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2004

**Faculty Mentoring: A Strategic Tool for the Enhancement of Adult Learners**

Brenda Jack

FACULTY MENTORING: A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF  
ADULT LEARNERS

DISSERTATION

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ADULT LEARNERS  
DISSERTATION

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2004

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The journey from conceptualization to ultimate completion of this dissertation has been a true odyssey of self-discovery. I have learned an enormous amount about myself emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned was that through trials and tribulations, persistence, and good old-fashioned hard work, one has the potential for incredible growth.

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## DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my parents Earle Chesterfield Lewis and the late Louise Jane Lewis, for instilling in me the values of hard work, a good attitude and persistence and for stressing the value of education. Their love, concern and pride in my work were always a major source of strength to me. Their encouragement, support and personal sacrifices made an everlasting impression on my life. The wisdom and ability passed down from my parents burgeoned through my doctoral experience.

The memories of my mother and her desire to see me reach the pinnacle of my academic achievements kept me going through this long and lonely process. I know my mother is cheering from the balconies of heaven.

Mom and Dad, with heartfelt thanks, I dedicate this paper to you.

As a Faculty Member, You're Mentoring When .....

In your classes, you encourage student participation.

In your classes, you create opportunities for collaborative interaction.

As a teacher, you develop your students' abilities to work with peers.

You encourage a sense of joy in the classroom and around class work.

You emphasize professional discipline, work habits, and personal integrity.

You develop students' capabilities to seek out new uses for traditional ideas.

You write comments on all students' papers you review.

You develop sensitivity, vulnerability, and responsibility.

You take students' suggestions for testing techniques.

You miss no class, except for clear necessity.

You arrive ten minutes early for class, so students have an opportunity to talk to you.

You recognize that education involves teaching oneself to be surprised.

You demonstrate respect and courtesy with all individuals.

You teach your students to write thank you notes for special acts others perform for them.

You care about the whole student and not just achievement in your course.

As an **academic advisor**, you listen to what students really want and not what they should want.

You know a student's GPA and previous academic performance and watch trends.

You help a student to understand the course catalog.

You encourage students to take advantage of aspects of other departments and programs with which they may not be familiar.

You share the successes and failures you have taken in the path to where you are today

You demonstrate through your behavior that teaching is a calling and not a job.

*Linda de Vries*

## ABSTRACT

# FACULTY MENTORING: A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF ADULT LEARNERS

Brenda Jack

Barry University, 2004

Dissertation Chairperson: Toni Powell, Ph.D.

### Purpose

One dominant theme in most adult education institutions is the recruitment and retention of adult students. The rate at which students drop out of universities has long been a concern to faculty, parents, administrators, and students themselves. Oftentimes, the primary reasons identified by dropouts for their behavior reflect a sense of isolation, lack of motivational support, vagueness of future academic plans, and insufficient faculty-to-student interaction.

In recent years, mentoring has been implemented in colleges and universities as a means of improving retention and student success. The role of mentor may be such that it allows the adult student the needed opportunity to interact with faculty, especially important during the crucial first year (Strommer, 1995). Given the increased emphasis and attention by adult educators to establishing, expanding, and improving formal mentoring programs (Jacobi, 1991), it is important to assess the behavioral mentoring functions of faculty mentors (Cohen, 1993). The logical starting point is the investigation of the functions of the mentor.

## Method

This research study was designed as a mixed methods case study. This mixed method design included qualitative student interviews, qualitative analysis of the observations, and a quantitative analysis of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* developed by Cohen (1993). The qualitative study focused on adult students at The Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education, Barry University, in an attempt to augment the knowledge base from a student and faculty perspective.

In this study the researcher explored the specific functions of a faculty mentor at the school of adult and continuing education to decipher the resemblance to the functions as recommended in the literature. Self-reported behaviors of the mentors were investigated by different levels of attribute variables (gender, and teaching area). The study utilized the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*, developed and validated by Cohen (1993). The six behavioral mentoring functions that integrate adult development psychology and the transactional process of learning were examined: *Relationship Emphasis*, *Information Emphasis*, *Confrontive Focus*, *Facilitative Focus*, *Mentor Model*, and *Student Vision*. The mentoring behavioral functions were considered relevant to establishing and maintaining an evolving mentor-protégé relationship by prominent adult educators and experts on the psychology theory of mentoring adult learners (Cohen, 1993).

Further, through open-ended interviews, the study attempted to describe the students' perception of factors that contribute to their retention and further the students' perception of mentoring relationships. "What are the perceived meaningful events, aspects, and people associated with your university experience? What support services,

have implications for you staying in university until your educational goals are achieved? Were you ever involved in a mentoring relationship?" These are some of the questions that were asked during the open-ended interviews in order to grasp the students' perspectives. An analysis of the transcripts of the interviews was used as the primary method to investigate the students' perceptions of their experiences. The data was analyzed by creating codes and a typology in order to look at the data inductively.

In addition, the researcher provided participant-observer data of the learning environment, subject matter, and instructional activities as they influenced transformational learning.

#### Major Findings

Subjects were administered the 55-item *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (PAMS), an instrument based on adult development psychology theories and the transactional process of learning with six behavioral mentoring functions. Faculty mentors completed the PAMS instrument. The ANOVA indicated that the male and female faculty members' overall levels of perception of effectiveness were similar. However, the levels of perception of effectiveness for the six behavioral mentoring functions showed similar levels except for the mentor role, where male faculty members exhibited higher scores.

When compared to Cohen's mentor role competency scores for the PAMS, the behavioral mentoring functions revealed a variety of perceptions of effectiveness: Relationship Emphasis for male and female faculty resulted in effective mean scores; Information Emphasis, Facilitative Focus, and Student Vision mean scores resulted in less effective for female faculty and not effective for male faculty; male and female

faculty mean scores resulted in not effective scores; while the Mentor Model scores for females resulted in very effective, the mean scores for males resulted in effective.

Confrontive Focus behavioral scores in this study were consistent with findings from F. C. Stoner's January 1996 study that revealed less effective mean scores for adult educators from Continuing Education, Higher Education, and Business and Industry (Stoner, 1996).

The approach used in this study can be used by other adult educators in schools of adult and continuing education. The results provide adult educators with data and reproducible techniques with which to assess, evaluate, and improve the interpersonal competencies of adult learners and mentors.

The qualitative findings were presented in the form of a typology consistent with other research studies which were similar to this particular study. The results of the study indicated that nontraditional-age students' commitment to the goal of completing university had the strongest effect on their decision to remain in the university. The results also showed that social integration with faculty can play a major role in student retention. Further, the results of the study support the research for the establishment of a formal mentoring program as a support service to help adult students in gaining academic success and building student retention.

These findings are somewhat different from the findings in existing literature. The difference exists because this study's data were collected on nontraditional-age students. Previous research focused on traditional-age students where nontraditional-age students were seldom included in studies of persistence or mentoring. There is a need for continued research on the nontraditional-age student population. This study's findings

suggest that data collected on traditional-age students cannot be generalized to include nontraditional-age students.

From the observations conducted in the classroom, the findings about fostering transformative learning seem quite promising. The study found that if professors develop authentic positive relationships with their learners, use creative experiential activities, encourage group ownership and individual agency, discuss value-laden course content, are willing to engage learners on the affective level in concert with critical thinking, and have ample classroom time, change can be initiated among those students predisposed to transformative learning. Adult educators will face the challenge of establishing authentic and helping relationships with adult students in the classroom when fostering transformative learning. Thus from these findings this researcher suggests that since transformative learning has the potential to be a deeply emotional experience, faculty members should possess considerable knowledge and skill to facilitate change responsibly and effectively.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### A Story

In July 1998, at the age of thirty-five, I graduated from the University of the West Indies. I recount my academic accomplishment because, on reflecting about the mentoring experiences that I had, I have come to realize that each tier of the academic ladder marks a different level of experience in the mentoring process.

I remember all too clearly the day of my interview and visit with prospective advisers. Dr. Andrew Lewis was my last visit on the itinerary that had been prepared for me. He pushed back his chair, put his hands behind his head, looked across his desk at me, and asked, "What do you want out of life, Brenda?" After I told him my short-term goals and my long-term goal, which at that time was to be an economist, he went on to inquire about my areas of interest, to probe my strengths and weaknesses, and to explain how he and the department faculty could assist me in achieving my goals. Based on my areas of interest and his disciplinary expertise and experience, we mutually decided that Dr. Lewis would be my mentor. Of all the potential professors who I had interacted with, I appreciated him most for his warmth, candor, and wisdom. He made me feel relaxed.

The most significant characteristics that I appreciated in Dr. Lewis were his overwhelming confidence in my abilities, his belief in my potential for success, and his role in shaping me as a professional. Perhaps even more intrinsically important was his ability to provide me with sincere, concrete, and honest feedback during my academic phase. Whenever I did not perform up to my potential, he would give specific,

constructive suggestions for improvement. He supported and encouraged me throughout all my endeavors and provided a lot of latitude for me to grow and develop my skills.

There is no doubt that the mentoring experience is complex. It involves a myriad of factors, and the relationship between mentor and protégé varies from one encounter to the next. For some students and for me in particular, the various levels involved in the experience contribute greatly to professional, intellectual, and social development.

Having a strong support system, such as a mentor or mentors, the department, the college, and the university, is very important in finding a secure medium that will encourage one to grow, develop, and become a self-directed learner.

### *Interest in Mentoring*

After completing my legal studies, I entered graduate school to pursue my Masters Degree in Legislative Drafting. During that period, I worked closely with two professors who “counseled, advised, and coached” me. They mentored me and when I graduated, I knew how to be an academic. When I settled in and began teaching, however, I noted with sadness that similar relationships were now missing for adults in this academic setting.

I started to reflect on the mentors who helped me to survive, who were willing to take the time to converse on intellectual work, to explain the process for accomplishing that work, and to model a strong sense of self. These mentors were brilliant in their academic work, and they were able to connect the work to their experience and give it meaning for me.

As a graduate student at Barry University, my day to day communication and shared experiences with adult students has developed into an informal mentoring process.



This mentoring process now provides an alternative to the isolation that many graduate students experience. This knowledge has led me to construe that mentoring is very essential and can meaningfully contribute to the process of intellectual life in academia. My faculty mentoring experience in Barbados has been significant in terms of my intellectual growth, but my experience at Barry University has taught me the survival skills in academia.

Research indicates that graduate students have faculty mentors who provide support. These mentors are a source of parallel academic learning because they help support, sustain, and expand the instructional activities conducted within the classroom. However, the pertinent question is whether these kinds of mentoring programs are available for adult students in schools of adult and continuing education in an effort to promote a philosophical vision and pragmatic approach through one-to-one learning. Mentoring can be used as a device to combat the high attrition rate, thereby leading to student retention and the promotion of educational achievement.

#### Background Research

The history of adult education reflects both a strong belief and practice of developing a significant positive relationship between the adult educator and the adult learner (Cohen, 1993). Internationally, nationally, and state-wide, adult education associations currently address these positive transactional relationships between educator and student as an essential factor in student growth and achievement. Most appropriate for this research study is Cohen's view. Based on his review of the literature and the application of mentoring to postsecondary education, mentoring is "a one-to-one transactional relationship between higher education faculty and adult learners within a

college environment. Faculty mentors interact with students for the purpose of developing their intellectual, affective, and career potential” (p.253).

Mentoring is not a new phenomenon. The attempt by adult institutions of higher education to duplicate the apparent “magic” of traditional spontaneous mentoring relationships by creating organized programs that deliberately match mentor and adult learners, however, is a relatively recent and important event (Lester & Johnson, 1981; Merriam, 1983). Mentoring in adult education is viewed as a significant factor in promoting student development and is advocated as a positive intervention which offers numerous benefits to faculty as well as institutions. The expanding literature regarding mentoring programs for adults in higher education now offers many positive accounts for faculty and administrative staff growing professionally, students growing intellectually, and colleges growing as mature environments for the nurturing of students (Jacobi, 1991).

Mentoring can be an important component in the improvement of learning for adult learners. According to Daloz (1999) and Zachary (2000), mentoring is considered a purposeful guiding relationship in a learning environment. Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski (2000) note that mentoring is assuming national importance as a vital component in the personal, educational, and professional experiences of higher education learners. It is cited as a significant element in understanding the growth and development of adult learners. In particular, mentoring has been a topic of discussion related to enrichment possibilities in the student personnel and development functions of higher education (Gaskill, 1993; Jacobi, 1991). Mentoring has become an essential module in education settings as a means of improving the instructional process, student and faculty

relations, professional enhancement, and faculty development (Cohen, 1995; Daloz, 1999; Galbraith & Cohen, 1995, 1997).

Research suggests that mentoring contributes significantly to the psychological development of individuals (Crosby, 1999; Daloz, 1986, 1999; D. J. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, M. H. Levinson, & McKee, 1978). Kram (1983) summarizes the functions of a mentor in two broad categories. Based on the literature, she believes that a mentor can perform career and/or psychosocial functions. Career functions assist the mentee in advancing within the organization, and psychosocial functions are the roles the mentor uses to enhance the individual's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role. Levinson et al. maintain that a mentor relationship is one of the most significant relationships an adult can experience, particularly the young adult as he or she transitions from one life phase to the next. Levinson et al. state further that the most important function of the mentor is to support and facilitate the realization of a dream.

Erikson (1978) suggests that the mentor relationship is equally important for the older adult who may be faced with issues of what Erikson terms stagnation versus generativity. In relation to Erikson's eight stages of opposing dilemmas, it is in the early adult stage of identity development versus role confusion that a mentor may first play a significant role. Through modeling, listening, and encouragement, the mentor can help the protégé develop self-assurance and confidence in newly developing roles. Mentoring experiences can also be important in later adulthood as individuals negotiate one or both of Erikson's later stages, and as mentors demonstrate generativity and pursue ego integrity through volunteer work, writing, or continued learning. It is in these later stages that the mentoring relationship may also be particularly valuable to the mentor as well, as

the experience provides an important source of generativity and stimulates the mentor to even greater reflection and life review.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The impact of a rapidly changing society is reflected in the growing number of adults engaged in a formal part-time course of study at schools of adult and continuing education. In the literature it seems well established that adult learners represent the fastest growing segment in the student population (Metzer & Bean, 1987; Bean, 1990). However, the nagging question lingers-how many of these students continue their educational pursuits? Statistically, adult learners, those 25 years of age or older, constitute over one half of all students enrolled in higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, (NCES), 1996). For the most part, these adult learners are in a state of transition seeking to improve their situation through education.

Over the years, schools of adult and continuing education have spent vast amounts of money setting up programs for adult learners. In spite of all the programs to help retain students, according to the U.S Department of Education, Center for Educational Statistics, only 50% of those entering the educational process actually earn a bachelor's degree. It has been shown that the retention of adult learners is becoming an issue of concern to faculty and administrators alike (Glazer & Stein, 2000). The improvement of retention rates is critical during this time of decreasing enrollment in adult and continuing education programs.

If administrators and educators mean for nontraditional students to stay and not become attrition statistics, researchers need to gain a keener understanding of the sensibilities and concerns that these students bring with them and of the difficulties the

students encounter along the way (London, 1992). In short, adult institutions must find ways to adjust to the needs of nontraditional-age students and provide the paths to success the students will need. An increase in adult enrollment has produced an increase in revenue; however, a decline in adult enrollment could produce a traumatic decline in revenue. The exodus of students in large numbers could have a disastrous economic impact on an institution.

In recent times, students have been complaining of the lack of academic support services to encourage active and cooperative learning and the lack of the institutions' ability to provide a learning environment to help students who are in a state of transition seeking to improve their situation through education.

In response to the growth in the number of nontraditional-age students, and the growing complaints, there is an implicit assumption that adult educators need to reexamine their delivery of service. The retention of these students requires that administrators accommodate this student population. In order to accommodate this group of students, adult educators are being challenged to develop and maintain appropriate programming and services which respond to the needs of this unique group.

#### *Research Question and Subquestions*

The overarching research question that guided the inquiry was: "What role do faculty mentors play toward enhancing the learning process of adult learners in schools of continuing education at the university level?" The study was organized to explore the following subquestions:

1. What are the primary factors which can induce or contribute to transformational learning through mentoring?

2. What challenges may arise for a faculty mentor who creates transformational learning experiences in the classroom?
3. What measures can be used by faculty mentors to promote self-directed learning in the mentoring process?
4. What measures are used by faculty mentors to delineate their behaviors and roles as mentors?
5. How do faculty mentors see the purposes and objectives of mentoring?
6. What functions do faculty mentors see themselves serving as mentors to adult students?
7. From the students' perspectives, what are the perceptions of mentoring and the factors which contribute to the retention of adult students?

Nearly two decades ago, Brookfield (1984) issued a challenge to adult education researchers to examine their "methodolatory" process of generating knowledge. He criticized researchers for their overreliance on "the adoption of strictly defined and tightly administered quantitative or qualitative measures in the investigation of adult learning" (p.65). Thus this study articulated the mixed method designs by using a dominant-less dominant design, by enhancing the qualitative and quantitative method. The study explored how mentoring relationships developed a student's ability to become a self-directed learner, and how faculty members could support efforts to meaningfully integrate mentoring as part of the curriculum in adult education to improve a student's academic achievement, thereby leading to improvement in retention rates.

### *Significance of the Study*

Nontraditional-age students comprise an increasingly larger proportion of undergraduate collegiate student bodies, and this trend is predicted to continue (Metzer & Bean, 1987). Constituting nearly 45% of higher education's total enrollment, adult students, twenty-five years and older, are projected to comprise another 3% by the year 2006 (NCES, 1996). Taking this into consideration, the attitude that faculty hold toward these non-traditional students is of great importance in the teaching-learning transaction.

The important question is how can educational institutions provide programs to enhance the learning and academic success of this adult population? It is commonly known that the relationship between faculty and students at universities is extremely important; in this light, mentoring-a specific type of faculty-student relationship, is considered to be at the heart of adult education (Cusanovich & Gilliland, 1991).

Adult educators have paid close attention to the benefits and possibilities of mentorship as a means of adult learning. Cohen (1995), Levinson (1978), and 1996, Daloz (1986), to name but three, have closely examined how the mentor can assist adults in realizing their life dreams and develop stronger human beings. However, with the exception of Daloz (1986), little attention has been given to mentoring as a means of helping the adult learner through the developmental process and to make meaning from experience.

Unfortunately, while researchers have suggested that mentoring is crucial in academic settings, in comparison with other settings such as the business world, mentoring is less likely to occur (Wright & Wright, 1987). According to Merriam (1983), the fundamental issue for adult educators and researchers is how mentoring relates to

adult development and adult learning. Merriam further notes that until 1983 no methodical research had covered the subject of mentoring in academic settings. When academic mentoring is researched, most studies investigate inner-city youth and undergraduate students as opposed to adult learners/non-traditional students. Yet, information about teens and undergraduates is not easily applied to the population of non-traditional students, because of differences in age, career stage, life circumstances, finances and reasons for pursuing an education (Cooke, Sims, & Peyrefitte, 1995).

This research can offer new perspectives for understanding adult learners and present concrete practical ways based on current developmental theory on how educators can set up support systems to more effectively improve the quality of support services for adult learners. The research also provides a catalyst for both the institutions and the faculty for improving their work with adult learners. It suggests using the sources of support to optimize the opportunities for transformational learning. Findings from this research can also help adult education providers and facilitators to come to a better understanding of the problems that adult learners face. Furthermore, the study can contribute to the knowledge base concerning adult education and to the general understanding of adult learners in schools of adult and continuing education. The results of this research will also expand the literature based on mentoring in adult education, and could provide a model for other schools of adult and continuing education to plan more methodically and effectively in an effort to meet the needs of their students.

#### Theoretical Framework

This research used the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*, an instrument based on theory relevant to adult development psychology and the transactional process of



learning, and focused on the distinctive ways a faculty mentor can interpret the effectiveness of his or her role as a professional mentor. This section provides a summary of important theories emphasizing the relationship of adult development psychology. The theoretical concepts are developmental in that they create a delicate balance between support and challenge as a crucial interaction between developing the student and the program needed.

### *Transformational Learning Theory*

The theory of transformative learning, the process of making meaning of one's experience, emerged with the work of Jack Mezirow (1981, 1994, 1996, 2000), and has been explored through numerous research studies and critiques over the last 20 years. Transformative learning offers a theory of learning that is uniquely adult, abstract, idealized, and grounded in the nature of human communication. It is a theory that is partly a developmental process, but more as "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1996, p.162).

Transformative learning offers an explanation for change in meaning structures that evolves in two domains of learning based on the epistemology of Habermas communicative theory. First is instrumental learning, which focuses on learning through task-oriented problem solving and determination of cause and effect relationships-to do, base on empirical-analytic discovery. Second is communicative learning, which is learning involved in understanding the meaning of what others "communicate concerning values, ideals, feelings, moral decisions, and such concepts as freedom, justice, love, labor, autonomy, commitment and democracy" (Mezirow, 1991, p.8). Mezirow observes

that transformational learning is taking place when these domains of learning involve a reflective assessment of premises and of movement through cognitive structures by identifying and judging presuppositions. Transformative learning attempts to explain how our expectations, framed within cultural assumptions and presuppositions, directly influence the meaning we derive from our experiences. It is the revision of meaningful structures from experiences that are addressed by the theory of perspective transformation.

Three common themes characterize Mezirow's theory of the mechanism of transformational learning in mentoring relationships. These are experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse. The students' life experiences provide a starting point for transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991). Mezirow considers critical reflection to be the distinguishing characteristic of adult learning, and sees it as a vehicle in which one questions the validity of worldview. He identifies rational discourse as a catalyst for transformation, as it induced the various participants to explore the depth and meaning of their various world-views and articulate those ideas to their professor and classmates. Mezirow (1996) emphasizes that transformational learning is rooted in the way human beings communicate and does not link it exclusively with significant life events of the learner. Through this combination of reflection and discourse, the student/protégé is able to make shifts in his/her worldview which produce a more inclusive world-view. For Mezirow, one of the benefits of transformational learning is the development of greater autonomy and self-direction as a person, a defining condition of adulthood.

According to Mezirow (1994), to achieve transformational learning, educators must establish objectives that promote critical reflection and provide opportunity for discourse.

Experiences that meet those requirements and involve deliberation and problem solving are described as “learner centered,” participatory and interactive.

Many factors can contribute to a perspective transformation experience. Support has been identified as one of these. Support relates to the process of providing emotional, psychological, or physical assistance to the learner when needed (Bloom, 1995; Daloz, 1987). Brookfield (1986), Cranton (1994), and Daloz, (1987) stress the need for educators to support the adult learner through the learning process. This may be accomplished through a variety of means, including the educator being “authentic,” creating welcoming, encouraging learner networks, and, the most valuable tool, mentoring. Daloz (1987) suggests that if adult educators are interested in facilitating a perspective transformation in students, then they should be interested in the concept of support, by providing mentoring support services for adult learners. Research in the area of transformational learning reveals findings regarding the support that students experience through mentoring relationships in different educational settings (King, 1996; 1997).

### *Motivational Learning Theory*

Motivation is concerned with why individuals think and behave in a certain manner (Wlodkowski, 1999). Motivation is a critical element in keeping adult learners engaged and committed in the learning environment. Motivated learners remain engaged in the learning community and in programs and ultimately graduate. The notion of motivated learners being retained in a program is a critical element for the success of any school of continuing education.

Wlodkowski (1999) offers four motivational elements that should be included in any learning environment to motivate adults to learn. He suggests that to motivate adults, learning environments should establish inclusion, develop attitudes, enhance meaning, and promote competence. To establish inclusion, the learning atmosphere should promote respectful and connected learners and instructors. The development of positive attitudes toward the learning experience should be based on identifying the relevance of the instruction to the learner and facilitating personal choices of the learner as much as possible throughout the learning environment. Reflective learning, challenging and engaging, helps to enhance the meaning of the content to the learner. Finally, the promotion of competence by continued learner success in areas that the learner values provide additional motivation.

Mentors can, and should, help motivate learners in a variety of ways. In each of the four motivational elements, mentors provide assistance. In the establishment of inclusion, mentors maintain contact with learners, communicating one-on-one. In helping to develop positive attitudes toward the learning environment, mentors offer examples and share their own learning experiences with adult learners. These experiences can be particularly meaningful to adult learners. These experiences are also helpful as learners reflect on the learning environment, the content, and their own experiences. The development of shared experiences helps to continue to build the learning community, which, in turn, helps to motivate the learner.

### *Adult Learning Theory*

Adult learning theory is founded on the work of Knowles and Cross (Cross, 1981; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). Knowles (1980) argues that adults must be taught

differently from children and that the learning process of adults is drastically distinct when compared with children or the traditional pedagogical approach. Knowles, a strong proponent of self-directed learning and the teacher's role as a facilitator in the process of adult education, is well known for his theory of andragogy. According to Knowles (1990), andragogy advocates both the self-directed learning concept and the teacher as the facilitator of learning.

The five assumptions underlying andragogy describe the adult learner as someone who (1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning, (2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning, (3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles, (4) is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and (5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. From these assumptions, Knowles (1980) proposes a program-planning model for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational experiences with adults. For example, with regard to the first assumption that as adults mature they become more independent and self-directing, Knowles suggests that the classroom climate be one of "adulthood," both physically and psychologically. In an "adult" classroom, adults "feel accepted, respected, and supported"; further, there exists "a spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint inquirers" (p.47). And because adults manage other aspects of their lives, they are capable of directing, or at least assisting in planning, their own learning.

The writings of Knowles (1990) are fraught with the message of self-directed learning and learning based upon the experience of the student. Knowles argues that:

Adults are motivated to devote energy to learn something to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks or deal with problems they confront in their life situations. Furthermore, they learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values, and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real life situations (p.61).

Additionally, scores of other scholars have found andragogy to be the principle guiding force in the practice of teaching adults (Candy, 1991; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Putman and Bell (1990) assert that, since older learners will naturally have more life experience, learning specialists would need to find better ways to capitalize on that experience in a learning area.

Mentoring is well suited to the characteristics of adult learners. According to Knowles (1970), adults tend to be goal and relevancy oriented, learn experientially, and approach learning as problem solving. They are less flexible and more impatient in their pursuit of specific objectives. Mentoring, based on adult learning principles, is viewed as guided learning. The mentor provides structure or “scaffolding” to the learning process, shares knowledge that could otherwise only be attained through experience and supports the protégés’ efforts without “rescuing” them from their failures. The challenge in effective, successful mentoring is to decipher and integrate the unique learning history of both the mentor and protégé to their mutual benefit; the best mentoring will always occur within this framework of adult learning (Walker, Kelly, & Hume, 2002).

The literature about adult learners indicates that they learn best when, (1) they are able to associate new learning with previous experiences and to use those experiences while learning; (2) they are able to provide input into the planning of their own learning

processes; (3) they have a variety of learning options and have opportunities to analyze and expand on what they learn; and (4) they have an opportunity to apply information to practical situations related to their own lives. These characteristics reflect a constructivist view of learning, which asserts that knowledge is acquired best from experiences with solving meaningful problems rather than from practicing skills or learning isolated bits of knowledge.

Knowles (1970) highlights the relationship between mentoring and adult learning. According to Knowles, mentors can facilitate learning by encouraging protégés to build their own knowledge while providing resources and other supports. The mentor can support the protégé in working through problems, and work with the protégé in building new information upon the foundation of past experiences and previous knowledge.

In addition to Knowles (1970), Joyce and Showers (1995) assert that adult learners believe that learning must be of value and relevant to their work, and further, they have different ways of learning, for example, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Joyce and Showers suggest that mentors should focus on what is important to the protégés' work environment to help the protégés to improve practices, and further, use a variety of strategies, for example, observations, journals, videotapes and portfolios, in the mentoring process.

Adults have different modes of learning; some may learn best by seeing, others by hearing, and still others through touch and movement. Mentoring may increase the transfer of learning because it provides a range of activities that accommodates different learning modes, opportunities to practice, individualized feedback, and follow-up support (Taylor, 1997). Involving the protégés in the planning of mentoring and helping them see

the value of mentoring activities also should facilitate the application of what they learn.

The themes of transformational learning and motivation discussed above were used in conjunction with the theory of adult learning to study how faculty mentors can assist adult learners in the academic process, leading to self-direction and higher retention rates.

### *The Role of Andragogy, Self-directed Learning, and Perspective Transformation*

Malcolm Knowles described principles of adult learning in the mid 1960s. Knowles (1980) developed the concept of andragogy to describe “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p.43). Knowles suggests that as people mature, their self-concept moves from being dependent to being self-directing; that adult experience is an asset for learning; that adult readiness to learn is closely connected to social roles; that adults are interested in the immediate application of knowledge; and that adults are motivated to learn by intrinsic factors (1980, 1990).

Knowles (1990) in his seminal work looked at the organizing concepts of adult education and states that in this era of knowledge explosion, and technical revolution, adult education must be primarily concerned with providing the resources and support for self-directed inquiry. Although there have been many adaptations by other educators, these pioneering learning principles underpin much of the research in adult education. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998) emphasize, “adults resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them” (p.65). In spite of their need for autonomy, previous schooling has made them dependent learners. It is the job of the adult educator to facilitate the transition of adult students away from their old habits and to new patterns of learning where they become self-directed, taking responsibility for their



own learning and the direction it takes. Mentoring is a perfect path for the facilitation of self-direction.

The term “self-directed learning” has been used in adult education literature for several decades, long enough to make it difficult to sort out the various meanings the term has taken on (Brockett, 1994). Some researchers focus on the process of self-directed learning, the teaching-learning transaction, while others concentrate on self-direction as an attribute of the learner (Hiemstra & Brockett, 1994; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Candy (1991) distinguishes four different meanings of the term “self-directed learning” (p.19). The author suggests that “self-directed learning” could refer to personal autonomy, self-management in learning, learner control over the learning situation, or autodidaxy, the independent pursuit of learning without any formal institutional structures (p.19).

Candy (1991) extends a conception of self-directed learning to include “constructing alternative perspectives and meaning systems” (p.278). For Candy, learning is active and involves the striving of learners to make meaning out of their experiences and understandings. The constructivist view of learning according to Candy is particularly compatible with the notion of self-direction, since it emphasizes the combined characteristics of active inquiry, independence, and individuality in learning a task.

Brookfield (1986) defines self-directed learning as “the attempt of adults to acquire skills, knowledge, and self-insight through educational experiences that they are responsible for arranging” (p.149). The author stresses the need for educators to remain focused on the ultimate purpose of adult education, that is, supporting adults in their

quest. Brookfield asserts that self-directed learning encompasses critical reflection, exploration, and alteration of personal and social circumstances.

Mezirow (1990, 1994) proposes that all human beings develop meaning structures, which are the frames of reference for personal concepts, beliefs, judgments, and feelings. If there is dissonance between experiences and the meaning structures previously developed, adults might either reject the experience, or engage in learning as they critically reflect on those experiences. According to Mezirow (1990), these shifts in perspectives for the adult might be the result of a major life incident or a series of small transformations. These perspective transformations are the bases of adult learning. Mezirow (1994) adds that transformative learning is central to what adult education is all about. Adult development inherently involves the alteration of adults' perspective.

The conceptual principles of andragogy have created the underpinnings whereby mentors can go on a journey to assist adult learners in the learning process. Andragogy, self-directed learning, motivation and perspective transformation are frameworks that can help educators develop a better understanding of adults as they engage in lifelong learning. These approaches describe learners at different phases or stages of their lives and suggest how educators might support the attempts of adult learners to grow, develop skills and understanding, and make meaning (Brookfield, 1986; Candy, 1991; Knowles, 1980, 1990; Mezirow, 1994).

### *Mentoring Adult Learners*

The study is built on several concepts and assumptions derived from the literature about the mentoring of adults. The literature alludes to the fact that mentoring adult

students is an appropriate choice and that the use of the transactional process of learning in the education of adults is effective.

The literature on mentoring has repeatedly called attention to the fact that there is no single definition of mentoring widely accepted by those who practice mentoring, or by those who study it. To examine this phenomenon, Jacobi (1991) conducted a comprehensive review of mentoring literature in three categories: adult education, management and organizations, and developmental psychology. Her study concludes that although there are some areas of overlap, there is little consistency in the way mentoring is defined both within these categories and across them.

