created through adult accelerated programs appears to be one of the key factors in student success and retention and degree completion (Wlodkowski & Kasworm (Eds.), 2003). Accelerated learning fills a highly desirable niche of the non-traditional student who often works over 20 hours a week and has a family and other responsibilities that do not permit pursuit of a residential full-time college experience (Wlodkowski & Kasworm (Eds.).

In doctoral research conducted by Root (1999), adults felt that the accelerated degree structure and process provided momentum and pushed them toward completion. Adults involved in Root's study believed that the accelerated program, unlike their previous academic experiences, would help them to succeed as long as they also took responsibility in the learning process. Adult students in Root's study described certain elements that they believed created the value of the program structure:

1. Learning was easier when it focused upon real world experience and application.
2. Small class size and active participation made a difference to keep them alert and involved.

3. Learning one subject at a time was an important asset of an accelerated learning experience so there was not an overload of learning information.
4. Faculty who are practitioners were an asset for an applied degree program because they understand the students and their world.
5. The structured, predictable, nature of the program removed stress and anxiety. (p. 7)

The students also valued fellow students as key personal supporters to help them cope with their lives. Adults need active and participatory learning as opposed to straight lecture, and adults are often able to transfer learning to application with greater ease than traditional students (Wlodkowski & Kasworm (Eds.), 2003)

Flexibility for adult students. Accelerated degree programs are a popular option for adults because of their time-shortened schedules and class flexibility. It is estimated that 25% or more of all adult students will be enrolled in accelerated programs by 2013 (Wlodkowski & Kasworm (Eds.), 2003). Most accelerated programs are found in traditional institutions and they are designed specifically to meet the needs of working adults. Wlodkowski (2003) defined accelerated programs as being structured specifically to enable students to complete their programs in less time, and the accelerated courses are presented in concentrated formats that often include evening and weekend classes. Many critics of accelerated courses say they are too compressed to produce consistent educational value (Wlodkowski & Kasworm (Eds.), 2003). Critics also believe that these types of programs stress convenience over substance and rigor. These critics were refuted by results of research studies by Wlodkowski (2003) and Conrad (1996) that showed that the average performance of older students in accelerated courses was significantly higher

than that of younger students in conventional courses. Haworth and Conrad (1996) suggested in their study that intensive courses became rewarding and powerful learning experiences when the following attributes were present:

- Instructor enthusiasm and expertise
- Active learning and classroom interaction
- Good course organization
- A collegial classroom atmosphere
- A relaxed learning environment. (p. 48)

Adults in both studies also reported consistently positive outlooks toward their accelerated learning experience. These same attributes have also shown to provide for the success of traditional students; however, the purposes of research for this dissertation project focus on the non-traditional adult student.

Adults surveyed by Kasworm (2001) concurred with these opinions, and they indicated they believed that the accelerated degree programs were designed to fit with their adult lives, while other collegiate program offerings were designed to try and force adults to fit into a system based on young adult lifestyles and full time collegiate studies.

Accelerated degree programs have a broad variety of presentation formats. Accelerated degree programs often attempt to tailor their degrees and format to adult students who otherwise would not be able to attain a degree. A program worthy of examination that has existed since 1975 and was used as a benchmark for the inception of other accelerated programs in the same geographic area is the Lindenwood University College for Individualized Education program. This program is an accelerated format in which students schedule classes on the quarter system and earn 9 hours of college credits

in 12 weeks. The students attend class one night a week from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. during this 12 week time period, and during one of the 12 weeks, they will have two class meetings. Class enrollment in this program is limited to 12–14 students, and written and oral communication skills are emphasized. Lindenwood University and the LCIE program have full accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Lindenwood University, 2009b) This program is one example of fitting the educational system to the adult's needs, which is contrary to the traditional education genre.

Adult student perspectives. Adults are often attracted to accelerated degree programs because of the accelerated format; however, this same factor often also causes stress and anxiety. In a study conducted by Kasworm (2001), some adults believed that their degrees attained in accelerated programs were more significant because they focused on real world application and issues. These adults also believed that their years of work experience enhanced their learning and understanding for meaningful learning and meaningful use.

Adult students in Kasworm's study noted concern by family members and others that because of the accelerated nature of the degree program, the degrees they were pursuing were "fluff" degrees or that they carried no weight because they were from a "diploma mill." The students surveyed in this study felt their family's and colleagues' judgments were unfounded and demeaning. The adults also believed that the collegiate environment of the accelerated programs was more congruent with their adult lives. The students felt affirmed that they had made the right choice for the accelerated program because it was structured specifically for their access and was flexible and supportive.

The adult students in this study believed that the accelerated program was going to help them succeed and get their degrees in a timely way (Kasworm, 2001)

The opinions of these students are supported by a popular, frequently cited, research-based, validated theory called the *self-determination theory*. According to this theory, people are motivated to behave and/or learn because of two motivational orientations: intrinsic and extrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic orientation involves learning because one finds the content interesting while extrinsic orientation involves learning as a means to an end. This theory is based on the assumption that it is more important to fulfill intrinsic needs for personal growth and learning than to fulfill extrinsic needs. The self-determination theory postulates that the most meaningful and successful learning occurs when students are motivated intrinsically (Ryan & Deci).

A central theme of adults returning to college was their need to see the application of what they are going to learn and how it will advance their careers. Prior and current experience provided a substantial portion of the context for new learning for the adult student and future experience was highly valued (Mealman & Lawrence, 2000). The adult students typically want to know where their education will lead, which opens the door to potential anxiety regarding their future.

To put it quite simply, adult students are different. They have different learning styles, preferences and needs than do post-adolescent adults, the primary differences being the older adults' motivation to learn and a wealth of life experiences that can be brought to bear on learning topics (Wlodkowski & Kasworm (Eds.), 2003) While learning styles and life experience are important factors regarding adult education, the

biggest potential barrier to adults obtaining a college education is often the financial aspect.

External Factors Influencing Adult Higher Education

Two external factors affect the adult student's contemplation of returning to school and obtaining a degree. These factors are finances and disparities. Central to the understanding of the external factors is the concept that these factors affect varied populations in different ways.

Finances as a factor in adult education. Another factor that must be examined when discussing adult education is the financing of that education. The rising cost of college is often cost prohibitive for many adults. Families will often sacrifice financially and accumulate a large debt in an attempt to afford the increasing tuition prices. Many people feel distressed because they see college costs spinning out of control at a time that a college education may be a make-it-or-break-it factor in determining a person's success in life. This distress is evidenced by the fact that 55% of the American public views obtaining a college degree as being the only way to succeed in America (Immerwahr, 2004). "Sixty-three percent believe that college prices are rising faster than the cost of other items and nearly 8 in 10 people think college prices are rising as fast or faster than health care" (para. 7).

Many methods of financing degrees exist; the most attractive option to students is securing a grant. The federal government gives out two major grants—the Pell Grant and the Federal Supplemental education Opportunity Grant—and one must fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible. A challenge that many working adults face in obtaining grants is that they may make too much money to qualify

for grants, so they are forced to take out sizeable loans to pay for tuition and books. Pell Grants are essentially the backbone of the student financial aid system. For that reason, accelerated programs focused on the adult population are well served to have experts in the field of financial aid and securing student loans available for students outside of traditional business hours. The rising cost of college education has provided a strong stimulus for students to often work full time while pursuing their college education, and many adult students find it difficult to leave their place of employment during the day to meet with the business or financial aid offices. It is of utmost importance that the adult student understands the resources that are available regarding the financing of their education.

When studying alternative education formats, it becomes obvious that there is a need for increased financial aid for adult students. Most adult undergraduates rely on personal funds to cover tuition costs. Only 20% use loans, 19% receive grants or scholarships, and 18% receive tuition reimbursement (Wlodkowski, 2008). If tuition reimbursement is available, 70% of adults use this benefit (Wlodkowski). Whenever the United States faces economic crises, one of the first benefits that corporations often cut or sideline is tuition reimbursement. When this benefit is cut, the gaps or disparities that currently exist in adult education often widen (Bailey & Mingle, 2003).

Disparities in adult education – the United States economy. There are distinct disparities regarding educational opportunities in the United States. According to the Cook (2004), more than 30% of White/non-Hispanic American adults have at least 4 years of college. This is in stark comparison to 18% of African Americans and 12% of Hispanics (Lumina Foundation). This gap in education is a contributing factor to the

disparities in income between racial and ethnic groups. The lack of a college education has implications that go far beyond simple earnings potential.

Economic and societal impacts of an education or lack of education are far reaching. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), there is a difference of 20–30% in earnings for people who hold associate degrees compared to those who only hold high school diplomas. The U.S. Department of Education goes on to assert that when the level of schooling increases by one year for a state or country, there is an average of 5–15% economic growth. This economic stimulus can also be accompanied by better jobs that carry with them more benefits than simply a larger paycheck.

According to labor economist Tony Carnevale, almost 95% of college graduates have employer-provided health insurance, in contrast to only 77% of high school graduates (Carnevale & Fry, 2000)**.** The ramifications of not having a degree also affect retirement potential, with 90% of college graduates having employer-funded retirement funds, compared to only 81% of high school graduates and only 53% of high school dropouts (Carnevale & Fry). Cook (2004) has also shown that since 1975, the average earnings of high school dropouts and high school graduates fell in real terms, by 15% and 1% respectively, and those of college graduates rose by 19%.

Prevailing opinions stress the importance of college education to the overall United States economy. The workforce is demanding higher skills and advanced knowledge, and by 2025, it is predicted by Cook (2004) in *Low-Income Adults in Profile: Improving Lives Through Higher Education*, that the United States will have a shortage of 16 million college-educated adults in its. workforce. According to Lumina Foundation

(2009b), other nations are reaching higher education attainment rates as high as 54%, where the United States is only at 39%.

According to OECD (2008), rates of college degree attainment are increasing in almost every OECD country faster than in the United States. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that between 2004 and 2014, people with either degrees or, at the least, occupational certificates will fill 24 of the fastest 30 growing occupations in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). *The Wall Street Journal* recently noted that U.S. employers are paying college educated workers 75% more than they are paying workers with only a high school diploma. The future prospects for education show great potential for expansion, if only people can find the money to pay their tuition. Intervention or assistance from third parties is needed to help prospective adult college students close the gap between their income and affordable college tuition.

The federal government currently invests about $90 billion annually in postsecondary education; however, most of that is in the form of student loans, which are repaid, so in reality, the investment is only $35 billion (Michelau, 2004). Those who make the policies regarding education at the state level often do not coordinate their efforts with the federal investments, thus making it more difficult for the states to accomplish their goals for higher education. According to Longanecker (2006), state policymakers would be well served to consider three important areas: (a) reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, (b) academic competitiveness grants, and (c) tax policy. The knowledge- based economy increasingly eliminates those without education and training beyond high school from employment opportunities that can support a middle

class standard of living (Callan, 2008). This elimination from the attainment of a higher standard of living can adversely affect a family for many future generations.

Adult Student Degree Completion

Many adults begin degree programs, but not all of them finish. Many factors affect an adult student's degree completion, such as persistency, prior college credits, and advising. However, it is important that the factors that affect retention and departure and non-degree completion are understood.

Persistency. Even if financing is available for their pursuit of college education, adult students are often affected by multiple factors outside their control. These factors include their jobs, health problems, financial problems, and personal or family problems (Wonacott, 2001). The question that was prevalent throughout literature studied regarding persistency of adult students was: Why do some students persist and other students fail? Adult learners need to experience a sense of progress to have successful educational outcomes. Adult learners often start their education journey with strong motivation, which needs nurturing throughout their educational experience. Maintaining learning motivation is the key point to a successful learning outcome (Huang, 2005).

As hypothesized by Woodley and Parlett and repeated by Huang in 2005, adult learners experience two opposite actions of "push" and "pull" during the learning process. When presented with learning difficulties and environmental barriers, the adults are pulled away from learning. When given proper social supports and consistent academic achievement, the adults are pushed toward greater retention in the learning process. When adult students face challenges and are able to overcome those challenges, they experience a sense of progress that gives them a more positive futuristic view of

their education. The emphasis on the sense of progress also stresses the importance of the interior satisfaction and reward essential to the enhancement of self-efficacy and learning retention (Huang, 2005).

In a paper presented by Craig Mealman and Randee Lawrence at the Adult Higher Education Conference in 2000, Mealman compared the accelerated adult educational experience to the operation of a pressure cooker. The raw food or materials are all elements that represent the components of the education experience: student's experience, curriculum structure, readings, assignments and applied summary papers. These elements are all thrown into the pot. The heat—deadlines and faculty and student expectations—is turned up to the point that the pressure gauge rattles at a pace sustainable for student learning (Mealman & Lawrence). While this is a simplistic scenario, it illustrates how a combination of factors comes into play when determining the potential for adult students to succeed in a program. It is often not just one factor that causes the adult student to "drop out"; it may be a multitude of issues. It is worthwhile to pause and ask the question, if the adult student has not yet accomplished his or her learning goals, why does he or she not complete the chosen degree program? It is also fair to ask what the institutions can do to retain these students and do a better job serving them and meeting their needs.

Retention versus departure. A significant problem exists when students drop out of college with no degree or certificate to enhance their earning power so that they can repay their debts. In Missouri 24% of the population currently in the workforce have earned some college credit but have not completed degrees or certifications, while only

30% of Missouri's working-age adults (25–64 years old) hold at least a 2-year degree, according to 2000 census data (Lumina Foundation, 2000).

Much literature is devoted to discussing the problem of student departure and non-degree completion. Almost one half of students entering a 2-year college and more than one fourth of students entering a 4-year college leave at the end of the first year (Braxton et al., 2000). One of the college's greatest challenges as an institution is getting a high level of integration of the student into the social community of the college. The greater the level of commitment they have into the social community, the greater the likelihood for student persistence. This presents a unique challenge for adult students who typically may not have time for extra social activities outside of their regular class time, due to familial responsibilities and work commitments. There is not an abundance of literature and research that applies retention theories to non-traditional students; most of what exists centers around the work of Bean and Metzner in 1985. They concluded that non-traditional students are more negatively affected by environmental factors and more positively affected by social and academic integration (Bean & Metzner).

Adult students have the luxury of choice to participate in higher education programs, while children under the age of 16 are legally mandated to attend school, and according to the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL, 2000) and reported by Comings, Parrella and Sorcione 2000):

> Children participate because of legal mandates and strong social and cultural forces that identify schooling as the proper 'work' of childhood. An adult, on the other hand, must make an active decision to participate in each class session and often must overcome significant barriers to attend classes. (p. 4)

It is these barriers that often prohibit the adult student from completing a degree program. As institutions of higher learning are examining why students leave their programs, it is important that the institutions ask themselves seven questions:

1. Do you understand the nature of the problem?
2. Do you know why your students leave?
3. Do you know what your institution is already doing to ameliorate these issues?
4. Do you know how effective these programs or strategies are?
5. Do you know what strategies and programs may be worth considering?
6. Do you have evidence that there exists significant support on campus to do something about this issue?
7. Do you understand the institutional change process? (Swail (Ed.), 2006, pp. 1–2)

Students and institutions both lose when students do not complete programs. Students lose because of debt often incurred with no positive outcome to offset it, and institutions lose because without the student, the revenue stream stops. If greater time were spent by higher education providers asking and answering these questions, the potential exists for the problem of student attrition could be greatly reduced.

No two students are the same, and typically, neither are their needs. In an article regarding student retention, Swail stated,

> Serving students is hard work, serving them well is even harder. . . . Students are our clients and we owe it to them to provide them with the best opportunity for success. We can't guarantee perfection for every student, nor can we promise

> success. But we can do what it is in our control to maximize their opportunities on our campuses. (p. 2)

College students, especially non-traditional adult students, may become easily frustrated when they feel as if they are treated as a number or made to feel they are a bother. A recurring theme throughout literature examined was that the first few weeks of a program and especially the first class was critically important. Learners may feel that they do not receive enough attention from their instructors or the institution (Kerka, 1995). The adult student especially needs to feel connected to something greater than himself/herself and feel as if he or she is journeying together with other like-minded individuals through this season of college life (Davis, 2009). It would be worthwhile for institutions to examine more in depth why students depart from programs prior to completion and what the institutions could do to stop that event from occurring.

Many studies indicate that GPA is inextricably linked to the adult student's intent to persist to the completion of the degree (Brown, 2002). Additional review of literature asserts that academic integration is also defined as an important function of nontraditional/adult student persistence (Brown, 2002). Students need to develop feelings of commitment and attachment to the institution and need to feel as if the institution cares about them.

Student departure/non degree completion. Several theories postulate reasons for student departure. The primary theory that has been set forth and studied regarding college student departure is Tinto's Interactionalist theory. Tinto contends that "if social integration is to occur, it must occur in the classroom because the classroom functions as the gateway for academic and social communities of a college." (as cited in Braxton

et al., 2000, p. 570) According to Tinto, the college classroom constitutes one possible source of influence on social integration, subsequent institutional commitment, and college departure (Braxton et al.).

In 1973 Tinto (as cited in Metz, 2002) produced a theoretical model of attrition and persistence, which included the following components:

- Pre-entry attributes (prior schooling and family background)
- Goals/commitment (student aspirations and institutional goals)
- Institutional experiences (academics, faculty interaction, co-curricular involvement, and peer group interaction)
- Integration (academic and social)
- Goals/commitment (intentions and external commitments)
- Outcome (departure decision – graduate, transfer or dropout) (p. 2)

Much of this theory deals with the student's need to move through the higher education system and eventually become adapted to the environment. Tinto goes on to say that the influence of institutional variables, such as faculty–student interaction, peer group interaction, and extracurricular involvement, help to shape the student's progression through college (Metz, 2002).

It is important when examining adult learning theory that Robert Kegan, a leading adult constructive developmental theorist, is also given consideration. Kegan explains that education not only changes what learners know, but also stimulates "qualitative shifts in perception" that change how the learner views the world (Kegan, 1982). According to the basis of this theory, adult education changes how we know and asserts the assumption that knowledge is neither given nor gotten, but it is constructed. Kegan

goes on to say that adults face issues of self-perception as soon as they begin thinking about enrolling in college. By going to college these adults are changing their routines and relationships. Kegan asserts that "going to college often feels like the abdication of the values of self-sacrifice and group coherency in exchange for the selfish pursuit of individual advancement" (Kegan). These perceptual shifts and radical changes implemented in the adult student's life can be challenging to maintain. Entering adults are usually thrilled to be joining the higher education system and are doing so because they have been motivated to change. The ability of the adult to self-monitor and deliberately choose effective interpersonal strategies is a critical determinant for his or her success (Goleman, 1998).

Prior college credits. Another factor examined that correlates directly to degree completion is that adult learners benefit greatly from having significant prior college experience before enrolling in 4-year colleges (Wlodkowski et al., 2001). According to Wlodkowski et al., adults who had approximately 30 semester hours completed prior to enrolling in 4-year universities would have greater possibility for degree completion and exhibit better writing skills than those who did not have this experience. This prior academic experience was thought to have provided some degree of confidence, strategy, and familiarity to facilitate greater persistence and degree attainment (Wlodkowski et al.).

There are varied ways that universities award college credits. Most colleges and universities accept transfer credits from other accredited schools, and they typically have their own policies regarding how much credit and what types of credits they will accept. Another standard is for colleges and universities to award credits for "experiential learning." This concept is defined as learning that takes place outside of the classroom

and is the process of making meaning through direct experience. For example, Lindenwood University awards credit for college-level knowledge and learning gained from the direct experience (Lindenwood University, 2009b). Lindenwood sets a limit on the credit to be awarded via this avenue at 27 hours, while other institutions set other limitations. Lindenwood awards credits for the following:

- Graduate of Diploma Schools of Nursing (RN) – up to 12 hours
- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) – up to 6 hours
- Completion of training and certification for EMT (Emergency Medical Technology) – up to 12 hours
- Graduates from the St. Louis or St. Charles Police Academy – up to 15 hours
- Real Estate Broker's License – up to 3 hours
- Stockbroker's License (series 6 or 7) – up to 6 hours
- Military Credits – up to 12 hours (Lindenwood University, 2009b, p. 20)

Lindenwood also awards credits for preparation of a portfolio through which the student demonstrates knowledge he or she has accumulated as evidenced in the form of certificate, syllabi, letters of testimony, and samples of work accomplished. This avenue of awarding students credit for life experiences often condenses time frames and requirements for adult students to attain their degrees. "Adult learners can be recognized as potential co-creators of knowledge; their experiences understood, not as evidence of a 'disconnect' between academic theory and real life, but as something which continually enriches and contributes to the learning process" (CAEL, 2005).

Importance of Advising. Greater faculty–student interaction promotes greater satisfaction for adult students and his or her college experience. Literature reviewed showed that the influence of faculty over students can be significant. According to a survey conducted by the American College Testing Program, inadequate academic advising emerged as the strongest negative factor in student retention, while a caring attitude of faculty and staff and high quality advising emerged as among the most positive factors (McArthur, 2005). The academic advisor is essentially the coordinator of the student's educational experience. The advisor provides the key to linking the adult student to the institution and creates the relationship necessary to facilitate degree attainment. One fourth of students participating in a study conducted by Wlodkowski et al. (2001) said they saw improved guidance and better advising as a positive influence for remaining in school. Major complaints discussed by the students in this study included misinformation, confusion, and lack of follow up. These complaints could be alleviated by greater relationship development between faculty and students (Wlodkowski)..

Certain key traits of significant faculty and advisor relationships that influence student decisions are a recurring theme throughout literary discussions of the adult student advisement process. The key traits that need to be present in the faculty are genuineness, flexibility, empathy, sensitivity and competence. The ability to offer constructive encouragement, remain respectful, and motivate through role modeling are also key (Miller, 2007). Development of caring relationships is important to the continuation of the student's education and completion of the degree process.

The accelerated format for education is conducive to this relationship building, as it emphasizes the collaborative learning approach, and success hinges on the facilitation of positive relationships among students and faculty. Educators specializing in adult education that utilizes the accelerated format approach must learn to draw on the life experiences that adult students bring into the classroom and coordinate that experience with an education that will be meaningful to them in their career pursuits.

Academic advising is the link to both student retention and academic success (Howell, 2009). Advisors meeting with students in a structured setting can eliminate roadblocks, reinforce good work, and identify and/or prevent problems (Howell). Academic advising is experiencing transition, along with the rest of the higher education system. The student body no longer consists solely of the 18–22-year-old residential student who does not work an out-of-school job and only attends class; the student body has evolved into students who are older, represent minorities, and may be dealing with disabilities (such as handicapped veterans returning from war). This evolvement of the student body has necessitated that the faculty advisor be even an even more diverse individual and excellent communicator than ever before.

The concept of *appreciative advising* reinforces the ideal traits previously stated regarding student advisement. Appreciative advising is defined as "the intentional, collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials" (Howell, 2009, p. 19). This student-centered conceptualization of the advisement process shows promise for students with varied backgrounds. While no distinct studies exist regarding the success of appreciative advising regarding adult students, Eastern Illinois

University has seen increased persistence in their adult and online student populations since their implementation of this concept (Howell).

Summary

Theories, literature, and opinions abound when reviewing information regarding education. More focus recently has been on the adult student because of the large numbers of adults returning to colleges and universities to get their degrees. Phenomena such as accelerated degree programs have arisen, and central to their success and attainment of academic respect is the ideal that that these programs must be well constructed and carry similar academic requirements as do other degrees earned via the traditional modes of course delivery. Colleges and universities that recognize the differences in the requirements of the adult student versus the traditional student and that create accelerated degree programs which are easily accessible, can be completed within a reasonable time frame, and are academically attainable will be those institutions that are successful in their service to the adult student. Increasing adult student degree attainment is important not only to the adult student and to the institutions that grant the degrees, but also to the continued economic success and professional advancement of the United States of America.

Chapter Three – Methods

This study uses blended qualitative and quantitative methods to explore traditional and accelerated degree options and programs for adult students at Lindenwood University. For the purpose of this study, adult students are defined as anyone over 22 years of age. It is postulated that accelerated degree programs result in higher retention rates for adult students and that such programs offer a more conducive learning environment for adults.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of this study was that accelerated degree programs for adult students will not result in higher retention rates than traditional day programs. Research questions were the following:

1. How does the retention in accelerated degree programs compare to the retention in traditional day programs?
2. Why do adult students who have never attended college or who have been out of the system for years return to school?
3. What role do finances play in an adult's decision to complete a degree program?
4. What key factors make an accelerated program successful?
5. What key factors help retention?

   Related sub-questions were as follows:

   a. Is accessibility to advising a factor?
   b. How do work responsibilities factor in when adult students are weighing the decision to begin school or return to school?

c. How do family responsibilities factor in when adult students are weighing the decision to begin or return to school?

6. What influence do faculty and administration have over the student's choice of a degree program?

Programs Examined for Study

The Lindenwood College for Individualized Education (LCIE), an accelerated program, was examined for this study. It operates under the auspices of Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. This accelerated program has existed at Lindenwood since 1975 and was specifically designed for working adults.

Courses are offered in a cluster format allowing students to earn 9 hours of credit by attending 13 meetings in a 12-week period. Classes typically meet one night a week from 6:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. Both graduate and undergraduate degrees are offered in this same format; however, for the purposes of this study, only undergraduate degrees were examined.

