

THE EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM ON THE
RETENTION OF ADULT STUDENTS
RETURNING TO SCHOOL
IN A COMMUNITY
COLLEGE SETTING

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1977

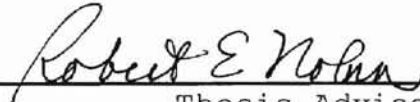
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
July, 1997

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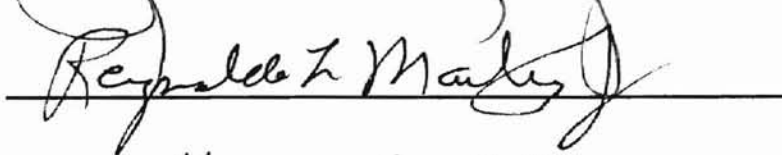
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my Committee Chairman and advisor, Dr. Robert Nolan, for his constructive guidance, intelligent supervision, and friendship. My appreciation extends to my other committee members, Dr. Jim Gregson and Dr. Reynaldo Martinez, whose guidance and direction were also invaluable.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Joe Dillsaver, Provost of Rogers University at Claremore, whose cooperation made this study possible. Also, to the faculty members who assisted me in the study: Ms. Barbara Christman, Dr. Emily Dial-Driver, Mrs. Evalon St. John, Ms. Mariaelena Godinez, Ms. Judy Hubble, Mr. Bill Pearish, and Mr. Phil Sample.

I would like to give special appreciation to my daughter, Amy Lynne Roberts, for her patience, her understanding, and for being my best friend. Also, to my father, Dr. Russell H. McClain, whose support and guidance have always been an inspiration to me. My thanks also go to David Goff, who has encouraged me and been of invaluable assistance to me throughout this process.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my dear mother, Lillian Y. McClain, whose life was an inspiration to us all.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Adult students returning to school face many obstacles, which they must overcome. With the open admission policy at Rogers University at Claremore, Oklahoma, many of these students who enroll may be unprepared to face the academic challenges of college level courses. Mandatory placement testing gives them the opportunity to begin classes at a level that is conducive to their success.

One of the most difficult barriers to adult students succeeding in higher education is the lack of self-confidence in their own abilities. Adult learning theorist Roger Boshier (1973) concluded that the participants' self-concept has a major influence on their likelihood to complete their classes. In his study on participation, he suggested that "both adult education participation and dropout can be understood to occur as a function of the magnitude of the discrepancy between the participant's self concept and key aspects (largely people) of the educational environment." (p. 260)

K. Patricia Cross, in Adults as Learners (1981), stated that "certain people, especially those who show a high degree of dissatisfaction with themselves, are likely to

project their own dissatisfaction onto the environment and to drop out of almost any kind of environment: that is, they are 'drop-out prone.'" (p. 120) She went on to discuss education as an achievement-oriented situation, noting that people who have low self-esteem do not typically do well in situations that emphasize achievement. They lack confidence in their own abilities and avoid situations that put them to the test and are likely to be a threat to their sense of self-esteem.

The Problem

The problem of concern in this particular study is that approximately thirty percent of adult returning students at Rogers University at Claremore withdraw from at least one class or drop out of all their classes each semester, based on student enrollment records (1993-97). The majority drop out in their first semester. National statistics reflected this trend showing rates varying from 33% to 51% of non-traditional students failing to complete their classes (West, 1992).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation between the perceived self-esteem of adult students and their completion of courses enrolled in a given semester.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the self-esteem levels in adult students as measured by the WAS Index of Self-esteem and their completion rate as measured by the number of weeks completed in English composition courses?
2. What is the difference, if any, in self esteem scores of adult returning students in their first year who are enrolled in Composition I and those enrolled in Writing I, a developmental course designed for those who score below proficiency level on English placement tests?

Significance of the Study

Community colleges, by name and mission, are designed to meet the educational needs of individuals in their local communities in pursuit of their personal goals. As explained by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, the challenge facing educators in this realm is by "offering quality education to all ages and social groups, community colleges can strengthen common goals as individuals are encouraged to see beyond private interests and place their lives in larger context" (Meyer, 1991, p. 8). These educators are obligated by the purposes of their profession to address the needs of their individual students in a way that they can assist them in developing to their

fullest potential.

With the number of non-traditional students increasing, it is vital that educators understand the conditions that motivate these students to remain in school and continue to pursue their objectives. By becoming aware of the possible effect of positive self-esteem on the retention rate of adult students, the educators may find cause to alter their attitudes and teaching techniques in order to enhance the self-esteem of their students.

The implications for a small community such as Claremore, Oklahoma would be great. Inasmuch as the majority of the students at Rogers University at Claremore (1993-97), are local commuter students, and approximately seventy-five percent are adult returning students, it would be of value to this institution to be aware of the effect that self-concept in its students has on their retention rate. As the primary focuses of the mission of this college are the success of its students and service to its community, this knowledge could give the faculty and staff a basis on which to concentrate their efforts in student support programs.

Limitations of the Study

The study, by design, dealt with the length of retention during one semester of enrollment in a single course. It did not encompass an overview of academic

performance or grades for each individual student. This approach was chosen in order to focus on the effect of self-esteem in adult students who had recently returned to school on their perseverance in completing the courses in which they enrolled.

The participants chosen for this study were first-year students twenty-one years of age or older enrolled in English Composition courses. The courses were those available to first-time enrollees, either Composition I or Writing I, a developmental course. Because of the non-random nature of the study sample, there was no assurance of the extent to which the results could be generalized.

Adult students who enrolled at Rogers University, who had not taken Composition I at another institution were assessed with the ACT COMPASS test for English placement. Those who enrolled in Writing I were those who had tested below the college level in English. The fact that these students were required to take a remedial course may have affected their self-esteem, thereby influencing their responses in this study, skewing the results toward lower self-esteem scores.

Definitions

The following terms will be used throughout this research paper in the defined context:

Non-traditional student: A post-secondary student who returns to school after a break in the educational process. This student has been out of school at least two years, and has adult responsibilities (Meyer, 1991). According to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, this adult student is twenty-one years of age or older (1996).

Retention: For the purposes of this study, retention is operationally defined as a student's continuation of the pursuit of enrolled courses to their completion, as opposed to dropping out.

Self-concept: A composite of a person's beliefs about herself based on personal relationships and unique life experiences. It is the self-knowledge one has about one's strengths and weaknesses, based on all information of which one is aware. (Martin and Coley, 1984).

Self-esteem: The extent to which a person holds regard for his or her worth. It is the evaluative component of self-concept, reflecting perception of value in reference to different attributes in one's personality that one considers important (Hudson, 1992).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, the literature pertaining to adult student retention and barriers to completion of educational pursuits was explored. Specific focus was placed on self-esteem in these students. The effects of both positive and negative self-image on course completion were examined, and measurements of this self-esteem quality were compared in order to choose an instrument for use in this study.

Adult Student Retention

Research into the drop-out rate in adult students in community colleges cited national statistics showing attrition rates varying from 33% to 51% of non-traditional students failing to complete their classes (West, 1992). Students with low reading levels tended to drop out more frequently. The evidence West accumulated indicated that retention rates were improved when the curriculum reflected on student experience. He concluded that "co-operation and participation in the classroom appear to be important prerequisites of student success." (p. 22)

At the "Catch Them, Calm Them, Keep Them" workshop held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a discussion produced several reasons why adult students drop out. Among these were difficulty in arranging transportation and child care,

scheduling conflicts, health problems, lack of family support, and fear of failure. In leading this workshop, Dr. Allen Quigley, director of Adult Education at Penn State University, related all of these possible reasons to the lack of personal motivation. Based on his research, if students have the motivation to continue, they would find solutions to these barriers. (Pennsylvania, 1993).

Hilts (1991) explored four categories of factors that could act as deterrents to meeting the academic goals of adults: "situational, institutional, informational, and psycho-social" (p. 6). Responses that were categorized as situational included financial considerations, shiftwork, or difficulties in obtaining child care or transportation. Institutional areas were registration confusion, poor instructors, inconvenient scheduling of courses, and fear of attending at a college setting. Lack of program or college offering information was placed in the informational category. Lack of interest, program difficulty, drug or alcohol problems, lack of confidence, and being tired of school were classified as psycho-social barriers. In his findings, the psycho-social factors were most prominent in students who had dropped out. Specifically, the highest number of responses were: "lack of self-confidence (32.5%), low regard for education (12.5%), and lack of family support (12.5%)." (p. 18) Situational factors that were prominent were "family obligations (17.5%), ease obtaining work

(15.0%), and lack of funding (15.0%).” (p. 20)

Career advancement and job security were found to be the primary motivators for returning to school in the reentry women studied by Greenwood (1990). These students, enrolled in Composition courses, indicated that the time pressures in their lives contributed to the most powerful internal deterrent to their persistence in school: fear of failure. This was stimulated by low self-esteem and the self-perception of their inability to learn and compete successfully in their courses. External contributing factors included time and financial constraints, inconsistent support from family and friends, and the stressful effect on family relationships. The author concluded that personal commitment, increased sense of self-worth through discoveries of learning abilities, and support from faculty and fellow students made it possible for these women to complete the semester.

