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BY
SHIRLEY RODDY
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ADULTS RETURNING TO COLLEGE

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

ADULTS RETURNING TO COLLEGE

BY: SHIRLEY RODDY

MAJOR PROFESSORS: DR. JEROME C. WEBER AND DR. ROBERT FOX

The purpose of this study was to determine adult student expectations in relationship to educational outcomes and benefits experienced both during the process of and after obtaining the baccalaureate degree. Because of the increase in recent years in educational programs designed to accommodate the working adult in the completion of a bachelor's degree in a non-traditional format, this study focused on adult students who had been in (had either graduated or dropped from the program prior to graduation) or were currently involved in the non-traditional format. Research on the traditional-age college student suggests that extending one's education beyond high school by attending college and obtaining a bachelor's degree is beneficial to both the individual and to society. However because of the paucity of research specific to the adult segment of the college population it is not known if the same would be true for the adult population. It is for that reason that a grounded theory approach was taken.

Specifically, expectations and outcomes in the following areas were explored: Learning and cognitive development, attitudes and values, psychosocial development, moral development, socioeconomic outcomes, spiritual development, worldview construction, and acceptance into graduate programs. Knowledge from this study will guide both the inquiring student and college education providers.

CHAPTER I

The Research Problem

Introduction

The number of educational programs designed to accommodate the working adult in the completion of a bachelor's degree in a non-traditional format has, in recent years, increased in both private and public colleges and universities nationwide. This issue was addressed in the June 2000 Task Force Report on Adult Degree Completion Programs that was given to the Board of Trustees of The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. John A. Taylor (2000) Associate Director of the Commission, states in the opening paragraph of the report Overview:

> Adult degree completion programs have become increasingly relevant within the higher education community and they are growing at a rapid pace across the nation. While the inception of such programs dates back at least to the early 1970s, the upsurge in interest in them is apparently a result of the marked increase in the number of working adults who seek to attain new levels of academic achievement—a goal highly related to advancing in their current work environments, preparing for greater job mobility and/or learning for purposes of enrichment. (p.1)

While some nontraditional universities have emerged specifically to serve adults, a recent study by the Lumina Foundation reports that more than 190 traditional institutions have developed flexible programs with accelerated formats, evening and

weekend courses, and distance or on-line options specifically to serve the working adult student. One of the fastest growing components of faith-based colleges is their adult education programs, according to Winston (2000). Approximately two-thirds of these institutions have created one or more bachelor's degree programs for adult students. Of these, 60 percent have started in the past 10 years. Regis University reports an average age of 36.47 in its adult accelerated baccalaureate program with 53 percent being between the ages of 35 and 49 (Wlodkowski, Mauldin, Gahn, 2001). These averages and percentages are in line with reported statistics in similar programs nationwide. However, the literature does not reflect the same proportionate growth of research endeavors focusing on this growing segment of college students.

Because adult learners bring rich and varied experiences into a learning situation, they are able to integrate formal academic knowledge with their life experiences. This is clearly expressed in a recent phenomenological study by Rebecca Kennedy (2002) of 12 women, reflecting years after they returned to college and completed a bachelor's degree at a non-traditional-age. She examines specifically why they persisted and what value they placed on their education. I anticipate that my study will be broader and more far-reaching in that I will study both male and female adult graduates as well as adults who began the program to complete their degrees but dropped from the program prior to completion

According to Kasworm (1997) the new knowledge to which adults are exposed in the classroom setting is filtered through reflections on their experiences and understandings. Individuals with rich vast knowledge from the world of practice not only bring this knowledge and understanding into the classroom, they may judge the relevance

of instructional content in terms of personal learning causing them to consider alternative philosophical and conceptual understandings. Kasworm believes that some adult learners selectively learn, apply, synthesize, and critically reflect on new and old sources of knowledge from the world of their everyday life and work, and the world of formal knowledge.

It seems reasonable to consider that adults' ways of synthesizing academic knowledge could cause them to not only evaluate the academic experience differently than traditional students but could even influence their assessment following graduation of how their degree benefits them. Perhaps the reasons for the pursuit of a bachelor's degree are not as important as having knowledge about the outcomes from the adult's perspective. Knowledge from such a perspective would provide valuable insight to adults considering the pursuit of a bachelor's degree, allowing them to consider if indeed those outcomes, as reported by adult students/graduates, are in alignment with what they are seeking.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) explain that the vast majority of studies of college students have focused on traditional-aged undergraduates and thus they clearly acknowledge that their study utilizes theories and models that deal principally with the benefits of college among that group of undergraduates. They caution the reader to realize that the evolving character of higher education's clientele, specifically the growing numbers of minority group and older students, raises serious questions about the universal applicability of these theories and models.

The following summary comments by Long (1987) suggest the need for more defined research data regarding the education of and for adults:

> The topic of education of and for adults in the United States is much broader than either of the historical streams that included (a) the adult learner who was served by higher education but because of definition was not included in adult education participation data, theory, research and literature or (b) the part-time adult student who met the criteria imposed by the more commonly used definitions of adult education. (p. 224)

The expectations of adult students are rooted in their motivation for participating in educational programs. Houle's (1961) landmark studies were followed by the expansion and refinement of numerous other researchers, providing a foundation for our current knowledge concerning motivators of adults to go to college. Houle's early studies characterize adults as being chiefly goal-oriented, activity-oriented or learning-oriented in their motivations to participate in formal learning activities. While there is some criticism of Houle's research as giving only one perspective of the motivation to learn and raising more questions that it answers (Courtney, 1984), most would recognize his research is foundational and useful to the understanding of adult education. Cross (1981) states that Houle's research "provides a reasonably good practitioner's handle for thinking about individual motivations for learning" (p. 96). As an adult educator I have found that the reasons adults give for wanting to continue their education generally fall into Houle's three categories.

Harriger (1991) questioned students about why they participated in college. In spite of the barriers inherent in their life-styles as well as the institutional barriers, students consistently reported that they were in college for a chance to better themselves and their families, for the love of learning, personal enrichment, and self-satisfaction.

While most reported that they returned to school to advance in their jobs and to further their employment opportunities, the excitement of personal growth ranked high as the reason for their persistence. As one student stated, "Regardless of whatever happens afterward, you've met a goal. It's more important than the job…just meeting the goal is what counts" (Harriger, 1991, p. 192). While it is evident that current research provides information about motivating factors that cause adults to participate in higher education for the attainment of a bachelor's degree, there is little research to determine if the actual outcomes are reflective of the factors that initially provided the motivation.

While accessibility for all is a goal for which educators have continually striven, new trends that have taken us closer to that goal have brought with it new challenges and are taking us through uncharted waters. This point is expressed by Donaldson & Graham (2002) who, when addressing the need for research in the area of accelerated learning, posit that the research has lagged behind the speed at which institutions have adopted the accelerated format. They contend that it will take a while for the research to catch up with the trend of institutions of higher education developing non-traditional educational program formats designed to meet the educational needs of adults.

The magnitude of this educational trend is described by Diane Winston (2000) in her work with the Mission Formation and Diversity Project based at Princeton University's Center for the Study of Religion 1999 when she reports that the past decade has seen a nationwide trend in the increase in the number of programs that serve the adult population. Winston posits that nontraditional universities, such as the University of Phoenix and the American Open University, have emerged specifically to serve adults. This is in contrast to traditional institutions that are not age specific and whose mission is

to serve traditional and non-traditional students. However, a recent study by the Lumina Foundation reports that more than 190 traditional institutions have developed flexible programs with accelerated formats, evening and weekend courses, and distance or on-line options specifically to serve the working adult students. Sixty percent of these programs have started in the past 10 years. In faith-based colleges, adult education programs are the fastest growing when compared to all of the other programs.

To further highlight the significance of this fast growing trend, Winston (2000), when studying the influence of adult programs on religious colleges, reports that three-fifths of all of the adult programs, half of which are at conservative Protestant colleges, began between 1990 and 2000. With such programs being relatively new on the educational scene, there has been very little research regarding the benefit to the participants and graduates of these programs.

Trends in Evaluating Higher Education Benefits

Trends for evaluating the benefits of higher education fall short when considering the newly evolving program formats designed to meet the educational needs of the working adult. Such conventional evaluation trends are expressed by Strum (1996) in his report of the impact a four-year public college (West Virginia State College) has on both its local community and graduates. He reported that there are two rates of return:

> …those that measure the rate of return for the individual and those that measures the rate of return for society. The study …emphasizes the economic gain as the primary benefit. [Specifically] Does the increased earnings potential justify a person's investment in higher education or does the economic benefit to the public justify expenditures of public resource? (p. 3)

Strum further explains that the economic benefit to graduates can be momentarily quantified in terms of an investment:

> If one views the time and money a student spends on earning a college degree as an investment, one can then study the return on this investment. Studies that measure the financial benefits of higher education as a monetary investment are described as "rates of return" studies (p.3).

Strum's study, as well as many other studies, focuses on the economic benefits. The question arises, can we adequately assess the benefits of college for the returning adult by just looking at the economic benefits or are we not just seeing one part of the equation when we do so? Furthermore, would the economic benefit be different for the returning adult than for the college student, in general? These are questions that can only be answered by research specific to the adult student.

Higher Educational Trends in the U.S.

There is a shift in higher educational trends, not only in regard to the non-traditional student but for the traditional student as well, as is evidenced by the following report from the U S Census Bureau, 2000:

> Currently, almost 90 % of young adults graduate from high school and about 60 % of those graduates continue on to college the following year. We are more educated than ever. 84 % of American adults ages 25 and over had completed high school and 26 % had obtained a Bachelor's Degree or higher. In comparison, in 1975, 63 percent of adults had completed high school and only 14 percent had obtained a Bachelor's Degree. A more educated younger population is replacing an older, less educated population, thus attributing to the increase in educational attainment levels of the

adult population. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, p. 2)

Background

There is a scarcity of research specific to educational outcomes for the adult student, especially in the qualitative area. In the more than one-half century since the G I Bill, volumes of research results and assessments of those results have been conducted that focused on not only the benefit of college to the public good but also on the benefit to the individual. The measurement of benefits to the individual have been primarily in the areas of critical thinking, communication skills (verbal and written), independent learning skills, skills for adapting to change, knowledge and workplace skills, job attainment or enhancement, heightened self-esteem, and financial enhancement (Committee on Education and the Workforce, 1998). This research, for the most part, has not been age specific but has focused on college students in general.

Historical records reveal that education pays off:

> Over the past 25 years, earnings differences have grown among workers with different levels of educational attainment. In 1975, full-time, year-round workers with a bachelor's degree had 1.5 times the annual earnings of workers with only a high school diploma. By 1999, this ratio had risen 1.8. During the same period, the relative earnings of the least educated workers fell. (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000; U.S. p. 3)

While the economic difference that educational attainment makes is certainly important and valuable to know, it is only one-dimensional. Again, the payoff is expressed in economic terms: “In contrast to the many pay off reports, some point to the earnings reports of the 1970s when the premiums [wages] paid to college

graduates dropped because of an increase in their numbers which kept the relative earnings range among the educational attainment levels rather narrow." (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; U.S., p.3) Boesel (1999) reports that in more recent years there has been a widening of the gap between degreed and non-degreed workers and that technological changes favoring more skilled (and educated) workers tended to increase earnings among working adults with higher educational attainment. Again, the discussion is in economic terms and is one-dimensional. To truly understand the benefit to adults to further their education by obtaining a bachelor's degree, there is a need for more qualitative inquiry specific to the adult student.

Statement of the Problem

Research suggests that extending one's education beyond high school by attending college and obtaining a bachelor's degree is beneficial to both the individual and to society. Because most of the research has concentrated on the benefits and outcomes of the traditional-age college student, there is little data specific to the college benefits and outcomes for the adult student. There is little data to determine if outcomes would be the same or similar if the research was specific to the adult student. There has been an increase in recent years of adults or non-traditional-age students going to college for the first time or returning to college to complete their bachelor's degrees. During the last twenty years, adult students have been the fastest growing segment of the college population (NCES, 1998). With many issues and concerns vying for the time and the resources of adults in our society, it is with great sacrifice and expectation that the adult student seeks to obtain a bachelor's degree. Are these expectations realized by the adult

student/graduate? Are the sacrifices commensurate with the benefits? Do some benefit while others do not, and if so, is there a way of knowing who will benefit and who will not?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the various ways that adult students who were currently in the process of obtaining their bachelors degrees perceived they were benefiting from the education process of obtaining a baccalaureate degree, as well as an understanding of the various ways that adult student graduates perceived they had benefited following the attainment of the baccalaureate degree and how these perceptions compared with their reflective expectations prior to entering the program for the purpose of completing their baccalaureate degree. A self-reported rate of return or economic gain to the individual will only be a part of the focus. The emphasis will be on persons who at age 25 years or older returned to college to complete a bachelor's degree in an adult degree completion program.

While many studies have focused on the traditional-age students in the area of expectations versus outcomes, because of the large number of adult students returning to college to complete their bachelor's degrees it is important that we have an understanding of the factors or expectations that influence them to return to college as well as knowledge of whether or not these expectations are met. Such knowledge could assist adults in determining if the program, the timing of entry into the program or even college level learning is right for them.

I will examine specific ways in which adult graduates of a university located in the mid-western region of the United States benefited from obtaining their degrees as

well as the benefits from the educational processes involved in obtaining the degree. I will also seek to determine if these reported benefits match the expectations (reflectively) the students had upon entering the program. For instance, an adult with two years of college who is contemplating entering a bachelor's degree completion program to increase their cognitive skills might consider the following and determine that a bachelor's degree would be of little or no benefit:

> Repeated tests conducted by the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment have shown that, when ability, time in college, and other confounding variables are controlled, 2-year college students make about the same gains in reading comprehension, mathematics, critical thinking, writing skills, and science reasoning as 4-year college students (Pascarella et al. 1998, Pascarella et al. 1995-96, Bohr et al. 1994 and Terenzini et al. 1994). In short a year at a community college produces about the same cognitive gains as a year at a 4-year college. (Boesel, Fredland, 1999, p. 18)

Would this data be different if the sample from which it was drawn focused only on the adult student? Would the perception of the adult student regarding cognitive gains be as important as the quantitative results? Qualitative inquiry would certainly provide another perspective and add to the understanding.

In a society that has bought into the idea that education is a means of social mobility, an investigation into the benefit and outcomes for the adult college graduate is needed to inform and advise the adult students properly. Specifically, a mid-western private Christian university launched an adult degree completion program in 1995 to facilitate the adult student returning to college to complete his/her bachelor's degree.

Seventy-five students were attracted to the program the first year and the program has steadily increased every year to a current annual enrollment of 350. Information from years of research on the outcomes for the college student was and is currently utilized to inform the potential adult student and to assist him/her in making the decision to return to college. Because this research data is, for the most part, drawn from the traditional-age college student, it seems reasonable to conclude that there should be some consideration for obtaining data regarding the benefits of a college degree to the adult student.

Research Questions

To be able to assess how the college program met students' expectations there is a need to find answers to the following questions: (a) what are the expectations of adult students upon entering a degree completion program and (b) what are their reported program outcomes at a particular point in the program or at the point of either dropping from the program or graduating? Clearly, while institutions will vary somewhat regarding specific program outcomes, most institutions will agree on some basic expected outcomes. "The institution defines and assesses the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experience in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor" (CAEL, 2000, p.2). While the ideals of college level learning have been clearly articulated by regional accrediting agencies and colleges and universities, for the purposes of this study, those ideals are is not the important issue. What is important to this study is that the specific ideals of the regionally accredited institution from which the study is conducted and which the institution espouses as expected outcomes are reflected in the evaluation tool utilized in

this study. The following domains encompass the expected areas of growth expressed in the program goals of the mid-western institution from which the sample is drawn:

- Learning and Cognitive Development
- Development of Attitudes and Values
- Psychosocial Development
- Moral Development
- Spiritual Development
- Worldview Construction
- Socioeconomic Outcomes
- Acceptance into graduate programs

The evaluation tool is open-ended, allowing for participants to go beyond the outcome domains listed above. Knowledge from participants/graduates of the institution from which the sample is drawn will allow one to determine if the actual outcomes coincide with the adult student's expectations that drive him/her to make the sacrifice to attend college to complete a bachelor's degree. These expectations may be a reflection of the student's preconceived expectations, a reflection of stated program outcomes transmitted through the institutions printed materials or spoken word, or a combination of both. In addition, explanations of factors involved from those who begin a program to complete their degree but drop from the program prior to their completion will add greater depths of understanding.

Significance of the Study

As is evidenced by the literature, numerous studies have been conducted on the general population of college graduates that include the adult population. In a January 1999 study of data collected from new college graduates since 1976, the National Center for Education Statistics included in the interpretation of the data the following reminder: "We should keep in mind, though, that these are young college graduates in the first year after leaving college" (Outcomes for College Graduates, 1999, p.1). While this was a study of "new college graduates" and included all ages of graduates, the majority of graduates would be considered "young", as is the case for most studies of outcomes for college graduates (U. S. Census Bureau: Special Studies, July 2002).

When describing the bias of their study, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) make it clear that the evidence of college outcomes has a bias:

> It focuses largely (although not exclusively) on non-minority students of traditional-age (eighteen to twenty-two), attending four-year institutions full-time and living on campus. This is not to say that the research literature has ignored the increasing numbers of students in American postsecondary education who fall outside these traditional student categories (for example, minority and older students, students attending college part-time while holding a job, commuter students, community college students). That would overstate the case. It is clear nonetheless, that the impacts of college on such "nontraditional" students are underrepresented in the existing evidence. (p. 13)

Since the purpose of this research is to gain knowledge and understanding, and it is believed that this study will do so by reducing bias and providing better understanding of

the expectations and educational outcomes of the adult student, it is believed that this research will be worthwhile. Individuals contemplating returning to college could consider the many variables involved for the adult student and thus make a more informed decision regarding the benefits/outcomes. Such information would allow the inquiring student to weigh reported benefits from adult students against their own expectations, thus, equipping them to make a more informed decision regarding the benefit for them, personally. Additionally, this more pertinent information would better equip adult college student advisors.

Implications for Practice and Research

Because of the proliferation of non-traditional "degree completion" programs in our nation that attract the adult student (ages 25 and up with a mean age of 35) and the high cost generally associated with such programs, this unique part of the population is worthy of focus. While currently the economic benefit for traditional-age graduates is generally accepted, it is not known if one would need to prorate the benefit to the returning adult student according to years left in the workforce at graduation. Additionally, there is very little literature that specifically addresses the over arching benefit of going back to college to obtain a bachelor degree at age 25 or older.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) report findings and insights from 20 years of research on how college affects students. I have built on this prior research by focusing on a select group of this population (the adult student enrolled in an adult degree completion program) to determine the ways in which they benefit socially, financially, cognitively, professionally, and personally. I believe my findings will be useful both to those individuals considering returning to college to complete their bachelor's degrees

either in a traditional program or in an adult education, non-traditional format as well as to those involved in or responsible for the implementation and promotion of higher education programs.

Definitions

1. Adult degree completion program—"one that is designed specifically to meet the needs of the working adult who, having acquired 60 or more college credit hours during previous enrollments, is returning to school after an extended period of absence to obtain a baccalaureate degree. The institution's promise that the student will be able to complete the program in fewer than two years of continuous study is realized through provisions such as establishing alternative class schedules, truncating the traditional semester/quarter time frame, organizing student cohorts, and awarding credit for prior learning experiences equivalent to approximately 25 of the bachelor's degree credit hour total." (Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, June 2000, p. 1)
2. Adult student—Throughout the literature and in this study, adult student is used synonymously with nontraditional-age student and nontraditional student and is usually described as a student who is 25 years of age or older upon entering or returning to college (Apps, 1981; Astin, 1993, Cross. 1981, Kasworm, 1977).
3. College premium—the percentage increase in the earnings of college graduates compared to those of high school graduates. .

4. Full-time work—thirty-five hours per week

5. Non-traditional format—a format unlike the 16-week long semester format that is the norm for traditional students. These are often weekends or one-night-a-week formats with a shortened in-class requirement.

7. Non-traditional student—a person who by self definition when asked what their role in life is does not identify him/herself as a student but rather identifies him/herself in another matter i.e. a parent who goes to school part-time or a full-time worker who also attends school.

Rate of Return—the student's costs in terms of tuition and fees, books and supplies, net forgone income (earnings lost while enrolled in college) and other educationally related expenditures equated to a dollar amount.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the adult students/graduates selected for interviewing would not be significantly different than most adults who return to college to complete their baccalaureate degrees. It was additionally assumed that these participants will desire to be helpful in explaining how the expectations of adults returning to college to complete their baccalaureate degrees match with the outcomes and, therefore, will be truthful and open in their responses.

Summary of the Study

Studies have shown that college benefits most people, though in varying ways, depending on the individual's abilities and life goals. Previous studies have primarily been quantitative in nature and have focused on the younger college student or college students in general. This study focuses on the adult student who returns to college for the

purpose of completing a baccalaureate degree. It is anticipated that while this study will confirm that adult students also benefit from college, it will provide qualitative insight into the expectations of adult students upon entry into a college program and how those expectations match the outcomes. This knowledge will not only guide the inquiring student but will provide insight for educational administrators as well. The findings from this study have the potential to inform the manner in which students are marketed to, recruited, oriented and served in order to maximize expectation fulfillment. The data collected on student expectations at college entry could also be utilized by higher education officials to plan academic and student services programming that will match student expectations. Such data could also prompt higher education official to consider interventions if students' expectations are unrealistic or inappropriate.

CHAPTER II

Related Literature

Introduction

This study is concerned specifically with gaining an understanding of the various ways that the participants of an adult degree completion program perceived they had benefited or were benefiting from the process of obtaining a baccalaureate degree, their reported benefit following the attainment of the baccalaureate degree (for those participants who had graduated) and how these perceptions compared with their reflective expectations prior to entering the program for the purpose of completing their baccalaureate degree. However, because of the paucity of research specific to the adult student, this chapter will examine the literature in regard to the younger college student and the college student in general, which includes students of all ages. It begins with a historical overview of higher education in the U S followed by the history of adult higher education in the U S. Next, the role of expectations in the life of an individual is examined followed by a review of the literature regarding student expectations prior to college entry or reentry. The correlation of student expectations in relationship to college outcomes—experienced educational benefits and benefits of attaining a baccalaureate degree is reviewed. Additionally, the literature is examined for student descriptions of unmet expectations regarding their college experiences and/or their college outcomes as well as possible explanations. Finally, I will examine the literature for possible solutions for unmet student expectations.

Higher Education in the U.S.

In order to lay some groundwork, I will initially review some fundamentally held beliefs regarding the benefits or outcomes of higher education in America from a historical point-of-view. Such a starting point is relevant because of the overarching influence that these fundamental beliefs have today on our society—both individually and as a whole. Discussions regarding the benefits of higher education to the student and to society in general have stemmed from the earliest days of higher education in America and were primarily concerned with democratization of higher education. Thomas Jefferson wrote in his autobiography:

> The less wealthy…by the bill for a general education, would be qualified to understand their rights, to maintain them, and to exercise with intelligence, their parts in self-government; and all this would be affected without the violation of a single natural right of any one individual citizen (Committee on Education and the Workforce, 1998).

