

2022

Perceptions of Support for Adult Students at a Community College

Holle Lynn Ford
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Holle Lynn Ford

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Joanna Karet, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Katherine Garlough, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Andrea Wilson, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Perceptions of Support for Adult Students at a Community College

by

Holle Lynn Ford

MEd, Freed-Hardeman University, 2013

BA, Xavier University of Louisiana, 2011

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

October 2022

Abstract

Adult college students face unique challenges that can derail their dreams of completing a degree or certificate program. The problem addressed in this study was that, although postsecondary institutions in Tennessee have been tasked with equipping at least 55% of adult residents with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025, some college leaders were struggling with how to best support adult students. Guided by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to better understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site. Six enrolled adult students and six college leaders participated in semistructured interviews. Inductive, open coding was used to identify codes, categories, and emergent themes in the interview data. Findings indicated that adult students and college leaders believed increased supports would help adult students complete a degree or certificate program. Recommended supports included offering more tutoring, better scholarships, evening childcare, and evening classes aimed at meeting the unique needs of adult learners. Based on these findings, a 3-day professional development training was created to provide college leaders with a deeper understanding of adult students' needs for support while enrolled in a degree or certificate program. As a result, college leaders will be better positioned to offer a range of meaningful support services that may improve adult students' college engagement, performance, and likelihood of program completion, thereby creating positive social change at the college and in the broader community over time.

Perceptions of Support for Adult Students at a Community College

by

Holle Lynn Ford

MEd, Freed-Hardeman University, 2013

BA, Xavier University of Louisiana, 2011

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

October 2022

Dedication

First, I would like to give praise and thanks to God. Second, I would like to dedicate this project to my mother and father. Thank you for all the support you have given me throughout my journey. You both are my everything, and I love you. Thank you! Lastly, I want to dedicate this project study to family and friends who have supported me, believed in me, and never left my side. I appreciate your love and patience!

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Section 1: The Problem.....	1
The Local Problem.....	1
Rationale	2
Definition of Terms.....	3
Significance of the Study	4
Research Questions.....	5
Review of the Literature	5
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Review of the Broader Problem.....	6
Implications.....	15
Summary.....	15
Research Design and Approach	18
Participants.....	20
Sample and Access to Participants	20
Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants	21
Establishing Researcher/Participant Relationships.....	21
Protection of Participants' Rights	22
Data Collection	22
Role of the Researcher	23
Data Analysis	24

Data Analysis Results	25
Coding Procedure.....	26
Research Findings.....	27
Evidence of Quality	37
Discrepant Cases.....	38
Accuracy of Data Analysis Procedures.....	38
Summary	38
Section 3: The Project.....	41
Introduction.....	41
Rationale	41
Review of the Literature	42
Developing Professional Development Trainings	43
Advantages of Microsoft PowerPoint.....	45
Cooperative Learning.....	47
Project Description.....	48
Needed Resources and Existing Supports.....	49
Potential Barriers	49
Implementation Plan and Timeline.....	50
Roles and Responsibilities of Those Involved.....	57
Project Evaluation Plan.....	57
Project Implications	59
Summary	60
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	61

Project Strengths and Limitations	61
Project Strengths	61
Project Limitations	62
Recommendations for Alternative Approaches	62
Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change	63
Reflection on Importance of the Work	64
Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research	65
Conclusion	65
References	68
Appendix A: The Project	80

List of Tables

Table 1. Day One Agenda.....	52
Table 2. Day Two Agenda.....	54
Table 3. Day Three Agenda.....	56

List of Figures

Figure 1. Perceptions of Supports Needed by Adult Students and College Leaders 28

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The Drive to 55 Initiative's mission focuses on higher education, workforce and economic development, a reduction in unemployment, and improvement in the quality of life of Tennessee residents. Specifically, Tennessee's Drive to 55 Alliance is a public and private alliance that aims to support the state's mission to equip 55% of Tennesseans with a college degree or certificate by 2025 (Drive to 55 Initiative, 2018). The Drive to 55 Alliance aims to help generate greater private sector awareness and ownership. In addition, the alliance's goal is to support the long-term steps needed in college entry and completion, adult education and training, and identifying and closing skills gaps will prepare the state's workforce for the future (Drive to 55 Alliance, 2018).