Within the category of adult education, certain assumptions have emerged in the definitions of mentoring offered. These include the assumptions that there will be a significant difference between mentor and mentee in both age and life experience. However, the implied hierarchical relationship between mentor and mentee may not be appropriate to the mentoring of adult students, who tend to be older and more experienced than traditional college students.

In the adult education literature, both Daloz (1986) and Galbraith (1991) establish that the purposes and objectives of mentoring are tied to the goals of learning by transformation. Transformation of the individual, according to both authors, occurs best through the transactional process. The transactional process is defined as an educational interface in which the teacher and student collaborate in such a way that they exchange information useful to both, making the learning experience enriching for both (Galbraith, 1991). This style of learning has been identified as particularly appropriate to adult learners and focuses on the development of the learner, drawing on his or her existing

strengths and aptitudes as an adult and resulting in a transformation of the individual.

According to Daloz and Galbraith, then, the goal of teaching and mentoring, broadly stated, is to help adult learners transform themselves to realize their own full potential.

Mentors, according to Daloz (1986) are the guides who “embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way” (p.16).

### *Mentoring as Transformative Learning*

Mentoring informs “best practices” across all disciplines when it provides opportunities for development and transformational learning. Transformational learning, which may occur in the learning process, is considered as one of changed vision and changed practice. At the heart of mentoring is the quality of the relationship, which changes the mentor and protégé professionally and personally (Martin, 1998). Mentors support adult learners by increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem during the academic process. According to Martin, the psychosocial nature, or even the spiritual nature of mentoring relationships distinguishes mentoring from other forms of helping relationships. The characteristic nature of mentoring as a caring, dynamic, learning relationship makes it distinct from that of an academic advisor, or even, that of a student-teacher relationship. Martin states that the difference lies in the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship that each member in the relationship gives and takes from the other in order to grow, to risk, and to change.

In a true mentoring relationship, participants are capable of being transformed personally and professionally through risk-taking, empowerment, and vision change. Though transformation does not occur within every mentoring relationship, the potential

to transform is possible. Growth is change. Change is risk. Taking risks empowers one to see in new ways, to try new things and changes one's vision.

In her discussion of mentoring in terms of the radical humanist approach, Darwin (2000) states that mentoring should be a reciprocal, supportive and creative partnership of equals. Darwin suggests that mentoring should be adult-like and interdependent, where individuals transcend roles, or create different roles, and interact as colleagues, resulting in a relationship that is transformative in nature.

According to Mezirow (1990) and others, mentoring can promote transformative learning and development by fostering an examination of underlying assumptions, encouraging reflective engagement between mentor and protégé, providing deeper understanding of the dynamics of power in relationships, and developing more integrative thinking (Cohen, 1995; Rodriguez, 1995). Cohen and Galbraith (1995), for example, note the development and transformative power of mentoring programs. Gould (1990) notes "mentoring relationships could assist individuals in negotiating changes that require new and improved attitudes and behaviors that result in "consolidating a new view of reality" (p.144).

#### Definition of Terms

The following specific terms are used throughout this study. They are listed in alphabetical order.

*Adult:* person who is responsible for his or her life and is performing a social role such as worker, spouse, or parent (Knowles, 1980, p.24).

*Adult education:* “activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

*Adult learner:* “any individual who engages in educational activities for the purposes of acquiring knowledge, skills, or values in any area. The term student is generally avoided since it connotes a younger learner, but when used, it is equivalent to (adult) learner” (Cranton, 1994, p.4). The adult learner is used interchangeably with the term nontraditional student.

*Adult learning:* the process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998, p.124).

*Andragogy:* the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980).

*Attrition:* the process of dropping out of a school of continuing education either before the end of the semester or the decision to withdraw from higher education.

*Characteristics of the adult learner:* those components, attributes, or features that typically describe adults as learners, such as physical needs when learning, cognitive differences as compared to youth, self-concept, need to know, role of experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn.

*Dropout:* any student enrolling at an institution but not completing a formally declared program of study within a prescribed time period.

*Educational Goals:* the student’s stated purpose for his or her current attendance at the school of continuing education.

*Nontraditional-age student:* an adult who returns to school while maintaining responsibilities such as employment, family, and other obligations of adult life. These students are also referred to as “adult students” and “adult learners” (Cross, 1981).

*Persistence:* the decision to remain in a school of adult and continuing education and the process of maintaining continuous enrollment until the student’s educational goal/goals are achieved.

*Perspective transformation:* the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectations to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective; and, finally making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167).

*Retention:* The process of maintaining continuous enrollment at the school of continuing education until the student’s educational goal/goals is achieved.

*Self-directed learning:* individuals taking the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1990).

*Transformative Learning:* learning that induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, especially learning experiences which shape the learner and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner’s subsequent experiences (Clark, 1993).

### *Limitations of the Study*

While the qualitative research approach was specifically suited to the study, it imposed certain limitations inherent in the research design. One limitation to this study was the inability to generalize to a larger population. This study was not cross institutional nor was it longitudinal. The data came from a single institution sample and was limited to one semester. Because the findings were limited to a single institution, there could have been a problem with external validity because the results could not be generalizable to other institutional settings. Clearly, replication in multi-institutional settings would have been desirable. According to Stake (1995) case studies are a poor basis for generalization. To overcome this limitation, this study focused on providing “naturalistic generalizations” as proposed by Stake. Naturalistic generalizations are described as “a partially intuitive process arrived at by recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context (Stake, 1995, p.69). Kemmis (1974) adds that naturalistic generalizations develop within a person as a result of experience, and may be verbalized, and may pass from tacit to propositional knowledge.

The second limitation spoke to the length of time over which the adult students were interviewed. Longitudinal research that investigates the changes that occur in adult students as they progress through university would have been particularly useful, but such a study would be quite costly. While modest in design, it is hoped that this study provides useful data.

Furthermore, part of this research used interviews; the unique features of the interview technique provided strength for investigating the phenomenon of nontraditional-age students, but not without its weaknesses. Several authors (Lofland &



Lofland, 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 1995) have stated that whenever a method proposes to study change and process, factor jeopardizing internal validity must be carefully treated. Marshall and Rossman listed seven potential problems of validity associated with interview field research: (1) misinformation, (2) evasions, (3) lies, (4) fronts, (5) taken-for-granted meanings, (6) problematic meanings, and (7) self-deception. Some of these problems might have been operating while the interview was being conducted. It was assumed that the participants would respond openly and honestly, thus another limitation was the fact that this study was dependent on those who agreed to be interviewed and their truthfulness.

Finally, it was possible that the qualitative method of data collection may have introduced bias. The researcher's ability to obtain and interpret the information gained through interview was dependent on the skill and knowledge of the researcher.

The sample size which completed the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* was limited to ten faculty members. Therefore, the ability to generalize the results to other adult education institutions is limited by the size of the population studied.

### *Organization of the Study*

Chapter One provides an introduction to the research problem. The chapter highlights an explanation of interest in the study, related research, a statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework forming the foundation for the study, definition of terms, and limitations of the study. Chapter Two provides a discussion of the research design and philosophical assumptions guiding the study, and the function of mentoring in educational settings. The chapter also includes a review of the literature pertaining to the characteristics of the mentor and protégé, the stages in the

mentoring relationship, the role of mentoring in adult learning, and the promise of mentoring in adult education. Chapter Three explains the research methodology of the study. It includes a description of the case, a description of the interview methodology and a thorough description of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* used in this study. The chapter discusses the purpose of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*, methods of formulation and the validity and reliability data on the instrument. The procedure for data collection and the method of data analysis is also highlighted in this chapter. Chapter Four contains the findings of the qualitative measures and the results of the quantitative measure and provides an analysis with a triangulated design. Chapter Five includes a formal literature review establishing the relationship of the findings to the existing literature; Chapter Six concludes the study by explaining the relevance and significance of the findings and areas for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### RESEARCH PARADIGM

#### *Positivism vs. Constructivism*

Paradigms provide philosophical, theoretical, instrumental, and methodological foundations for conducting research and, in addition, provide researchers with a platform from which to interpret the world (Morgan, 1998). According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), paradigms provide a belief system that can guide researchers. Kuhn (as cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) states that paradigms are models that are imitated within any given field and that in immature sciences, paradigms that compete may exist simultaneously.

The positivist paradigm underpins what are called quantitative methods and is associated with the traditional approaches such as experimental or quasi-experimental designs and causal comparative and correlational research approaches, while the constructivist paradigm underlies qualitative methods and is associated with many qualitative approaches to research such as case studies (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A debate has arisen about the worth or value of the two paradigms and has sometimes been referred to as the qualitative-quantitative debate. In fact, the debate has been so prevalent that no discipline in the social and behavioral sciences “has avoided the manifestations of these “paradigm wars” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.4). “Paradigm warriors” have been used to describe the participants (p.4). Lincoln and Guba (1985) are among the “warriors” who argue that the doctrine of positivism and the quantitative methodology that accompanies that paradigm have been discredited and are fundamentally incommensurable (as cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.4).

Smith and Heshusius (as cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) apply the point of view called “incompatibility thesis” to explain the “shutting down” of dialogue between the two camps, saying that their incompatibility made further dialogue unproductive (p.12). Smith (as cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), a paradigm purist, further posit the incompatibility thesis with regard to research methods.

While the debate over the two styles of research still persists, there have been calls for a truce to the paradigm wars. There have been a number of attempts in the social and behavioral sciences to make peace between the two paradigm positions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). “Pacifists” state that quantitative and qualitative methods are, indeed, compatible (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p.12). In general, the tendency to suggest a compromise can be seen in the emerging literature, which advocates for complementary paradigms and compatibility rather than a divorce between the two. Theorists are also asking for actual research to use both methods. For example, in education and evaluation research, some authors (Howe, 1988; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994) propose the compatibility thesis under a cover term ‘pragmatism’ which emphasizes the compatibility between the two paradigms. To counter this paradigm-method link, Howe (1988) posits the use of a different paradigm: pragmatism.

### *Pragmatism*

Theorist and researchers who are oriented toward pragmatism refer to “mixed methods” or “mixed methodology” which comprises of elements of both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p.6). Although mixed methods have been in use for over a century, the philosophical approach known as pragmatism (Howe, 1988; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) was adopted in the United States

as a response to the “paradigm wars” arising from assertions that the two methodologies, qualitative and quantitative, were incompatible (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The set of ideas associated with pragmatism developed from the work of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century American pragmatist philosopher Charles Pierce, as a formal doctrine. William James, George H. Mead, Charles Horton Cooley and John Dewey followed him. Pragmatism dominated American philosophy from the 1890s to the 1930s and has reemerged as a significant element in contemporary thought today.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to using mixed methods as the triangulation method, whereby the process of combining both qualitative and quantitative design methods in the same study were shown to strengthen the internal validity and enhance the research process. Further, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) argue that mixed methods allow the researcher to use the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques so as to understand the phenomena better.

Pragmatists consider the truth to be “what works” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.12). Howe (1988) argues that quantitative and qualitative methods are compatible. Reichardt and Cook (1979) state, “the most telling and fundamental distinction between the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms is the dimension of verification versus discovery” (p.17). Reichardt and Rallis (as cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) contend that there are many similarities in fundamental values between qualitative and quantitative methods, which include similarities in the value-ladenness of inquiry, the belief in the theory-ladenness of facts, the belief that reality is constructed and multiple, the belief that knowledge is fallible, and the belief of underdetermination of theory by fact – that is, that a given set of data can be explained by many theories. This paradigm

allows for the use of mixed methods in social and behavioral research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Creswell (1998) describes four mixed method designs. The first mixed method design is called sequential studies where the researcher conducts two separate phases of study: one qualitative and the other quantitative. In the second method, parallel/simultaneous studies, the researcher conducts both the qualitative and quantitative phases at the same time. The third method design is the equivalent status design, where the researcher conducts both qualitative and quantitative approaches equally to understand the phenomenon being studied. In the fourth method, dominant-less dominant studies, the researcher conducts the study within a single dominant approach with a small component taken from another approach. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) define mixed model studies somewhat differently: "These are studies that are products of the pragmatist paradigm and that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process" (p.6). They add that in their approach there may be single or multiple applications within phases of the study.

The pragmatist paradigm as described by Creswell (1998) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) is well apt for this study. The focus is on a dominant-less dominant method with an emphasis on qualitative methods and uses various applications within the phases of study. In following the pragmatist paradigm, this study subscribed to the philosophical assumptions described by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). Qualitative and quantitative approaches were used because they allowed the qualitative method that is inductive to take primacy and be complemented by the quantitative, deductive portion of the study. Inductive and deductive logic directed the research from grounded results to

general inferences and to tentative predictions of particular events or outcomes. The epistemological orientation over the course of the research supported both objective and subjective postures.

The ontological consideration of the pragmatist agrees, in part, with the positivists/post positivists on the existence of external reality (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). On the other hand, pragmatists deny that "truth" can be determined once and for all and are not sure if one explanation of reality is better than another (Tashakkori & Teddlie, p.28). In essence they select the explanation that best produces desired outcomes. Pragmatists also purport that causal relationships can exist but cannot ever be pinned down. The pragmatist paradigm suited this study in that it embraced the use of mixed methodology; it eschewed the use of "truth" and "reality" and presented a practical and applied research philosophy (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.2). It allowed the researcher to study what was of personal interest and value, to study in different ways that seemed most appropriate, and to use the results in ways that lead to positive consequences with the value system of the researcher.

It is from this background that this study was designed and was conducted; without such a background, this study could have only been undertaken using a purely qualitative approach, as was often the case with case studies on mentoring. While purely qualitative approaches do have their merit in representing the research environment as it is, and can legitimately stand on their own, the overt reliance on detailed description sometimes tends to make less obvious some salient features of participants under the study. This was also part of the reason why integration of two different research approaches was preferred in this research study. This study will contribute to the general body of research

undertaken with mixed methods, and will help to strengthen further the view that the qualitative and quantitative methods are not only compatible but also more productive.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Background

In the last two decades, mentoring has emerged as an important topic in academia (Kram, 1985). Dorsey (2003) views academic mentoring as a professional development strategy designed to enable fledging students to take advantage of the skills and expertise of the faculty in order to enhance their academic success and foster their social and emotional well-being. Although mentoring has received recent attention, it is not a new phenomenon. Several versions of the term mentor and its importance in adult development have been documented for centuries. The actual word mentor can be traced back to the Odyssey and derives from Odysseus' implicit trust in Mentor, to whom he delegated complete responsibility for raising his son Telemachus (Clawson, 1985; English, 2001; Haring-Hidore, 1987; Russell & Adams, 1997). Today, the term mentor is used to describe a person who leads through guidance. A mentor is a guide along the journey, supporting, challenging, and providing vision for the students. For an adult student in continuing education, the person who most often takes on this role is a full-time professor.

Adult development and career theorists (Kram, 2001) have long espoused the benefits of having a mentoring relationship for an individual's personal, professional and educational development (Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977; Hall, 1976; Kram, 1985; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978). Since these seminal studies, quite a lot has been learned about the nature and benefits of mentoring. Mentoring can be



divided into three categories: career, academic, and developmental. Career mentoring is concerned primarily with job advancement. While personal development may occur, the focus is on obtaining skills and mastering the organizational power structure. Academic mentoring focuses on the educational needs of the individual student and involves one-on-one instruction. Developmental mentoring considers more general aspects of personal growth. People emulate those whom they perceive to be like themselves or whom they desire to become like (Erkut & Mokros, 1984), and developmental mentors act as role models.

To the educator, mentoring primarily involves the development of the person. Mentors are guides who “have something to do with the growing up, with the development of identity in the protégé” (Daloz, 1986, p.19). Daloz combines the functions of the academic mentor and the developmental to produce the “teaching mentor.” Daloz states further that “teaching mentors” are interested not only in conveying knowledge, but also in having students’ experience “the phenomena” of the journey itself. Daloz uses the term mentor to mean “teacher of adults,” referring to an educational program for adults who, after several years in the workforce or in the home, return to school. These particular adults need special help in navigating the paths of formal education, especially as it calls for them to rethink their assumptions and to discover new perspectives on preconceived ideas.

Daloz’s (1986) proposal of a metaphor of the mentee as an adult learner who has consciously undertaken a developmental journey helps to clarify three key functions provided by the mentor: support, challenge, and vision. Daloz refers to the experience of learning enacted within the mentoring relationship as a complex evolving process of

interpersonal interactions. The author notes that mentors assist students in developing critical thinking, empathy, and the aptitude to observe all sides of an issue and in making constructive decisions in an uncertain world. Mentors align themselves in relation to their students and are mediators between the student and the environment. He concludes by focusing on the relational process of learning: "For more than any other factor, it is the partnership of teacher and student that finally determines the value of an education. In the nurture of that partnership lays the mentor's art" (p.244).

Mentoring has found its place in educational settings as a means of improving the instructional process, student and faculty relations, professional enhancement, and faculty development (Cohen, 1995; Daloz, 1999; Galbraith & Cohen, 1995, 1997). Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski (2000) state, "to a large extent, the personal, educational, and professional significance of mentoring will depend on the ability of the mentor to develop and maintain a relevant interpersonal relationship with the mentee" (p.134). Not all faculty members have the talent, interest, or psychological disposition to engage in a mutually enriching educational endeavor that good mentorship can provide. Further, it can be stated that some faculty mentors do not have the time to be effective mentors. Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski states further that good mentoring is about creating a mini-learning community that ultimately seeks to create, for the mentor and mentee, a teaching and learning environment that embraces elements of critical and reflective thinking, self-direction, autonomy, and praxis.

Galbraith and Cohen (1997) state that the first critical step in the preparation for the mentor role must be the self-assessment of individual mentoring competencies. Cohen provides to the educational community a reliable and valid self-assessment instrument,

the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (cited in Galbraith & Cohen, 1995), for use by faculty, counselors, and administrators who want to discover their perceived effectiveness.

### *Definition and Functions of Mentoring*

A clear definition of mentoring is difficult to determine as many researchers consider that there is no commonly accepted conceptualization (Merriam, 1983; Broadbridge, 1999). The literature indicates a variety of definitions regarding mentoring; however, the concepts of helping others navigate unknown or unfamiliar cultures are reflected in many interpretations of mentoring in adult education literature (Hansman, 2001). English (2001) reports that the definition of mentoring changes within the context that it is used. A sampling of definitions from education illustrates that a widely accepted definition of mentoring does not exist. Jacobi (1991) suggests that despite the attempt to devise an ample definition of mentoring or mentors, definitional diversity continues to typify the literature.

Heller and Sindelar (1991) state that mentoring is simply advice or counsel given by a trusted person to someone who needs help. According to Daloz (1999), mentoring has something to do with growing up as well as with the development of identity. However, Blackwell (1989) views mentoring as a process by which persons of superior rank, special achievement, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and or career development of persons identified as protégés. Lester and Johnson (1981) on the other hand support the view of Cohen (1993) that mentoring can be seen as a one-to-one learning relationship. Perhaps the most inclusive definition is provided by Galbraith and Zelenak (1991) who define mentoring "as a powerful emotional and

passionate interaction whereby the mentor and protégé experience personal, professional, and intellectual growth and development” (p.126).

Within higher education, a mentor is described as one who guides, counsels, supports, shares, models and welcomes the student into the academic world (Ellis, 1988). The mentor may be a peer, a faculty member, administrator, or staff; the mentor may meet the protégé in the classroom, residence hall, or elsewhere; mentors may or may not receive special training; mentors may act as volunteers or be paid; the length of the mentoring may be as little as one session to several years (Jacobi, 1991).

The functions of a mentor are as varied as the definition itself. Functions can be defined as specific activities or duties of the mentor within the mentoring relationship. These duties may include coaching, exposing the protégé to new opportunities, role modeling, counseling, confirming, and befriending.

Perhaps the most relevant to this study is the research by Cohen (1993) which resulted in the development of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (PAMS). This scale was developed for the purpose of assessing the behavioral mentoring functions advocated by prominent adult education scholars as most likely to be of significance in relationships between mentors such as faculty, counselors, and administrators and their protégés. Based largely on a synthesis of principles advocated by experts on the psychological theory of mentoring adult learners (Daloz, 1986; Decoster & Brown, 1982; Chickering, 1974), review by faculty and administrators with direct knowledge and experience in mentoring, interviews with faculty mentors at the Community College of Philadelphia, and other nationally recognized scholars who authored books on mentoring, the PAMS evaluates 55 specific mentor interpersonal behaviors relevant to establishing

and maintaining an evolving mentoring relationship. The transactional process of learning as a central component of mentoring served as a model from which the mentor role and general behavioral mentoring functions were developed for use in the PAMS (Cohen, 1993, p.10).

#### *Cohen's Six Functions of a Faculty Mentor*

Pertinent to faculty-student mentorships, Cohen (1993) identifies six functions of a faculty mentor. The six functions include *Relationship Emphasis*, *Information Emphasis*, *Facilitative Emphasis*, *Confrontive Focus*, *Mentor Model Behaviors*, and the *Student Vision Behaviors*. The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale – the scale that measures the six functions – was proven to be valid and reliable and was chosen for the present study due to its link to postsecondary education.

According to Cohen (1993), the mentor exhibits the *Relationship Emphasis* when he or she conveys a genuine acceptance of students' feelings – accomplished through empathetic and active listening. The purpose of this function is to create trust in order for the student to feel comfortable in sharing personal experiences.

The *Information Emphasis* involves the mentor requesting detailed information from the student and offering information regarding the students' plans in achieving goals. The purpose of this function is to ensure that accurate and sufficient advice is given. Behaviors of the mentor include asking questions aimed at obtaining factual information about the student's academic situation and reviewing the student's background to better understand and direct the student (Cohen, 1993).

In order for a mentor to be *Facilitative*, he or she guides students through review and exploration of interests, abilities, ideas, and beliefs. The purpose of this function is to

allow the students to make their own decisions while the mentor makes available all alternative views. Cohen (1993) believes that the behavior of the mentor for this function involves presenting various viewpoints to generate thinking and facilitate decision-making and encouraging the analysis of reasons why the student is pursuing a specific goal.

Cohen (1993) describes the fourth function of the mentor as one of *Confrontive*. The mentor needs to respectfully challenge the student when decisions are avoided or if goals are unrealistic. The purpose of this function is to assist the student in recognizing nonproductive behaviors – through constructive criticism and focusing on more appropriate alternatives.

The *Mentor Model* function allows the mentor to self-disclose his or her own experiences in an attempt to further develop the relationship. In the model, the mentor must be motivated to take risks. Cohen (1993) states that this can be done by giving examples of the mentor's own life experiences or the experiences of previous students and by expressing a confident view of risk-taking necessary for personal growth.

The final function of the mentor in the postsecondary setting described by Cohen (1993) is that of *Student Vision Behaviors*. It is the duty of the mentor to stimulate the student's critical thinking in realizing his or her own potential. The purpose of the student vision function is to support the student as he or she takes the initiative in his or her own future. Behavior of the function includes reviewing the student's choices by analyzing the options and resources and by encouraging problem solving strategies.

The *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (Cohen, 1993) also established normative scale scores for the six functions. Normative scores were developed based on Cohen's

criterion group of 46 mentors at a community college. Based on their responses, percentiles were used as normative references for each separate variable and the overall scale score. The consultants of the study, as part of the validity research, agreed that the descriptors of mentor functions would assist the mentor in the interpretation of the final scores. Cut off scores were determined by specific percentages. Percentages represent that portion of the total score. The following descriptors and percentages were developed: Less than 20 percent was labeled “non-effective”; 20 to 39 percent was labeled as “less effective”; 40 to 59 percent was labeled as “effective”; 60 to 70 percent was labeled as “very effective”; and those scores representing 80 percent or more were labeled as “highly effective”.

Mentors can actively help adults to develop their own unique personal, educational, and career potential across the social landscape of academic, government, and business environments (Cohen, 1995). Mentors make a difference primarily because their competent mentoring behaviors enable them to transmit the essential quality of trust. This quality is a characteristic of adult educators who are perceived as truly committed to the development of adult learners, regardless of their gender, age, or ethnicity, or whether the mentors and mentees are officially labeled as instructors and students.

In education, mentoring has been used for a variety of purposes, and evaluations reflect this diversity (Dennison, 2000; Dondero, 1997). Review of the literature on mentoring relationships in educational settings reveals a body of research largely focused on the protégé’s perceptions of the mentoring interaction, including the initiation of the mentoring relationship (Turban & Dougherty, 1994); psychosocial and career development functions of mentoring (Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997; Noe, 1988);

gender issues in mentoring (Mobley, Jaret, Marsh, & Lim, 1994; Ragins, 1997; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000); positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction and career success among protégés (Baugh & Scandura, 1999); and the potential negative implications of mentoring relationships (Eby, McManus, Simon & Russell, 1999; Scandura, 1998).

According to the recent literature of education, business, and government, the mentoring phenomenon has achieved a significant status. Mentoring is viewed as a powerful influence in promoting “retention and enrichment” (Jacobi, 1991, p.505) in post secondary educational settings (Daloz, 1986; Galbraith, 1991). The importance of mentoring relationships, as a factor in personal maturation and successful adult adjustment to numerous life roles, is as well, a general theme of the adult development and counseling literature (Brookfield, 1986; Merriam, 1984).

#### *Mentor and Protégé Characteristics*

A good mentor possesses talent, engaging personal characteristics and strong professional qualities. Given that informally mentoring others is not typically mandated within the educational system, serving as a mentor is an additional investment in time that goes above and beyond the mentor’s formal job requirements. Thus, Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski (2000) state, “the mentor must have the will to invest time and effort in developing an effective relationship” (p.144). Good mentors must have a disposition toward nurturing and relationship building. Consequently, not all experienced senior employees/professors become mentors. Further, not all faculty possess the personality traits or psychological dispositions to be mentors. Hence, it is necessary to determine what will influence or motivate educators to mentor others (Aryee, Chay, & Chew,



1996). One consistent finding in the literature is that those who have engaged in mentoring activities in the past report greater willingness to mentor others.

Roche (1979) describes mentors as knowledgeable individuals who are willing to be coaches to protégés and are not threatened by the potential for success of the protégé. They have self-confidence; they engender respect and are concerned with the needs of their protégés.

In Hunt and Michael's (1983) conceptual framework, the mentor's age, gender, organizational position, and self-confidence and the protégé's age, gender and need for power are identified as important variables to consider in examining the characteristics of mentors and protégés. These variables are based largely on the qualitative interview work of Kram (1983; 1985) and Levinson et al., (1978) with mentor-protégé dyads. In those studies, mentors are characterized as generally older than their protégés by eight to fifteen years (Levinson et al., 1978) and are in their forties, or mid-life (Kram, 1983); are in high enough positions to have access to resources and influence on other people in the organization; have a high degree of self-confidence; and are interested in the career, personal and educational development of individuals (Kram, 1983; 1985; Levinson et al., 1978).

More recent research by Allen, Poteret, and Russell (2000) on the characteristics deemed most influential by mentors in selecting protégés suggests that mentors are more likely to choose a protégé based upon perceptions regarding the protégé's potential and ability as opposed to the perceptions of the protégé's need for help. Mullen's (1999) research confirms that perceptions of protégés' competence influence the commitment of time and effort made by mentors. Research conducted by Green and Bauer (1995) within

an academic setting also lends empirical evidence that mentoring functions are more likely to be available to the most capable newcomers within an organizational setting.

Turban and Dougherty (1994) report that the protégé personality might affect the initiation of mentoring relationships. Those with an internal locus of control, high self-monitoring, and a high degree of emotional stability were found to be more likely to initiate and receive mentoring. Fagenson (1992) finds that protégés, in comparison to non-protégés, tend to have higher needs for power and achievement.

Similar values shared by mentors and protégés have also been influential in mentor-protégé dyads (Lee, Dougherty, & Turban, 2000). Research by Kalbfleisch (2000) suggests that gender also affects the selection process. Same sex mentoring relationships occur more frequently than cross-gender relationships and the sex of the mentor or protégé is the best predictor of the sex of the corresponding partner (Kalbfleisch, 2000). In addition to cross-gender mentorships, Thomas (2001) acknowledges that a significant amount of research suggests that cross-race mentorships suffer from public scrutiny, peer resentment, lack of identification and role modeling, and skepticism about intimacy. All of these issues affect the formation of mentoring relationships. Thomas (2001) advocates that organizations and institutions teach mentors and protégés about identifying and surmounting various race-related difficulties. Another important task for mentors in cross-race relationships is to help the protégé build a large and diverse network of relationships.

### *Stages of the Mentoring Relationship*

Mentoring is often described as dynamic. It is viewed as a developmental process rather than a series of disconnected, short-term interactions (Cohen, 1993). Basing their

work on that of McClelland (1965; 1975) who studied the power needs of individuals, Hunt and Michael (1983) propose four stages in the mentoring-protégé relationship. In the first stage, the protégé seeks mentoring to help develop his/her power; he/she and the mentor become familiar with each other. In the second stage, the protégé's power is further developed; he/she receives encouragement, support and advice from the mentor. In stage three, separation occurs; the protégé moves on and becomes independent. In the fourth and final stage, the nature of the relationship changes; the former protégé may become a peer or friend to the mentor.

Perhaps the most popular description of the mentoring stages comes from Kram (1983) who proposes a more detailed description of the stages of the relationship in an in-depth qualitative study of eighteen relationships in one corporate setting. As a relationship, mentorship is theorized to evolve through several stages over time (Kram, 1985). According to Kram, mentoring relationships progress through a series of "four predictable, yet not entirely distinct" (p.614) developmental phases: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition.

Initiation is the first phase. According to Kram (1983), this phase occurs during the first six to twelve months of the relationship. The protégé begins to respect the competence of a potential mentor who serves as a valuable role model, while the mentor begins to recognize the protégé as someone who deserves special attention. The protégé perceives the mentor as knowledgeable and interested in his/her personal, career and academic development (Kram, 1983, 1985).

As noted by Kram (1985), organizational features can inhibit or facilitate the initiation of mentoring relationships. Features noted by Kram include reward systems,

design of work, performance management systems, and organizational culture. Another key to understanding the initiation of mentoring relationships is to examine protégé characteristics that attract mentors. As noted by Olian, Carroll and Giannantonio (1993), it seems likely that a mentor's perception of the expected benefits and costs, and, consequently, the decision to engage in the mentoring relationship, are influenced by protégé characteristics. Green and Bauer (1995) find that graduate students with more potential received more supervisory mentoring from faculty than graduate students with less potential.

In the second phase of the relationship, which lasts from two to five years (Kram, 1983), the protégé benefits from the career and psychosocial functions of the mentoring relationship. Kram refers to this period as the cultivation phase. The mentor provides the coaching and feedback necessary for the development of the relationship, and an interpersonal bonding takes place. Recent research has shown that the mentoring relationship performs three main functions: providing vocational support, psychosocial support and role modeling (Burke, 1984; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Scandura, 1992; Viator & Scandura, 1991). As the relationship progresses, the protégé becomes more competent and receives further acceptance and confirmation from the mentor, who also serves as a role model for the behaviors that are appropriate for successful academic and career development.

The third phase involves a structural and psychological separation between the mentorship partners when the functions provided by the mentor decrease and the protégé acts with more independence (Kram, 1983). The protégé may have outgrown the need for mentoring, and each party becomes a less important part of the other's life. It may also

terminate for functional reasons as the relationship evolves (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). Scandura (1998) notes that the relationship could also terminate because of dysfunction. Whatever the case, Dalton et al., (1977) propose that separation is an important part of the evolution of the mentoring relationship, as the protégé becomes independent with his/her own professional identity. However, the way in which the relationship terminates impacts the final phase of the relationship.

The final phase of the mentoring relationship is redefinition. This phase terminates a mentorship, and the partners evolve the relationship to one of informal contact and mutual support (Kram, 1983). According to Kram, some mentoring relationships may result in lasting friendships; others in hostility if the separation was caused by over dependency, competitiveness or jealousy (Scandura, 1998); still others may be characterized by the drifting apart of the mentor and protégé (Ragins & Scandura, 1994b). Kram (1983) and Dalton et al. (1977) imply that the tones of both the separation and redefinition phases may affect the willingness of the former protégé to become a mentor to others.