Undergraduate students are required to complete a minimum of 128 hours to attain a degree. Students may transfer credits from other accredited institutions and may also earn experiential learning credits to satisfy the total hours required. A list of general education requirements for the LCIE program is provided in Appendix H. After completion of the specified general education requirements, students must complete specified coursework for their chosen majors.

Classes for the LCIE general education requirements and for the core coursework are offered grouped together in clusters. That cluster encompasses three separate classes, and students are allowed to take only one cluster at a time. Each class within the cluster is

valued at 3 hours of college credit and a student is considered full-time by taking one 9-hour cluster. Unless a student transfers coursework that covers two thirds of the requirement for that cluster of classes, he or she must take the whole cluster at Lindenwood. Thirteen different undergraduate degrees are offered in the accelerated format. Both bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees are offered (Lindenwood University, 2009b).

The traditional program examined for this study at Lindenwood University offers programs during the day in a semester format. Traditional courses are typically offered as 3 credit hour segments and meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for 50 minutes or on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 1 hour and 15 minutes or once a week for 2 and 1/2 hours. There are 63 different undergraduate degree programs offered in the traditional day schedule, with some degrees offering the choice of a bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, or bachelor of fine arts. This traditional course format focuses mainly on recruitment of high school students to fulfill student enrollment goals (B. Barger, personal communication, September 23, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to examine adult student and instructor perspectives and also to investigate motivators, factors and life events that have affected adult learners as they pursue their degrees. The second purpose of this study was to examine the environment, format, and course content of accelerated degree programs to determine if these programs are more conducive to adult students' wants and needs than traditional programs, thus enhancing student retention. This research explored accelerated degree programs as an option for adults and key factors that affect an adult student's choice to

participate in an accelerated program versus a traditional program. For the purpose of this study, only undergraduate degrees were examined.

The surveys used to gather data for this project provided vital insight to both faculty and administration regarding student attitudes and perceptions of the programs and information regarding the effectiveness of the advising process. Information regarding the findings of the data gathered from the surveys will be used to enhance and improve the accelerated and traditional programs for adult students. It is asserted that information gathered by the surveys could also be used as validation for proposed improvements for accelerated programs at universities that are currently operating or considering operating similar programs.

Instrumentation

The Adult Education Survey (AES) (see Appendix A) was adapted from an original survey used by Lumina Foundation. There was no attestation available pertaining to the validity or reliability of this tool. The Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory (MIPI) (see Appendix G) and the Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory – Adapted for Students (MIPI-S) (see Appendix I) were obtained with the permission of Dr. John Henschke, Assistant Professor of Andragogy in the School of Education at Lindenwood University. The instructor's perspective inventory was validated by using two major groups totaling 600 adult educators to test and refine the instrument. The focus group questions were created by the principal researcher and were based on similar topics covered by the AES.

Methodology

Data for this study were gathered utilizing two methods – surveys and a focus group. Survey instruments used included the AES, MIPI, (MIPI-S), and a free online survey creation tool, SurveyMonkey. Historical retention data was secured from the university that was the primary focus of this study.

Gathering data from students. Adult students who attend traditional day programs at Lindenwood University were surveyed via SurveyMonkey, and adult students who attended classes in the LCIE format were surveyed using a paper-based survey. Focus groups were also conducted with two different LCIE classes. Adult students who participated in the day program were surveyed via SurveyMonkey because they did not all live on campus, and due to varied class schedules, the principal researcher determined the timeliest means of surveying these students was via automated methods. LCIE students were surveyed via paper-based surveys because they were gathered in groups at varied locations and an accurate count of students at the various locations was easily determined.

A list of students enrolled in the traditional program who fit this paper's definition of "adult student" was obtained from the Lindenwood University admissions office, and a link to an automated survey posted on SurveyMonkey was sent to the students via their Lindenwood Lionmail email account. It offers the ability to look at the data collected from the survey in various ways, both by individual and in groups. Reports were run that showed overall response rate as well as responses for each question individually. At the time the survey was conducted, January 2009, there were only 12 students enrolled in the traditional program who fit the definition of adult students for this research project.

Students enrolled in the LCIE program were given a paper survey that is attached as Appendix A. The Dean of Graduate and Evening Admissions and the Dean of Accelerated Programs at Lindenwood University reviewed the surveys and agreed that the questions asked on the surveys would be useful data related to this study and to the university. This survey used a Likert scale, which is the most widely used scale in survey research, allowing survey respondents to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement (Uebersax, n.d.). The scale of the survey allowed students to choose their answers from categories labeled *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree,* and *strongly disagree*. These surveys were distributed by the site directors at each location where LCIE classes were being held. A brief letter of explanation and a consent form accompanied the survey. When the principal investigator collected the surveys, she determined if a valid consent form was signed and attached to the survey. If the consent form was not signed or if questions were left blank, surveys were placed in a separate location and were not tabulated within the survey results. The surveys were all collected and were kept separated according to enrollment location. The intent was to be able to examine the student responses by location and also aggregate the data for an overall response rate. Data from these surveys was tabulated on an Excel spreadsheet by the principal investigator.

Focus groups. Research conducted through focus group discussions can provide valuable personal insight that written responses on paper or online surveys cannot provide. The Omni Institute (n.d.) created a Toolkit for Conducting Focus Groups. The following principles of research ethics were recommended:

- *Voluntary participation* – Participants must agree to participate of their own free will, and researchers must explain the study in an easily understood way. Written consent is preferred, but recorded verbal consent is acceptable.
- *Confidentiality* – Personal information must be kept confidential and researchers must explain how the information will be protected. No information should be publicly reported to identify individuals as participants in the study.
- *Professional competence* – Researchers must not misrepresent themselves or misuse their experience as researchers. They should only undertake tasks for which they have been trained.
- *Respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity* – Researchers must respect the rights of others to have beliefs that differ from their own and researchers must also strive to advance and protect public good through their work. (p. 1)

The principles of these suggestions were followed by the principal researcher as she conducted the focus group discussion.

One focus group was conducted that consisted of adult students enrolled in the accelerated LCIE program. The principal researcher acted as a facilitator for this group, and she had an assistant present to record the meeting and the responses both on audio tape and in written form. The members of the focus group were asked to sign a standard consent form prior to their participation in the group. The consent form is attached to this dissertation as Appendix E. It was assumed that all focus group members would sign the

consent forms when they were solicited for their participation; it was explained to them as a condition for their participation.

Gathering of retention data. Information regarding student retention was obtained from admissions staff. Information was examined for a 4-year period, fall 2005 through fall 2009. Information was provided by admissions in an Excel spreadsheet format to facilitate easier analysis of the data by the principal investigator. Data regarding retention was compared by year separately for the traditional day students and the LCIE students. The time frame of 4 years was chosen because the data was easily accessible and also because the average adult student at Lindenwood completes his or her degree in the accelerated program in fewer than 4 years, and in the traditional programs it is estimated that completion of the degree takes 4 years. These estimates are based upon the assumption that students enrolling in the separate programs are transferring fewer than 20 credits and will be taking the substantial portion of their classes at Lindenwood University.

The sample size of traditional day students averages 10,000 students and the LCIE undergraduate program averages 2,000 students. Because the sample size of the two groups was significantly different, a *z* test was performed to compare the proportion of the groups that was actually retained.

Retention data were examined to determine how many of the adult students in the given time period have either completed their degrees and/or have been enrolled consistently in this time period. Consistent enrollment shall be defined as enrollment for two sequential clusters for LCIE students, and it shall be defined as two sequential semesters for traditional students.

Data Analysis

Data from surveys for the traditional and non-traditional students were first analyzed separately to determine any trends or commonalities within each group. Data were categorized by the following survey headings, as defined in the survey: education plans and motivations, financial matters, advising, and academics.

- *Education plans and motivations* – What compelled the student to get a degree?
- *Financial matters* – How are the students financing their education?
- *Advising* – How important is the advising relationship to the student and what is he or she looking for in an advisor?
- *Academics* – What is the student's perception of the value of what he or she is learning in the classroom and how will that information pertain to him/her in the future?

Narrative results of the focus groups were transcribed and analyzed for commonalities and contrasts in answers. Focus group discussions were recorded during the group session and transcribed immediately following the meeting. This immediacy was necessary in order to ensure that every answer was understood and impressions or observations made during the group were recalled in exact detail. The principal investigator asked the questions and her assistant took notes and operated the tape recorder.

Use of Perspectives Inventories with Students and Instructors

The paper-based surveys and the SurveyMonkey survey both gathered valuable information regarding the environment surrounding the adult student. The perspectives

questionnaires gathered additional information regarding adult students' perspectives of the learning process and provided valuable insight into the process of how adults learn. MIPI-S and MIPI were both used with four undergraduate classes in the LCIE program that were chosen at random. Students and instructors completed a 45-statement questionnaire that reflected beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that students and instructors may have at any given moment. Approval to use the questionnaires was gained from the author Dr. John Henschke. Approval for use of the questionnaires to survey LCIE students and instructors was secured from the Dean of the Accelerated Programs and from the IRB at Lindenwood University. Students had to sign a consent form prior to the completion of the questionnaire and then were given 30 minutes to complete it.

A variety of methods were used to gather and assemble the data for this study. This broad-based approach allowed for exploration of the externalities and internalities that affect the adult student, and was important to assure than an accurate picture of the adult student and the accelerated program studied were developed. Analysis of the data in chapter 4 will support the importance of the methods that were used.

Chapter Four – Results

This study examined both the education needs and motivations of adult students. Both traditional and accelerated degree program participants were surveyed. This study examined adult student and instructor perspectives and also investigated motivators, factors and life events that have affected adult learners as they pursue their degrees. A second purpose of this project was to examine the environment, format and course content of accelerated degree programs to determine if these programs are more conducive to adult students' wants and needs than traditional programs, thus enhancing student retention. Factors and life events that affected and motivated adult students were examined. Survey questions and focus groups were structured to provide key insights into four key areas: education plans and preferences, financing of education, academic measures and expectations, and advising.

This study was blended in nature, and involved both quantitative and qualitative research elements, with primary focus on the qualitative elements. Qualitative research is broadly defined as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This study illuminated issues that adult students face and created an understanding of how institutions of higher learning can increase retention and best serve the adult student's needs. The data presented in this chapter can be used by other designers of traditional and accelerated degree programs to tailor their programs to better serve the adult student population.

The survey group for the paper-based surveys consisted of LCIE undergraduate students at all campus locations of Lindenwood University: the main campus in

St. Charles, Wentzville, O'Fallon, St. Louis, Florissant, South County, Westport, Lincoln County, and Weldon Springs. Data were also collected from the Lindenwood University Belleville, Illinois, campus. This cross-section of campuses represents an ethnically diverse population.

Results and Analysis of Data from Paper Surveys of LCIE Students

Information was gathered on marital status, children at home, and income. Some participants declined to provide this optional demographic information on the paper-based surveys. A total of 735 valid surveys with consent forms were received. The survey form is attached as Appendix A. Any survey that did not have answers to all questions (other than the demographic information) or that did not have a valid, signed consent form was removed from and not included with this study. Approximately 1,100 surveys were distributed to the various sites. Several sites returned blank surveys, and the principal researcher was unable to ascertain if these were returned because students were absent or because the count of students was incorrect. Looking at the number of valid surveys received versus those distributed, not accounting for any absent students nor incorrect initial student count estimates, constitutes a return rate of approximately 67%. This response rate was calculated with the following equation:

$$RESPONSE\ RATE = \frac{number\ of\ people\ who\ returned\ valid\ surveys}{number\ of\ surveys\ distributed}$$

Results of the surveys are presented with a 99% confidence with an error rate of plus or minus 2.7% (CustomInsight, n.d.). This is an acceptable response rate, and confident assertions based upon the analysis of the data can be made.

Information by Survey Location

Extension campus locations for Lindenwood University offer some graduate and some undergraduate courses at each location. Only undergraduate students were given the opportunity to complete the survey. Total responses received by location were as follows:

Table 3

Contrast of Campus Responses to Surveys

Location	Sample Size	% of Total Responses	Classrooms Available
St. Charles	223	30%	34
Belleville	86	12%	12
Florissant	79	11%	16
St. Louis City	7	1%	6
Wentzville	29	4%	11
Westport	181	25%	14
South County	40	5%	4
Weldon Springs	14	2%	8
O'Fallon	66	9%	9
Lincoln County	10	1%	6
TOTALS	735	100%	120

Note. This table shows results of survey data gathered from Lindenwood University campuses from LCIE students that completed the paper-based survey. The first column shows the number of valid surveys returned by each location, the second column shows what percentage that location was of the total number of returned surveys, and the third column shows the number of classrooms available for use at each location.

It is important to understand that locations differ widely in the number of students who attend each campus, and some locations have greater square footage of available classroom space than others. Locations in St. Charles and Westport have existed longer

than the other locations, and these locations are geographically closer to larger corporations and residential areas.

Responses to questions were reviewed based upon the four categories of education plans and preferences, financing of education, academics, and advising.

Survey Responses to Education Plans and Preferences

For analysis and comparative purposes, questions from the AES were grouped into the following five categories: motivations, finances, scheduling, and advising.

Responses to questions 1 to 6 – motivations. The seven questions in this category primarily dealt with the motivations of the adult student for his or her pursuit of a chosen degree. Results did vary by location; however, distinct similarities existed among the sites. A complete numerical breakdown data from the survey for each question is attached as Appendix D.

The first question on the survey asked the adult students if they were pursuing this degree to improve their income potential (see Figure 1).

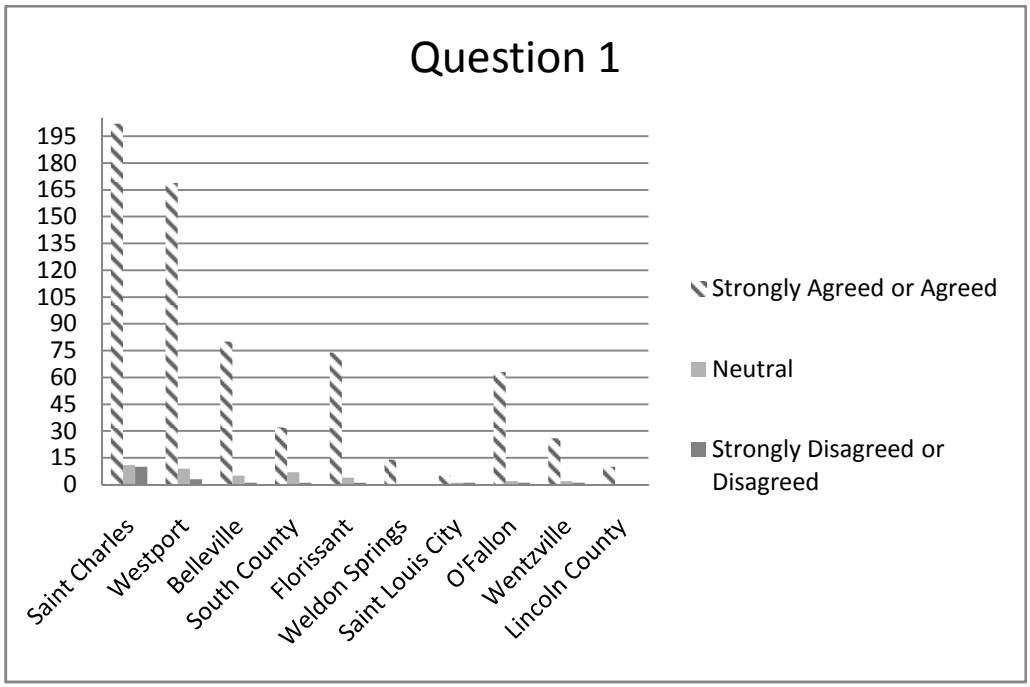

Figure 1 – Question 1 – Pursuit of degree and income potential

Students predominantly responded that income was a motivator for the pursuit of the degree.

Question 2 on the survey asked if adult students were pursuing this degree to learn a new occupation (see Figure 2).

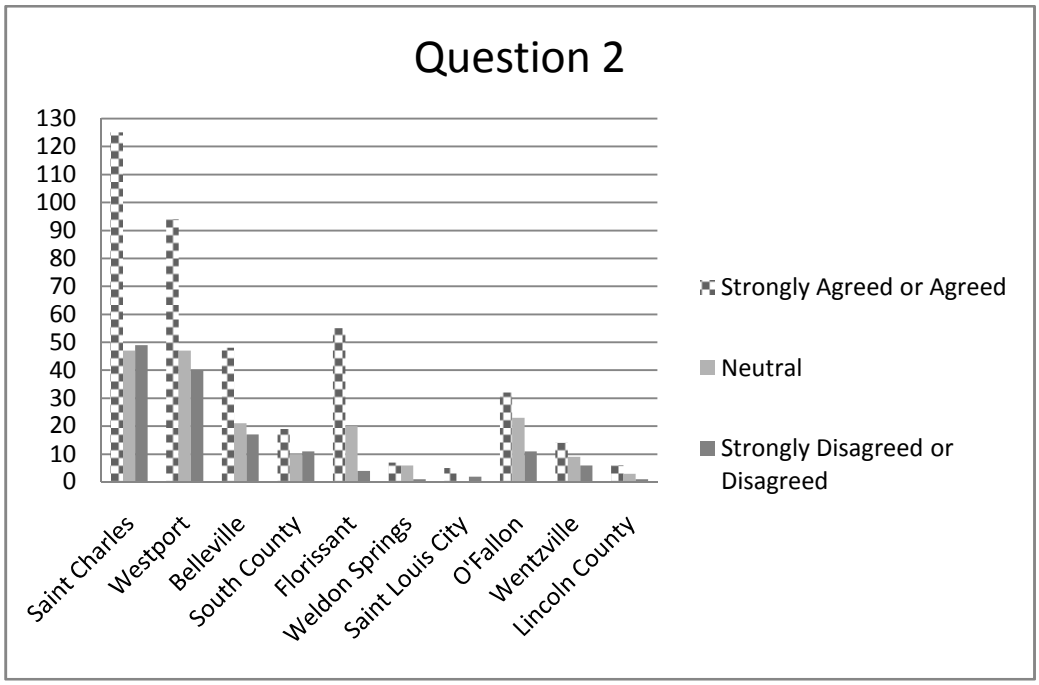

Figure 2 – Question 2 – pursuing degree for new occupation

The students overwhelmingly responded that seeking a new occupation was a primary motivator in degree attainment.

Question 3 dealt with a more intrinsic viewpoint and asked the adult students if they were pursuing this degree for personal satisfaction or happiness (see Figure 3).

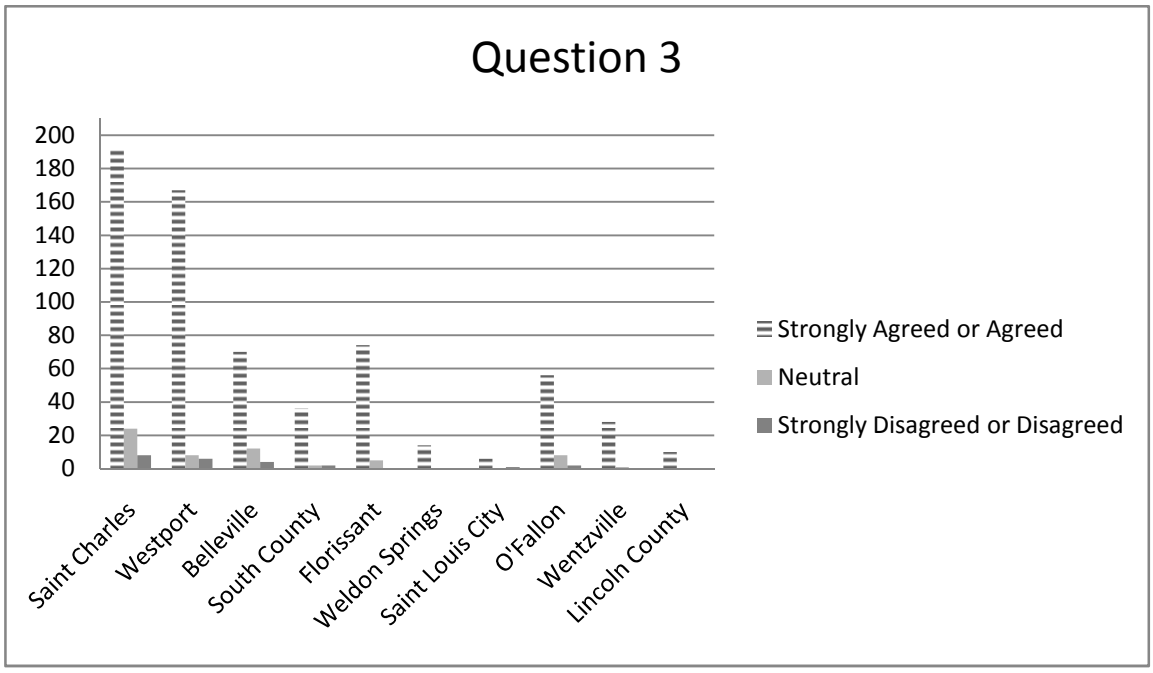

Figure 3 – Question 3 – pursuing degree personal satisfaction/happiness

This survey question was evidence of the fact that the intrinsic motivation was also important as the financial and career motivation discussed in the first two questions.

Question 4 in the survey asked if adult students were pursuing the degree to meet existing job requirements or job skills. A breakdown of results from this question is shown in Appendix D. Responses to this question showed that twice as many students agreed or strongly agreed that job skills and requirements also played a key role in their educational pursuits.

Question 5 asked if the adult student were pursuing the degree to become better educated and more well informed. In response to this question, 715 respondents at all locations surveyed for Lindenwood University agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This indicated that academic content was of greater significance to these adult students than socialization.

Question 6 in the survey asked if the adult students were pursuing this degree to meet new people. Responses to this question were shown to be overwhelmingly either neutral or in disagreement, again reinforcing the concept that academics take precedence over socialization.

Responses to questions 7 to 11 – finances. Questions 7–11 dealt with financial concerns for the adult student. Question 7 asked if personal funds would be a major source of funding for the adult students' education. While results by location did show personal funds were a dominant factor, this question closely relates to question 9, which asked if the ease in obtaining student loans would be a factor in the adult students' education. Both question 7 and question 9 showed that the financing of their education was of paramount importance to the adult student.

Question 8 asked if educational grants and scholarships would be a factor in the funding of the students' education (see Figure 4). Questions 8 and 10 are interrelated in that they both involve financing factors; however, they are unique in that grants, scholarships, and tuition reimbursement through employers do not require a cash outlay on the part of the students (see Figures 4 & 5). Both of these questions involve financing that is affected by the overall economic climate of the country. Grants and scholarships may not be as readily available if funding is cut, and tuition reimbursement may be sacrificed if a company sees it as a means to quickly trim their expenses.

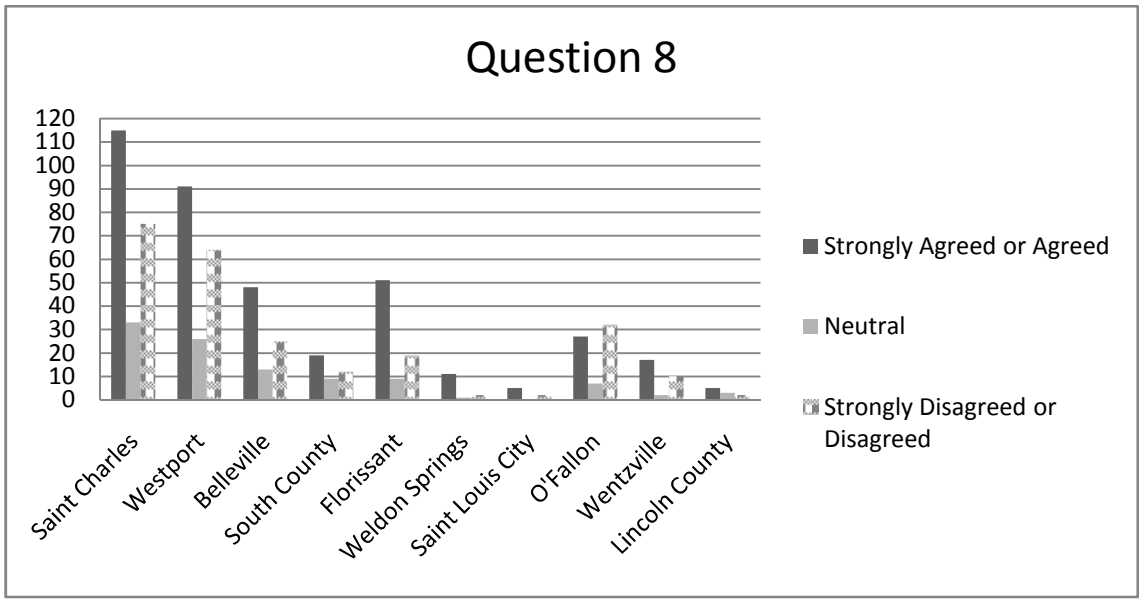

Figure 4 – Question 8 – Grants and scholarships/ factors in funding

Question 10 asked if tuition reimbursement offered by the adult student's employer would be a factor in their education, and this question warranted similar responses to that of question 8 (see Figure 5).