Self-esteem in Adult Returning Students

Self-concept may be the key to success in education, as well as in life. What one believes about oneself is firmly connected with the direction one's life takes. Hartzclaw (1983) suggested that adults returning to school need to probe their inner selves in the effort to move ahead in their lives. Being placed in a situation that requires new

responses and role decisions brings a more concrete awareness to one's real preferences and inner continuities, and thereby helps to establish sound ego identity. Learning and self-evaluation then become central life tasks.

Heatherly and Steffens (1989) concluded that psychological readiness for learning in adults is a result of self-esteem and self-worth, which in turn, come from having learned to cope with life. Coping skills are part of the learning skills that most people glean from interaction in the educational environment. In children, learning needs transcend the school; they extend to the experiences that they have with their parents and family. Parents must raise their dependent children to be independent adults by providing security and direction. When they have not fulfilled their "first teacher" roles, their children's learning needs are not met. If learners have a negative attitude toward themselves, it might negatively affect their motivation to learn.

In many adults, self-esteem in regards to learning is unnecessarily low. They may not realize just how much they do know. They might not perceive what they know as valuable, so they do not believe in themselves as learners. This makes them doubtful about their own value. If they realize that they know more than they have given themselves credit for, it spurs a great surge of confidence. This can happen when a student is in a new learning situation or when

one accomplishes a personal educational goal (Evans, 1985).

For an adult to return to school is a fearful prospect and a source of anxiety. Recognizing personal myths about education and learning is useful in dispelling fears and anxiety. If people have negative convictions about their abilities, such as "I'm too old to learn", dispelling these beliefs is essential. Realizing that such attitudes are potentially self-defeating can be an important step toward developing a positive self-awareness of learning capacity (Smith, 1991).

Krupp (1991) recognized that often these students are haunted by recollections of earlier educational failures. An adult who has repeatedly experienced failure might feel intense fear when considering the risk of failure in a new learning situation. This person may experience all the emotions of the worst case scenario: anger, guilt, insecurity, and panic. These thoughts lead to negative reactions toward the learning process resulting in further failures and lower self-esteem. Individuals with high self-esteem, however, react to learning opportunities feeling confident, capable, eager, and excited. This translates into positive actions in the learning situation, resulting in success. This accomplishment breeds higher self-esteem. Adults who have high self-esteem learn to learn in order to help themselves grow and in order to be more able to help others. They use their acquired knowledge to improve

interpersonal relationships, make appropriate decisions, and to become more responsible in our democratic society (Krupp, 1991).

Wlodkowski (1985) separated the esteem needs of adult learners into two categories. The first emphasized self-respect and the inner desire for strength, achievement, mastery, competence, confidence, independence and freedom. Most adults enter learning situations in order to raise the level at which they perform a task or action. They want to be effective in their positions of responsibility. The second type of esteem needs noted was more other-directed in desiring respect from other people. These include prestige, status, fame, glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, and appreciation. Under certain conditions, these needs can lead to severe dependency on others and self-distortion, and make the person more prone to manipulation. It is common for returning adult students to have doubts about their learning capacity. Their abilities are often underestimated and undeveloped. Their families who might question their abilities or need for learning may reinforce their doubts. The healthiest esteem is based on deserved respect from others, which comes as a result of our actual competence and adequacy.

Poor Self-esteem as a Barrier to Retention

The impression that an individual develops about

education early in life has a vital impact on the attitudes they retain throughout life. "The feeling of not belonging to the educational setting can create weak self images that often continue through life. These weakened self images play a significant part in determining educational success or failure" (Eschenmann & Olinger, 1992, p. 8). This lack of self-confidence in educational settings that is cultivated in childhood remains in our adult students. These feelings are often compounded by frustrations felt in the classroom, pressures of daily responsibilities, and crises or transitions in life. Many adults, though basically committed to succeeding in school, are tempted to escape when familiar signs of failure arise. They may consider dropping out because they feel different than other students and do not have the confidence to cope with the rigors of the demands they encounter in their educational and life experiences (Eschenmann & Olinger, 1992).

In studying the adult students at Northern Lights College, David Hilts (1991) found that the primary psychosocial barrier to continuance of educational pursuits was the lack of self-confidence. His study showed that 32.5 percent of these students perceived this as a dominant factor affecting their success in educational programs. He emphasized the "fear of failure syndrome" as significant in impeding an adult student's progress.

Greenwood (1990) found the two factors of fear of

failure and low self-esteem shaped the perception of inability to compete in the classroom for the students she studied. These proved to be the most powerful internal barriers to overcome. Reentry students simply do not believe that they have the ability to learn. "They enter college, therefore, highly apprehensive learners, committed to a dream with little if any appreciation of their ability to attain it." (p. 134)

Noel (1978) also referred to the "fear of failure" syndrome as a source of anxiety and frustration in adult students. He reflected that many adult "reentry" students unjustifiably relate past achievements with ability and, consequently, ability with worth. If these students are not taught the reality of the educational process and a realistic self-image, they might drop out to avoid the adverse reactions of anxiety and frustration caused by these insecure feelings of inadequacy. "An enhanced view of self is essential to retaining these students in an otherwise threatening educational setting." (p. 51)

Positive Self-esteem and Retention

In a study by Jeffrey Rosenberg (1991), self-esteem and anxiety levels of students in a technical retraining program were tested as they advanced in their studies. One of the focuses of this program was the personal growth and self-esteem of the adults they were retraining. A counselor and

job-developer were hired by this program specifically to encourage these students in completing the program. By the end of the program, students showed increases in their self-esteem and decreases in anxiety levels.

Wlodkowski (1985) believed that there is a positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. As the adult has a firmer and more fully formed self-concept, the relationship between self-esteem and achievement is stronger. "The higher the self-concept, the better the odds that the person will do well on academic tasks and vice versa." (p.89)

Valentine and Darkenwald (1986) conducted a survey of 300 New Jersey GED graduates for the period January 1 through April 31, 1982. In the area of self-esteem, 94.2 percent reported that they felt better about themselves after accomplishing the successful completion of the GED exam.

In a similar study, Bonnett and Newsom (1995) examined the changes in self-esteem levels in adult learners in a GED class offered on a military base for wives of U.S Army personnel. Their results showed that the mean scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory raised twenty-two per cent from the initial test to the exit test. Of the eighteen learners fourteen expressed a renewed appreciation for education. Seventeen reflected increased confidence in themselves and their ability to learn. They had overcome

their fears of failure, and developed the attitudes that this failure was temporary and gave opportunities to find alternate ways to succeed. "At the end of the course, these women viewed success as a result of studying and the development of self-confidence in existing and newly developed skills." (p. 10)

The findings of Greenwood's study (1990) revealed that only after discovering their ability to learn and experiencing a rapidly increasing sense of self-worth were her students able to complete the semester. She concluded that students must develop a strong sense of their ability to succeed in their classes in order to overcome the profound fear of the experience. A focused optimism maintained by a support system was the encouragement necessary to keep them in school. At the end of the semester, though many still felt a sense of inferiority among their peers, the major benefits of completing college classes reported by this study's participants were building confidence, bettering themselves, realizing their self-worth and feeling a sense of satisfaction.

Measurements of Self-esteem

Martin and Coley (1984) described self-esteem as a set of attitudes an individual holds in regards to him or herself. It referred to the attributes one considered important, the value one placed on these attributes, and the

positive or negative self-image one had toward these qualities. Considered a vital internally-oriented psychological factor, many instruments have been created to evaluate this component of self-concept. Each was found to have distinct characteristics.

Stanley Coopersmith created the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory in 1981. The Adult Form, Form C, consisted of twenty-five short statements to be evaluated by the respondent. The two possible answers were "like me" or "unlike me" (Martin and Coley, 1984).

The Barksdale Self-Esteem Evaluation consisted of fifty statements to which respondents would give an answer on a graduated scale from "0 if not true" to "3 if true". (Heatherly and Steffens, 1989, p. 85). The total of odd-numbered statements, which were negative, was subtracted from even-numbered statements, which were positive.