Kram (1985) finds that different phases are associated with different developmental functions, with career functions emerging first, psychosocial functions becoming more important in the cultivation phases and both functions being less important in the later stages. Aside from Kram's (1983, 1985) interviews of eighteen mentor/protégé pairs, there are no published studies examining the validity of these phases.

While Levinson et al. (1978) did not outline mentoring in stages, he did discuss the presence of a termination phase. He found that the mentoring relationship continues for eight to ten years at the most. Sometimes it comes to a natural end, and the mentor and

mentee form a warm friendship. Other times, an intense mentor relationship ends with strong conflict and bad feelings on both sides. In spite of this conflict, he states that following the separation, the younger person took the qualities of the mentor. This internalization was a major source of development in adulthood.

### *The Role of Gender in Mentoring Relationships*

The psychosocial benefits of mentoring relationships may vary significantly, depending on the gender of the individuals involved. The shared experiences, empathy, and potential for deeper emotional bonds enjoyed between women mentors and protégés, for example, may not be enjoyed by male mentoring pairs, who tend to focus more on instrumental aspects and benefits of mentoring and who may be concerned with maintaining social propriety and avoiding any sexual innuendo. Ervin (1995) conducted a study among women graduate students and observes that mentoring in an educational context could be significantly power laden, especially depending on the mentor's gender.

In his sequel, Levinson (1996) also counters the notion of women students being effectively mentored by teachers. Although teachers "served a few mentorial functions, enabling the student to realize specific goals, to feel appreciated, to cope with stressful situations, very few served the most crucial function of a mentorial relationship, namely, the development and articulation of the protégé's dream" (p.238).

Research has addressed how the gender composition of a mentoring dyad may impact relationship outcomes such as career advancement, personal and academic advancement, and enhanced self-esteem. Ragins (1997) investigates gender in mentoring relationships. Prior to the author's study, much of the research on gender and the mentoring relationship centered around the independent effects of the mentor's or

protégé's gender without considering the effect of gender composition on mentoring outcomes. Ragins proposed a model by which gender composition in mentor functions and protégé outcomes are influenced by the gender composition of the mentoring relationship.

In a separate study, Sosik and Godshalk (2000) take a dyadic approach to exploring the impact of gender composition on mentoring relationships. The authors find that female mentors are perceived to provide less career development support to their protégé's than male mentors provide. Conversely, homogenous female mentor relationships and female mentor/male protégé relationships are associated with higher amounts of idealized influence behaviors, that is, role modeling, than homogenous male mentoring dyads. The study provides evidence to support the career-related impact of cross-gender dyads in mentoring. Sosik and Godshalk observe that male mentor/female protégé dyads report higher amounts of career development functions than any other combination of mentoring relationships.

Much of the literature reviewed thus far advances the notion that mentor relationships provide varying degrees of positive outcomes for both female and male protégés in the areas of psychosocial and career functions. However, the current body of research pays little attention to the potentially detrimental effects of negative mentoring relationships in an educational setting. Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell (2000) emphasize that the almost exclusive focus on the positive aspects of relationships paints a vague and unrealistic picture of relational patterns and fosters the perception that any negative experience is pathological and aberrant rather than a normal aspect of relationships.

### *Positive and Negative Outcomes*

There are several benefits of mentoring identified in the literature for both the organization and the protégé. For the organization, mentoring provides a collaborative learning environment, community spirit, and means of information exchange (English, 2001). Wilson and Elman (1990) identify two benefits of mentoring: flow of corporate culture vis-à-vis strengthening of the organizational structure while providing support during disruption and provision of a “deep sensing apparatus” (p.89) that is used to get an impression of environmental mood. Also, Wilson and Elman note that mentoring programs motivate individuals, encourage high job performance, and academic achievement.

The more obvious benefit of mentoring, from the protégés standpoint, is the acquisition of knowledge and skills (English, 2001). Furthermore, learning is the fundamental and primary process of mentoring (Zachary, 2000). Aside from this acquisition of knowledge and skills, there is another outcome of mentoring that is also beneficial for the protégé, that is, socialization (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddau, 1991; Crow & Matthews, 1998; Hardcastle, 1988).

Mentoring, in the form of offering challenging assignments, career advice, feedback, and social support, is important for career and academic development (Burke & McKeen, 1997; Crow & Matthews, 1998; English, 2001; Scandura & Viator, 1994). The mentor, in a position to recognize protégé talents, negotiates learning opportunities. In doing so, the mentor exposes the protégé to the opportunity to learn in a safe environment, increases the protégé’s confidence and competence, and fosters the protégé’s creativity via exposure to new ideas (Crow & Matthews, 1998).



Benefits for the mentor are also included in the literature but are researched and reported far less often than those for the organization and the protégé. According to English (1999, 2001), mentoring can help strengthen teaching skills and encourage professionalism. In addition, there is a long-term intangible reward in seeing someone grow and succeed (Vance, 1982). Allen, Poteet, and Burroughs (1997) conducted interviews with twenty-seven managerial subjects from various disciplines, including academia, to determine their reasons for mentoring. The most commonly cited reasons were gratification in seeing someone grow and succeed, the desire to pass on information to others, the desire to build a competent workforce, and a general desire to help others. Qualitative studies conducted by Scandura and Siegel (1995) reports that individuals in an organization undergoing a major change prefer informal mentoring to formal mentoring and are more likely to seek out psychosocial support than vocational support from their mentors. Scandura and Siegel (1995) emphasize the importance of mentoring as an organizational learning system where managers learn how to manage, especially in time of corporate trauma.

Aside from the above-mentioned benefits of being involved in a mentoring relationship, Ragins and Cotton (1993) as well as Kram and Hall (1996) present the notion that the face of mentoring is changing. Mentoring is no longer a one-way relationship; it can be a solution for the enhancement of adult learners who are searching for meaning (Kram & Hall, 1996).

The negative outcomes of mentoring are few. The most commonly cited drawback to mentoring is lack of time as a resource (Allen et al., 1997). It does take time to form a relationship, develop emotional bonds, monitor the protégé's progress, and provide

feedback. Crow and Matthews (1998) address the mentoring relationship and personality characteristics in their discussion on the negative outcomes of mentoring. They suggest that the mentor may have ulterior motives of prestige and status that interfere with the true purpose of mentoring.

Scandura (1998) developed a model of dysfunctional mentoring that identifies several manifestations of negative mentor-protégé interactions, ranging from power struggles and submissiveness to sabotage, deception and harassment. The model proposes a multitude of outcomes, including termination of the relationship. However, the relationship may persist to the detriment of both parties. Scandura presents a host of negative outcomes under this manifestation. The author states:

Dysfunction in mentoring relationships may be negatively related to protégés' self-esteem. Repeated interactions with "toxic" mentors, for example, can result in lowered perceptions of the self and lack of initiative to change the situation. Dissatisfaction with work may result from having to deal with a difficult relationship. Stress can result from dysfunctional mentoring, since coping with negative relationships can be a strain on emotional resources. Negative relationships can result in absenteeism and turnover (p.462).

#### *Formal and Informal Mentoring Programs*

Mentoring is a vehicle to build a competitive advantage through development of human and intellectual capital (Allen & Poteet, 1999). The traditional forms of mentoring may develop by formal or informal methods (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992). Golian and Galbraith (1996) state:

Informal mentoring is a relationship that occurs that is unplanned, and, in most cases, not expected. A certain "chemistry" emerges drawing two individuals together for the purpose of professional, personal, and psychological growth and development. Informal mentoring seems to be a qualitative experience that has great meaning for the parties involved. (p.102)

It is very difficult during the informal mentoring process to explain how the mentoring relationship began, developed, and sustained itself and how the process can be replicated. Formal or sponsored mentoring, the second type, is an intentional process resulting from a planned and operating mentoring program. Golian and Galbraith (1996) note that the mentoring program is designed to reach a variety of specific goals and purposes, defined within the setting in which it operates. However, Cohen (1995), Zachary (2000) and others indicate that sponsored mentoring has similar processes or steps in the development and operation of a program.

Formal mentoring programs in which mentors are assigned protégés can be likened to arranged or planned marriages. A prescriptive series of hierarchical steps are usually recommended for mentors and protégés to follow while building their relationships and for educational institutions to build programs. The steps as outlined by Cohen (1995) include: early phase, in which foundations of trust are established; middle phase, where mentors help protégés establish goals; later phase, where mentors interact with protégés to explore their interest, beliefs, and reasons for decisions; and final phase, where mentors function as models, challenging protégés to reflect upon their goals while pursuing challenges. Newby and Comer (1997) stress learning within the mentor/protégé

relationship and report that the main idea underlying formal mentoring programs is to help individuals grow, learn, and overcome obstacles.

In educational settings, both informal and formal mentoring occurs. While formal or sponsored mentoring is grounded in a structured and planned program, informal mentoring can provide the same benefits and results as positive as those experienced through formal programs. It is important to realize that the characteristics, roles, functions, and benefits of mentoring are consistent for both informal and sponsored mentorship.

Formal and informal mentoring can also be internal or external. Mentors within the same institution as protégés are considered internal mentors, and those employed outside of the institution are external mentors. Internal mentors may be more physically accessible and may be able to buffer and protect protégés (Ragins, 1997). External mentors, on the other hand, may be better poised to provide long-range educational enhancement assistance and lateral transitions.

### *The Role of Mentoring in Adult Learning*

Research suggests that mentoring contributes significantly to the psychosocial development of individuals (Cafferella & Olson, 1993; Crosby, 1999; Daloz, 1986, 1999; Levinson et al., 1978; Sheehy, 1995). The interconnectedness and support provided through mentoring can play a crucial role in negotiating the challenges of discontinuities, transitions, and new roles undertaken in the developmental process. A person new in a career field or life stage, for instance, can benefit from the encouragement, counsel, and shared experiences of a more experienced person who can share perspectives, ask critical questions, and provide opportunities.

Kram (1983) notes that mentoring relationships have “great potential to facilitate the psychosocial development in both early and middle adulthood by providing a vehicle for accomplishing these primary developmental tasks” (p.608). Levinson et al. (1978), for instance, maintain that, during early adulthood, the most crucial developmental function of a mentor is to facilitate the formulation and realization of a protégé’s dream. Although Levinson’s work in this regard focuses primarily on career aspirations, mentors can also be instrumental in prompting visions for personal life goals. Levinson et al. note that, particularly during the transition to early adulthood, a mentor might promote and broaden integrative thinking and encourage the protégé’s consideration of the societal impact of one’s dream. Then, in later adulthood, reappraisal becomes an important developmental dimension when mentors can help individuals come to terms with reconsidered life dreams, accomplishments, and adjusted life and career roles (Daloz, 1986, 1999; Gordon & Whelan, 1998; Levinson et al., 1978; Sheehy, 1995).

Mentoring may be especially important to first-generation college students, first-generation professionals, and those entering career fields dominated by persons of a different gender or race, and working-class individuals pursuing higher education or career advancement. Stalker (1996) finds, for instance, that women academics in same-gender mentoring relationships enjoy a “special connectedness” (p.298) that may be instrumental in helping negotiate the difficult young adult stages of identity/role confusion and intimacy/isolation as theorized by Erikson (1982), as well as the later adult stages of generativity and ego integrity. Of Erikson’s eight stages of opposing dilemmas, it is during the early adult stage of identity development versus role confusion that a mentor may first play a significant role. Through modeling, listening, and

encouragement, the mentor can help the protégé develop self-assurance and confidence in newly developing roles. Mentoring experiences can also be important in later adulthood as individuals negotiate one or both of Erikson's late stages, as mentors demonstrate generativity and pursue ego integrity through volunteer work, writing, or continued learning. It is in these later stages that the mentoring relationship may also be particularly valuable to the mentor as well, and provide an important source of generativity and stimulate the mentor to even greater reflection and life review.

As the needs for mentors change as individuals develop throughout adulthood, mentors and the nature of the relationships may change as well (Gordon & Whelan, 1998). Mentors assume a plethora of roles and functions, standing sometimes behind students in a supportive stance, walking ahead as a guide, engaging students face to face while listening and questioning, then finally standing "shoulder to shoulder, as companion, ally and fellow learner" (Bloom, 1995, p.64).

The developmental benefits of mentoring are significant and promising. Among the most common is the use of mentoring to promote cognitive development and intentional learning. English (2000) describes mentoring as a complex yet informal system of learning, initiation, and ongoing support that encompasses career and psychosocial support. Bierema's (1999) study of executive women similarly points to the importance of mentoring as a learning strategy. All of the women in her study identify mentoring as critical to learning to negotiate the corporate culture. According to Bierema, women in the early stages of their career rely on informal learning through relationships, mentors, and peer feedback as learning tactics; women more advanced in their career agree with

the importance of mentoring in development of learning, often identifying themselves as mentors to those following in their footsteps.

### *The Role of Mentor/Protégé in Transformational Learning*

Not all faculty/mentors or all learners are predisposed to engaging in transformative learning, and many adult learning situations do not lend themselves to these kinds of experiences. When transformational learning is part of a mentoring program, one role of the professor is to establish an environment characterized by trust and care, and to facilitate sensitive relationships among the participants (Taylor, 1998).

Boyd and Myers (as cited in Imel, 1998) encourage adult educators to develop and practice two characteristics. First is "seasoned guidance," the ability to serve as an experienced mentor reflecting on his/her journey, with the intent to assist others with their transformational process. Second is "compassionate criticism," assisting students in questioning their own reality in ways that would promote transformation of their worldview. Cranton (1994) emphasizes the importance of the professor as a role model who is ready to demonstrate his or her own willingness to learn and change. Taylor (1998) sees the role of teachers as helping students connect the rational and affective aspects of their experience in the process of critical reflection.

Taylor (1998) believes that too much emphasis is placed on the teacher, at the expense of the student. The author notes that, although it is difficult for transformative learning to occur without the teacher playing a key role, learners share the responsibility for constructing and creating both the environment and the process of transformational learning. Daloz (1986) recognizes that growth can be a risky and frightening journey into

the unknown, as students are challenged to let go of old conceptualizations of self and the world. He challenges teachers to structure their teaching for fostering personal development of the students rather than developing specific competencies. He frequently uses the metaphor of transformation as a journey in which the mentor serves as a gatekeeper as well as a guide for students on the journey (Daloz, 1999).

#### *Four-Lens Approach to Transformational Learning Theory*

Transformational learning theory has been conceptualized in several ways (Clark, 1993; Dirkx, 1998; Elias, 2000). Dirkx's four-lens approach provides a useful way to think about the unique transformational learning philosophies. One lens draws from Freire's (2000) notions of emancipatory education. Freire's work with the poor illiterate of Brazil helped him realize that the "banking method" of education, which emphasizes passive listening and acceptance of facts, kept his students disenfranchised (p.53). Freire notes that through consciousness-raising, or conscientization, learners came to see the world and their place in it differently. Empowered in their new perspective, they could act to transform the world.

The cognitive-rational approach to transformational learning advanced by Mezirow (1991; 2000) shares theoretical underpinnings with Freire (2000). Both perspectives assert that adult education should lead to empowerment (Freire, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). Second, both take a constructivist approach to transformational learning. In short, knowledge is not "out there" to be discovered but is created from interpretations and reinterpretations in light of new experiences (Mezirow, 1996).

Long criticized for ignoring the affective, emotional, and social context aspects of the learning process (Lucas, 1994; Cervero & Covetenay, 1999), Mezirow (2000) in his



most recent work, acknowledges the importance in the meaning making process. He states further that learning occurs in the real world in complex institutional, interpersonal, and historical settings and must be understood in the context of cultural orientations embodied in our frames of reference. He realizes that there are “asymmetrical power relationships” that influence the learning process (p.28). Lastly, Mezirow acknowledges that social interaction is important in the learning relationship.

The developmental approach to transformational learning, the third lens, is most prominently articulated in Daloz’s writings (1986; 1999). Daloz (1999) examines the interplay between education and development and realizes that students often are in a developmental transition and that they look to education to “help them make sense of lives whose fabric of meaning has gone frayed” (p.4). The transformational learning process is intuitive, holistic, and contextually based. It is a mythical procedure during which a mentor guides students in a learning journey affected by the student’s social environment, including family dynamics and social class. Daloz’s narrative approach to transformative learning humanizes the transformational learning process as he shares stories of students’ struggles. These tales demonstrate how students negotiate developmental transitions and are changed in the process.

A fourth approach champions the link between spirituality and learning (Dirkx, 1997, 1998; Healy, 2000). Both Dirkx and Healy make a case for transformational learning having a spiritual dimension. Dirkx (1998) speaks of the role of imagination in facilitating learning through the soul and says that transformative learning goes beyond the ego-based, rational approach that relies on words to communicate ideas to an extrarational, soul-based learning that emphasizes feelings and images. Healy (2000)

investigated the transformational learning process of those who practice insight meditation. He found that respondents had an expanded self-awareness that simultaneously led to a deeper self-understanding and mindfulness of the present.

### *Mentoring in Academia*

A growing base of research in educational settings examines the benefits of mentoring (Russell & Adams, 1997). Mentoring has been examined in general, special, and higher education (Campbell & Campbell, 2000). Some research explores mentoring and at-risk students, peer mentoring in secondary education, student teachers (Boreen & Niday, 2000; Hawkey, 1997), beginning teachers (Ballantyne, Hansford, & Packer, 1995; Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Gratch, 1998) faculty and students (Campbell & Campbell, 2000; Cullen & Luna, 1993; Waldeck, Orrego, Plax, & Kearney, 1997), and faculty (Goodwin, Stevens, & Bellamy, 1998). Prior studies provide overviews of mentoring and examine forms and consequences of mentoring, particularly at the elementary and secondary education levels (Campbell & Campbell, 2000; Cunningham, 1999; Hawkey, 1997).

Similar to mentoring within work organizations, formal programs exist in educational settings that assign students to mentors. Conversely, some mentorship relationships develop naturally without any formal structure or support (Campbell & Campbell, 2000). In contrast, at least at the elementary and secondary levels, mentoring relationships that are more structured and organized within classroom settings tend to be more successful (Barton-Arwood, Jolivet, & Massey, 2000).

Research on faculty-to-student mentoring is incomplete, and Goodwin, Stevens, and Bellamy (1998) suggest that only a few articles and books exist that explore this

phenomenon. Although mentoring among graduate students tends to be more common than at the undergraduate level, mentoring research in academic settings has largely excluded adult learners and graduate students/faculty mentoring experiences (Cullen & Luna, 1993; Waldeck, Orrego, Plax, & Kearney, 1997). In an attempt to extend this line of inquiry, Waldeck et al., surveyed mentored graduate students to obtain a profile of the graduate student/faculty mentoring relationship, identification and selection strategies, evaluation strategies, mentoring functions, and satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. One striking finding from this research is the perception of difficulty among students at initiating mentoring relationships with faculty members.

In contrast, a related study by Ervin (1995) examines the experiences of women as both mentors and protégés; study participants acknowledge that their academic mentors were unsupportive emotionally, unwilling or unable to give feedback, and unwilling to share their knowledge. Findings from another study conducted by Bowman and Hatley (1995) on the issue of dual relationships between full-time faculty and graduate students suggest that more research is needed on the ethics of faculty-student-relationships and that students should have more input on such relationships since mentoring, friendship, and social interaction affect the graduate student experience.

Campbell and Campbell (2000) conducted a survey study within a large west coast university in which faculty volunteered to mentor students and were paired based upon their shared academic interests. Findings suggest that students tend to assess the value of the mentoring relationship in terms of getting assistance from their mentors with academic matters. Faculty mentors, however, were more sensitive to the social benefits of mentoring students and developing a personal bond and friendship with their students.

The differences in perceived benefits suggest that further research is needed to explore what motivates faculty and students to participate in mentoring programs.

### *The Promise of Mentoring*

Mentoring relationships hold great mutual promise for adults, whether as mentors or protégés, in terms of understanding and negotiating life's challenging developmental processes, while promoting friendship, assurance, career advancement, rejuvenation, and transformation. Mentoring contributes to the development of professional expertise, facilitates team building and cross training, and enhances job satisfaction (Peterson & Provo, 1998). Further, as Stalker (1994) and others suggest, mentoring holds promise for promoting structural change and more equitable opportunities in many institutions, agencies, and organizations (Brookfield 1987; Cohen & Galbraith, 1995; Daloz, 1999; Daresh, 2001).

Mentoring may provide significant developmental assistance to both the mentor and protégé, while benefiting a learning society as well. Aimed at promoting self-directed learning, intentional learning and development, mentoring enables individuals to cope with change, challenge assumptions and perspectives, and promotes critical and integrative thinking. English (2000) views mentoring as a means of self-actualization for both mentor and protégé. She suggests that adult educators could "initiate mentorship structures in their places of practice, and encourage individuals to mentor, to pass on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to protégés and instill in them the social value of the field, fostering in them a shared commitment for the common good" (p.36), all valuable goals for practitioners in adult and continuing education.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to generate empirical data on the roles that faculty mentors play towards enhancing the learning process of adult learners, in schools of adult and continuing education at the university level, to improve the retention rate of adult learners. In the current era of mass participation in adult education, there are a number of interlinked issues receiving growing attention internationally. Retention of adult students and other indicators of quality are closely monitored, and institutions are dealing with problems of inadequately prepared students, increasing attrition rates, decreased government funding and consequent pressure to attract and maintain students (Najar, 1999; Ramsden, 1992).

This case study research undertook a mixed methodology utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods providing an in-depth analysis of the participants' views of the mentoring process. Qualitative interviews provided the dominant research method for deeper exploratory purposes in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. This was supported by a quantitative questionnaire, The *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*, developed by Cohen (1993). This is a specific self-assessment instrument exclusively designed for higher education and was used in this study by full-time faculty members to evaluate their behaviors as faculty mentors of adult learners in a university context. The incorporation of qualitative and quantitative research is often referred to as an expansion method, "wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study" (Creswell, 1994, p.175). This research strategy will address the critical components of a case study by the triangulation of perspectives.

### *Mixed Method*

The mixed method approach is concerned with how learning experiences of adult learners can be enhanced with faculty taking on the role of mentors. Flick (1998) states that qualitative research has essential features: correctly choosing appropriate methods and theories, the acknowledgment and examination of diverse perspectives, the incorporation of the researcher's reflection of the study as part of their expanding knowledge, and the array of multiple approaches and methods in qualitative research. Creswell (2003) illustrates that the mixed methods approach incorporates the idea of triangulation, a way for seeking convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods, with the ability to elaborate on or develop the findings of one method with another method.

Creswell (1998) used a mixed method of research in his case study: "Campus Response to a Student Gunman" (p.351). Denzin (1978) refers to using mixed methods as the triangulation method, whereby the process of combining both qualitative and quantitative design methods in the same study were shown to strengthen the internal validity and enhance the research process. While it would have been beneficial if, by using this method, the internal validity were strengthened, the purpose in using this method in this study was to enhance the results of the qualitative interviews with the results of the quantitative survey.

### *Justification for Mixed Method Approach*

The mixed method was most appropriate for this study because, in adult education, several studies have been conducted on the benefits of mentoring. The literature is vast, yet these particular questions relating to mentoring and adult learners have not been

answered through empirical studies. The literature review of this study provides significant background on mentoring adult learners, self-directed learning and mentoring, and transformational learning in the mentoring process. "The advantage of this approach is that it will present a consistent paradigm picture in the study and still gather limited information to probe in detail one aspect of the study. The chief disadvantage is that qualitative purists, as well as quantitative purists, would see this approach as misusing the qualitative paradigm, or quantitative paradigm, because the central assumptions of the study would not link or match the qualitative or quantitative data collection procedure" (Creswell, 1994, p.177).

This type of qualitative approach aligns itself with the philosophy of constructivist learning. However, some researchers express some concerns for the mixed method because it requires a "sophisticated knowledge of both paradigms," which could hinder those with limited experience in research methods (Creswell, 1994, p.178). This can be overcome as Bowen (1996) explains: "At the outset of the research project, the researcher must meticulously develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for mixed methods, which includes planning for data analysis along with planning the design of the study. The analysis of research findings from one methodology can then provide a set of substantive categories that is used as a framework applied in analyzing the remaining research findings" (p.63).

### *Case Study Methodology*

The case study methodology is largely inspired by the work of Yin (1989), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Stake (1995). Lincoln and Guba (1985) report the criteria for assessing naturalistic inquiries they felt were more applicable to the study of human

behavior, than those supporting the positivist research of the physical sciences. In naturalistic research, the assumption is made that various factors work on and amongst each other. One of the most common forms of naturalistic research is the case study approach. Yin (1994) defines a case study as "...an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p.13). It is particularly valuable in answering who, why and how questions in educational research.

According to Bell (1987), the case study methodology has also been described as an umbrella term for a group of research methods that have in common the decision to focus an inquiry around a specific instance or event. The philosophy behind the case study is that sometimes just by looking carefully at a practical, real-life instance, a full picture can be obtained of the actual interaction of variables or events. The case study allows the investigator to concentrate on specific instances in an attempt to identify interactive processes that may be crucial but that are transparent to the large-scale survey.

In this research study, the researcher adopted a single case study, that is, the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education, Barry University. Single cases may be used to confirm or challenge a theory, or to represent a unique or extreme case (Yin, 1994). Single-case studies are also ideal for revelatory cases where an observer may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible. These studies can be holistic or embedded, the latter occurring when the same case study involves more than one unit of analysis.



## *Validity*

As in all research, consideration must be given to construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 1989). Levy (1988) establishes construct validity using the single-case exploratory design, and internal validity using the single-case explanatory design. Yin (1994) suggests using multiple sources of evidence as the way to ensure construct validity. The current study used multiple sources of evidence, questionnaires, interviews and observations. The specification of the unit of analysis provided the internal validity as the theories developed, and data collection and analysis tested those theories. External validity is more difficult to attain in a single-case study. Yin (1994) provides the assertion that external validity could be achieved from theoretical relationships and from these generalizations could be made. It is the development of a formal case study protocol that provides the reliability that is required of all research.

Yin (1994) suggests the use of case study protocol that is, documenting the procedures followed in detail, and the development of case study database, that is, preserving data collected for future use. In this study, the researcher documented the procedures followed in conducting the research and assembled the observations, questionnaire data and the interview transcripts to enhance future verifiability.

### Site and Population Selection

The research study was conducted at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education, Barry University, traditionally known for serving adult students. Adult students twenty-five years and older were invited to participate. The purpose of the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education is to provide adult students

with graduate and undergraduate credit, non-credit and certificate programs which recognize the educational needs of the adult learner and promote lifelong learning. These degree and certificate programs are designed for adult men and women who, because of family and work responsibilities, are unable to attend class in a traditional manner or at traditional times. The university has made a significant commitment to adult students and desires to continuously assess its impact on the students.

The faculty data for the year 2001 to 2003 are shown in Table 1. and the student enrollment data are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: *Faculty Data: 01/23 Summer 2001 – 02/22 Spring 2002*

	Total	Female	Male
Full-Time Faculty	29	12	17
Adjunct Faculty	310	105	205

*02/23 Summer 2002 – 03/23 Summer 2003*

	Total	Female	Male
Full-Time Faculty	30	14	16
Adjunct Faculty	357	135	222

Table 2. *Student Enrollment Data*

Period	Part Time	Full Time	Withdrawals	Total Students
2002	2197	288	181	2566
2003	2283	320	243	2846

The university student body's profile in 2002 consisted of approximately 733 Caucasian Hispanics, 862 Caucasian/non-Hispanics, 68 black Hispanics, 635 black non-Hispanics, 7 American Indians, 9 Asians, 1 Alaskan Native, and 251 students rated under others. Of the 2566 students registered, 105 were under the age of twenty-five years; 838 were between twenty-five and thirty-four. The largest group, 1002, were between the age of thirty-five and forty-four, whilst 536 were between forty-five to fifty-four; the remaining 85 were fifty-five years and older. In 2003, the student population remained predominantly Caucasian/non Hispanic, and the largest group enrolled was between twenty-five and thirty-four years old. The most popular majors included: information technology, public administration, and professional administration and health services administration. The participants were selected so there was equal representation of backgrounds, and academic disciplines.

#### Data Collection

As noted by Stake (1995), data collection methods within a case study are principally observation, interview, and document review. This kind of triangulation has a value affirmed by other authors (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The value is in enhanced internal validity, reliability, and generalizability, which may consider to be criteria of research soundness (Romberg, 1992). Internal validity refers to how well the findings of the research match the reality of what occurred during the research process. The second criteria of reliability, often referring to the extent in which the research findings can be replicated, "seem to be something of a misfit when applied to qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p.206). Merriam advocates the term 'consistency' in place of 'reliability' saying, "the question then is not whether findings will be found

again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (p.206). With generalizability, it should be noted that whereas a case study represents a specific, unique, and bounded circumstance, the “transferability or generalizability to other settings may be problematic” (Marshall & Rossman, 1994, p.144).

Many researchers contend that the notion of generalizability can only be applied to qualitative methodology in a theoretical sense. Some qualitative methodologists prefer to talk instead of working hypotheses, while others prefer to talk in terms of naturalistic generalizations which “include the kind of learning that readers take from their encounters with specific case studies” (Patton, 2001, p.583). In this study, the researcher referred to the term naturalistic generalizations. Triangulating multiple sources of data can enhance a study’s generalizability, claim Marshall and Rossman (1995). Moreover, “especially in terms of using multiples methods of data collection and analysis, triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity” (Merriam, 1998, p.207). Thus, to gain triangulation, the three methods of data gathering that were adopted in this study were questionnaires, observations, and interviews.

The previous review of the literature indicates that the relationship between faculty and student can be a determining factor in the retention and academic success of adult students. A formal mentoring program, where the university arranges student-mentor pairs, is a vehicle in which this relationship can be established. This study will analyze the faculty-student relationship by analyzing the specific behaviors of the mentors and how these behaviors will influence a mentoring relationship.

More often than not, theories, beliefs, and evaluations suggest that faculty mentor-protégé relations in adult education assume effective roles. Since the mentor-protégé

relationship is continually evolving, and can sometimes be risky and threatening, effectiveness in the relationship is not always achieved (Cohen, 1993). Furthermore, "the absence of an effective diagnostic tool was viewed as especially serious because of the perceived limited preparation of faculty for the mentor role" (Cohen, 1993, p.192).

Because faculty mentor and protégé relationships involve using the transactional process, results are accountable to theoretical demonstration (Cohen & Galbraith, 1995). A review of the literature found numerous evaluative results from faculty mentors and protégés in higher education, but few analyses use a valid and reliable instrument to explore the perceptions of faculty mentors. Faculty mentors may perceive their behavior one way and protégés may perceive faculty mentors' behavior another way.

According to Galbraith (1990), there is a need for higher education faculty to become involved in their own professional development as mentors since very little, if any, significant education or training has adequately prepared faculty for the complexity of the mentor role. Instruments to objectively assess faculty mentors' probable competency as mentors of traditional or nontraditional students have not been available until the development of *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* by Cohen (1993). Cohen continues by citing that "a serious gap between the professional obligation of faculty, counselors, and administrators to evaluate their own interpersonal communication skills/adult psychology competencies in the mentor role and the currently available measurement inventories needs to be remedied" (p.6).

The quantitative aspect of this study used the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* developed by Cohen (1993) to measure the perceptions of effectiveness of full-time faculty based on overall behavioral mentoring functions that integrated adult

development psychology and the transactional process of learning. Functions of the mentor were described as the behaviors or duties of the mentor within the relationship. In particular, the quantitative aspect of the study analyzed the six functions as outlined by Cohen, described in the previous review of the literature. In other words, to what extent did full-time faculty exhibit the specific behaviors deemed essential for a quality mentoring relationship? If so, to what degree were these behaviors exhibited – from not effective to highly effective?