John Dewey's classic 1916 book, *Democracy and Education*, reinforced nearly a century later the democratic purposes of education:

> Around the middle of the century, national security and economic development were added to the equation as fundamental precepts of the public good. This was evidenced by the passing of the G I Bill, near the end of World War II, as a way to ensure that veterans would return to the workforce as productive, contributing citizens, thus avoiding massive unemployment (Committee on Education and the Workforce, 1998).

In describing the aftermath of the passage of the GI Bill, Robert Zemsky (2003) states that "A college education became *the* gateway to middle-class status for the veterans who flocked to American campuses in unprecedented numbers, and higher-education institutions served as prime platforms for national and regional economic development" (p. 1). Additionally, the Civil Rights Act, the Education Amendments of 1972 and student financial aid, increased competition for students, affirmative action admissions policies, and state initiatives served to encourage heretofore underrepresented groups to think about higher education differently than before (Lucas, 1994).

Zemsky (2003) proposes that while in the 1960s college campuses were public arenas or platforms for political theater and recruiting grounds for social activists, today colleges and universities are seen principally as providing tickets to financial security and economic status. Zemsky, explains that, although now largely forgotten, a second initiative launched in 1945 at the time of the more celebrated GI Bill of Rights higher education initiative was *Science, the Endless Frontier: A Report to the President* by Vannevar Bush, then the director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development. While the direct benefit to the individual is not as evident, its proposed benefit to society makes it worthy of note.

In that report, Bush (Repr. 1980), challenged the federal government to make a substantial investment in basic scientific research and posed that the American research university should be the agency responsible for that research, not only because of the part it had played in the war effort, but because only a university and its research faculty were capable of achieving what the nation required. He further stated that it is mainly these institutions that scientists are able work in relative freedom from the adverse

pressure of convention, prejudice, or commercial necessity. Bush believed that, at their best, the American research university provided the scientific worker with a sense of solidarity, security, and a substantial degree of personal intellectual freedom. This initiative reflects the high regard government placed on education and the role of the institutions of higher education.

While this value historically placed on education by government may, at first glance, seem somewhat indirect to today's returning adult college student, it has lingering influences on individually-held beliefs about education's value and is a part of the mosaic of higher education of which the returning adult student becomes a part. The ongoing and current public and private funding of America's institutions of higher education coupled with awareness through the media has raised the public's awareness regarding higher education. Colleges have become much more aggressive in seeking out prospective students utilizing multi-media methods. Such exposure sends a message to our society about the value and high regard for education. These influences create a belief and a level of expectancy regarding the benefits of education for society as a whole and for the individual, which may or may not be based on fact. Research on the expectations of traditional-age students are often idealistic rather than accurate reflections of reality (Stern, 1970). This overly-optimistic set of expectations about college has been confirmed in numerous studies (Buckley, 1971, Shaw, 1968).

Adult Higher Education Trends in the U.S.

To gain a perspective of the significance of adult participation in higher education one only has to look at recent reports on the issue. Kerka (2001), "Adults over the age of 25 now make up at least 50 percent of overall higher education enrollments" (p. 5).

"Nontraditional' students (older, part time, financially independent) are heavily represented in 2-year colleges and their numbers are increasing in 4-year institutions, where they made up 39 percent of the enrollment in 1992" (Horn and Carroll, 1996). Adults over 40 are the fastest growing segment of the higher education population, making up "5.5 percent of enrollment in 1970 and 11.2 percent in 1993" (O'Brien and Merisotis, 1996, p. 1). The National Center for Educational Statistics reports that 41 % (6 million age 25 and older) of students enrolled in degree-granting higher education institutions in Fall 1998 were adult learners (Digest of Education Statistics 2000, Table 175).

The following statement highlighted in the home page of the Lumina Foundation for Education web site (January 11, 2004), Adult Learner section further decries the need for studies which focus specifically on the adult student: "The demographics of college has shifted and only one in six students fits the mold of the "typical" 18 year-old who enrolls at a residential campus, stays for four years and graduates with a baccalaureate degree." Instead, nationwide, adult students are becoming the majority on campus.

The Role of Expectations

Expectations of benefits or outcomes are an important part of motivation for most of what we undertake in life. Visions of positive results and outcomes provide the fuel of motivation. Both individual and environmental expectations play a significant part in determining our levels of motivation and have the potential to impact our decisions, choices and even our patterns of behavior (Feist, 1990). Houle (1988) explains that for decades learning theorists have discussed motivation in learning and searched for underlying motivational structure to explain participation in adult learning. Houle

characterizes adults as being mainly goal-oriented, activity-oriented, or learning-oriented in their motivation to participate in formal learning activities. Karen Mann and Judith Ribble (1994) explore factors that have been associated with motivation, either conceptually or empirically and which include factors within the individual, within the environment, or within the learning process itself.

In regard to factors within the individual, Mann and Ribble (1994) propose that individuals with a positive attitude toward self-directed learning are more likely to become involved in such learning activities than if those attitudes are absent. They are careful to point out, however, that attitudinal predispositions alone are insufficient to affect behavior and that skills and an enabling environment frequently are also necessary to bring about change. Regarding factors within the environment, Mann and Ribble explain how, although previously unrealized, current research by the Accreditation Council on Continuing Medical Education revealed that credits or recognition for learning was the single most important factor for physicians choosing to participate in a particular educational opportunity. The third factor, with which "the learning process" dealt, was flexibility in time and location to suit a busy schedule. Mann and Ribble propose that such factors attract the individual to the learning opportunity, but the other two factors mentioned above kept the individual engaged in the activity.

The importance of meeting expectations is further emphasized by Porter & Steers' (1973) comprehensive review of the classic literature on organizational work theory and the importance of meeting expectations. From their study they proposed the met-expectations hypothesis which states, "when an individual's expectations—whatever they are—are not substantially met, his propensity to withdraw would increase" (. 152).

While this proposed hypothesis is presented within the context of the workplace, it is easy to see how one could apply it to an educational situation. Basically, regardless of the environment or an individual's particular set of expectations, if those expectations are not somewhat met, the individuals could easily lose their motivation and determine not to remain involved in the situation. McCombs (1991), when writing about motivation to learn, posits that motivation is an internal, naturally occurring capacity of human beings that is enhanced and nurtured by quality supportive relationships, opportunities for personal choice and responsibility for learning, and personally relevant and meaningful learning tasks" (p. 120). Aslanian & Brickell (1980) caution that demographic characteristics of learners are correlated with the causes, but are not themselves the causes of adult learning and therefore we must be careful in making assumptions about adult choices about attending college.

Both individual and environmental expectations play important roles within the education arena in shaping the performance and experiences of students. Prior research has revealed a strong link between the confidence and expectations maintained by teachers and parents and the educational performance of children (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989). Research suggests that the success of students in higher education is influenced by their own expectations. Such knowledge is a good indication that further research is needed to better understand adult expectations in regard to higher education and would be essential in determining how expectations match with reported outcomes. The findings as well as the limitations of prior research bring to light a number of unanswered questions for future research. Are the expectations of adult students a predictor of success in completing their baccalaureate degrees? What are other factors that influence

the success of adult students completing their baccalaureate degrees? What factors cause some to not be successful? What expectations besides the attainment of a baccalaureate degree do adults have upon entry into a program for the purpose of completing the baccalaureate degree? What are the reported expectations and outcomes from adult participants and graduates of such a program as well as those who began but dropped from the program prior to completion of their baccalaureate degree?

Theories and Models Regarding College Students

While there is a tremendous amount of research on college students, there is a scarcity of theory and tested hypothesis. Of the theories and models that do exist, there are two general families that Pascarella and Terenzini identify as dealing with student change in the literature. One addresses the nature, structure and processes of individual human growth and is referred to as developmental theories. Developmental theories and models seek to identify the dimensions and structure of growth in college students and to explain the dynamics by which that growth occurs. These theories concentrate on outcomes or the nature of student change. The second general class of models for the study of college student change focuses more on the environmental or sociological origins of student change and is referred to as "college impact" models. These models tend to identify sets of variables that are presumed to exert an influence on one or more aspects of student change, with particular emphasis on between- and within-institutional effects on change and development. They typically provide for the interaction of student and environmental characteristics within the organizational context (p. 15-16).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) point out that the vast majority of studies of college students have focused on traditional undergraduates involving theories and

models that deal principally with change or growth among that group of undergraduates. They caution readers to understand that the evolving character of higher education's clientele, specifically the growing numbers of minority group and older students, raises serious questions about the universal applicability of these theories and models (p. 17). While they point out that theories of change over the full, human life span have merit for understanding the effects of postsecondary education on individuals, these life-span theories are becoming increasingly important as large numbers of older students enter or return to college.

By modifying and applying earlier works by Vroom (1964), Kjell Rubenson (1977) has made great strides in utilizing current research findings and past theoretical models to develop a framework for understanding the competing forces at work in motivating adults to participate in organized education. Rubenson's Expectancy-Valence Model begins with psychological theories of motivation and consists of two components for the expectancy part—the expectation of success in the educational endeavor and the expectation that that success will have positive consequences. The other part of the model, valence, which deals with affect, can be positive, negative or indifferent. The strength of valence will depend on perceived consequences of participation. For example, while participation in adult education can lead to higher pay, it can also mean sacrificing time with family. The valence is the sum of the values that the student places on the various consequences of participation (Cross, 1981). Qualitative inquiry into adult student expectations and perceived outcomes or valance will utilize this model to build upon and expand our understanding of the impact of college on the adult student.

Theories Linking Student Expectations with Outcomes

There are many theories that speak to the various components of socialization and adjustment associated with various settings. Prior to looking into the studies on student expectations, experience and outcomes, it will be useful to review the main theoretical foundations upon which these studies are based. Three major theoretical models that link expectations with some kind of outcome are the Expectancy Theories, Tinto' Theory of Student Departure and the "Freshman Myth" Theory. Each offers a theoretical context for studying the relationship between student expectations and outcomes.

The first theoretical models to provide a link between expectations and experiences were the expectancy theories. These theories basically propose that individuals' attitudes are based on their beliefs and values and that these values inform their intention to act which ultimately shape their future behavior or experiences (Eagly & Chaiken in Gilbert, Fiske & Lindzey, 1998). These expectancies, which are representative of the main attitudes that influence behavior in these models, are defined as "the probability held by the individual that a particular reinforcement will occur at a function of a specified behavior on his part in a specific situation or situations" (Rotten & Hochreich, 1975, p. 96 in Feist, 1990). Expectancy theories have been utilized in previous studies that consider the influence of expectations on educational outcomes and are therefore relevant to this study by providing a vital link between the two.

Tinto's (1993) Theory of Student Departure proposes that family background, high school achievement and experiences as well as personal skills and abilities moderate the strength of students' commitments to their personal and institutional goals and intentions which in turn influence student expectations. This combination of background

characteristics and student goals and intentions contributes to what Tinto calls the student's academic and social "integration" into the campus community. Tinto proposes that a student who experiences a high degree of integration in regard to academic performance, interactions with faculty and staff, extracurricular activities, and peer group interactions is assumed to be more likely to adjust to college successfully and persist to graduation.

Stern (1970) discusses the "Freshman Myth and observes that because students have higher expectations regarding their academic environment than are appropriate, they are often overly optimistic about what their actual college experience will be like. Stern refers to this as the "Freshman Myth" and proposes these unrealistic expectations are likely to result in a period of disappointment and disillusionment. Although Stern did not provide any empirical support, he posits that disillusionment has potentially negative effects on students' college experiences and adjustments.

Transformation Theory

Transformation theory was designed to describe and analyze how adults learn and to attach meaning to their experience. Lindeman E. C. (1924) described the ideal adult learning situation as a cooperative venture in non-authoritarian and informal learning which leads to the discovery of the meaning of experience, an understanding of the reasons for our conduct and provides a technique of learning which becomes a life-long adventure. Jack Mezirow (1991) explains that "Transformation theory provides a foundation for ideals like Lindeman's by explaining the learning dynamics that are involved when we dig down to the roots of our assumptions and preconceptions and, as a result, change the way we construe the meaning of experience" (page 196). Mezirow

(1978) introduces perspective transformation to suggest that new learning is not just adding to what we already know, but taking that existing knowledge and transforming it to form a new perspective. Merizow further explains that "we are caught in our own history and are reliving it…. New experience is assimilated to—and transformed by—one's past experience" (p. 101). Mezirow suggests that one views and evaluates his or her life experiences through meaning perspectives by establishing standards for judging persons and situations, for understanding oneself, for setting goals and expectations, and for introspection of one's own life. Kolb (1984) suggests that learning for adults becomes relearning which allows for old knowledge to become transformed knowledge. Since the subjects of research in this study are learners who come back to the learning environment with a great deal of life experience and existing knowledge, a challenge of adult programs is to assist the learner in forming new perspectives of existing knowledge as well as adding to their knowledge. Henceforth, transformative learning is an important aspect of adult educational programs.

Integration of Theories & Models

As discussed earlier, there is a notable lack of theory in adult education. While The Chain-of-Response (COR) Model (Cross, 1981) is far from the kind of theory that can be used to predict adult participation, it is a broad theoretical model which can be useful for organizing thinking and existing knowledge and research. Other theories and models are integrated into or organized by the COR Model. It is for that reason that I have chosen to introduce the COR at the end of this section. The model is concerned with the adult learner and assumes that participating in a learning activity is the result of a chain of responses rather than a single act.

The COR Model includes several variables represented by points A through F with point A, self-evaluation, being the starting point. Self evaluation points to attitudes about education (B) which arise from the learner's past experiences and indirectly from the attitudes and experiences of friends and family. The next point (C) represents the importance of goals and the expectation that goals will be met as expressed in the well known expectancy-valence theory (discussed earlier) of motivation developed through the work of Tolman, Lewin, Atkinson, Vroom, and Rubenson. The study of the adult learner and lifelong learning gives much attention to life transitions (D) which often trigger a desire for education. The next point (E) is representative of opportunities and barriers that the adult learner encounters which leads you to (F) representing accurate and appropriate information regarding educational opportunities available for adult learners. The last variable (G) represents participation in adult learning after the adult has navigated through the other points. Basically, adult educators desiring to understand why some adults fail to participate or fail to continue their participation in learning opportunities would start at the beginning of the COR model and seek understanding of attitudes toward self and education (Cross, 1981, p. 130).

Explanation of Unmet Expectations

Unmet expectations can stem from the in-school experience as well as the experience following the completion of the baccalaureate degree. Wlodkowski (2004) discusses some of the reasons adult students give for failing to persist in the pursuit of their baccalaureate degree from which assumptions can be made regarding an explanation for unmet expectations in regard to the in-school experience:

- Not enough money to go to school is a reason expressed by 50% of those

who do not persist.

- Unable to meet the time constraints of college
- Lack of social integration with peers.
- Curriculum not relevant to real life situations
- Misinformation regarding program requirements resulting in confusion about necessary next steps
- Lack of follow-up and lack of contact with advisors

In regard to dissatisfaction following the completion of the baccalaureate degree, one must consider reports that question the emphasis placed on obtaining a four-year college degree. Such critics of this emphasis say that college graduates may not be getting the expected payoff from college:

> Many find themselves in low-paying service jobs and other lines of work not traditionally associated with a college education. From this perspective, graduation no longer provides reasonable assurance of a college-level job,' e.g., a white-collar job in an organization that provides reasonable pay, good benefits, training opportunities, and the prospect of advancement at least to middle-management or mid-level professional status.(Outcomes for College, 1999, p. 1)

Since 1976, The National Center for Education Statistics has been collecting information regarding college graduates and their work experience the first year after finishing college. When asked in four repeated surveys if their current jobs required college-level skills, the proportion of graduates saying that their job did not require college-level skills increased from "24 percent in 1976 to 44 percent in 1991 and remained at that level in 1994. The largest part of the increase (13 of 20 percentage

points) occurred between 1976 and 1985" (Outcomes for College, 1999, p.1). It is noted that the data are subjective, but because the question and the methods remained essentially the same over time, there is confidence that the graduates' opinions reflect real change. However, the reader is reminded to keep in mind that these are typically young college graduates in the first year after leaving college. Thus, it is another example of the gap in data specific to the adult college student.

Freeman (1976) and Freeman and McCarthy (1982) were among the first to observe that the proportion of college graduates in professional jobs declined from the late 1950s and the 1960s to the early 70s (Outcomes for College, 1999, p. 2). It must be pointed out that this is an ongoing discussion when considering outcomes for college graduates. Although there is widespread belief that high school graduates should go to a 4-year college, critics of the college movement have found qualified empirical support for several of their points.

In a more detailed study, Hecker (1992) reported that the numbers of college graduates (including those with advanced degrees) age 25 and older in what he termed 'non-college jobs' increased substantially from 1967 to 1990. Using Current Population Survey data, Hecker defined non-college occupations as those in the retail sales; administrative support; service; precision production, craft and repair; operator, fabricator, and laborer; and farm categories. Hecker excluded occupations in these categories that might reasonably require college-graduate skills, such as farm manager and craft-worker supervisor.

In the "Conclusion" of the previous reference it is noted that 4-year college graduates are doing well in the labor market, and since 1975 their earnings have held

steady. Except for the atypical 1970s that so many critics point to, their wages over high school graduates have been growing for the last forty to fifty years. Also, the rate of return on investment in college is high. It seems clear that the wages of college dropouts are limited and that students should do everything in their power to complete their bachelor's degree

Toward a Better Understanding of the Adult Student

Recent and ongoing studies are steering us in the right direction of a better understanding of the adult student. Two universities, Regis University and University of Missouri in Kansas City participated in a study to identify factors that influence adult learners' persistence and success in college (Wlodkowski, Mauldin & Gahn, 2001). Important findings from this study were:

- Adult learners benefit from having significant college experience before enrolling in four-year colleges. Having more transfer credits was associated with degree completion at both universities. Adult learners with higher grades were more likely to persist and succeed at both universities.
- Women were twice as likely as men to graduate within six years at Regis University (accelerated format), but were two times more likely than men to drop out after one term at UMKC (traditional format).
- Financial aid enhances adult student persistence. At Regis University, adults who received financial aid were 2.9 times more likely than non-financial aid recipients to persist to the spring semester. This effect was

even stronger at UMKC, where adults who received financial aid were more than four times more likely to persist.

- Social integration was associated with adult student persistence and success in the traditional program only.
- Several motivational variables were associated with higher grades in the traditional program: self-regulation, self-efficacy and instruction that supported students' intrinsic motivation. (p. 3)

While Woldkowski, Mauldin & Gahn's study provides some valuable insight into the adult learner, according to Wlodkowski, Mauldin & Campbell (2002), our understanding of adults leaving college is, at best, improvised---a combination of myth, common sense, recent experience and various research models. Instead, they declare that their research reveals that while adults do leave colleges, their departures are temporary, necessary for advancement in their job, or part of a process of personal development where another college or program is more desirable. The current study should add to the a better understanding of adults leaving college in that it is more narrowly focused to gain knowledge regarding the returning adult college student's expectations verses outcomes both during the program and at departure.

The need for further research specific to the adult student is expressed throughout the literature. When expressing "Some Final Thoughts" Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) emphasize this point:

> A seventh important direction of future research on college impact should be greater dependence on naturalistic and qualitative methodologies. When employed judiciously, such approaches are capable of providing greater

> sensitivity to many of the subtle and fine-grained complexities of college impact than more traditional quantitative approaches. Naturalistic inquiries may be particularly sensitive to the detection of the kinds of indirect and conditional effects just discussed. We anticipate that in the next decade important contributions to our understanding of college impact will be yielded by naturalistic investigations (p. 634).

The belief in the need for a variety of investigative methods is expressed by Houle, C. O. (1992) when he states: "The future literature seems likely to be primarily influenced by the summative effect of many kinds of investigations, each undertaken by a scholar who sees an opportunity to be of service" (p. 321). Houle further explains that, "A literature grows through a multifaceted development of ideas, controversy, the discovery of new techniques of investigation, and the interaction of researchers and other analysts with one another" (p. 321).

Summary

While there have been extensive studies on the benefits of college, there is a need for more focused qualitative studies on the adult segment of the college population that is enrolled in adult degree completion programs. The paucity of research in this area and the lack of a well-developed theoretical foundation led to the choice of a qualitative, grounded theory approach with the intent to contribute to the groundwork for research on college outcomes for adult students. Specifically, there is a need to look at the college outcomes in light of student expectations upon entry into a bachelor's degree completion program. By systematically extracting data from interviews with adults that are currently in the LEAD program, adults who have dropped form the LEAD program and

graduates of the program, a grounded theory could be developed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Continuous comparative analysis of the interview data is used to identify the reported satisfaction/dissatisfaction of the educational experience and/or the attainment of the bachelor's degree in comparison to the expectations upon entrance into an adult degree completion program for the purpose of completing the bachelor's degree. By analyzing reasons that adults give for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with either the college experience or the resulting outcomes, we can better plan retention strategies, better inform policy decisions and provide better advisement to the adult student.

CHAPTER III

Methodology and Mode of Inquiry

Introduction

Because of the paucity of research and established theory in the area of outcomes for adult baccalaureate students/graduates versus their expectations upon entering an educational program to complete their baccalaureate degree, this was an exploratory study conducted for the purpose of developing the emerging theory. Open-ended, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were utilized in this study to gain knowledge regarding the extent that the reflective expectations of adults entering an adult baccalaureate degree completion program are demonstrated in their perceived and reported outcomes. A grounded theory approach guided the collection and analysis of data. Specifically, the study focused on adults who had participated or were currently participating in a degree completion program at a mid-western regionally accredited Christian university. These adults entered the program for the purpose of completing their baccalaureate degree between one and seven years prior to the inquiry. The sampling included graduates of the program, students currently in the program and students who had dropped from the program prior to obtaining their degrees.

Design of the Study

With the complex area of educational outcomes for adult baccalaureate students and graduates being a largely unexplored area, the use of grounded theory approach to examine the perceptions of these students and former students was believed to be the most effective because the subject of study involved qualitative changes that took place gradually over a period of time involving various rates for different individuals as well as

different factors and social contexts. Grounded theory is one approach to qualitative research and theory and is a methodological outgrowth of phenomenology first applied in sociological research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Stern (1980) proposes that grounded theory methods are most favorable for the investigation of relatively "uncharted waters."

Grounded theory gets it name from the fact that it is a general methodology that develops theory that has at its foundation or "ground" a systematic gathering and analysis of data. Grounded theory has been used by humanistic-oriented psychologists in descriptive, interpretive research (Tesch,1990). Commonalities and uniqueness in the individual responses result in a gradual crystallization of constituents of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1971). Theory is then generated from the process of deriving categories from the participants. The fit of data to the theory must be exact; there is no room for prescriptive, preconceived categories. Thus theory evolves within a cyclic process of verification and generation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This concept of "emergent design" allows the researcher to establish links between pieces of data and to forge these links into themes or propositions which may then be related to the state of existing theory in his particular field.