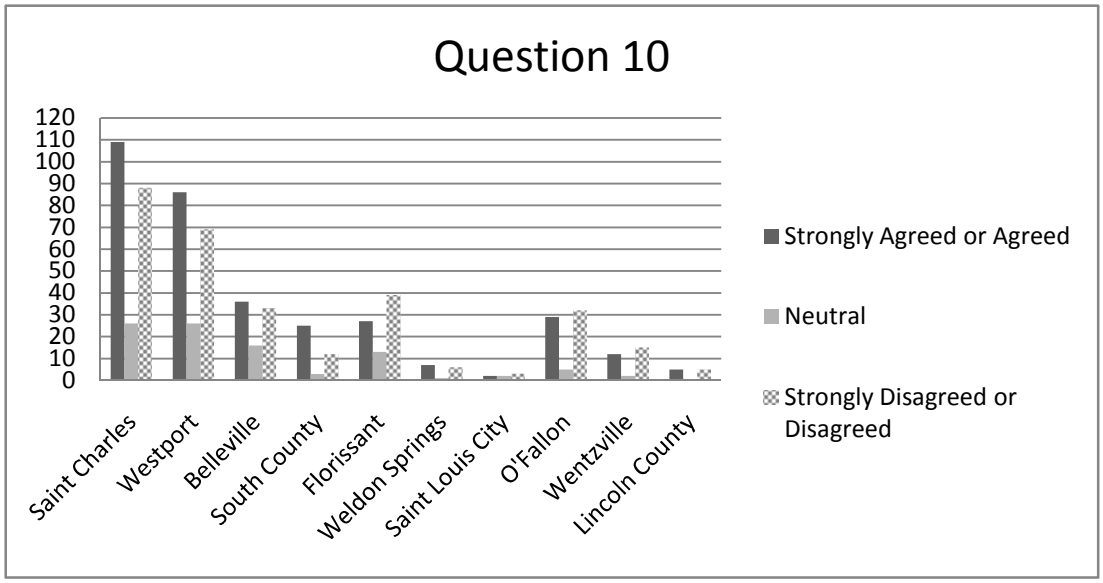

Figure 5 – Question 10 – tuition reimbursement factor

Question 11 asked if students were given direction by admissions staff about what financial aid options were available.

Response to question 12 – scheduling. Lindenwood University offers 10 campus locations at which adult students can take courses for the accelerated degree option. Question 12 asked if students were able to schedule classes at a location that was convenient for them. Responses to question 12 indicated that students overall were satisfied with the offering of classes at the various Lindenwood campus locations (see Figure 6).

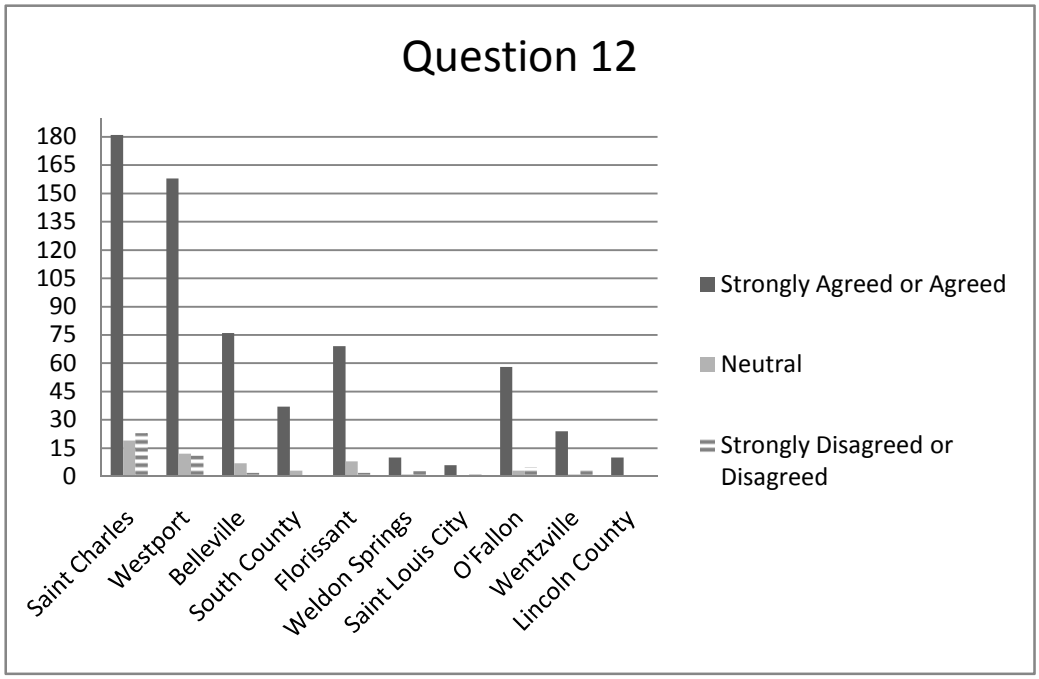

Figure 6. Question 12 – scheduling classes and location.

Responses to questions 13 to 16 – academics. Questions 13–16 addressed the students' perceptions of the academic strength of the program. Question 13 asked if students felt challenged to improve their analytic thinking skills by the coursework. An

overwhelming 99% of respondents indicated they agreed, strongly agreed, or were neutral with question 13. Question 14 asked if the students felt that the university valued their previous work experience as a part of their education. Responses to question 14 showed that 86% of students agreed, strongly agreed, or were neutral with the question, which indicated students believe the university did value their previous experience. Question 15 asked if the student felt that assignments and coursework were graded fairly and consistently. The ideal of fair and consistent grading for the coursework which question 15 asked about was supported by the fact that 99% of students agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral in responses, which indicated the students believed that their coursework was fairly and consistently graded. Question 16 asked if the course requirements for the student's chosen degree accurately reflected the knowledge necessary to be successful in his or her given area of expertise. Students surveyed largely agreed with question 16, as was evidenced by the fact that 97% of students surveyed agreed, strongly agreed, or were neutral with question 16. Overall responses to these questions showed the students felt challenged academically by their chosen programs, and that the student felt as if what they learned in class was valuable information.

Responses to questions 17 to 21 – advising. Questions 17–21 asked the students about their relationships with and impressions of their faculty advisors. Question 17 asked if the students' advisors were available when they needed assistance. Students largely believed that their advisor was available when needed, as was shown by the response rate of 96% of students surveyed agreed, strongly agreed, or were neutral with question 17. Question 18 asked if the students felt the advisor respected their feelings and opinions. Respect was an important concept to the students surveyed, as shown by the

responses of 98% of survey participants, which indicated that there was a sense of mutual respect, as they agreed, strongly agreed, or were neutral in their responses to question 18. Question 19 asked if the students believed their advisor was helpful and if they would recommend them to other students. Nearly all students, 95% of respondents to question 19, would recommend their advisors to others. Question 20 asked if they were encouraged to achieve educational goals by their advisors. Students did feel that they were encouraged by their advisors to meet their goals, as evidenced by 98% of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with question 20. Question 21 asked if the student's advisor provided accurate information on prerequisites and requirements. The attestation by survey respondents feeling clearly informed about degree requirements was supported by 96% of students who either agreed, strongly agreed, or were neutral in their responses to question 21. Responses to questions 17–21 showed that overall, the students believed they had good relationships with their advisors and that they also felt comfortable that the advisor was a guiding force in the expeditious accomplishment of their degree.

Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion was conducted in order to probe more in depth into student motivations and also so the principal investigator could make in-person observations of the students as they were answering the questions. One focus group discussion was conducted on October 7, 2009, with 12 students in the Lindenwood University LCIE program in a classroom at the Lindenwood University Cultural Center. Students were all undergraduates and a part of the same class of social science. The group

was composed of 2 White/non-Hispanic men, 2 African-American women, and 8 White/non-Hispanic women. The students were between 23 and 50 years old.

The principal researcher, who was also the focus group facilitator, introduced herself and the purpose and rationale for the study. The participants were given the consent form, which was explained, and the students were given the option to not participate in the study. All students chose to participate and signed the consent forms. Notes were also taken by an assistant to supplement the recorded conversation. The tape was immediately transcribed after the focus group concluded.

Analysis of Data

Responses to the focus group discussion, the MIPI and MIPI-S and retention data from the traditional versus accelerated programs were all coded in detail to determine the relevance of participant responses to the research questions.

Participant responses – focus group discussion. The focus group facilitator began the discussion by asking the students the primary reason for returning to school. Student responses varied from being personally to professionally motivated. One of the students said she enrolled in college when her son did, and they are in competition to see who can get the best grades and finish first. Several other students concurred that the reason they were getting their degrees was they knew they could not advance any further professionally. Another student said that she was glad she waited until she was older to enroll because she appreciated it more now than when she was younger.

The facilitator then asked if it was sometimes difficult for the students to work all day and then come to class in the evening and if there were challenges balancing work, home, and school. The students all nodded in agreement that it often was very difficult.

The students unanimously agreed that the one night a week that they have to attend classes with the Lindenwood University LCIE program is much easier to manage rather than attending several nights in the same week for a traditional program.

The facilitator asked what motivated the students to choose the LCIE program over a traditional program. Students were all in agreement that the primary motivating factor was because they could complete their degrees more quickly and earn more credit hours at a time. One student also commented that she liked the fact that the classes moved very quickly, and she enjoyed the fast pace and felt challenged.

The facilitator then asked if finances were a factor or consideration in the students' pursuit of a degree. Overwhelmingly, they answered yes. Five students stated that they received tuition reimbursement from their employers, 6 students received financial aid or grants, and one student was taking advantage of the G.I. Bill.

The facilitator then asked what the greatest challenges were that the students had to overcome when starting or re-starting their educations. Students all agreed that figuring out how to manage their time and complete homework and everything else they have to do was a very tough hurdle to overcome. Three students also said their biggest fear was fear of failing; they said they did not try in high school and did not really care about their grades, and now they do care. One student also commented that she even had to learn how to take notes and teach herself how to do many other little things. Three students said that they did not tell many people right away that they were starting school because they wanted to make sure they could do it first; they waited until they passed their first class, and then they told people they were working on a degree.

The facilitator then asked if it would be fair to say that their lifestyles have been altered in some manner since they started school. One student said the first thing that came to mind was lack of sleep, and the whole class laughed at that comment and agreed. Several other students agreed that their stress levels had gone up and that they worried about having the time to get everything done and doing a good job. The students also said they learned that sometimes they had to make choices about attending events and doing homework. One student said she felt energized about coming back to school; she had a couple of false starts and had not been able to finish her degree before, and now she is determined. She said it was not until she was forced into knowing that she could not compete in the professional marketplace without the degree that she opted to come back to school. Students also unanimously agreed that the workload for the LCIE program was heavy and at times hard to manage, but it got easier after the first class.

When the students were asked what they liked most about their classes, all students responded that they liked the small class size. They said they felt more important and more a part of things, like someone actually cared if they attended class or not. The students also felt less intimidated to ask questions and have open discussions because of the smaller class size. The students felt as if the instructors understood that they were adults and had lives outside of the classroom, but they still held them to high expectations for the academic material. One student also said she thought that a lot of networking went on in the classes, and several other students agreed. She said that in her last class, two students had lost their jobs, and by the end of the cluster, they had made contacts to help them get new jobs. Another student added that the relationships she developed with other students were deeper than those her college-age son developed because the adults were

serious students and not just in school to socialize. Another student added that she likes it that most people in the classes are older and that they care about what they are learning, and she also appreciated the fact that there is not a 19-year-old next to her who did not appreciate the opportunity to be in school.

The facilitator then thanked the students again for their time and asked if there were any more comments or questions. There were not, so the focus group was concluded and the facilitator immediately went to transcribe the tape.

Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory Surveys (MIPI). Surveys were conducted with four undergraduate classes within the LCIE program. MIPI surveys were given to 25 instructors. Participants were all given a standard consent form to sign prior to beginning the questionnaires. It was explained to the students and to the instructors that their participation was not mandatory and that they could elect to drop out of the survey process at any time. A total of 53 students participated in the surveys. A total of 13 instructors participated and completed surveys. The instructor group respondents were comprised of 5 full-time faculty and 8 adjunct faculty. All faculty participants who were teaching in the fall 2009 quarter of the LCIE program at the Lindenwood University Cultural Center were given the opportunity to complete the survey. The student participants in this survey were all enrolled as undergraduate students in the fall 2009 quarter in the LCIE program. Four classes comprised of all undergraduate LCIE students were chosen at random from all undergraduate classes that were taught on various nights at the Lindenwood University Cultural Center.

All participants were asked to complete the MIPI or MIPI-S. The results of the surveys were then tabulated and scored with a Likert scale. Instructors chose from the

following categories to indicate their answers: *almost never, not often, sometimes, usually*, and *almost always*. Questions from the surveys were grouped into seven factors that were the predominant themes of that particular set of questions:

- Teacher empathy with learners
- Teacher trust of learners
- Planning and delivery of instruction
- Accommodating learner uniqueness
- Teacher insensitivity toward learners
- Experienced-based learning techniques
- Teacher centered learning process

The surveys, their score tabulation sheets, and specific numerical breakdowns of individual factors and participants are located in Appendix G.

Both an average and a total score of the factor sets were presented. The total scores represent the total points the instructor attained for that particular factor set. The mean represents the average score of the total of each question included in the factor set (see Figures 7 and 8).

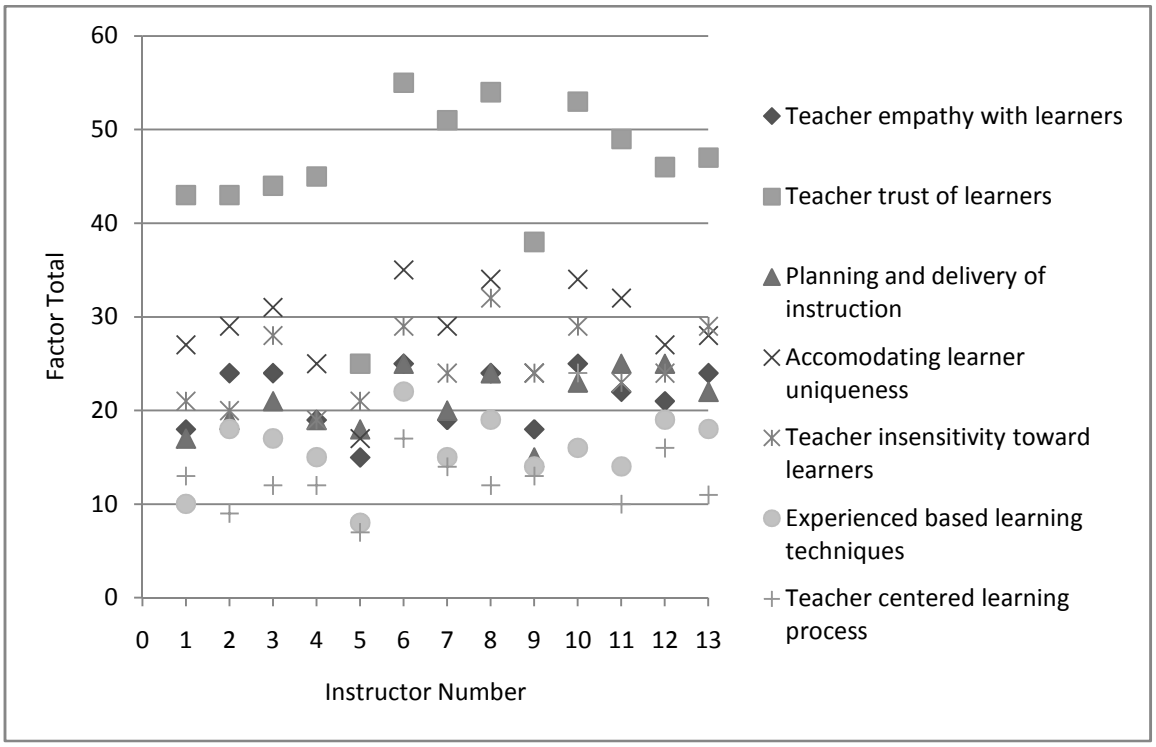

Figure 7. Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory totals.

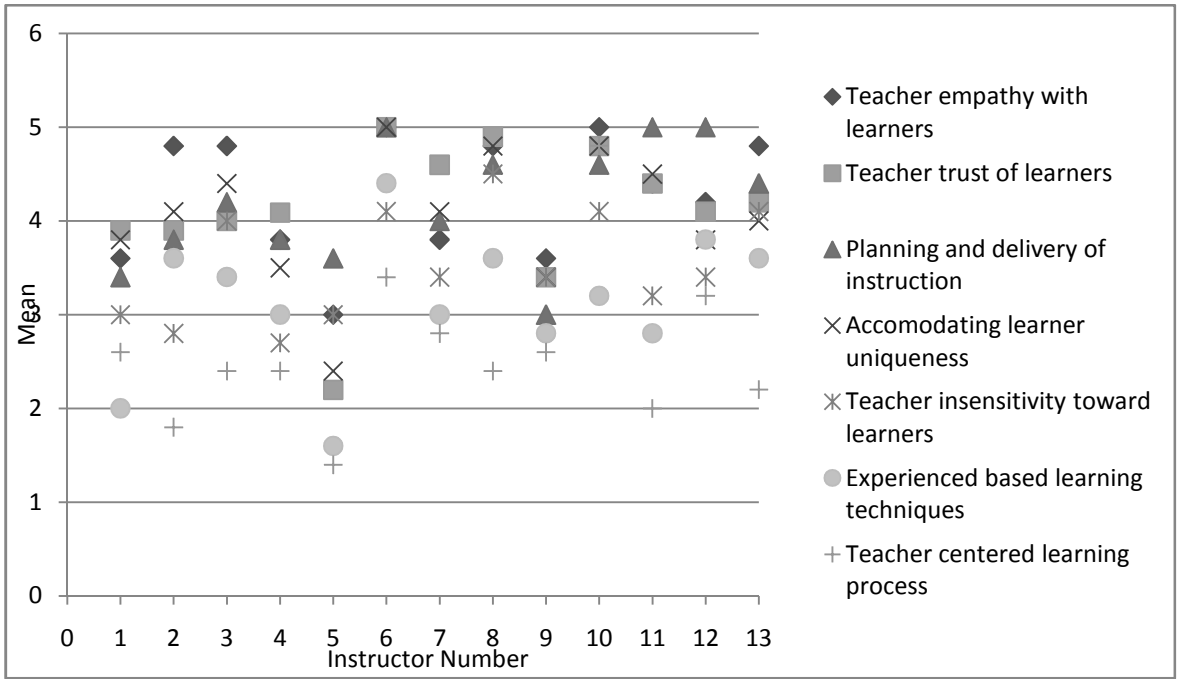

Figure 8. Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory survey mean.

The MIPI mean scores in Figure 8 as well as the total scores shown in Figure 7 are evidence that overall most instructors believed they had high levels of empathy and trusted their student learners. All instructors had a mean score of 3–5 on a 5-point scale in relation to teacher empathy. Teacher trust of learners showed most instructors in the 4–5 mean range, with only one instructor falling below 2.5. In relation to planning and delivery of instruction, most instructors also felt well prepared and that they did a good job of accommodating student uniqueness, as shown in Figure 10 with the means being at or above 3.5. Instructors generally believed that they were not insensitive to learner needs and that they used their experiences to enhance the classroom experiences; however, 2 instructors were well below the other 11 with use of experienced-based learning techniques, and they fell at or below a mean score of 2. These 2 instructors taught general education, non-major related courses, indicating that these instructors would have students from potentially all different chosen major fields, thus making it harder to relate what they are teaching to everyone's current career positioning.

Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory – Adapted for Students (MIPI-S). Because the sample size of the number of student participants was 53 total students, it presents a more accurate overall view of the data by examining an average of the mean scores as opposed to individual responses. The "Total Average Points – Student by Factor" scores shown in Figure 9 are shown as total points attained for that given factor.

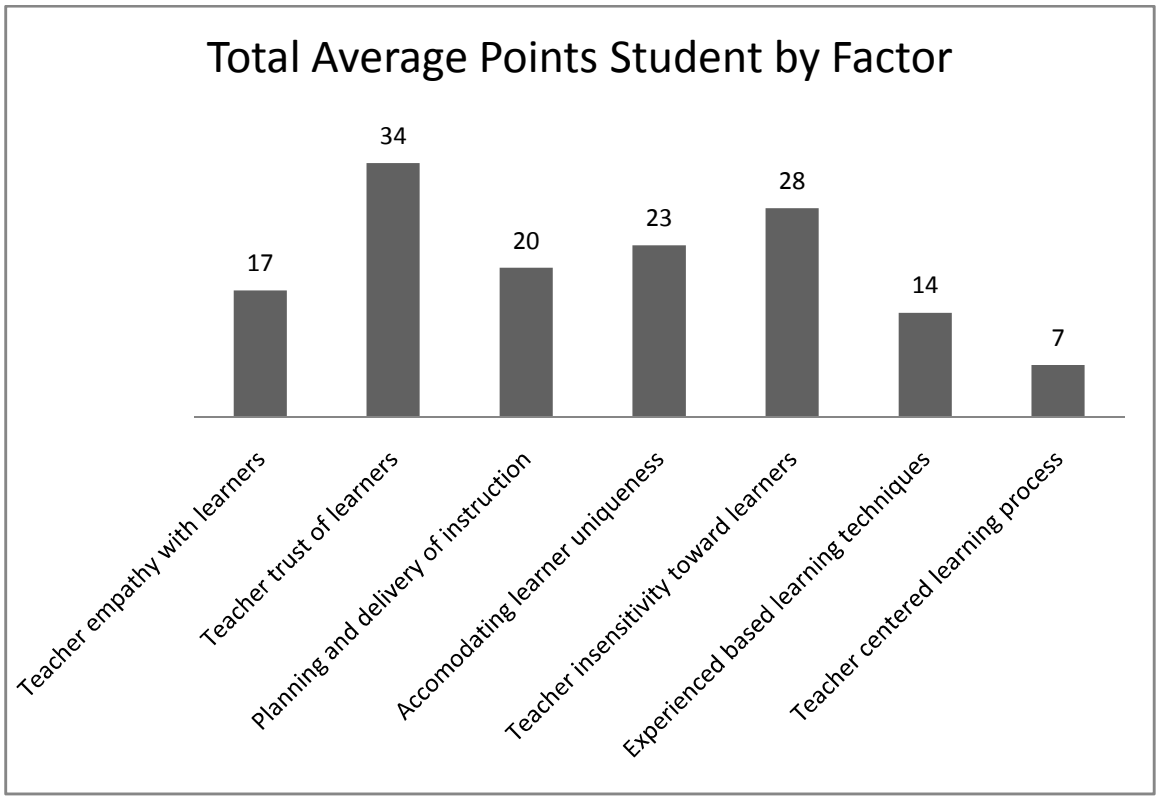

Figure 9. Total average points – student by factor.

Note. Possible points by factor were: teacher empathy = 25; teacher trust = 55; planning = 25; accommodating = 35; teacher insensitivity = 35; experience-based = 25; and teacher centered = 25.

Due to the large number of student surveys, for data presentation purposes, the "Mean for Student by Factor" (Figure 10) is the mean for all students totaled together and divided by the number of students.

Total average points per student by factor for students numbered 1 through 53

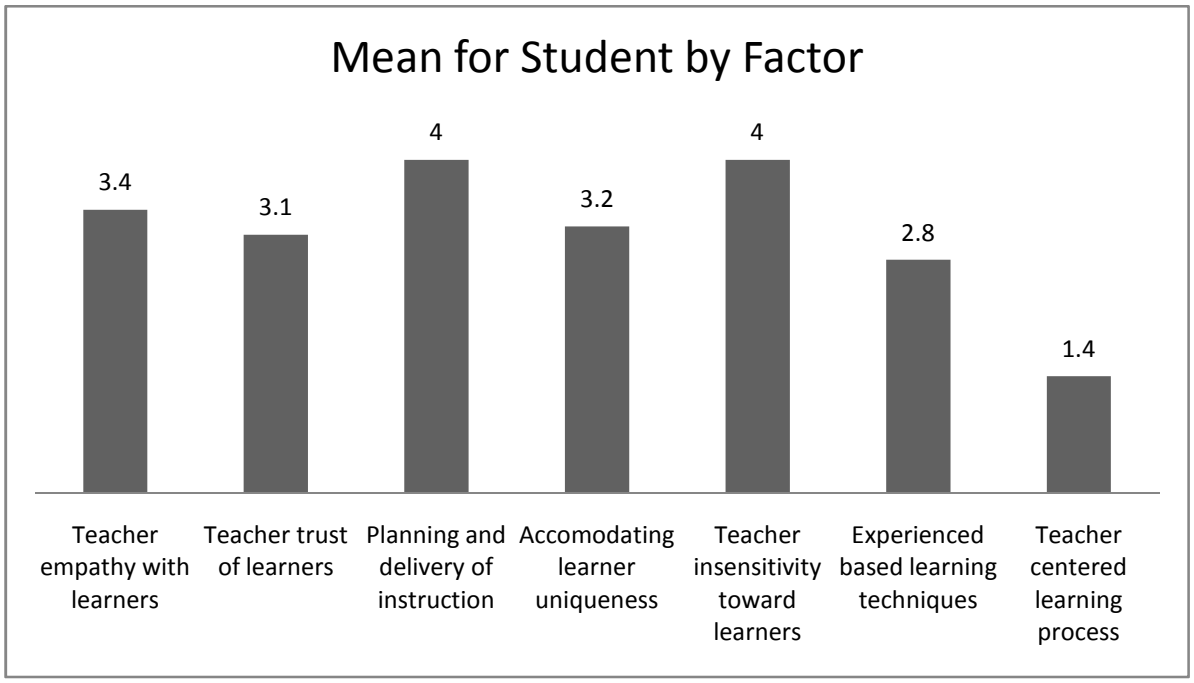

Figure 10. Mean for student by factor.