Mentoring is a deliberate effort to support traditional and non-traditional students from diverse backgrounds in formal and informal settings (Cohen & Galbraith, 1995). Although it is assumed that faculty mentor and protégé relationships are effective, this assumption is not necessarily accurate. “While studies imply that mentoring relations may positively influence retention and achievement, they do not address the issue of functions of the mentoring relationships that are most important” (Jacobi, 1991, p.515).

*The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* was important in this study in that it allowed the researcher to effectively analyze the behavioral mentoring functions of full-time faculty by the use of an effective tool. Further, unlike other studies where the focus was mainly on mentoring relationships for retention and academic achievement without a focus on the importance of mentoring relationships, this study incorporated not only retention from a qualitative perspective, but also whether faculty possessed the behavioral functions, using a quantitative instrument, to actively mentor adult students to aid with retention and the lowering of attrition rates. Assessment of this competency with the use of *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* instrument will assist faculty mentors toward increasing their perception about mentoring behaviors that incorporate the six behavioral

mentoring functions of the mentor role. Furthermore, faculty mentors will be able to use *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* as an educational tool to better understand the functions of the mentor role.

#### *Sample and Procedures for the Faculty Mentors*

A list of full time faculty was provided to the researcher by the Assistant Dean in the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education, Barry University. A letter of invitation (Appendix A) and a packet were sent to each faculty member at the beginning of the spring semester. The letter explained the study and the importance of the participation of each faculty member. The packet included the following: the consent form from the International Review Board, a cover letter in which the study was explained, the Demographic Information Sheet, and *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*. The packet was sent to the faculty member via campus mail. Faculty were asked to complete the information within two weeks of receiving the packet. A follow up letter (Appendix A) was sent after that time to elicit the participation of those who had not responded to the first request. This letter asked for their participation in the study. A second packet was included with the follow-up letter.

#### *Research Questions*

The behaviors and functions of the mentor were investigated by asking the faculty members to what extent they practiced behaviors related to the six essential functions in the mentoring relationship and as measured by the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (Cohen, 1993). (Appendix B). This aspect of the study will address the following research questions:

1. What measures are used by faculty mentors to delineate their behaviors and roles as mentors?
2. How do faculty mentors see the purposes and objectives of mentoring?
3. What functions do faculty mentors see themselves serving as mentors to adult students?

#### *Outcome Measure/Dependent Variable*

The outcome measures in this study, which were the dependent variable, will be the self-reported behaviors of the mentor. These behaviors were assessed in terms of the six mentor functions described by Cohen (1993). The six functions were measured by the completion of *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* by all participating full-time faculty members. The instrument contained 55 items, each representing a behavior of the mentor. The faculty member responded to each of the statements in terms of how he or she felt the statement was representative of his or her actual behavior. For each statement, the faculty member selected from the following choices: *never*, *infrequently*, *sometimes*, *frequently*, or *always*. Each statement related to one of the six functions, and the researcher totaled each individual statement response to determine a score in each of the prospective function categories (Appendix C).

The scale allowed for the total scores in each category to be interpreted in descriptive terms with the following divisions: *not effective*, *less effective*, *effective*, *very effective*, and *highly effective*. For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined each of these functions separately. As part of the development of the scale, a panel of experts determined the descriptors to be useful in helping the mentor understand his or her abilities for specific functions (Cohen, 1993).



### *Variables*

The self-reported behaviors of the faculty member were the dependent variable. The independent variable, however, was the attribute variables based on the faculty mentor responses to the Demographic Information Sheet. (Appendix D). The researcher explored how these attribute variables may have impacted the reported practice of the six functions outlined by Cohen (1993).

The variables of interest included gender and teaching area. The first variable gender will be defined by male or female. The gender of the mentor may have impacted the specific role of the mentor. For example, were scores of the female mentors higher in the Relationship Emphasis than scores of the male mentors? In the same manner, did males exhibit higher scores in the area of Confrontive Focus when compared to the scores of the female mentors?

Mentor experience is an area recognized by Cohen (1993) which may affect the practice of the particular functions. Based on his knowledge of mentoring and the adult learner, more experienced mentors exhibit Confrontive or Student Vision type behavior at a higher level – after the development of the Relationship Emphasis.

### *Interviews*

In this study, the researcher sought to explore from the students' perspective the factors which may contribute to the retention of adult students. The nature of the research question required that data be collected regarding the perceptions of the participants. A logical assumption was to collect data using a method that was flexible, adaptable, and allowed for human interaction. Borg and Gall (1989) state that the flexibility, adaptability, and human interaction are unique strengths of the interview.

One of the main thrusts of the research was to investigate 'meanings' (Van Maanen, 1983). The key qualitative tool used for this purpose was the interview, a data collection instrument that has been described as the essential source of information for the case study method (Yin, 1989). The method of interviewing is a common and powerful way of trying to understand other people (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Best and Kahn (1995) note "interviews are used to gather information regarding an individual's experience and knowledge" (p.255); Patton (2001) affirms that the purpose of interviewing "is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. The advantages of the interview method are relevant to this study and justify using this research method. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p.341).

To ensure credibility within the naturalistic paradigm of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the researcher engaged with the participants to build rapport, establish trust, and understand participants' perceptions and reactions to a variety of daily events before beginning the interview process. As a trained observer-an-participant in the study, the researcher acknowledged the inevitability of the lens and maintained credibility by means of (a) formulated research purpose, (b) deliberate planning, (c) systematic records, and (d) checks and controls as described by Kidder (1981).

### *Participants*

The participants for this section of the research consisted of nontraditional students. The participants were chosen to equally represent ethnicity, gender, age, and academic discipline.

### *Interview Protocol and Procedure*

According to Creswell (1994), a protocol is useful in conducting interviews. Protocol components should include: (a) a heading, (b) opening statement, (c) the research questions, (d) and space for recording the interviewer's comments and reflective notes (Appendix E).

Upon drawing a simple random sample of approximately twenty nontraditional age students, the researcher telephoned individuals in the sample to arrange interviews and to explain briefly the purpose of the research. During the initial conversation, the researcher invited the participants to be interviewed. A letter to confirm the arrangements and to provide some evidence of the researcher's background followed up the initial contact.

At the time of the interview, the researcher gave a copy of the informed consent letter to each participant and at that time assure the participants that they would remain anonymous in any written reports. At the beginning of each interview the respondent was reminded that the researcher was collecting information for her PhD. They were promised that their contribution would remain confidential both within and outside the institution. Furthermore, they were informed that any criticism, which emerged from the research, would be couched in terms of process, systems and structure and not be directed at individuals or groups of individuals. The relationship between the researcher and the respondent was consequently based on trust and developed through contact outside the interview proper, including telephone contact and meetings over lunch.

The primary source of the qualitative data collection was face-to-face, open-ended, interviews. Part of the intent of this study was to describe the perceptions of adult

students regarding the factors which contribute to retention. The strengths of the interview design best complimented this intent. Krathwohl (1993) states that the strengths of the interview are that it allow depth of response. The interview ensured that individuals understood the questions and followed directions. Additionally, the interview was flexible and adaptable to individuals. Finally, during the interview nonverbal responses that revealed feelings were available for interpretation by the interviewer.

For the purposes of collecting demographic data about participants, the first page of the interview was devoted to factual data. This page was called the factsheet. (Appendix F). The factsheet provided space for the following information: respondent's age, sex, marital status, number of children, parents' educational level, date of interview, place of interview, how long the respondent had been at this university, whether he or she was ever in any college or university before, and the length of time between previous enrollment and present enrollment.

The retention interview which formed the second part of the interview contained approximately thirty-two questions. These questions fell into two main categories: (1) environmental factors, and (2) perceived gains. Environmental factors represented all external factors that may have impacted the students' persistence decisions. These factors included questions about family responsibilities, work responsibilities, monetary situation and encouragement and support from significant others, faculty, staff, and students to stay in university. Students were also asked questions on the importance of mentoring relationships, and the benefits adult students can derive leading to academic success. Perceived gains represented perceived gains in learning and long term goals that impacted persistence decisions. These factors included questions about perceived gains

while in university (perceptions of how much gain or progress students believe they made during university) and long range goals (how well the university fit into students' long range goals).

Participants were asked for their permission to tape record the interviews. The use of the tape recorder enabled the interview to be conducted in a more natural way and ensured that cues 'missed' during the interview were identified during transcription. Questions were posed in a neutral way, with interventions well-timed and phrased. Furthermore, the integrity and credibility of the researcher were enhanced by knowledge gained from the preliminary fieldwork.

Interviews were conducted in locations and at times which were most convenient for the respondents. The participants were told that the interviews would take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. This flexibility in the research venue and timing was beneficial in ensuring that targeted respondents participated in the study. The researcher was aware of the potential biases of case study interviewing, both in terms of researcher effects on the site and in terms of site effects on the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Due to the ontology and epistemology of the research it may have been inconsistent to attempt to eradicate bias, on the premise that bias may represent a particular view of reality. However, the negative aspects of bias were consciously managed in a number of additional ways. Efforts were made to avoid phrasing questions in a leading way (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1991). Steps were also taken to demarcate volunteered and directed information, to actively search for contrary evidence, and to compare interview data with observation (Becker & Geer, 1982). Interviews were tape recorded wherever possible and transcribed soon after the meeting. This allowed the

interviews to be rated in terms of effectiveness, value of information obtained, areas requiring clarification, balance of descriptive and evaluative data, and suitable tactics for re-interviewing (Whyte, 1982). The interview was regarded as a data collection instrument which could produce a richness of data unobtainable through other means and which, in a semi-structured form, was particularly appropriate for the study of mentoring adult learners in schools of adult and continuing education, an area with little empirical research.

### *Observation*

In an effort to gain answers to the following research questions, the researcher used observations. As part of this study, the researcher explored the primary factors which can induce or contribute to transformational learning through mentoring; the challenges that may arise for a faculty mentor who create transformational learning experiences in the classroom, and the measures used by faculty members to promote self-directed learning. The research used observation to develop a greater understanding of these research questions.

The researcher observed various classroom settings to gain insight into the type of learning taking place. Taking the role of complete observer, the researcher observed faculty interaction with students, whether students were encouraged to reflect and share their feelings and thoughts in the class, and whether faculty allowed for open discussion and criticism. Further, the researcher observed the difference in interactions between male and female faculty, and the responses of the male and female students.

Through observing the participants in the classrooms, the researcher was able to gain understanding and record information as it occurred while the faculty mentor was

facilitating the class. This observation provided critical important data as to whether transformational learning was taking place in the classroom. Observation became part of an interactive cycle of combining and comparing data from a variety of sources.

Many of the criticisms of observation appear to be rooted in a positivist or post-positivist conception of validity and reliability (Alder & Alder, 1994). However, it is believed that the approach to observation that was used in the research benefited from the combination of schedule and opportunism. This was consistent with the inductive nature of the investigation, which was sensitive to the emergence of data and categories. The research was consequently able to “move beyond the selective perceptions of others” (Patton, 1980, p.125) while at the same time harness the ‘great rigor’ of combining observation with other data collection instruments (Alder & Alder, 1994, p.382).

#### Instrumentation

Many undergraduate institutions of higher education are creating organized mentoring programs that match professional faculty, counselors, and administrators with both traditional and nontraditional college students in the 18-50+ age range. College sponsored mentoring relationships are advocated as a significant factor in promoting the personal, educational, and career development of adults; these one-to-one relationships are also generally viewed as positive interventions that offers numerous benefits to both faculty and institutions. However, in the early 1990s, it was noticed that mentors did not have a self-assessment instrument to evaluate their behavioral competencies in the role of mentor to adult learners. Also, professional adult educators and scholars did not have a scale that would allow them to establish baseline data for conducting research on the vital topic of mentorship and human resource development.

While this study took a dominant qualitative case study approach, the use of a quantitative assessment instrument strengthened the plausibility of the findings. The current study utilized a quantitative instrument, *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* developed by Cohen (1993). Further, a demographic information sheet was used.

#### *Demographic Information Sheet*

In order to gain necessary demographic information, all participating faculty members completed the Demographic Information Sheet. Such information as gender, and teaching field served as attribute variables. The form also allowed the faculty member to give anecdotal information that may have been useful in the final analysis of the study.

#### *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*

The mentors completed *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*, a scale developed as part of a dissertation research study (Cohen, 1993). This 55-item scale measured the six functions described by Cohen. For each item, the mentor indicated the extent to which he or she exhibited a specific behavior on a scale from “one” (never) to “five” (always). Each item related back to one of the six functions, and the individual items were summed for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the particular function. Faculty mentor scores in relationship to the PAMS means were indicators of the faculty mentors’ perception of behavioral competency.

According to Cohen (1993), a scale that provides baseline data for researchers and educators has not been available prior to the development of PAMS. The instrument has been examined critically and empirically for its reliability and validity. Cohen also notes that a “wide variety of evidence attests to the PAMS validity” (p.119). Cohen, using a



sample of 42 mentors, reported the following individual reliability coefficients using Cronbach's Alpha: Relationship (10 items) score of .77; Information (10 items) score of .79; Facilitative (six items) score of .67; Confrontive (12 items) score of .81; Mentor Model (six items) score of .78; and Student Vision (11 items) score of .86.

In addition, the corrected item-total correlation was given for each individual item. Content validity was incorporated into the construction of the scale utilizing a jury of experts in the mentoring field. Two scholars in the field were also used to perform the task of conducting a construct validity "back translation" test to ensure that specific mentor functions could be matched back to the mentor behavioral actions identified in the scale (Cohen, 1993).

#### Data Analysis

The research examined the effect of faculty acting as mentors to improve the retention rate among adult students and enhancing the learning process of these students, leading towards academic improvement. As a result, a strictly qualitative or quantitative research approach was not sufficient. Therefore, a mixed methods case study allowed this researcher to quantitatively analyze faculty from the evaluation questionnaire and to incorporate qualitative interview feedback from adult students. A copy of the questions and interviews is included in the appendix section of this research study.

According to Yin (1994), analysis hinges on linking the data to the propositions and explicating the criteria by which findings are to be interpreted. It has been suggested that: "There are no formal, universal rules to follow in analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating qualitative data" (Patton, 1980, p.268). However, it has been argued that: "We should continue to be concerned with producing texts that explicate how we claim to know what

we know” (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p.496). Patton (1990) explains the challenge of data analysis in a qualitative study: “The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (p.372).

The general principles for data analysis in this study were derived from the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967). According to Glaser and Strauss, grounded theory is a general methodology applicable to both quantitative as well as qualitative studies. This allowed the researcher to use an approach that is both fluid and based on interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The researcher took the view that “analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units. Interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions” (Patton, 1980, p.268).

The aim in the analysis is to describe and categorize the data, resulting in a tentative theory of what are the key features of the subjects’ conceptions of variation. The first step of data analysis was establishing concepts. “Science could not exist without concepts” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A concept, according to Strauss and Corbin, is basically a labeled phenomenon or an abstract representation of what the researcher finds significant in the data. “Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.273), and the techniques prescribed fit the aim of the analysis needed for this study.

The ultimate aim of most qualitative studies, claim Huberman and Miles (1994) is “to describe and explain a pattern of relationships, which can be done only with a set of

conceptually specified analytic categories (p.431). Grounded theory begins by describing and building categories, the dimensions of which are defined by their conceptual properties; tentative hypotheses then emerge which suggest links between categories and properties (Patton, 2001; Merriam, 1998). The process of analysis and interpretation was iterative and continuous, the suggested procedure as noted by Strauss and Corbin (1994). This process of “taking information from data collection and comparing it to emerging categories is called the constant comparative method of data analysis” (Creswell, 1998, p.57). Patton (2001) calls this comparative analysis “a central feature of grounded theory development” (p.490).

In this study, because the role of faculty mentors for the enhancement of adult learning was being examined, the techniques of grounded theory were of particular appeal because “concepts are the basic units of analysis in the grounded theory method” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.63). In this study, conceptualizing the data was the first step in the analysis. Open coding is described as the process of identifying the concepts and discovering their properties. Open coding was done with line-by-line analysis of the data to identify the concepts. A detailed line-by-line analysis, while labor intensive, was extremely generative and especially useful at the outset of this study.

During subsequent analysis, the raw data was further ordered by adopting some of the tactics for generating meaning proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The researcher was engaged in a process of noting patterns and themes, clustering, making contrasts and comparisons, and building a logical chain of evidence. An example of the use of this technique in the study of understanding variation was provided by Torok and Watson (2000). Adding to the power of open coding is axial coding, defined as “the

process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed 'axial' because coding occurs around the axis of the category, linking categories of the level of properties and dimensions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.123). Microanalysis is the combined approach of open and axial coding, using a line-by-line analysis, to "generate initial categories and to suggest relationships among categories" (p.57).

Grounded theory techniques allowed for the inclusion of a wide scope of data, apropos of this study, such as transcribed interviews and observational notes. Although data was gathered using a variety of methods, interview transcripts produced the largest volume of data. Also, memos suggesting the continual conjecturing and refinement of categories and concepts became part of the data, as the process of theory development moved through cycles of constant comparison. As such, data management became a crucial issue in using grounded theory. Patton (2001) boldly states, "all researchers working in a qualitative mode will clearly be helped by some computer software" (p.205). The use of qualitative data analysis software facilitates not only the management of data, but "it can offer leaps in productivity for those adept at it" (p.447).

The software that was used in this study is NUDIST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching, and Theorizing), a theory-building program that aids in data storage, coding, retrieval, and category comparison and linking (Patton, 2001). NUDIST is well suited for the analysis techniques of grounded theory, although it cannot be emphasized enough that software only assists in the process – software does not analyze data for the researcher (Patton, 2001; Creswell, 1998).

### *Quantitative Statistical Analysis*

The behavior and role of the mentors was examined by levels of attribute variables, and the various means were compared to check trends and statistical differences. The descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, and ranges of scores from *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* and the frequency and percentage of each level of the attribute variables, that is, gender and teaching area. A series of ANOVA was used to compare *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* outcomes by the attribute variable in order to check for statistical differences between groups. For example, the mean score for the females in the relationship function was compared to the mean score of males in the relationship function to check for statistical differences in terms of gender for this particular function.

Cohen (1995) states that the primary purpose of the scale scores is to “help mentors better locate themselves on the map of their mentoring relationship, so they can contribute as much as possible to the meaning of the journey for the mentee” (p.23). From Cohen’s perspective, mentoring is a blend of six interrelated behavioral functions, each with a distinct and central purpose; the collective nature of the six functions constitutes the complete mentor role.

The literature was reviewed to examine existing research on the findings to make relevant connections. The feasibility of developing a model from naturalistic generalizations for practical use that depicted the meaning of the experience, connections to existing literature, and integration of concepts was explored (Stake, 1995).

### *Human Subjects Approval-Institutional Review Board*

The Barry University Institutional Review Board reviewed the study and the procedures for the collection of data (Appendix H). Informed consent forms were created for both the faculty members and the adult students. Information within the forms included the purpose and basic procedures for the study, the name of the researcher, and the individual's rights as a subject in the study. A copy of the forms can be found in Appendix G.

### *Ethical Considerations*

The researcher secured the written informed consent of each informal interview participant. The participants in the interview process participated with anonymity and with knowledge that by completing the questionnaire they had agreed to participate in the study. The participants were informed of what the researcher was studying, what methods were being used, why they had been selected, what were the benefits, what was the time commitment required, and why the study was being conducted.

Before the study was conducted, the interview participants signed the Informed Consent Form. After the signature, the researcher presented an assurance of anonymity for the interview participants.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

The first two chapters of this study centered on mentoring as an important component in the improvement of learning for adult learners. In addition, the chapters highlighted the importance of mentoring as a device to combat high attrition rates, thereby leading to student retention and the promotion of educational achievement. The literature shows that there is considerable research on mentoring in education; however, there is little empirical research on faculty mentoring in schools of adult and continuing education for student retention. This study provides new perspectives for understanding adult learners and presents concrete ways based on current developmental theory on how educators can set up support systems to more effectively improve the quality of support services for adult learners. Chapter Three discussed the methodology that was used in conducting this study, which consisted of interviews, observations and a questionnaire, the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*. Chapter Three also provided a rationale for the research design, instrumentation, and data analysis procedure. The analysis that follows in Chapters Four and Five should direct future researchers interested in mentoring adult learners in schools of adult and continuing education.

The overarching research question that guided this inquiry was “What role do faculty mentors play toward enhancing the learning process of adult learners in schools of adult and continuing education at the university level?” This study is an exploration of the roles of faculty mentors in an adult education environment. Mentoring relationships must be understood within the context in which they develop. Dynamics of mentoring phenomena can be more clearly exposed and better grasped through a holistic approach

(Patton, 1990). According to Paterson (2004), a mentor is a faculty member who guides, supports, and advises a student. In schools of adult and continuing education, faculty mentors may expedite a student's progress through program requirements, provide opportunities for professional socialization, help define his or her career goals, and inspire confidence. In effectively performing the role of mentor, faculty mentors can help in decreasing student attrition and help non-traditional students succeed in the unfamiliar environment of academia.

Given the critical function of mentoring, it is vital for adult students to have a strong supportive relationship with faculty mentors. Through this relationship, students are provided with an opportunity to connect individually with a faculty member. Faculty mentors are encouraged to continue to develop innovative and supportive learning environments that question ambiguity and contradiction while engaging the wholeness of the adult learners. By providing these learning environments that support opportunities for personal growth and development, faculty mentors and adult students together can carry new ways of knowing and understanding into their personal lives, their relationships and their communities, opening the door to new ways of being.

From the qualitative data analysis in this study, two kinds of mentoring relationships were identified by this researcher: business associate relationship, professor-student relationship. The majority of the students who participated in this study experienced mentorship from faculty members from the social interactions and integration provided by the faculty. However, some students experienced mentoring relationships on the job which they considered more effective for their personal development.



This study was also an attempt to determine from the students' perspective the perceptions of mentoring and the factors which contribute to the retention of adult students. The study also addressed the primary factors which can induce or contribute to transformational learning in the classroom and explored if full-time faculty members at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education possess specific mentoring functions as recommended in the literature. More specifically, self-reported behaviors of the faculty on the mentor function scale were investigated and compared by different levels of attribute variables.

The findings of the study will be presented first with the results of the study from the interview, followed by the observations conducted in the classroom to determine the transformational learning process taking place and finally, the results of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*.

#### *Results of Interviews*

As part of the data collection, ten nontraditional-age students were randomly selected and then asked to respond to an open-ended survey. The research question was: "From the student's perspectives, what are the perceptions of mentoring and the factors which contribute to the retention of adult students?"

The findings from the interviews will be presented in the form of a typology. Definitions and examples of the types and dimensions of contrast will be given. The typological distinctions will be used to describe which factors contribute to the retention of nontraditional-age students at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education.

Factors selected for this study were all previously tested separately or in combination in an extensive series of studies in the literature (Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996; Bean, 1980, 1983, 1985; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Bers & Smith, 1989, 1991; Nora & Wedham, 1991; Cabrera, Nora, & Casteneda, 1990, 1993). Research findings by Nora and Wedham (1991) and Cabrera, Nora, and Casteneda (1993) suggest that pulling-in and pulling-out factors, as well as tangible and intangible financial aid factors, need to be incorporated into models of student persistence to fully reflect the persistence process for the adult student population. Nora and Wedham (1991) found that students who had more family responsibilities and a hard work schedule were less likely to interact with faculty and peers and, therefore, less likely to integrate both socially and academically into their college environment, two factors highly predictive of student persistence. Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, and Pascarella (1996) found the likelihood of persisting is further influenced by the contributions of environmental factors, such as family responsibilities, financial circumstances, and encouragement and support from significant others. Additionally, Nora and associates (1996) found that perceptions of gains made in predispositions toward learning and the student's academic achievement further impacted the likelihood of persisting in college.

The findings from these studies are congruent to the findings in this research study, and therefore this researcher adopted the typology created in these studies to better explain the findings. In the study conducted by Bean and Metzner (1985) the authors in creating a typology indicated that from the analysis two types of students were identified. In the present study, interviews with nontraditional-age students, and the analysis of these interviews indicated to this researcher that this typology can be adopted as a device to

organize the data. The two types are the focused student, one who maintains his or her focus on education, and the unfocused student, one who does not maintain his or her focus on education. The six dimensions of contrast are: financial situation, work responsibilities, relationships with significant other and family, relationships with faculty and other students, educational goals, and the impact of mentoring relationships.

With the dimensions of contrast and analytic types in place, the discussion will proceed to give definitions and examples of each type. This will be followed by a section that defines and gives examples of the dimensions of contrast. The discussion will then focus on integrating the two types of students by the dimensions of contrast in order to describe the perceptions of nontraditional-age students regarding the factors that contribute to their retention at a university level.

### *The Focused Student*

The focused student is one who enters or returns to a university to achieve the defined educational goal of getting a degree. Receiving a degree is the number one priority in his or her life. The fact that the students attend the university with a clear set of goals and objectives, letting no problems interfere with their education, distinguishes them from the other type.

Rhea is a 45-year-old mother and has an 11-year-old daughter. Rhea entered the university in 2001 to major in Professional Administration with a minor in Information Technology. Rhea's university years at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education have not been problem-free. Upon registration at the university, Rhea's mother became ill, and it was a very difficult and depressing period for Rhea. The rough road of work and spending so many hours of visitation at the hospital was quite

stressful; however, through it all Rhea was able to stay focused on her education and get through the semester. Rhea was asked, "What are the factors that keep her going to succeed in her education?"

Rhea: This is a dream and personal fulfillment. My daughter and mother are the driving forces in my life. I want to be able to provide a good life for my daughter and also set an example to show her the importance of education. I would say that I am driven by the forces and support from my daughter.

Jane is 49 years old and single with no children. Having dropped out of the university in 1980, Jane returned in 2003 to pursue studies in Public Administration. On reentering, Jane was working full-time, forty hours a week, but recently lost her job. It was then quite difficult financially with the pressures of maintaining mortgage payments and other bills. This was taking a toll on her life. However, Jane stayed focused on school by utilizing resources around campus and trying not to dwell on negative feelings. She said she did not allow herself to worry and complain because things would collapse. Jane was asked, "What are the factors that keep her going in school?"

Jane: God, he is my only hope and strength, and I pray continuously because I know that he would work things out for me.

These two students exhibited persistence toward degree completion. They both indicated that when problems came up they were able to cope and work through the problems by staying focused on their education.

### *The Unfocused Student*

Unfocused students are those who are similar to focused students in that they have an educational goal and desire a university degree. However, they are not able to

maintain their focus on their education as well as focused students. What distinguishes focused students from unfocused students is that the unfocused students allow problems to interfere. In many cases they have not yet reached a point where education is the number one priority in their life.

George is 47 years old, married with no children. George returned to the university after 14 years, having dropped out from a previous university after spending only one semester. George noted that his ultimate goal was to get a degree in Information Technology since it appears that this is where the money is. When George was asked how his work responsibilities affected school, he responded:

George: It's just too hard to find time to study, and right now I am having problems with my assignments. I have bills to pay, and so sometimes I just skip class to go out and make money. I want a degree but I have to give up too much, like the finer things in life, friends, partying, and I love that.

Throughout the interview, George's priority was making money, investing, and purchasing stocks and bonds. Little or no emphasis was placed on why he was at the university and the importance of an education. From the interview it appeared that this student was having difficulty shifting his focus on his education. Although the student had a clear educational goal, he was not able to maintain focus but was easily distracted. Clearly, he had not reached the point where school was his number one priority. From this researcher's perspective, this does not lend to the fact that a person must neglect his or her finances, but shows that those students who are able to focus on an educational goal are able to persist more at a university level.

The preceding section attempted to distinguish among nontraditional-age students by categorizing them into empirically discreet types adopted from previous studies, according to their adaptive strategy. The next section will discuss the dimensions of contrast.

### *Dimensions of Contrast*

The six dimensions of contrast are: financial situation, work responsibilities, relationship with significant other and family, relationship with faculty and other students, educational goals, and the impact of mentoring relationships. These six variables are keys to understanding adaptation to university nontraditional-age students.

The financial situation dimension examines the student's money management ability. The work responsibilities dimension examines what students do to earn money in order to support themselves and their family while they are in school. The relationships with significant others and family dimension reflects, not only the extent to which students receive emotional support and encouragement from their family and/or significant others but also, the extent to which they are able to balance family and school. The relationships with faculty and other students dimension represent the extent to which nontraditional-age students relate to and interact with faculty and other students; other students include both traditional-nontraditional-age students. The educational goal dimension reflects the student's stated educational purpose or mission for being in the university, and what he or she hopes to be able to achieve as a result of being in the university. The mentoring relationship dimension examines the importance of mentoring for adult students to enhance the learning process and retention rates. This dimension looks at the views and perceptions of adult students towards mentoring.

Snow and Anderson (1993), very eloquently, state that in creating a typology a researcher is in effect creating empirical and conceptual scaffolding that can be used to explore in greater detail the nature of a phenomenon. The authors go on to state that like any scaffolding this conceptual framework is a platform from which to work, a springboard for diving into the social world under investigation. The task of the next section is to attend to these concerns by elaborating on the similarities and differences in the various types of nontraditional-age students and to explore in greater detail the factors that contribute to their retention along the six dimensions of contrast.

### Integrating of Dimensions of Contrast with Types of Students

#### *Work Responsibilities*

With regard to work responsibilities it appears that, across types both focused and unfocused, students work either part-time or full-time to support themselves through the university. In the sample of ten students seven worked full-time, two worked part-time, and one had previously worked full-time but is now presently unemployed. While, across types, more than half of the sample had to work in order to support their families, it was interesting to see how the focused and unfocused students balanced work and university studies. During the interview, the unfocused students appeared to this researcher to identify the job as a means to an end. The job played an integral role in the lives of some of these unfocused students and presented an inhibiting factor or barrier in their academic success.

The focused students indicated that they did not let the job interfere with their education and devised creative ways to assure their primary focus was dedicated to

complete their education. Most of the students in the sample had creative plans to build study time into their work schedules and family responsibilities.

Joan: I spend quiet times locked away in my office during the weekend and during lunch break I concentrate on getting my paper completed.

Jill: When I am not at work, I spend hours in the writing center or in the library having my papers revised or doing research. I have found that this helps since being at home can at times present numerous distractions.

From the interview this researcher was able to identify that in relation to the unfocused students they were unable to come up with a decisive plan to successfully balance school, work and family responsibilities.

Judy: It is not easy to balance; it is quite difficult. I cannot study at work and by the time I get home my children can at times drive me crazy.

Victor: This is tough, and my job is now getting stressful. I have to miss so many classes because my job is too demanding.

From the students interviewed, the types of employment included information technologist, technical specialist, administrative assistant, office clerk, social worker, and sales clerk. Focused students appeared to be able and willing to take the necessary steps to adapt a schedule that allowed for more study time. Unfocused students either did not know how to modify their schedule or were too overwhelmed to even think about making the necessary modifications.

### *Financial Situation*

It appears to this researcher that adult students' persistence is affected by such things as time management, family and work needs, logistics and economic barriers. In



this study, the financial situation was the dimension that really separated the focused from the unfocused student. The focused students indicated that they manage their money by spending less on material objects while they were in school. These students indicated that during this period, spending was only on basic necessities. One student indicated that she decreased work responsibilities and went from full-time to part-time employment status.

Jane: I have tailored my schedule, and now I work for only 25 hours per week.

This enables me to have flexibility. I arrange to see my clients only within this 25 hour period unless it is an emergency. One of the reasons I never went back to school was because I was working over forty hours per week in my prior job. I had been working for over 15 years full-time forty hours, and that was one of the hindrances why I did not go back, because I could not have worked forty hours and then go to school.

Another student took a philosophical stance:

Ken: Education is important, and thus I did not schedule to buy any big items.

Now I am in school, those things can come later.

In the view of this researcher, focused students cut back on spending and, in a lot of cases, employment status so they could go to school and give school priority status. Unfocused students appeared to have trouble shifting the priority away from money to school. Participation in adult and continuing education is patterned according to key social dimensions; this is strikingly shown along class and age lines. According to Cross (1981) there is a significant correlation between class and initial educational success that is carried through into adult life.