Due to the success of the Drive to 55 Initiative, the college included in this study, referred to by the pseudonym Horizon Community College (HCC), experienced a surge in enrollment of adult students. The administration at HCC reported struggling with establishing supports for this influx of adult students (personal communication, September 19, 2019). HCC is an urban community college that enrolled approximately 2,700 adult students in 2020. According to the vice president of student affairs at HCC (personal communication, September 19, 2019), challenges exist in building infrastructure to support adult students. They have unique needs from traditional-age students in obtaining a degree or certificate. The uncertainty in providing appropriate supports for adult students poses a problem for educational institutions and adult learners in Tennessee and the larger academic community.

Rationale

The problem addressed in this study was that, although postsecondary institutions in Tennessee have been tasked with equipping at least 55% of adult residents with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025 (Drive to 55, 2018), some college leaders have been struggling with how to best support adult students. According to the vice president of student affairs at HCC (personal communication, September 19, 2019), colleges have the challenge of building infrastructures to support adult students, who have unique needs from traditional-age students, in obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Staff struggled to support HCC adult students because adult students are not a homogenous group and typically possess multiple roles and responsibilities. These might include ongoing employment, being a spouse, parent, or student (personal communication, September 30, 2019). Several departments at HCC struggled to best support adult students in completing a degree or certificate. For example, according to the head of the English department at HCC (personal communication, April 30, 2019), while the enrollment of adult students in the English Department increased, they could not discern the specific support adult students needed to complete a degree or certificate successfully. College leaders must identify ways to help adult students earn their degrees (personal communication, September 19, 2019).

Many adult students struggle to navigate university services, feeling isolated and stressed because the institution and faculty do not provide the support they need (Glowacki-Dudka, 2019). “Most colleges and universities gear their curriculum, programs, advising, and administrative services to traditional students who can access

them during working hours” (Glowacki-Dudka, 2019, p. 84). If college leaders understand adult students’ perceptions regarding necessary supports to complete a degree or certificate, it may enable them to implement more efficient supports for adult students. Using a case study format, the purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site.

Definition of Terms

Adult Students: Adult students are learners that are 25 years of age and older (Ellis, 2019). While there are alternative labels available, including nontraditional students and mature students, all three refer to students in a nontraditional age group (Iloh, 2017). For this study, adult students are the preferred label for this population.

Degree: Degree refers to college programs focused on producing well-rounded students who understand their industry and its role in the world (DiFranza, 2019).

Certificate: Certificate refers to program courses more narrowly focused than a degree program. They often build upon the actionable skills needed to work in a particular industry (DiFranza, 2019).

Community College: Community college is a public two-year institution (Juszkiewicz, 2020).

Drive to 55 Initiative: The Drive to 55 Initiative is a state-wide effort to increase the number of adult Tennesseans with a post-secondary degree to 55% by 2025 (McHenry & Flora, 2017).

Nontraditional Students: Nontraditional students are individuals who delayed enrollment in postsecondary education by a year or more after high school or who attend part-time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). For this study, adult students will be the preferred name for the population.

Significance of the Study

Universities go beyond enrolling students in programs, advising them on what classes to take, and encouraging them to persist toward degree completion independently (Glowacki-Dudka, 2019). Higher education administrators must also be able to prioritize adult students in strategic planning efforts (Sun, 2019). Academic advisors may find they routinely reach out to adult students in their first year to ensure they stay on track and succeed in their classes (Glowacki-Dudka, 2019). Faculty, staff, and administrators may need training on the knowledge and skills required to work effectively with adult students (Sun, 2019) and to embrace and stay attuned to this population. Beyond listening to students and differentiating instruction accordingly, adjustments should embrace preservice and in-service teaching training (Housel, 2020). For example, local, state, regional, and federal policies should support ancillary services, adequate teacher preservice training, and in-service professional development for adult educators. These services will encourage educators to comprehensively address their students' diverse and complex learning and psychosocial needs (Housel, 2020). A better understanding of adult students' and college leaders' perceptions at HCC may be adaptable to other colleges and benefit future adult retention.