Figures 9 and 10 show that students surveyed believed that their instructor's empathy and trust of the student was above average, showing at 3.4 and 3.1, respectively, on a 5-point scale. Instructors scored an average of 4 out of 5 possible points regarding planning and delivery of instruction, which indicated that students believed their instructors were well prepared for class. Students scored instructors at an average of 3.2 on a 5-point scale regarding the accommodation of learner uniqueness, which indicates that students felt positively toward their instructors regarding this factor. Figure 10 shows an average of 4 out of 5 possible for teacher toward learners, which means that students do not feel that their instructors are insensitive toward them. Student perspectives on experience-based learning techniques had a mean of 2.8 on a 5-point scale, which means from the students' perspectives, the instructors were a bit below average on this factor. An area that would definitely be a focus for improvement would be the teacher-centered

learning process, as the level here fell to a mean of 1.4. Student perspectives on these final two factors showed areas with definite possibilities for future improvements with adjunct instructor professional development and application of relevant coursework to current student expertise.

Retention Data

Information was secured from academic services at Lindenwood University regarding student retention for the traditional day program and from the LCIE program. The time period the data encompassed spanned fall 2005 semester and quarter through the fall 2009 semester and quarter. The students used to determine retention were the full-time students from the fall census cohort that is conducted each year in mid October at Lindenwood University for the LCIE students. An average of 10,000 students were enrolled in the traditional program and an average of 2,000 students were enrolled in the LCIE program. A *z* test was performed to determine if the proportion of groups retained was significantly different.

H_0: There is no significant difference between the proportion of students retained in the traditional program and the proportion of students retained in the LCIE program.

The *z* test showed there was a significant difference between the retention percentages for the two groups. The results of the *z* test ($z = 8.18$) showed with a 95% confidence rate (z critical = 1.96) that the null hypothesis regarding retention was rejected.

The information for the traditional program was gathered from a report prepared for the Higher Learning Commission. The Higher Learning Commission is

> an independent corporation and one of two Commission members of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) . . . The Higher Learning Commission accredits, and thereby grants membership in the Commission and in the North Central Association, to degree-granting educational institutions in the North Central region. (The Higher Learning Commission, n.d., para. 1)

Lindenwood University has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since 1918 (Lindenwood University, 2009b).

The retention rate of the traditional students is reported as the percentage of full-time day undergraduates who were enrolled in the previous fall semester and returned for the fall semester indicated (see Figure 11). Lindenwood University categorizes undergraduate students by academic rank based upon credit hours accrued:

- Senior = 84 hours or more
- Junior = 54 to 83 hours
- Sophomore = 24 to 53 hours
- Freshman = 23 hours or less

(Lindenwood University LCIE Catalog, 2009a, p. 10)

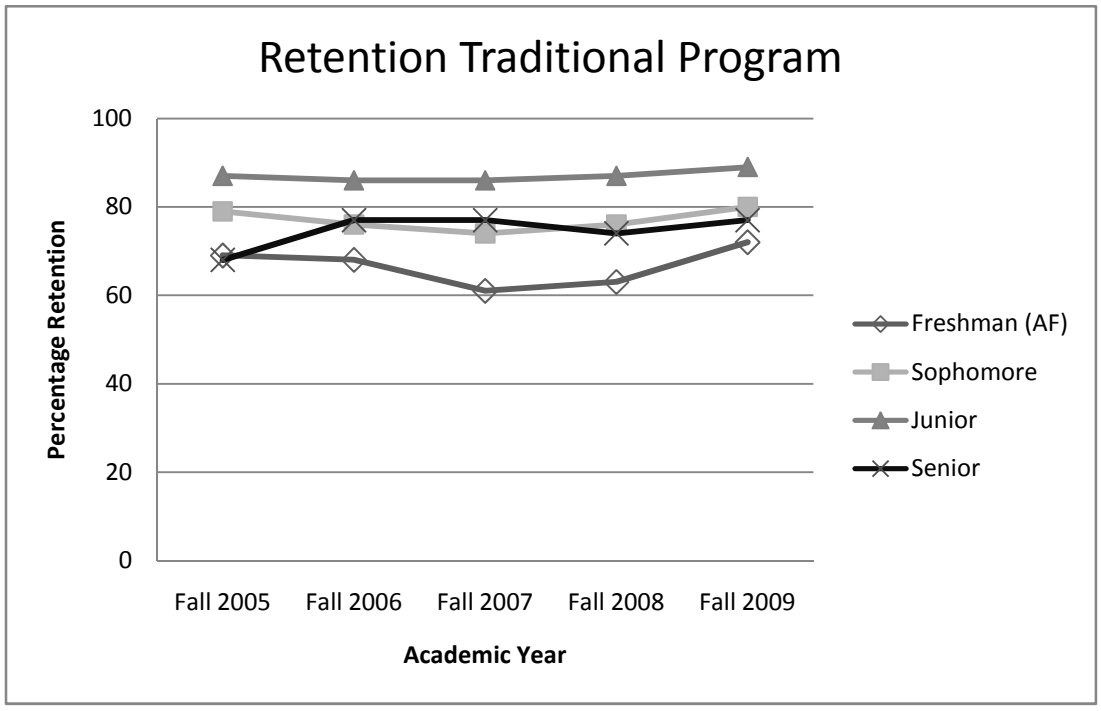

Figure 11. Retention traditional program.

Specific numerical percentage breakdown of retention for the traditional program is shown in Appendix J. The students were tracked in segments of an academic year, which starts in fall and runs through the following fall. Academic rank (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) was determined by the number of credit hours in which the student was enrolled. It is important to understand that students may fall into the academic rank of senior according to the hours accrued or transferred in, and those same students may still have substantial time left to degree completion, if he or she has not fulfilled the required courses.

Retention for the LCIE program at Lindenwood University undergraduate quarter students is broken down by year, percentage, gender, and total number of students. This program holds evening classes at nine locations in Missouri and one location in

Belleville, Illinois. The retention information is not broken down by location, but is instead an overall average of all locations. Data examined includes both students who were enrolled in the Lindenwood University LCIE program as first-time, full-time students in the fall 2005 session and returned the following fall 2006, and full-time census quarter students enrolled in the fall who returned the next fall. IPEDS defines a first-time student as one who has no prior postsecondary experience attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level (United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, n.d.). Lindenwood University further defines first-time students as students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term and students who entered with advanced standing (J. Weinrich, personal communication, October 15, 2009).

Figure 12 shows the students who enrolled for the first time as a student in fall 2005 and returned as a student in fall 2006. Quarter students are the LCIE students in the accelerated program. Figure 13 shows there were more female students that were first-time, full-time students during this time period than male students. Figure 13 also shows a notable increase in the number of students when comparing year 4 to year 1 from 2005 to 2009.

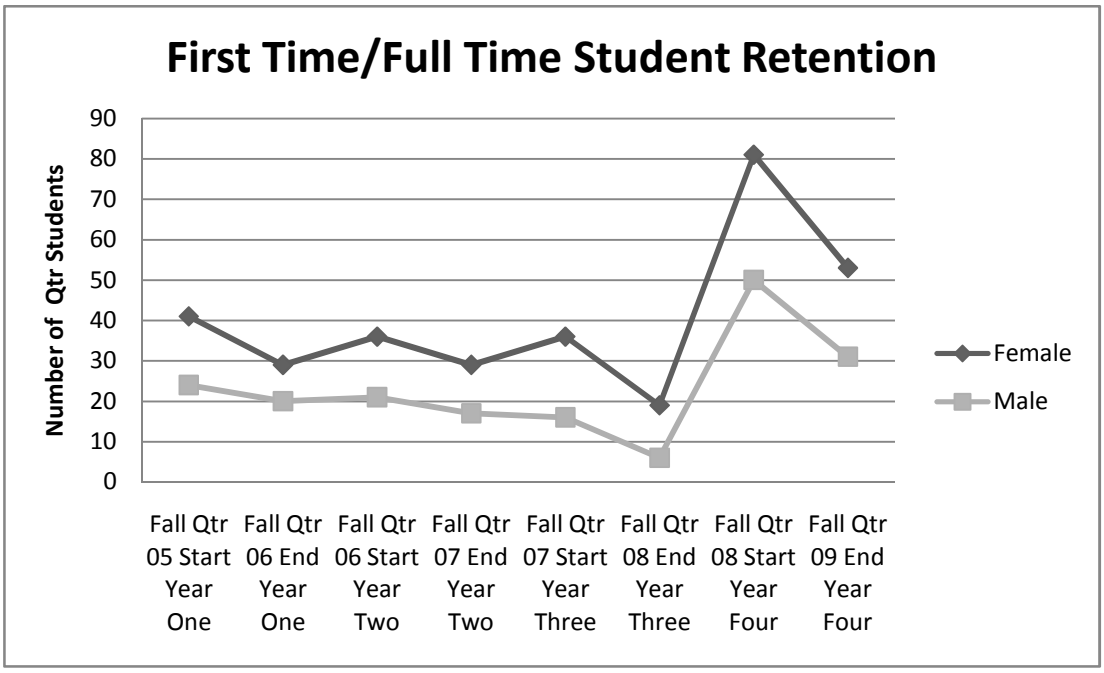

Figure 12 – First time/full time student retention

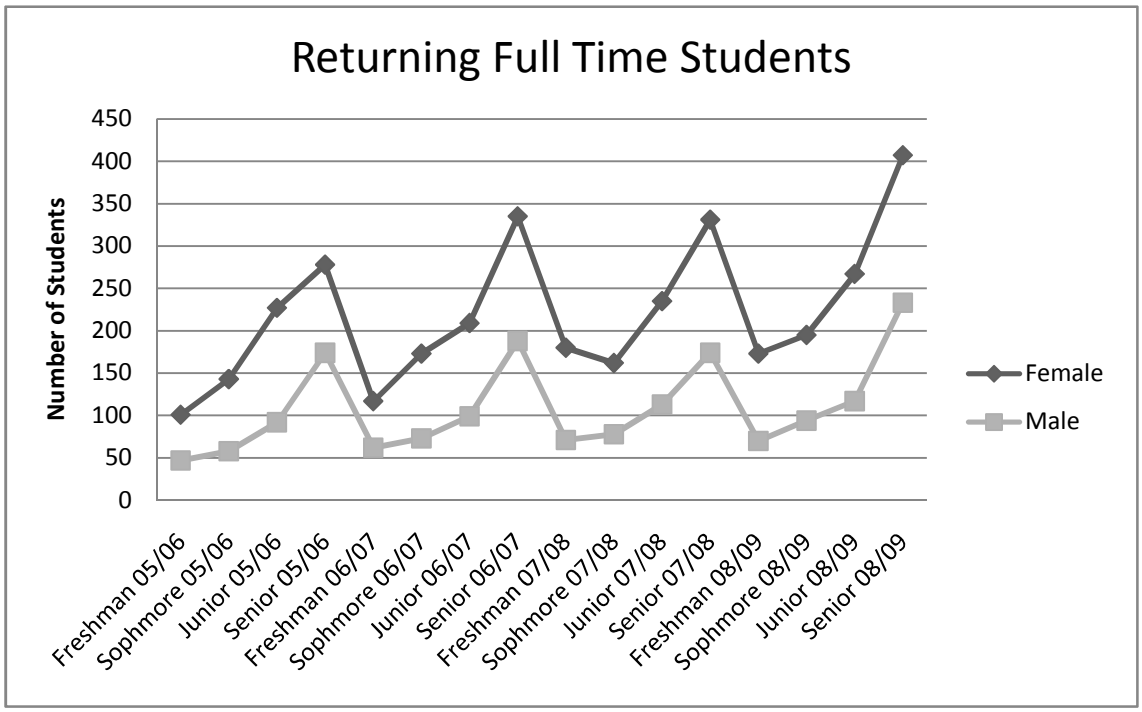

Figure 13 – Returning full time students

Figure 13 illustrates the full-time census students that were enrolled in the fall 2005 quarter and returned in fall 2006. These students were not first-time students and had not been continuously enrolled as a full-time student during the time periods shown. Figure 13 shows that there were more women enrolled as full-time census students during this time period that male students. Figure 13 also shows consistent growth in number of students, when reviewing one academic year at a time. Figure 13 also shows an increase in the number of students in fall 2008–2009, when compared to fall 2005–2006.

Summary

This chapter presented data gathered from four instruments or methods: paper-based surveys to LCIE students, focus group discussion, perspectives inventories from both LCIE faculty and students, and SurveyMonkey. Retention data for quarter and semester students at Lindenwood University was also presented. The goal of this study was to analyze the environment and motivation of the adult student in the accelerated LCIE program and to determine if there was a difference in retention between traditional and non-traditional or accelerated format delivery.

Survey data from LCIE students from the paper-based surveys showed the current environment surrounding the adult learner in the LCIE program. The focus group discussion further narrowed the data to a cohort group of 12 non-traditional students in the LCIE program and their motivations for returning to school and what prompted the students' decisions to choose the LCIE program. These surveys showed that overall students were concerned with the financing of their degrees and that they were motivated to succeed to facilitate securement of a better job or future employability. Students also

were pleased with the academic rigor of the program and found their advisors to be helpful during their tenure as students in the LCIE program.

Student and instructor perspectives on learning were then gathered from a sample group of full-time and adjunct faculty and students from the LCIE program using the MIPI and the MIPI-S. MIPI surveys showed that the instructors felt well prepared for their classes and concerned with their students' needs and abilities. Instructor and student surveys also showed that there was a sense of mutual respect and consideration between students and instructors. Student surveys also showed that the students felt instructors used practical, real-life experiences to enhance the classroom experience.

Retention data was secured from a report prepared by Lindenwood University for the Higher Learning Commission regarding traditional students, and retention data for the LCIE Quarter accelerated program students was attained from academic services. Retention for both programs was remarkably similar, with the retention rate for the traditional day program students averaging 76% and the LCIE accelerated program averaging 67%. The difference in percentages could be attributed to the fact that the traditional day undergraduate program has a substantially larger student enrollment than the LCIE undergraduate program, hence making their retention percentage appear higher because of a larger number upon which to draw the base percentage. Chapter 5 will exhibit conclusions drawn from this data, and based upon those conclusions, recommendations will be made for future considerations by those institutions of higher learning that work with non traditional adult learners and accelerated degree programs.

Chapter Five – Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

Research for this study involved collection of data from student surveys, instructor and student perspective inventories, a focus group, and retention data. This multipronged approach for data collection was used to ascertain an accurate view of the Lindenwood University LCIE accelerated program and also to provide vital insight into the adult learner's perspective of higher education and the learning process. The study is of importance because the undergraduate student of today is not the same as the traditional undergraduate student of 20 years ago. Adult students comprise 44% of all undergraduate students in the United States (Chao et al., 2007), which constitutes a market segment that institutions of higher learning cannot afford to ignore. The need exists for more study of accelerated learning environments to determine the degree to which they address the unique needs of their students (Boylston & Blair, 2009). If colleges and universities are to provide an academically sound education in an easily understood and assimilated format for the adult non-traditional student, they must carefully study the adult learner and devise creative methods (such as accelerated degrees) that are tailor made for the adult student.

Answers to Research Questions and Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study stated that accelerated degree programs for adult students would not result in higher retention rates and degree completion than traditional day programs. From fall 2005 through fall 2009, the retention rate of the traditional day program students at Lindenwood University averaged 76% while the LCIE accelerated program averaged 67%. This does not support the hypothesis regarding

retention. The traditional day program has an average student population of 10,000 students while the LCIE program averages around 2,000 students. The assertion regarding the accelerated program being more conducive to adult students' wants and needs was proven through the focus group discussion participants' responses and also through the results of the MIPI-S.

Research questions were answered by the study participants through two methods: surveys and a focus group. Historical retention data was gathered to answer the question regarding retention.

Question 1 of the survey was, *How does the retention in the accelerated adult degree programs compare to the retention in traditional day programs?* Information regarding retention data was attained from the Provost of Lindenwood University and from academic services at Lindenwood University. Retention for the accelerated adult degree program (LCIE) was 67% and retention for the traditional day program was 76%. This answer resulted in rejection of the null hypothesis regarding retention. The null hypothesis was that there is not a significant difference between the proportion of students retained in the traditional program and the proportion of students retained by LCIE.

Question 2 of the survey was, *Why do adult students who have never attended college or who have been out of the system for years return to school?* This question was answered by student participants in both the AES survey and in the focus group discussion. The strongest motivating factor for the adult students' return to school involved finances, as exhibited in the AES survey question 1, where 92% of the LCIE students surveyed stated they returned to school to improve their income potential.

Students in the focus group listed reasons for returning to school as learning a new job, personal satisfaction, and competition with other family members and co-workers.

Question 3 of the survey was, *What role do finances play in an adult's decision to complete a degree program?* Finances were a concern for students in the focus group, and some stated that if their work did not pay for their school, they would not have been able to return. The AES survey responses to survey question 10 corroborates this statement, as 58% of students either strongly agreed, agreed, or were neutral when asked if tuition reimbursement from their employer would be a determining factor in their pursuit of their degree. The students' responses further supported the fact that finances were a concern, as 67% or survey respondents said in their answer to question 9 on the AES survey that ease in obtaining student loans would be a factor in their education.

Question 4 of the survey was, *What key factors make an accelerated program successful?* Students in the focus group indicated that the convenience in scheduling classes, small class size, understanding instructors, and connections developed with other students were all reasons why they chose the accelerated program and why they continued with classes. These factors that the focus group indicated were important were also evidenced in literature reviewed (Wlodkowski et al., 2001).

Question 5 was a three-part question:

(a) *What key factors help retention? (a) Is accessibility to advising a factor?*

(b) How do work responsibilities factor in when adult students are weighing the decision to begin school or return to school?

(c) How do family responsibilities factor in when adult students are weighing the decision to begin or return to school?

In responding to question 5(a), advisors were seen as available, helpful, respectful, encouraging and effective by students completing the AES survey, as evidenced by the average agreement rate of 78% with questions 17, 18, 19, and 20 of the survey. In responding to questions (b) and (c), students in the focus group discussed challenges of arranging their work, home, and school schedules. Some students had to sit out for a session of school when their work schedule was busier or when he or she had a lot going on with their children or a vacation planned. Students in the focus group also indicated that attending the LCIE program only one night a week was easier to manage than the several nights a week required with other traditional programs. Question 6 of the survey was, *What influence do faculty and administration have over the students' choice of a degree program?* The students in the focus group felt as if their instructors understood that they were adults and had lives outside of the classroom, and the students appreciated the fact that the instructors still held high expectations while not making the workload overwhelming. The data from the MIPI-S was tabulated in Figures 9 and 10, and shows that students surveyed believed that their instructor's empathy and trust of the student was above average, at 3.4 and 3.1, respectively, on a 5-point scale. This above average-score shown via these indicators is evidence of the importance of empathy and trust to the students and that this connection between instructors and students is of significance to the students currently enrolled in the accelerated programs.

Results of Paper Surveys of LCIE Students

Seven hundred and thirty-five surveys were returned along with signed consent forms. These surveys were collected from Lindenwood locations where undergraduate classes for the LCIE program are held. Because the locations varied widely in size and

classroom availability, it was important to look at the compiled results of the data, as one negative answer at a campus that has a limited number of students would not present an accurate view of the overall beliefs of all students in the program.

Responses to survey questions 1 to 6 – motivations. LCIE students were motivated to begin a degree program by extrinsic factors of increased income and career potential. Question 1 of the survey asked the students if they were pursuing this degree to improve their income potential. Predominant responses showed that adult students were motivated to get this degree by a desire to improve their income potential. The responses to question 2, which asked if they were pursuing this degree to learn a new occupation, were very similar to that of the first question. Responses to questions 1 and 2 suggested that for the adult students in the LCIE program, the possibility of increasing income and seeking another career were two primary motivators for returning to school to seek a degree. This same assertion of motivating factors was corroborated during the focus group discussion. The LCIE students wanted to move forward in some way, either via increased income or by obtaining a more well recognized or respected occupation. The students were not compelled to remain stagnant in their occupations or income levels; the need for change was a primary driver in the degree pursuit.

Intrinsic factors were important to LCIE students, as evidenced by question 3, which asked if the adult student was pursuing this degree for personal satisfaction or happiness. Results showed that although a large portion of the adults were motivated by potential income and job security, they were also inwardly motivated by a sense of pride and personal accomplishment. These questions showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors compelled the students to begin their degrees. Question 4 asked if the students

were pursuing the degree to meet existing job requirements or to develop needed job skills. Responses to this question showed an even balance between agreement, neutrality and disagreement. Responses to question 4 did not show enough difference in agreement or disagreement to make a contrasting assumption, hence further analysis of this question was not conducted. Social networking and peer socialization will happen as a natural course of events when students spend a substantial amount of time together in the classroom setting. However, pursuit of the degree in the case of the LCIE student was not being used primarily as a networking vehicle; the primary focus of the education for the LCIE student was personal or professional validation, not societal validation. Question 5 asked if the students were pursuing the degree to become better educated and informed, and question 6 asked if the students were pursuing this degree as a way to meet people. Responses to question 5 were positive, and responses to question 6 were predominantly negative. Based on this information, the principal investigator concluded that the adult LCIE student was primarily a focused and driven individual, who was not using the pursuit of this degree as merely another social mechanism with which to meet people.

Responses to survey questions 7 to 11 – finances. Financing of the LCIE student's education was a source of concern and sometimes confusion for him/her. This concern of the LCIE student is corroborated by the fact that the cost of a college education is rising more quickly than family income or the consumer price index (H. Greene & Greene, 2003). Question 7 of the survey began the inquiry into how the LCIE student was financing his or her degree. Question 7 asked if personal funds would be a major source of funding for the student's education. Based upon the results of question 7 and the focus group discussion, it appeared that some students perceived personal funds to be

interpreted as student loans. Because of this interpretation, a larger number of students agreed with question 7, as is evidenced by the similar responses attained from question 9. Question 9 asked if the ease of obtaining student loans would be a factor in the financing of the student's education. Questions 7 and 9 may have been a bit confusing for the students because of individual interpretation. This assertion is substantiated with proof shown in numerical data breakdowns of questions 7 and 9 as shown in Appendix A.

The economy of the United States is an important factor that students have to consider in regard to payment options for their desired degree program. The importance of this factor is evidenced in the responses to survey questions 8 and 10. Question 8 showed somewhat evenly disbursed responses to the question if grants and scholarships would be a factor regarding the funding of the adult student's education. Question 10 asked if tuition reimbursement from the students' employers would be a factor in the financing and completion of their chosen degree program. Responses to both questions 8 and 10 could be affected by changes in federal and state budgeting for education and also by economic factors affecting individual organizations. It is possible, based on student responses, that the answers to these two questions might change as more or fewer grants become available through stimulus funding and employers are encouraged to offer tuition reimbursement as a means of retaining and retraining current employees. The high cost of replacing employees, which according to a study conducted by University of California, Berkeley (Reh, n.d.), is nearly 150% of the employee's salary, is also economic incentive for employers to try and retain employees through mechanisms such as tuition reimbursement.

Proper direction for students is imperative to alleviate their concerns and questions regarding the subject of financing of degree options. Sudden job loss or other financial challenges are some of the greatest obstacles the adult student must overcome. Question 11 asked if students were given direction by admissions and business office personnel about what financial aid options were available. Survey results showed that well over half of the students either strongly agreed, agreed, or were neutral in their responses to this question. Based upon the responses, it appears that students understand their financial aid options at Lindenwood University, and the students were satisfied and able to take advantage of all financial options that were available regarding payment for their degree.

Responses to question 12 – scheduling. Flexibility of scheduling was vitally important to the LCIE students surveyed. Question 12 asked if students were able to schedule classes at a location that was convenient for them. It is important when reviewing the responses to this question that it is understood that the locations of Lindenwood University's extended campuses exist in widely varied geographic locations, and due to space, technology and instructor availability constraints, it is not feasible to offer every class at every location. Typically, all classes are offered at the main campus in St. Charles, which is the largest location both in number of students and classroom availability. The St. Louis City location opened in January 2009 and, at the time of the survey, was holding the first classes at that location. The comparative size of the respective Lindenwood campuses is accurately illustrated by the number of responses to the surveys and classroom availability shown on Table 3. Personal communication by the principal researcher with both LCIE students and with colleagues at Lindenwood

University validates the claim that most of these students attend classes closer to their homes as opposed to their place of employment.

Responses to questions 13 to 16 – academics. Analytical thinking follows an organized and scientific approach to problem solving, and responses to this question were evidence of the fact that this is an important approach to education for the adult students that were surveyed. Question 13 asked if the students felt they were challenged to improve their analytical thinking skills by their coursework. Overwhelmingly, students responded that they strongly agreed or agreed with this question; there were very few students in disagreement with this question.