Miller (1967) sought to draw together Maslow's and Lewin's theories to explain why socio-economic status (class) is linked to successful participation in adult education. Applying Lewin's force-field theory, Miller charts positive forces and negative forces and their relative strengths. This is then taken a step further by Rubenson (1977). He argues that education, like work, is an achievement-oriented activity, 'meaning that people who want to get ahead will put effort into personal achievement' (Cross, 1981, p.166). Rubenson suggested that motivation emerges from the interaction of two factors: expectancy and valence. 'Expectancy' consists of two components: the expectation of personal success in the educational activity; and the expectation that being successful in the activity will have positive consequences. 'Valence' refers to the sum of positive or negative values that people assign to learning activities. For example, participation in education can lead to higher pay, but it can also mean cutting back on spending, seeing less of the family or spending less time in social activities (Cross, 1981, p.116).

In this study, about sixty percent of the adult students fell into the category of the lower class, while forty percent were in the middle class. Both lower and middle class students developed methods to cut back spending. Although some students were in the middle class, they still reported being under financial stress. Applying the class structure to this study, most of the students in the middle class were more focused towards their educational goals, however, in the lower class, some adult students remained focused by applying priorities to their educational goals.

George: With financial stress, my objective now is to get money in order to pay my bills. Being in class I don't have time to see my clients, my hours in class

conflict, and right now my clients come first since without them I cannot pay my bills.

In this study, when focused students were compared to unfocused students, it was apparent to this researcher from their responses that focused students were not concerned about money or possessions and were able to focus as students. They had adapted techniques and/or a philosophy that allowed them to focus on their education and their educational goals. From the interviews, it appeared that unfocused students were concerned more about money than their education and completing their studies within a reasonable time.

#### *Relationship with Significant Others and Family*

Both focused and unfocused students reported getting support from their family. Some students stated that relationships with significant others and family were not a problem because various family members came forth to help out. However, interviews indicated that there were other aspects related to this dimension. Students reported that family problems interfering with their education and family members helping out were also components of this dimension.

Jane: I am blessed to have a family structure, an excellent family structure. My mother is wonderful; she primarily keeps the kids while I am at school and my husband is at work at night. In addition, my sister, mother-in-law, sister-in-law pitch in whenever possible. On the rare occasions when I have had problems, last minute cancellations because the person is ill, people here at work, my co-workers have offered to keep my children.

Judy: My husband can at times pose problems especially when he wants to go out and I have to study. Also, sometimes my two daughters want so much attention I have to put everything aside including my studies.

Contrary to some ideas, male students help out with chores around the house. This in turn reduces the stress in a relationship.

Ken: I split the family responsibilities with my wife, in taking care of the baby and household chores. I clean the house, wash dishes, bathe my daughter, and wash clothes, just family stuff.

Joe: In the household I am the enforcer and handyman. I also help my wife with other things around the house.

Jill: My husband is also a student, and he is very supportive and takes care of most of the chores in the house since this is his last semester before graduation. I'm blessed to have a wonderful husband.

Focused students said they maintained balanced family relationships by enlisting the help of other family members; for most students interviewed family members played an integral role in helping them to overcome problems related to school.

Unfocused students indicated they had a difficult time balancing family and school and indicated they were sometimes frustrated because they did not see how the situation would resolve itself. These students had significant trouble coping and felt like giving up at times. From the interviews conducted it appeared to this researcher that these students lack structure, and this can be highlighted as a contributing factor to the inability of these students trying to cope in an adult institution environment.

Boshier (1977) sets forth a congruence model in which there are two groups of adult learners based on the strength of their motivation to successfully participate in education. The first group is made up of growth-oriented adults, which in this study are considered focused students who are motivated by internal forces and whose view of themselves is congruent with their view of the ideal self and how others see them. Growth-oriented or focused students are open to new experiences, remain focused on their goals despite any barriers, and enjoy participation in education. Deficiency-oriented adults or unfocused students are motivated by external factors and have a view of themselves that is incongruent with their view of an ideal self and how others see them. Anxiety engendered by this incongruence leads deficiency-oriented or unfocused students to avoid successful participation in education, and inhibits success since these students develop problems in taking focus away from the barriers that may confront them.

Judy: My responsibilities in the home cover cooking, shopping, and taking care of all the bills. My children sometimes throw things all over the house and I can't stand mess so I clean up. This is quite demanding

Focused students appeared to cope better by keeping the problem in perspective and believing one way or another the problem would eventually be resolved.

Joe: When my friends or family just can't understand why I need to study, I just go to a quiet place and block everything out. I still love them the same anyway.

Although both types indicated they received support from significant others, regarding the relationships with significant others and family, focused students did several things to help balance school and family. First, these students did not allow family problems to interfere with school. Additionally, they enlist the aid of other family

members to help out with chores around the house. In those cases when the male student's spouse worked, the male student helped out around the house in order to achieve balance in family relationships and school. Based on these interviews unfocused students tended to put more emphasis on the problem and let the family problem overshadow school.

### *Relationship with Faculty and Students*

Interviews indicated that both types of students were satisfied with the type of relationship they had with faculty and other students. However, one student who appeared not to be directly focused on education stated that "the faculty here is not that supportive, this is a money thing, and some of them must be more caring." Across-types comments about faculty ranged from, "faculty is very supportive and my advisor is incredible" to "every professor I've worked with thus far is always available." Focused students in this study identified and benefited from the support services on campus. These students made use of all the available opportunities, and the social interaction and integration with faculty members presented a contributing factor towards their academic success and retention.

Although positive comments were across types, the focused students appeared to interact with faculty outside of the classroom.

Rhea: Well, I have good interaction with most teachers in and out of class. I even have good interaction with deans. The power of the student does work. A teacher was not teaching us in class this semester, and I sent an e-mail with a c.c. to my fellow classmates, and the teacher was removed. The interaction is very positive, and on a good note, with the new teacher and the other teachers there is a lot of

communication back and forth, assistance is given whenever needed. When I send e-mails they are receptive in going over the points you do not comprehend.

Noel: My professors have all been wonderful. I am truly blessed to have such wonderful professors and be a student here at Barry. Without these professors I just couldn't make it.

Comments about student interaction were quite interesting. One student related that her interaction with students of all ages can be considered relatively good. "We can relate, I understand their experiences, I relate my experiences and this at times help them to cope. I sometimes hear students say, this is too much, and I use my experience to help them along. I would always tell them, I work full time, have five kids and let them know that they can make it." Another student reported that his interaction is wonderful; he stated that in every class he attends the environment is great with his classmates. This was one area where positive comments were even across types.

In this dimension focused students related to faculty on a different level than unfocused students. Unfocused students appeared to relate to faculty only in the classroom pertaining to the subject matter. One student highlighted: "My interaction is somewhat limited, I really don't go out there and search for them, I only see them in class, and there is not much interaction." From the interviews conducted, this researcher is of the view that one reason for the limited interaction by some adult students with faculty members is their heavy family responsibilities. Most students reported having family members take care of their children whilst in class. In order to relieve family members of these duties, students were unable to stay after class to form any social interaction or integration with faculty members. For some adult learners, social

interaction with faculty members or involvement in campus life can at times offer a challenge. As an example, social interaction and involvement in campus life implies juggling such competing challenges as parenting and maintaining a full-time work schedule, in addition to the equally-time and energy-consuming academic schedule (Vella, 1994). This makes outside interaction and participation in extra-curricular activities on campus difficult, if not impossible. Nonetheless, many adult learners are engaged as citizens and leaders in their communities.

From these responses, despite the lack of interaction outside of the classroom, data still presented support of mentoring in the classroom where faculty members provided guided learning and transformational learning to the adult students. Focused students appeared to develop mentoring relationships and used faculty as an additional resource to help them through the transition of their university experience. In this dimension it appears that whether a student departs from an institution is largely a result of the extent to which the student becomes academically and socially connected with the institution. The absence of interactions with professors is the single leading predictor of university attrition. Student interaction must go beyond the classroom in order for students to feel integrated. Integration is an important component for retaining adult students and it is particularly important in retaining adult /nontraditional-age students.

### *Educational Goals*

It was apparent to this researcher that both the focused students and the unfocused students had specific goals. However, when the two types were compared it appeared that the focused students wanted an education for not only what the degree could do for them monetarily but desired an education because of the positive impact education had on their



lives. The unfocused students however, possess dispositional barriers and this was reflected in their negative attitudes towards education and the positive impact education can have on their personal development. According to Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) dispositional barriers can be broken down into two components, informational and psychosocial. Informational barriers result from a lack of information or interest about the availability of support services. Psychosocial barriers result from attitudes and values. Dispositional barriers can produce results such as lack of confidence, time constraints, and lack of interest. These barriers are influenced by the characteristics of the individuals. The characteristics of the unfocused students interviewed showed that some adult students placed little value on their education and at times showed lack of self-confidence in succeeding in an educational environment. From the interview the focused students had well-planned goals:

Joan: My goals are to graduate with honors and return to work with the federal aviation administration.

Ken: My wife did not have a degree; she went first, and now I have followed behind. This is an accomplishment for my kids. By my example, my kids have excelled tremendously in school.

Unfocused students tended to have specific utilitarian educational goals that revolve around money.

George: In the field of Information Technology, the money is good and my eyes are set to have financial freedom.

In this study, the researcher found that focused students do differ from unfocused students. From the students' responses it appeared that focused students stayed focused

on their education; unfocused students were distracted from their education. Focused students were more resourceful than unfocused students in solving personal, emotional or financial problems that came up while they were in school. Focused students demonstrated an ability to utilize resources to their advantage; unfocused students appeared to become overwhelmed by their problems and not effectively utilize resources.

In order to grasp a further understanding of the factors which contribute to the retention of adults, students were asked, "How would you describe the initial stages or phases your family has gone through to your being in school?" The student's answers indicated joy, happiness, and pride in having their family go through the various stages or phases of acceptance and validation.

Rhea: Stages of being my crutch, being my backbone, they have taken a more active role in my children's education, they are now surrogate mothers

In one interview, the event was so profound that it changed the entire family's philosophy about education:

Noel: My grandmother and aunt are both educators and took personal interest in my career and education. My grandmother who was a principal would always say that a career is one thing but with an education you can climb a mountain. My parents and other family members are happy. I have been added to the list since I also want to be an educator.

Another meaningful event was for the student to successfully adapt to being in university. Students were asked, "How did you adapt to university culture?"

Jane: I had the fear of going back to school, but on entering I realized it was a very warm atmosphere. I was off and on in college for over twenty years; I've

gone to three or four different colleges and kept moving and changing degrees.

However, I've adapted well here since I get considerable support from my husband and the Writing Lab.

During the interview, most students had clear educational goals and upon entering the university were quite focused on their majors. The goals identified ranged from long term to short-term goals.

Joel: Bachelors in Information Technology.

Noel: Bachelors in Professional Administration.

For some of the adult students interviewed, the major changed after spending only a few semesters in class; others stayed the same, but some had long range educational goals.

Rhea: At the end of this I am going for my Masters and eventually a PhD.

Jane: I am completing my Masters of Science in Information Technology and might get another Masters or go directly to a PhD. Whichever one I am not stopping here.

Whilst conducting the interview with the adult students, it appeared that having an educational goal, whether short term or long term, helped the adult student to remain focused and able to deal with any unforeseen problems during the semester. Since goals play a role in learner persistence, it is imperative that adult educators enter a continuous dialogue with each adult student which leads to a better understanding of goals by both parties.

When students were asked who are the most meaningful people in their lives, students consistently mentioned family members as being the most important in their

lives while they were in school. However, it was quite interesting to hear most of the students during the interview mentioned the importance that God played in their lives. One student noted “with God being number one in my life family just falls into place.” During the interview, two of the ten participants mentioned teachers and advisors as being important people in their lives.

Noel: There are certain teachers who have given me things that I did not get in high school.....things I definitely need to survive during this period. The teachers are wonderful...I’m truly blessed, and they mean a lot to me.

Joe: My advisor, who has now retired was a God send, and mean a lot to me, she was a source of encouragement and was a guide to me during rough times.

Although only two of the participants in the interview specifically signaled out their professors and advisors as being quite meaningful in their lives, other students also mentioned teachers as being important although family took preference. Students noted that the professors were important to them in many ways; they were seen as role models, mentors, a coach and advisors. It was quite interesting to note that of the ten students interviewed five saw their professors as mentors and guides along the journey.

The students that identified professors as playing the role of mentors highlighted that these professors provided advice on methods and procedures, at times gave independent study, and were very helpful in assisting them through personal contacts for job leads. Students who saw professors as role models reflected on the uniqueness of the professor’s skills and qualities which they considered lacking in his or herself. The view of professors providing experiential learning was noted by many students, they saw the

professors as providing a dynamic relationship in the learning process which aimed at promoting their professional and personal development.

Several of the participants indicated that events, goals, and personal associations all contribute to their retention at the university. The data indicate that all three, events, goals, and personal associations, have something to do with the process that motivates students to continue their education. This suggests to this researcher that adult students will persist at a university if there is a high level of congruence between the students' values, goals, and attitudes and those of the university. Students stated during the interview that meaningful events positively reinforce the status of adult students to persist in completion of their education, along with commitment to educational goals, and encouragement from significant others. Receiving positive feedback from significant others, being satisfied with important educational events in their lives, and having positive interactions with faculty, appeared to have resulted in the enrollment persistence that then, in turn, leads to degree completion. Through reinforcing and confirming events, their own and their families', students believe they can do it educationally which also translates into degree completion. Jill explained the process of enrollment persistence towards degree completion. Jill was asked, "What were the factors that kept you going in school?"

Rhea: My children....definitely my children... This is a dream. From this educational experience my children are now doing better in school; they are showing more drive, determination, because with God's help I have shown them that nothing is impossible.

During the interview, some of the adult students noted that some problematic events and personal associations can lead to a high drop-out rate for adult students and related some of these incidences.

Although most of the students interviewed received family support, this could not be said for all the participants. Students were asked, "Can you describe the stages or phases your family has gone through due to you being in school?" For those students who received negative feedback from their families, their answers indicated an impending sense of doom regarding their education pursuit.

Judy: I am depressed very often. My husband doesn't want me to achieve my goals, but I am defying him and moving forward.

Victor: My mother feels I should be at home with her and my son, and would always make remarks about me studying at this age.

Although students stressed the importance of family members, it was interesting to note that some students saw family members as a cause of problems with their education. Students were asked, "What is the biggest family problem you face as a student?"

Joan: Not being there for my kids and doing all the necessary chores in the house.

Jill: My mother is often very ill and must go to the doctor and sometimes she is admitted to the hospital. Although my aunt is at home, I just wish I was there more to care for her.

Students have indicated that sometimes the most important people can cause the biggest problems. In talking to students it appeared that personal associations and family members cause problems which can deeply affect their progress and educational goals.

Judy: My biggest family problem is my husband. He is always upset because certain things are not done in the house, food is not prepared on time, and mainly because I am not around for him. This at times causes serious turbulence in the home and it affects my studies.

Of the perceived problematic events, goals, and personal associations, students indicated that problems regarding significant others and family outweighed problematic events and goals. Students' responses give strong indication that problematic personal associations impact student attrition.

### *Mentoring Relationships*

In the dimension relating to the impact of mentoring relationships and mentoring programs for adult students, the views were mixed. One student, who throughout the interview was quite focused on his goals, was asked, "Do you think a mentoring program for adult students on campus would be beneficial?" His response was as follows:

"Maybe not for me, when I know what I want I go get it. For those students with children, yes. The pressure is harder on them, and they need someone to nurture them, to keep them going; a mentor would be good, but the program should be set up that the mentor is available until 9:00pm."

Most of the students interviewed had informal mentors, and one student noted with a gleam in her eyes that she had been assigned a formal mentor on the job, and her progression career wise since then had been great. Students were asked, "Have you ever had a mentor whether formal or informal in your life?" Rhea noted:

Yes, I have had several mentors. It's a good experience to have someone to talk to about your problems, to assist you and guide you in the right direction. A mentor

looks out for you, have your best interest at heart. I think all students should have a mentor whether formal or informal.

Noel: Yes, my next door neighbor who was seventy-four years old was my mentor. She inspired me in going back to school. Even though I had spoken to my wife, I did not get that motivation until I spoke with my neighbor and she gave me hope.

Students were then asked whether they thought that having a mentor was an important tool and whether a mentoring program set up for adult students would help with retention of these adult students.

Joe: I believe that a mentor is essential for everyone in whatever area in life they are pursuing. A mentor can help ease the transition into any or all paths. Setting up a mentoring program on campus for adult students would be a great asset and very beneficial to all students.

Jill: A mentoring program would provide adult students with someone they can go to and communicate their feelings with; it would provide them the opportunity to get the needed direction, career or educational.

Joe: If I had a mentor, I would know where to go; professors are bombarded and cannot deal with so many persons. I wish right now I had someone to turn to, and the advisor is just not the right person; a mentor is better to have. A mentoring program on campus for adult students would definitely increase the enrollment rate and provide an easy transition for adults.



However, one student mentioned, "I am hardly on campus, I just come here for class and that's it. I really don't use any of the services provided and don't know if a mentoring program would help. Probably yes or probably no. I have never had a mentor."

In this dimension, it appears that most students, focused and unfocused, view mentoring programs as a promising and innovative approach that has potential to enhance the persistence of adult students towards accomplishing their goals. Most of the students in the interview saw this as a unique way of understanding and meeting the needs of adult students. Including a mentoring component as part of the adult education program will help to ensure that students are provided with further quality support services on campus. Faculty mentoring programs can be viewed as an effective retention strategy.

From the responses given during the interviews, this researcher is of the view that adult students must overcome certain barriers in order to remain in a university environment. These barriers include: inability to adapt learning strategies; lack of nurturing, for example, family support; lack of resources, for example, money; or lack of role models and mentors. Focused students took actions and practiced certain behavior in order to overcome these barriers. These actions included building a support system and increasing independence. The researcher noted during the interviews family support as a very important factor for adult students; conversely campus support, faculty, staff, peers were important support systems for adult students.

A support system provided by adult educators to transition adult learners during the learning process is important for retention. The expanded interest by adult education institutions in learning strategies is a result of the large and growing number of academically underprepared or disadvantaged adult students entering the university

classroom (Weinstein, 1988). To deal with this development, many adult institutions have created programs that help incoming adult students' learn-how-to-learn (Noel & Levitz, 1982). Studies indicate that the more the student understands about how they learn, the more likely they will become independent, responsible, self-confident learners (Sims & Ehrhardt, 1978; Myers, 1992). Much of the work done on support services for adult students focused on learning strategies (Weinstein, 1988). This is clearly appropriate since research suggests that returning to the classroom is a difficult experience for many adults. They feel intimidated by the university environment (Sandler-Smith, Allison, & Haynes, 2000) and their skills have often become rusty.

This section provided the findings from the interviews conducted in the study. The findings were presented in the form of a typology; a typology had been created to delineate two varieties of nontraditional-age students. This was followed by defining the six dimensions of contrast. The typological distinctions were then used to describe which factors contribute to the retention of nontraditional-age university students. The next section will deal with a discussion on the classroom observations and transformational learning process.

#### Observations - Transformational Learning in the Classroom

In this age of information, rapid shifts in careers, advancing technologies, increasing diversity within our population, and dramatic fluctuations in the personal contexts of our lives draw attention to our need for lifelong learning. Learning, however, continues to be framed within a technical-rational view of knowledge, in which we learn instrumentally to adapt to the demands of our outer environment. Bubbling just beneath this technical-rational surface is a continual search for meaning, a need to make sense of

the changes and the empty spaces we perceive both within ourselves and our world. This struggle for meaning, the need to feel and be authentic with ourselves and others, and to realize a more just social order, is the focus of several strands of research and theory referred to as transformative theories of adult learning (Clark, 1993). As reflected in the works of Mezirow (1991), Cranton (1994), Daloz (1986), and Freire (1970), transformative learning represents a heroic struggle to wrest consciousness and knowledge from the forces of unconsciousness and ignorance.

#### *Factors which Induce or Contribute to Transformational Learning*

This section addressed the following research questions: "What are the primary factors which can induce or contribute to transformational learning in the classroom?", "What challenges may arise for a faculty mentor who creates transformational learning in the classroom?", and "What measures can be used by faculty mentors to promote self-directed learning in the mentoring process?"

Among the factors which promote transformational learning are student and teacher roles and characteristics, the nature of course content and classroom environment, and instructional activities. However, not all teachers or all learners are predisposed to engage in transformative learning, and many adult learning situations do not lend themselves to these kinds of experiences. When transformational learning is part of a course of study, one role of the teacher is to establish an environment characterized by trust and care and to facilitate sensitive relationships among the participants (Taylor, 1998).

For this section of the study, the researcher conducted observations of four classrooms, two taught by female professors and two by male professors in different teaching areas. The subjects observed varied, and the teaching styles and methods

adopted in all the classrooms showed different teaching techniques and methods used to promote transformational learning. The observations were conducted over a four-week period between the hours of six and eight. The days of the observations were Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Of all the classes observed, one striking note made by the researcher was the dominance of females in comparisons with males. The highest number of males in any one classroom was four. The main areas observed were environmental factors, classroom activities and curriculum design.

### *Environmental Factors*

In the transformational learning process, it is imperative for adult educators to attend to the physical aspect of the learning environment. An environment that is cold and sterile, or that is cluttered, messy, and arranged haphazardly can reflect itself in the transformational learning process. In all four classrooms observed the environment was physically and psychologically comfortable. The atmosphere was polite, comfortable, and students seemed to enjoy both the topics and the informality of the learning process. In one classroom observed, the environment was one which allowed for student and teacher interaction during the break where assigned groups brought dinner to be served during break at each class period and everyone sat together, including the professor, and participated in the dinner whilst interacting among each other.

Although classes were scheduled from the hours of six until ten in the evening, none of the classes observed had long lectures. What was unique from the observations were that all professors fostered intellectual freedom and encouraged exploration. From the discussions in the classrooms all faculty members treated students as intelligent

experienced adults whose opinions were appreciated and students were free from coercion.

In the transformational learning environment, the goal of the adult educator is to enter into a discourse of trust. This can be achieved when the teacher becomes an active listener and begins to hear and understand the meaningful perspectives of the learner. During the observations, the professors appeared focused at all times and followed carefully the sequence of thought of the adult learners. The professor as-active-listener was indicated by the professors responding to the ideas of the students in a critical and analytical fashion. Listening is important in a transformational learning environment since the adult students usually do not enter the classroom ready to do reflection nor have the skills to enter into critical discourse. Thus, during the observation the professors epitomized true critical reflection by sharing their own transformational journey and explained the cardinal elements of critical reflection through constructive discourse.

#### *Classroom Activities*

Although there was active involvement in the learning process, the interaction with male professors was more noticeable than with female professors. One classroom observed specifically highlighted numerous aspects of transformational learning process taking place. Adults bring a great deal of life experience into the classroom, and this was highlighted during the teaching process when students related their experiences to the subject matter being taught. The feedback was not only student-to-student, but throughout the observation the researcher noted that the feedback was also a two way process of teacher/student. This was the only classroom where male students actively participated in the learning process, and the professor complimented students which

motivated them to take control over their learning. In this classroom students were seen more as self-directed learners and were challenged beyond their level of ability.

In two of the classrooms observed, the professor used different teaching strategies, namely, lectures, role play, group projects and discussions. With the different strategies adopted this kept the attention of the students. From the researchers' observation, students worked well in groups and enjoyed the method of role play used to gain a better understanding of the area under study.

### *Curriculum Design*

Adults prefer courses that focus on the application of the concept to relevant problems. Therefore, adult educators must design programs to accept viewpoints from people in different life stages and with different value sets. Taking a close look at the curriculum design for the four classes observed, one of the courses made provision for students to give critical reflections on the readings. The actual course content placed students in a position where they would be more focused on being self-directed learners.

Further, the curriculum was designed where projects assigned were more self-designed learning projects over group learning experiences. This part of the curriculum showed transformational learning taking place since adult students prefer to have control of their own pace. The curriculum was structured in such a way to foster personal development of the adult students rather than developing specific competencies.

### *Challenges for Adult Educators in Transformational Learning*

Though transformational learning has powerful potential for enhancing and accelerating students' self-actualization process, there are important considerations for adult educators attempting to foster a transformational learning environment. During the

observation process, it was obvious to this researcher that all students were not open to transformational learning. There were instances where the professors were precipitating transformational learning in the classroom and in the view of this researcher some of the adult students were clearly not prepared for this process, or did not fully understand the possible consequences of this type of learning. Further, although some students were eager to grasp this learning process and were receptive to personal change and evolution, this researcher questioned, whether the professors were adequately prepared for this process.

Some students appeared to be burnt out, and the learning process at some times appeared to be beyond their ability to cope. This researcher at times reflected on and questioned how the professor would know when the time was right to expose a student to transformational learning. From the observations, it was quite noticeable to this researcher, that there is a fine line between adult education and the transformational learning process.

#### Analysis of Quantitative Data

In order to determine the faculty members' perceived effective behavior and perception of the mentor's effective behavior in higher education, the researcher submitted the data to an analysis of variance (ANOVA) using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+). The research questions in this section were "What measures are used by faculty mentors to delineate their behaviors and roles as mentors?" "How do faculty mentors see the purposes and objectives of mentoring?" and "What functions do faculty mentors see themselves serving as mentors to adult students?"

### *A Description of the Sample*

Thirteen full-time faculty members were sent the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (PAMS). Ten faculty members returned the completed PAMS representing a 76.9% response rate. From the responses the distribution was equal with five females and five males. The ethnicity of the faculty members was largely Caucasian, with only one faculty member in the study falling under the category of "other." The average age of the sample was 55.4 years. Table 3 provides a detailed demographic profile about the characteristics of the faculty members who participated in the study.

Table 3. *Demographic Characteristics of the Faculty Members*

Faculty Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Male	5	50.0
Female	5	50.0
Age		
Under 35	0	00.0
35-45	0	00.0
46-55	6	60.0
Over 55	4	40.0
Ethnicity		
African American	0	00.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	00.0
Hispanic	0	00.0
Caucasian	9	90.0
Other	1	10.0



### *Methods of Scoring Results*

The PAMS instrument contains 55 specific mentor interpersonal behaviors which integrate the theory and practice of adult mentoring to the definitions of the mentor role, functions, and specific mentoring behaviors. The PAMS evaluates the effectiveness of the role, function, and behaviors of faculty mentors.

The PAMS has seven scoring components: overall effectiveness (composite score) and six subscale scores of distinct behavioral mentoring functions. The six subscale concepts are: *Relationship Emphasis, Information Emphasis, Facilitative Focus, Confrontive Focus, Mentor Model, and Student Vision.*

A composite score was calculated for males and females by summing the responses of the 55-item statements on each PAMS. The subscale scores were calculated by summing the responses of items identified as related to each of the six subscale concepts for each respondent.

All faculty members involved in the study completed the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*. Table 4 outlines the descriptive statistics provided by the self-reported responses of the faculty members who returned the instrument.

Table 4. *PAMS – Function Score and Function Mean*

Function	Sum Score (Function Mean)	SD	Min	Max	N
Relationship Emphasis	39.70 (3.97)	3.49	34	36	10
Information Emphasis	33.10 (3.31)	5.20	28	41	10

Table 4. *PAMS – Function Score and Function Mean (cont.)*

Facilitative Focus	19.00 (3.17)	3.30	13	23	10
Confrontive Focus	39.90 (3.32)	8.21	26	49	10
Mentor Model	23.40 (3.90)	3.98	18	28	10
Student Vision	38.90 (3.54)	6.44	29	46	10

The total number of full-time faculty members completing the scale was 10. To compare the functions, it was necessary to obtain a mean of the items which constituted each function. This information is provided in Table 4 (function mean). The area in which the faculty members reported the highest level of activity was in response to the items representing the behaviors of the Relationship Emphasis (3.97). The next highest average was associated with those behaviors of Mentor Model, Student Vision, Confrontive Focus and Information Emphasis. The function which faculty members reported practicing the least was Facilitative Focus type behavior with an average of 3.17 points. The behaviors related to the Confrontive Focus had the most variance with a standard deviation of 8.21 points. Behaviors relating to the Facilitative Focus and Relationship Emphasis had the least variance with standard deviations of 3.30 and 3.49 respectively.

The teaching areas used in the study were English, theology, information technology, political science, philosophy, social science and legal studies. In order to determine the behavioral effectiveness in accordance with the PAMS, an analysis of

variance (ANOVA) analytical technique was used to test whether there were any significant differences in relation to the teaching areas. (Table 5)

Table 5. *Analysis of Variance: Teaching Areas*

Function	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Relationship Emphasis</b>					
Between Groups	29.433	6	4.906	.182	.963
Within Groups	80.667	3	26.889		
Total	110.100	9			
<b>Information Emphasis</b>					
Between Groups	143.733	6	23.956	.771	.641
Within Groups	93.167	3	31.056		
Total	236.900	9			
<b>Facilitative Focus</b>					
Between Groups	76.000	6	12.667	1.727	.350
Within Groups	22.000	3	7.333		
Total	98.000	9			
<b>Confrontive Focus</b>					
Between Groups	490.400	6	81.733	2.105	.289
Within Groups	116.500	3	38.833		
Total	606.900	9			
<b>Mentor Model</b>					
Between Groups	135.900	6	22.650	10.454	.040
Within Groups	6.500	3	2.167		
Total	142.400	9			
<b>Student Vision</b>					
Between Groups	202.900	6	33.817	.597	.730
Within Groups	170.000	3	56.667		
Total	372.900	9			

The results of the analysis in the teaching area, when using an F-test, showed a significant difference for the mentor model. In the analysis  $F(6, 3) = 10.454$ . The observance significance level is 0.04. Among the seven teaching areas, a significant difference is reflected under the mentor model,  $0.04 < 0.05$ . These results indicated that there was reason to reject the null hypothesis. Under teaching area, the test of

homogeneity of variance cannot be performed because the sum of case weights is less than the number of groups.

*Comparisons of Cohen's Norms – Principle of Adult Mentoring Scale*

Participants' scores in relation to the PAMS means is an indicator of their behavioral effectiveness. The male and female mean scores in Table 6 resulted in not effective, less effective, and effective mean scores when compared to Cohen's norms of the PAMS in Table 7.

Table 6. *Mean Scores for Male and Female Full-time Faculty*

	Male Mean Score	Female Mean Score
Overall Score	193.40	152.50
Relationship Emphasis	40.20	39.20
Information Emphasis	34.40	31.80
Facilitative Focus	19.40	18.60
Confrontive Focus	38.60	41.20
Mentor Model	21.60	25.20
Student Vision	40.40	37.40

Table 7. *Norms – Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*

	Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective
Overall Score			212.73		
Relationship Emphasis			40.37		
Information Emphasis			38.52		
Facilitative Focus			22.26		

Table 7. *Norms – Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale (cont.)*

Confrontive Focus			45.65		
Mentor Model			22.89		
Student Vision			43.04		

From Cohen, N. H. (1993, August). Development and validation of the principles of adult mentoring scale for faculty mentors in higher education. (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1993). Dissertation Abstract International-A 54/02, Section A, p.144.

Both male and female faculty members' mean scores resulted in not effective, less effective, and effective mean scores when compared to Cohen's mentor role competency range of scores for effectiveness. (Table 8)

Table 8. *Mentor Role Competency Scores*

Overall Score				
55-190	191-205	206-219	220-234	235-275
Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective
Relationship Emphasis				
10-35	36-38	39-41	42-44	45-50
Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective
Information Emphasis				
10-33	34-36	37-39	40-42	43-50
Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective
Facilitative Focus				
6-18	19-20	21-22	23-24	25-30
Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective

Table 8. *Mentor Role Competency Scores (cont.)*

Confrontive Focus				
12-39	40-43	44-46	47-50	51-60
Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective
Mentor Model				
6-18	19-21	22-23	24-25	26-30
Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective
Student Vision				
11-37	38-41	42-44	45-47	48-55
Not Effective	Less Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Highly Effective

From Cohen, N. H. (1995, Summer). *The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*.  
*Mentoring: New strategies and challenges*, (pp.28-29). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RELATIONSHIP OF FINDINGS TO EXISTING LITERATURE

The main focus of this study was to determine the roles that faculty mentors play toward enhancing the learning process of adult learners in schools of continuing education at the university level. To identify the various roles, the study also looked at the measures used by faculty mentors to delineate their behaviors and roles as mentors and how faculty mentors see the purposes and objectives of mentoring. This study also sought to gain an understanding of three important factors in adult education. These were, first, from the students' perspectives, "What are the perceptions of mentoring and the factors which contribute to the retention of adult students?", second, "What are the primary factors which can induce or contribute to transformational learning through mentoring?", and third, "What challenges may arise for a faculty mentor who creates transformational learning experiences in the classroom?" In this chapter, the researcher will link the findings of this study to the existing literature.