Grounded theory provides a building block for new theory by providing the researcher with analytic tools that are useful when dealing with large amounts of raw data. Grounded theory is a creative way of considering alternative meanings for the phenomena which leads to concepts that serve as the building blocks of theory. Theory is well-developed concepts that are related through a statement that is useful in predicting or explaining certain phenomena. Theorizing is a complex activity that involves concepts (ideas) and then offers logical, systematic explanations and implications. Grounded

theory thus draws from the data, offers insights, understanding *and* a meaningful guide to action as posited by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Rationale for Design

The major purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the various ways that the participants (a sampling of current participants as well as participants who had dropped from the program) perceived they had benefited from the education process of obtaining a baccalaureate degree, the reported benefit of graduates following the attainment of the baccalaureate degree, and how these perceptions compared with their reflective expectations prior to entering the program for the purpose of completing their baccalaureate degree. The grounded theory method allowed the researcher to ask the participants the necessary why and how questions to gain the desired information. A pilot study conducted earlier provided insight and direction regarding the need for the grounded theory approach.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to determine the difference that earning a baccalaureate degree made in the life of the adult student who returned to college for the purpose of completing his/her baccalaureate degree at age twenty-five or older. The selection was based on the participants' establishment in a job or career for two years or longer prior to returning to college and on his/her continuing to work fulltime in that job or career while completing their degree. While the purpose of the pilot study was somewhat different than the current study, some of the same questions were asked of the participants. This process played an important role in helping refine my research question, aided in finalizing the interview procedure for optimum effectiveness for the

current study and confirmed the belief that the grounded theory approach was the right approach for the knowledge and understanding that was being sought.

The sample for the pilot study was drawn from the graduates of four regionally accredited colleges in the same metropolitan areas as the current study and involved four men and eight women. The subjects interviewed were college graduates who had been adult students. All participants were established in a job or career for two or more years prior to returning to college and all continued to work full-time in a job while going back to college to complete their bachelor's degrees. Each participant had graduated two or more years prior to the interview.

Program administrators from the selected institutions identified 30 individuals who met the above criteria. Twelve were randomly selected from the original group of 30 with each of the four institutions being represented.

The purpose of the pilot study was to gain knowledge and understanding of the difference that earning a baccalaureate degree makes in the life of the adult students who returns to college to complete their baccalaureate degree. A standardized open-ended interview was conducted. In order to minimize the possibility of bias, a predetermined sequence of wording of the same set of questions was asked of each participant. However, during the course of the interview, questions were added to better understand responses or to follow leads that developed during the interviews. A cassette recorder was utilized with field notes being created during the interviews. Transcripts from the interviews and field notes were used to develop categories of data.

Categories or themes that emerged from the collected data regarding reasons adults return to college seemed to correlate with Houle's (1992) foundational studies

regarding adults being goal, activity and learning oriented as well as Harriger's (1991) study that presented a more detailed characterization. I have placed the quotations which represent the emerging themes from my pilot study under sub-titles which represent the emerging themes from Harriger's research to show both the replication of categories and the subjectivity of the responses:

Chance to better themselves and their families:

"This probably doesn't fit into what you are trying to do, but I was a single parent—three children—and it was real important to me that they had a good role model. When I graduated I heard my kiddos from the top of the stadium yelling 'That a girl, mom!'—Now, that is a benefit you can't quantify."

"I was tired of climbing the ladder only to a certain point. Also, it was like something was missing—I felt inadequate or inferior."

Self Satisfaction:

"If I had not finished my bachelor's degree, I would probably be working toward finishing until I died. It was a life long intention…I have the need to finish things I start—not to quit."

"It was an unfulfilled goal. I had not completed the degree that I had started. I needed to be a part of that group that had their degree. The unfinished business of having 120 hours of college credit and no degree motivated me to go back."

Further Employment Opportunities:

"I wanted to continue to have options and I needed the credential in order to not always have to struggle to prove myself. I wanted to break out of the

socioeconomic level of which I was a part. It is easier to be successful if you are educated…having a bachelor's degree puts me on a different playing field."

"I am in a new job which is a better work environment and better opportunity."

"It has allowed me to pursue my goal of ministry. I could not be in seminary without a bachelor's degree."

"It has allowed me to specialize in real estate business with the elderly but I can't say it has benefited me financially."

"By completing my degree, I have been able to pursue graduate studies [completed terminal degree] and now am an administrator at the community college."

"I understand business concepts better and have received an offer for a better position—although I would have to move out of state."

Advance in their job or career

"I have received two promotions—assistant vice president and then vice president. I have more freedom, power and authority."

"I have received two promotions and oversight of a $10 million budget."

"It has allowed me to specialize in real estate business with the elderly but I can't say it has benefited me financially."

"The job I currently have, required a degree. I am just view differently; I am now part of that small percent that have a degree. In the business world it makes a difference.

While this data does suggest that the experienced benefits are often very subjective, which influenced the research method in my current study, the data does not

address the additional question posed in my current research of how adult's expectations prior to beginning a program to complete their degree compare with the outcomes. Additionally, one must keep in mind that the selection for the pilot study was rather narrow in that it included only graduates who were employed fulltime for 2 years or more prior to going back to complete their baccalaureate degree, remained employed during the process and were employed at the time of the interview. While this data does add to the prevalently held belief that people benefit from obtaining a college degree, the question arises: Would the same benefits and satisfaction be expressed with a different selection criteria and would a person's expectations have a predictive influence over their perceived outcomes?

Sample

The participants for the current study involved adults who had either participated in or were currently in a degree completion program at a mid-western regionally accredited Christian university. Because of the desire to gain a full and broad perspective of expectations verses outcomes it was important to draw a sample from three classifications of students: a) students currently in the program, b) students who had graduated from the program, and c) students who had been in the program but had dropped from the program prior to completing their baccalaureate degree.

In the spirit of the grounded theory approach, there were not a predetermined number of participants. Rather, theoretical, purposeful sampling was utilized in that additional participants in each of the three categories described above were interviewed until no new data emerged. For triangulation purposes a questionnaire was sent to 50 additional individuals representing the three categories described above. For further

triangulation purposes, interviews were conducted with each of the four assistant directors of the program of study.

There are four degree programs in the degree completion program under study with an assistant director administering over each. Each assistant director is responsible for the recruitment and advisement of the students who enroll in the program for which they provide oversight. Because they are responsible for and work closely with the same set of students enrolled in the degree program from entry into the program to time of exit from the program (approximately two years), they develop insight and understanding into expectations, experiences and perceived program/degree benefits of the students. Therefore, their contribution to the data gathering process proved insightful and valuable.

Data Collection Methods

As is characteristic of all forms of qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). It is for that reason that the training, experiences, philosophical orientation, and biases need to be stated at the beginning of the study. The researcher's knowledge of the phenomenon being investigated can be useful and positive (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). According to Strauss & Corbin (1998b) "Researchers carry into their research the sensitizing possibilities of their training, reading, and research expertise, as well as explicit theories that might be useful if played against systematically gathered data, in conjunction with theories emerging from analysis of these data." (p. 167)

My perceptions of expectations and outcomes of adult learners have been influenced in the following ways:

- I returned to college as an adult student for the purpose of completing my baccalaureate degree, after which, I continued my education.
- I initiated and currently direct the adult degree completion program at the mid-western regionally accredited church-related university from which the sample is drawn.
- I have heard the oral spontaneous testimonies and seen the evidence of transformation through students' academic achievements.
- I have also witnessed the struggles of students and the agony of their failure to complete their educational goals.
- I have witnessed the educational outcomes through the various successes of students in the workplace and by their acceptance and success in graduate work.

While my experiences could have created some biases (These are discussed in the "How to Manage Bias" section of this chapter), it also provided rich and in depth insights that aided in both the data gathering and the interpretive process.

The adult degree completion program at a mid-western, regionally accredited, Christian university provided the homogeneous sample that I was seeking. Solicitation for participants was conducted in the form of a phone call. In an attempt to appeal to their sense of civic duty I explained that the knowledge gained from their participation would benefit other adults contemplating returning to college. Interviews of approximately one hour in length were conducted with the purposefully selected individuals. An open-ended inductive style interview was utilized (See Appendix A). The researcher actually became a "human instrument" inasmuch as the resulting data was

subjectively analyzed by the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Firestone & Dawson, 1988).

Although a standardized open-ended interview method was utilized involving a predetermined sequence and wording of the same set of questions to be asked of each respondent, I also added questions during the course of the interview in order to better understand responses or to follow leads that developed during the interviews. The interviews were audio recorded, and field notes were taken. Transcripts were later created from the recordings. Data from the transcripts and the field notes were then coded and analyzed to provide categories of information resulting in themes.

Data collection and analysis took place simultaneously in that coding and categorizing of data began to take shape as respondents provided information. Coding allowed the researcher to cluster incidents, events, and information that had some common element. The constant comparison method was utilized where empirical indicators from the data were examined for similarities and differences. Schwandt (1997) further explains this method:

> Empirical indicators from the data (actions and events observed, recorded, or described in documents in the words of interviewees and respondents) are looked at for similarities and differences. From this process the analyst identifies underlying uniformities in the indicators and produces a coded category or concept. Concepts are compared with more empirical indicators and with each other to sharpen the definition of the concept and to define its properties. (p. 60)

Schwandt goes on to explain how from the observation of similarities and differences, uniformities and concepts lead to the eventual forming of theory:

> Theories are formed from proposing plausible relationships among concepts and sets of concepts. Tentative theories or theoretical propositions are further explored through additional instances of data. The testing of the emergent theory is guided by theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling means that the sampling of additional incidents, events, activities, populations, and so on is directed by the evolving theoretical constructs. Comparisons between the explanatory adequacy of the theoretical constructs and these additional empirical indicators go on continuously until theoretical saturation is reached (i.e., additional analysis no longer contributes to anything new about a concept). In this way, the resulting theory is considered conceptually dense and grounded in the data. (p.60-61).

Trustworthiness of collected information and findings was gained through debriefing and through the triangulation described above. Debriefing was conducted in an effort to get respondents' feedback regarding the researcher's interpretations and understanding of the data. Summaries of interview transcripts and findings were provided to each respondent along with a stamped return envelope. Respondents were asked to correct transcripts and to offer any commentary or contradictory views to the findings. Respondents' feedback insured the accuracy of the transcriptions and provided support for the findings.

Instrumentation

My principal data-gathering instrument was the open-ended, biographical interview format involving approximately twenty students or former students of an adult degree completion program at a mid-western, regionally accredited, Christian university who were either currently in the program, had dropped from the program or had

graduated from the program. Additional questions were added throughout the interview for clarity and understanding of responses. The same set of questions that were used to guide the in depth interviews were mailed to 50 additional LEAD program participants. Although some of the same categories of questions were used in the interviews with the four assistant directors, since I desired to gain an understanding of their perception of student expectations verses student outcomes, some questions were dropped and others revised to get the desired information from the different sample (See Appendix B).

Procedures

Following approval for the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board Office, a data collection form, as suggested by Creswell (1998) was utilized (see Appendix A) to log information gained during the interview. Information was recorded from the interviews both by taking notes and by the use of a tape recorder. Lofland and Lofland (1995) describe the process as "logging data" (p.66). When recording an interview, a header was used, as suggested by Cresswell, to record essential information about the project and as a reminder to go over the purpose of the study with the interviewee. The issues of confidentiality were addressed prior to beginning the interview. Following the interviews, the interviewees were thanked and were requested to provide follow up information as needed. Transcripts of the interviews were then created and the content was sent to the participant for verification, offering them the opportunity to clarify or expand an idea. To protect the anonymity of the informants, aliases were assigned to the individuals and their names were masked in the data.

The interview transcripts were saved to disks and placed in a file along with the accompanying field notes. The responses to the mail questionnaire were also place in a

file along with summary notes from the categorizing and coding of all data. High quality tapes were utilized for the audio recordings and the tapes were added to the document file. A master list of types of information gathered was placed in the front of the file.

Methods of Analysis

In this study there was generated a significant amount of raw data coming from the collection of responses from one-on-one interviews as well as from the mail questionnaire to adult graduates. Strauss and Corbin (1998) posit that data collection is messy. However, grounded theory offers the best methodological fit to enable data to be classified and compared in order to guide theory. Researchers can classify and compare data from points and incidents followed by grouping of similarities and differences into categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). They further explain that if a researcher has problems or difficulties categorizing, a theoretical comparison is made through examining the properties of the data to better understand the meaning of the situation. Comparative analysis is used to insure the accuracy of evidence with the objective being to generate conceptual categories in discovery theory, which is the main thrust of this study.

This inductive process which is utilized in grounded theory and which was utilized in this study stands in contrast to deductive methods that are characteristic of quantitative research which begins with an hypotheses and ends with the accumulation of data testing the viability of the hypotheses. Development of grounded theory permits no prior expectations to influence data collection or analysis (Glaser, 1978). A literature review which provided limited areas of interest to the study and clarified the interview method guided this study. No hypotheses was developed or tested.

In qualitative research Huberman & Miles (1994) explain that qualitative researchers learn by doing and that data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather, it is custom-built, revised and choreographed. This proved true as I worked to strategize the best method of analyzing the collected data to capture the truths therein. Henceforth, I adopted a combination of strategies from three different research authors. I found it helpful to sketch my ideas by jotting them down in the margins of my field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). From those notes I then drafted a summary sheet (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Additionally, I displayed findings in a table with emerging subject headings (Wolcott, 1994b). From the subject headings and from the summary sheet I was able to develop coding categories. I chose to begin with a short lists of codes as suggested by Creswell, (1998) and then expand the categories as I reviewed and re-reviewed my database. By sorting the material into these developed categories I was able to reduce the information and make note of patterns and themes. After breaking the data apart, I went back and read the transcripts in their entirety several times to keep a perspective of the interview as a whole (Agar, 1980).

The above-described process allowed me to propose relationships among the concepts and sets of concepts and thus form tentative theoretical propositions. These theoretical propositions could then be further explored through subsequent data collection.

How to Manage Bias

As the director of the adult program from which the sample is drawn, it was important that precautions were taken and elements of “good practice” were utilized to control for bias. According to Kopala and Suzuki, 1999, trustworthiness which

encompasses elements of "good practice" that are present throughout the research process is a primary criterion for evaluation of quality. Stiles (1993), expresses elements of trustworthiness as including the following: a) disclosure of the researcher's orientation, b) intensive and prolonged engagement with the material, c) persistent observation, d) triangulation and e) discussion of findings and process with others. Stiles further posits that a qualitative approach to the problem of bias is to "increase the investigators'—and readers'—exposure to the phenomenon" (p. 614) by using intensive interviews and by providing "thick descriptions" (p. 614) of the data. Additionally, Stiles (1993) identified triangulation, responsible searching for negative instances and repeatedly seeking consensus through peer debriefing as elements of good practice.

Because the researcher, in this instance, served or serves (role is dependent on the status of the student—current or former) as the college administrator over the program from which the sample is drawn, the precautions discussed above were taken to reduce bias. The participants were encouraged to consider the researcher's role as that of a student and a researcher rather than a college administrator, stressing the desire for them to be candid and straightforward in their responses. Participants were assured that the researcher was seeking truth and insight which may or may not be confirmation. When conducting face-to-face interviews with both students and assistant directors the researcher was careful to dress in a more casual manner (more as a student) rather than the attire of an administrator. By allowing the participant to choose the meeting place, it gave them a sense of control and helped provide a level ground of communication.

There is a long-standing assumption in adult learning theory that adults are more self-directed and self-motivated than are younger students (Knowles, 1980). Because

most adult students are engaged in jobs and life positions that require thoughtful, autonomous learners rather than dependent learners (Cross, K. P., 1981, p. 250) it is the researcher's belief that the participants are capable of providing responses that are reflective of independent thinking uninfluenced by the researcher. Adequate time was allowed for the interviews to develop and evolve. Participants were encouraged to take time to reflect on their experience and to give candid responses. With no conscious hypothesis, the researcher was sensitive to feelings or insights of the participants and asked probing questions to gain more in-depth understanding.

Lastly, the very atmosphere of the program under study is one of constant renewal and assessment. Students are involved in ongoing assessment, are frequently questioned regarding their opinions and are encouraged to give feedback regarding program needs. This already-established atmosphere of openness and free exchange of ideas is believed to be fertile ground for this study.

For triangulation purposes, both face-to-face interviews and anonymous survey data was gathered from students/alumni. The cover letter introducing the survey emphasized the desire to receive candid responses. In addition, program assistant directors responsible for enrollment and advisement of the participants were also interviewed. A typed transcript of each participant's face-to-face interview was provided to the participant allowing them to concur, correct or elaborate as desired. Following the initial collection of data, a meeting with the four program assistant directors was conducted for the purpose of discussing the emerging data from interviews and mail surveys and to solicit feedback regarding their interpretation of the data. This allowed for

critical reflection, a constant comparison of interpretation and strengthened the commitment to revealing, rather than avoiding emerging phenomenon.

While precautions had to be taken because of the researcher's role as a college administrator, that role, due to a decade of observation and involvement with students, also provided in-depth understanding and insight into the plight of the student. Additionally, the fact that the researcher, too, was an adult student provided sensitivity and understanding beyond the administrative role allowing the researcher to provide an empathetic ear.

Limitations

As explained by Jessor, "For some, considerations of qualitative research prompt thoughts of relativism and loosely established truths. A charge is often made that "there is no way to establish the validity or truth of scientific claims or observations in qualitative work" (Merrick, 1999, p. 25). Merrick further states, "Indeed, what most qualitative researchers consider strengths—reliance on the human instrument and an acknowledgement that many truths exist—others may see as major threats or weaknesses" (p. 25). For these reasons, one must acknowledge the subjectivity of the human instrument. While it is believed that the human instrument is not only a strength of the study, but a necessary instrument for this study, others may see it as a weakness or threat to validity of the research.

Another potential threat is the fact that so much of the previous research regarding the benefits of college, which this research references, is quantitative in design. Again, while the researcher believes that this is a strength--adding yet another dimension to existing research, some may see it as a weakness. The qualitative design was chosen

because it is believed that it will produce the type of information that is being sought. Because the gathering of data and the interpretation of the results will be somewhat subjective, the researcher's role as a college administrator in a non-traditional adult degree completion program could have led to a biased interpretation. However, being aware of the potential for bias and strongly desiring to advise potential students properly aided in reducing bias to a minimum. Debriefing and triangulation served to confirm the validity of responses and the researcher's interpretations, thus assisting in the control for bias.

Finally, the study is limited by the participants' ability to accurately reflect and report their expectations prior to entering the program to complete their baccalaureate degrees as well as their ability to assess how those expectations match with the outcomes.

CHAPTER IV

Presentation and Discussion of Research Findings

Introduction

After nearly a decade of directing/facilitating a college program for adults to return to college to complete their baccalaureate degree, a lingering question remained unanswered: Are these adult students' expectations of the educational benefits and/or the benefit of earning a baccalaureate degree being realized? More specifically, what did adult students entering a baccalaureate degree completion program in an accelerated format at a regionally accredited university expect to gain from the educational process and/or from the attainment of the baccalaureate degree and how did those expectations compare with how they benefited from the educational process and/or post-degree outcomes? The previous chapter described the methodology of this study, including the data collection, the sample, and the data analysis procedures. This chapter presents, examines and discusses those findings.

Data was drawn from three sources: a) A questionnaire mailed to 50 current/former program participants b) Interviews of 21 additional current/former program participants; and c) Administrators who advised and observed the current/former participants throughout their participation in the program. The student sample was representative of all four degrees in the program and of program participants at three stages: current students, students who had dropped from the program prior to graduating and graduates of the program. Twenty-six of the 50 mail questionnaires were returned. The level of participation was attributed to phone calls being made to verify current addresses and to the inclusion of a personal note from the researcher with each

questionnaire, greeting and thanking the participant in advance. Return responses were anonymous.

The data is first presented in the form of graphs, followed by summary comments and representative qualitative responses from participants. The student data is presented first, followed by data from assistant directors. All Quantitative data are reflected in the Figures in a non-interpretative manner. Representative verbal or written responses are reported together under each emerging theme and following the summary comments. The presentation of data is followed with a comparative discussion of student and administrator responses, followed by a chapter summary.

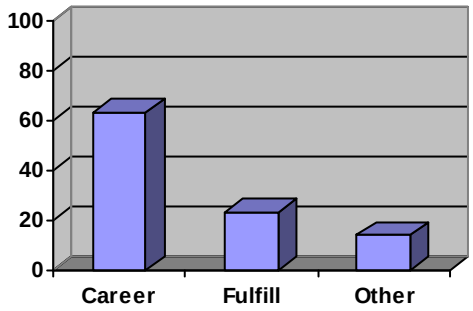
The Decision to Return to Higher Education

The first research question following the general demographic data questions was designed to open the door for exploring more specific expectations of college/degree benefits. Consistent with prior research of adults returning to college to complete their baccalaureate degree (Harriger (1991), Cross (1981) Houle (1961), the responses regarding their decision to return to higher education fell into three main categories: Career/job motivation, self fulfillment, and other.

Reasons for Returning to College

Figure1

Percentages--all student participants/all responses



(63% career or job/23% self fulfillment/14% other reasons)

While it may seem obvious that participants were in the program to get their degree, the motivation for obtaining the degree varied as demonstrated in the Figure above (Some respondents gave more than one motivating factor for their return to higher education, thus the Figure represents all responses) and in the following summary of interview and mail verbal responses. While the cause for the motivation varied, the two reasons discussed below are the desire to obtain a different or better job or career, which remained the primary motivation for participants' return to higher education, and self fulfillment, which was frequently expressed as a primary motivation. Unique and representative comments are listed below.

In the areas of career job motivation, it is apparent from the following representative comments that of the 63% that indicated that their motivation was career or job-centered, there is a strong belief that the attainment of a bachelor's degree will give them more job and career opportunities or choices and, in many cases, it is accompanied by the belief that it will benefit them financially.

Stacy explained that after 18 years of marriage, due to a divorce decree, she would receive alimony until 2008, after which her financial situation would change. "I did not want to continue working in nursing. I like working with computers"--Thus, she was pursuing a degree that will enable her to obtain employment in that field. David was even more specific regarding career change when he stated: "I decided to start back to college because I wanted to move away from contractor to a position at Tinker Air Force Base." Cindy, who is ending her military career, explained that she wanted to gain an expertise in the technology field for possible post retirement work but that the actual degree was not that important to her. One respondent simply replied, "retirement options—I will be eligible to retire in 7 years" while another stated briefly, "not happy with jobs available to me for the education I currently had".

Rick, a transportation manager, responded, "I graduated from high school in 1981. Not having a college degree was okay then—today it is not okay. In order for me to compete in the next 20-30 years and to be viable in the workforce, I knew I had to get a degree—plus, it was a personal goal." Other straightforward responses were "my job was not fulfilling—I wanted to better my life" and "to plan for my future after the Navy".

Nathan's response implied that he was not looking for a change in job or career, but that he expected the bachelor's degree to allow for upward mobility in his current job: "I started back to get my degree and was pushed back to college by several people through work and family. I knew that in order to move into upper management and even further up the ladder, I needed a degree." Likewise, Jan simply stated she wanted to advance at work while another responded, "career enhancement and my son was close to college and I wanted to set a good example." One written response was simply

"Promotion" and another stated, "Having a bachelor's degree would allow more opportunities for me" Another response was mixed: "It was suggested by our state manager to do so. In addition, it was always my desire to do so."

While financial motivation is likely an unspoken part of the career and job advancement reasons cited above, the following responses spoke specifically to the financial motive: "My husband is terminally ill and I need to support the family", "To better myself and get a better paying job", "The hope of increasing salary and opportunities available to me..." and "To earn more money and better myself".

Marlin, a U S Federal Agent nearing early retirement stated, "I was getting ready to retire and to live on a retirement check. I need to get a degree for my next career to be able to keep the same standard of living." Another candid response was, "I did not want to stay in the type of jobs that I was in and continue making the low wages I was making."