Adult students need to feel as if their previous life experiences warrant value in the academic world. Question 14 asked if the student felt the university valued their previous work experience as a part of their education. This question addresses an avenue of awarding credit that most universities indicate as "experiential learning." For the undergraduate degrees in the LCIE program, experiential learning credits can be awarded in a variety of ways, as was previously detailed in chapter 2 of this paper. These credits are awarded as elective credits and help students attain the total number of required hours for their undergraduate degrees. Student responses to this question were predominantly in agreement or neutral that Lindenwood University valued their previous work experience as a part of their education. According to the experiential learning coordinator for LCIE, one of the biggest challenges with the awarding of experiential learning credits for LCIE students is often justification of the academic worth of that experience (C. Engleking, personal communication, October 5, 2009). Clear delineation of required justification for academic credits to be awarded is an absolute necessity. Simply being a manager for 15

years does not automatically warrant academic credit, and some LCIE students have difficulty grasping that concept (C. Engleking, personal communication, October 5, 2009).

The creation of a relationship of trust and mutual respect was important to LCIE students. Question 15 asked if the students felt their assignments and coursework were graded fairly and consistently by their instructors. Although there was some dissension, more students either strongly agreed, agreed, or were neutral that they felt as if they were being treated fairly and consistently by their instructors. The trust and relationship between instructors and students will be explored more fully in the discussion of the instructor and student perspectives inventories.

Over half of all surveys for each campus location showed student responses that strongly agreed or agreed or were neutral with the statement that the classwork required was reflective of what was needed to be successful in a given career. The students need to see evidence that what they are learning is relevant and important to their future career prospects so that they can make proper application and use of the knowledge they are attaining through their coursework and study. Question 16 asked if the course requirements for the students' chosen degrees accurately reflected the knowledge necessary to be successful in their given area of expertise. The responses to this question indicated that the students need to see the application of what they learn in the classroom to their places of employment in order to gain the best and most meaningful education experience.

Responses to questions 17 to 21 – advising. Academic advisors play a very important part in the retainment of adult students. "To find the right path, adult learners

need a guide. Few factors influence adult learners' success more than student/institutional planning and counseling. Mapping the student's path to postsecondary success is crucial" (Pusser et al., 2007, p. 4). Questions 18–22 asked the students about their relationships and impressions of their faculty advisors. A majority of the students found their advisors to be available, helpful, respectful, and effective in their communications. These same students also saw their advisors as a source of encouragement and someone who kept them on track to attain their educational goals. There were few students who indicated that their relationship with the faculty advisor was not what they expected or desired. However, one student did note in the comments field of the survey that she felt her particular advisor "was the best in the world and that they deserved a raise."

Summary Results of Focus Group Discussions

The adult students in the focus group were motivated by various factors to begin their pursuit of an undergraduate degree. These factors included competition with others, a sense of personal accomplishment, employer incentives, and desire for future career advancement. Students in the class also appeared to have developed a sense of camaraderie, even though at the time of the focus group discussion meeting, it was only their second full class period. Observations of the students showed that they were exhibiting varied degrees of enthusiasm and openness to discussing their motivations and experiences. Some students were admittedly tired, after working all day, and were not as vocal as others.

Students in the focus group session all agreed that the convenience and flexibility of the LCIE program was an impetus for them to pursue their degree. All students in the group agreed unanimously that without this flexibility, they would have much greater

difficulty in attaining their degrees. This convenience, flexibility, and feeling that their needs and challenges are understood were all very important to the students. The students all said they needed to feel respected and valued by their instructors, advisors, and the university. The students' voices, mannerisms, and expressions during the focus group session all indicated that they were pleased with the educational choice they had made to come to Lindenwood University.

Students appeared to feel varying degrees of excitement and apprehension regarding their education, as was evidenced by the discussion often being punctuated with laughter after student comments/responses to the facilitator's questions. The main point reached from this discussion was that though there were widely varied reasons for each student's return to school, relationships were important to them, and Lindenwood University was adeptly facilitating and nurturing those relationships.

Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory Analysis (MIPI)

The seven factors examined for the MIPI were as follows:

1. Teacher empathy with learners
2. Teacher trust of learners
3. Planning and delivery of instruction
4. Accommodating learner uniqueness
5. Teacher insensitivity toward learners
6. Experience-based learning techniques
7. Teacher-centered learning process

The MIPI delved into individual instructor perceptions of their own teaching methods as they related to connections with the adult students. Both full-time and adjunct

faculty members were surveyed to determine if there would be variance in their answers. The MIPI showed in the category of *teacher empathy* that the average response of instructors in this category was 4.2 on a 5-point scale (see Appendix H). This average response indicates that the instructors perceived themselves as being highly empathetic to their students. The MIPI showed in the category of *teacher's trust of learners*, 2 instructors had substantially lower trust levels (see Figure 9). Both of these dissenting views were from adjunct instructors. It might be that the adjunct instructors might have felt less connected or a lower trust level since at the time of the survey, they were only in their second week of class with that particular set of students; thus, the adjuncts may have answered based on the class they had at the time, instead of an overall perspective of all past classes as well as the present class.

All instructors perceived they had low levels of insensitivity toward the adult learners. In personal communication with both full-time and adjunct faculty, it was determined that the instructors felt as if they had, indeed, become learners themselves. The instructors also voiced the opinion that most of the adult students are more likely to take their academic work seriously than their younger counterparts. The fact that the instructors had become learners themselves contributed to the idea that they more greatly identified and developed sensitivity to the adult learners' needs. This assertion was further corroborated by the fact that all instructors were within one point of the middle of the scale when asked about accommodating learner uniqueness. "Adult learners have unique developmental and social characteristics as compared to their traditional counterparts in higher education" (Gold, 2005, p. 4). Accommodation of this uniqueness is an absolute necessity for all adult learning instructors. Instructors averaged a score of

4.12 on a 5-point scale regarding accommodating learner uniqueness. This above-average score was evidence of the instructors viewing their students as unique individuals with varying needs.

Some instructors who completed the survey appeared to be more focused on experience-based learning techniques (see Figure 9). Kolb (1984) defined *experience-based learning techniques* as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience (p. 25)." From the MIPI, it appeared as though instructors who were not teaching general education requirements and were teaching courses related to the specific major considered to be core courses were stronger in their agreement with this question. General education courses involve basic skills required of every chosen major in the areas of communications, social science, humanities, natural science, and mathematics. Core courses are those that are required for the specific chosen major—for example business administration—and that relate directly to the chosen major. Based on this information, it appears as if it is more common for instructors to relate core business concepts and principles to everyday events for the adult students than it is for instructors to be able to relate a subject such as social science to everyday use in the workplace.

The instructors' answers relating to planning and delivery of instruction were well above average for the instructor's perspective inventory mean. Answers to this question showed that the instructors typically felt very prepared to teach their classes. Instructors surveyed had a wide variety of teaching experience, from less than 1 year to over 15 years. This broad time span of teaching experience seemed to have nothing to do with

feeling prepared, though personal communication with newer instructors showed evidence of nervousness and excitement about teaching.

Related to planning and delivery of instruction were the responses to the teacher-centered learning process. The average in this category was 2.6 with a range from 1.4 to 4.8 on a 5-point scale. Teacher-centered learning means that instruction focuses on the instructor controlling all aspects of the conversation in the classroom, students work independently, and the instructor simply talks while students listen (National Capital Language Resource Center, n.d.). The Lindenwood University LCIE model focuses on the Socratic method of instruction, which is group-work and discussion oriented. It is because of the discussion-oriented focus of the LCIE program that the numbers in this category were below average. The one instructor that had a 4.8 on this question was the instructor that teaches math and statistics, which is, by tradition, course subject matter that warrants more direction and instruction as opposed to discussion. Overall, the MIPI showed a perception of connectedness from the instructors to the students. The instructors felt they were prepared, compassionate, and empathetic to the students and secure in their abilities to deliver adequate instruction. This instructor perspective was mirrored in the answers the students gave in their answers in the student adaptation of the MIPI.

Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory – Adapted for Students (MIPI-S) Analysis

The seven factors examined in the MIPI-S were the same as those examined for the MIPI. They were as follows:

1. Teacher empathy with learners
2. Teacher trust of learners

3. Planning and delivery of instruction
4. Accommodating learner uniqueness
5. Teacher insensitivity toward learners
6. Experience-based learning techniques
7. Teacher-centered learning process

Examination of student perceptions on the MIPI-S showed that their perceptions of teacher empathy and trust were closely aligned with that of the instructors on the MIPI. Students averaged a score of 17 out of a possible scale of 25 points regarding teacher empathy with learners and students averaged a score of 34 on a scale of 55 regarding teacher trust of learners. Students in the focus group agreed with this assumption as they expressed how important it was that the instructors challenged them but also realized they had lives going on outside of the classroom. Empathy on both the student and instructor side was an important consideration. It is important to have a clear definition of empathy as it relates to the higher education environment and the complexities often dealt with by college students. This discussion of empathy is well punctuated with the following quote from Thoms (n.d.):

> Empathy involves the human factor associated with learning; it is separate from the computers, the software programs, the attendance requirements, the late fees for late assignments, etc. Empathy does include flexibility, an understanding that babies do come early and miss the spring break by four days (thus the student misses a week of class), families experience the death of a friend or loved one, knowledge that a blizzard keeps a 70-mile commuter at home rather than face slipping into a ditch, or having compassion for a student who has just suffered a

> miscarriage. Some teachers will argue that these situations should not impact a student's educational path, but reality convinces us that they actually do. Naturally, our adult learners often have more complex situations with which to deal than do our more traditional learners. (p. 8)

The planning and delivery of instruction scores from student perspective inventories also evidenced the fact that students perceived their instructors to be well prepared for class. Students scored their instructors an average of 20 out of a possible 25 points. If the instructors are prepared and the students are not, it will be a far less effective classroom.

The factor that involved accommodating learner uniqueness was rated by students at an average of 23 on a possible scale of 35. This correlates with the focus group discussion response because the participants said that they felt their instructors understood they were working adults and knew they had lives outside of the classroom. This numerical indicator of 23, coupled with the response of the focus group, is evidence of the importance of recognizing and accommodating the adult student differences.

The student ratings regarding teacher insensitivity toward learners on the MIPI-S showed an average score of 28 out of a total possible 35 points. This score indicates that the students did not feel their instructors were insensitive toward them; rather, it supports the student perceptions of teacher empathy and trust being high.

Experience-based learning techniques answers closely correlated between instructors' and students' perceptions. Students averaged a score of 14 on a scale of 25 regarding experience-based learning techniques. This correlation is substantiated by previously discussed literature that adult students need to see the importance and

relevance of what they have learned (Kasworm, 2008). “Learning from experience is a central, philosophical and theoretical ideal in the field of adult learning” (Dirkx & Lavin, 1991, p. 1). Educational experiences that manage to tie practical experience to adult learning concepts will afford adult learners and their instructors the greatest possibility for success. The greater the adult student feels affiliated with and connected to a program, the stronger the prospect of retention and program completion (Siebert & Karr, 2003).

The students averaged 7 out of a possible 25 regarding teacher-centered learning process. As previously discussed with the MIPI, on the MIPI-S students scored their instructors low in this factor, as a teacher-centered learning focus is contrary to the nature of the LCIE program. The LCIE program is discussion focused and has a different orientation than the teacher-centered model.

Instructor perceptions on the MIPI and student perceptions on the MIPI-S indicated that the instructors and students were perceiving the seven factors similarly. This similarity indicates that lines of communication between instructors and students are clear and that there is a level of trust and understanding that is shared between the two groups. This mutual trust and understanding will facilitate a learning environment.

Retention Information Analysis

Retention data was gathered on students enrolled in both the traditional program and in the adult accelerated LCIE program. Retention for both programs was broken down by academic rank (e.g., senior, junior, sophomore, and freshman). A comprehensive search for national statistics to compare with that of Lindenwood University revealed that the most recent information available for this comparison comes from NCES from 1994 (see Figure 14). This figure shows that nearly half of all non-

traditional students left without return prior to degree completion and that approximately one third of traditional students left without return prior to degree completion.

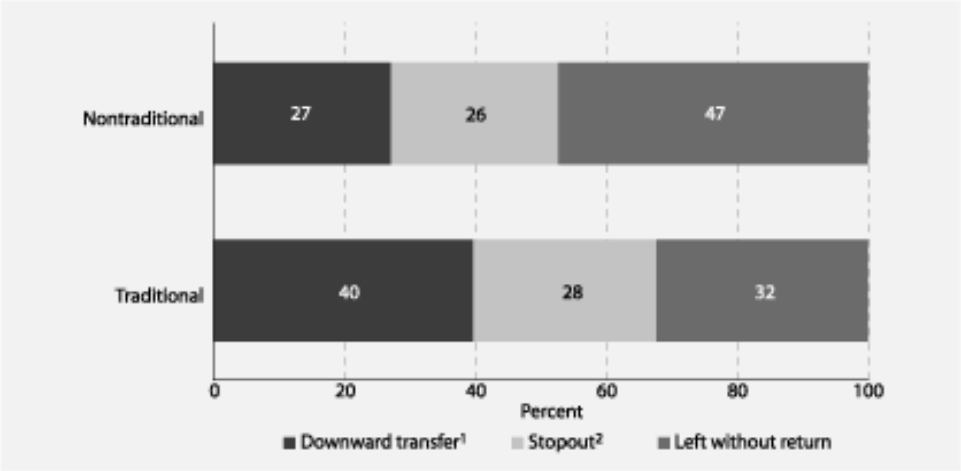

Figure 14 – Percentage distribution of beginning postsecondary degree seekers who left their first institution according to the type of leaving, by student status:

Note. 1994[1] From a 4-year to 2-year institution, for example (with or without taking time off).[2] Left school for a period of 4 or more months and then returned to the same level of institution. Source: U.S. Department of Education, NCES. 1994. http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2002/analyses/nontraditional/Figures/fig06.asp?popup=true

Lindenwood University's retention rate for traditional undergraduate students averaged 76% for the time period of fall 2005 to fall 2009. Lindenwood's retention rate for non-traditional undergraduate students for this same time period was 67%.

In a comparison, based solely on the numbers, not taking into account any economic or political changes in the United States, Lindenwood University's average retention rate for traditional students was higher at 76% than the national average of 68%. Lindenwood's retention rate for non-traditional accelerated students was at 67%,

substantially higher than the national average of 43%. Lindenwood University's retention rates are higher than the national average retention rate; however, there is still room for improvement.

The retention rate of traditional students is 9% greater than the retention rate of the non-traditional students in the accelerated program. Varied factors affect adult student persistence, such as divorce, illness, job loss and promotion. These same factors are not shown to be as prevalent among traditional students (Brown, 2002). According to Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989), the challenges that affect adult student retention can often be addressed:

> Adults facing such circumstantial barriers need services that will enhance their academic adjustment by allowing them to concentrate on the student role, such as (1) assistance with transportation and childcare – recommend expanding to family care for those responsible for both their children and their parents; (2) alternatives to stopping out, such as independent study, correspondence courses, contract learning; and (3) creative financial aid that might include flexible payment plans and tuition reimbursement. (p. 1)

Lindenwood has attempted to address some of Schlossberg's recommendations. Lindenwood had attempted a joint venture with the YMCA for childcare in the past; however, no student interest was shown, so it was discontinued.

Findings of the Study

The adult students in the LCIE program and instructors that were surveyed showed by their collective answers on the MIPI, MIPI-S, AES survey, and focus group discussion that the relationship developed by the student and the instructor was

important. Students demonstrated by their answers to the AES survey that they returned to college to get a degree for a variety of different reasons and that the students weighed many factors when considering the decision to either return to college or begin a degree program. The focus group discussion revealed that students had a variety of motivators to return to school and that the complex decision to return to school was not one that the adult students entered into lightly.

Further Discussion

Recommendations for future practices resulted from personal communication with LCIE students over the course of time in which this study was conducted. The principal investigator found that many students voiced frustration at the fact that the business and financial aid offices do not have any evening hours. This particular challenge for the students was not explored with this study; however, extending these offices hours of operation would benefit and potentially help retain both traditional and non-traditional students and the university. Oftentimes, traditional students' parents may be the ones that need to come to the business office or financial aid, and they, like the LCIE students themselves, have full-time jobs or other commitments that keep them from coming to talk with someone during regular business hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. According to Choy, in a report created by the American Council on Education Center for Policy Analysis, "about three-quarters of all four-year college students now earn a paycheck, and about one-quarter of them work full time" (Choy, 2002, p. 2).

It would be worthy of further study to interview those LCIE students who have dropped out and not attained their degrees to determine why they dropped out and also what would need to be done to get them to finish their degrees. Findings from this

additional research could provide the insight necessary for improvement of student retention in both the accelerated and traditional programs. Understanding the reasons that the LCIE students did not complete their degrees would be the first step for Lindenwood University to take in order to overcome the students' obstacles to degree completion.

The MIPI and MIPI-S both provided insight into the importance of instructor empathy toward students and the student's perceptions of the empathetic instructors. It is recommended to conduct further research to determine the academic success of the students with the more empathetic instructors. Additional research regarding student grades, performance, and future career performance by those students who worked with the more empathetic instructors could provide valuable insight for further professional development for instructors to enhance their empathy skills.

Childcare costs and arrangements are a topic of constant conversation with LCIE students. It would be a topic worthy of further in-depth examination to determine why the childcare program venture with the YMCA failed and if there would possibly be a way to implement a childcare program that would be of greater benefit to the students and the university.

Summary and Conclusions

Study of adult students and accelerated programs and their general concepts is not a new avenue of discussion. The study of the adult student has recently come under even greater scrutiny with unprecedented numbers of adults returning to colleges and universities seeking degrees. Colleges and universities are scrambling to create programs that are both acceptable and valuable to the adult student market. Recognition of the fact that the adult student has unique challenges and needs when compared to the traditional

students is a factor that is compelling these institutions of higher learning to implement and utilize accelerated course formats for course delivery. As accelerated course delivery methods are created, it is imperative that the institution takes into account the different needs of the adult students if the programs are to be successful. This in-depth examination of adult learning and the accelerated program (LCIE) at Lindenwood University are evidence of the significance of a well-planned and orchestrated degree program for the adult student. Maintaining academic integrity while delivering a high-quality educational product that caters to the needs of the adult student is a primary focus of the LCIE program at Lindenwood University. This examination of the program, coupled with the results of the surveys and focus group, provides not only valuable information, but also the impetus that future study of the adult learner and accelerated programs is necessary.

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Appendix A – Adult Education Survey

Adult Education Survey

This survey is a questionnaire designed to evaluate the education-related needs of adult learners. By answering the following questions, you will provide valuable insights for the purposes of this study that may be used for the future enhancements of the educational programs at Lindenwood University. The information you supply on this survey is confidential and surveys are numbered only to ensure a valid statistical sample is obtained. Place an "X" in the box that corresponds most accurately to your opinion.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Education Plans and Preferences					
I am pursing this degree to improve my income potential. (Question 1)					
I am pursuing this degree to learn a new occupation. (Question 2)					
I am pursuing this degree for personal satisfaction or happiness. (Question 3)					
I am pursuing this degree to meet existing job requirements or improve existing job skills. (Question 4)					
I am pursuing this degree to become better educated and informed. (Question 5)					
I am pursuing this degree to meet new people. (Question 6)					
Finances					
Personal funds will be a major source of funding for my education. (Question 7)					
Education grants and scholarships will be a factor regarding funding my education. (Question 8)					
Ease of obtaining student loans will be a factor in the financing of my education. (Question 9)					
Tuition reimbursement by my employer will be a determining factor in the pursuit of my degree. (Question 10)					
I was given direction on what financial aid options are available. (Question 11)					
Scheduling					
I was able to schedule classes at the campus location that was the most					

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
convenient to me (Question 12)					
Academics					
Courses at this University challenge me to improve my analytical thinking skills. (Question 13)					
This University values my previous work experience as a vital part of my education. (Question 14)					
Assignments and coursework are graded fairly and consistently. (Question 15)					
Course requirements for my chosen major accurately reflect subject knowledge necessary to be successful in my field of expertise. (Question 16)					
My current Grade Point Average (GPA) is – (***circle the correct category).***	3.5-4.0	3.0-3.4	2.5-2.9	2.0 & below	I do not know my GPA
Advising					
My advisor is available when I need assistance. (Question 17)					
My advisor respects my feelings and opinions. (Question 18)					
My advisor is helpful and effective and I would recommend him/her to other students. (Question 19)					
My advisor encourages me to achieve my educational goals. (Question 20)					
My advisor provides me with accurate information about requirements and pre-requisites. (Question 21)					
Demographics (Circle the appropriate response below)					

Current marital status	Married	Divorced, widowed or separated	Single (never married)		
Current age	16-21	22-30	31-40	41-49	50 & above
What is your current total annual family income?	Less than $20,000	$20,001-$35,000	$35,001 – $50,000	$50,001 - $100,000	$100,001 & above
Number of children currently living in your home?	1	2	3	4 or more	

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Additional Comments:					

Appendix B – Cover Letter for AES

Dear Adult Student,

I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral Program for Instructional Leadership at Lindenwood University. My thesis is titled "The Affects of Adult Accelerated Degree Programs on Student Retention and Adult Learning I am excited to begin this research project, and I believe that valuable information will be gathered that will affect the future education of our adult population.

As a part of my research, I am conducting a survey regarding Adult Learning. The survey form is attached to this cover letter along with a consent form. The survey is anonymous and offers no means of individual identification, and it will offer great insight into the adult student's attitudes and learning styles.

Please take some time to review the survey, complete the consent form and the survey, and return it to the site director at your current class location. I will be collecting these surveys from the site directors and detaching the consent forms prior to tabulation and calculation of survey results. Should you prefer to return the survey to me directly, please mail the consent form and the survey to

Lindenwood University
Attn: Cindy Manjounes, LCIE
400 South Kingshighway
St. Charles, MO 63301

I thank you in advance for your participation in this valuable research endeavor.
Sincerely,
Cindy K. Manjounes

Appendix C – Consent form for AES

Consent Form for Study

Title: __An Adult Accelerated Degree Program: Student and Instructor Perspective and Factors that Affect Retention

Principal Investigator: Cindy K. Manjounes

Introduction/Purpose: We are conducting this research in order to learn more about how accelerated degree programs offer adult students a greater possibility for successful degree completion thus enhancing a university's student retention.

Procedures: This study involves a survey which will ask you several questions regarding personal profile, study habits, learning styles, feelings about earning your degree, and your interactions with other students and university staff.

Risks: There are no reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

Benefits: Taking part in this study may not benefit you personally, but we hope to learn vital information that will help us to construct adult education programs to be most beneficial to you as an individual.

Confidentiality: The survey is anonymous and has no individually identifying factors so your confidentiality is assured.

Contact Persons: If you have any questions about this research, call Assistant Professor Cindy Manjounes at 636-949-4522. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Dr. Colleen Biri, Chairperson of The Institutional Review Board, and the group that oversees the protection of human research participants. She can be reached at 636-949-4519 or cbiri@lindenwood.edu.

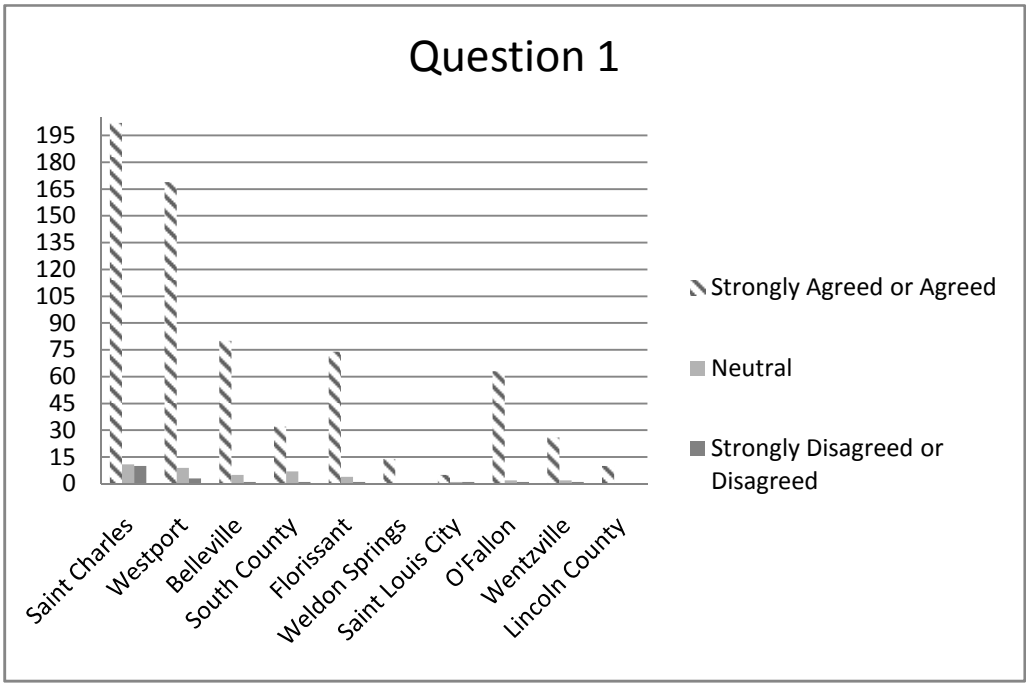
Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to refuse to be in this study. You may terminate your participation in this study at any time after giving your consent. This decision will have no negative consequences.