Case studies are undertaken to make the case understandable (Stake, 1995). People can learn a great deal about what is general from cases and also by forming generalizations from their own experience. "Naturalistic generalizations are described as "a partially intuitive process arrived at by recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context" (Stake, 1995, p.63). Kemmis (1974) adds that naturalistic generalizations develop within a person as a result of experience, and may be verbalized, and may pass from tacit to propositional knowledge. The purpose of Chapter Four was to provide naturalistic generalizations that emerged from this study depicting the views of nontraditional-age students in adult education. Chapter Four also provided an analysis of

classroom observations conducted during this study over a three week period, and results of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* completed by full-time faculty members who agreed to participate in the study.

This study employed three research procedures: interviews, observations and questionnaires. Because the phenomena under investigation were complex and multifaceted, the study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative enquiry.

#### *The Role of Faculty Mentors in Enhancing the Learning Process of Adult Learners*

Researchers insist that having a mentor is critical to academic success and achievement of career goals (Kavina & Pedras, 1986; Merriam, Thomas & Zeph, 1987). The mentor functions as the major source of sharing information with the adult students. Mentored students are placed in better positions to be socialized into the culture of the discipline or field in the adult education setting. As evidence of the benefits of mentorship, studies have found that those who are mentored are more likely to achieve high levels of academic success and meaningful employment (Merriam, Thomas, & Zeph, 1987). More important, mentoring roles have influences on future development of adult students in addition to their successful completion of the degree program. Generating long-lasting effects, the support experiences from faculty mentors lead students toward their life-long work and enable them to begin the process of self-mentoring (Schubert, 1992). The results of this study support the importance of mentoring in adult education as discussed in the literature review of Chapter 2, and the results of studies conducted by Merriam, Thomas, and Zeph (1987) who asserted that mentored students are in a better position to be socialized into culture and adapt to an adult education environment.



A long held principle in adult education is to start the process with the learner's input. Malcolm Knowles, who deeply influenced many of today's adult educators, extended this idea to urge that program planning should recognize students' autonomy and involve them in diagnosing their learning needs, designing a plan of learning, and managing and evaluating their learning experiences (Knowles, 1970, 1980; Knowles & Associates, 1990). In this study, taking into consideration the concept of learning highlighted by Knowles, the question is: "What role do faculty mentors play toward enhancing the learning process of adult learners in schools of continuing education at the university level?"

Wong (2003) notes that adult students can benefit from the guidance of a faculty mentor who values experiential learning as a means of fostering academic and personal growth. Adult students interviewed in this study revealed the importance of the benefits gained from interactions with faculty members which enhanced their personal, academic and career development. According to Wong, more and more adult learners are entering or re-entering university, often bringing with them rich experiential learning achieved in a variety of contexts. Faculty mentors can assist students by first applying teaching and learning practices that could foster reflective thinking, and second, by promoting experiential learning structures that can assist adult students in documenting evidence of learning. In this study, the full-time faculty members who were participants exhibited the functions of mentoring as a transformational learning process as noted in the literature by Mezirow (2000) by providing learning strategies to develop critical thinking and reflection in adult learners.

Kolb (1984) defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. To assist learners in creating meaningful new knowledge, faculty mentors can design teaching and learning activities that are active, situated, and integrative (Mentkowski, 2000). This involves:

- Allowing learners to test their judgments and abilities in action;
- Encouraging learners to think during experience; and
- Providing “hooks” for students to connect experience with disciplinary abstractions.

Some adult students interviewed by this researcher during the study noted that faculty mentors provided reflective learning by establishing learning structures where students were able to document information in logs or journals. Students were allowed to record their observations and thoughts throughout the class, and the extracts were incorporated into written assignments at the end of the semester. Wong (2003) asserts that in sponsored experiential learning, learning contracts provide a structure that takes into consideration the goals and expectations of multiple parties, including the learner, the faculty mentor, and the institution.

Faculty members can play the role of providing experiential learning. Experiential learning can be systematically documented in a learning portfolio, which becomes a vehicle for providing evidence of developmental process. In portfolio-assisted assessment of prior experiential learning, adult learners can present a variety of best practices and reflective thought in relation to the learning outcomes of a course (Wong, 1999).

Experiential learning provides an “umbrella” under which faculty mentors can explore

and experiment with a variety of teaching and assessment strategies that can facilitate academic and personal growth.

Faculty mentors support much of what is currently known about how individuals learn, including the socially constructed nature of learning and the importance of experiential, situated learning experiences (Kerka, 1997). Faculty mentors can provide and facilitate learning for adult students by modeling problem-solving strategies, guiding learners in approximating the strategies while learners articulate their thought processes. Faculty mentors can provide authentic, experiential learning opportunities as well as an intense interpersonal relationship through which social learning takes place. This is consistent with the views of adult students in this study and the observations conducted by this researcher in four classrooms, where faculty members acted as role models in guiding adult learners during the learning process.

In a study conducted by Bell (1997), he likens the faculty mentor's role in experiential learning to that of birds guiding their young in leaving the nest; they support without rescuing, provide scaffolding, and have the courage to let learners fail. Learning from experience, "mentees speed past learning basic routines and get on to the job, they enjoy a fast linkup between what was learned in the classroom and what is needed in the workplace" (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995, p.60). Exploring how experience is transformed into expertise, Cleminson and Bradford (1996) identify three types of learning: trial and error, observing an experienced person, and guided learning. The latter, they suggest, is characteristic of the most effective mentoring. Applying the three types of learning identified by Cleminson and Bradford to this study, this researcher observed areas of guided learning in the classroom. However, during the interviews conducted with adult

students in this study, some students mentioned that observing an experienced person, for example, a faculty member, provided scaffolding for learning. Trial and error as a learning component was not observed by this researcher during the study.

With trust as the foundation of the relationship, mentors give protégés a safe place to try out ideas, skills, and roles with minimal risk (Kaye & Jacobson, 1996). According to Galbraith and Cohen (1995) “the idea of learning as a transaction, an interactive and evolving process between mentors and their adult learners, is considered a fundamental component of the adult mentoring relationship” (p.17).

The mentor was described, in Greek mythology and in practice, as an older guide to a younger protégé. Catherine Hansman cites two recent authors’ characterizations of the mentor role as follows, “interpreters of the environment” (Daloz, 1986) and experienced persons “working with less experienced persons to promote both professional and personal development” (Caffarella, 1993). This researcher suggests that these latter day interpretations are more appropriate descriptions of the role of a faculty mentor for adult students.

As noted in the literature review presented in Chapter Two, within the mentorship process, a mentor often assumes multiple roles to bring about the enhancement of the mentee’s professional, personal, and psychological development. There has been little investigation of mentoring phases or stages from a conceptual and theoretical perspective, except for the work of Kram (1985) and Cohen (1995). Kram examined the phases of a mentor relationship from the perspective of psychological and organizational factors that influence career and psychological functions performed. She suggests that developmental relationships vary in length but generally proceed through four predictable, yet not

entirely distinct, phases. In looking at the phases presented by Kram and Cohen, this researcher related these phases to this study to determine if during the mentoring process faculty mentors had sufficient time to complete each phase effectively.

Research studies show that the role of a faculty mentor is demanding in terms of developing rapport and instilling trust in the adult students. Cohen (1995) in writing about the role of the mentor in adult learning cites four phases of the relationship between mentor and protégé:

- The early phase in which trust is earned by the mentor
- The middle phase in which rapport is established and goals can be focused upon
- The latter phases when mentors provide guidance and feedback
- The final phase, where mentors challenge their protégés to apply what they have learned.

These phases can be also applied to the relationship that mentors establish with adult students. The efficacy of the mentor relies upon successful accomplishment of the first phase, establishing trust. For the adult student, the positive expectations that emerge during the initiation phase are continually tested against reality. In the third phase, the adult student experiences new independence and autonomy, as well as turmoil, anxiety, and feelings of loss. In the final phase, the mentor and mentee recognize that a shift in developmental tasks has occurred and that the previous mentorship process is no longer needed or desired. Getting out of sync with the developmental phases of the mentoring relationship could result in a less-than-positive experience for both the mentor and

mentee. Although everyone will not experience the phases at the same rate, it is essential that he or she go through all of them, and in sequence.

Taking into consideration the overarching research question that guided this study, if one accepts the stage theory of mentoring, it is obvious that the time commitment required precludes this being accomplished in a single semester. Mentoring is not a short-term relationship. Mentoring would not fit the adult education model of taking a series of courses with different professors if the expectation is for all faculty to mentor all students. One course in one semester does not provide sufficient time to move through the total process. From the literature, this justifies the notion for a mentoring program set up specifically where faculty members who encompass the complete mentor role can be assigned as mentors from the period an adult student is enrolled in the institution.

Good mentoring is a distinctive and powerful process that enhances intellectual, professional, and personal development through a special relationship characterized by highly emotional and often passionate interactions between the mentor and mentee. According to Brookfield (1990), although it can be assumed that all professors in adult education engage in some level of instructional activity, it cannot be concluded that all are actively involved in mentoring, nor should they be. Brookfield further states that the complete mentor role does not fit all individuals: some faculty are less inclined toward developing close relationships with students and with nurturing the student's development. Not all faculty are capable of or willing to take on this role and if required to do so would be inadequate or "incomplete" mentors. From the analysis of the Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale, which identified the self-reported behaviors of faculty mentors, the results were consistent with the study conducted by Brookfield.

Although some faculty mentors exhibited the six mentoring functions developed by Cohen (1993), this could not be said for all ten faculty members who participated in this study.

Taking into consideration the role that faculty mentors play, Daloz (1986) notes that even if all professors are not mentors, understanding the role of the complete mentor can be a template for the good professor. The essence of mentoring is grounded in the concept of one-on-one teaching. If one is engaged in mentoring, one is engaged in teaching. The functions of the effective mentor, which include building a relationship, providing information, being facilitative and challenging, serving as a role model, and co-constructing a vision, are not far removed from what good professors do. In examining the role of a skillful professor, it seems clear that there is a high correlation between the two roles (Brookfield, 1990, 1995; Daloz, 1986). This researcher suggests that regardless of the academic discipline or subject, the instructional process can be enhanced by understanding and incorporating aspects of the complete mentor role. From the study, the aspects of mentoring varied according to gender and teaching area; the complete mentor role as highlighted by Cohen (1995) was not present in all six functions. However, in accordance with the literature, this researcher suggests that faculty members in schools of adult and continuing education should gain an understanding of the complete role of a mentor and incorporate aspects into their teaching strategies.

Professors as mentors, according to Daloz (1999), provide a balance of support and challenge such that our learners feel safe to move in the environment. This was evident by this researcher during the classroom observations where faculty members provided an environment of openness and trust and exhibited genuine support for the adult students.

From ancient times to contemporary life, mentors have challenged students to have a vision that places their journey in a larger context and invokes purpose in their lives. Mentoring is a special role that should only be assigned to professors who embrace it. Faculty mentors support their students, challenge their students, and help their students construct a vision to further their educational journey. Complete mentors work in a truly responsive and interactive way with learners, which allows for a profound affirmation of both teaching and learning in the adult education environment. After an analysis of the interviews conducted in this study, it is the recommendation of this researcher that adult educators in schools of adult and continuing education develop a mentoring program for the enhancement of the academic success of adult students. However, this researcher, in reviewing the literature and the studies conducted by Cohen, recommends that faculty members participating in a formal mentoring program must totally embrace the aspects of a complete mentor.

#### *Retention of Non-traditional Age Students*

In June of 1971, Barry University formed the Department of Continuing Education. Due to the demand on institutions to provide education for adult learners, the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education was established on July 1, 1982. From its inception until today, the school has seen a drastic increase in the enrollment of adult students. In 2002 the number reported was 2,566, and in 2003 that number increased to 2,846 as shown in Chapter Three of this study. In this researcher's view, this observation of the increase in enrollment justifies the findings from studies conducted that the growth over the last generation of the number of adult learners among the total population of adult education enrollments has been well noted. However, despite the



steady growth, the number of withdrawals is quite prevalent, with 181 adult students withdrawing in 2002 and 243 withdrawing in 2003. The reasons for the withdrawals were not available; therefore in this study this researcher could not identify a factor that would have led to the withdrawal of these adult students. In light of this, there is a need for further research to determine the factors which contribute to the withdrawals of adult students at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education, and similar adult education institutions. From the interviews conducted with adult students during this study and the responses given for reasons which led to their retention, this researcher is of the view that if the necessary support services were available these may effect a decrease in the number of adult students withdrawing before completion of studies.

Research studies show that the proportion of enrollment for adult students varies from year to year, but during the 1990s the number of adult students aged twenty-five and older has risen to between 40% and 45% of all enrollments. Most of these persons are between twenty-five and forty-nine years old, making up 39.4% of the adult education total in 1995. The likelihood is that adult participation will remain at those levels or possibly increase (NCES, 2000). However, in this study sixty five percent of the adult students enrolled in the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education were between the age of thirty-five and forty-four. The age category as noted in research studies during the 1990's differs from that shown in this study in 2004.

The presence of adult students in adult education is no longer an emerging trend but a reality. Retaining these students requires a change in perspective among educators and administrators accustomed to dealing with the traditional-age student population. "The concept of persistence or retention must be thought of differently for adults" (Pappas &

Loring, 1985, p.139). Defining retention in terms of program degree completion is relevant only for some. Adult students have diverse characteristics and life circumstances that affect their participation in education. As they handle multiple roles and responsibilities, the student role is often secondary. They have more and varied past experiences, are more concerned with practical application, and have greater self-determination and acceptance of responsibility (Schlossbery, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989). During the interviews conducted in this study, this researcher observed the different characteristics of the adult students, and from the responses given during the interviews most adult students reported handling multiple roles and responsibilities. However, despite these roles, it appears to this researcher that most of the adult students were still able to effectively balance school and work.

Student persistence and departure is becoming one of the most studied areas in adult education (Tinto, 1993; Braxton, 2000). Braxton, Shaw-Sullivan and Johnson (1997) indicate that the lack of student persistence constitutes a puzzle. In citing Tinto (1993), they write:

...Institutional rates of student departure constitute a puzzle, one which might be labeled the departure puzzle. Given the availability of numerous guides on the selection of universities and the enormous amount of attention that parents, adult students and university officials focus upon the university selection process, it is puzzling that almost one-half of the adult student population departs from the institution at the end of the first year (p.63).

Nontraditional-age students were asked to respond to open-ended questions. The questions fell into four categories adopted from a similar study of adult students

conducted by Bean and Metzner (1985): (1) environmental factors related to work, (2) environmental factors related to encouragement and support from significant others, (3) environmental factors related to encouragement and support from faculty, staff and other students, and (4) perceived gains.

### *Environmental Factors Related to Work*

Contrary to the literature, students reported that working part-time or full-time did not adversely affect persistence. Nora and Wedham (1991) state that while encouragement and support was found to have the largest impact on a student's decision to remain in a university, work may negate the positive effects that both academic integration and encouragement have on a student's persistence.

During the interviews students reported that time spent at work took away from time spent studying and that work "slowed them down" because they were not able to take a lot of courses during the semester. Some students in this study also reported feeling "worn out" because they had to work long hours and attend the university. However, from the interview, none of the students indicated that any of these problems were severe enough to cause them to drop out of the university. Nontraditional-age students' comments during the interviews regarding work, left a strong impression to this researcher that they can and often do find creative solutions to work related problems, and that working, part-time or full-time, did not impinge on the students' ability or desire to continue with their education.

The environmental factor related to work also included the factor of the students' monetary situation as it impacted retention. Unfortunately, financial aid continues to be a major factor in the lack of student persistence. Saint John, Cabrera, Nora and Asker

(2000) state that national studies show finance-related factors (student aid, tuition, and other costs, including living) explained about half the total variance in the student persistence process. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999) "lack of money is one of the two most cited reasons for adult nonparticipation in adult education, including higher education" (p.56). Tinto (1993) asserts that effect of finances upon student attrition can be indirect and long-term as well as short-term character. Family finances affect persistence through their influences on educational goals. Finances also affect decisions on whether to attend university in the first place, how much education to seek, and where one chooses to attend university. Financial aid has been found to be a significant factor in retention in many studies (Nora, 1990) as substantiated by this study when some students indicated that receiving financial aid is important to their continuing their studies.

#### *Environmental Factors Related to Encouragement and Support from Significant Others*

This factor included measures of family responsibilities and encouragement and support from family and friends to enroll and then complete university. Students' comments in this study indicated that encouragement and support from significant others could take on two different forms. The first form of encouragement reflects words and behaviors that imply that students are being encouraged to attend the university by significant others in their lives. The second form of encouragement reflects words that imply family members and significant others are not only supportive of the student staying in the university, but that significant others' behavior is supportive to the extent that they are willing to take on additional family responsibilities to help the student once he or she is enrolled.

Ely (1997) indicates that the two largest concerns for adult students are family and finances. The adult student may very well experience guilt attempting to balance his or her education, job, family and household. Nontraditional-age students reported that encouragement from significant others had played a very important role in the students' desire to enroll or re-enroll and to persist to complete their education. This is consistent with what is in most of the literature. A number of studies focus on the importance of encouragement by significant others. Nora and Cabrera (1994) state that words of encouragement by family and friends are often considered very influential. This is substantiated by Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, and Pasceralla (1996) who state that the role of encouragement can be considered a contributing factor in predicting the persistence for adult students.

Nontraditional-age students in this study talked about another form of encouragement from significant others, of "helping out behavior." The researcher's literature searches found very little on this factor. Bean and Metzner (1985) state that older students consider family reaction to their university attendance to be an important aspect of satisfaction with the university experience. Bean and Metzner go on to report that older female dropouts compared to persisters at these universities rated their husbands as providing less functional help. This study found the literature incomplete on this factor of encouragement and suggests that future research be focused on this issue. As one student eloquently stated, "It's one thing to say I have your full support and backing; it's another thing to help me when the going gets rough."

During the interview, students reported that even though family members were a source of emotional support, family members can also "cause real problems" for the

students. Some students reported encountering problems with their husband and children, yet these students were able to deal with the family problems and either return to, or remain, in school.

Another interesting point raised by the students during the interview, was the issue of being a role model for their children. Nontraditional-age students who were parents said that they wanted their children to be happy and see them reach the stage of graduation from the university. They did not want to portray any aspects which showed that they were ready to give up. Some students also mentioned that they wanted to give their children a better life. This study found nothing on the role model factor and suggests future research look at how children might be a contributing factor in the academic success and retention of their parents in adult education.

#### *Environmental Factors Related to Encouragement and Support from Faculty and Students*

During the interview, when adult students were asked, "While you have been in the university, who are the most important people in your life?" most responses referred to family as being the most important part in their lives; however, some students in this study indicated that encouragement from faculty, either in the form of formal classroom interaction or in the form of informal contact outside the classroom, played an integral role in the student's desire to persist in the university. Students said that the effect faculty had on them was faculty's ability to give reassurance and positive encouragement to get a degree. Several students identified faculty as being mentors and friends. In this study, it appears to this researcher from the responses given by adult students during the interview that support from family and encouragement from faculty members can be tools used to

reduce the dropout rate among adult students, thereby leading to academic success and student retention.

In an extensive review of the literature, Tinto (1975) developed a theoretical model that sought to explain post-secondary education dropout. He concluded that attrition was due to insufficient integration into the social sphere and academic domain. In 1987, Tinto expanded his research on college dropout to include retention factors, which resulted in a student integration model of college persistence.

According to Tinto (1987), interactions between the individual and the academic environment, as well as the social interactions between the student and peer groups within the institution, strengthen the integration of that student which results in the students' ability and desire to persist. His research supports the findings in this study in that retention through affiliation with peers and professors of integration into the value system of the college can increase persistence. Tinto (1998) argues that students must be integrated academically and socially into the campus culture if they are to be successful, while Rendon (1994) calls the validation of students' experiential knowledge as a way to provide them with a positive learning environment on campus where new knowledge can be acquired.

Lewin (1936) posits that individual behavior is a function of the interaction between the individual and the environment and the notion that challenge between the individual and the environment must be balanced with environmental support. In case of institutions this refers to student support services, academic support, and social integration. Strong faculty/staff relationships with students inside and outside the classroom (Tinto, 1993) contribute to the formation of successful learning communities. This finding was strongly

supported in this study. Faculty's and staff's willingness to spend time with students outside of class was seen as a significant outcome in the students' feeling, they were valued and there was genuine concern for their academic success. This study showed that informal interaction with faculty is significant.

Much has been written and reported on academic and social integration, their relationships to student enrollment behavior, and how the relationships differ for traditional and non-traditional students (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Such findings help the university appreciate that student retention is related to the quality of faculty-student interactions. Faculty willing to devote their time to the development and enhancement of the student beyond the classroom setting were critical to the success of the adult students.

Austin (1977) reports that students who interact more frequently with faculty report significantly greater satisfaction with the university environment. Pascarella, Terenzini, and Wolfe (1986) emphasize the influence of faculty involvement on student retention and satisfaction with education. Kramer and Spencer (1989) state: "Overall, faculty-student contact is an important factor in student achievement, persistence, academic-skill development, personal development, and general satisfaction with the university experience" (p.105).

In this study, most non-traditional-age students' responses during the interview, regarding interactions with faculty left the impression to this researcher that these relationships are important and reflect the significance placed on relationships as reported in the literature. Results from studies conducted found that when interactions between students and faculty are frequent and when these interactions occur in diverse situations, informal as well as formal, students' sense of purpose is fostered (Pascarella, 1980).



Pascarella further suggests that informal interaction with faculty is one of the important components of social, and perhaps of academic integration. Presumably the more an adult student interacts with faculty across a range of informal settings, the stronger the personal bonds they may develop with the university and, consequently, the less likely the chances they will withdraw voluntarily.

To this researcher, another form of interaction that proved to be quite significant for adult student retention was faculty mentoring. When students were asked whether a mentoring program for adult students on campus would be beneficial the responses were mixed. However, most of the students interviewed saw mentoring as providing a great impact for academic success and student retention.

Mentoring programs are designed to help students succeed and are found to be crucial components of other academic support programs. Pascarella and Terenzini (1977) found that mentoring relationships contribute to a greater academic performance and personal development as well as having a positive influence on retention. According to Endo and Harpel (1982), "Studies have shown that students who interact frequently with faculty in a mentoring process are more satisfied with their collegiate experiences than those who do not connect with faculty and staff" (p.116). Futhermore, (Kram, 1988; Lester & Johnson, 1981; Shandley, 1989; Zey, 1984) state that "such satisfaction has long been experienced by students and professionals fortunate enough to acquire a faculty or professional mentor to teach them the ropes and guide their efforts early in their careers or crucial points in their academic, personal, or professional development" (p.200).

Johnson (1989) says that mentoring involves dealing with the total personality of an individual in order to advise, counsel and provide them with guidance. Mentors fill many

roles such as friend, advisor, activities coordinator and personal counselor. Their roles differ from student to student. Mentors teach in "the classroom of life," while their lectures are delivered one-on-one. The mentoring relationship itself can take on various faces. However, from the analysis of the interviews and observations conducted in this study, this researcher observed that this form of faculty interaction is worthwhile and critical to student persistence.

The case for close, personal, and frequent mentoring relationships between faculty mentors and protégés is not difficult to defend in terms of research findings. DeCoster and Brown (1982) concluded that students who experience a high degree of faculty interaction seem to take a far more active role in their education than do their peers. Not only are they more interested in pursuing their own intellectual interest, but they are more actively engaged in utilizing the existing resources and structures of their institutions and in changing them in the direction that responds better to their needs. DeCoster and Brown further state that "these students more often help initiate new courses, took exams in lieu of required courses, participated in study groups among some of the students in classes, took independent study courses, served on faculty-student committees with colleges or departments, and used all available academic support services" (p.165).

#### *Effect of Perceived Gains on Student Persistence*

In this study, perceived gains represented gains in learning and long term goals that affected persistence. Students' comments during the interviews regarding perceived gains left a strong impression to this researcher, that this factor was an indication of the personal importance attached to attending university and graduating. The results of this study indicated that the commitment of the student to the goal of completing university

had the strongest positive effect on the decision to remain in university. Factors related to degree persistence and degree completion appeared to this researcher to be far more important to non-traditional-age students' persistence than the other three categories examined in the study.

Educational goals, which repeatedly surface in the literature (Tinto, 1975; Bean & Metzner, 1985) as important predictors of retention, also emerged as a key factor in this study. Bean and Metzner (1985) state that no study was reviewed that exclusively explored the relationship between goal commitment and the attrition of older or part-time students. However, studies that looked at the influence of academic and social integration and students' educational objectives at two-year community colleges concur with this study's findings. Bers and Smith (1991) found that academic integration and social integration differentiated persisters from non-persisters. Results suggested, however, that students' educational objectives and intent to re-enroll combined, and their pre-college characteristics and employment status, provide more insights into persistence than academic or social integration.

Studies, that examine the effect of goal commitment and compare the effect between two-year colleges and four-year institutions, also support this study's findings. Pascarella and Chapman (1983) incorporated post matriculation goal commitment as a variable in a study involving full-time freshmen at these types of institutions. Goal commitment showed a small positive direct effect on persistence at a residence-oriented four-year institution, no significant effect at commuter-oriented four-year institutions, and a very large positive influence at two-year colleges. Thus, it is expected that students' educational objectives, goal commitment, degree persistence and degree completion are

closely related to perceived gains, and the findings for the perceived gains factor are relevant for this study.

This study reinforces other studies that show that adult students who are successful, are supported in their quest for a university degree, exhibit a high level of commitment to their educational goals, exert a quality effort in their studies, and make themselves at home in the academic and social culture of their campus, are more likely to succeed. Tinto (1993) asserts that both a student's academic and social integration are modified and/or intensified by a pre-college commitment to attend a particular institution. While integrating Tinto's model, Cabrera, Nora and Castaneda (1993) found goal commitment to be influenced by both collegiate experiences and external factors. Furthermore, they found goal commitment exerting significant effects on intent to persist. This study also found institutional and goal commitment as significant to persistence.

Tinto (1993) seems to equate academic integration and goal commitment with career maturity. This is particularly evident when he claims that failure to resolve students' goals is a problem that institutions must address through career exploration services. This is supported in this study by the mentor's role in helping students towards developing a formalized plan of action. The results indicate that students who are encouraged to consider educational opportunities and guided towards making well informed choices are more likely to persist.

Previous studies dating from Tinto (1975) to Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, and Pascarella (1996) suggest that academic integration, social integration, institutional commitment and to some extent, goal commitment, exert the highest effects on persistence. With non-traditional-age students it appears that their educational goals and

educational objectives lead to enrollment persistence which leads to academic integration into their educational environment; their commitment to their educational goals positively affects persistence.

Research shows that adult institutions which have the foresight to more fully measure, understand, and respond to the expectations and experiences of their incoming students stand a significantly greater likelihood of retaining students (Tinto, 1987). Positive educational outcomes are the product of an interaction between student, staff, and institutional characteristics (Tinto, 1982, 1993) to the extent that staff and institutional characteristics, that is, the nature of the learning environment, match student characteristics; then outcomes such as student success and improved retention are encouraged.

The responses offered by non-traditional-age students in the open-ended questions in this study attempted to add to the knowledge base concerning the students' perspectives about their perceptions of mentoring and the challenges they face and about the people on-campus and off-campus who provided the most support. One of the purposes of this study was to test the influence of mentoring experiences on supporting academic success and adult student retention to see if by adding this construct it would improve adult student persistence. To this researcher, the findings in this study clearly show that the mentoring construct is significant and can be used as a tool to enhance student success in adult education. In this researcher's view, the results from this study point to issues on campus that are influential in providing support to students which could positively affect their decision to remain enrolled in the university.

### *Transformational Learning in the Classroom*

Since Mezirow's work in the late 1970s, transformational learning has received extensive scholarly attention. Central to transformational learning is the assertion that "because we are trapped by our own meaning perspectives, we can never make interpretations of our experience free from bias" (Mezirow, 1990, p.10).

Transformational learning seeks to free the individual from the chains of bias through the process of 'perspective transformation,' that is, "the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world" (Mezirow, 1991, p.167).

Complementing transformational learning theory is andragogical theory. Simply stated, andragogical theory asserts that adults' vast reservoir of experience in multiple settings constitutes a powerful resource for learning (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles, 1990). Brookfield posits that "when adults teach and learn in one another's company, they find themselves engaged in a challenging, passionate, and creative activity" (p.1). Also, as Taylor (1998) observes, adults in interaction constitute a community of knowers as well as a community of learners.

Adult learning theory and principles can provide a framework for examining and understanding the adult learning experiences of nontraditional-age students in this study and recommend meaningful, effective, and andragogically sound guidelines for such experiences. This research study was undertaken with transformational learning theory as one of the perspectives from which to examine adult learning in the classroom.

Since the original research on transformative learning by Mezirow (1978) over twenty years ago there has been a growing body of instructional literature that offers

practitioners who work in a variety of adult and higher education settings innovative methods and techniques for fostering transformational learning in the classroom (Cranton, 1994). Fostering transformative learning is a practice of education that is “predicated on the idea that students are seriously challenged to assess their value system and worldview and are subsequently changed by the experience” (Quinnan, 1997, p.38).

As discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two, adult educators are increasingly mindful of the many ways in which adult learners grow and change as a result of their educational experiences (Brookfield, 1986; Kegan, 1994). There are multiple links between adult learning and adult development; the connections are web-like because the two processes are interdependent and interface in many facets. Within this context, the process of adult development has been identified by some as a transition from one perspective scheme to another (Kegan, 1994; Taylor & Marienau, 1995). In turn, this process of a shifting a perspective meaning has been identified as a perspective transformation by many theorists and researchers (Brookfield, 1986, 1995; Cranton, 1994; Mezirow & Associates, 1990). The questions addressed by this research were: “What are the factors that contribute to transformational learning in the classroom?” Second, “What challenges arise for the professor who teaches in transformational learning environments?”

The importance of perspective transformation in adult learning was identified by this researcher when conducting the classroom observations during this study. Research indicates that perspective transformation has dominated the adult learning theory literature in recent years (Cranton, 1997; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Taylor, 1998). This theory explains the process whereby adult learners critically examine their beliefs,

assumptions, and values as they acquire new knowledge and experience a “reframing” of their perspective of circumstances, issues, and subsequent actions (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1994; Taylor, 1998).

Mezirow’s (1990) theory of transformational learning formed part of the theoretical framework in this study. Since Mezirow articulated the concept of transformational learning in the literature in 1978, there has been much discussion about the model in the field of adult education (Taylor, 1998). Recognizing that it has been difficult to delineate an all-encompassing definition of perspective transformation, Mezirow’s definition (1990) is used in this research to offer a foundation for the examination of the process of adult learning in the classroom. According to Mezirow (1990) transformational learning is defined as learning that induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, especially learning experiences which shape the learner and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner’s subsequent experiences. The importance of Mezirow’s theory being adopted in this study by this researcher is that Mezirow views mentoring as a transformational learning process. Therefore, this researcher suggests that adult educators should grasp an understanding of the concepts of transformational learning and its applicability to their role and functions of mentoring in adult education.

Applying the transformational learning theory, observations were conducted in four adult education classrooms. During the observations, factors were identified that reflected the practice of fostering transformative learning in the classroom as noted by Mezirow (1990). Throughout the observation, factors identified by this researcher included recognizing the varying nature of how transformative learning is triggered and initiated,



the significance of personal and social contextual factors that surround and shape the learning experience, and the lesser role of critical reflection and an increased role of affective learning, and the significance of relational knowing.