Fitts (1965) developed the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale as a standardized instrument to measure the multi-dimensional nature of self-concept. The Scale consisted of 100 items designed as descriptive statements that were used by the subject "to portray his own picture of himself." (p. 1) The scores were compiled in a total of thirty different combinations to denote separate aspects of self-concept. For example, the total self-esteem score was divided into eight sub-scores: identity, self-satisfaction, behavior, physical self, moral-ethical self, personal self, family

self, and social self. The testing and scoring times were each estimated at twenty minutes. (Fitts, 1965)

Hudson's Index of Self-esteem was created as part of the Clinical Measurement Package in 1982. (Hudson, 1982) It was designed to measure the magnitude of a problem that a subject had with self-esteem. It consisted of twenty-five statements to which the respondent placed a value of one, denoting "none of the time", to seven, signifying "all of the time". The positive and negative statements were randomly distributed throughout, and scoring was accomplished by reversing the scores on the positive statements. A clinical cutting score of 30 indicated whether or not a client had a problem in the area of self-esteem. (Hudson, 1992)

In evaluating various measures of self-esteem, Abell, Jones, and Hudson (1984) described the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) as clear in the issue of definition of self-esteem and formatted as a unidimensional instrument. The ISE compared the ideal self with the real self, allowing the respondent "to report levels of self-esteem along a single continuum at a given point in time." (p. 12) The short form format was noted as easy to understand by the clients and completely answered by the overwhelming majority. The scoring formula was a simple procedure for computing a total score. The findings of this study reported positively that the ISE had "good-to-excellent reliability, ...good-to-excellent content,

concurrent, construct, and factorial validity,...and that the potential for clinical and research application of the ISE is high." (Abell, Jones, and Hudson, 1984, p. 16)

Summary

The consistent thread through all literature found concerning self-esteem and adult learners was the strong impact that a positive self-image has on the prospects of retention in college courses. The importance of this concept was reflected in the tendency of adult students with low self-esteem to have a fear of failing in educational pursuits and to either not attempt or drop out of their classes. Though no studies were found which specifically compared retention rates and self-esteem, those that addressed academic performance and dropout tendencies indicated a positive relationship between self-concept and scholastic success.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The problem of concern in this study was that approximately thirty percent of adult returning students at Rogers University at Claremore withdraw from at least one class or drop out of all their classes each semester. The majority drop out in the first semester. To address this problem, this study examined whether there was a correlation between the perceived self-esteem of adult students and their completion of courses enrolled in a given semester. The best way to examine this possible correlation was to compare the scores on a standardized self-esteem test with the number of weeks a student remained in a particular class.

Research questions guiding this study were:

1. What is the relationship between the self-esteem levels in adult students as measured by the WAS Index of Self-esteem and their completion rate as measured by the number of weeks completed in English composition courses?
2. What is the difference, if any, in self esteem scores of adult returning students in their first year who are enrolled in Composition I and those enrolled in Writing I, a developmental course designed for those who score below proficiency level on English placement tests?

Population and Sample

The study was initiated during the Spring Semester of 1997, focusing on the population consisting of all adult returning students twenty-one years of age or older enrolled Rogers University at Claremore, Oklahoma. The sample selected was an intact group of first-time students who were enrolled in Composition I or Writing I, a remedial English course taken by at-risk students who were deficient in their English skills. These particular courses were chosen because some form of English Composition was typically taken during a student's first semester of college attendance, and these were the two writing courses available to first-time enrollees.

Design

Approval of the proposal for this study was obtained from the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). Permission to conduct this study with current adult students was sought and granted by the Provost of the Rogers University Claremore Campus (Appendixes B and C). As agreed, participation by the students was totally voluntary. Each of the first-time adult students in the chosen courses was asked to take the Index of Self-esteem inventory during the first week of the semester. This was intended to give an assessment of their perceived self-

esteem level. In order to increase probability of a high rate of return, the questionnaires were distributed in the classes. Prior to the beginning of the semester, a letter describing the study and requesting cooperation for the distribution process was sent to each of the instructors of Writing I and Composition I courses for the Spring 1997 semester (Appendix D). All were willing to comply.

The researcher delivered the Index of Self-esteem (ISE) questionnaires to the students during their first week of classes, being available to explain the study and answer questions. In addition, two copies of the Informed Consent form (Appendix E) were given to each potential participant, one to return with the completed ISE and one for their records. The packets for students who were not in attendance at the class when the forms were distributed were left with the instructor to be given at the first class they attended. Students were instructed to return the forms either to their instructor, or directly to the researcher. Confidentiality was stressed.

During the third week of classes, a second letter was sent to the instructors asking them to remind their students to return their forms (Appendix F). A follow-up letter was sent during the sixth week directly to the withdrawn students who had not responded, stressing the importance of their responses, even though they were no longer in the courses (Appendix G). Enclosed with the letter were an

additional copy of the ISE, two more Informed Consent forms, and a self-addressed stamped envelope in which the completed questionnaire could be returned.

Each week throughout the first six weeks of the semester, rosters showing the enrollment in each Composition I and Writing I class were pulled. These reflected the students who had withdrawn from the classes up until that time. At the end of the first nine weeks, completion rates were tabulated by the number of weeks each student remained enrolled in the course, and considered on a scale from one to nine weeks. This figure gave a variable that was used as interval data which was compared statistically to arrive at a correlation between the self-esteem and retention rate of the students who responded to the ISE.

Data Collection

The Index of Self-esteem (ISE) was chosen for this study because it is designed specifically to measure the intensity of a problem that one has with self-esteem. The items are stated in simple language that is easy for respondents to understand (Appendix H). This was one of the nine scales of the Clinical Measurement Package (CMP) created by Walter W. Hudson in 1982. The collection of assessment tools has been expanded to consist of twenty instruments referred to as the WALMYR Assessment Scales or WAS scales. (Hudson, 1992)

The twenty-five statements on the ISE are rated by the subject on a seven-point scale according to the following criteria: (1) none of the time, (2) very rarely, (3) a little of the time, (4) some of the time, (5) a good part of the time, (6) most of the time, and (7) all of the time. To score the ISE, the following items that are on the positive end of the scale are first given reverse values: 3-7, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, 23, and 25. The sum of these reversed scores is then added to the remaining responses. This number is denoted as "Y" in the following score computation, referring to the final score as "S": $S = (\text{Sum}(Y) - N)(100) / [(N)(K - 1)]$. "N" denotes the number of items that were properly completed by the respondent and "K" is the largest possible score value for each item (7 in all cases). The purpose of this scoring formula is to replace omitted or improperly scored items with the mean of the items properly completed. The result is a score which falls in a range from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating a problem with self-esteem (Hudson, 1992).

The clinical cutting score of the ISE is 30, with scores above 30 showing that the respondent has a significant problem with self-esteem, and scores below 30 indicating that no such problem exists (Hudson, 1992). This score was determined to minimize the percent of false positives and false negatives (Hudson, Wung, & Borges, 1980). According to Hudson (1982), this gives the counselor

a useful and important tool for understanding and interpreting the results, while providing a convenient goal or standard for treatment.

For the purpose of this study, the scores on this test, though actually nominal data, can be considered as interval data on a scale of 0 to 100, which will give variables that can be easily used for subsequent statistical analysis. This has been found to be an accepted practice for usage of scores of this type. Scores from the ISE, specifically, have been used as interval data in correlational studies by Hudson, Wung, and Borges (1980), Hudson and McIntosh (1981), Nurius (1983), and Abell, Jones, and Hudson (1984).

In determining the reliability of the ISE, Hudson (1982) indicated that the coefficient alpha was chosen as the primary means of determining internal consistency. He noted that an alpha coefficient of .90 or greater evidenced that the scale is a unidimensional measurement tool. Findings indicated an excellent internal consistency in the ISE showing compatibility between the items reflected in a mean alpha of .93 (Corcoran & Fischer, 1987, p. 188).

The ISE has been tested multi-racially and cross-culturally. Corcoran and Fischer indicated that its test-retest stability has been evidenced with a two-hour correlation of .92. This measurement of reliability reflected the stability of a measurement device over time, indicating that there would be only slight variations in

results of measuring the level of the characteristic (in this case, self-esteem) over time.

Hudson (1992) cited three specific studies that measured the reliability of the ISE: Hudson and Proctor (1976), McIntosh (1979), and Hudson, Abell, and Jones (1982). The research provided strong evidence that the ISE is a highly reliable scale, with consistently low Standard Error of Measurement (SEM), ranging from 3.51 to 3.87. Clinically, this SEM indicates that approximately 95 percent of the time, a person's score will fall within about seven points of their "true" score. Since the range on the ISE is from 0 to 100, it is reported to be an excellent scale in terms of its error of measurement (Hudson, Wung, & Borges, 1980).

Validity of a measurement tool must be determined in order to determine its ability to measure what it was designed to measure. In determining the validity of the ISE test, two separate areas were addressed by Corcoran and Fischer (1987): discriminant and construct validity. Discriminant or "known-groups" validity was established by a team of clinical psychologists who determined that the test accurately distinguished between clients who had been judged to have difficulties with self-esteem and those who had been determined not to have this type of problem. Findings indicated that the ISE had outstanding discriminant validity, with validity coefficients of .60 or greater

(Hudson, 1992).