Research Questions

According to the head of the English department at HCC (personal communication, April 30, 2019), adult students may need support in obtaining and completing a degree; however, to effectively implement supports for adult students, college leaders must be aware of adult students' perceptions, as well administrators' perceptions of supports needed. The purpose of this qualitative research study, using a case study format, was to understand better what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site using the following research questions:

RQ1: What are Horizon Community College adult students' perceptions about supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate successfully?

RQ2: What are Horizon Community College leaders' perceptions about supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate successfully?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a motivational theory, was the conceptual framework utilized in this qualitative study. Also known as humanistic theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) is a motivational hierarchy used to understand human behavior. Maslow's hierarchy of needs has a five-tier model of human needs (McLeod, 2018). The model consisted of the need for physical, love and belongingness, safety, self-actualization, and self-esteem. The model includes four levels, which are known as the top-level needs and lower-level needs (Maslow, 1943). Top-level needs are growth needs,

and lower-level needs are physiological needs (Maslow, 1943). The first four levels, physiological, self-esteem, love and belongingness, and safety, are deprivation needs, motivating people when their needs are unmet. According to the theory, people attempt to fill the lower-level needs first then advance to the higher levels in the hierarchy of needs. “In Maslow’s theory, the more the physiological needs are satisfied, the more the person will attempt to satisfy their safety and security needs, and so on” (Ryan et al., 2020, p. 3). An individual's desire to reach wholeness or self-actualization is the motivation for all human behavior (Maslow, 1943).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs used identified needs to demonstrate appropriate support for adult students earning a degree or certificate. The needs of adult students enrolled at a university are pertinent to college leaders and the type of support they provide to adult students. The research questions and the grounding theory guided the advancement of the interview protocol. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs helped inform the interview questions, which focused on supports for adult students.

Review of the Broader Problem

Overview of Topics

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to better understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site; therefore, I conducted an inquiry of peer-reviewed research. The related literature presents the problem in the broader context in five main sections. The first section focused on research to guide the literature review. The following subsections emphasized an identified topic resulting from the problem statement: adult

students, barriers faced by adult students, support services for adult students, and motivation for adult students.

Search Strategy

I used the Walden University library to access various databases for this study. This scholarly literature review reflected material represented in the ERIC, ProQuest, Academic Research Complete, SAGE, and EBSCO databases. These resources were valuable in laying the framework for this inquiry and continuing discussions of needed support for adult students within higher education contexts. The literature review included keywords such as *adult students, higher education, colleges, universities, graduation rates, infrastructures, Drive to 55 Initiative, college leaders, programs, supports, and obstacles.*

Adult Students

Adults who consider returning to college, or taking college classes for the first time, are taking a big step; however, they are not alone (Brandes, 2017). Several adult students are in community colleges (Barcinas et al., 2016). Nationally, the percentage of students in the United States who are 25 years of age or older jumped 10.5 points from 27.8% in 1970 to 38.3% in 1980. Over the next decade, the number increased 5.8 points to 44.1% in 1990 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Data projected that 62% of all undergraduate students in the United States would be traditional students aged 24 years and younger, leaving 38% of all undergraduate adult students aged 25 years and older in 2028 (Gulley, 2021).