It seems evident from the above comments that expectation and anticipation of the bachelor's degree making a difference in their lives both financially and job and career-wise are a strong factor of motivation for the returning adult student.

In the area of self-fulfillment, a little less than one-fourth of the respondents cited reasons for returning to higher education that could be categorized as self-fulfillment with key statements like "life-long goal", "self-satisfaction", and "finishing what I started". Melody, who is in her late fifties, explained that her main motivation was to achieve a life-long goal, other reasons she stated were to improve future career choices in addition to a necessary step for going on to obtain a master's degree so that "when I retire, I can come back here and teach business." Jean simply stated, "I have always had the desire

to complete my degree, I felt like I was equipped for [capable of] obtaining a degree and this program put it within reach [because of one-night-a week format]." The simple response "I always wanted a B.S." says a lot. Another revealingly responded "I was recovering from cancer and promised myself that I would complete my education if I survived my illness." The feeling of unfinished business is apparent in responses like "Wanted to finish what I started—plus, I would like growth opportunity. I must have bachelor's degree before pursuing Master's" and "I always knew I would start back to college, and it was time." Carol replied, "I had always wanted to go to college, but when I got the opportunity to go to work at this institution and tuition was a part of the salary package, I decided that we could give up the difference in salary to have a degree at the other end, so I jumped at it!"

Self satisfaction and validation were sometimes implied and other times stated straightforwardly. Alys replied, "I currently worked in the field and felt the knowledge would validate my work. Also, I am about to relocate and felt that the degree would benefit me in obtaining another position." Another simply replied, "Self satisfaction" while yet another responded "I want my kids to reach my goals and/or higher".

Representative comments of the 14% that fell into the "other" category were unique and did not tend to fall definitively into either of the two categories indicated above or there was not enough data to categorize them otherwise, such as Julia's response which was one of the more unusual—"I was encouraged by my church (Mormon church) to continue my education. They put a lot of emphasis on education which made me feel it was important for me to get a degree." Sharon explained that working fulltime and being involved in ministry left little time for pursuing a degree. "Opportunity presented itself in

this program with both the academic and the spiritual side. Before I found this program I had to choose one or the other. This program allowed me to have both so it was easy for me to make the decision to complete my degree at this time—something I had wanted to do since I began my academic pursuit in the 70's." Many of the following responses were from the mail surveys and perhaps could have been more definitively categorized had the researcher had the opportunity to ask follow up questions. As written, they are fairly one-dimensional: "My employer paid for my college expense!", "I wanted to see what the criminal justice field was like", "I wanted a degree that was not medical-related and I was interested in the ethical basis of this program." And "I wanted a degree in the psychology field".

Summary Comments

These responses and the resulting categories are consistent with prior inquiry regarding reasons adults return to higher education, as indicated in the introductory statements of this paper. While career, job and financial motivations are the leading reasons for returning to higher education, self-fulfillment is a strong second.

Expectations Versus Educational Experience/post-degree Outcome

Although the initial research question involves the expectation of adult students upon entry into a program to complete their bachelor's degree versus what they actually experience, another question emerges. Would the responses vary depending on the student's status—current, graduate, dropped from the program? To assist in detecting any variances resulting from the participant's student status, under each of the themes that emerged from the data, I have reported the research results in those three categories: current student, graduate, and dropped from the program.

The following research questions were more specific to expectations versus actual perceived experience and were asked of all three categories of program participants both through interviews and mail questionnaires. The same questions were posed to the four assistant directors. They were asked to give their perspective, from an observation standpoint, of how students would respond to the questions. Those responses are presented following the students' responses.

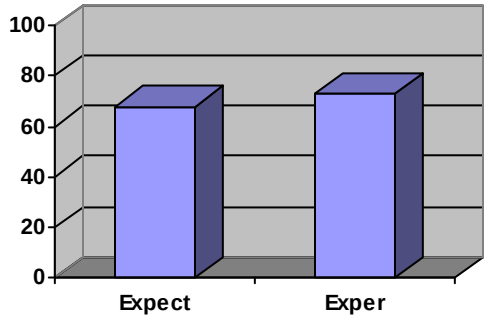
Students/former students were asked to reflect back on their expectations at the entry point of returning to complete their baccalaureate degree and to apply a percentage of expectation in the following categories: knowledge, change and benefit, with sub categories under both change and benefit. A percentage scale of 0% to 100% was utilized with 0% representing no expectation and 100% being extremely high expectation with percentage point increments in between utilized to reflect varying degrees of expectation. They were then asked to represent their "actual experienced" utilizing the same percentage scale of rating.

Knowledge--Actual learning and cognitive development

Current Students

Figure 2

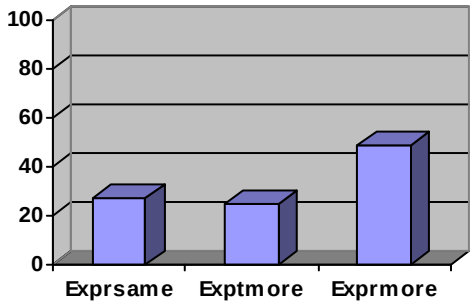
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Expected to gain 67.9%--Reported an experienced gain of 73.1%)

Figure 3

Percentage of students reporting of expectation versus experience



(27% experienced same as expected/24.5%expected more than experienced/48.5% experienced more than expected)

The "current student" respondents were each approximately one-half way through the program. While the overall average of expectation versus experience only had a 5% differential as displayed in Figure #2, Figure #3 reveals that almost one-half of the current students had gained more knowledge than they expected.

While most current students expressed that they gained what they expected or more, at entry point into the program the expectations of some were not met. The comments following the percentages provide some insight into met and unmet expectations.

Expectation	Actual Experience
Experienced the same as or more than expected	
50%	50%

I read a lot of materials regarding knowledge in my degree and felt like I already had a lot of knowledge.

I expected to learn more about computer programming instead of management.

75%	90%

My expectation now is to get all A's. I just wanted to get the degree at first.

100%	100%

My purpose was to get a degree. I can make or break my percentage of learning by what I put into it.

75%	90%

The classes exceeded my expectation and have not been easy. Doing the degree over IETV (Interactive Educational Television), we have to put more into the degree.

100%	100%

Overall, I have gained 100% more knowledge. There were higher gains in some courses than in others but I gained new knowledge in every course. I have learned a lot more about computers.

Expected more than experienced	
80%	40%

Only because I haven't gotten into many extensive courses yet. I expect the percentage to go up.

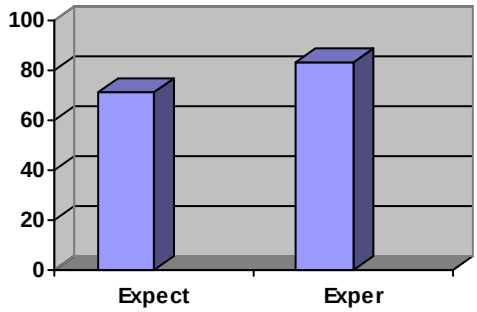
75% 50%

I expected to learn more about computer programming instead of management.

Knowledge--Graduates

Figure 4

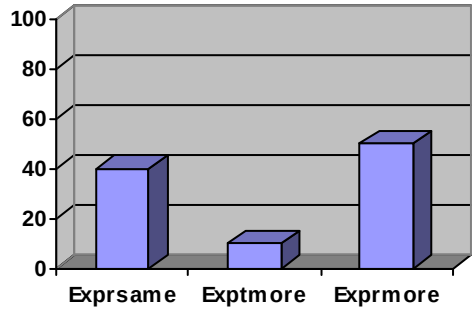
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Graduates, on an average, expected to gain 71.2%--On an average, they reported an experienced gain of 82.9%)

Figure 5

Students' expectation versus experience



(40%experienced the same as expected/10% expected more than experienced/50% experienced more than expected)

The graduate responses reflected a differential in Figure #4 of over 10% in experienced gain versus expected which is twice the differential reported by current students as reported in Figure #2. Graduates (Figure #5) expressed a 1.5% higher percentage point of actual experienced than did current students (Figure #3).

Verbal/written responses

The verbal and written responses of graduates provide some understanding to their reported percentages as represented in the instance of the criminal justice professional who reported 50% expectation and 40% actual experience.

Expectation	Actual Experience
Experienced the same as or more than expected	
50%	75%

I expected to learn more than in by Associates degree. I gained a lot and not as much as I should have because I did not put the effort in that I needed to. I am now learning the benefit of my education.

90%	90%

I expected to gain the knowledge to go on to graduate school. I did receive that.

90%	90%

I expected to gain a lot of knowledge.

50%	50%

I felt that going through the studies I would gain more knowledge.

90%	90%

I expected to gain a whole bunch of knowledge in areas that I did not already have. I think I gained that much. Even perspectives—even if I had had some kind of knowledge,

I got a whole added dimension, not only from the instructors, but from the students in the class—so I learned a lot.

50% 100%

I had gone through my Associates degree in the late 80's & thought—how much more can I learn! It was a whole new learning experience.

Expected more than experienced

100% 90%

The criminal justice instructor would put a Christian slant on the knowledge which gave me practical application.

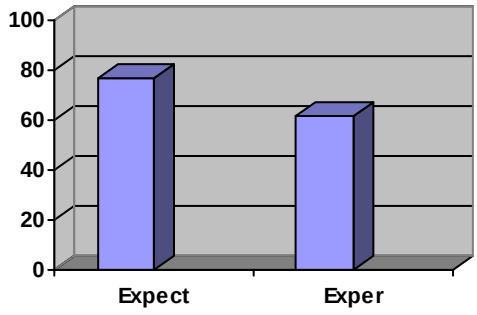
50% 40%

As a criminal justice professional, I have been supervising people for five years and had gained a lot of knowledge already.

Knowledge—Students Dropped

Figure 6

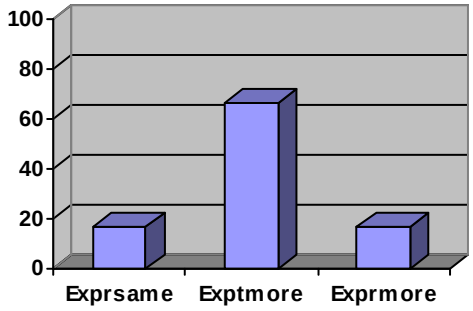
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Students who dropped from the program prior to completion expected to gain 76.7%-- They reported an experienced gain of 61.7%)

Figure 7

Students' expectation versus experience



(16.67% experienced the same as expected/66.66% expected more than experienced/16.67% experienced more than expected)

As you would expect, those who dropped from the program expressed a significantly higher expectation of knowledge gained than they experienced. Two of the respondents, because of the contact, have since reentered the program to complete their degrees.

Verbal/written responses

It was interesting to note that the students who dropped from the program tended to assume the responsibility for the lower percentage of actual experienced than expected. rather than placing the responsibility on the university.

<u>Experienced the same as or more than expected</u>

50% 50%

I learned about Jesus.

50% 75%

How's that for the middle of the road! I learned a lot of Biblical knowledge as well as business and marketing knowledge—there were still things out there to learn

Expected more than experienced

100% 75%

I probably had too high of expectations. I did not read all of the material and did not have time to complete all of the reading assignments.

100% 50%

I expected to learn a lot. I experienced less, mainly because I did not complete—yet.

80% 50%

Well, I came in with a minimal amount of knowledge but since I didn't finish there, I received about 50%--I learned a lot while I was there.

Summary comments regarding knowledge

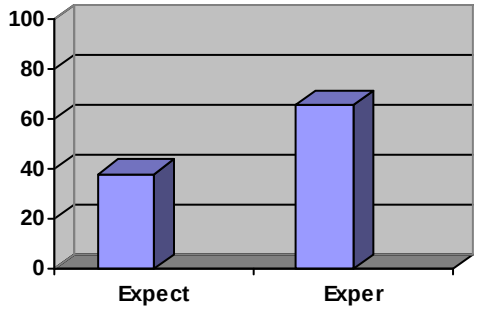
The largest percentage gain in the area of knowledge gained was reported by graduates with the second largest reported by current students (about one-half that of graduates). As one might expect the lowest gain was reported by those who dropped from the program which was 15% less than expected at entry into the program.

Change—Attitudes and Values

Current Students

Figure 8

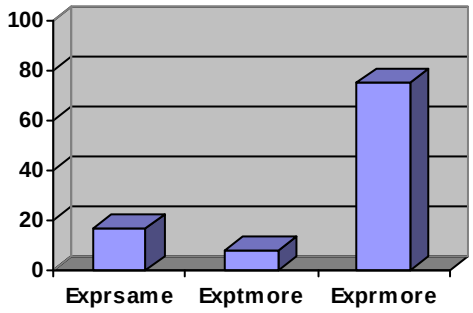
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Expected to gain 38.1--Experienced gain of 65.6%)

Figure 9

Students' expectation versus experience



(17% experienced the same as expected/8% expected more than experienced/75% experienced more than expected)

The increase from expectation to experience in the area of attitudes and values was significant. The number of students experiencing more than expected was more than twice those who experienced the same or those who expected more, combined.

Verbal/written responses

The following were reflected in the responses from current students regarding change in attitude and values: Tolerance, more positive attitude, increased or changed values. Several cited the Ethics (Bible/religious) classes as the reason for their change in attitude and values.

Expectation	Actual Experienced
Tolerance	
0%	30%

I became more open to other people and understand where they are coming from—more apt to listen even though I do not agree.

More positive attitude

25% 75%

I now have a more positive attitude and strengthened values.

20% 60%

I feel that my attitudes and values increased a lot and I didn't expect this at all.

Increased or changed values

25% 50%

I came in thinking I would know everything that I need to know. I know that I need to pursue further degree to obtain additional knowledge.

55% 95%

With this university was an emphasis on the community service and the religious class. I expected to strengthen my values, I was nervous about the religious classes but I enjoyed them.

25% 25%

I have a solid value system. I have appreciated the Biblical classes. I have grown spiritually with the classes.

0% 25%

The reason is because of the ethic classes. They put everything in perspective.

100% 100%

I had a very high expectation coming into the program because it was a type of education I had never had—what I would define as intense Bible study and I expected to be challenged in this area. I expected huge changes in my attitude and my thought process

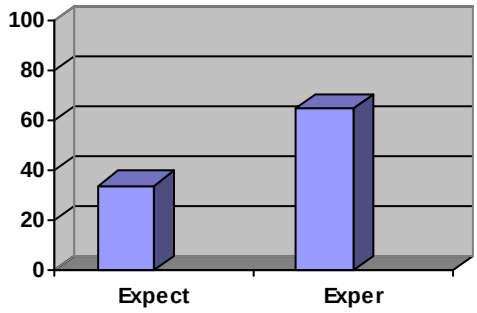
80% 100%

I had to adjust a few of my attitudes.

Attitudes and Values--Graduates

Figure 10

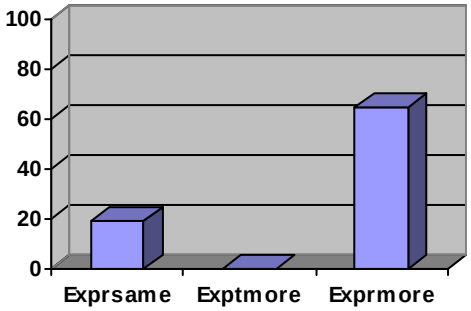
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Graduates expected to a change of 34%—they reported an experienced change of 64.5%)

Figure 11

Students' expectation versus experience



(19% experienced the same as expected/0% expected more than experienced/64.5%experienced more than expected)

Verbal/Written Responses

The second largest change experienced versus what was expected at entry into the program reported by graduates was in the area of attitudes and values. These changes were reflected in words like confidence, ethics and attitude about learning:

Expectation	Experienced
0%	75%

Going through the program I gained confidence. I'm the first person in my family to get a degree. I am now considering getting my master's degree. It builds your confidence in speaking with people and how you see people. You have more understanding in the way you view people and the way you deal with people –the education experience gives you more compassion.

0%	75%

The change was related to "God timing". It was good to see that there are Christian law enforcement officers. From an African American woman view, I had seen the negative side. I gained respect for the law enforcement officers.

20%	80%

Enjoyment of learning--The feeling of accomplishment and increase in ethic knowledge

25%	25%

It probably wasn't as high in the sense that I knew it was a Christian College, but still, I expanded. I would have expected to have some difference—I did look at some things in a different way from when I came in.

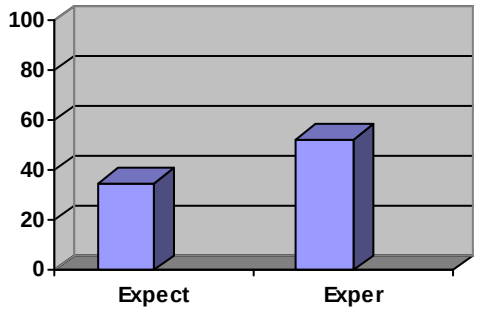
75%	100%

I searched every program in town and asked God to help me to decide. I kept coming back to this university.

Attitudes and Values—Students Dropped

Figure 12

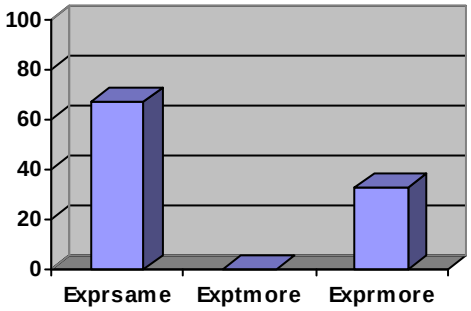
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Those who dropped from the program expected a 35% change but experienced a 52.5% change)

Figure 13

Students' expectation versus experience



(67% experienced same as expected/0%expected more than experienced/33% experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses

Those who dropped experienced a 17.5% change in the area of attitudes and values from what they expected at entry into the program.

Expectation	Experienced
20%	20%

I learned some good values

30%	80%

I did not expect a lot of change in this area—It was more like 80%

50%	50%

That is hard for me to answer. My outlook has changed—the fact that my husband took his life contributed to my attitude and values change.

30%	30%

I came in with a lot of values held there at the school, so I didn't expect it to change too dramatically.

Summary comments regarding attitudes and values

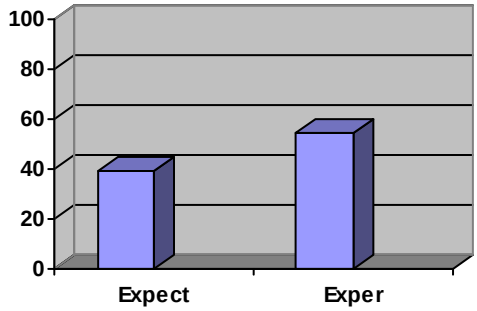
A significant difference in expectation versus actual experienced was expressed by graduates as reflected in Figures 10 and 11 as was expressed by current students and reflected in Figures 8 & 9.

Change—Psychosocial Development

Current Students

Figure 14

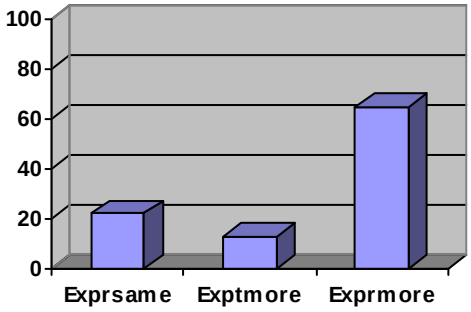
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(current students expected to gain 39.4% (averaged)—They reported an experienced gain of 54.2%)

Figure 15

Students' expectation versus experience



(22% experienced the same as expected/13% expected more than experienced/65% experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses

Current students expressed their psychosocial gain with key phrases: "Increased confidence", "increased self esteem" although some expressed no difference in experienced than expected.

Expectation	Actual Experienced
Experienced the same as or more than expected	
0%	100%

The social status has increased and increased my confidence. I feel more on the same level as my friends.

25% 75%

My self esteem has increased and I have gained friendships and mentors.

20% 95%

The input and interchange with classmates has played a huge part in my increased self esteem.

75% 80%

I expected to learn how to deal with people (management student)

20% 20%

I felt comfortable with my social experience. I wanted to grow in my relationships.

0% 0%

Because I was older and had a lot of prior experience

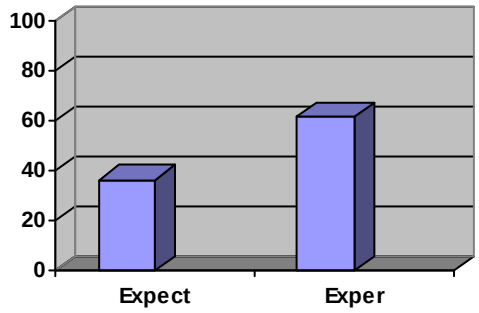
Expected more than experienced

75% 50%

I expected to gain more close relationships. I did not have a cohesive group. We had people leaving and coming into our classes.

Figure 16

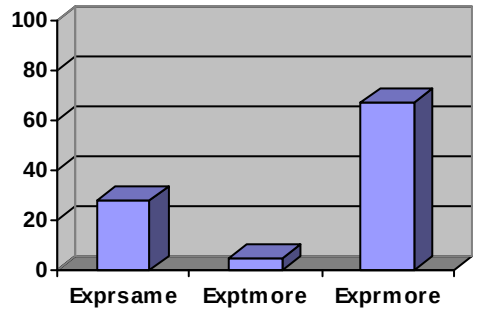
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Graduates expected to gain 36.4%—Reported an experienced gain of 61.4%)

Figure 17

Students' expectation versus experience



(28% experienced the same as expected/5% expected more than experienced/67% experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses

Although all participants expressed an increase in experienced over expected in the area of psychosocial development, graduates expressed the greatest increase. Social gains and confidence were key descriptors of the change that took place.

Expectation	Experienced
Experienced the same as or more than expected	
0%	75%

I had no expectation in this area—I just wanted an education. I now have more confidence in communicating with educated people and more confidence socially.

0%	35%

I had no preconceived ideas before coming. I became more outgoing.

0%	80%

I learned to embrace people that expressed their faith differently than I did and realize that they were seeking to grow too—they just expressed themselves differently.

60%	100%

I thought I knew a lot because I had an Associates degree and I had learned so many concepts and theories.

30%	60%

I became more social

0%	25%

I learned from the interchange in class.

Expected more than experienced	
20%	10%

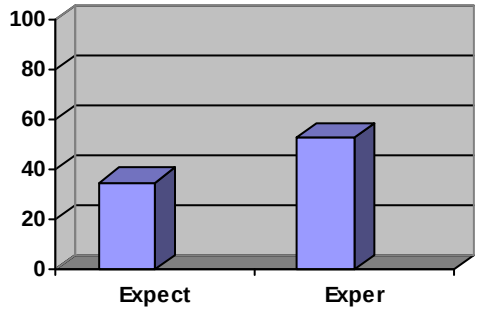
I'm not so sure I even got that far—It wasn't like my social behavior adaptation—those kinds of things didn't change that much, but I was pretty mature when I started (50 years old). I guess that could be relative or questionable. Let's say 10% because always you learn something. I had to be in a lot of groups with a lot of people that I

had to practice social skills in allowing them to speak and say some things that I did not necessarily agree with. I know I gained at least 10 or 15% in patience with my fellow students.