If you're willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

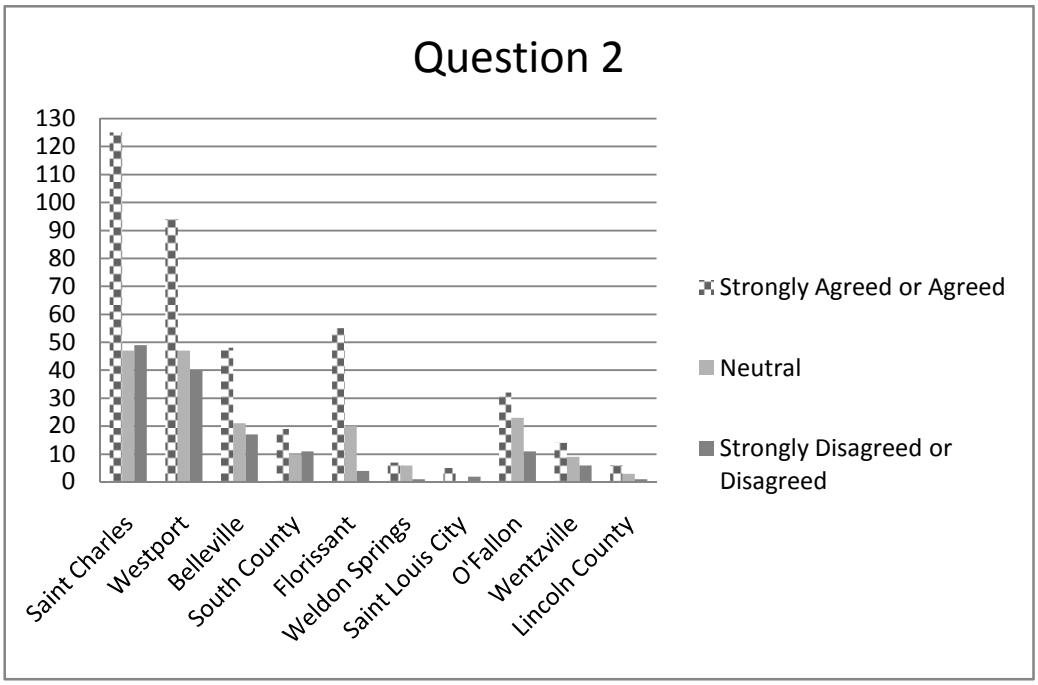
_____ _____ _____

Signature Date Time

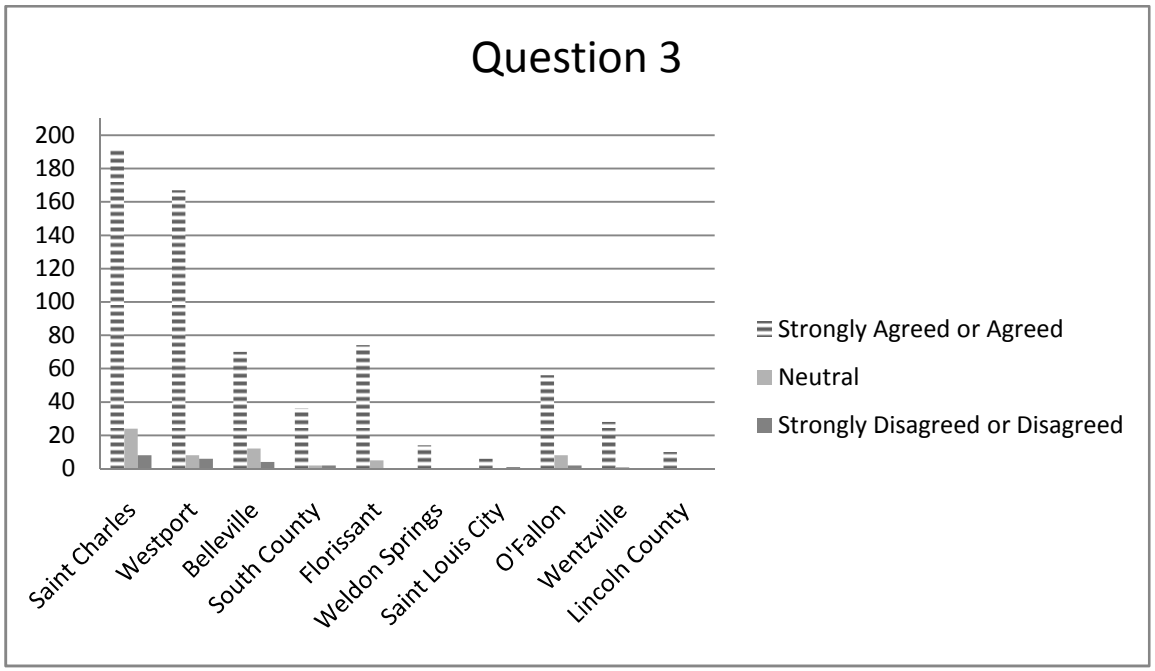
Appendix D – Breakdown by Question of AES Responses



	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	202	11	10
Westport	169	9	3
Belleville	80	5	1
South County	32	7	1
Florissant	74	4	1
Weldon Springs	14	0	0
Saint Louis City	5	1	1
O'Fallon	63	2	1
Wentzville	26	2	1
Lincoln County	10	0	0



	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	125	47	49
Westport	94	47	40
Belleville	48	21	17
South County	19	10	11
Florissant	55	20	4
Weldon Springs	7	6	1
Saint Louis City	5	0	2
O'Fallon	32	23	11
Wentzville	14	9	6
Lincoln County	6	3	1



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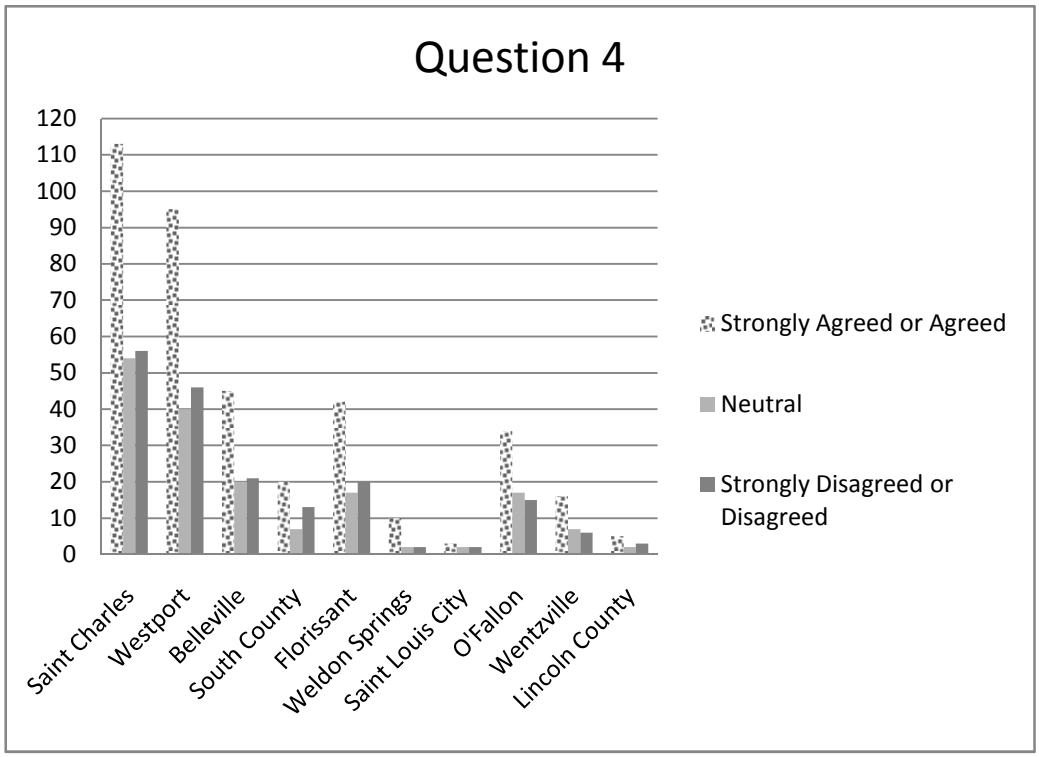
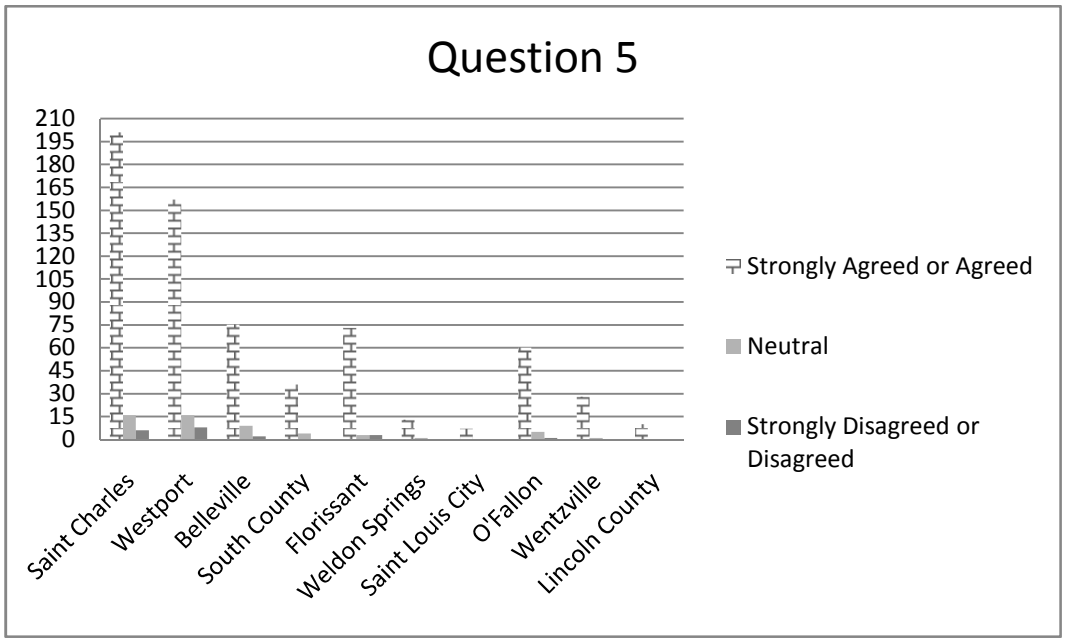
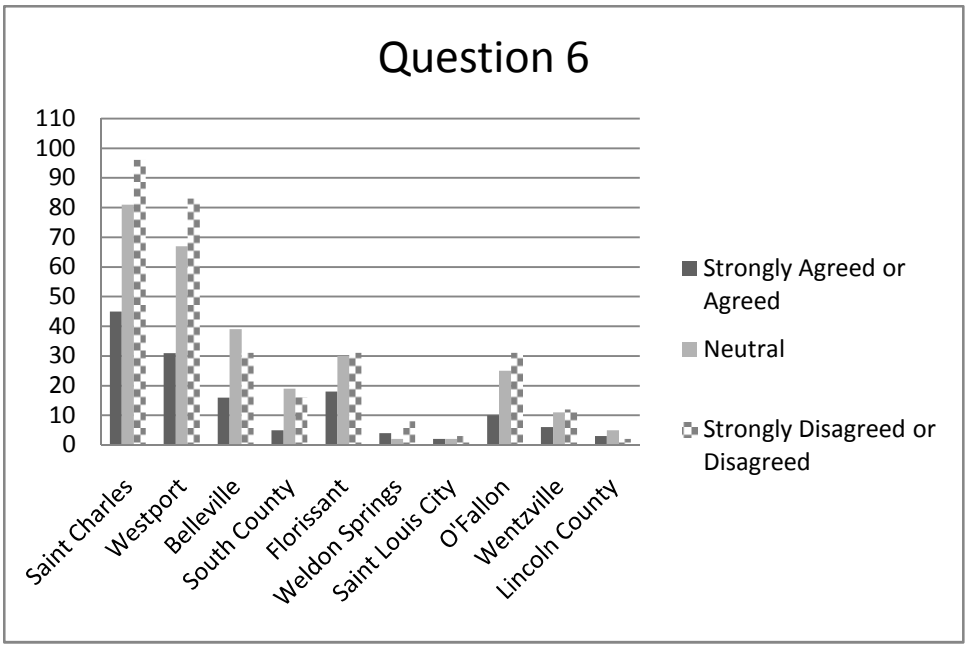
Saint Charles	191	24	8
Westport	167	8	6
Belleville	70	12	4
South County	36	2	2
Florissant	74	5	0
Weldon Springs	14	0	0
Saint Louis City	6	0	1
O'Fallon	56	8	2
Wentzville	28	1	0
Lincoln County	10	0	0



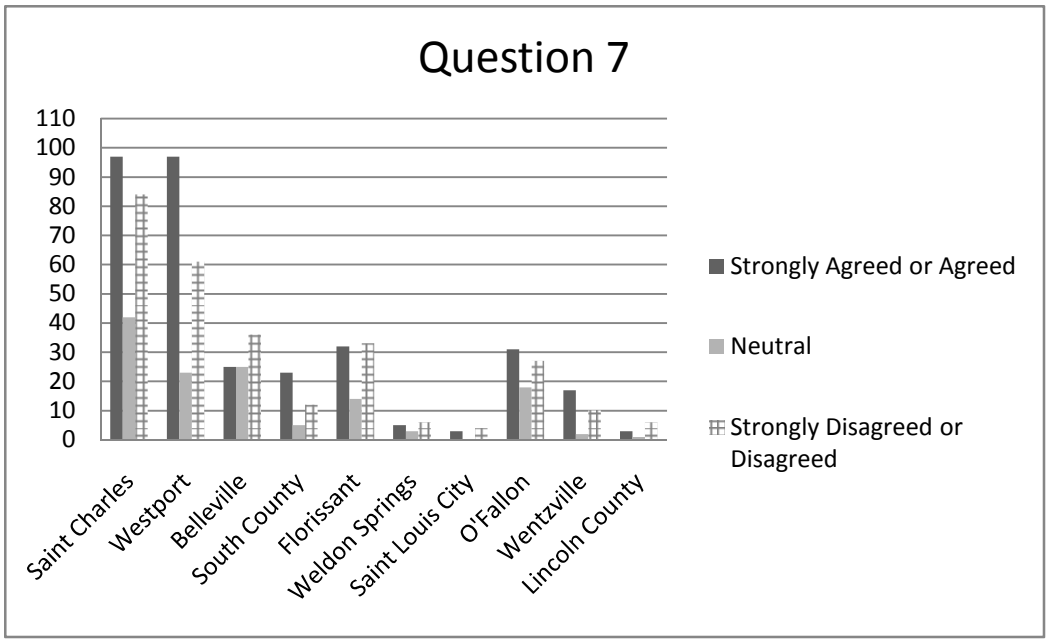
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	113	54	56
Westport	95	40	46
Belleville	45	20	21
South County	20	7	13
Florissant	42	17	20
Weldon Springs	10	2	2
Saint Louis City	3	2	2
O'Fallon	34	17	15
Wentzville	16	7	6
Lincoln County	5	2	3



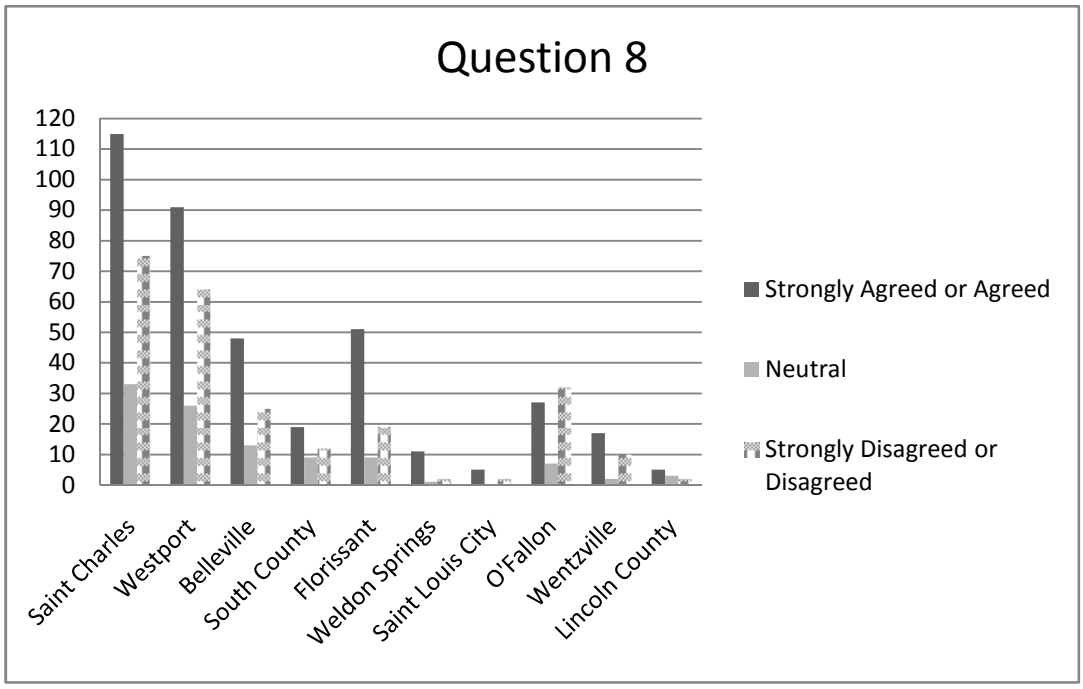
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	201	16	6
Westport	157	16	8
Belleville	75	9	2
South County	36	4	0
Florissant	73	3	3
Weldon Springs	13	1	0
Saint Louis City	7	0	0
O'Fallon	60	5	1
Wentzville	28	1	0
Lincoln County	10	0	0



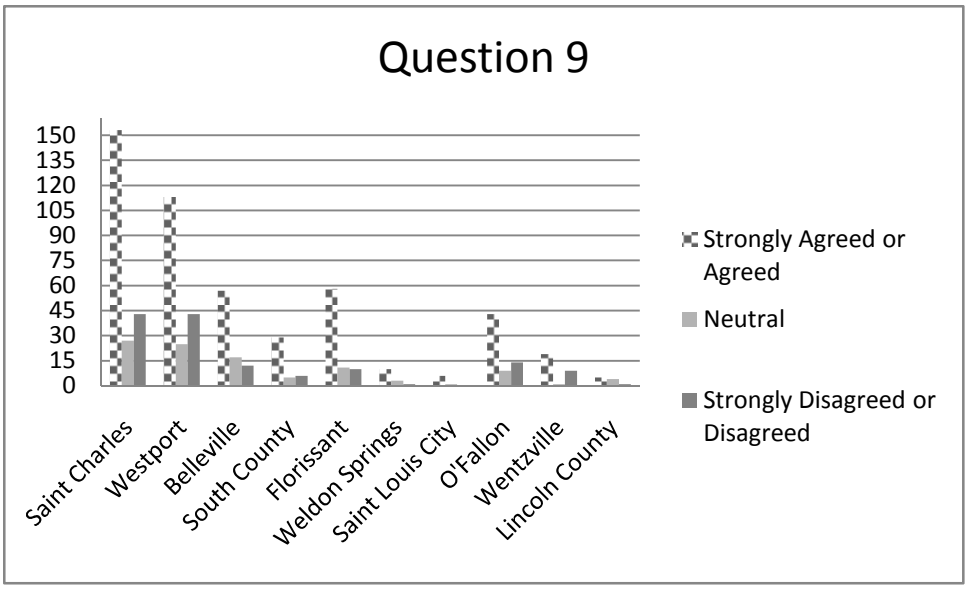
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	45	81	96
Westport	31	67	83
Belleville	16	39	31
South County	5	19	16
Florissant	18	30	31
Weldon Springs	4	2	8
Saint Louis City	2	2	3
O'Fallon	10	25	31
Wentzville	6	11	12
Lincoln County	3	5	2



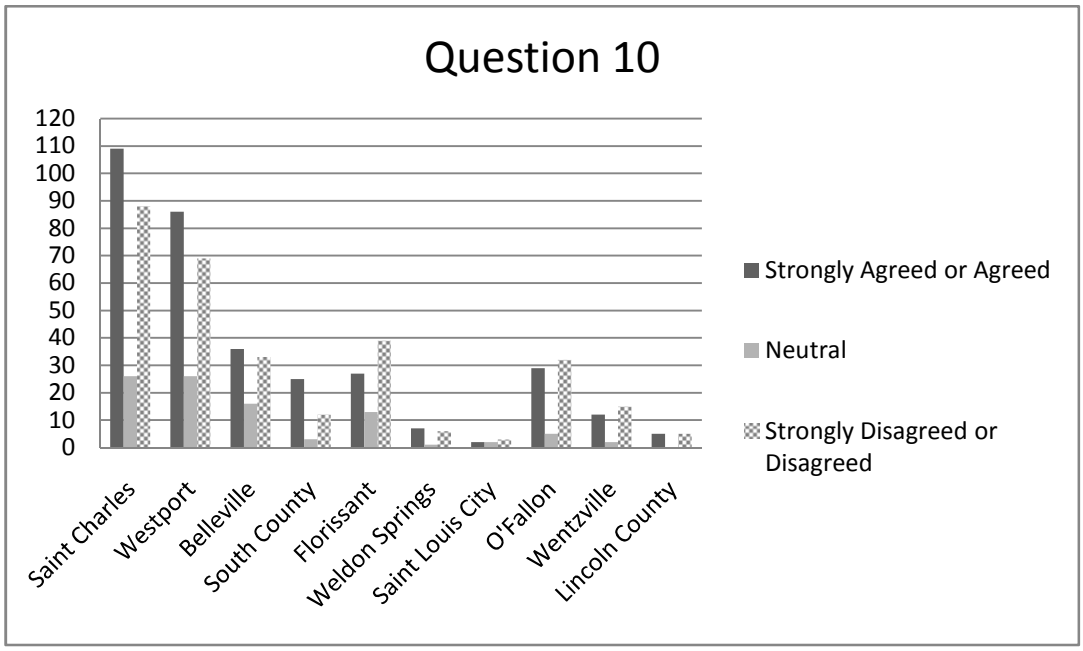
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	97	42	84
Westport	97	23	61
Belleville	25	25	36
South County	23	5	12
Florissant	32	14	33
Weldon Springs	5	3	6
Saint Louis City	3	0	4
O'Fallon	31	18	27
Wentzville	17	2	10
Lincoln County	3	1	6



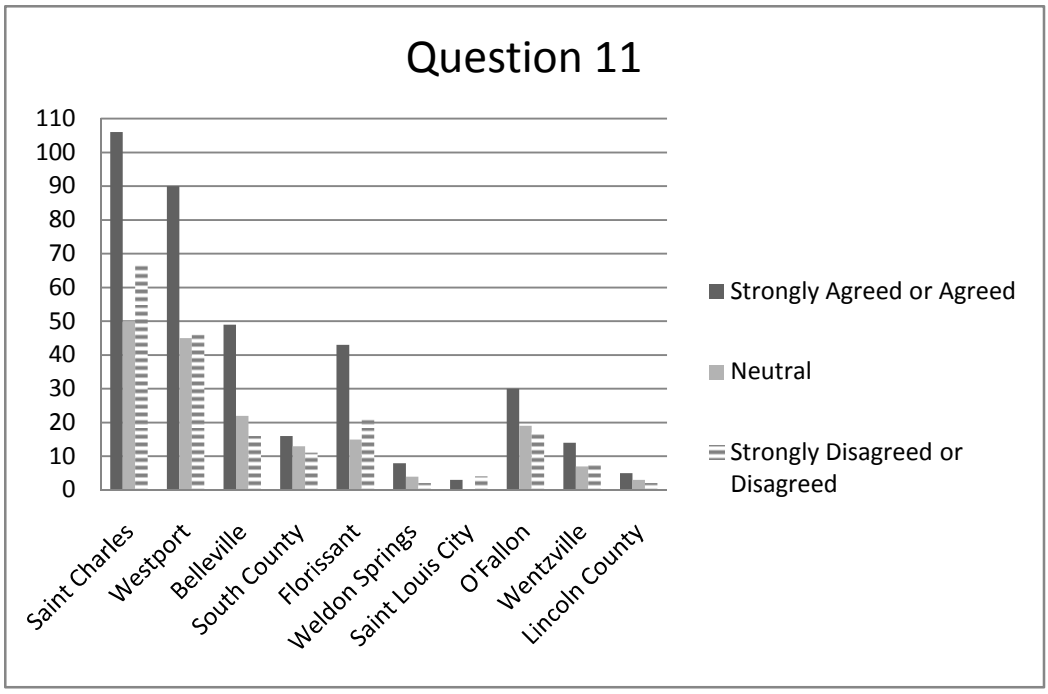
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	115	33	75
Westport	91	26	64
Belleville	48	13	25
South County	19	9	12
Florissant	51	9	19
Weldon Springs	11	1	2
Saint Louis City	5	0	2
O'Fallon	27	7	32
Wentzville	17	2	10
Lincoln County	5	3	2