A high value of construct validity was determined by the fact that these results correlate well with those related tests with which it should correlate highly, such as sense of identity, depression and happiness. It also correlates poorly with measures with which it should not correlate. Another of the Hudson's Clinical Measurement Package instruments, the General Contentment Scale, was one of the assessments used to determine these correlations.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data collected in this study, the chi-square statistic and probit model of non-linear regression were used. The actual computation was aided by the SYSTAT 6.0 for Windows computer program. SYSTAT processes information through data analysis in a graphical environment, creating tables and graphics to illustrate the statistical calculations. (SYSTAT, 1996)

The chi-square statistic is based on frequencies of occurrence. It indicates whether two variables are related or independent, without giving information about the strength, direction, or pattern of the association. This statistic is based on the relationship between the frequencies that one observes and the frequencies that one would expect to observe if the null hypothesis of no association were true (Wilkinson, Blank, and Gruber, 1996).

In the analysis of this study, the chi-square was used in an attempt to answer both research questions by transforming the variables into categorical variables and determining whether or not there was a statistical association between them.

The probit model of non-linear regression is designed to plot data against the fit of an S-curve instead of a straight line. The model determines the ability of a continuous variable to predict the occurrence of a categorical variable. It is typically used in computing samples with small numbers of responses. It applies a mathematical formula to linear regression in order to fit the data between 0 and 1 boundaries. It fits the data into a probability curve known as the normal cumulative distribution function (Wilkinson, Blank, and Gruber, 1996). This model was used in the computation of data for the second research question, comparing ISE scores for students enrolled in Writing I or Composition I to predict the probability of enrollment in a particular English course.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

A total of 121 survey/consent packets were distributed to the classes, one for each adult student twenty-one years of age or older on the roster during the first week of class. Eighteen of the packets were returned by the instructors unopened, because the students assigned to them never attended class. This left a possible sample size of 103, corresponding with the total number of packets actually distributed to students.

By the third week of classes, thirty-one completed ISE and Informed Consent forms had been returned. A second letter was sent to the instructors asking them to remind their students to return their forms (Appendix F). Consequently, eight more completed forms were returned. By the sixth week of class, only three responses had been received from the twenty-two students who had dropped their English courses. A follow-up letter was sent directly to the nineteen withdrawn students who had not responded, stressing the importance of their responses, even though they were no longer in the courses (Appendix G). Three of these students responded, giving a total of forty-two completed ISE forms, or a 40.78% return from the adult students who attended the Writing I and Composition I courses. Of these, only six, or 25%, of the twenty-four

students who dropped the course responded, and thirty-six, or 45.6%, of the seventy-nine adult students who remained in the classes answered the questionnaire.

Self-esteem and Course Completion

Research question 1: What is the relationship between the self-esteem levels in adult students as measured by the WAS Index of Self-esteem and their completion rate as measured by the number of weeks completed in English composition courses?

The original design of the analysis was a correlational study comparing two interval variables to determine whether or not a student's ISE score would correlate positively with the number of weeks that student would attend class. When the assumptions for correlational studies were checked, it was found that correlation could not be measured in this case due to the fact that the scatter plot of the weeks attended variable (Figures 1 and 2) showed that this variable is not normally distributed in this sample.

In an attempt to answer the first research question, the scatter plots in Figures 1 and 2 were reviewed to compare the ISE scores of each respondent with the number of weeks they attended their English classes. Figure 1 used two separate points indicating two variables for each student who responded. The diamond shape represented the number of weeks the student remained in the course, and

FIGURE 1
SCATTER PLOT ILLUSTRATING
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EACH RESPONDENT'S
ISE SCORE AND NUMBER OF WEEKS ATTENDED

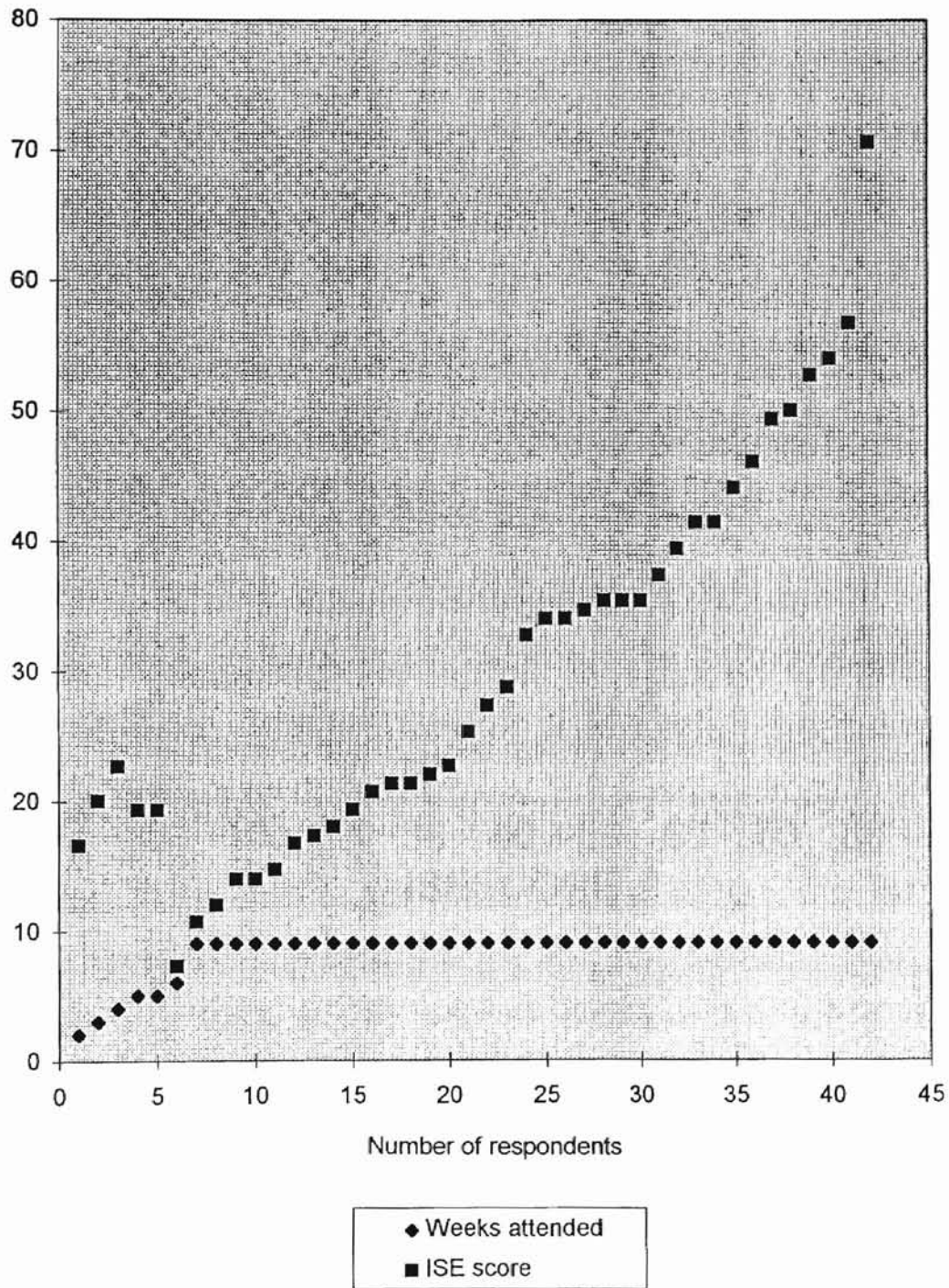
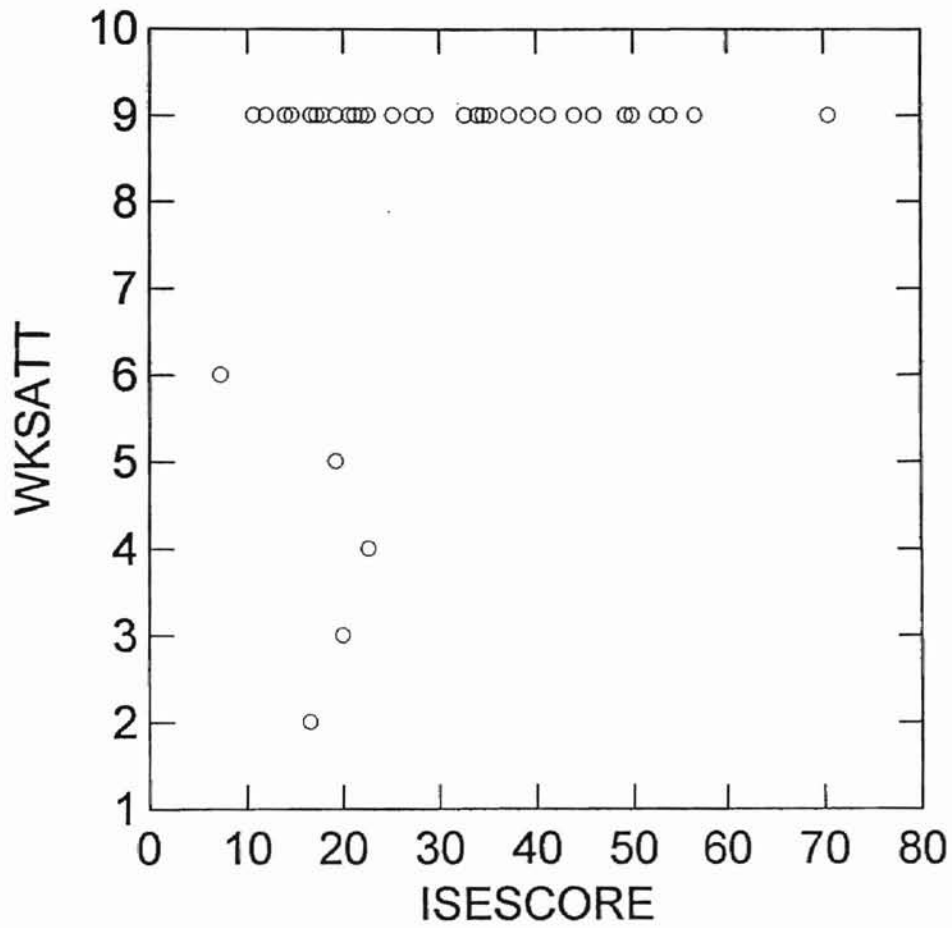


FIGURE 2
SCATTER PLOT COMPARING
ISE SCORE AND WEEKS ATTENDED



the square indicated the level of IES score. It gave an illustration of the individual relationship between each respondent's ISE score and the weeks of class that student attended.