Psychosocial Development—Students Dropped

Figure 18

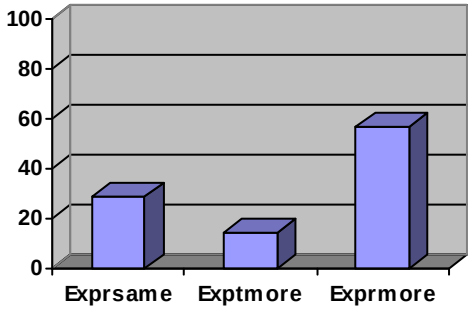
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Students who dropped expected to gain 35% (averaged)—They experienced a gain of 52.9

Figure 19

Students' expectation versus experience



(28.6% experienced the same as expected/14.3%expected more than experienced/57.1%experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written response

Even student who dropped from the program benefited significantly in the area of psychosocial development.

Expectation	Experienced
Experienced the same or more than expected	
25%	75%

When I started the program I was dealing with depression and the depression went away and the school helped me to clarify my values and what I wanted and how to deal with the issues that I was facing. The courses helped me to deal with the crisis of my x-husband taking his life. The education has helped me to deal with the guilt and the grief.

10%	80%

I really didn't expect much of a change there because I never have functioned very well in the classroom in having to deal with other people. I experienced about an 80% change—I was really able to do well there because we work in small groups—and it is really helping me where I am now, too (currently a college financial aid counselor)

40%	60%

I had very high expectations in this area, but it was closer to 60%

Summary Comments for psychosocial development

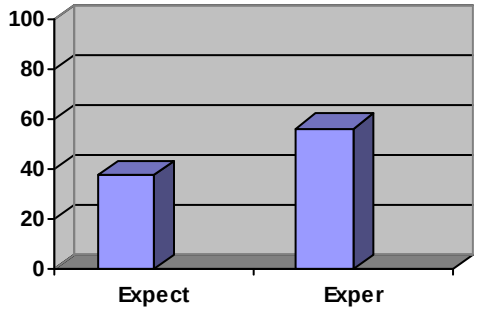
A higher "experienced than expected" in the area of psychosocial development was reported by students at all stages.

Change—Moral Development

Current Students

Figure 20

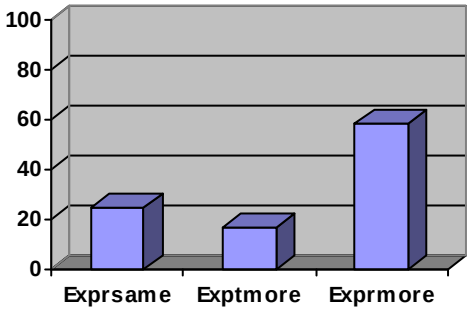
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Current students expected to gain 37.9% (averaged—They reported an experienced gain of 56.5%)

Figure 21

Students' expectation versus experience



(25% experienced the same as expected/16.7 expected more than experienced/58.3% experienced more
than expected)

Verbal/written responses

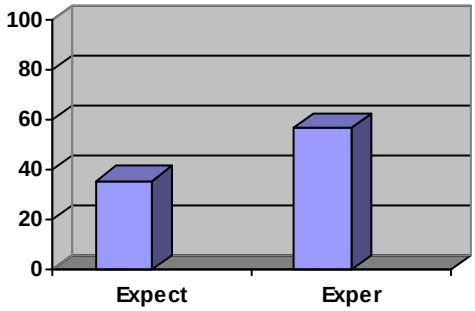
Current students who described themselves as high moral persons at entry tended to experience less of a change than those who did not describe themselves high in this area.

Expectation	Actual Experienced
Expressed high moral view of themselves prior to entry	
0%	0%
I am a religious person and I live a pretty strict life.	
25%	50%
I consider myself a high moral person and I had a narrow moral view. I increased my thinking on ethics and morals.	
40%	30%
I am a very moral person	
Did not necessarily express high moral view of themselves prior to entry	
50%	100%
I've learned so much about the Bible and it's teachings that I never knew. I'm excited about reading the Word now and I understand it better.	
10%	45%
I felt my parents and wife had already helped me in my moral development. I think my morals have strengthened with attending the classes.	

Moral Development--Graduates

Figure 22

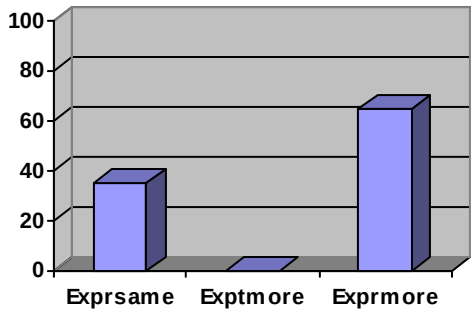
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Graduates expected a change of 35.8%—They reported an experienced change of 57%)

Figure 23

Students' expectation versus experience



(35% experienced the same as expected/0% Expected more than experienced/65% Experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses:

Expectation	Experienced
0%	25%

I had good moral values taught by my parents. I learned from the Hebrew Wisdom Literature Course how to relate to people.

0%	0%

On moral development I really didn't expect anything to change on that—I mean at age 49 I pretty well had my values in place. The program just supported those values--there was an agreement. I didn't have any problem with any of the ethical perspectives that we study. I wouldn't say that that changed very much at all—either in expectation or gain.

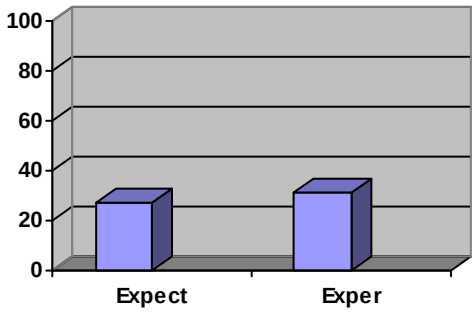
85%	100%

I had visited this university twice before deciding to enter the program. I expected to be challenged by the program. The study Bible is a great resource which I continue to use.

Moral Development—Students Dropped

Figure 24

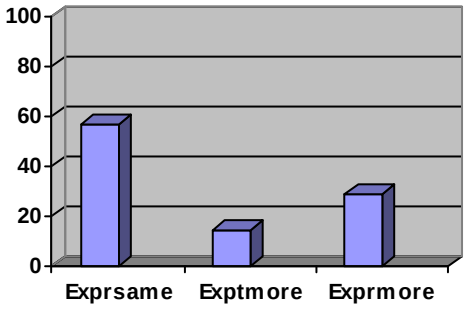
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Students who dropped from the program expected a change of 27.1% but experienced a change of 31.4%)

Figure 25

Students expectation versus experience



(57.1%experienced the same as expected/14.3% expected more than experienced/28.6% experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses

Expected	Experienced
60%	40%

I was doing better than I thought I was—my Christian values were higher that I thought they were.

30% 40%

I expected about 30% since it is a church school of the same denomination that I am a part, so I just expected it to further me along.

0% 0%

I already had good morals

40% 80%

I guess I didn't expect a lot in that either.

Summary Comment regarding Moral Development

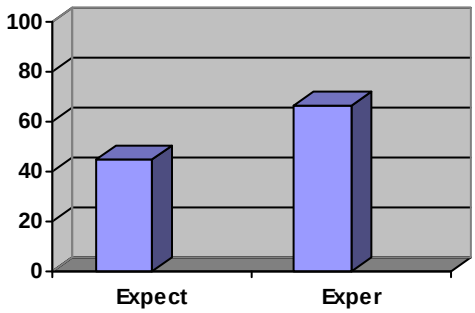
More current students and graduates experienced more than expected in moral development than those who dropped. While students who dropped also experienced more than expected, the percentage difference was not as great as it was for current students and graduates.

Change—Spiritual Development

Current Students

Figure 26

Average percentage of expectation versus experienced

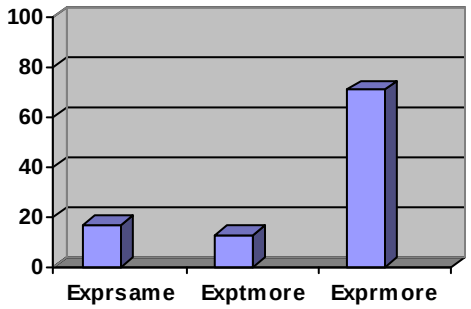


(Current students expected a change of 44.8% but experienced a change of 66.5%)

Spiritual Development—Current Students

Figure 27

Students' expectation versus experience



(16.7% experienced the same as expected/12.5% expected more than experienced/70.8% experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses:

A high percentage of current students expressed a high percentage of change in spiritual development. Current students who expected more than experienced gave no explanatory comments.

Expectation	Actual Experienced
50%	100%

I've learned so much more about the Bible—I love reading it now.

30%	60%

I assumed there would be some spiritual development but there are some nights after class I would cry and pray all the way home from being so moved and touched by the lesson.

25%	50%

I was a Christian and thought the ethic part of the degree would be helpful. I liked the fact that we prayed and asked for prayer requests. I would like to attend chapel and I liked attending the classes about the Bible. I learned more than I did in church.

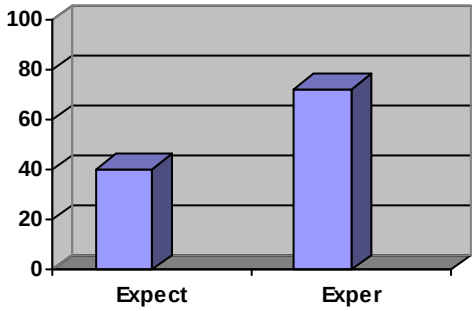
50% 90%

I was looking for more knowledge of the Bible than spiritual. The actual spiritual experience was high with both the students and the instructors.

Spiritual Development--Graduates

Figure 28

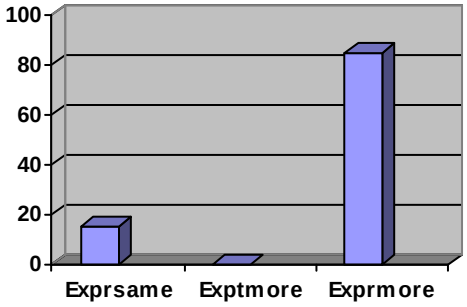
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Graduates expected a 40.5% change but experienced 72.25% change

Figure 29

Students' expectation versus experience



(15% experienced the same as expected/0% expected more than experienced/85% experienced more than
expected)

Verbal/written responses

Although graduates reported high expectations, they expressed an element of surprise at how much they gained in the area of spiritual development.

Expectation	Experienced
75%	95%

I expected to gain more spiritual due to the fact it was a Christian University. The Bible class was my favorite part and I gained knowledge even though I was raised in a pastor's home. My spiritual life has grown and developed. For me the Bible classes were "stress management" classes.

85%	100%

I felt that I would grow in my walk with the Lord and find my place with the Lord.

10%	35%

I would have to say that just because you're in a different environment, you gain. You care about other people and their perspectives—it expands your spiritual perspective in a different way. I was surprised—I gained more than I expected.

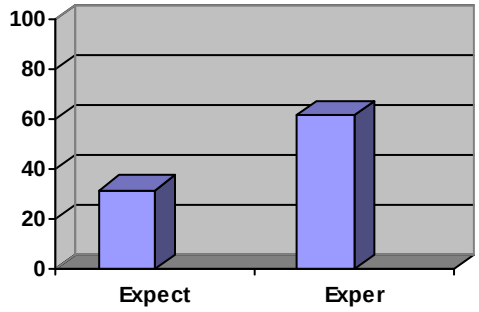
70%	100%

Basically the same as moral—expected to be challenged by the program. The study Bible is a great resource that I continue to use.

Spiritual Development--Dropped

Figure 30

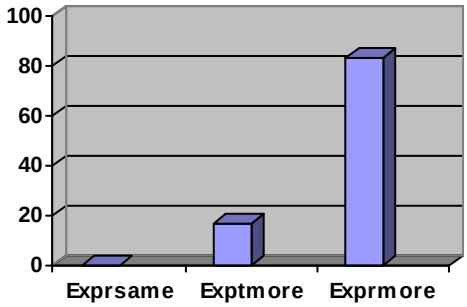
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Students who dropped expected a change of 31.7% but experienced a change of 61.7%)

Figure 31

Students' expectation versus experience



(0% experienced the same as expected/17% expected more than experienced/83% experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses

The percentage of students who dropped from the program that reported that they experienced more in the area of spiritual development than expected was second highest to graduates' reporting of the same.

Expectation Experienced

Experienced more than expected

20% 65%

I really expected very little—going at night—until I got there and found out about some of the courses I'd been taking and some of the work I'd be doing.

I didn't expect much. I was very interested in the Bible classes that I have not been able to take anywhere else and they are really helping me along.

0% 25%

I attend church regularly so I didn't expect to gain any more.

40% 80%

Similar to ethical

Expected more than experienced

60% 30%

I am not happy with myself spiritually. I am learning that it is okay to be down, however.

Summary comment regarding spiritual development

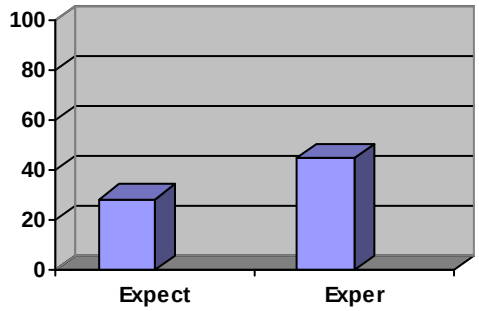
One of the larger differences in expectation and experience in all categories of students was in spiritual development. The overall average of experienced was twice as much as expected.

Change—Worldview Construction

Current Students

Figure 32

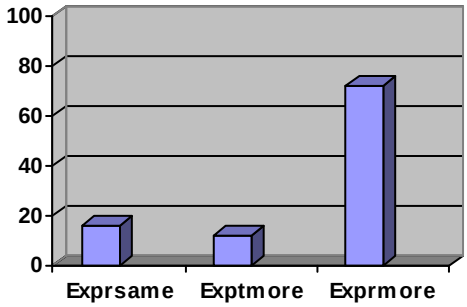
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Current students expected a change of 28.5% and experienced a change of 45%)

Figure 33

Students' expectation versus experience



(16% experienced the same as expected/12%expected more than experienced/72%experienced more
than expected)

Verbal and written responses:

Changed more than expected

0% 35%

I have changed to some degree—my program helped me to change on some issues in that we deal with the issues.

40% 90%

The exchange with students and instructors has had a huge impact—my worldview has definitely expanded

0% 20%

I did change my view about the international aspects as I learned about how other countries handle money and ethics.

15% 30%

In the MISE program I did not expect to see the world in a different way—but even in computer systems you have to consider the way you view the world.

Did not change

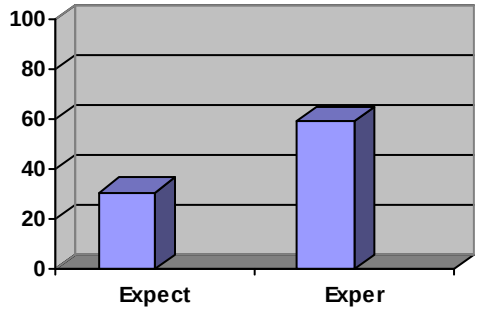
50% 50%

I have learned, but my worldview hasn't changed much.

Worldview Construction--Graduates

Figure 34

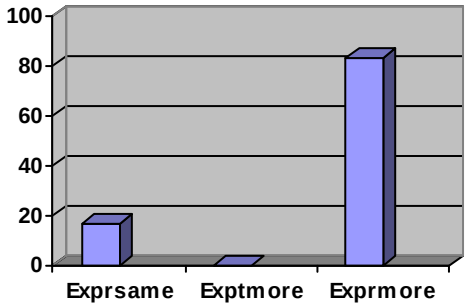
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Graduates expected a change of 30.8% but experienced 59.2%)

Figure 35

Students' expectation versus experience



(17% experienced the same as expected/0%expected more than experienced/83% experienced more
than expected)

Verbal/written responses:

The 83% of graduates that reported that they experienced more change than they expected in their worldview represents the second largest percentage of students reporting change in all areas for students of all status. Supporting comments are displayed below:

Expectation	Experienced
Changed more than expected	
0%	80%

I did not expect my worldview to change. My worldview changed—gain knowledge makes you change and have more tolerance. The class has helped me to see the world differently.

0%	70%

I did not have any expectation in that area. As I began, I was getting a glance at the ideal that we all were learning and could make a difference in this big vast world—we all have a part to play.

0%	25%

I am more accepting of people from learning the way that different people relate.

0%	65%

Actually, when I went into the program I hadn't even considered worldview in that sense. I would have to say when I came out of the program that probably I actually began to think more about the basis of why I think what I think. Why do I accept what I do? So, it taught me to look at that differently. I actually think that college helped me to develop a worldview that I had never considered.

Did not change

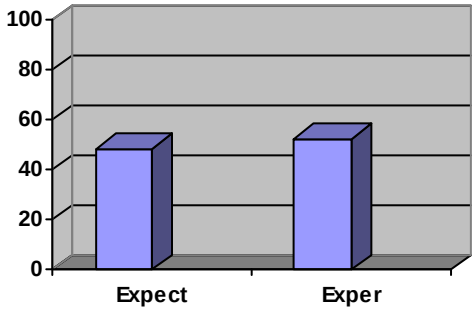
0% 0%

I did not change in worldview. In fifteen years I have been in 24 countries and the life experiences of living abroad give you a pretty broad worldview.

Worldview Construction—Students Dropped

Figure 36

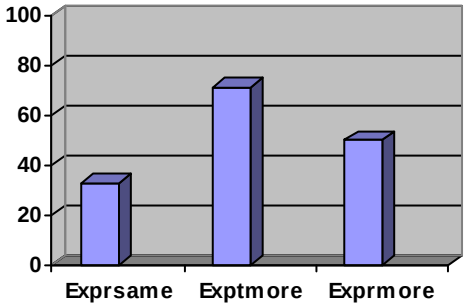
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Students who dropped expected 48.3% and experienced 52.5%)

Figure 37

Students' expectation versus experience



(33% experienced the same as expected/17% expected more than experienced/50% experienced more
than expected)

Verbal/written responses:

0% 0%

I am in the military—I had no expectation of a change in worldview and I have not had a change.

40% 40%

I had a pretty broad outlook on the world in general.

Summary Comments

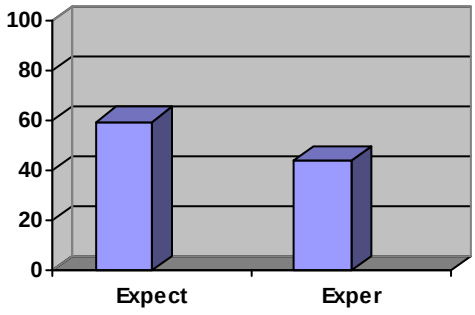
Worldview is another area where students in all categories experienced more than expected. However, the percentage difference was not as great for those who had dropped.

Benefit—Socioeconomic Outcomes

Current

Figure 38

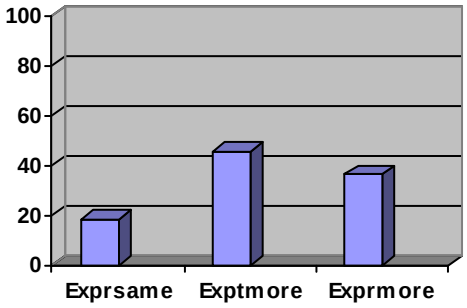
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Current students expected to gain 59.5%/Experienced gain of 44.1%)

Figure 39

Students' expectation versus experience



(18.1 experienced the same as expected/45.5 expected more than experienced/36.4 experienced more than
expected)

Verbal/written responses

While you would not expect current students to experience economic benefits prior to graduation, some did. They also reported experiencing social benefits.

Expected	Experienced
Experienced the same as or more than expected	
90%	100%
Secured a position with a wonderful organization at requires a degree which I will soon have	
30%	50%
I do feel more confident socially—something I did not expect. I don't have to worry about being the only one in the room of a group or in a meeting who is undereducated	
0%	0%
I just want to finish my degree in the behavioral science area. I do not plan to use my degree at this time– I plan to stay as a stay-at-home mom.	
Expected more than experienced	
25%	0%

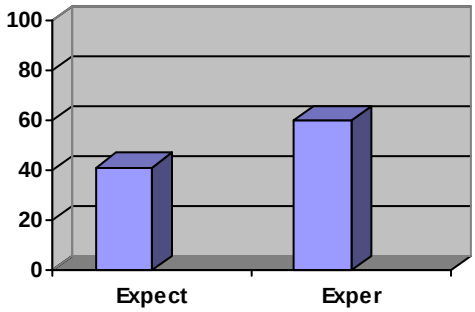
In financial aid debt—degree (behavioral science) requires grad school, but I should get a decent job once graduated

99% 90%
I highly expected to increase my income to take care of my family. Socially—management is already taking me more seriously—I have received awards and bonuses.

Socioeconomic--Graduate

Figure 40

Average percentage of expectation versus experienced

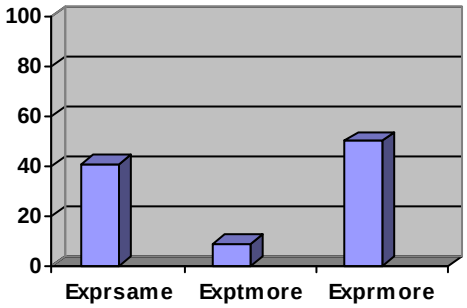


(Graduates expected to gain 41.1/They reported an experienced gain of 60%)

Socioeconomic—Graduate

Figure 41

Students' expectation versus experience



(41% experienced the same as expected/9% expected more than expected/50% experienced more than
Expected)

Verbal/written responses

As one would expect, the highest percentage of students that experienced benefit in the area of socioeconomic were graduates.

Expected	Experienced
Experienced the same as or more than expected	
50%	l00%

Someone at my work retired and I was offered the position. I would not have gotten the job without the degree. I received a job promotion within one year.

20%	100%

It has opened up a lot of contacts and opportunities. I really expected it to be a piece of paper with no economic change.

50%	100%

I did not expect a huge benefit in the beginning but it put me on the road to moving upward. I have benefited greatly.

50%	100%

I have received a 20% increase in pay--on the personal side--50%. Due to the research project I did I received the job for which I was doing the research.

40%	75%

Socially, it has improved—economically it has not yet. Due to a disease in my back I had to change my career goals which means I won't see an economic benefit until I receive my masters degree—I hope to teach part-time

0%	0%

I knew that in my position that it would probably be my master's degree before I recovered money difference in what I gave up in my career. I realized that I would not recover my money difference until I completed my masters.

Experienced less than expected	
25%	0%

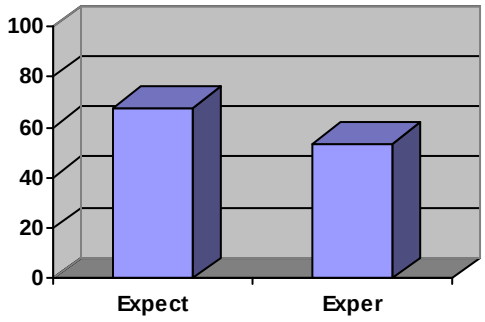
I expected to make money and grow in my job. I have not experienced the growth due to being a stay-at-home Mom. I have turned down jobs that would increase my income three to four times what I was making before becoming a stay-at-home mom.

40% 25%
I did not expect much socially but experienced a lot. Economically I experienced a lot, but have experienced no changes.