In order to link the findings to related literature, this section begins by finding support for the ideal conditions outlined by Mezirow (1991) in fostering transformative learning, such as the importance of a safe, open and trusting environment for learning; the use of instructional practices that support a learner-centered approach and promote student autonomy and collaboration; and the importance of activities that encourage exploration of alternative personal perspectives and critical reflection. Also, other practices were identified in this study that appears to this researcher to have equal significance. They include the necessity of professors to be trusting, empathetic, and caring; the emphasis on personal self-disclosure, and the importance of feedback and assessment.

Taylor (2000) reviewed twenty-three studies that used Mezirow's model and focused on fostering transformational learning in the classroom. He found support for some of Mezirow's ideal conditions for transformational learning, including the need for "a safe, open, and trusting environment that allows for participation, collaboration, exploration, critical reflection, and feedback" (p.154). This study also supports Mezirow's theory and found that because the adult students felt safe within the classroom, it allowed for open discussion and participation.

Cranton's (2000) writings focus on how to create Mezirow's ideal conditions in the classroom. The author suggests that instructors relinquish some of their authority or "position power" in the classroom (p.147). Using first names and having learning

contracts are two ways to do this. Second, Cranton recommends recognizing learners' learning styles in order to help them critically question their assumptions. In one of the classrooms observed the professor related to the adult students by the use of first names, and this relates directly back to Cranton's assumption of promoting transformational learning in the classroom. However, the learning styles in the class varied, and at times this posed some difficulty for the professors.

Not all teachers or all learners are predisposed to engage in transformative learning, and many adult learning situations do not lend themselves to these kinds of experiences. When transformational learning is part of a course of study, one role of the teacher is to establish an environment characterized by trust and care, and to facilitate sensitive relationships among the participants (Taylor, 1998). In this study, this researcher observed that although the environment of the classroom characterized one of trust and support, some of the students observed in the classroom appeared to this researcher as not being open to a transformational learning process.

Boyd and Myers (as cited in Imel, 1998) encourage adult educators to develop and practice two characteristics. First is "seasoned guidance," the ability to serve as an experienced mentor reflecting on his or her own journey with the intent to assist others with their transformational process. Second, they value "compassionate criticism," assisting students to question their own reality in ways that would promote transformation of their world view. Cranton (1994) emphasizes the importance of the teacher as a role model who is willing to demonstrate his own willingness to learn and change. Taylor (1998) sees the role of the teacher as helping students connect the rational and affective aspects of their experience in the process of critical reflection. From the

perspective of this researcher, faculty members in this study depicted the roles as identified in the literature, that of being a role model and helping students to connect. Faculty members created an environment where students were allowed to question their own reality and expand their worldviews.

Taylor (1998) believes that too much emphasis is placed on the teacher at the expense of the student. He emphasizes that learners share the responsibility for constructing and creating both the environment and the process of transformational learning. While conducting the interviews the emphasis placed on the teacher was apparent to this researcher. Some students in this study placed a strong emphasis on the role that faculty members should play toward adult students but saw themselves as being detached from the process and not expected to share responsibility for their own learning. However, from responses during the interview, this researcher is of the view that because students were away from the learning environment for a long period, they developed a sense of fear, that is, fear of failing to complete their studies. This fear as highlighted by some students during the interviews can be linked to the findings of a study conducted by Daloz (1986). Daloz recognized that growth can be a risky and frightening journey into the unknown, as students are challenged to relinquish old conceptualizations of self and the world. He challenges teachers to structure their teaching for fostering personal development of the students rather than developing specific competencies. He frequently uses the metaphor of transformation as a journey in which the mentor or instructor serves as a gatekeeper as well as a guide for students on the journey (Daloz, 1999).

The roles of the professor and adult students in this study were recognized during the observational process. The professors encouraged students to reflect on and share

their feelings and thoughts in the class. Students were shown alternative ways of learning, and the environment in all the classrooms was characterized by trust and care. The professors demonstrated the ability to serve as mentors, and in so doing students were allowed to question their reality in ways that promoted shifts in their worldviews.

However, during the observations it was quite evident that not all students were ready for and open to change, and this was seen when some adult students showed preference for doing things a particular way instead of trying alternative and new ideas. Although some students were willing and able to integrate critical reflection into their school work and personal life, this could not be said of all four classrooms observed.

In this study, the role played by the professors in the classroom linked to the literature, especially the points noted by Daloz, 1999; Cranton, 1994; and Boyd and Myers, 1998. These authors stress in the literature that the transformational learning process must be looked at in a holistic fashion whereby not only the professor's characteristics and roles are taken into account in facilitation of transformational learning but also students' characteristics and roles.

Educators approach their work and research from diverse educational philosophies; one of these is a humanistic philosophy of education. It is the humanistic educator's great desire that the learner fully integrate new ideas, concepts and knowledge into his or her current knowledge base in order to reach his or her fullest personal potential. This is the process of the learner making knowledge his or her own. With this as a primary objective of adult education (Tennant & Pogson, 1995), the adult educator needs to know how to encourage and facilitate this experience through the curriculum.

One of the most provocative discussions of environment, subject matter, and learning activities relating to transformational learning was proposed by Youngstown State University Professor Bache (n.d.). He described a “subtle energetic resonance” that spontaneously rises in learning circles. Bache believed that certain types of subject matter were particularly conducive to transformational learning, for example, inquiries into the origins and destinies of individual existence, mind exploration, the mysteries of human suffering and purpose, and other universal questions. In this study, during the classroom observations, this researcher observed that some of the subject matter presented was not conducive to transformational learning. However, to this researcher, the aspects of spirituality and legal issues discussed reflected the transformational learning process as noted by Mezirow (1990).

Mezirow (1997) describes a transformative learning environment as one in which those participating have full information, are free from coercion, have equal opportunity to assume various roles, can become critically reflective of assumptions, are empathetic and good listeners, and are willing to search for common ground or a synthesis of different points of view.

Mezirow (1997) identifies several ways to stimulate transformational learning, including journal writing, metaphors, life history, exploration, learning contracts, group projects, role play, case studies, and using literature to stimulate critical consciousness. He believes that these could stimulate critical reflection and rational discourse, integral parts of the transformative process in his model. Mezirow strongly emphasizes that transformational learning came about through discussion and exploration of concepts

relating to these kinds of experiences and was not an advocate of creating intense emotional experiences in transformational learning.

Taylor's review (2000) uncovers several ways to foster transformational learning in the classroom. One aspect of Taylor's review is significant in this study. Taylor suggests that "fostering group ownership and individual agency promotes transformational learning" (p.155). The classrooms observed in this study demonstrated that a "group setting" is the ideal medium for fostering transformative learning. The group milieu provided an important medium for fostering group ownership and individual agency among the participants in the group. Students were placed in groups to analyze issues and strategies. Placing the adult students at the center of their own learning in a critically reflective and social group setting contributed to transformation.

The interaction of people, events and context changes in an environment designed to challenge assumptions is not, as Mezirow and others have noted, threat-free. According to Taylor (2000), transformative learning poses threats to psychological security as it challenges "comfortably established beliefs and values, including those that may be central to self-concept and the changes in long-established and cherished relationships" (p.359). In this study, this reality was seen by this researcher during the observations. Students were told during group sessions that they must be prepared to have every idea, belief and fibre of their educational being questioned and scrutinized. In brief, the interaction of people, events, and context encouraged, indeed often demanded, that adult students confront their educational assumptions in very direct and sometimes brutal ways.

Fostering transformative learning requires adult educators to engage learners at times in intense shared experiential activities that help provoke meaning-making among the participants involved (King, 1999). These activities often act as “triggers” provoking critical reflection and facilitating transformative learning, allowing learners to experience learning more directly and holistically, beyond a logical and rational approach. In one classroom observed during this study, the professor sought to precipitate transformation in racial awareness among the adult students. Students were assigned various texts to read and provide reflections. During the discussion in the classroom the professor made connections with the various writings, and this led to an in-depth discussion on the problems that were faced by African Americans. The discussion offered a shared catalyst for change initiating a mutual context for the adult students to explore relevant issues. The experiences of racism highlighted in the text provided opportunities for the adult students to develop greater self-awareness, essential for transformational learning, and also offered ways to confront issues that they find painful and are often resistant to learning about.

Several studies found that controversial and value-laden content plays a role in fostering transformative learning (Cranton, 2000; Taylor, 2000). According to Taylor (2000) value-laden course content appears to foster transformational learning in that discussions about controversial topics “provoked critical reflection, more so than other content” (p.156). From the observations it seemed that certain subject matter encouraged and provoked critical reflection among the adult students more so than other content. For example, in one classroom observed students were asked to conduct an intake interview with the professor who had fallen through a glass sliding door at his parents’ home where

he resided. The students were asked to determine the facts surrounding the event and if there is a cause of action and if so, against whom. In another classroom the focus was on spirituality, whereas another professor dealt with aspects of racism. The controversial content provoked the learners to reflect on both their personal and professional values, which at times were in conflict with each other. What was revealed during the observation was that the use of value laden courses not only involves an opportunity to promote transformative learning in the classroom, but also poses a challenge for adult educators who teach the less obvious politically and socially charged subject, for example, the more skill-based courses.

One aspect that proved to be quite critical by this researcher during the observation was that of time. Adhering to the practices of transformative learning, particularly in a group setting, requires an inordinate amount of time, something that many regular adult education classes do not have available (Gallagher, 1997). Brookfield (1998) brings this issue to light, by exploring how "issue of action, voice, empowerment, and knowledge were enacted in practice" (p.13). The author found that observing the conditions outlined by Mezirow (1995) for promoting rational discourse resulted in a challenge "that inclusiveness in terms of stakeholder membership practically guarantees that groups will have different agendas about what needs to be done, making coming to a consensus an onerous, time-consuming task" (p.274). It was shown during the classroom observations that the lack of time placed a constraint on providing access to the voices of all the adult students as well as coming to a consensus around various group decisions.

As noted in the literature by Mezirow (1995) various challenges can confront a professor in promoting transformational learning in the classroom. This was quite evident



in this study. According to Baumgartner (2001), although transformational learning has powerful potential for enhancing and accelerating students' self-actualization process, there are important considerations for adult educators in attempting to promote transformational learning in the classroom. Adult educators must ask themselves the most basic question: "What right do adult educators have to promote transformational learning?" Students who see the adult educator as an authority figure may have difficulty or reluctance to challenge conventional values, beliefs, and interpretation of facts. This appeared quite obvious in one classroom where students made subtle remarks but seemed afraid to challenge the professor's view on a topic.

Differential power dynamics in the classroom also require sensitivity. Smith's (2000) study, which examined the experiences of university students between the ages of sixty-six and seventy-six, showed that older students saw the professor as an authority figure. The transformational learning process involves questioning, critical reflection, and the need to engage in "rational discourse" to gain a consensual validation for a new perspective (Mezirow, 1991, p.168). Students who see the professor as an authority figure may be unable or unwilling to question their teacher's values. Transformational learning is difficult to achieve in this setting. Ethics regarding the power differential arise. Cranton (1994) advises that teachers explicitly state their values and "model questioning their own values" (p.201).

Scott (1997) tells us that "at the entrance to the twenty-first century, a door is waiting for us to open as we gather as individuating souls to act in new ways" (p.49). This challenges adult educators to continue to develop innovative and supportive learning environments that question ambiguity and contradiction while engaging "the wholeness

of learners' lives, not just their heads" (Dirkx, 1997, p.82). By providing learning environments that support opportunities for personal growth and development, the academic community, adult educators and students together carry new ways of knowing and understanding into their personal lives, their relationships and their communities, opening the door to new ways of thinking.

Adult learning and adult development share common ground in transformational learning. As adult educators and researchers continue to explore and understand this relationship it will produce many insights into educational practice. As adult educators understand more about transformational learning, continued research could impact adult education curriculum, program planning, teaching methods and support services.

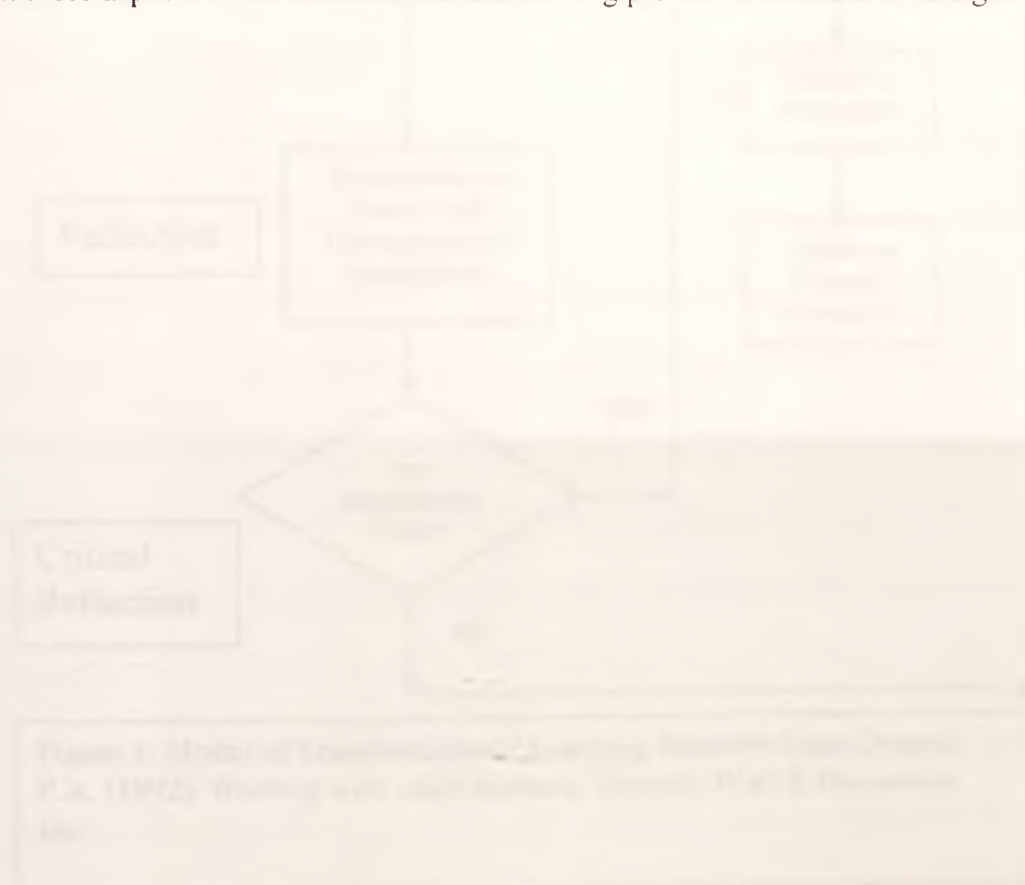
#### *Cranton's Model of Transformational Learning*

Cranton's (1992) process model of transformational learning can also be adopted in this study. Varying stages are listed in the model as developed by Cranton. For Cranton, transformative learning begins "with a learner who has a value system and a set of assumptions which form his or her perspective on life" (p.148).

This configuration of values and assumptions provides stability to the individual's life in both personal and professional areas. During the observations adult students were not reluctant to reveal their values. There is little direct evidence that some of the adult students were thinking in terms of transformational learning. To the extent they did, however, it was more likely to be akin to Grabov's (1997) conception of transformational learning as 'intuitive, creative, and emotional' than Mezirow's (1990) 'rational, analytical, and cognitive' (p.90).

Reflection is at the heart of transformative learning. Moreover, as Figure 1 indicates, reflection follows a logical progression, that is, becomes progressively more sophisticated and demanding. It moves from awareness and examination of assumptions through examination of sources and consequences of assumptions to questioning the validity of the assumptions themselves, critical reflection. In all the classrooms observed during this study, reflection was an immediate and natural outcome.

For one to claim that transformative learning has occurred there must be evidence of change. Cranton (1992) argues for three kinds of change, change in assumptions, change in perspective, and change in behavior. The time limit of this study prohibited the researcher from coming to a determination as to whether any of the evidence of change as noted by Cranton actually occurred. Further research for an extended period should focus on these aspects of the transformational learning process to establish if changes are noted.



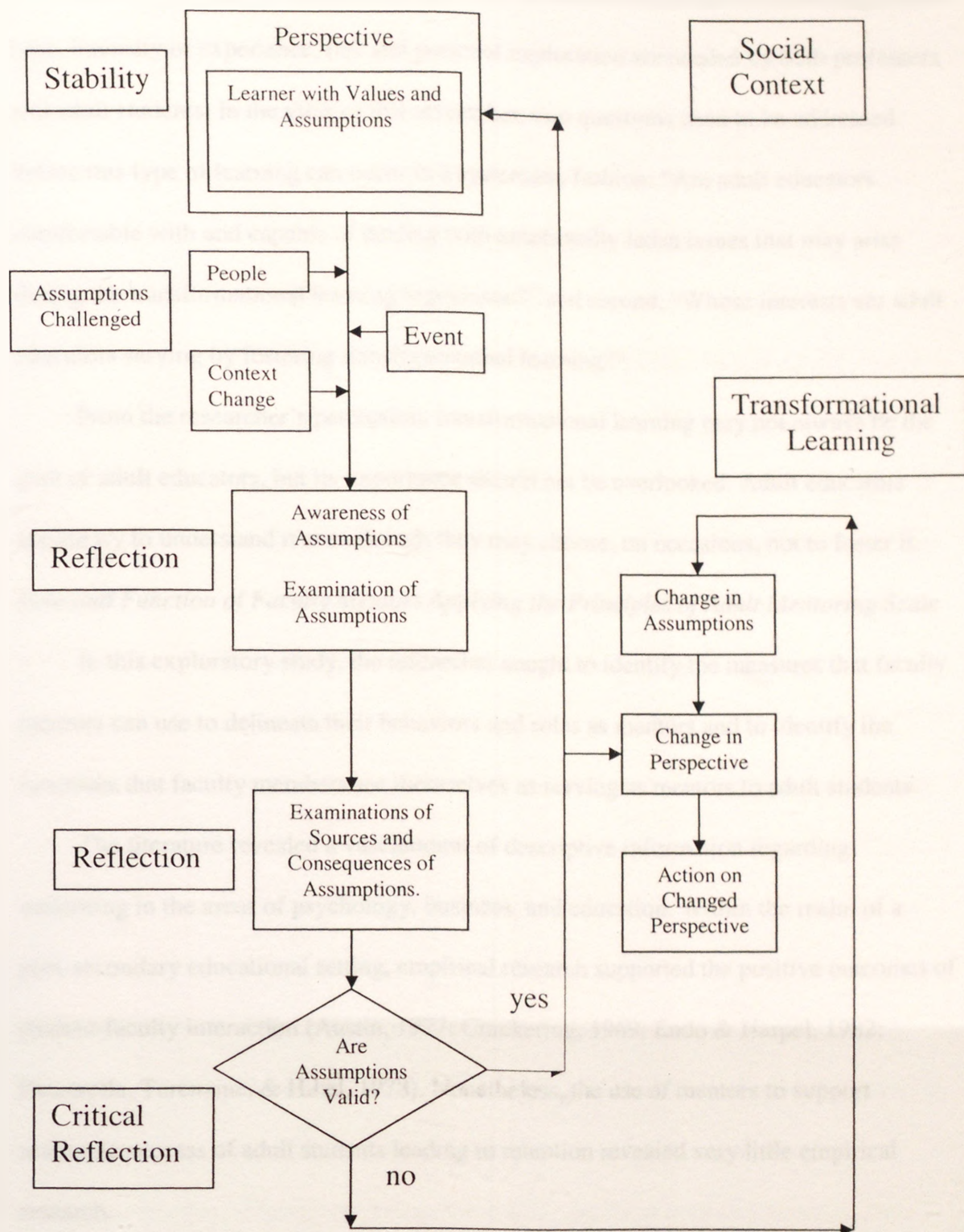


Figure 1. Model of Transformational Learning. Redrawn from Cranton, P.A. (1992). *Working with adult learners*. Toronto: Wall & Emmerson, Inc.

This study suggests to adult educators that to foster transformational learning, much time, intensity of experience, risk and personal exploration are needed by both professors and adult students. In the view of this researcher, two questions need to be addressed before this type of learning can occur in a systematic fashion: "Are adult educators comfortable with and capable of dealing with emotionally laden issues that may arise during the transformational learning experience?" and second, "Whose interests are adult educators serving by fostering transformational learning?"

From the researcher's perception, transformational learning may not always be the goal of adult educators, but its importance should not be overlooked. Adult educators should try to understand it even though they may choose, on occasions, not to foster it.

#### *Role and Function of Faculty Mentors Applying the Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale*

In this exploratory study, the researcher sought to identify the measures that faculty mentors can use to delineate their behaviors and roles as mentors and to identify the functions that faculty members see themselves as serving as mentors to adult students.

The literature revealed a vast amount of descriptive information regarding mentoring in the areas of psychology, business, and education. Within the realm of a post-secondary educational setting, empirical research supported the positive outcomes of student-faculty interaction (Austin, 1977; Chickering, 1969; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Pascarella, Terenzine, & Hibel, 1978). Nonetheless, the use of mentors to support academic success of adult students leading to retention revealed very little empirical research.

Perhaps one reason for the lack of empirical studies is the nature of mentoring which is considered one of complexity. The lack of consensus in the definition is often

cited in the literature (Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983; Cohen, 1993). Hunt and Michael (1983) and Kram (1983) recognized the multi-faceted nature of mentoring. In turn, the evaluation of the mentoring process needs to be multi-faceted. The beginning point of this assessment may be the behaviors of faculty members, these behaviors or functions may be critical to the success in setting up a formal mentoring program.

Cohen (1993) provided a reliable and validated instrument to measure the functions of the mentor. Designed especially for the postsecondary setting, the instrument measures six mentor roles found to be essential in the faculty-student relationship, grounded by extensive literature review and knowledge of the adult learner. This research focused on full-time faculty at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education. The study used the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* developed by Cohen to measure the effectiveness of full-time faculty members in terms of exhibiting the six functions, also referred to as the mentors' behavior.

The research questions in part duplicated the study of Cohen and his development and validation of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (Cohen, 1993). Unlike Cohen's research, the present study used the scale to explore the faculty members in groups, not to self-evaluate the individual faculty member. Additional differences in Cohen's criterion group of mentor (N=46) and faculty members at the School of Adult and Continuing Education (N=10) were noted. Unlike Cohen's group of mentors who had participated in previous training, none of the faculty members in this study had any training in mentoring. Further, although the groups were quite similar as regards education, there were differences related to gender.

The comparison of the separate function means of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* for Cohen's criterion group and the present study was investigated with descriptive methods. (Table 9).

Table 9. *Comparison of Criterion Groups and Full-time Faculty*

Function	Criterion Group N=46	ACE N=10
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Relationship	40.37 (5.37)	39.70 (3.49)
Information	38.52 (5.51)	33.10 (5.20)
Facilitative	22.26 (3.32)	19.00 (3.30)
Confrontive	45.65 (6.22)	39.90 (8.21)
Mentor Model	22.89 (4.23)	23.40 (3.98)
Student Vision	43.04 (6.30)	38.90 (6.44)

The results of this study and research completed by Stoner (1996, January) resulted in similar mean scores for the Confrontive Focus behavioral mentoring function. The Confrontive Focus behavioral mean scores for this study revealed a mean score for the male as (38.60) and a female mean score (41.20) indicating a less effective mean score rating compared to Cohen's norm score for effectiveness (45.65). Stoner's study concerning behaviors of adult educators from Continuing Education, Higher Education, and Business and Industry, also showed scores of less effective, respectively (42.15) and (43.09), in the Confrontive Focus behavior. According to Cohen (1995), "an acceptable

confrontive score may sometimes suggest that a mentor has a tendency to remain in the comfort zone of adequate confrontational behavior and avoid the discomfort often associated with the upper ranges of appropriately confrontive mentor-mentee interaction” (p.19).

Cohen (1993) adds that the Confrontive Focus principle respectfully challenges the students’ explanations for or avoidance of decisions and actions relevant to development as adult learners. According to Galbraith (1991), “a true adult learning transactional process engenders three types of risk-taking: the risk of commitment, the risk of confrontation, and the risk of independence” (p.5).

If the risk of commitment involves an adult learner committed to a collaborative and challenging educational encounter, facilitators must be willing to make the same commitment--a commitment that suggests they too will experience opportunities for change, growth, and new learning. The risk of confrontation involves wisdom--wisdom to know when to confront someone and whether or not they are ready for such confrontation and criticism. The final risk that facilitators and adult educators are confronted with is the risk of independence...asking adult learners to take responsibility for their own learning as well as to seek individuality and independence can be a highly anxious and threatening experience (Galbraith, 1991, p.5).

Cohen (1995) warns that “confrontation interaction should be considered as an intervention that requires astute mentor awareness and skill during all phases of the evolving interpersonal relationship” (p.12). Cohen expressed the view that one should be careful to avoid introducing confrontation too early, for this could jeopardize the



probability of a successful relationship from continuing beyond that point. Daloz (1986) and Galbraith (1990) have noted that confrontive items are viewed as communicating the most risky of all the behavioral mentoring functions due to the factors of establishing trust and acquiring verbal skills necessary in presenting the issues to adult learners.

Since establishing a relationship through active, empathetic listening with a protégé is less complex and less risky than that of Confrontive Focus the effectiveness score rating female faculty members is not unusual. The Mentor Model behavioral mentoring function mean scores as perceived by female faculty members (25.20) revealed very effective scores compared to Cohen's norm competency score for effectiveness (22.89). The mean score of male faculty members of (21.60) is more in line with Cohen's score for effectiveness. According to Cohen's definition of the Mentor Model, this implies that the faculty members at the School of Adult and Continuing Education are paying attention toward motivating adult students to take necessary risks and overcome difficulties in their journeys toward educational and career goals.

In analysis of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (PAMS) scores, statistical evidence gathered in this study indicated there were a variety of perceptions of effectiveness for male and female faculty members who participated in the study.

#### *Relationship Emphasis*

The male mean score (40.20) and the female mean score (39.20) revealed similar perceptions and fell within Cohen's mentor role competency score range (39-41) considered to be effective and fell slightly below Cohen's effectiveness norm score (40.37) considered to be an effective mean score for relationship emphasis.

### *Information Emphasis*

The male mean score was (34.40) and the female mean score (31.80). The male mean score is considered a less effective mean score while the female mean score is considered to be not effective when compared to Cohen's effective norm score (38.52) and Cohen's mentor role competency score range (37-39) considered to be an effective score range for information emphasis.

### *Facilitative Focus*

The male mean score (19.40) and the female mean score (18.60) revealed similar perceptions. These scores did not fall within Cohen's mentor role competency range (21-22) considered as an effective score for facilitative focus. The score also fell slightly below Cohen's norm score of (22.26).

### *Confrontive Focus*

The male mean score (38.60) and the female mean score (41.20) revealed similar perceptions. However, both scores fell below Cohen's effective norm score (45.65) revealing scores of not effective, and less effective for confrontive focus. Both mean scores for male and female fell below Cohen's mentor role competency score range (44-46) considered to be effective.

### *Mentor Model*

The male mean score (21.60) and female mean score (25.20) showed a difference in perceptions resulting in a very effective mean score for the females when compared with Cohen's effective norm score (22-89) and Cohen's mentor role competency score range (22-23) considered to be effective for the mentor model. The male mean score (21.60)

fell well below Cohen's effective norm score and Cohen's mentor role competency score range.

### *Student Vision*

The male mean score (40.40) and female mean score (37.40) revealed similar perceptions. These scores resulted in not effective and less effective when compared to Cohen's effective norm score (43.04) for student vision and Cohen's mentor role competency score range (42-44) considered to be effective for student vision.

Comparing these scores to Cohen's norm and overall mentor role competencies, the areas of Information Emphasis, Facilitative Focus, Confrontive Focus and Student Vision fell well below what Cohen expected as the complete role of the mentor. These results are a reflection of the small sample size used in this study of ten participants in comparison to Cohen's study of forty-six participants.

## CHAPTER SIX

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The main focus of this study was to examine the role that faculty mentors play toward enhancing the learning process of adult learners in schools of adult and continuing education at the university level. The instrument developed by Cohen (1993), the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (PAMS), was used in order to assess the self-behaviors of full-time faculty who participated in the study. The PAMS is an instrument based on adult development psychology theories and the transactional process of learning. The instrument is used to assess the behavioral mentoring function competencies of faculty mentors. The six behavioral mentoring functions include: Relationship Emphasis, Information Emphasis, Confrontive Focus, Facilitative Focus, Mentor Model, and Student Vision. The instrument was administered only where there was no formal mentoring program in place.

Although both male and female perceptions of effectiveness varied among the six behavioral mentoring functions, it appears that faculty members at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education are maintaining a balance in their mentoring relationships with adult students. This can be highlighted from the findings, especially those concerning faculty members in the mentor role. From the findings we can infer that faculty members are demonstrating concern and offering assistance through appropriate behaviors toward generating productive learning. The results of the PAMS instrument and analysis of the qualitative findings should provide faculty members with a clearer perception of the faculty mentor role and provide adult students with clearer expectations of the mentoring relationship relevant to adult learning.

Faculty members at the school of adult and continuing education could utilize the PAMS instrument to assess, evaluate, and improve their interpersonal competencies as adult educators by becoming aware of their behavioral mentoring effectiveness. Faculty members could acquire a clearer perception of their mentoring role and its importance in teaching adult students to be successful in academic settings, and ultimately in the world of work, and in society. Future training for current faculty members could integrate specialized programs of self-assessment, maintenance, and evaluation by using the PAMS instrument.

On the surface, the findings about fostering transformative learning seem quite promising. The study revealed that if professors develop authentic positive relationships with their learners, use creative experiential activities, encourage group ownership and individual agency, discuss value-laden course content, are willing to engage learners on the affective level in concert with critical thinking, and have ample classroom time, change can be initiated among those adult students predisposed to transformative learning.

However, most of the research studies reviewed by this researcher underemphasizes the practical implications associated with encouraging learners to revise their meaning perspectives in the classroom. This study suggests that adult educators will face the challenge of establishing authentic and helping relationships with adult students in the classroom when fostering transformative learning. Further, there is the additional challenge of engaging in and promoting affective learning with students in the classroom. Affective learning is not only the precursor to reflection but is often rooted in conflict. These findings pose real challenges to professors in the adult higher education

classrooms. Since transformative learning has the potential to be a deeply emotional experience, it demands considerable knowledge and skill of professors to facilitate change responsibly and effectively.

From the research, there appears to be a need for clarification of what is unique about fostering transformative learning, in contrast to other teaching practices in adult and higher education. There is lack of understanding about transformative learning's impact on student learning/outcomes. For example, as a result of fostering transformative learning in an adult classroom, are adult learners more successful at reading and writing?

Of utmost importance is the ethical issue of fostering transformative learning in the adult higher education classroom. Education is a social activity involving the interaction of people who have differing views about the right way to teach. Just because some adult educators believe that fostering transformative learning is in the best interest of their learners, this kind of learning may not reflect the wishes and desires of the learners themselves or even the institution in which they are enrolled. Do we have the right to challenge learners to change and transform? How ethical is it to create conditions that will put learners in such emotionally challenging classroom experiences?

This study offers only a beginning into the essential practices of transformative learning in the adult education classroom. Adult educators and students who are willing to engage each other in open and safe group settings, participate in challenging experiential activities, and explore learning beyond the rational to include the extrarational, have the potential for a transformative learning experience. However, there is a caveat that adult educators have to be aware of, that they are entering an arena that they are only beginning to understand, with still much remaining unknown. Therefore, it

is imperative that as adult educators embark on the journey of promoting transformative learning, they do so responsibly and with their eyes wide open.

From this researcher's analysis of the findings in this study it seemed quite likely that adult students would benefit from more support services at the Frank J. Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education. Mentoring programs were highlighted by most students as being beneficial for personal development and academic success. Consequently, institutions should establish a point-of-contact person for nontraditional-age students. A person with a good working knowledge of the university rules, regulations, and procedures and the ability to refer the student in the direction of appropriate services. This person could serve as a mentor, providing the student information about the university or helping the student develop student skills necessary in the academic environment.