The scatterplot in Figure 2 combined the variables, placing the weeks attended on the x-axis and the ISE score on the y-axis. This graph indicated that approximately half of the respondents (seventeen) scored below the cutting score of 30, indicating high self-esteem, and half (nineteen) scored above 30, indicating low self-esteem.

In order to analyze the data, the two variables, ISE score and weeks attempted, were then transformed into categorical variables to measure association. The ISE variable was denoted as high or low depending on its relationship to the designated cutting score of 30. Scores of more than 30 indicated low self-esteem, and scores of 30 or less denoted a sense of high self-esteem. In converting the weeks attended variable, students who were still in the courses when the final computations were made (at nine weeks) had been assigned a weeks attended value of 9, and were considered "persisting". Those who had withdrawn from the classes had a weeks attended value of the actual number of weeks they were in the class (<9), and were considered "dropped" for this analysis.

An association is said to exist between two variables if the distribution of the dependent variable differs across

at least some categories of the independent variable. The frequency of distribution of high self-esteem scores (30 or less on the ISE) and low self-esteem scores (more than 30 on the ISE) between those students who stayed in their English courses and those who did not is shown in Table 1. Expected frequencies for this sample were computed by multiplying the total of each row by the total of each column and dividing by the number of respondents in the sample, and are shown in Table 2. The general rule is: after computing percentages in the appropriate direction, if there is any difference in the percentage distributions then an association exists. The percentage computation of the frequency distribution is shown in Table 3. When the actual distribution of ISE scores (Table 1) is compared with the expected frequencies (Table 2), and looking at the percentage frequency table (Table 3), there appears to be an association between Index of Self-esteem scores and completion of English courses.

The chi-square is a statistic that indicates whether two variables are related or independent, without giving information about the strength, direction, or pattern of the association. For this frequency distribution, the observed chi-square value (χ^2) was 5.783. The critical value of χ^2 for a table with one degree of freedom at a p level of 0.05 is 3.8415 (Brown, 1988, p. 192). Therefore, there is only a 5% chance that the observed χ^2 of 5.783 was due to chance

alone, or there is a 95% probability that there is an association between the frequencies (see Table 4).

TABLE 1
FREQUENCY OF HIGH AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM SCORES

	DROPPED	PERSISTING	TOTAL
High (< 31)	6	17	23
Low (> 30)	0	19	19
Total	6	36	42

TABLE 2
EXPECTED FREQUENCY OF HIGH AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM SCORES

	DROPPED	PERSISTING	TOTAL
High (< 31)	3.3	19.7	23
Low (> 30)	2.7	16.3	19
Total	6	36	42

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE OF FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM SCORES

	DROPPED	PERSISTING	TOTAL	N RESPONSES
High (< 31)	26.087	73.913	100.0	23
Low (> 30)	0.0	100.0	100.0	19
Total	14.286	85.714	100.0	
N responses	6	36		42

TABLE 4
CHI-SQUARE VALUES

STATISTIC	VALUE	DF	p LEVEL	CRITICAL VALUE
chi-square (χ^2)	5.783	1.0	0.05	3.8415

English Course Enrollment and Self-esteem

Research question 2: What is the difference, if any, in self esteem scores of adult returning students in their first year who are enrolled in Composition I and those enrolled in Writing I, a developmental course designed for those who score below proficiency level on English placement tests?

To address this question, the statistic chosen was the probit model of non-linear regression. This model is designed to plot data against the fit of an S-curve instead of a straight line. The model determines the ability of a continuous variable to predict the occurrence of a categorical variable.

The checking of assumptions is shown in the scatter plots in Figures 3 and 4. The scatter plot graph in Figure 3 indicates that the ISE scores are normally distributed and provide the independent variable of continuous interval data. Figure 4 is a conventional scatter plot with the dependent variable on the vertical scale and the independent variable, ISE Score, on the horizontal. The Y-scale indicates placement into Composition I or Writing I. The horizontal strips of values indicate that "English" is a categorical dependent variable and "ISE Score" is a continuous independent variable. All data for the dependent variable is categorical.

FIGURE 3

GRAPH OF ISE SCORES FOR
PROBIT MODEL OF NON-LINEAR REGRESSION
ILLUSTRATING NORMAL DISTRIBUTION
FROM HIGH TO LOW VALUES WITH
CLUSTERING IN THE MIDDLE

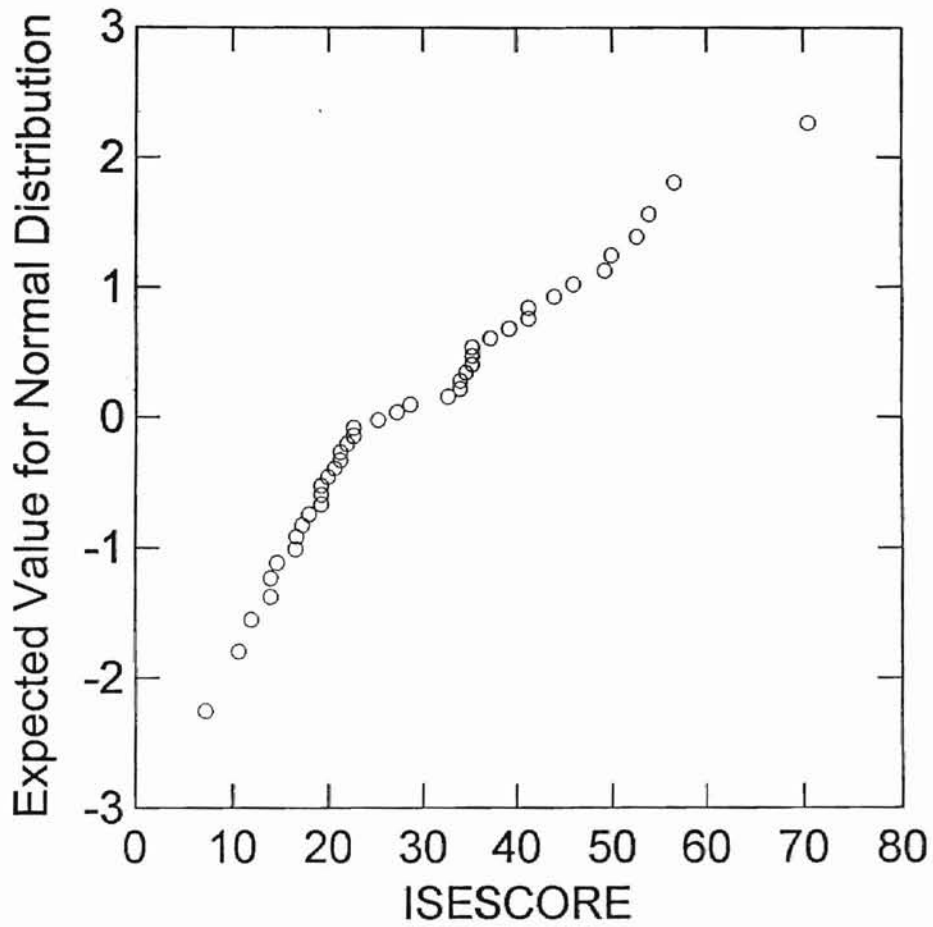
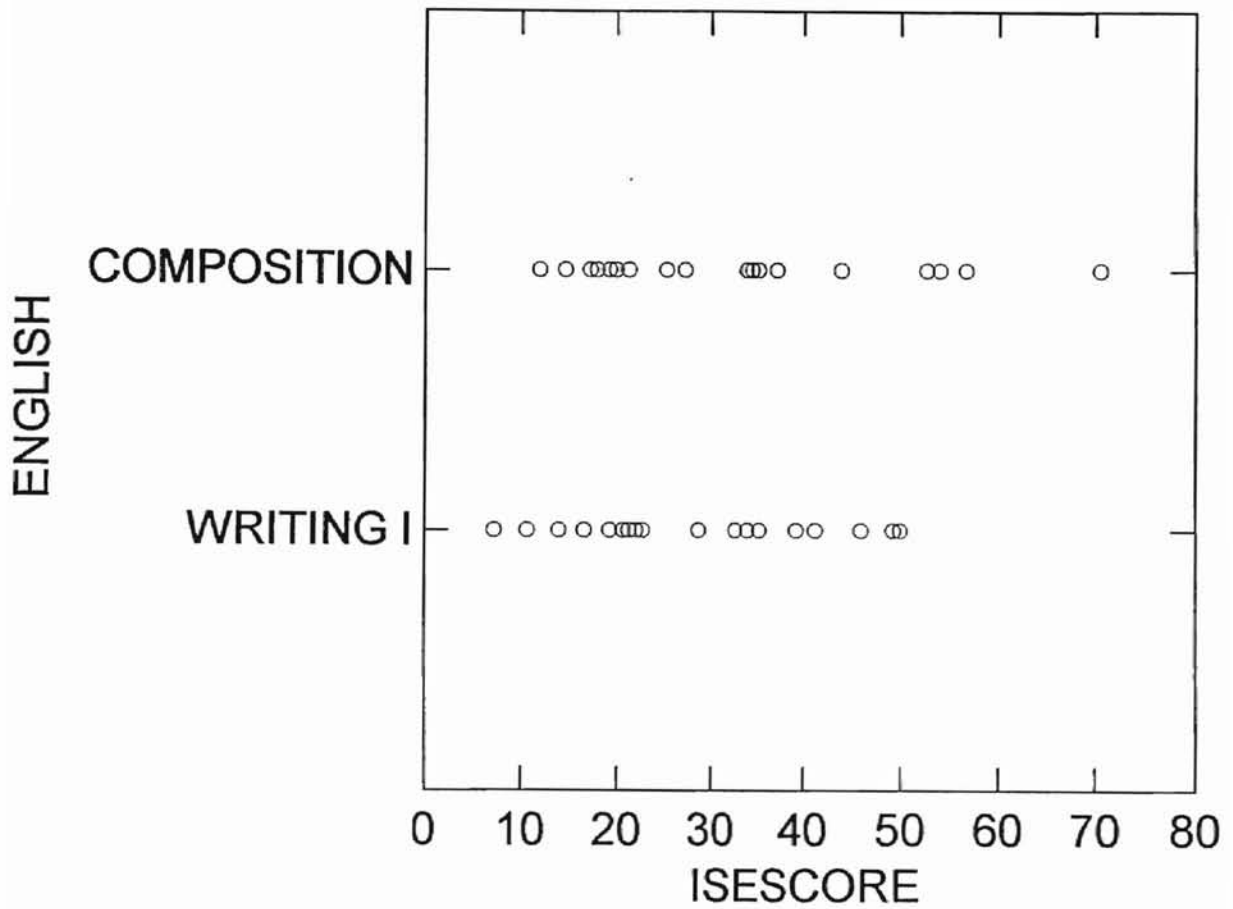