Socioeconomic—Students Dropped

Figure 42

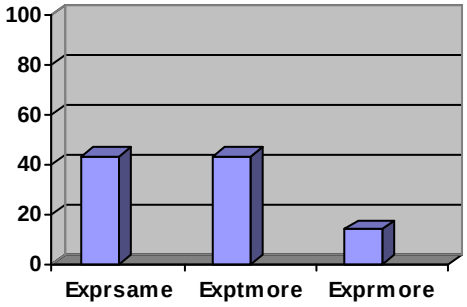
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Students who dropped expected a benefit of 67.9%--They experienced a benefit of 53.6%)

Figure 43

Students' expectation versus experience



(43% experienced the same as expected/43% expected more than experienced/14% experienced more than expected)

Verbal/written responses:

While those who dropped did experience some benefit in the area of socioeconomic, for most it was the same or lower than expected.

Expected	Experienced
90%	30%

I am making more money at my current job and the courses I had taken contributed to my getting the job.

90%	10%

"I expected to benefit a lot. I thought it was going to be a lot better. Since I did not complete it, I have not experienced much change at all. When I went back to work, I was able to get a better job because of my classes—but that is also why I had to stop going to school. When I found out some of the salaries for what I wanted to do, without being able to get a masters degree or a PhD—I just don't have any more time for school than to get a bachelor's degree—I realized the Behavioral Science degree wasn't going to raise my pay level all that much more than what I was making in my job already—so I kind of had to make some changes there.

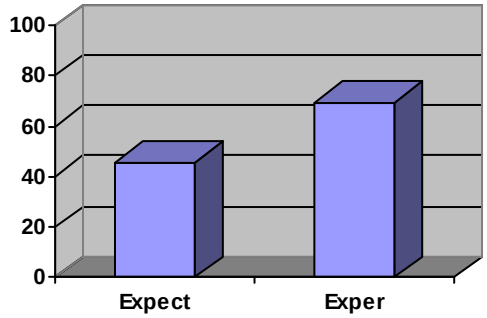
Summary Statement of socioeconomic benefit

As one would expect, the greatest socioeconomic benefit was experienced by graduates, and the lowest amount of benefit was experienced by those who had dropped.

Benefit: Acceptance Into Graduate School (Only Applies to Graduates)

Figure 44

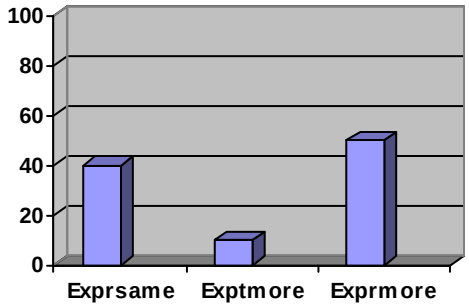
Average percentage of expectation versus experienced



(Graduates expected a benefit of 45.5%/they experienced a benefit of 69.5%)

Figure 45

Students' expectation versus experience



(40% experienced the same as expected/10% expected more than experienced/50%experienced more than expected)

Summary Statement

The expected benefit (Figure #44) represents those who at entry had plans to continue on to graduate work. The experienced represented those who had been or are currently engaged in graduate studies. The 10% who expected more (Figure #45) represents those who had planned to continue on to graduate work and have not yet done so. There were no reports of non-acceptance into graduate school.

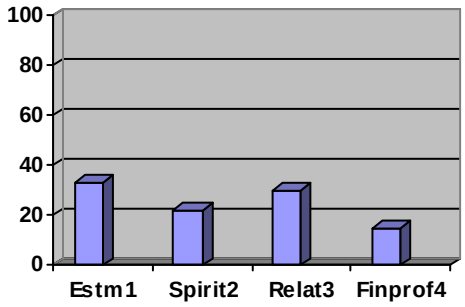
Other Ways of Benefiting from Education Experience or Degree

Question number 12 on the questionnaire which was utilized for both the anonymous mailing and for the in-person interviews ask the participant if there were others ways that they had benefited from the education experience in the degree completion program. Participant responses fell into four basic categories: (1) Esteem/self growth, (2) Spiritually, (3) Relationships/enjoyment, (4) financially and professionally. While most of the other-ways-of-benefiting were represented through the responses to questions previously reported, these restatements serve as a summary statement of benefit that is significant for the students and therefore worthy of reporting. The following Figure displays the responses in those categories. The actual statements are coded to reflect the categories in which they fall.

Current Students

Figure 46

Other ways of benefiting



(33% esteem & self growth/22% spiritually/30% relationships & enjoyment/15% financially and professionally)

(1) Yes, I just feel so much more confident. I am very proud of myself for doing this. I am the only one in my immediate family to get a degree and now I will have two and will begin working on my third next year with enrolling in an RN program.

(1) The benefits are personal satisfaction. I do not come from a family that is highly educated, formally. You can count the number of college graduates on one hand on both side of my family. I feel proud. The benefits of reaching my goal can't be expressed financially. This program benefited me by allowing me to go only one night a week and yet not feeling cheated educationally. My life situation would not have allowed me to go the traditionally route.

(1) It is good to keep learning. I was concerned that it would be too difficult or too challenging. It was good that I was successful. I feel confident to go on for a master's degree. I am not worked about pursuing additional degrees.

(1) I have been able to be more confident socially and have made my family proud. It has put me in a different category of people at work. I feel more respect and expectation from by peers and from management.

(1) Being in the program as helped me to better communicate with other professionals in my field—I have gained status.

(1, 2 & 3) I have a strengthened determination to complete goals. I have made new friendships and spiritual contacts and support.

(1 & 3) I feel better about myself—Being a stay-at-home mom, the interaction with adults has been good for me.

(1 & 3) Not expected, but clearly enjoyed—the ability and joy of discussing issues and going through the educational process with other students—both traditional and non-traditional. It has served as a wonderful sense of accomplishment and immense personal pride.

(1 & 3) Having small classes with professors who cared--I know if I need them, I can come back and get references from the professors. Attending a smaller school give you self-esteem which continues to build.

(2/3) Relationships and spiritual growth

(2 & 3) I have gained a broader understanding of Christianity within the workplace. I have enjoyed all of my classes and peers

(2 & 3) I am benefiting by meeting great people here and I've learned a lot. My spiritual life is excelling and I am proud of being associated with this institution.

(3) Yes, I have met some great people—students and instructors and I now have resources within the community.

(3) Networking and being around other adults that are motivated. Sharing life experiences with each other has benefited me.

(2, 3 & 4) I feel that I have greatly benefited with rich relationships and profound teaching. Some of the things I've heard from various instructors, I will remember and practice for a lifetime. Things such as perspectives on life—how to deal with church situations—different views about God and how he really loves me. Different experiences the instructors shared about their life—they were so realistic, down to earth and I was able to relate to them.

(2, 3 & 4) I have experienced major health problems during my studies in this program, including severe depression. Due to the staff as well as small group support, I have continued to work through most of these issues. Because of the knowledge and quality of the staff I have been both mentally and spiritually uplifted. They have given me a sense of "want-to" when times were tough and it would have been easier not to go forward.

(4) Being able to continue working fulltime while attending school I was able to contribute to the family income and have time with my children.

(4) I have been chosen for jobs over other co-workers with more experience because of my being in this bachelor's program and have received higher pay

(4) I look at my job responsibilities in a much different light. I see the importance of an education and better understand how it benefits me in the long term.

(4) It has allowed me to work fulltime and go to school fulltime which was needed to pay for school.

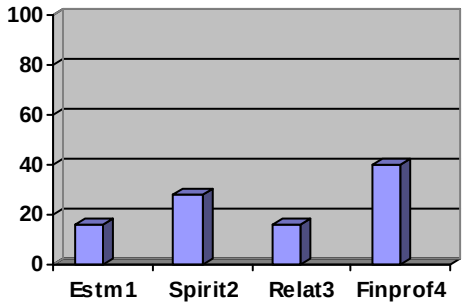
(3 & 4) I have learned from others experience and from teachers that are actually in the workforce. This has helped me learn how things actually are—nut just book learning.

(4) Increased discipline. Increased opportunities--I feel like I think outside of the box a little more.

Graduates

Other ways of Benefiting

Figure 47



(16% esteem/28% spiritually/16% relationships & enjoyment/40% financially & professionally)

(1) I have personally accomplished a goal and received self satisfaction.

(1, 2 & 4)Yes I have benefited in many ways—increased knowledge, better management skills. I look at management in a different view. The Bible classes gave me additional knowledge and helped me when I went through something tragic to get positive outcomes from it. I have benefited in overall self esteem and confidence.

(1 & 3)Yes, I enjoyed interacting with other students and I have received a personal satisfaction from receiving my degree.

(1 & 4) Self assured, have something to fall back on in case I loose my job. I learned a lot of information that has helped me in my masters. The teachers were great!

(2) Well, especially in the spiritual development. I was very surprised that being in that program with the processors and with the students really did enlarge my spiritual perspective in a lot of ways. I wasn't so closed minded. I wasn't so quick to condemn a particular point of view—I was more open listening to other points-of-view in their spiritual development and in their progress. I think I developed more empathy than I had before—I don't think I am as arrogant now.

(2) It was a wonderful program—I gained valuable skills as well as improved my knowledge of the Bible.

(2 & 4) I benefited from having to continually express my thoughts and ideas in written form, based on research of source materials. Also, my knowledge of God and His desires for my life are much clearer.

(2 & 4) Yes, spiritually more knowledgeable. The whole program helped me. Educationally, it was great. The knowledge of the professors was superior to all I had in my younger days. It took me to the next level of my life. Thanks!

(2 & 4) Writing skills, case studies, Biblical reviews—all ways I've benefited

(2 & 4)Yes, the program set me up for my studies to complete my MBA. Also, I have applied the Christian standards to my life! Excellent.

(3) I have benefited from the contacts and friendships from the class and learning from the instructors and about their careers.

(3) I have benefited by gaining my bachelor's degree and I am currently searching for a job. The college continues to be a help to me as I am job hunting.

(3 & 4) The people contacts and instructors who teach the class are valuable in the MIS field. This allows you to network with the instructor. I learned more about the different types of management

(4) Also, when I started my master's degree I was amazed at how well prepared I was for being in that environment--More so than students who came in from a traditional environment. Particularly, you can notice it in the younger ones (she is 52) who came out of the traditional program into the masters. They don't have the same sense of community. They don't know how to work in groups. They are not as open to other concepts—other ways of doing things. They are inflexible. I was so well-prepared because in class we had such great discussion and it was not modeled from the instructor—everyone participated in all of the discussions. The students in the program were treated almost like apprentices—not like children. They are apprentices in this program and that was great preparation for my master's work. They expect you to come in thinking and being able to participate and give right in the beginning to this community process. I had already spent 18 months in the community process. It was great.

(4) I have completed two years of law school and I am one-half way through with my MBA.

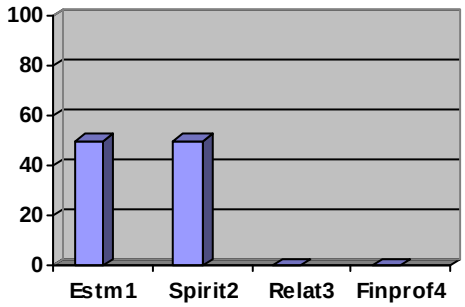
(4) The job I have now requires a degree. I wouldn't have been considered for this position if I didn't have my degree.

(4) I would not have gotten a promotion without the degree. I am on a much higher professional level not because of having the degree and have more opportunities open to me for future.

Students Who Dropped

Other ways of benefiting

Figure 48



(50% of the four respondents reported a benefit of increased self esteem and spiritual benefit)

I am half way done with the program and am planning to come back and complete.

Although I have dropped from the program—I plan to return to complete my degree

(1, 2) The biggest benefit for me was getting back into school and learning—I learned a lot of interesting things and material there that I don't think I would have gotten a chance to go and learn anywhere else—or even where I go now or where I have been in the past. Just being able to function better in a classroom setting is, for me, the biggest benefit I've gotten from going there. The religious atmosphere really helped me to do better, I think.

(1, 2) I think that I would say that the overall growth in the way I think through things. The classes on ethics, as far as Biblical literature, were quite detailed and well-presented—I think that expanded by horizon considerably. I think that because I was taking Bible classes on a regular basis, it constantly kept me in a spiritual mindset, you know, the constant exposure to it.

Summary Comments

While current students reported highest benefits in esteem and relationships and lowest in financial and professional, graduates reported the reverse. The spiritual was similar across all three categories of students.

Educational Experience/Degree NOT Benefited You

All Students/Graduates/Dropped

Twenty-five of the returned mail questionnaire respondents, including the one dropped, placed no comments in this area. A respondent currently in the behavioral science program stated: "I really needs at least a master's degree, but this gives me a jump start to getting into grad school."

Still work to obtain degree?

Forty-four of the forty-five (current, graduates, and dropped) who responded to this question stated that if they had it to do over that they would still work to complete their degree. One MISE current student stated "No, not in a five-week program—in a program that has more hands on." Representative affirmative responses are listed below in the three student status categories:

Current

Yes—it is a goal I have always wanted.

Yes—the only thing I would do over is get all of my prerequisites out of the way first to eliminate stress. I have 22 additional credits to get along with the program. (She came in on an exception). I am proud to attend a Christian university and I would like one day to be in the ministry. I feel like it is a benefit to receive the spiritual teaching.

Yes—I would do the same format again—it is not as stressful on my family.

Yes—I would do the same format—absolutely.

I would do it over in this format.

Yes—this has been a very wonderful experience. I will recommend others to the program

Yes—for the overall experience of the program

Yes—especially in a Christian University

Yes—although if I could do it over, I would have gone immediately to college after high school and not work full time.

Yes—I love the structure! Get in and get done one night a week is so much better than the traditional way.

Yes, this program has been a delight to attend. They will help you work out most anything. I still have time to be with my kids and this is very important.

Yes, I feel proud that I am finally going to be able to obtain my degree. I look forward to having that diploma on my wall!

Yes, because I will have the satisfaction of a college degree and possible jobs for the future.

Yes, because of the doors it will open and the feeling of accomplishment of a goal. The Christian-based teaching has benefited me and I have grown personally and professionally.

Yes, but only through programs such as this could I have obtained a degree.

Yes, but I would have done it earlier. In this day of finding jobs you need an extra edge.

Yes, I believe that my degree will help further my life's experiences and help me deal better in the workforce where there are so many unethical issues to be dealt with.

Graduates

Yes, I would do the same format over again and get my degree

Definitely—the feeling of accomplishment

I would do it over in the same format. The instructor gave real world insights to education.

Yes, I would have gone to my grave—at least trying to have gotten my bachelor's degree.

Yes, this was an invaluable experience. I did not know, understand and appreciate the value of education and its experience until I had "been there and done that". My perspectives and abilities have benefited greatly through the LEAD Program.

Yes. It benefits the overall self-esteem and confidence and helps you build in any career from the knowledge provided.

Yes, I would obtain my bachelors degree. The four-year degree is a requirement in the field I'm currently in.

Yes, I enjoyed interacting with other students and I have received a personal satisfaction by obtaining my degree.

Yes, but I would have done so sooner

Yes! A degree is something one can always fall back on in tough times.

Yes, anyone looking for a better and stronger relationship with God will benefit from this program. Every aspect of learning is reached.

Dropped

Yes—It is a goal I want to obtain to better myself in the job market.

Yes I would get my bachelors degree in this program in the one-night-a-week format.

I plan to return, but it is expensive and time-consuming—it's very difficult.

Yes, I am not elsewhere (working on a nursing degree)

Yes, because in this program you can get your degree faster.

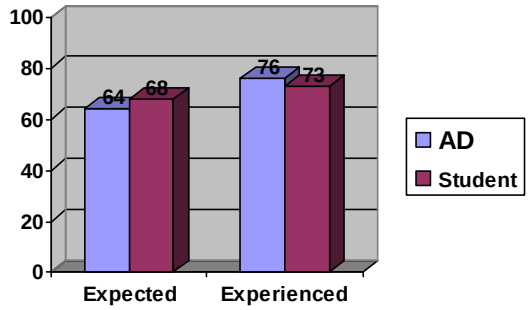
Assistant Directors' Perspectives

As mentioned earlier, the four assistant directors over each of the four degree tracks at the university for which the study was conducted were interviewed and asked to give their perspectives of how the participants (students/graduates/those dropped) would respond in the various categories. I have presented their perspectives, collectively, in the form of Figures paralleled with the student's response. Responses are presented in the various categories of emerging themes and the student status (current, graduate, dropped)

Knowledge—Learning and Cognitive Development

Figure 49

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



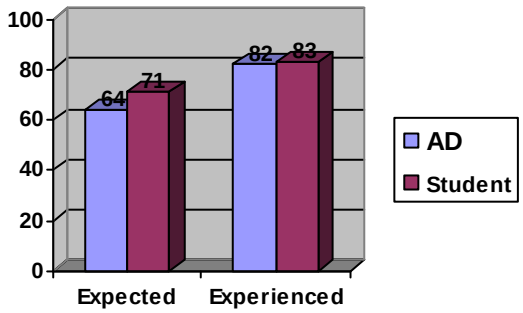
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Current)

Observation

While the assistant directors' perspectives paralleled the current students' responses fairly closely in the area of knowledge gained, they slightly underestimated the students' expectation and overestimated the students' experienced gain.

Figure 50

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



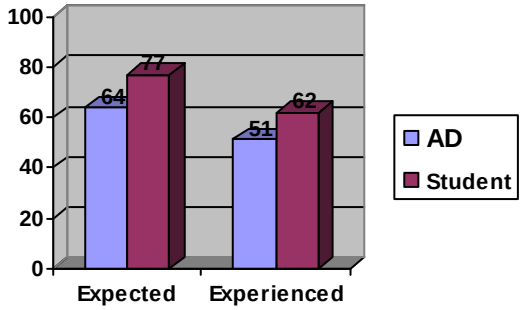
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduate)

Observation

While the assistant directors underestimated the graduates' responses in the area of knowledge gained regarding expectation by 7 percentage points, they came within one percentage point of estimating the students' responses on experienced gain.

Figure 51

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Dropped)

Observation

The assistant directors underestimated by more than 10 percentage points the response of students who dropped in both expectation and the experience in the area of knowledge gained.

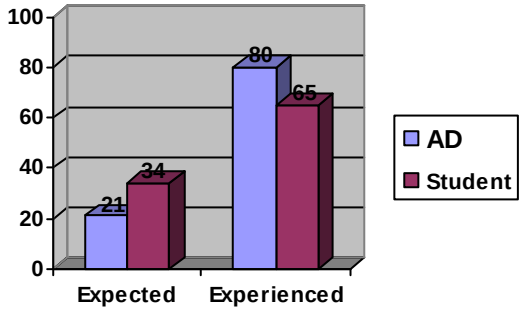
Summary of knowledge gain expected versus experienced as reported by students of all status and compared with Assistant directors' perspective

In most instances the assistant directors underestimated both the students' expectations and their experienced gains in the area of knowledge gained.

Change—Attitudes and Values

Figure 52

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



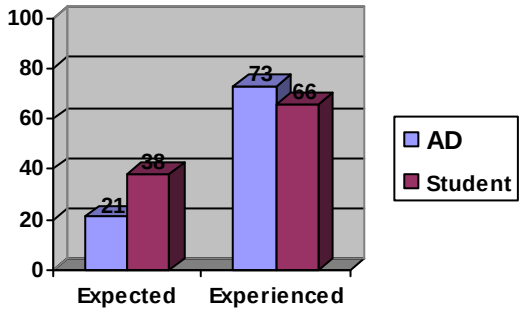
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Current)

Observation

The assistant directors underestimated the students' expectation of change in attitudes and values by 13% and over estimated the students' experienced change by 15%.

Figure 53

Average Percentage of Expectation vs. Experienced



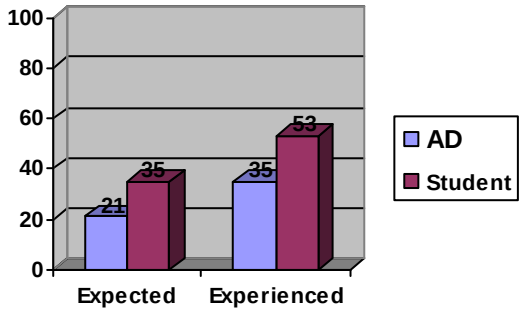
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduate)

Observation

The assistant directors underestimated, by 17%, the students' expectation of change in the area of attitudes and values and overestimated their experienced by only 7%.

Figure 54

Average Percentage of Expectation vs. Experienced



(Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Dropped)

Observation

Assistant directors underestimated by 14% the expectation of change in the area of attitudes and values and underestimated by 18% their experienced change for the students who dropped.

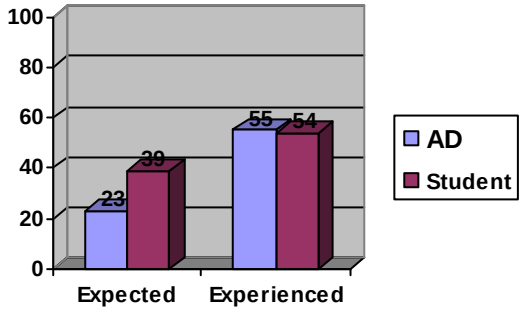
Summary of expected change in attitudes and values versus experienced as reported by students of all status and compared with assistant directors' perspective

Assistant directors underestimated the expectations of students of all status but overestimated the experienced change of all except for those who dropped.

Change—Psychosocial Development

Figure 55

Average Percentage of Expectation vs. Experienced



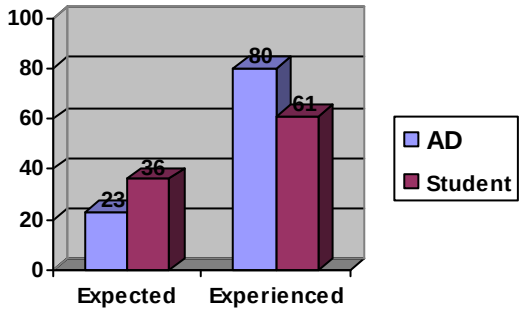
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Current)

Observation

Assistant directors underestimated by 16% current students' expectation of change in the area of psychosocial development but came within one percentage point of estimating the experienced change.

Figure 56

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



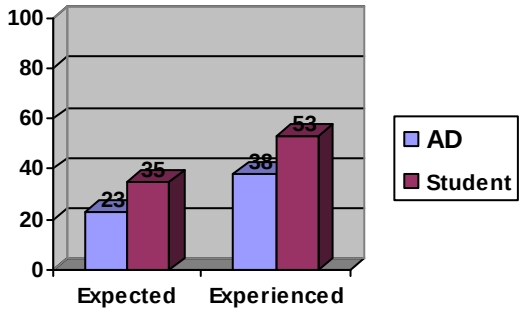
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduate)

Observation

Assistant directors underestimated by 13 % the graduate students' expectation of change in the area of psychosocial development and overestimated by 19% the experienced change.

Figure 57

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Dropped)

Observation

Assistant directors underestimated by 12% the expectation of change in the area of psychosocial development and underestimated by 15% the experienced change for students who dropped.