Obtaining a college degree can be beneficial. College graduates make \$1 million more than high school graduates (Brandes, 2017). The traditional student and adult student categories do not represent homogeneous groups but consist of students with highly diverse characteristics, needs, experiences, and goals (Panacci, 2017). Adult students are heterogeneous as a group with different social environments and physical and mental attributes. Some adult students did not start college at 18, and some stopped attending during traditional postsecondary years, later resuming their education (Phillips et al., 2017). Adult learning is witnessing increased participation among adult students learning by a distance education (DE) mode in higher education institutions (Biney, 2021). Adult students participate in educational activities to obtain a diploma and degree for various other reasons (Kao, 2017). Those reasons include to strengthening professional skills, enriching life knowledge and related skills, solving problems in life and work, pursuing lifelong learning, making friends, expanding the interpersonal network, looking for business partners, exploring for customers, obtaining a student identity for social welfare, and, lastly, to kill time (Kao, 2017).

Adult students have professional experience and knowledge gained in the previous stages of education (Pozdnyakova & Pozdnyakov, 2017). Mature adult students may enroll in college later in life, have a full-time job, have dependents, or could be experiencing other circumstances. Often an adult student has a job, a family, and specific public responsibilities, which certainly affect the learning process (Pozdnyakova & Pozdnyakov, 2017). Although adult students may be more initiative-taking and accustomed to making their own decisions (Housel, 2020), they must overcome the many

economic, personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional challenges in their way (Iloh, 2017).

Barriers to Completing College

Financial aid and admission practices are institutional barriers that reduce postsecondary presence (Osam et al., 2017). Barriers may revolve around travel time, distance to the campus, and rigorous course or program design that conflicts with work and family obligations (van Rhijn et al., 2016). Adult students bring nontraditional characteristics to campuses, including part-time enrollment, full-time employment, and increased family obligations (Koivisto, 2019). Adult students experience obstacles differently from undergraduate students (van Rhijn et al., 2016). Starting but not completing a program of study can be costly for students and institutions; hence, there are benefits to reducing attrition rates through increasing awareness of stressors and barriers to academic success among adult students (van Rhijn et al., 2016).

With their multiple roles and socioeconomic reality, adult learners face unrelenting life demands that subsequently deter their educational effort compared to traditional university students (Bok, 2021). Both men and women have responsibilities in the home (e.g., paying bills, caring for aging parents, household chores, and child-rearing) that could influence their decision to return to school (Osam et al., 2017). Students struggle to find new employment due to the declining economy (Singh et al., 2021). The decrease in the number of males seeking to return to college, coupled with the societal expectation for men to provide for their families, means that finances also serve as a considerable barrier to their return to college (Osam et al., 2017). Women who

decide they want to return to college to pursue a degree may have to consider dropping out of the workforce to increase the time available for their studies and responsibilities at home (Osam et al., 2017).

Adult students face many barriers to completion, including family life, transportation, health, and particularly the availability of financial resources (Osam et al., 2017). Despite the barriers, numerous adult learners consider higher education a bridge to better job opportunities, higher pay, promotions, and an increase in knowledge (Bowers & Bergman, 2016). Mature students have comparatively more family commitments that influence their integration into higher education (Venegas-Muggli, 2020). Most research on adult learners focuses on work-life balance issues; however, work–school conflict is a significant barrier to higher education completion not talked about (Bellare et al., 2021). Adult learners returning to college must find a balance between their distinct roles and combine them in a relevant way to overcome their obstacles to study (Koivisto, 2019). It is imperative to enhance adult students' academic success and achievement by implementing efficient and pertinent instruction (Housel, 2020). However, when adult students face various barriers, it becomes challenging to learn and earn a degree successfully. Adult learners interact with several stakeholders, including but not limited to family and friends, other students, employers, universities, and society (Koivisto, 2019). The stakeholders' support or resistance affects how easily a working professional can overcome the dispositional, institutional, and situational barriers to studying and finding a balance between different dimensions of their life (Koivisto, 2019).