FIGURE 4
ILLUSTRATION OF CATEGORICAL
VALUES OF ISE SCORES FOR
ENGLISH COURSE ENROLLMENT



ISE SCORE	LOW (>30)	HIGH (<31)	TOTALS
Composition I	10	9	19
Writing I	9	14	23
Totals	19	23	42

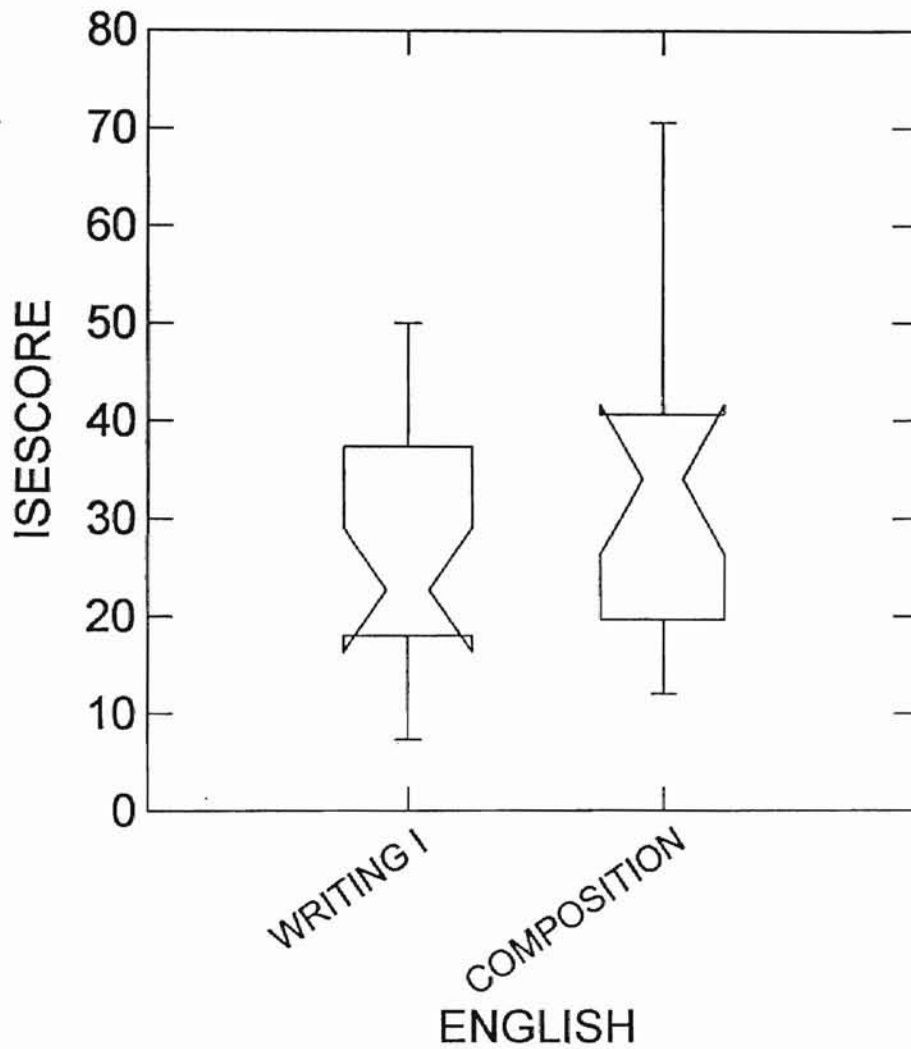
A box plot graph was constructed comparing the means of the ISE scores for the Writing I and Composition I students (Figure 5). In this graph, the boxes are notched at the median and expand to full width at the lower and upper confidence interval values. The lines, or "Whiskers", at the top and bottom of the boxes show the full range of values in the sample (SYSTAT, 1996). The appearance of this graph indicates that there may be a correlation between self-esteem scores and English course placement, due to the apparent difference in the average scores. Considering the cut score of 30 for the ISE, the group with the highest mean ISE score indicating the lowest levels of self-esteem appears to be enrolled in the more advanced English course, Composition I, and the group with the lowest mean indicating higher self-esteem in Writing I.

To further examine the ability of the ISE to predict the likelihood of being enrolled in a particular English course, a probability curve known as the normal cumulative distribution function was fitted to the data in Figure 4. This function provides an S-curve regression line that estimates nonlinear models. The probit model is bounded by 0 and 1 and therefore represents the probability of enrollment in a particular English course better than a linear model of regression.

In the probit model, the Raw R-square, ranging from 0 to 1.0, indicates the proportion of variance in the

FIGURE 5

BOX PLOT DEPICTING
APPARENT DIFFERENCES IN MEAN
ISE SCORES IN ENGLISH COURSES



(mean score shown at notches)

dependent variable that can be accounted for or explained by the independent variable in the regression model. The formula used to analyze this variance is: ENROLLMENT = ZCF [normal cumulative distribution function] (CONSTANT + SLOPE * ISE). (Wilkinson, Blank, and Gruber, 1996) This computation is shown in Table 5. It appears that the model has explained 47.5% of the variance.

TABLE 5

PROBIT MODEL OF NON-LINEAR REGRESSION
ILLUSTRATING LACK OF CORRELATION BETWEEN
ISE SCORES AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT

SOURCE	SUM-OF-SQUARES	DF	MEAN-SQUARE
Regression	9.025	2	4.513
Residual	9.975	40	0.249
TOTAL	19.000	42	
Mean corrected	10.405	41	
Raw R-square (1-Residual/Total) =			0.475
Mean corrected R-square (1-Residual/Corrected) =			0.041
R (observed vs. predicted) square =			0.041

The Mean corrected R-square is an adjustment made for a regression model that is based on relatively few cases. It usually reflects a closer fit of the model in the population than does the Raw R-square. When the error is reduced using the proportional reduction error measure (PRE), the variance explained by the model is reduced to 4.1% (Table 5).