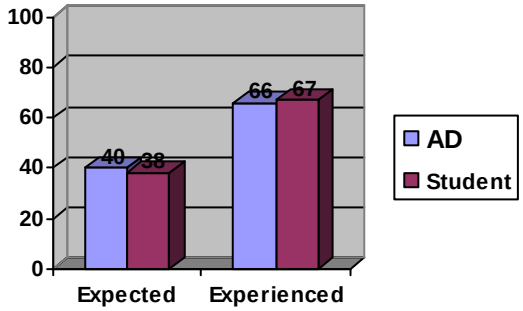
Summary of expected change in psychosocial development versus experienced as reported by students of all status and compared with Assistant directors' perspective

In all instances the assistant directors underestimated the students' expectations. While they came within one percent of estimating the experienced gain of current students, they overestimated the experienced gain of graduates by 19% and underestimated the experienced gain of those who dropped by 15%.

Change—Moral Development

Figure 58

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



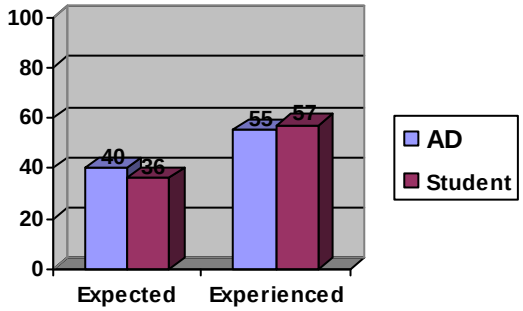
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Current)

Observation

Assistant directors came within 2% of estimating the expectation of change in the area of moral development and within 1% of estimating the experienced change for current students.

Figure 59

Average percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



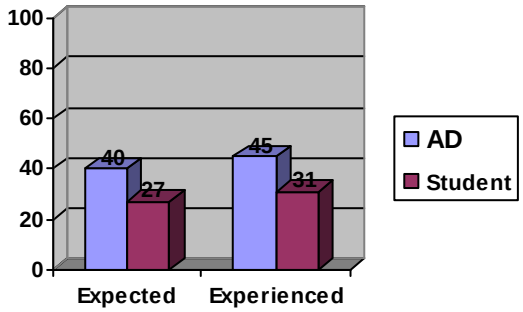
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduate)

Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of change in the area of psychosocial development by only 4% and only underestimated the experienced change for graduates by 2%.

Figure 60

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Dropped)

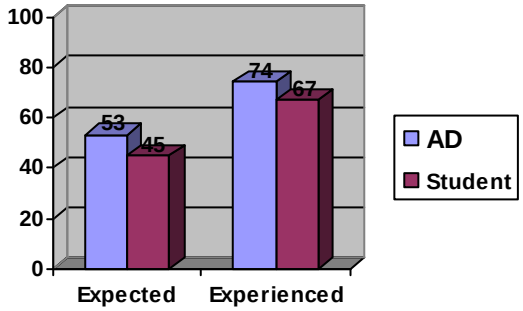
Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of change in the area of psychosocial development for those who dropped by 13% and overestimated the experienced change by 14%.

Change—Spiritual Development

Figure 61

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



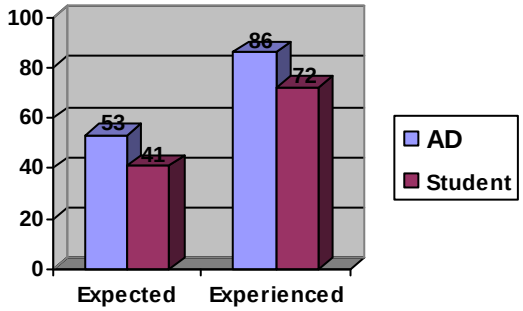
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Current)

Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of change in the area of spiritual development for current students by only 8% and overestimated the experienced change by only 7%.

Figure 62

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



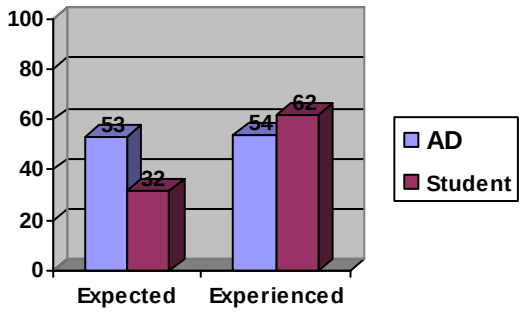
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduates)

Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of change in the area of spiritual development for graduates by 12% and overestimated the experienced change by only 14%.

Figure 63

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Dropped)

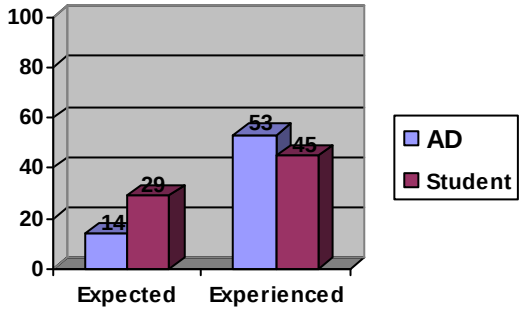
Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of change in the area of spiritual development for those who dropped by 21% and underestimated the experienced change by 8%.

Change—Worldview Construction

Figure 64

Averaged Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



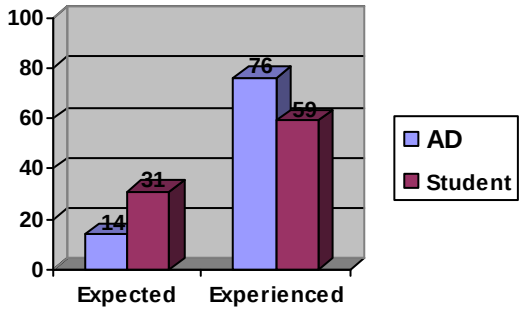
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Current)

Observation

Assistant directors underestimated the expectation of change in the area of worldview for current students by 15% and overestimated the experienced change by 8%.

Figure 65

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



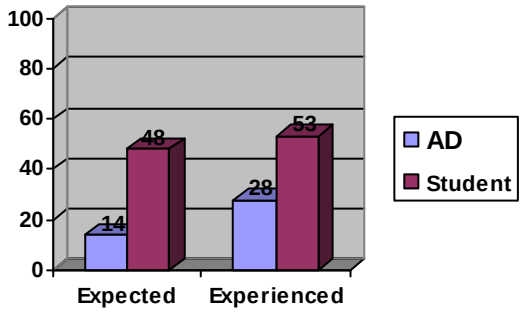
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduate)

Observation

Assistant directors underestimated the expectation of change in the area of worldview for graduates by 17% and overestimated the experienced change by 17%.

Figure 66

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Dropped)

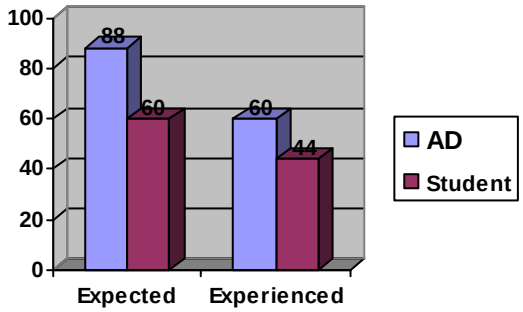
Observation

Assistant directors underestimated the expectation of change in the area of worldview for those who dropped by 34% and underestimated the experienced change by 25%.

Benefit—Socioeconomic Outcomes

Figure 67

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experience



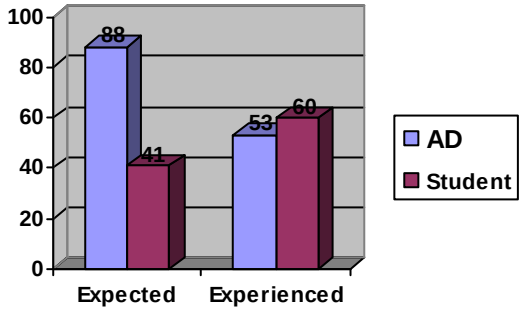
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Current)

Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of benefit in the area of socioeconomic development for current students by 28% and overestimated the experienced change by 16%.

Figure 68

Average percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



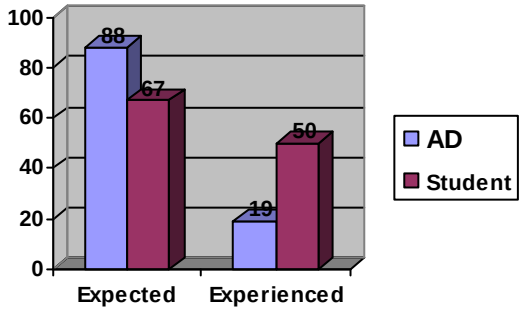
Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduate)

Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of benefit in the area of socioeconomic development for graduates by 47% and underestimated the experienced change by 7%.

Figure 69

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experienced



Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Dropped)

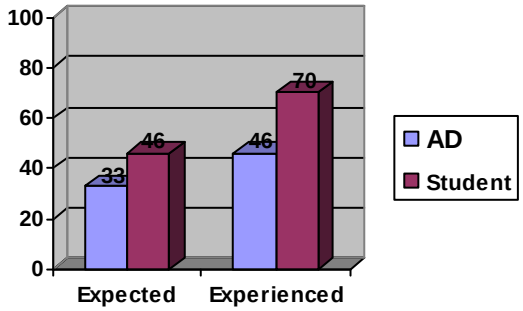
Observation

Assistant directors overestimated the expectation of benefit in the area of socioeconomic development for those who dropped by 21% and underestimated the experienced change by 31%.

Benefit—Acceptance into graduate School

Figure 70

Average Percentage of Expectation vs Experience



Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' (Graduates)

Observation

Assistant directors underestimated the expectation of benefit in the area of acceptance into graduate school for graduates by 13% and underestimated the experienced benefit by 24%.

Summary of assistant directors' perspectives in all categories versus the perspective of students of all stages

Regarding expectation at entry into the program, the assistant directors underestimated the students' expectations at entry into the program in all areas except moral, spiritual and socioeconomic in which cases they overestimated the students' expectations. The largest (15% or greater) overestimation by assistant directors of

students' expectations was in the area of socioeconomic for students at all stages (see Figures 67, 68, & 69) and spiritual development for those who dropped.

Regarding actual experienced at entry into the program, the assistant directors' largest (15% or greater) overestimations were in the area of attitudes and values for current students, psychosocial development for graduates, worldview construction for graduates, and socioeconomic for current students. Their largest underestimations were in the area of attitudes and values for graduates, change in psychosocial development for those who dropped, change in worldview construction for those who dropped and socioeconomic benefit for those who dropped.

The more frequent and consistent underestimation by assistant directors of experienced student benefit was for those who dropped. It appears that students who drop from the program prior to completion benefit in a greater way than perceived by administrators.

Assistant directors' perspectives of other ways that students' benefit—all students

The assistant directors' comments below reemphasize and summarize their belief that students of all stages benefit most in areas of self-confidence and attitudes and values. This is consistent with the student feedback with students rating their highest benefits in attitudes and values, psychosocial, moral and spiritual, and world view.
"I think the one thing that students don't really realize—their personal belief about themselves changes. They believe that they can do it and their accomplishment does so much more for their self esteem and who they are as a person. It is more personal than they could have realized."

"I love it when students do come back and they say things like 'I was never expecting to be affected like I was. I really thought I was just going to go into the degree. I'm a totally different person—a totally different manager—a totally different parent because I went through this degree.' I just love it when they come back and tell us those kinds of things and it's not an uncommon conversation that I have—it's not that rare."

"This part may have to do with attitudes and values, but for many of our students, there is a development of self image and it's confidence in their being able to accomplish something—so that they are now ready to go out and to try something new and to feel confident with doing it and attempt to do activities or look for jobs that they would never have attempted before they came to this college."

"They have benefited by the psychosocial development—I've seen them develop a support system of networking and in a couple of dramatic cases, I've seen it have a very significant affect. The biggest is the confidence they've gained—they are smarter than they thought they were and as they discover their aptitudes, they find interests they didn't know they had."

Assistant director's responses regarding ways that they may have observed that students had not benefited

Again, assistant directors' responses are consistent with student feedback in general. However, from this specific question, none of the student respondents reported ways of not benefiting.

Assistant Director over MISE (2 years advisement experience)

"I have never heard from a graduate that did not benefit in some way. The benefits vary and some come in at retirement, basically, so it was more personal gratification. But I

have never heard from a LEAD graduate that it was a wasted experience—now from those who drop out, I don't know—but from graduates, no."

Assistant Director over Behavioral Science (2 years advisement experience)

"The main ones that I've talked to or kept in touch with have benefited because they are going on for their masters. I don't know of anyone who doesn't say that they've benefited from it—that they didn't walk away with something."

Assistant Director over Management (8 years of advisement experience)

"There are some people who realize they haven't met some of the goals they had—but it's a low percentage. Probably an explanation for that is that their life is probably in a place where they can't realize it. And, some of these people—it sounds negative—but the way the work in school, you recognize that they are not going to be the type that would be "promotable" anyway. I mean, you can kind of tell. I'm thinking of one person in our program that every time you try to communicate with her you have to say it several times before she gets it. She is just not a good communicator and I don't think she is "promotable".

And we're not able to help her?

"There is nothing you can do to fix that. Those people I would think would come out at the end and not benefit as much as those—some of those that really accomplished and this is the last thing they need instead of the first thing they need to be successful—if that makes sense.

"I think that the people that call in the beginning and say 'will you have a job placement for me when I get out'—that's the kind of people I'm talking about. Rather

than I am going to get it and I already have opportunities and I'm going to go for it. Job placement—that's so Vo Techie! Getting a degree is not going to change your life!"

Assistant Director with seven years of advisement experience in the CJ Program (approximately 500 students)—a former Junior College Dean

"I have one that feels that she has personally benefited from having the degree, but every time that she has applied for a job within the system that she is in—and it is not necessarily the facility that she is in, but the system, she is never even offered an interview. We are now wondering if it is more ethnic background that it is education—and she has not found a way yet to challenge the system to find out. She has good writing skills, she handles herself well. I can think of two fellows who kind of felt that it was a waste of time. But as I look at their personalities as they come in, I look at how they handle themselves on the job yet today, I talk with their supervisors, and because they really haven't had the change in their behavior that one would expect in education, they are not advancing. However, one did get the pay increase anyway even though he has not advanced in his responsibilities."

Assistant directors' responses to question: "What percentage of graduates of the LEAD Program do you believe would still work to obtain their degree if they had it to do over?

"I would say about 90% would say that they would do it again—especially in this format. I think that would be lower if they had to do it in another format. I only have two groups who have finished so far. In one group 90% would do it over. In the other group—80-85 percent would do it over."

"They would do it differently—they would have finished when they first started. I think they would say, don't do it this way, but thank God it's available. But if they had it to do all over again, they would not drop out in the first place."

"Maybe some would not do it over because some of their dreams for economic benefit didn't happen that it really wasn't worth it for them—because it was a sacrifice and if they don't realize any of their dreams from it—didn't get a raise—didn't get a job change from it—I wouldn't make that investment again—but I think it's low—more from economic reasons than anything."

"When I heard people say "boy, I wouldn't do that again" they are usually taking a lot of hours. What they mean is, I would do it, but I wouldn't do it that way again. If they are just doing the one-night-a-week, I don't hear that."

I am going to say 70-75% and I say that because in every group that goes through, there are several students who because they have not been able to prioritize time, to discipline themselves, to really begin to get into the curriculum to look at it for what they can learn rather than just a means to moving up into the job force, they wouldn't go through it again because they wouldn't want to subject themselves to what they see as demands on their time.

I would say that a very high percentage would do it again if they had it to do over—I would quote it is 85% because the format does not require as many sacrifices in other parts of their life. You weigh the costs and the benefits—the cost of family time and other pursuits is minimal. The one reason I can see for that 15% is the monetary expense and if they did not quickly find the job placement or increase in pay they may feel that it did not pay off—But I think the primary sacrifice is monetary.

Triangulation Results

As was discussed in Chapter II, for triangulation purposes and in order to detect bias, along with interviewing a set of students from all student categories, data was also collected through anonymous questionnaires from a different set of students representing the same categories. Data was collected, as well, from assistant directors that served as advisors to the student participants. Figures 49 through 70 displays the assistant directors' perspectives of how the three categories of students would state they expected to gain, change or benefit in the various areas versus the students' responses of expectation. For the purpose of detecting bias, a summary of Figures 49-70 is displayed in Figures 71 and 72 below by displaying the average of the assistant directors' responses versus the students', first in expectation, then in experience, respectively.

Figure 71

Average of Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' regarding Expectation

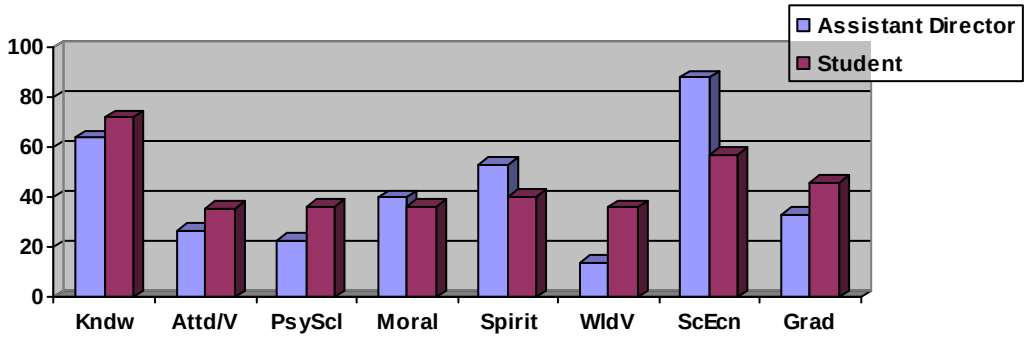
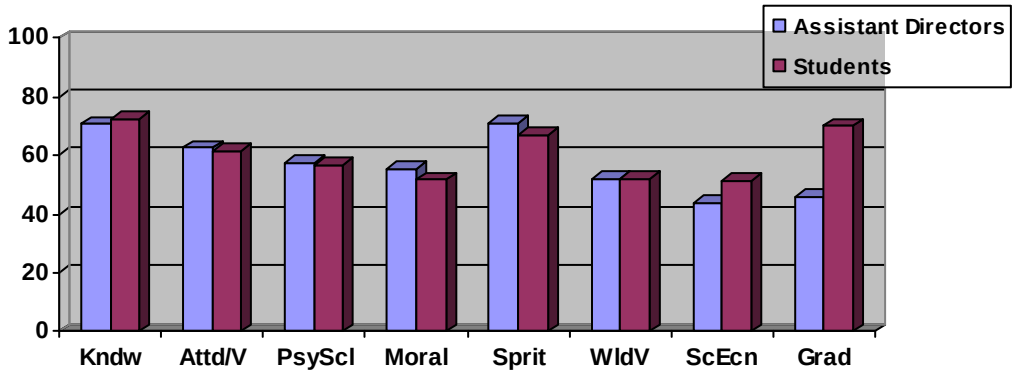


Figure 72

Average of Assistant Directors' Perspectives versus Students' regarding Experience



Observation

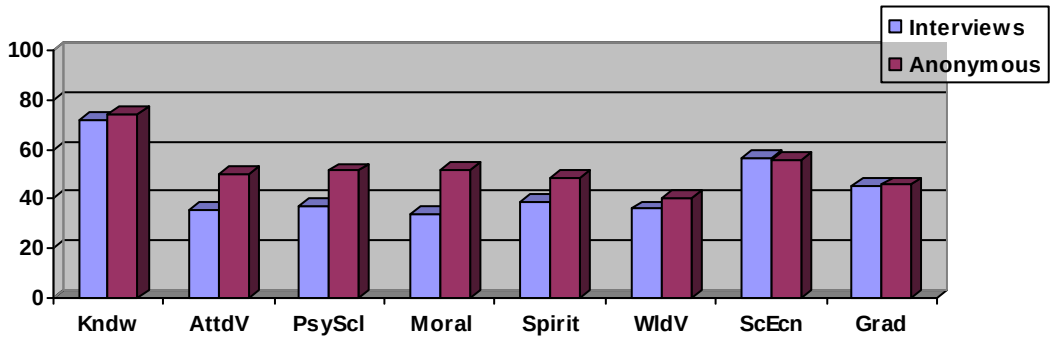
While regarding most areas of expectation, as displayed in Figure #71, there was some disparity between assistant directors' perspectives and students', in most areas of actual experience reported by the students and projected by the assistant directors (except for socioeconomic benefit and acceptance into graduate school) they were closely (less than 5% difference) aligned. If assistant directors were going to express a bias in their projections it would be more likely that it would be in the experienced rather than the expectation. Additionally, the assistant directors under projected the student's experience in the areas of socioeconomic benefit and acceptance into graduate school. It would be more likely for biased to be expressed with an overstatement than an understatement. For that reason, it does not appear that the assistant directors were biased in their responses.

Figures 73 and 74 below illustrate the comparison of students' interview responses versus students' anonymous mail responses in expectation and experience, respectively. The responses from all three categories of students' interviews were

combined and averaged. Likewise, the responses from all three categories of students' anonymous mail responses were combined and averaged.

Figure 73

Student Interview Responses versus Anonymous Mail Responses Regarding Expectations

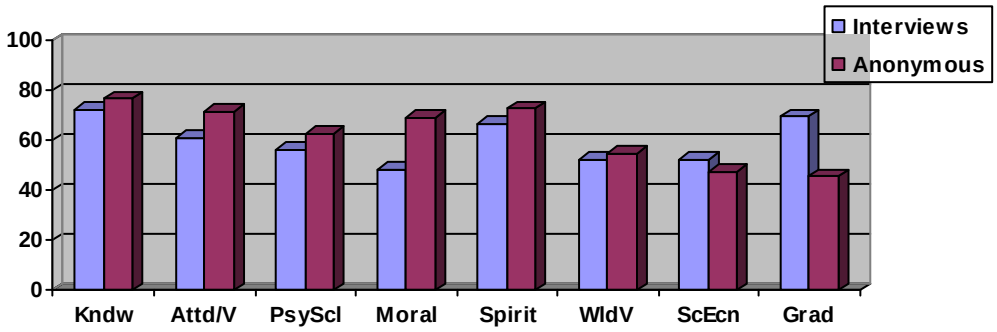


(Responses averaged in categories of gain of Knowledge; Change in Attitudes and Values, Psychosocial Development, Moral Development, Spiritual Development, Worldview Construction; and Benefits of Socioeconomic and Graduate School Acceptance)

Figure 74

Student Interview Responses versus Anonymous Mail Responses

Regarding Experience



(Responses averaged in categories of gain of Knowledge; Change in Attitudes and Values, Psychosocial Development, Moral Development, Spiritual Development, Worldview Construction; and Benefits of Socioeconomic and Graduate School Acceptance)

Observation

It seems reasonable to assume that if students in a one-on-one interview were biased or influenced by the interviewer that they would give more favorable or positive responses than would students who were reporting anonymously. Following that line of reasoning, it would appear, from the two Figures above, that bias or influence was not a significant factor since the overall results reflect more positive responses from the anonymous participants.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the various ways that adult students who were currently in the process of obtaining their bachelors degrees

perceived they were benefiting from the education process of obtaining a baccalaureate degree, as well as an understanding of the various ways that adult student graduates perceived they had benefited following the attainment of the baccalaureate degree and how these perceptions compared with their reflective expectations prior to entering the program. In addition, students who had dropped from the program and program administrators were interviewed or polled to add their perspective to the understanding of benefit.