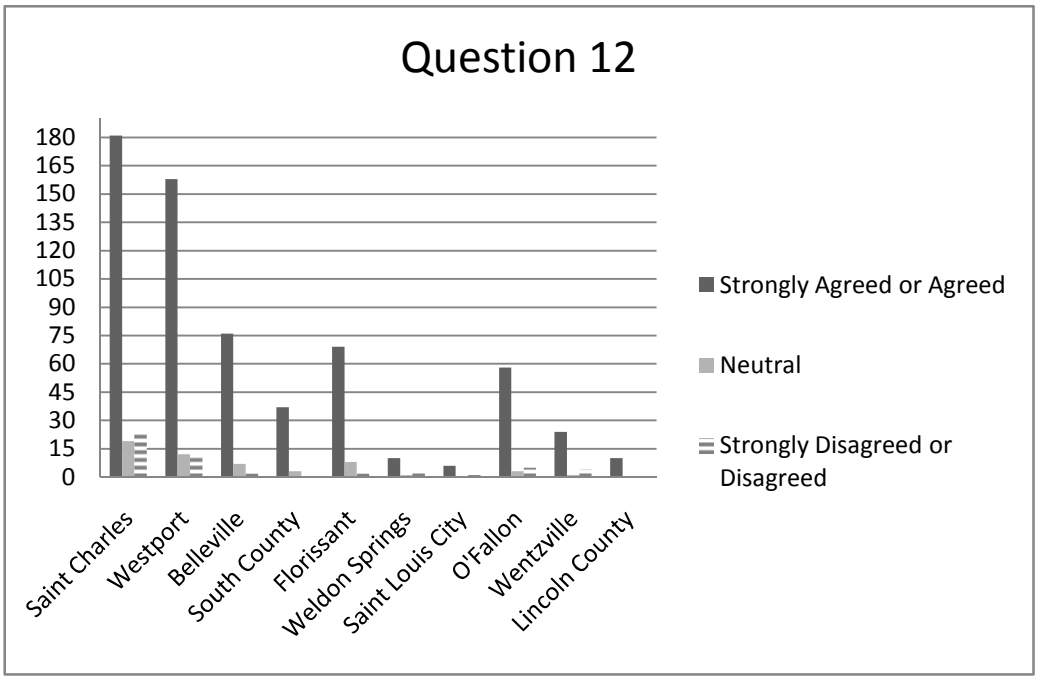
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	153	27	43
Westport	113	25	43
Belleville	57	17	12
South County	29	5	6
Florissant	58	11	10
Weldon Springs	10	3	1
Saint Louis City	6	1	0
O'Fallon	43	9	14
Wentzville	19	1	9
Lincoln County	5	4	1



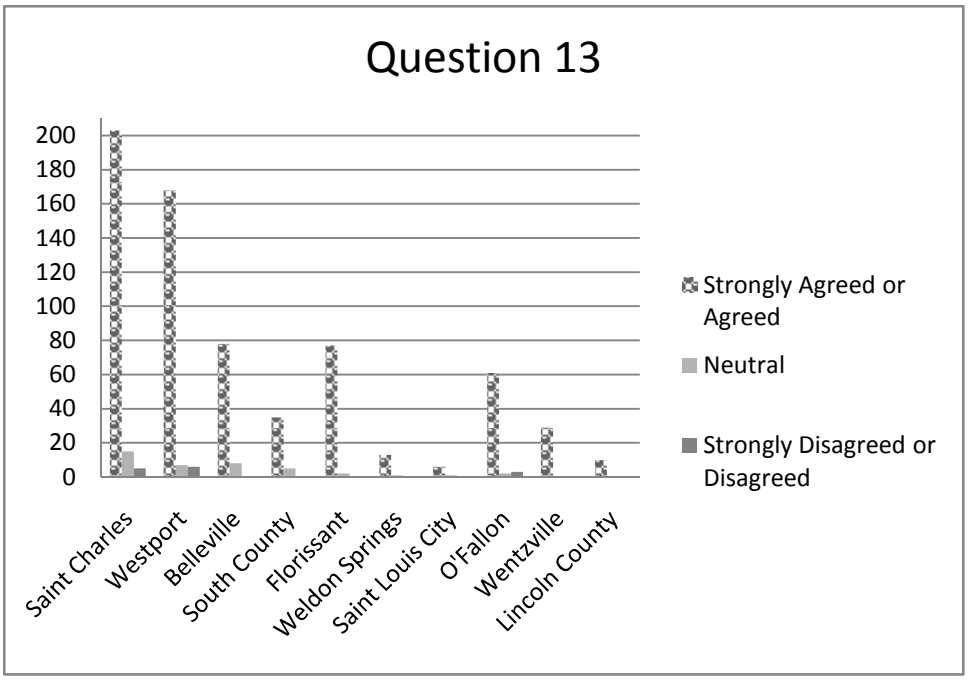
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	109	26	88
Westport	86	26	69
Belleville	36	16	33
South County	25	3	12
Florissant	27	13	39
Weldon Springs	7	1	6
Saint Louis City	2	2	3
O'Fallon	29	5	32
Wentzville	12	2	15
Lincoln County	5	0	5



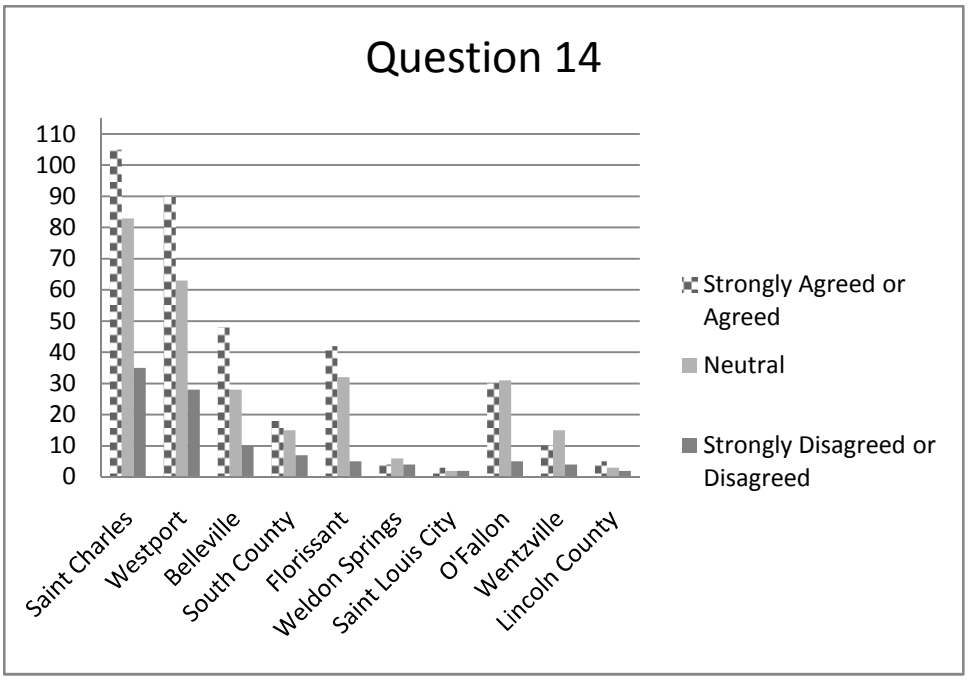
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	106	50	67
Westport	90	45	46
Belleville	49	22	16
South County	16	13	11
Florissant	43	15	21
Weldon Springs	8	4	2
Saint Louis City	3	0	4
O'Fallon	30	19	17
Wentzville	14	7	8
Lincoln County	5	3	2



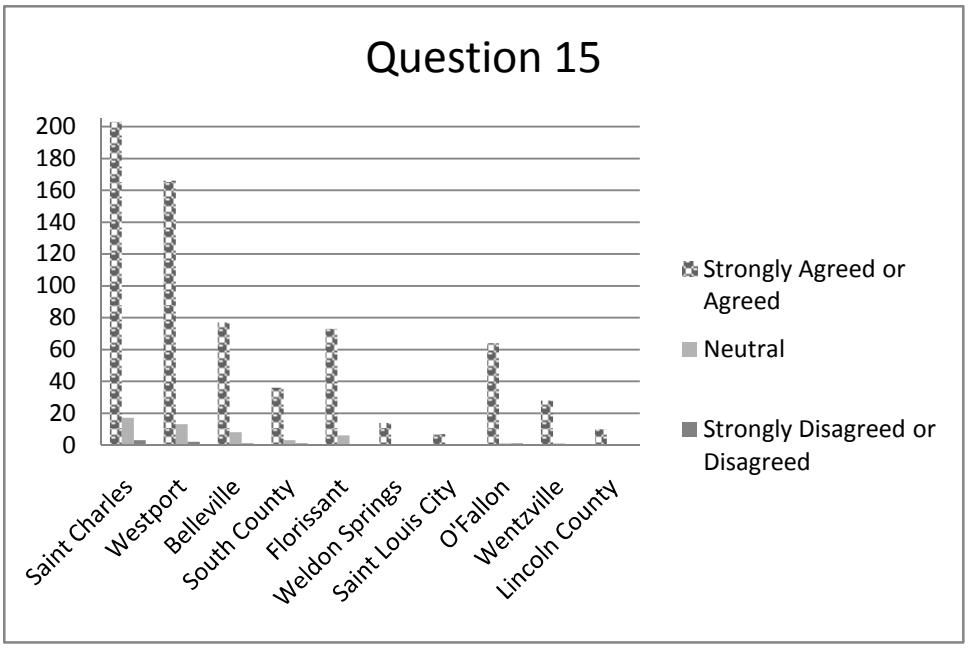
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	181	19	23
Westport	158	12	11
Belleville	76	7	2
South County	37	3	0
Florissant	69	8	2
Weldon Springs	10	1	3
Saint Louis City	6	0	1
O'Fallon	58	3	5
Wentzville	24	1	4
Lincoln County	10	0	0



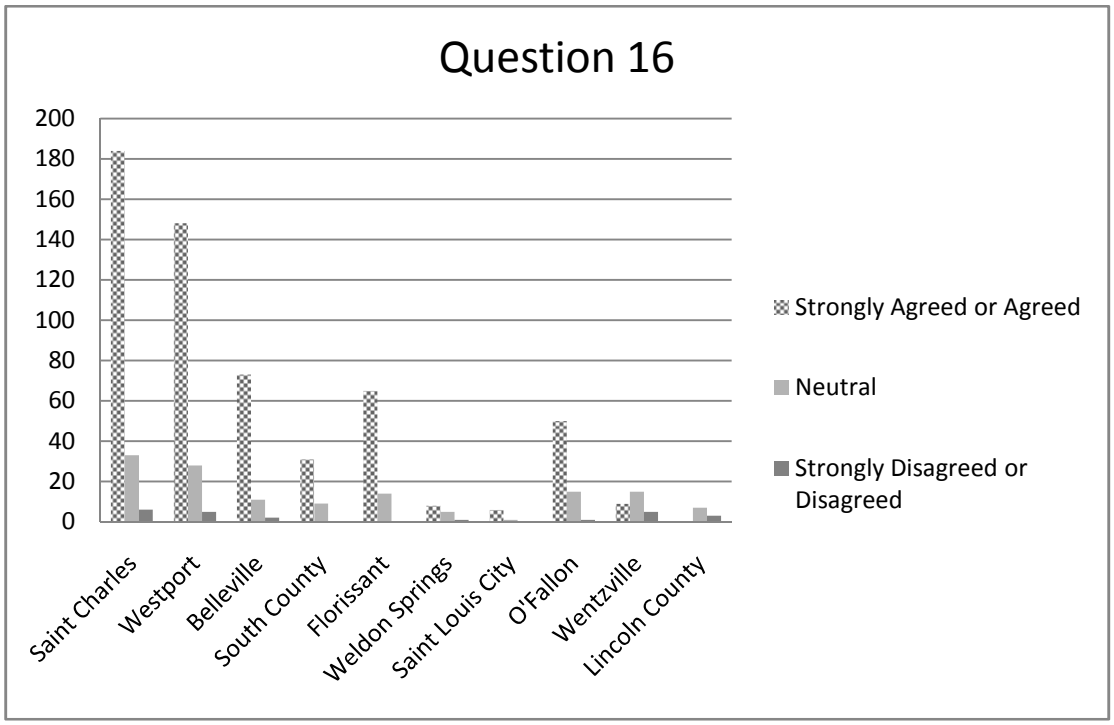
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	203	15	5
Westport	168	7	6
Belleville	78	8	0
South County	35	5	0
Florissant	77	2	0
Weldon Springs	13	1	0
Saint Louis City	6	1	0
O'Fallon	61	2	3
Wentzville	29	0	0
Lincoln County	10	0	0



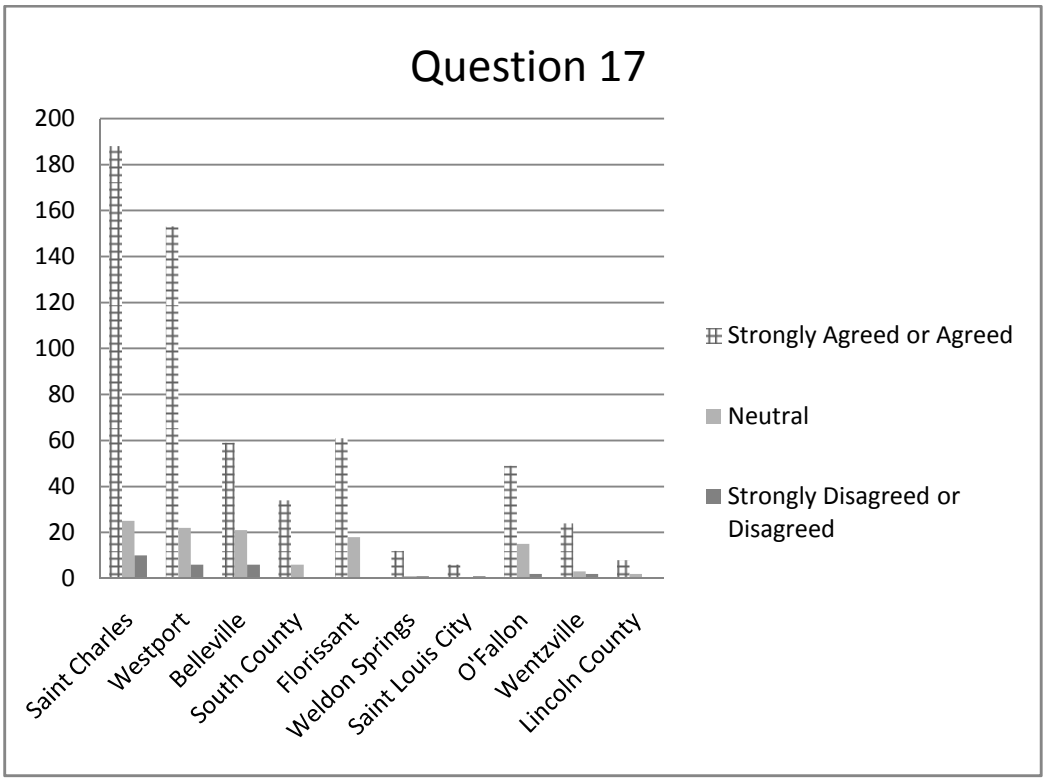
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	105	83	35
Westport	90	63	28
Belleville	48	28	10
South County	18	15	7
Florissant	42	32	5
Weldon Springs	4	6	4
Saint Louis City	3	2	2
O'Fallon	30	31	5
Wentzville	10	15	4
Lincoln County	5	3	2



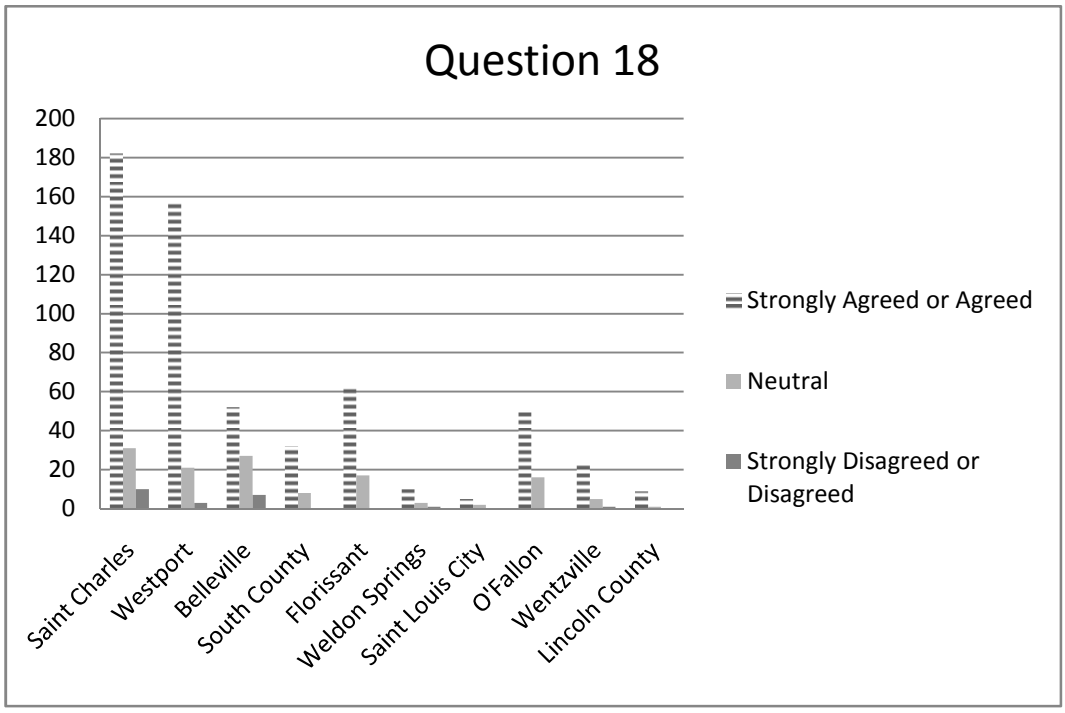
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	203	17	3
Westport	166	13	2
Belleville	77	8	1
South County	36	3	1
Florissant	73	6	0
Weldon Springs	14	0	0
Saint Louis City	7	0	0
O'Fallon	64	1	1
Wentzville	28	1	0
Lincoln County	10	0	0



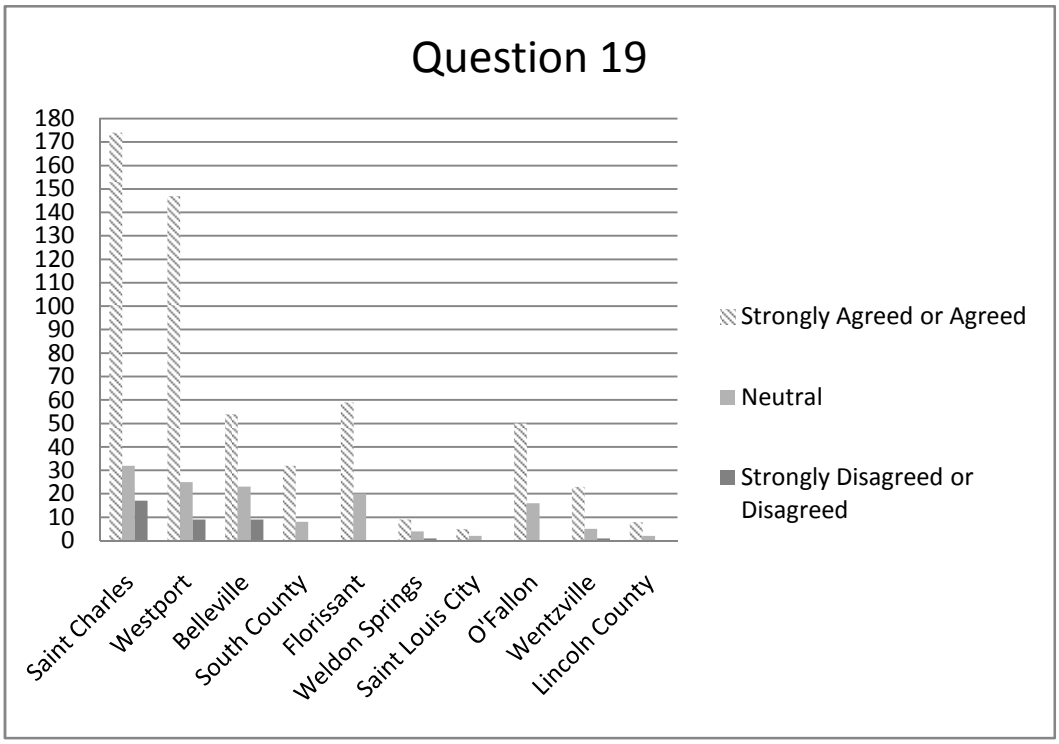
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	184	33	6
Westport	148	28	5
Belleville	73	11	2
South County	31	9	0
Florissant	65	14	0
Weldon Springs	8	5	1
Saint Louis City	6	1	0
O'Fallon	50	15	1
Wentzville	9	15	5
Lincoln County	0	7	3



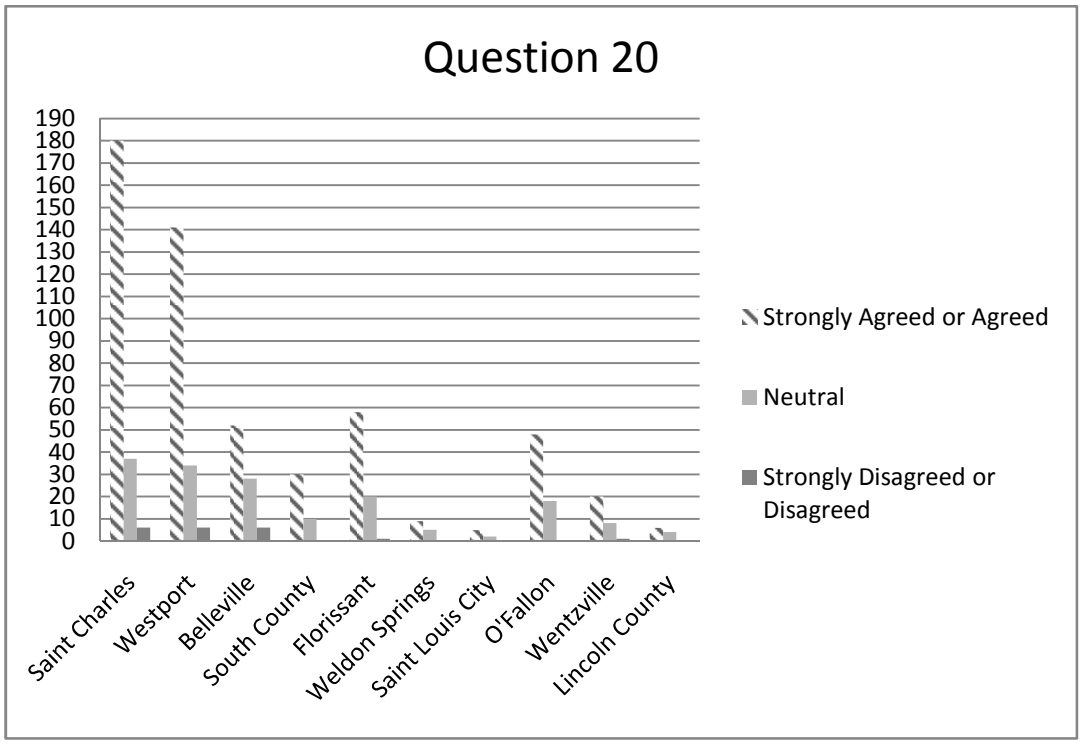
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	188	25	10
Westport	153	22	6
Belleville	59	21	6
South County	34	6	0
Florissant	61	18	0
Weldon Springs	12	1	1
Saint Louis City	6	0	1
O'Fallon	49	15	2
Wentzville	24	3	2
Lincoln County	8	2	0



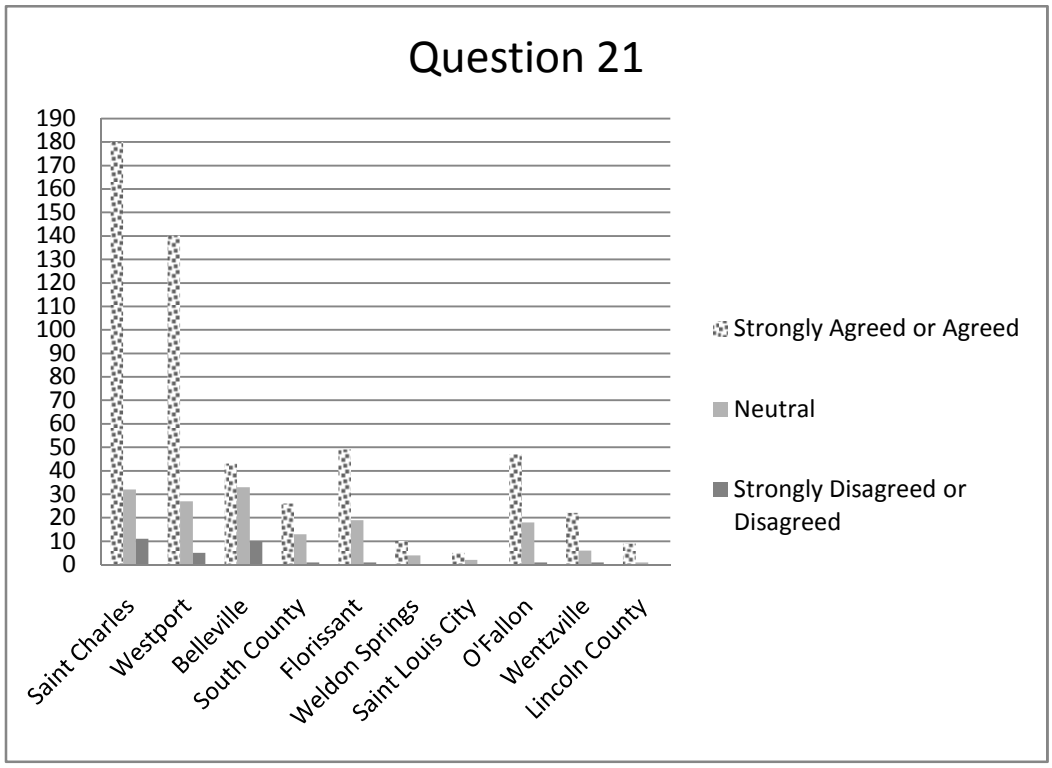
	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	182	31	10
Westport	157	21	3
Belleville	52	27	7
South County	32	8	0
Florissant	62	17	0
Weldon Springs	10	3	1
Saint Louis City	5	2	0
O'Fallon	50	16	0
Wentzville	23	5	1
Lincoln County	9	1	0



	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	174	32	17
Westport	147	25	9
Belleville	54	23	9
South County	32	8	0
Florissant	59	20	0
Weldon Springs	9	4	1
Saint Louis City	5	2	0
O'Fallon	50	16	0
Wentzville	23	5	1
Lincoln County	8	2	0



	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	180	37	6
Westport	141	34	6
Belleville	52	28	6
South County	30	10	0
Florissant	58	20	1
Weldon Springs	9	5	0
Saint Louis City	5	2	0
O'Fallon	48	18	0
Wentzville	20	8	1
Lincoln County	6	4	0



	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Neutral	Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed
Saint Charles	180	32	11
Westport	140	27	5
Belleville	43	33	10
South County	26	13	1
Florissant	49	19	1
Weldon Springs	10	4	0
Saint Louis City	5	2	0
O'Fallon	47	18	1
Wentzville	22	6	1
Lincoln County	9	1	0

Appendix E – Consent form for Focus Group

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Accelerated Degree Programs and Adult Learning Styles and Motivators

Investigator

This study will be conducted by Ms. Cindy Manjounes, doctoral candidate and faculty member at Lindenwood University.