Thus, in this particular study, the box plot indicates a visual relationship between the Index of Self-esteem scores and the students' enrollment in a particular English

course. However, the regression model indicates that there is, based on this sample, virtually no correlation. The results are inconclusive.

The ISE score variable was again transformed into a categorical variable to measure association with students enrolled in Composition I and Writing I. The ISE variable was denoted as high or low depending on its relationship to the designated cutting score of 30. Scores of more than 30 indicated low self-esteem, and scores of 30 or less denoted a sense of high self-esteem.

If the distribution of the dependent variable differs across at least some categories of the independent variable, an association is said to exist between two variables. The frequency of distribution of high self-esteem scores (30 or less on the ISE) and low self-esteem scores (more than 30 on the ISE) between those students who were enrolled in Composition I and those in Writing I is shown in Table 6. Expected frequencies for this sample were computed by multiplying the total of each row by the total of each column and dividing by the number of respondents in the sample, and are shown in Table 7. To establish whether or not an association existed, the percentage distributions were examined for differences. The percentage computation of the frequency distribution is shown in Table 8. When the actual distribution of ISE scores (Table 6) is compared with the expected frequencies (Table 7), and looking at the

percentage frequency table (Table 8), there seems to be an association between Index of Self-esteem scores and enrollment in the two levels of English courses due to the differences between the numbers.

The chi-square statistic was applied to determine statistical probability of association. For this frequency distribution, the observed chi-square value (χ^2) was 0.766. The critical value of χ^2 for a table with one degree of freedom at a p level of 0.05 is 3.8415 (Brown, 1988, p. 192). Since the chi-square value was lower than the critical value, it was concluded that any association was due to chance alone (see Table 9).

TABLE 6

FREQUENCY OF HIGH AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM SCORES
FOR STUDENTS IN COMPOSITION I AND WRITING I COURSES

	COMP I	WRITING I	TOTAL
High (< 31)	9	14	23
Low (> 30)	10	9	19
Total	19	23	42

TABLE 7

EXPECTED FREQUENCY OF HIGH AND LOW
SELF-ESTEEM SCORES

	COMP I	WRITING I	TOTAL
High (< 31)	10.4	12.6	23
Low (> 30)	8.6	10.4	19
Total	19	23	42

TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE OF FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION
OF HIGH AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM SCORES

	COMP I	WRITING I	TOTAL	N RESPONSES
High (< 31)	39.13	60.87	100.0	23
Low (> 30)	52.63	47.37	100.0	19
Total	45.24	54.76	100.0	
N responses	19	23		42

TABLE 9

CHI-SQUARE VALUES

STATISTIC	VALUE	DF	p LEVEL	CRITICAL VALUE
chi-square (χ^2)	0.766	1.0	0.05	3.8415

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Possible conclusions that could be drawn from this study were limited due to the return rate of only 40.78% of the adult students attending the classes surveyed. Any inference of significance that could be made from the statistical results would be suspect, especially due to the low rate of response from only 25% of those students who withdrew from the classes.

Self-esteem and Course Completion

The distribution shown in Figure 1 indicates relatively low scores (high self-esteem) for the students who dropped out of their classes in contrast with the higher scores of the students who completed. Among those withdrawn who responded, all of the ISE scores were below the prescribed cutting score of 30, indicating high self-esteem (see Figure 2). This was a surprising result, since the researcher would have expected the opposite scores to be prevalent, indicating that it would be more likely for those with low self-esteem not to complete the courses. However, with eighteen, or 75%, of the dropouts who did not answer the questionnaire, it is possible that those with low self-esteem simply did not respond. As the research has shown, there could have been various other factors that contributed

to the students dropping out, other than self-esteem. Therefore, any conclusions that could be made from this small response would not be valid.

Some observations can be made considering the thirty-six, or 45.6%, of the seventy-nine adult students that remained in the classes who answered the questionnaire (see Figure 2). Approximately half of the respondents (seventeen) scored below the cutting score of 30, indicating high self-esteem, and half (nineteen) scored above 30, indicating low self-esteem. This would indicate that there is no relationship between self-esteem and course completion. These findings were contrary to the research, which indicated a strong relationship between self-esteem and the prospects of course completion.

The results of the chi-square statistic show that there is a 95% probability of a relationship between the frequency of distribution between the high and low self-esteem scores and course completion. However, one-fourth of the fitted cells were sparse (frequency < 5), therefore significance tests computed on this table are suspect. Since there were so few responses from those who dropped, and thereby none to be counted in the quadrant denoting withdrawals with low self-esteem, these results cannot be considered conclusive.

English Course Enrollment and Self-esteem

The placement of adult students in remedial or college level courses was dictated by test scores alone, and not by student choice. The fact that a student was placed in a developmental or remedial course could be a factor in their self-esteem perception.

By examining the effect of self-esteem on placement in remedial or college level English courses, it was the expectation of the researcher that conclusions might be drawn concerning the retention of students in their respective courses. The fact that 14 (58.3% of drops) students withdrew from Writing I and 10 (41.7% of drops) dropped from Composition I raises the question that students may be more likely to drop remedial courses than college-credit level courses. These students may not feel that they are in need of a remedial course. Unfortunately, the inconclusive results of this study do not shed light on whether or not this may be related to their self-esteem level.

The box graph (Figure 5) indicated that there may be a relationship between self-esteem scores and English course placement, due to the apparent difference in the average scores on the ISE. However, the statistical analysis through the probit model of non-linear regression found that any differences in the mean scores of the two courses were

insignificant. Consequently, even though the mean ISE score of the Composition I course was higher, there was no significant statistical difference. This may have been affected by the poor response rate of students who withdrew from the courses, since they were not well represented in the sample. The chi-square statistic corroborated this result by indicating that any association between the ISE scores of the students enrolled in Composition I and Writing I was due solely to chance.

Recommendations

In reviewing the results of this study, it is apparent that further study must be done if accurate conclusions are to be made concerning the relationship between self-esteem and retention in adult students.

Further Research

A similar study could be done expanding the sample to include all first-time adult students at the institution, thus giving a potential for a larger number of questionnaires to be returned. A longer term study over a complete semester would give a more comprehensive view of drop rate, providing more data for the regression study. Extending the study over two or more semesters would add an element of consistency. This might be done by following the

same students or by repeating the study twice with the same parameters each semester to accumulate data from additional students.

In order to address the poor return rate in students who withdraw from the courses, an immediate response could be requested at the time the researcher distributes the forms. This was not done in this study due to the express concern of the Provost that the students asked to participate would opt to do so on a completely voluntary basis. In retrospect, this might be accomplished by presenting the study at the end of a class period, instead of the beginning, and asking those who would volunteer to stay after class in order to complete the brief questionnaire.

An additional study could be performed with two control groups to determine whether self-esteem actually affects completion of college courses. Two groups of similar students in first-time Writing courses could be tested with the ISE at the beginning of the semester. One of the groups would attend a self-esteem improvement seminar during the semester. Both groups would be retested at the end of the semester to see if self-esteem had changed. The students who dropped the courses would also be retested. This procedure would provide more data for analysis of correlation for relationship.

A follow-up survey or interview could be done with

students who dropped the course to gather qualitative information on the actual cause of the withdrawal. Additional factors that were suggested in the research could be explored, such as difficulty in arranging transportation and child care, scheduling conflicts, health problems, lack of family support, and other external stressors. This would give a more clear indication of the areas that might be addressed in helping these students stay in school.

In addition, follow-up studies could be done with the students who drop out of remedial courses to examine the possible effect that the actual placement in these developmental courses might have on retention. Further research in relation to retention might also focus on specific demographic groups, such as single parents or economically disadvantaged students. Other variables like gender or race could be addressed in comparison studies.

Implications for Education

The problem statement on which this study was based still remains: approximately thirty percent of adult returning students at Rogers University at Claremore withdraw from at least one class or drop out of all their classes each semester, with the majority dropping out in their first semester. Causal factors must be identified and intervention strategies implemented in order to address this issue.

From the results of this study, there would seem to be a relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. This poses a question to examine: Does self-esteem precede academic achievement, or is self-esteem a result of academic achievement? The implications of this question on the retention issue might be that if students could be encouraged to stay in their classes long enough to experience academic achievement and success, it may raise their levels of self-esteem. This could provide a basis for the development of self-esteem building workshops to aid in this process. If the level of self-esteem was proven to be a factor in retention for these students, it would give student service professionals another area on which to focus to improve the probability of student success.