Because of the lack of prior research on the benefit to adults returning to college, this was conducted as a grounded theory, qualitative study. However, quantitative data emerged and was presented in this chapter. Current students, graduates, and those who had dropped from the program reported varying levels of knowledge gain, change and benefit in all areas except for those who dropped in the areas of knowledge gain and socioeconomic benefit and current students in socioeconomic benefits.

As one would suspect, graduates reported the highest overall gains in knowledge, change and benefits. Current students reported the second highest gains and those who dropped reported the lowest gains. Graduates' highest levels of change were in the areas of spiritual, attitudes and values, worldview, and psychosocial. Current students' highest levels of change were in attitudes and values, and morals, followed by spiritual. Those who dropped reported the highest level of change in spiritual followed by attitudes and values and psychosocial.

The assistant directors' perspectives revealed the highest underestimation of benefit for those who dropped in all areas except for morals. Their highest overestimation of benefit for current students and those who had graduated were in the

following areas: current student in attitudes and values and socioeconomic and for graduates in psychosocial and worldview.

Both the qualitative and quantitative responses reveal that while all of the expectations of adults returning to college may not be experienced to the fullest percentage of expectations, collectively, the experienced benefit is greater than the expectation for students of all status. Graduates experience the greatest benefits. It appears that these results reflect reliable data since the control to detect bias did not show bias to be a significant problem in this study.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION

Introduction

A decade ago, after 6:00pm on most evenings when you drove onto the campus of the mid-western United States university from which the data for this research was drawn, except for security lights, the campus was dark, and the classrooms and parking lots were empty. Today, 2005, the opposite is true—the classrooms and the parking lots are filled to capacity on most weeknights as well as weekends and administration is looking for additional offsite classroom space for weeknight classes. These classes are filled with adult learners who are driven by the belief that the sacrifice to obtain their bachelors degrees will have a payoff. This research reveals that there is a payoff, and that payoff in most areas is greater than the expectations with which most adults learners enter the program. Additionally, while advisors have a fundamental understanding of what students entering the program expect to gain and what those reported outcomes will be, there are both overestimations and underestimations in various areas.

This grounded theory study was driven by the following research question: How do the expectations that motivate adult learners to make such sacrificial monetary and time commitments to return to higher education for the completion of a bachelor's degree match with the educational experience and post degree outcomes? As was revealed in the previous chapter of data presentation, not all expectations match with outcomes. Students at three stages (current, graduates, and those who had withdrawn prior to completing the bachelor's degree) were interviewed or polled regarding their

expectations at entry into the program versus their educational experience and, in the case of their graduates, both their educational experience and their post-degree outcomes. For triangulation purposes data was drawn from interviewing a set of students representative of each of the categories mentioned above and from responses from mailed questionnaires that had been sent to a different set of students representative of the same categories. In addition, assistant directors that serve or had served as the students' advisement counselors were interviewed and asked to give their perceptions of how the three categories of students would respond. While the interviewing of assistant directors was done for triangulation purposes, some data emerged from those interviews that both provided insight and raised questions for consideration for further inquiry. This is discussed later in this chapter.

Conclusions

This study contributes to the understanding of expectations versus educational and post-degree outcomes in a cohort-based, accelerated undergraduate degree completion program for adults. The conclusions will be discussed in the same order as the organization of the questionnaire utilized in this study and as the resulting categories in which the findings were reported.

Reasons for Adults Returning to Higher Education

While the majority (63%) of adults in this study expressed career or job goals as their motivation for returning to higher education, almost one-fourth (23%) cited fulfillment as their motivation for returning to higher education. This significant percentage is cause for consideration of criticism by Courtney (1984) that the characterization by Houle (1961) that adults are chiefly goal-oriented, activity-oriented,

or learning oriented in their motivation to participate in higher education, is not the full picture. The findings of this study appear to be more in alignment with the multi-dimensional characterization by Harriger (1991) of adults returning to college to better themselves and their families, for the love of learning, personal enrichment and self-satisfaction.

Knowledge—Learning and Cognitive Development

In the area of knowledge both current students and graduates reported that they had gained more than expected while those who withdrew prior to completion reported that they had gained less than they expected. Kasworm (1997) explains that adult learners bring rich and varied knowledge from the world of practice into the classroom, and they may judge the relevance of instructional content in terms of personal learning that causes them to consider alternative or philosophical and conceptual understanding. While it was not the intent of this research study to provide answers regarding why current students and graduates perceived they had gained more knowledge than they expected, it does clearly indicated that they did. Likewise, while we learned from the data that those who dropped from the program prior to completing did not gain as much knowledge as they had expected, we do not know why. Although assistant directors came within one to three percentage points of accurately projecting the experienced knowledge gain of current students and graduates, they underestimated their expectation upon entry. The assistant director underestimated both the expected and experienced gain of those who dropped.

As reported in Chapter II of this study, Porter & Steers (1973) propose that meeting expectations is important to a person's continued involvement in an activity.

The report by current students and graduates of a knowledge gain greater than their entry point expectation could be an indicator of met expectations and thus continued involvement in the program of study. (It is a point of record in the assessment data for the program of study that 85% of the students who begin the program complete it.) However, those who withdrew from the program prior to completion reported less knowledge gained than expected. While at first glance it would be easy to surmise that they gained less knowledge because they withdrew, one must consider that perhaps some withdrew because their expectations were not being met. While further inquiry would be necessary to draw conclusions in that regard, a statement from one of the participants of this study who is a single mom and had withdrawn from the program did provide an explanation for her reason for withdrawing: "When I found out some of the salaries for what I wanted to do, without being able to get a master degree or a Ph.D. (I don't have anymore time for school than to get a bachelor's) I realized the Behavioral Science degree wasn't going to raise my pay level all that much more than what I was making in my job already. So, I kind of had to make some changes there." Ricci returned to the community college to obtain credentials for nursing. This example does cause one to consider the usefulness of recognizing students' expectations and the need to assist the student in weighing those expectations against known program outcomes. This line of reasoning indicates that it would be prudent for advisors to have a clear understanding of program outcomes which are a known derivative of good assessment feedback.

From the closely aligned percentage projections by assistant directors of students' knowledge gained with students' reported knowledge gain, it appears that assistant directors have a fairly accurate awareness of students' gains in the area of knowledge as

they proceed through the program. Although this study did not investigate how this awareness was gained, in the program sample utilized for this study there are several possible elements of the program design that could be factors. Since courses are taken one at a time in a modular format, there is course-by-course written knowledge assessment feedback that administrators monitor, allowing for necessary adaptations within a semester. Additionally, three of the four assistant directors teach in the program and receive "first-hand" feedback. Because the program design provides the assistant directors weekly contact with the student (Assistant directors are present to greet students as they arrive on campus each week, thus allowing them to visit with students regarding any concerns or needs they might have.), they would have the opportunity to know the "pulse" of the students.

Expected Change/Experienced Change

The following discussion of students' reported expectations upon entry into the program of how they will change and their report of actual change experienced covers five categories of change: Attitudes and values, psychological development, moral development, spiritual development, and worldview construction. As discussed in chapter 2, Cotton & Wikelund (1989) posit that while both individual and environmental expectations play important roles within the secondary education arena in shaping the performance and experience of students and that there is a strong link between the confidence and expectations maintained by teachers and parents and the education performance of children, that the success of students in higher education is influenced by their own expectations. In their exploration of factors associated with motivation in

learning, Karen Mann and Judith Ribble (1994) suggest that those factors derive from within the individual, within the environment, or within the learning process itself.

Clearly, the findings of this research reveal that most students in most areas experienced a higher degree of change than they had expected and that the assistant director who served as their advisor underestimated the students' expectations in all cases except for moral and spiritual change, in which cases they overestimated. Except for experienced change in moral development, assistant directors overestimated both current students' and graduates' experienced change. However, for those who dropped, assistant directors underestimated the experienced gain in all five areas of change. These findings suggest that students have a higher expectation of change coming into a degree completion program than their advisors perceive them to have. Furthermore, while in the program, current students and graduates experience a greater change in most areas than they themselves or their advisors anticipate that they will experience upon entry into the program. Additionally, students who drop from the program prior to completion change more in all five areas than they themselves or their advisors expect. Realizing that one should be cautious about oversimplifying what this data might be revealing, it does lend cause for considering the statement by Cotton and Wikelund mentioned above, that the motivation to achieve does indeed come from within.

Benefit—Socioeconomic Outcome: In the area of socioeconomic outcomes current students reported that they expected a greater gain than they had yet experienced (It would seem reasonable to assume that this would change after program completion) while graduates reported a greater experienced gain than expected. Not surprisingly, those who dropped expected a greater gain than experienced. Assistant directors

overestimated both expectations and experienced benefit in all levels of students except for those who dropped—they underestimated by a large percent the experienced socioeconomic benefit for those who dropped. While those who withdrew prior to completion did experience less benefit than they or their advisors expected, the deficit reported by those who withdrew is not as great as advisors predicted. The data leads one to conclude that not only did most students fare better than the program advisors anticipated they would, even those who withdrew prior to completion gained or changed more in most areas than their advisors believed they would.

Benefit—Acceptance into Graduate School: As one would surmise, this category of benefit experienced can only apply to graduates. Graduates reported a 24% greater benefit than expected. In other-words, 24% more of the graduates applied and were accepted into graduate school than expected to apply and to gain acceptance. This study was not designed to determine the percentage of graduates from the program who went on to graduate school, butsimply measured expectation versus experience. The 24% greater experience than expected does appear to be significant. Assistant Directors underestimated the students' expectations regarding graduate school by 13% and underestimated the students experienced acceptance into graduate school by 24%. Clearly, students have a greater motivation or confidence regarding continuing their education beyond the baccalaureate degree than their advisors detected. Eagly & Chaiken in Gilbert, Fiske & Lindzey, 1998 explain that expectancy theories basically propose that individuals' attitudes are based on their beliefs and values and that these values inform their intention to act which ultimately shapes their future behavior or experiences. This study seems to indicate that somehow, within the program's education

process, a significant percentage of students gained a belief and a value that caused them to pursue education beyond the baccalaureate degree.

Triangulation Results: As was illustrated in the graphs in Chapter IV, assistant directors did not have an accurate perspective of students' expectation of gain, change and benefit upon entry into the program. In most cases, however, they came within 10 percentage points of projecting how students would report their experience, except for those who dropped. The underestimated the experience for those who dropped in all three categories—knowledge gain, change and benefits.

Summary of Conclusions

In the area of knowledge gained, although current students and graduates gained more than they expected to gain, advisors had a fairly accurate assessment of what students would gain. However, since students' knowledge gain exceeded the students' expectations, this could be an indicator that advisors may not be accurately communicating program outcomes with students at entry point. According to Feist (1990), both individual and environmental expectations play a significant part in determining our levels of motivation and have the potential to impact our decisions, choices and even our patterns of behavior. There seems little doubt that it would be beneficial to the inquiring student for those advising them to have accurate information regarding student outcomes.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) identify two general families of theories and models that deal with student change: Developmental theories and "college impact" models. This research dealt with the latter and, specifically, how much change students would experience from entry point through completion and even postgraduate. The data

revealed that graduates experienced a greater change or benefit than expected in all areas, that current students experienced a greater change or benefit in all areas except socioeconomic, and those who dropped from the program experienced a greater change or benefit than they expected in all of the areas previously described except knowledge and socioeconomics.

Assistant directors tended to underestimate the expectations of adults in most categories except for spiritual and socioeconomic. They tended to underestimate the experienced benefit of those who dropped in most areas. Assistant directors also underestimated the number of graduates who were accepted into graduate school. It appears from the findings that in most cases students exceeded their advisors' expectations which would cause one to once again consider Cotton and Wilklund's statement that the success of students in higher education is influenced by their own expectations.

The surprising conclusion of this study was that whether or not they completed the program and obtained the bachelor's degree, program participants reported benefits beyond their expectation in most categories, and program advisors underestimated the gain or benefits in most areas. Students and advisors could perhaps be better served by an increased awareness and a more accurate knowledge of program outcomes. Such awareness could raise students' expected gains and could perhaps serve as an influence to encourage reluctant inquirers to participate who might otherwise decide not to participate.

Students are not fully aware of the benefit they will receive from participating in higher education. Although graduates report the greatest benefit, there appear to be

benefits just from being involved in the education process whether or not the actual degree is obtained.

Glaser & Strauss (1967) stated "…a theory is a theory because it explains or predicts something" (p. 31). While it seems that this study raised more questions than it answered, it also indicates that for most participants of this study in most areas of investigation, there was more of a gain of benefit or change than initially anticipated by both themselves and their advisement counselors. This could allow one to predict that in most cases students of this particular program will fare better than they believe they will or than their advisor predicts they will.

Implications of the Findings

While clearly student responses indicate that the majority of students returning to higher education do so for job and career advancement, being cognizant of the knowledge that the motivation for a significant number of adults to return to higher education appears to be self fulfillment and reasons other than job and career advancement could have implications for educators in regard to curriculum development and program design. This knowledge or insight could also assist those who counsel and advise the adult student by enabling them to more easily detect the student's motivation and thus provide the student with more enlightened advisement. Additionally, this knowledge can assist administrators in determining ways of attracting adults to and informing adults of education opportunities.

In the area of knowledge, advisement counselors made fairly accurate projections about how current students and graduates would report their knowledge gain. This accurate projection could be an indicator of successful ongoing program assessment and

"loop-back" of information. Findings that indicate that students benefit to some degree whether or not they are able to complete the program and obtain a bachelor's degree should allow advisement counselors to confidently encourage students to participate even if they detect indicators that the potential student might not be able to complete the program.

As reported in Chapter II, McCombs (1991) posits that "motivation is an internal, naturally occurring capacity of human beings that is enhanced and nurtured by quality supportive relationships, opportunities for personal choice and responsibility for learning, and personally relevant and meaningful learning tasks" (p. 120). Being cognizant of students' perceptions of gain as they proceed through a program of study could provide guidance to both administrators and instructors regarding students' needs and how to proceed or adapt to meet those needs. This could be especially useful for program models designed for students to take one module (class) at a time before proceeding to the next class rather than a model where students take four and five courses at a time. The former model would allow administrators and instructors to make necessary adjustments more immediately.

While it is commendable for administrators to continually seek ways to encourage college completion, educators can be encouraged that students appear to benefit in most areas whether or not they graduate. Perhaps administrators should not be overly concerned with students leaving college prior to graduation but should focus their efforts on keeping educational opportunities available for students of all ages and at all stages of their lives.

Awareness of how students benefit should enable enrollment personnel to confidently encourage reluctant inquirers. Additionally, when enrollment personnel, themselves, have doubts about how or if an inquirer will benefit from the education process, they can more confidently encourage that inquirer to participate.

These results could imply that a program model that allows for frequent interchange between students and administrators as well as instructors could provide valuable insight into a student's progression in the program and any emerging needs.

The knowledge that students' expectations were largely met and exceeded in most areas and that the program of study's completion rate is 85% could imply that met expectations lead to completion. This is also supported by the findings that students who dropped did not have their expectations met in the categories of knowledge gained or socio-economic benefit. More research is needed to eliminate the possibility of a post hoc fallacy in these connections.

Limitations and Recommendations

This research was conducted at one institution and may or may not reflect the outcomes of students at other institutions. It would be confirming to repeat the research at multiple institutions to see if the results would be the same or similar. However, for comparison of data to be relevant, it would be important to select institutions with similar programs, similar settings and similar academic rigors.

Because of the researcher's position as director over the program in which the participants were involved, there could have been some reluctance to share less than positive data. However, the researcher took time to explain that truth—not confirmation—was being sought and that their candid responses would provide insight

for advising future students and in future program planning. Additionally, the researcher was careful to interview participants in a casual setting rather than an "across the desk" type setting. Also, it is the belief of the researcher that the collaborative learning environment of the program in which the participants have been a part encourages open and honest dialogue which would extend to the interview process. Additionally, for triangulation purposes, data was gathered from anonymous questionnaires and the perspective of assistant directors/advisors was considered when drawing conclusions.

While participants were drawn from four different degree majors, the data was assessed as a whole. It could be beneficial to keep the data separate to determine if the results would vary with degree major. Additionally, factoring in a student's age, marital status, gender and employment could determine if and how it might influence responses.

More in-depth interviews could be conducted to reveal indirect motivational factors such as personality or character traits or environmental conditioning that contribute to the adult student's motivation to participate in higher education and their reported benefit. Conducting comparable research to determine if continuing adult education that is non-degree track produces similar results/benefits as degree-track higher education could be of benefit to both learners and providers.

While much study and analysis has been conducted regarding the adult learner, it is important that there be on going assessment in the ever evolving and fast-paced world in which adult learners live and operate to insure that we are indeed meeting the needs of the adult learner.

With this research revealing that the education experience and resulting outcomes of adult learners often exceeds their expectations, the question arises if determining the

needs of adult learners may be more important than determining their expectations. Regardless, consumers have the right to know if and how their expectations will be met when they are investing in any product or service. Ongoing research can help insure that education consumers are accurately informed and thus served appropriately.

Consideration should be given to further inquiry to determine if there is a way to raise the expectations of adult students and, if it could be accomplished, would the gained outcomes rise commensurate with expectations? Additionally, further inquiry to determine if the expectation of advisors has any influence over the expectations of students could be of benefit.

Further inquiry to determine if program design has an affect in regard to student accomplishment or completion rate could be beneficial. Additionally, further studies are warranted to determine if a higher percentage of graduates go on to graduate school from some programs than from others and, if so, what factors are involved.

Additional inquiry into adult students' reasons for withdrawal prior to completion would be necessary to determine if personal circumstances, unmet expectations in the program or other reasons influenced them to withdraw from the program.

Follow-up studies would be helpful to determine how education experience benefits those who withdraw prior to completion five, ten and fifteen years later as well as to determine how many of those re-enter at a later point to complete their baccalaureate degree.

Further inquiry would be beneficial to determine if advisement counselors are accurately communicating program benefits to inquiring students and to determine if failure to do so influences some to not participate who would have otherwise participated.

Finally, are the expectations of adult students/graduates being realized by their participation in degree completion programs being offered nationwide at institutions of higher education? This research is distinctively different than much of the college outcomes research that has been conducted on traditional students and traditional programs. This grounded theory research focused on the expectations versus the outcomes of adult students in a non-traditional program. The resulting data illustrated the disparity between adult student expectations and reported outcomes, though in a positive way, and reveals the need for further inquiry.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS—ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

Date of Interview_____

1. How long have you worked in the position of assistant director/advisor in the LEAD Program?

2. For which of the four degree tracks do you provide oversight?

3. How many students do you currently advise?

4. What are the main reasons that persons inquiring into the LEAD program give for wanting to return to college to complete their degree?

5. From an observation standpoint, how would you rate student expectations, on a collective basis, upon entry into the LEAD program and their perceived benefit when exiting the program in the following categories:

Column A--Reflecting back to conversations during advisement of LEAD students at entry point into the LEAD program, what percentage in the various categories best expresses your collective observation of students' **expectations,** of educational outcomes and degree benefits.

Column B-D Since you work closely with the students in your degree tract throughout their program, know each of them individually and even attend their graduation ceremony, what percentage of benefit (From 0% to 100% with 0 representing no benefit and 100 representing very beneficial) do you believe students would give to the **actual experienced** outcome?

Column B--Place the percentages that you believe reflect, collectively, responses that students who are **currently in the LEAD Program** would give to actual experienced outcomes.

Column C**--**Place the percentages that you have observed reflect, collectively, responses that students who **have graduated from the LEAD Program** would give to actual experienced outcomes.

Column D**—**Place the percentages that you have observed reflect, collectively, responses to actual experienced outcomes that students would give who have**dropped from the LEAD Program** prior to graduation.

	Percentage of gain/change/benefit			
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**
	Expected At Entry	**Actual** Exper'd Current	**Actual** Exper'd Grad	**Actual** Exper'd Drop
KNOWLEDGE:				
• Learning and Cognitive Development……	_____	_____	_____	_____
CHANGE				
• Attitudes and Values……	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Psychosocial Development……	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Moral Development……..	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Spiritual Development ……	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Worldview Construction……...	_____	_____	_____	_____
BENEFIT				
• Socioeconomic Outcomes…….	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Acceptance into graduate programs……	_____	_____	_____	_____

6. What do you believe are the main reasons that students drop from the LEAD Program without completing their degrees?

7. Are there other ways that you have observed that students have benefited from the education experience in the LEAD Program or from the attainment of their degrees through the LEAD Program?

8. Have you observed that some graduates of the LEAD Program do not feel that they have benefited from the educational process or from receiving their degrees? Please explain.
9. What percentage of graduates of the LEAD Program do you believe would still work to obtain their bachelors degree if they had it to do over? Please elaborate.

Thank you for your assistance.

APPENDIX B

Appendix B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS—LEAD PARTICIPANTS
Date of Interview_____
Participant gender_____

1. How long had it been since you had attended college when you started back to complete your degree?

   Why did you "stop out" of college?

2. What was your age when you started back to complete your degree?

   _____,

   age when completed (if completed)_____, and current age?

   _____.

3. How long were you established in your job or career before you started back to college to complete your bachelor's degree?_____

4. What was your job or position at the time you returned to college to complete your degree?_____

5. What is your current job or position?_____

6. Why did you decide to start back to college to complete your degree?

7. What is your degree major?_____

8. How long has it been since you received your bachelor's degree?_____

Please rate your expectations of college/degree benefits verses actually gained in the columns below:

Column A--Reflecting back to the time you returned to college to complete your degree, what where your **expectations** of benefits you would receive, knowledge you would gain or change that would take place in your life in the following areas? Please rate your percentage of expectations upon entry into the degree completion program from 0% to 100% with 0 reflecting no expectation and 100 reflecting very high expectation to illustrate the percentage of knowledge, benefit or change you **believed** you would experience from the process and attainment of your degree.

Column B—Indicate the percentage of benefit that you believe you have **actually gained** with 0 representing no gain and 100 representing a very high gain.

	Percentage of gain/change/benefit	
	A	**B**
	Expected At Entry	**Actual** Experienced
KNOWLEDGE:		
• Learning and Cognitive Development……	_____	_____
CHANGE		
• Attitudes and Values……	_____	_____
• Psychosocial Development……	_____	_____
• Moral Development…….	_____	_____
• Spiritual Development ……	_____	_____
• Worldview Construction……...	_____	_____
BENEFIT		
• Socioeconomic Outcomes…….	_____	_____
• Acceptance into graduate programs……	_____	_____

10. Please indicate which of the following scenarios describes your status as a student:

Approximately one-half way through the program_____

Graduated from the program_____ Year graduated_____

Dropped from the program_____

I plan to return to complete my degree_____

I do not plan to return to complete my degree_____

I have completed my degree elsewhere_____

I plan to complete my degree elsewhere_____

11. Reason for dropping from the program (If applicable):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. Are there other ways that you **have benefited** from the education experience in the LEAD program or from the attainment of your degree through the LEAD program?

If, yes, please explain:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. If you **do not** feel that the education experience through the LEAD program or the attainment of your bachelor's degree through the LEAD Program has benefited you, could you please explain why you feel that way.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. If you had it to do over, would you still work to obtain your bachelors degree? Why or Why not?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your participation. Please place the completed questionnaire in the postage paid return envelope.

Additional Questions

What is the education level of:

Your father_____

Your mother_____

Your

siblings_____

_____

Your spouse_____

Your children if they are over 18 years of age

_____