Invitation to Participate & Purpose

You are being invited to participate in a focus group discussion regarding accelerated programs and adult learning motivators. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to consider participation.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this evaluation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the process. If you choose to do so, any information derived from your participation will be deleted from the evaluations findings.

Methods/Procedures

The methods of data collection for this study will be focus groups. The sessions will be audio-taped, and the audio-tapes transcribed, to ensure accurate reporting of the information that you provide. Transcribers will sign a form stating that they will not discuss any item on the tape with anyone other than the researchers. No one's name will be asked or revealed during the focus groups or individual interviews. However, should another participant call you by name, the transcriber will be instructed to remove all names from the transcription. The audio-tapes will be stored in locked files before and after being transcribed. Tapes will be destroyed within 2 weeks of completing the transcriptions and the transcriptions will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of this evaluation.

Confidentiality

If you choose to participate, you will not be asked your name at the focus group or individual interview. You will not need to use your name in the focus groups or individual interviews. If by chance, you or someone you know addresses you by name in the sessions, the transcriber will be instructed to delete the statement with the name. . There will however be no names attached to the tapes or transcriptions, and there will be no identifying information or names used in any written reports or publications which result from this evaluation project. Your participation in this evaluation will be strictly confidential.

All findings used in any written reports or publications which result from this evaluation project will be reported in aggregate form with no identifying information. It is, however useful to use direct quotes to more clearly capture the meanings in reporting the findings from this form of evaluation. You will be asked at the end of the interview or focus group if there is anything you said which you do not want included as a quote, and we will ensure that they are not used.

Risks and Inconveniences

There are no anticipated physical risks to participants. Focus group members will be asked to keep the information provided in the groups confidential; however, a potential

risk that might exist for some would be that information about your workplace might be discussed outside the group by other participants and be traced back to you. If this is a potential issue for you, you are encouraged to ask for an individual interview with one of the researchers who would then be knowledgeable of and bound by confidentiality.

Benefits

A potential benefit of participating in this evaluation for you could be having an opportunity to describe your experience with this Project with others who have shared the experience. Additionally, the opportunity to connect with other allies and share similar and divergent experiences may help clarify and validate your experiences within this Project. The benefits to society would be based on establishing a clearer understanding of the experiences faced by students and some of the obstacles and benefits of being an adult student. This information can help the current administration be more effective, and may provide guidance through lessons learned: for future program administration.

In Case of Injury

Lindenwood University appreciates the participation of people who help it carry out its function of developing knowledge through research. If you have any questions about the study that you are participating in you are encouraged to call Cindy Manjounes**,** the investigator, at 636-949-4522**.**

Although it is not the University's policy to compensate or provide medical treatment for persons who participate in studies, if you think you have been injured as a result of participating in this study, please call Dr. Jann Weitzel, Provost of Lindenwood University and Chair of the committee for Ms. Manjounes at 636-949-4500.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study at any time, you may contact Cindy Manjounes at Lindenwood University at 209 South Kingshighway, St. Charles, Missouri 63301 or you may phone her at 636-949-4522; or e-mail her at cmanjounes@lindenwood.edu.

Authorization

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Once again, we thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to participate in this evaluation process.

Printed Name of the Participant _____

Signature of the Participant _____

Date_____

Printed Name of the Investigator _____Cindy K. Manjounes_____

Signature of the Investigator _____

Appendix F – Focus Group Questions

Date Time:

(1) What was the primary reason you chose to pursue your education? What made you choose the traditional or accelerated programs ?

(2) How much of a factor are finances in your decision to pursue your education?

a. Grants and scholarships
b. Student Loans
c. Tuition reimbursement
d. Self funding education

(3) What has been the greatest challenge to overcome in your pursuit of your education?

(4) What do you like most about your classes?

(5) What do you like least about your classes?

(6) What is your timeframe for the completion of your degree and what factors could you see potentially affecting your degree completion time?

(7) Any additional comments at this time.

Appendix G – Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory

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MODIFIED INSTRUCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES INVENTORY

Listed below are 45 statements reflecting beliefs, feelings, and behaviors beginning or seasoned teachers of adults may or may not possess at a given moment. Please indicate how frequently each statement typically applies to you as you work with adult learners. Circle the number that best describes you.

	How frequently do you:	Almost Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
1.	Use a variety of teaching techniques?	A	B	C	D	E
2.	Use buzz groups (learners placed in groups to discuss information from lectures)?	A	B	C	D	E
3.	Believe that your primary goal is to provide learners as much information as possible?	A	B	C	D	E
4.	Feel fully prepared to teach?	A	B	C	D	E
5.	Have difficulty understanding learner point-of-views?	A	B	C	D	E
6.	Expect and accept learner frustration as they grapple with problems?	A	B	C	D	E
7.	Purposefully communicate to learners that each is uniquely important?	A	B	C	D	E
8.	Express confidence that learners will develop the skills they need?	A	B	C	D	E
9.	Search for or create new teaching?	A	B	C	D	E
10.	Teach through simulations of real-life?	A	B	C	D	E
11.	Teach exactly what and how you have planned?	A	B	C	D	E
12.	Notice and acknowledge to learners positive changes in them?	A	B	C	D	E
13.	Have difficulty getting your point across to learners?	A	B	C	D	E

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	How frequently do you:	Almost Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
14.	Believe that learners vary in the way they acquire, process, and apply subject matter knowledge?	A	B	C	D	E
15.	Really listen to what learners have to say?	A	B	C	D	E
16.	Trust learners to know what their own goals, dreams, and realities are like?	A	B	C	D	E
17.	Encourage learners to solicit assistance from other learners?	A	B	C	D	E
18.	Feel impatient with learner's progress?	A	B	C	D	E
19.	Balance your efforts between learner content acquisition and motivation?	A	B	C	D	E
20.	Try to make your presentations clear enough to forestall all learner questions?	A	B	C	D	E
21.	Conduct group discussions?	A	B	C	D	E
22.	Establish instructional objectives?	A	B	C	D	E
23.	Use a variety of instructional media? (internet, distance, interactive video, videos, etc.)	A	B	C	D	E
24.	Use listening teams (learners grouped together to listen for a specific purpose) during lectures?	A	B	C	D	E
25.	Believe that your teaching skills are as refined as they can be?	A	B	C	D	E
26.	Express appreciation to learners who actively participate?	A	B	C	D	E
27.	Experience frustration with learner apathy?	A	B	C	D	E
28.	Prize the learner's ability to learn what is needed?	A	B	C	D	E
29.	Feel learners need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings?	A	B	C	D	E
30.	Enable learners to evaluate their own progress in learning?	A	B	C	D	E

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	How frequently do you:	Almost Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
31.	Hear what learners indicate their learning needs are?	A	B	C	D	E
32.	Have difficulty with the amount of time learners need to grasp various concepts?	A	B	C	D	E
33.	Promote positive self-esteem in learners?	A	B	C	D	E
34.	Require learners to follow the precise learning experiences you provide them?	A	B	C	D	E
35.	Conduct role plays?	A	B	C	D	E
36.	Get bored with the many questions learners ask?	A	B	C	D	E
37.	Individualize the pace of learning for each learner?	A	B	C	D	E
38	Help learners explore their own abilities?	A	B	C	D	E
39.	Engage learners in clarifying their own aspirations?	A	B	C	D	E
40.	Ask the learners how they would approach a learning task?	A	B	C	D	E
41.	Feel irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting?	A	B	C	D	E
42.	Integrate teaching techniques with subject matter content?	A	B	C	D	E
43.	Develop supportive relationships with your learners?	A	B	C	D	E
44.	Experience unconditional positive regard for your learners?	A	B	C	D	E
45.	Respect the dignity and integrity of the learners?	A	B	C	D	E

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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	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL

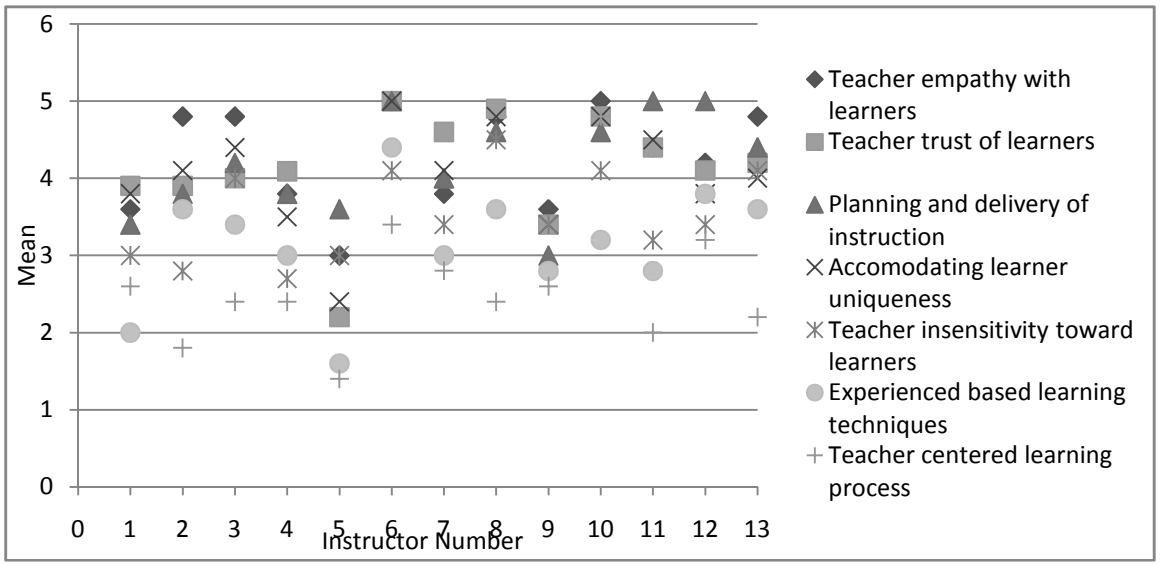
Scoring process

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.

FACTORS	MEAN	TOTAL	POSSIBLE MINIMUM	POSSIBLE MAXIMUM
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

Appendix H – Graphic Analysis Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory



INSTRUCTOR NUMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teacher empathy with learners	3.6	4.8	4.8	3.8	3	5
Teacher trust of learners	3.9	3.9	4	4.09	2.2	5
Planning and delivery of instruction	3.4	3.8	4.2	3.8	3.6	5
Accommodating learner uniqueness	3.8	4.1	4.4	3.5	2.4	5
Teacher insensitivity toward learners	3	2.8	4	2.7	3	4.1
Experienced based learning techniques	2	3.6	3.4	3	1.6	4.4
Teacher centered learning process	2.6	1.8	2.4	2.4	1.4	3.4
INSTRUCTOR NUMBER	7	8	9	10	11	12
Teacher empathy with learners	3.8	4.8	3.6	5	4.4	4.2
Teacher trust of learners	4.6	4.9	3.4	4.8	4.4	4.1
Planning and delivery of instruction	4	4.6	3	4.6	5	5
Accommodating learner uniqueness	4.1	4.8	3.4	4.8	4.5	3.8
Teacher insensitivity toward learners	3.4	4.5	3.4	4.1	3.2	3.4
Experienced based learning techniques	3	3.6	2.8	3.2	2.8	3.8
Teacher centered learning process	2.8	2.4	2.6	4.8	2	3.2
INSTRUCTOR NUMBER	13					
Teacher empathy with learners	4.8					
Teacher trust of learners	4.2					
Planning and delivery of instruction	4.4					
Accommodating learner uniqueness	4					
Teacher insensitivity toward learners	4.1					
Experienced based learning techniques	3.6					
Teacher centered learning process	2.2					

Appendix I – Modified Instructional Perspectives Inventory –

Adapted for Students (MIPI-S)

Listed below are 45 statements reflecting beliefs, feelings and behaviors beginning or seasoned teachers of adults may or may not possess at a given moment. Please indicate how frequently each statement typically applies to your instructor. Circle the letter that best describes the instructor.

How frequently does your instructor…	Almost Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
1. use a variety of teaching techniques?	A	B	C	D	E
2. use buzz groups (learners placed in groups to discuss information from lectures)?	A	B	C	D	E
3. appear to believe that his/her primary goal is to provide learners with as much information as possible?	A	B	C	D	E
4. appear to be fully prepared to teach?	A	B	C	D	E
5.have difficulty understanding learner point-of-views?	A	B	C	D	E
6. appear to expect and accept learner frustration as they grapple with problems?	A	B	C	D	E
7. purposefully communicate to learners that each learner is uniquely important?	A	B	C	D	E
8. express confidence that learners will develop the skills they need?	A	B	C	D	E
9. show he/she values searching for or creating new teaching techniques?	A	B	C	D	E
10. teach through simulations of real-life settings or situations?	A	B	C	D	E
11. appear to teach exactly what and how he/she has planned?	A	B	C	D	E
12. notice and acknowledge positive changes in learners?	A	B	C	D	E

13. have difficulty getting his/her point across to learners?	A	B	C	D	E
14. appear to believe that learners vary in the way they acquire, process, and apply subject matter knowledge?	A	B	C	D	E
15. really listen to what learners have to say?	A	B	C	D	E
16. appear to trust learners to know what their own goals, dreams, and realities are like?	A	B	C	D	E
17. encourage learners to solicit assistance from other learners?	A	B	C	D	E
18. appear to feel impatient with learners' progress?	A	B	C	D	E
19. balance his/her efforts between learner content acquisition and motivation?	A	B	C	D	E
20. make her/his presentations clear enough to forestall all learner questions?	A	B	C	D	E
21. conduct group discussions?	A	B	C	D	E
22. establish instructional objectives?	A	B	C	D	E
23. use a variety of instructional media? (Internet, distance, interactive video, videos, etc.)	A	B	C	D	E
24. use listening teams (learners grouped together to listen for a specific purpose) during lectures?	A	B	C	D	E
25. appear to believe that his/her teaching skills are as refined as they can be?	A	B	C	D	E
26. express appreciation to learners who actively participate?	A	B	C	D	E
27. appear to experience frustration with learner apathy?	A	B	C	D	E
28. appear to prize the learner's ability to learn what is needed?	A	B	C	D	E
29. appear to feel that learners need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings?	A	B	C	D	E
30. enable learners to evaluate their own progress in learning?	A	B	C	D	E
31. hear what learners indicate their learning needs are?	A	B	C	D	E
32. have difficulty with the amount of time learners need to grasp various concepts?	A	B	C	D	E
33. promote positive self-esteem in learners?	A	B	C	D	E
34. require learners to follow the precise learning experiences which he/she provides to them?	A	B	C	D	E
35. conduct role plays?	A	B	C	D	E
36. appear to act bored with the many questions learners ask?	A	B	C	D	E

37. individualize the pace of learning for each learner?	A	B	C	D	E
38. help learners explore their own abilities?	A	B	C	D	E
39. engage learners in clarifying their own aspirations?	A	B	C	D	E
40. ask the learners how they would approach a learning task?	A	B	C	D	E
41. appear to feel irritation at learner inattentiveness in the learning setting?	A	B	C	D	E
42. integrate teaching techniques with subject matter content?	A	B	C	D	E
43. develop supportive relationships with learners?	A	B	C	D	E
44. appear to experience unconditional positive regard for learners?	A	B	C	D	E
45. respect the dignity and integrity of the learners?	A	B	C	D	E

Instructional Perspectives Inventory Factors (Teachers)

(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	**TOTAL**	**TOTAL**	**TOTAL**	**TOTAL**	**TOTAL**	**TOTAL**

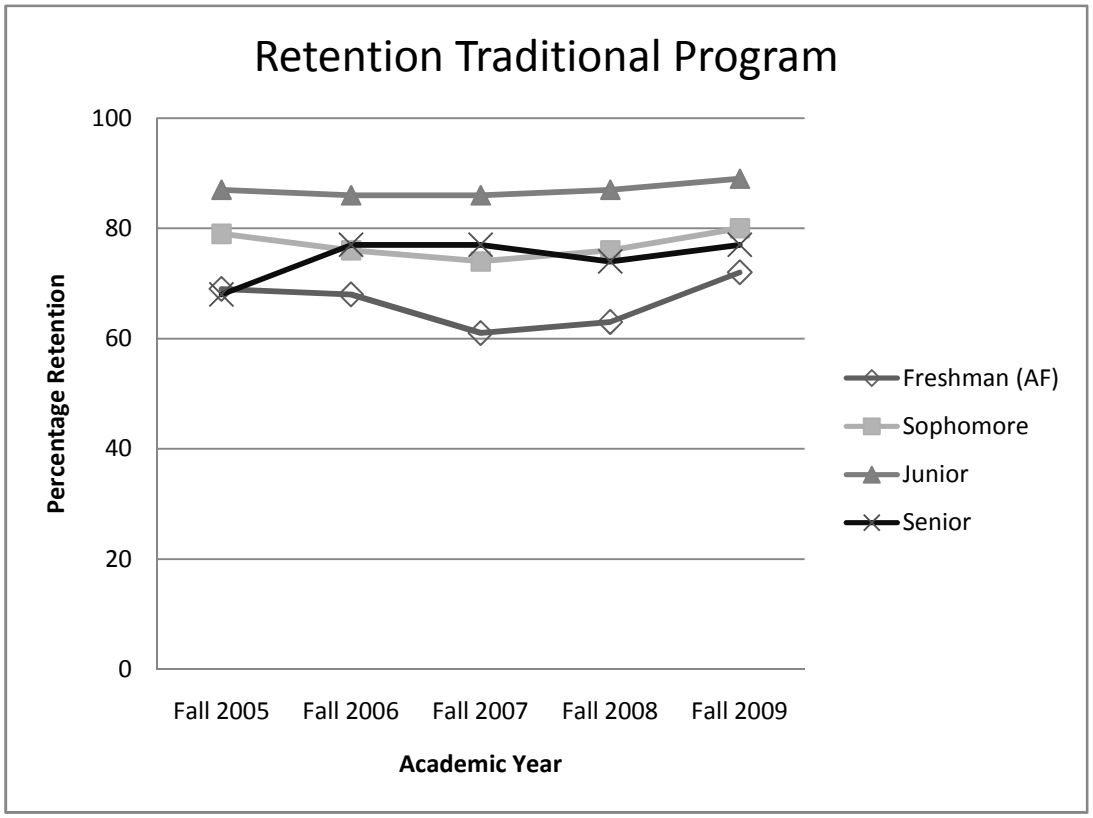
Scoring Process

A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, and E = 5

Reversed scored items are 3,5,11,18,20,25,27,32,34,36,and 41. These reversed items are scored as follows: A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, ...and E = 1.

FACTORS	MEAN POSSIBLE MINIMUM	MEAN POSSIBLE MAXIMUM	TOTAL
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. Experienced based learning techniques. (Learner-centered learning process)	5	25	_____ = _____
7. Teacher-centered learning process.	5	25	_____ = _____

Appendix J – Chart and Breakdown of Retention in Traditional Program



	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009
Freshman (AF)	69	68	61	63	72
Sophomore	79	76	74	76	80
Junior	87	86	86	87	89
Senior	68	77	77	74	77
Overall	76	76	73	74	79

Appendix K – General Education Requirements for LCIE Program

Communications Cluster ..... Humanities Cluster

Communications I .....

World Literature

Communications II .....

Survey of Philosophy

Intro to Literature .....

Concepts of Visual Arts

Social Sciences Cluster ..... Cross Cultural Cluster

Principles of Psychology .....

20th Century World History

Basic Concepts in Sociology .....

Focus area dependent upon

American Government the Nation .....

specific country chosen

Natural Sciences Cluster .....

Chemistry in Society .....

Environmental Biology .....

Ethical Problems in Science .....

Environmental Biology Lab

Math/Statistics Cluster

Quantitative Methods for Business

Basic Statistics

Research Design & Methodology

Vitae

Cindy K. Manjounes

QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

Committed senior-level professional with extensive experience and proven track record of success in contract negotiation, client retention, and strategic planning. Accomplished in facilitation and team development, and instilling a standard of excellence within the company. Highly skilled in communication, organization, and prioritization of tasks. Recognized for ability to retain key providers in established markets and build relationships with new providers in expansion areas, leading to increased client satisfaction.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY**,** St Charles, MO .....
11/2006 – present

Department Chair of Health Management & Gerontology

Primarily responsible for organization and delivery of Health Management and Gerontology programs.

- ❑ Faculty Advisor for approximately 300 undergraduate and graduate students in various degree programs.
- ❑ Developed course curriculum for division of undergraduate and graduate Health Management programs.
- ❑ Annually recruited over 30 new students since employment for the University.
- ❑ Oversee and direct 18 adjunct professors.
- ❑ Vice Chair of IRB committee for over one year.
- ❑ Sat on the Speaker's Bureau Committee for one year and have been instrumental in helping to bring certain speakers to the University.
- ❑ Attended several networking and business related events to bolster recognition of the University and our programs.
- ❑ Graduate level Instructor for Healthcare Strategies, Healthcare Marketing, World Health, Digital Medicine, Medical Records and the Law, and Ethics in Healthcare in adult accelerated program.
- ❑ Also taught undergraduate Business Writing Communications during day traditional program.

HEALTHLINK, INC., St Louis, MO .....
03/1996 – 10/2006

Senior Network Specialist

Managed territories of Southern and Central Illinois, Indiana and Arkansas to meet network needs of various clients and communities. Positioned company for long-term success via facilitation of relationships with key healthcare providers. Created educational programs to keep providers and staff informed of legal and product changes. Developed and established policies and procedures to ensure success and ease of workflow. Responsible for network of approximately 12,000 hospitals, physicians and

other ancillary providers in the areas of Southern and Central Illinois, and the states of Arkansas and Indiana. Conducted new product and contract orientations for all areas.

- ❑ Increased cash flow via collections of outstanding administrative fees by over $2 Million dollars in 2004.
- ❑ Significantly expanded network service area via education of healthcare Providers in 3 states in 2005.
- ❑ Increased profitability for company via re-negotiation and re-contracting of Provider network in Illinois in 1999 -2000
- ❑ Facilitated Office Staff Council meetings for Missouri and Illinois in 2005. Recommended improvements in current workflows, policies, and procedures based on data gathered at the meetings.

GREAT WEST LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY, Clayton, MO.....05/1992- 03/1996
Senior Customer Service Associate
Handled incoming calls from clients and health care providers and resolved their challenges in a timely manner. Facilitated client retention by immediate resolution of any discrepancies. Assisted in training of new associates to orient them to processing systems. Processed difficult and high dollar claims to ensure proper benefit application. Created benefit grids and training tools to facilitate sharing of correct information.

- ❑ Answered high volume of calls and maintained exceptional quality standards that were used as benchmarks of excellence in the company.
- ❑ Instituted off site training to encourage a broader perspective of issues that affect the industry.
- ❑ Received quality compensation bonuses yearly for high volume and exceptional quality work.

EDUCATION

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY, St Charles, MO
Master of Science Healthcare Management, 2005
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI ST LOUIS, St Louis, MO
Bachelor of Arts in Communication, 1991

PUBLICATIONS & LECTURES

The Start-up of Blissful Gardens – A case study published in the text "Effective Management of Long Term Care Facilities" about the start up of an extended care facility from inception to first resident, published by Jones and Bartlett – 2009.

Careers in Gerontology – Presented at the AADD Conference – May 2009.

CORO Leadership Academy, Selected as Fellows Judge, March 2010.