As noted earlier, the intent of this study was threefold. One of the purposes of this study was to explain the perceptions of mentoring and the factors which contribute to the retention of nontraditional age students. The findings presented in this study are tentative ones and will undoubtedly need to be modified when more evidence from other studies of nontraditional-age students become available. Nonetheless, it is hoped that these preliminary findings could provide a framework for conducting future studies. Hopefully, these findings will contribute not only to the existing body of knowledge but also be found useful in schools of adult and continuing education, especially as the number of nontraditional-age students increases.

The sample in this study was one of convenience. Only those faculty members who agreed to complete the questionnaire participated. This often leads to an unrepresentative

sample, and the generalization of the results may be difficult. To assess the behaviors of the faculty members, the options were limited. Without the opportunity to observe the behaviors, the self-assessment of the faculty members' behaviors was necessary. Self-reported methods allow for the faculty member to determine and report the behavior related to the function. At times, the individual in this situation may report what they assume are expected, not their true behaviors.

The grouping of faculty members by teaching area did not allow for a complete analysis as this researcher first intended; therefore the analysis focused mainly on gender. With the small sample size in this study an extensive quantitative analysis was not possible. The findings suggest that the categorization based on education may be a better indicator of this area than teaching area.

#### *Implications for Practice*

As the understanding of student success develops and a more vital role in the faculty-to-student relationship domain is recognized, several initiatives can be cited as being effective in our quest for greater student retention, one being, faculty mentoring. When considering the development and implementation of such service programs, depending upon the institutional culture, some initiative will need to be sanctioned; some will need encouraging, while others will require outright promotion and strong institutional leadership.

Whereas faculty-to-student relationships arguably have much merit when it comes to their contributing to academic success and adult student retention, it is not necessarily the case that faculty, for example, always see these initiatives as part of their role. This researcher regrets that, many may see such involvement as taking them away from their



primary role of teaching or research. Others may subscribe to the notion that some students who find their way into adult education should not, in fact, be there. Faculty may view their involvement in such retention services as interfering with their primary role.

This study suggests that an important issue to consider is the centrality of academic success and retention to the mission of the institution. Support for a mentoring initiative must be widespread across the institution. The university needs to assist faculty in the development of personal associations with students and train them in effective ways of mentoring. Recognition for involvement and enthusiasm toward the enhancement of essential relationships would be a positive motivation for faculty who are reluctant to give of themselves outside the classroom. Adult administrators should encourage faculty to lengthen their office hours, soften their approaches, and become interested partners in the educational process.

Adult educators can soften their approaches in transitioning adult learners through the learning process. Strategies that can be adopted are (1) developing more effective communication in and out of the classroom. This can be accomplished through technology, for example, via e-mail, or where adult educators can allocate time before and after class for consultation, (2) in designing the curriculum, identify projects that can strategically fit into the workload of the adult student, for example, incorporation of distance learning, (3) be more sensitive to the felt needs of the adult student, and (4) develop a holistic learning environment where the adult student can become a more active participant (Cohen, 1993).

Another method to soften their approach is for faculty to evaluate the construction of their courses from the student's perspective. If the course content is difficult to master,

its level of difficulty may be exacerbated by the format in which it is presented. Chacon (1985) determined that "the workload or amount of assignments in the course and the professor's focus on reactive, assessment-centered support increases the difficulty for adult students in completing the course" (p.44). Adult educators should select the best format, for example, videoconferencing, computer mediated, or web-based, to present material. Student retention is greatly improved when the quality of instruction is planned and student centered.

Recognizing the high attrition rates of students in adult education institutions, particularly among the nontraditional student population, Rendon (1994, 1995, 2000) provides suggestions for institutions to increase nontraditional student retention. Because most students drop out during the first semester, Rendon (1995) argues that adult institutions should focus on two critical phases that affect student retention: making the transition to the university and making academic and social connections in the university. Nontraditional students, defined more broadly by Rendon to include first-generation, low-socioeconomic status, and minority students, are more likely to be unfamiliar with the university environment and the stress of dealing with issues such as breaking away from family traditions, being perceived as different, and feeling as though they are living between two worlds. The difficulties associated with these barriers can be amplified when certain institutional barriers exist, such as a Eurocentric curriculum, lack of faculty involvement, pedagogy that promotes passive learning or competition, or cultural insensitivity. In order to address these personal institutional barriers, Rendon (1995) proposes four key commitments needed for restructuring adult institutions: keeping the culturally diverse learner at the center of restructuring, creating conditions for optimal

learning, diversifying faculty and staff, and designating transfer as a high institutional priority.

Rendon (1994) also points out that nontraditional students will not become involved on their own. Therefore, adult institutions should create validating academic and social environments in and out of the classroom similar to the learning communities that Tinto (1999) advocates. These validating communities can be developed in the classroom by replacing competitive environments with personalized attention, by promoting encouragement and positive reinforcement from faculty, by promoting active learning, by validating students' ability to learn and accept challenge, and by fostering a positive and culturally sensitive classroom climate. Out of the classroom, these validating communities can be created by establishing a hospitable, positive campus climate and by building an institutional climate that connects the cognitive and social dimensions of the adult institution.

It is incumbent for adult education institutions to implement policy changes, such as extending the hours of the bookstore, counseling services, financial aid, registration, and business offices, which can provide better access for nontraditional age students.

This study emphasizes the importance of the adult educator's role as assisting adult learners in making life transitions. It is incumbent upon educational institutions to implement institutional programs, practices, services, and provide staff to facilitate developmental transitions, to contribute to a student's educational and personal success. What is needed is a success/retention perspective by institutional leaders that incorporates a networking approach among all groups. If this approach is valued by all and practiced

as an important component of institutional initiatives, it can promote success/retention efforts.

This study supports the belief that students are successful during their university experience partly because of the availability of support services. It also emphasizes that students' university networks or relationships are formed not only with peers but with faculty. Given the reduced financial resources available, adult education institutions would be well advised to consider removing many current institutional and systemic barriers to student success. The importance of institutionalizing the changes necessary to improve student success is a logical outcome of ongoing efforts to improve educational quality, efficiency and accountability, both in and apart from the classroom.

This study also highlights the need for effective programs that build intentional campus and classroom connections with students and the creation of campus cultures that value co-curricular learning experiences. Adult administrators and faculty must change how they work together, understanding that everyone is a student development educator and responsible for helping students to succeed.

### *Implications for Research*

One of the major questions raised by this study is: "Are adult educators in schools of adult and continuing education able to improve academic success and persistence among adult learners?" This researcher believes they can and recommends that a reliable knowledge base of effective policies and programs be implemented. Policies or programs found to facilitate social integration and retention in one institutional setting should be the focus of replication studies in different institutions of the same institutional type as well as in different types of adult education institutions. Several replications assure the

reliability of the effectiveness of the given policy or program to foster social integration and student persistence.

Other areas that bear exploration are such questions as what motivates students to choose a particular type of institution and how does this choice relate to retention? What is the persistence rate at the alternative type of institutions?

Once the patterns of student retention at an institution are described and organized into meaningful patterns, the real challenges arise. How can the institution find value in the information? How can the information be used to further the strategic goals of the institution and to address pressing issues? With the increasing number of adult students entering educational programs, there is a need for research on who these students are, what they want, and how best to help them close the gap between their potential and eventual success as they define it.

### *Recommendations*

Further analyses of data collected in this study, complemented by data collected in other studies, can be used to collectively address questions related to the faculty mentor-protégé relationship in schools of adult and continuing education.

Various suggestions are given for further research. Adult educators can conduct a similar study with a larger sample of faculty members including part-time faculty. A longitudinal study can be conducted to compare the retention and graduation rates of nontraditional-age students who participate in a mentor program versus similar students who do not participate in a mentor program can be instituted. With the data gathered from this study, research can be conducted to check retention rates and grades for those

students assigned to faculty members reporting to practice the six functions compared to those who reported a lack of practice of the six functions.

Adult institutions provide various mentoring services; a study to determine how the benefits from other developmental relationships--for example, informal mentoring relationships--are perceived, as compared to formal mentoring programs in adult education would contribute greatly to the research. In addition, training is essential if mentoring programs are to be successful thus, additional research should focus on the training component of the mentoring program. Although some of the six functions as noted by Cohen (1995) were reflected in the self-reported behaviors of faculty members in this study, future studies may want to explore if the practice occurs naturally or is better expressed with specific instruction during training.

The need to include students in future research using a modification of the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* is apparent. Research may focus on how this important group may value and benefit from the functions exhibited within the mentoring relationship. The inclusion of students could give the research new insight into the effectiveness of the mentoring programs and how the relationship may best benefit the adult student. Thus the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* can be modified so that students can respond on their perceptions of mentoring applying the six functions. A longitudinal research that investigates changes in nontraditional-age students' attitudes and performance over time would be particularly useful.

### *Conclusion*

Over the past decade, schools of adult and continuing education have witnessed an increase in enrollment of nontraditional-age students. To be successful in the university

setting, these adult students must profit from the support of faculty. Mentoring can be a source of this support, and the formal establishment of mentoring programs should only increase as the population of the adult student body changes. The understanding of the complex concept of mentoring is necessary in order for institutions to implement new programs and to improve existing programs. This research study suggests that the behaviors of faculty members are often the foundation of this process. With additional research, mentoring can be better understood and applied to settings of adult and continuing education.

This study explored how full-time faculty members exhibit particular functions of the mentoring relationship. With a clear understanding of the behaviors of the mentor, a foundation for further research of the mentoring process is established. Like a piece of the puzzle, the results add to the overall understanding of the multi-faceted, complex concept.

Cohen (1993) found six functions or behaviors of the mentor considered necessary in the postsecondary mentoring relationship. Faculty members in this study exhibited some of the six functions as noted by Cohen. Since the faculty member's scores fell mainly into the categories of not effective or less effective in Cohen's norms, it is necessary for training needs to be examined to improve the effectiveness of faculty members. The question is "Should training be mandatory?" It must be noted that the time spent in training need not be only related to the teaching of the six functions of the mentor.

It is imperative that future research include the understanding of the needs and desires of the adult student in implementing a mentoring program in a setting of a school

of adult and continuing education. As another piece of the puzzle, the understanding of the student's role in the relationship will help in assuring the success of the program. Dickey (1996) describes the quality mentoring program as one that benefits both the mentor and the mentee and stresses the importance of a reciprocal relationship with shared responsibilities and benefits.

This research can assist an institution in understanding the complexity of the mentoring concept. To develop a template for other institutions to use in the establishment of a program is too simplistic for this multifaceted concept and is unrealistic. Each adult education institution is unique, with different concerns and different resources. Whether a formal mentoring program is established or informal mentoring is encouraged, the benefits can be seen for both the faculty member and the student. The present study is the first step in recognizing the importance in the behaviors of mentors. The challenge is to take the information presented in this study as well as other research on mentorships and utilize the information to meet the needs of the adult students and faculty of any institution. The results of this study can also inform adult educators of the perspectives of adult students in order to provide or enhance services leading to academic success and adult student retention.

Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski (2000) suggest, "good mentoring is a distinctive and powerful process that enhances intellectual, professional, and personal development through a special relationship characterized by highly emotional and often passionate interactions between the mentor and mentee" (p.147). Understanding good mentoring and incorporating it into a student and faculty development program will allow the institution to enhance its teaching and learning process while demonstrating its support for faculty



and student development. Institutions which engage in faculty and student development have the potential to reap large rewards, personally and professionally. These institutions will soon realize that mentoring positively impacts the development of the total institution.

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March 25, 2004

Dear [Name]:

It is my pleasure to invite you to attend the [Event Name] on [Date] at [Location]. This event is an important opportunity for you to [Purpose of Event]. We are pleased to have you as a guest and we hope you will find the event both informative and enjoyable.

The [Event Name] will be held at [Location] on [Date] from [Time]. The agenda includes [List of Topics/Activities]. We are pleased to have you as a guest and we hope you will find the event both informative and enjoyable.

**Appendix A**

**Letter of Invitation**

The [Event Name] is a [Type of Event] that will be held at [Location] on [Date] from [Time]. The agenda includes [List of Topics/Activities]. We are pleased to have you as a guest and we hope you will find the event both informative and enjoyable.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact [Contact Information]. We are pleased to have you as a guest and we hope you will find the event both informative and enjoyable.

Thank you for your interest in attending the [Event Name]. We are pleased to have you as a guest and we hope you will find the event both informative and enjoyable.

[Signature/Name]

January 27, 2004

Dear Faculty:

Currently I am a doctoral student at Barry University, Miami Shores working towards the completion of a PhD in Leadership and Education (Human Resource Development). To finish my degree requirements, I must complete my dissertation research study. The topic of my research project is "Faculty Mentoring: A Strategic Tool for the Enhancement of Adult Learners." I am inviting your participation and am interested in learning more about your practices as a mentor, or if you are presently not a mentor, how you would probably interact with mentees.

In this study, a self-assessment instrument The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale will be used. Your reactions would be a significant contribution to the field of adult education. Therefore, I am requesting your assistance by answering the statements on the Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale (in large envelope labeled MENTOR). The instructions for completing the Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale are enclosed. Please follow the instructions carefully.

Your consent to participate in this study is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this research at any time. A decision to withdraw from the research will not affect you in any way. As a benefit of the research, you may learn more about yourself regarding specific mentoring functions. As a research participant, the information you provide will be held in strict confidence as required by law. To protect your confidentiality, the research data will be coded so that no names will be used. All published results will refer to the participants by pseudonym only. Individual responses of the faculty member as well as all other records will be kept confidential and locked in a file in the researcher's office. All data collected during the study will be kept for a period of five years and then destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Brenda Jack, at (305)653-4634, my dissertation chair, Dr. Toni Powell, at (305)899-3708, or the IRB point of contact, Ms. Avril Brenner, at (305)899-3020.

Thank you in advance for your time and energy in completing the information in this packet.

Sincerely,

---

Brenda Jack  
Researcher

Dear Faculty,

A few weeks ago, you received an invitation to participate in a research project as part of my dissertation, one that will benefit the institution in learning more about mentoring and its effectiveness to enhance student retention. In order for the research to be the most beneficial, it is vital that I receive information from all faculty interested in participating in the study. I hope you will find the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and forward the information back to me.

Thank you for your time and assistance. Please forward the completed forms to me at No. 326, 12864 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, Florida, 33181. If you have any questions about the forms or the project, you may contact me, Brenda Jack, at (305)653-4634, my dissertation chair, Dr. Toni Powell, at (305)899-3708, or the IRB point of contact, Ms. Avril Brenner, at (305)899-3020.

Sincerely,

---

Brenda Jack  
Researcher

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### Appendix B

### Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale

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### Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale: Postsecondary Education

Instructions: Circle one of the following choices for each of the following 55 statements. Choose the one that is most representative of your actual behavior as a mentor. If you have functioned as a mentor, your answers should be based on your past and current mentoring experience. If you have very little or no actual experience as a mentor of adults, your answers should be based on how you would probably interact at the time with the mentee.

Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Please circle your response in the area provided to each of the following questions.

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I encourage students to express their honest feelings (positive and negative) about their academic and social experiences as adult learners in college.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I discuss with students who are discouraged (due to poor scholastic performance or other difficulties) the importance of developing a realistic view of learning that can include both success and disappointment (mentioning other students who have been frustrated as learners but have continued their education) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I ask students for detailed information about their academic progress.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I refer students to other staff members and departments to obtain information they need about academic and career plans.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I attempt to be verbally supportive when students are emotionally upset.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I suggest to students that we establish a regular schedule of meeting times.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I make a good deal of eye contact with students.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. I suggest that students who indicate concerns about serious emotional or psychological problems meet with a college counselor.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I ask students to explain (in some detail) the reasons for their college plans and career choices.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I encourage students to provide a good deal of background information about their academic preparation, success, and problems in college.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I inquire in some depth about students' study strategies and (if necessary) offer practical suggestions and/or refer them for help to improve their academic performance.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I explain to students that I really want to know what they as individuals honestly think about issues (such as balancing college commitments and outside responsibilities) so that I can offer advice specific to them.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I arrange my meetings (when possible) with students at times when I will probably not be interrupted very much by telephone calls or other people.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I explain the need to explore degree and career options to students who have insufficient information (such as adult learners in transition between job fields or facing long-term commitments to fulfill degree requirements). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I encourage students to consider nontraditional (such as television-based) courses as well as more formal education opportunities they have not yet explored to develop their personal interest.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I point out inconsistencies (rationalizations) in students' explanations of why their academic goals were not achieved if I believe my comments will help them develop better coping strategies to deal with their problem.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I try to stimulate students to do more rigorous critical thinking about the long-range implications (time commitments, life-style changes) their academic choices may have for increasing the complexity of their lives.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I explain to students why they should discuss (even with someone else) significant academic problems they are presently confronted with even if they prefer not to deal with these issues.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I offer recommendations to students about their personal academic learning needs (from remedial to honors courses, tutoring, course loads) based on specific information provided by them (as well as placement tests and academic records, if available) during our meetings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I follow up on students' decisions to develop better personal strategies (study habits, getting accurate information, making realistic decision) by asking questions (and offering comments, if appropriate) about their actual progress at later meetings.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I tell students when I think their ideas about career or academic concerns (such as job entry or degree requirements) are very clearly based on incomplete or inaccurate information.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I attempt to guide students in exploring their own personal commitment to career or academic interest by posing alternative views for them to consider.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. I verbally communicate my concerns to students when their negative attitudes and emotions are expressed to me through such nonverbal behaviors as eye contact, facial expression, and voice tone.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. I discuss students' general reasons for attending college and then focus on helping them identify concrete educational objectives, degrees, curricula, and courses.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I provide a reasonable amount of guidance in our discussions so that students will explore realistic options and attainable academic and career objectives.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. I ask students to review their strategies for managing the changes in their lives (such as impact of increased time pressures on personal relationships or ability to handle current jobs) while they pursue their "dreams" regarding educational goals.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. I question students' assumptions (especially about career options and the value of education) as a way of guiding them through a realistic appraisal of the extent to which their important ideas and beliefs are based on adequate personal experiences and facts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. I discuss my own work related experience as a ways of helping students think about and carefully examine their career options.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. I share with students personal examples of difficulties I have overcome in my own individual and professional growth if these experiences might provide insights for them.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. I engage students in discussions which require them to reflect on the new competencies they will need to achieve their future goals.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31. I point out (using personal examples as well as stories about students) that achievement in college is primarily based on personal commitment (rather than just "luck"), to students who are having problems completing the work but appear unrealistic about the amount of discipline and energy needed to cope with the pressure of an academic workload. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. I express my personal confidence in the ability of student to succeed if they persevere in the pursuit of their academic goals.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. I confront students with the reality of continued or probable negative consequences in a direct (but supportive) manner when they repeatedly do not follow through on their stated intentions to deal with serious academic problems.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. I encourage students to use me as a sounding board to explore their hopes, ideas, feeling, and plans.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. I engage students in discussions aimed at motivating them to develop a positive view of their ability to function now and in the future as independent, competent adult learners.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. I use my own experience (personal as well as references to other students I have advised) to explain how college courses or activities students believe will be boring, too demanding, or not relevant could be valuable learning experiences for them.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. I offer students constructive criticism if I believe their avoidance of problems and decisions is clearly limiting their growth as adult learners.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. I encourage students to make well-informed personal choices as they plan their own educational and career goals.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39. I explore with students who express a lack of confidence in themselves the ways in which their own life experience might be a valuable resource to help them devise strategies to succeed within the college environment.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. I assist students in using facts to carefully map out realistic step-by-step strategies to achieve their academic and career goals.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. I share my own views and feelings when they are relevant to the college-related situations and issues I am discussing with students.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. I listen to criticism from students about college policies, regulations, requirements, and even colleagues without immediately attempting to offer justifications.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. I offer comments to students about their inappropriate behavior (in college) if I have a reasonable expectation that they are prepared to work on positive change and will most likely experience some success as a result.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. I inform students that they can discuss "negative" emotions such as anxiety, self-doubt, fear, and anger in our meetings.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. I express confidence in students' abilities to achieve their educational goals, especially when they are having personal difficulties in fulfilling their academic responsibilities due to outside pressures (work, family, relationships). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. I question students' decisions and actions regarding college-related issues and problems when they do not appear to be appropriate solutions.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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47. I discuss the positive and negative feelings students have about their abilities to succeed as adult learners. 1 2 3 4 5
48. I offer as few carefully chosen criticism as possible when I try to get students to understand the (often difficult to accept) connection between their own self-limiting (defeating) behaviors and their inability to solve a particular problem. 1 2 3 4 5
49. I ask probing questions that require more than a yes or no answer, so that students will explain (in some detail) their views regarding their academic progress and plans. 1 2 3 4 5
50. I explore with students the extent of their commitment (such as willingness to spend time and energy) as adult learners in achieving their educational goals. 1 2 3 4 5
51. I base the timing of my “confrontive” questions and comments to students on my knowledge of their individual readiness (often related to the stage of our relationship) to benefit from discussions about clearly sensitive issues. 1 2 3 4 5
52. I discuss my role as a mentor with students so that their individual expectations of me are appropriate and realistic. 1 2 3 4 5
53. I try to clarify the problems students are explaining to me by verbally expressing my understanding of their feelings and then asking if my views are accurate. 1 2 3 4 5
54. I ask students to reflect on the resources available (college, family, community) to help them manage their lives effectively while they pursue their educational and career goals. 1 2 3 4 5

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55. I emphasize to students, especially those who appear uncertain about what to expect from our meetings, that one of my important goals is to assist them in reaching their own decisions about personal academic, and career goals.

1	2	3	4	5
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Appendix C  
Factors and Items for Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale

Factor 1: [Faint text]

Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5
0.75	0.68	0.72	0.70	0.73

Factor 2: [Faint text]

Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
0.78	0.71	0.74	0.76	0.79

Factor 3: [Faint text]

Item 11	Item 12	Item 13	Item 14	Item 15
0.72	0.69	0.73	0.71	0.75

Factor 4: [Faint text]

Item 16	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
0.76	0.70	0.74	0.72	0.77

**Appendix C**

**Factors and Items for Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale**

Factor 5: [Faint text]

Item 21	Item 22	Item 23	Item 24	Item 25
0.73	0.71	0.75	0.72	0.76

Factor 6: [Faint text]

Item 26	Item 27	Item 28	Item 29	Item 30
0.77	0.74	0.78	0.75	0.79

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**Factors and Items for Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale  
(Cohen's Criterion Group, N=46)**

**Factor 1: Relationship Emphasis**      **Items: 1, 5, 7, 12, 13, 23, 42, 44, 47, 53**

not effective	less effective	effective	very effective	highly effective
10 – 35	36 – 38	39-41	42-44	45-50

**Factor 2: Information Emphasis**      **Items: 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 19, 24, 40, 52**

not effective	less effective	effective	very effective	highly effective
10-33	34-36	37-39	40-42	43-50

**Factor 3: Facilitative Focus**      **Items: 15, 22, 25, 34, 39, 49**

not effective	less effective	effective	very effective	highly effective
6-18	19-20	21-22	23-24	25-30

**Factor 4: Confrontive Focus**      **Items: 8, 16, 18, 21, 27, 31, 33, 37, 43, 46, 48, 51**

not effective	less effective	effective	very effective	highly effective
12-39	40-43	44-46	47-50	51-60

**Factor 5: Mentor Model**      **Items: 2, 28, 29, 32, 36, 41**

not effective	less effective	effective	very effective	highly effective
6-18	19-21	22-23	24-25	26-30

**Factor 6: Student Vision**      **Items: 14, 17, 20, 26, 30, 35, 38, 45, 50, 54, 55**

not effective	less effective	effective	very effective	highly effective
11-37	38-41	42-44	45-47	48-55

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*[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]*

**Appendix D**

**Demographic Information Sheet**

*[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]*

### Demographic Information Sheet

For use in interpreting your responses, answers to the following questions are necessary.

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your sex? Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ethnic Background.  
\_\_\_\_\_ African American      Asian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic  
\_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian      Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your marital status?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Single      \_\_\_\_\_ Married      \_\_\_\_\_ Widowed  
\_\_\_\_\_ Divorced/Separated
5. How long have you been employed as a faculty member at the Barry University School of Continuing Education? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Teaching Area \_\_\_\_\_
7. Years in Current Position \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your current academic rank?  
Instructor  
Assistant Professor  
Associate Professor  
Full Professor  
Distinguished Professor

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING**  
**Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale**

1. Read and sign the reverse side of the consent form (immediately above the line "Signature of Participant") if you are willing to participate in this study. Retain one of the forms for your personal records.
2. Use a No. 2 pencil and circle one of the choices for each of the 55 statements. Choose one that is most representative of your whether you have actual experience as a mentor or very little or no actual experience.
3. Upon completion of your responses to the 55-item statements and the demographic statements, please enclose the following in the white self-addressed envelope:
  - (a) the signed consent form
  - (b) the demographic statement form
  - (c) the Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale
4. Seal the envelope to ensure confidentiality.
5. Place the self-addressed and stamped envelope in postage.

**Appendix E**  
**Interview Protocol**

## *Interview Notes*

Course:

Date:

Time:

---

Setting:

Comments and observations:

Introduction: (researcher)

Open-ended questions:

What are your educational goals?

What barriers, if any, have you encountered  
in attempting to achieve your educational goals?

What kinds of support services are  
available at the university in order to  
assist you in reaching those goals?

Describe the kinds of interactions you've had with  
faculty members. How often? How many faculty  
members? If there were no interactions, why not?

**Appendix F**

**Fact Sheet**

**Students Perception of Retention Interview**

## FACTSHEET

Age of respondent \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Hours this semester \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children \_\_\_\_\_ Age of children \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Place of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' educational level \_\_\_\_\_

When did you reenter/enter college? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been at this university? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you in university before now? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the length of time between previous enrollment and present enrollment?

\_\_\_\_\_

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF RETENTION INTERVIEW

1. Do you work? If so, how many hours per week?
2. How do you support yourself (or family) while you are in school?
3. If you work, how do your work responsibilities affect school?
4. Career wise, what did you give up to come to school?
5. If you work, how do you balance work and school?
6. How would you describe the initial stages or phases your family has gone through due to your being in school?
7. What monetary arrangements did you have to make to be able to come to college?
8. What did you give up monetarily to come to school?
9. What is your income source while you are in school?
10. What family arrangements did you have to make to be able to come to college?
11. What is the biggest family problem you face as a student?
12. How would you describe your family responsibilities?
13. How do your family responsibilities affect school?
14. How do you balance family and school?
15. Who did you talk to when you first thought about coming to school?
16. What kind of support system do you have?
17. Who do you turn to for help?
18. What do you do when the going gets rough?
19. While you are in school who are the most important people in your life?
20. How did you figure out what you needed to do to enroll in this college?
21. What have your experiences with faculty been like?



22. You have probably had some interesting experiences at this university. Can you talk about them?
23. How do you interact with other students, traditional and non-traditional age students?
24. How did you adapt to university culture?
25. What can you say about the stages or phases in your experiences as a university student?
26. What is it like for you to be back into an educational institution?
27. What was your educational goal when you enrolled at this university?
28. How did you arrive at this goal?
29. What are your educational goals now?
30. How did you arrive at these goals?
31. Would having a mentor assist you in coping strategies if your academic goals are not achieved? If so, how?
32. Do you think a mentoring program will assist you in making personal choices regarding your educational and career goals?
31. How would you describe the "real learning" that takes place in the university, then discuss where the real learning takes place for you?
32. What are the factors that keep you going in this university?
33. In your view, what support services are necessary for adult students to enhance their academic success?
34. How well do you think a mentoring program would serve nontraditional adult students

Study Summary

Consent Form Text

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**Appendix G**

**Informed Consent Forms**

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## Barry University

### Informed Consent Form

I am currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Barry University. My doctoral dissertation research project is entitled: "Faculty Mentoring a Strategic Tool for the Enhancement of Adult Learners." Your participation in this research project is greatly appreciated. I am anticipating the number of participants to be 20.

As adult educators of nontraditional age students, your reactions to the Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale would be a significant contribution to the field of adult education. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a Demographic Information Sheet, and answer the statements on The Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale (in large envelope labeled MENTOR). This is a 55-item questionnaire assessing the behaviors of faculty on six prescribed mentor functions. Completing all information should take no more than 30 minutes. The instructions for completing the Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale are enclosed. Please follow the instructions carefully.

Your consent to participate in this study is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this research at any time. A decision to withdraw from the research will not affect you in any way. As a benefit of the research, you may learn more about yourself regarding specific mentoring functions. As a research participant, the information you provide will be held in strict confidence as required by law. To protect your confidentiality, the research data will be coded so that no names will be used. All published results will refer to the participants by pseudonym only. Individual responses of the faculty member as well as all other records will be kept confidential and locked in a file in the researcher's office. All data collected during the study will be kept for a period of five years and then destroyed. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Brenda Jack, at (305)653-4634, my dissertation chair, Dr. Toni Powell, at (305)899-3708, or the IRB point of contact, Ms. Avril Brenner, at (305)899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

### Voluntary Consent

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purpose of this research by Brenda Jack, and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Barry University

### Informed Consent Form

I am currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Barry University. My doctoral dissertation research project is entitled: "Faculty Mentoring a Strategic Tool for the Enhancement of Adult Learners." I am anticipating the number of participants to be 20. Your participation in this research study is greatly appreciated. I would like to interview you as part of my research because I believe you possess information and insight related to my area of study.

As part of the research, the aim is to describe nontraditional-age students' perceptions of the factors that contribute to their retention at Frank J Rooney School of Adult and Continuing Education, Barry University. The information unveiled through the interviews may be used to assist the institution in examining its delivery services and in establishing, or improving support services for nontraditional students. The interviews will be recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

If you decide to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in a personal interview which will take approximately 45 minutes. The interview will include questions about your attitudes, feelings and educational goals, as well as some brief personal information.

I do not foresee that you should experience any risks as a result of your participation in this research study. Although there may be no direct benefits, I foresee that you may receive the personal benefit of participating in a study that makes the nontraditional student feel they are part of an adult institution that fosters educational attainment and academic success. In addition, your participation will allow adult educators to better understand processes that affect nontraditional student satisfaction. Such information can contribute to an enhancement of support services and the establishment of a formal mentoring program for nontraditional students.

You have several choices regarding non-participation in this research project: (1) you may decide not to participate at all; (2) you may decide to not answer some of the questions; (3) you may decide to terminate the interview. Any of these choices is an option and you will not suffer any penalty, nor will it negatively impact your student status.

As a research participant, the information you provide will be held in strict confidence as required by law. To protect your confidentiality, the research data will be coded so that no names will be used. All published results will refer to the participants by pseudonym only. All the data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office and the audiotapes made during the interview will be erased at the completion of the study. Further, all transcripts and notes will be destroyed after a five year period. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Brenda Jack, at (305)653-4634, my dissertation chair, Dr. Toni Powell, at (305)899-3708, or the IRB point of contact, Ms. Avril Brenner, at (305)899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

## Voluntary Consent

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purpose of this research by Brenda Jack, and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. Moreover, I give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Barry University  
Office of Institutional Research

To: [Faded text]  
From: [Faded text]  
Date: [Faded text]

**Appendix H**  
**Institutional Review Board**  
**Protocol Review**

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# Barry University

Institutional Review Board  
Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

11300 NORTHEAST SECOND AVENUE

MIAMI SHORES, FLORIDA 33161-6695

Direct (305) 899-3020

Fax (305) 899-3026

## Research with Human Subjects Protocol Review

To: Ms. Brenda E. Jack  
1264 Biscayne Blvd #326  
Miami, FL 33181

From: Deborah Jones Ph.D., Chair

Date: January 29, 2004

Protocol Number: 04-01-010

Protocol Title: Faculty mentoring: A strategic tool for the enhancement of adult learners

Dear Ms. Jack:

The Board has accepted your proposal. Please use the consent forms for all data collection. Please notify the IRB office in writing of any changes to your proposal in the future.

Regards,

141 Deborah Jones, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
Barry University  
11300 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave  
Miami Shores, FL 33161  
[dljones@mail.barry.edu](mailto:dljones@mail.barry.edu)