Many variables have been identified by the research to effect student retention. This indicates that these causes are of an individual nature. The most effective way to address the retention issue may be through closer advisement of each individual student. If each student were assigned a specific faculty advisor or departmental counselor to monitor their progress, it would provide an opportunity for the advisor to identify potential problem areas and intervene through consulting with the student. Referrals could be made for campus services, such as workshops, tutoring, or personal counseling, as the need indicated. This type of institutional approach to student service might

be the most effective way to convey commitment and
dedication to the success of each individual student.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 11-11-96

IRB#: ED-97-034

**Proposal Title: THE EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM ON THE RETENTION
OF ADULT STUDENTS IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE SETTING**

Principal Investigator(s): Robert Nolan, Marilyn R. McClain

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

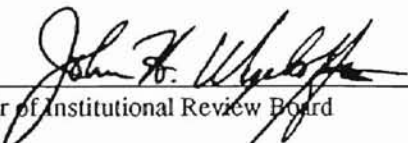
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING
THE APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD
APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR
APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval
are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: November 18, 1996

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO PROVOST

memorandum

Date: September 10, 1996

To: Dr. Joe Dillsaver

From: Marilyn McClain 

RE: Masters Thesis

Enclosed is a copy of the draft of the first three chapters of my Masters thesis. As we have discussed earlier, my topic is the effect of self-esteem on the retention of adult students.

My committee has approved for me to conduct this study among the adult students at Rogers State College, Claremore Campus of Rogers University. As described in the Methodology chapter, the students that would be contacted would be those enrolled in Writing I this semester. Each would be given a copy of the Informed Consent Form along with the Index of Self-esteem scale (copies of both are attached to the back of the draft). Each month of the semester, the withdrawals would be recorded, and at the end of the semester, a correlational study comparing the results of the ISE and the retention figures.

I would like to ask your permission to conduct this study as proposed and approved by my committee. Confidentiality would be respected in every aspect, in that the actual study results would not reveal the identity of any student in any way. If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to call me at extension 7594.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM PROVOST



ROGERS STATE COLLEGE

"Changing Lives . . . Building Futures"

President

MEMORANDUM

To: Marilyn McClain, Health Sciences

From: Dr. Joe D. Dillsaver

Subject: Request

Date: 9/12/96

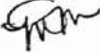
Marilyn, I have no problem with what you have suggested if participation in the study is voluntary, the students feel no pressure to participate and it is confidential.

On campuses where a lot of research takes place, there is a human subjects committee which reviews such requests. You might ask around and see if we have one.

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS

memorandum

Date: January 6, 1997
To: Barbara Christmann
Emily Dial-Driver
Mariaelena Godinez
Judy Hubble
Phil Sample
Evalon St. John
From: Marilyn McClain 
RE: Research Study for Masters Thesis

During the Spring 1997 semester, I will be finishing my Masters thesis to complete my degree in Adult Education from OSU. The topic for my thesis is *The Effect of Self-esteem on the Retention of Adult Students Returning to School in a Community College Setting*.

Dr. Dillsaver and my thesis committee have approved for me to conduct this study among the adult students at Rogers University at Claremore. The sample consists of first-time students, twenty-one years of age and older, who are enrolled in Writing I or Composition I during the Spring 1997 semester. Each will be given the Index of Self-esteem (ISE) scale along with two copies of the Informed Consent Form (see attached).

The students will be asked to complete and return the ISE within the first week of classes. Each week, the withdrawals from these courses will be recorded. At the end of the first six weeks, a correlational study will be conducted to compare the results of the ISE and the retention figures. Confidentiality will be respected in every aspect, in that the actual study results will not reveal the identity of any student in any way.

I would like to ask your assistance in allowing these questionnaires to be distributed directly to your students during the first week of class. Either you could hand them out, or I could come and deliver them myself. This method will hopefully provide a sufficient rate of return for the study.

Please let me know this week if this would be agreeable to you. The design of the study dictates that the scales be distributed during the first week of the semester, but I will coordinate with your schedule within these constraints. If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to call me at extension 7594.

Thank you so much for your help and consideration.

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

I, _____, authorize Marilyn McClain to use the information gained from my completion of the Index of Self-esteem inventory as part of her research for her Masters Degree Thesis entitled "The Effect of Self-esteem on the Retention of Adult Students Returning to School in a Community College Setting."

I understand that this information will be compared, along with other adult students, with the rate of completion of writing courses during the Spring 1997 semester. The respect of confidentiality is guaranteed, in that the actual study results will not reveal the identity of any student in any way. The results will be used for statistical purposes only.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director.

I may contact Marilyn McClain at (918) 343-7594 should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact Kay Clarkson, University Research Services, 303 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; telephone: (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been provided for me.

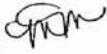
Date _____.

Signed _____
(signature of subject)

APPENDIX F

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO INSTRUCTORS

memorandum

Date: February 3, 1997
To: Barbara Christmann
Emily Dial-Driver
Mariaelena Godinez
Judy Hubble
Bill Pearish
Phil Sample
Evalon St.John
From: Marilyn McClain 
RE: Follow-up on Research Questionnaire

Thank you for distributing the questionnaires for my Masters research study. Many have been returned, yet many have not. I would like to ask your help one more time in reminding your students that if they are willing to participate in this study and have not returned their questionnaires to please do so as soon as possible. As you well know, it is vital that I get as many back as I can to make my numbers valid.

Once again, thanks so much for your help.

APPENDIX G

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO DROPOUTS



February 24, 1997

Dear

At the beginning of this semester, you were asked to complete a survey to assist me in a study for my Masters Degree thesis. I understand that you are no longer enrolled in the writing course where you received this information, however, your response is still important to my study. My results will not be valid unless I am able to use responses from students who have withdrawn as well as those who complete the course.

In the event that you have misplaced or discarded the packet that you were given in January, I have enclosed another questionnaire, and two copies of the informed consent form (one for you to keep, and one to return with your completed survey). Though your participation is voluntary, I would like to impress on you how important your response is to the accuracy of my study and the completion of my thesis.

You will also find enclosed a stamped, addressed envelope in which to return your survey. Thank you so much for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Marilyn McClain
Student Counselor
Health Sciences

TULSA ▼ CLAREMORE ▼ BARTLESVILLE ▼ PRYOR ▼ KRSC-TV
www.rogersu.edu

Rogers University was created through the merger of the University Center at Tulsa and Rogers State College.

APPENDIX H

WAS INDEX OF SELF-ESTEEM



INDEX OF SELF ESTEEM (ISE)

Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

This questionnaire is designed to measure how you see yourself. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows.

- 1 = None of the time
- 2 = Very rarely
- 3 = A little of the time
- 4 = Some of the time
- 5 = A good part of the time
- 6 = Most of the time
- 7 = All of the time

1. _____ I feel that people would not like me if they really knew me well.
2. _____ I feel that others get along much better than I do.
3. _____ I feel that I am a beautiful person.
4. _____ When I am with others I feel they are glad I am with them.
5. _____ I feel that people really like to talk with me.
6. _____ I feel that I am a very competent person.
7. _____ I think I make a good impression on others.
8. _____ I feel that I need more self-confidence.
9. _____ When I am with strangers I am very nervous.
10. _____ I think that I am a dull person.
11. _____ I feel ugly.
12. _____ I feel that others have more fun than I do.
13. _____ I feel that I bore people.
14. _____ I think my friends find me interesting.
15. _____ I think I have a good sense of humor.
16. _____ I feel very self-conscious when I am with strangers.
17. _____ I feel that if I could be more like other people I would have it made.
18. _____ I feel that people have a good time when they are with me.
19. _____ I feel like a wallflower when I go out.
20. _____ I feel I get pushed around more than others.
21. _____ I think I am a rather nice person.
22. _____ I feel that people really like me very much.
23. _____ I feel that I am a likeable person.
24. _____ I am afraid I will appear foolish to others.
25. _____ My friends think very highly of me.

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3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25

VITA

Marilyn R. McClain

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: THE EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM ON THE RETENTION OF ADULT
STUDENTS RETURNING TO SCHOOL IN A COMMUNITY
COLLEGE SETTING

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Flushing, Queens, New York, on
August 18, 1956, the daughter of Dr. Russell H. and
Lillian Y. McClain.

Education: Graduated from Harding Academy, Searcy,
Arkansas; received Bachelor of Science degree in Social
Work from Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas in
August 1977. Completed the requirements for the Master
of Science degree with a major in Occupational and
Adult Education, specializing in Adult and Continuing
Education, in July 1997.

Experience: Employed as Career Awareness Counselor at
Foothills Vo-Tech School in Searcy, Arkansas, 1977 to
1978; became Social Worker with the Oklahoma
Department of Human Services in Tulsa, Oklahoma from
1977 until the birth of my daughter in 1979; owned and
operated Special Deliveries Childbirth Preparation and
Parenting Center in Tulsa, from 1980 to 1985; employed
as Store Manager at Moto-Photo in Tulsa, 1986 to 1989;
worked as Area Manager at Mervyn's in Tulsa from 1989
to 1992; served as Student Counselor in Admissions,
then Health Sciences, at Rogers University at
Claremore, Oklahoma from 1992 to the present.

Professional Memberships: American Association for
Adult and Continuing Education, Oklahoma Academic
Advising Association, Oklahoma Association of Community
Colleges, Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education.