Support Services for Adult Students

Remembering that U.S. colleges and universities favor traditional-aged students over adult students, support is indeed available for adult students if they are willing to endure the youth-centric bias (Robertson, 2020). Support services can potentially assist a student with being persistent and succeeding in the completion of a college degree. Also, support services aid in increasing graduation rates and retention. Giving support to students, including social and emotional support along with academic support, increases a student's awareness and can be beneficial in enhancing the quality of higher education (Kaur, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019), student support services provide academic tutoring, including instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, science, and other subjects, as well as advice and assistance in postsecondary education course selection. Also, support services assist a student with information on the full range of student financial aid programs, benefits, and public resources. Student Support Services (SSS) are a bunch of facilities and ventures to make learning reachable and more enjoyable for the learner (Kaur, 2016). If universities and colleges of higher education are deficient in supporting their students, then it does not serve the purpose of education but only distribution (Kaur, 2016).

Adult students in higher education in the United States are as diverse as the over 4,000 colleges and universities they attend (Robertson, 2020). Adult students require supports and services to help them successfully transition into taking on the demands and expectations of attending college as students (Karmelita, 2017). Transition programs have grown in popularity to aid adult students in transitioning to higher education (Karmelita,

2017). When colleges are initiative-taking in discovering adult students' perceptions of supports, the colleges are better at deploying resources, including transition programs (Karmelita, 2017). Transition programs are often intensive and offered at a more accelerated pace than a traditional semester, requiring participation throughout the program (Kallison, 2017).

Educational program planning is complex, and planners should ponder and examine all the participating factors, contexts, and people in the program (Shi, 2017). Educational programs should help adult learners to authorize goals regarding their conditions, support them in understanding how to search for information and resources, enable learners to get access to all services, and provide different assessment methods to accommodate the needs of adult learners (Shi, 2017). Nevertheless, supporting the academic advising needs of adult learners is essential in postsecondary education (Powers & Wartalski, 2021). If colleges and universities are to serve these students well, programming, teaching, and advising must address adult learners' needs in all curricular areas and fundamental academic skills and knowledge areas, such as writing, mathematics, and reading (Robertson, 2020).

The Motivation of Adult Students

Though higher education can provide numerous economic and career enhancement opportunities, adult learners experience several challenges when they return to college (Bellare et al., 2021). Adult students have been participants in higher education since the early beginnings of the United States (Kasworm, 2018). The adult learner is typically somebody who requires a program that allows them to balance life and

educational aspirations due to a secure job or family obligations (Okyere, 2015).

Specifying adult student motivation is worthwhile because this population has specificities that set it apart from traditional students (Rothes et al., 2017). Many adult learners return to school for career advancement and upward mobility (Korhonen & Portaankorva-Koivisto, 2021). Traditional students are more motivated to focus on their studies and more prone to set academic goals (Novotný et al., 2019). However, research has identified adult students as having lower levels of extrinsic motivation (Novotný et al., 2019).

Studying adult learner's motivation is worthwhile because this population has specificities that set it apart from traditional students (Rothes et al., 2017). To succeed at universities, students must have self-regulatory skills and high psychological well-being (Davis & Hadwin, 2021). Self-regulated students monitor their learning and performance and actively regulate their cognition, emotion, and motivation (Sněhotová et al., 2021; Zimmerman, 1990). While there is ample research on the motivation of traditional students, adult or adult learners' motivation for studying is still a seldom learned subject under contemporary theories of motivation (Rothes et al., 2017). For example, the self-determination theory's most basic distinction is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

As the prime motivation between intrinsic and extrinsic, intrinsic motivation represents the functioning of an interest that is gratifying (Rothes et al., 2017). However, extrinsic motivation is the achievement exercise for a prize or punishment (Rothes et al., 2017). Extrinsic motives include (a) prescribing economic benefits; (b) participating to

avoid unpleasant activities; (c) developing competencies, knowledge, or skills for professional activities; (d) developing competencies, knowledge, or skills required for activities outside the job and working life; (e) demanding skills or symbolic recognition needed to get, preserve, or evolve in a job; and (f) appreciating one's own identity (Alshebou, 2019).

Postsecondary attainment for adult students is crucial for meeting the needs of the workforce and the needs of the individual. A college education is a pathway that frequently determines entry into the middle class for degree earners (Kallison, 2017). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the median weekly earnings for those with the highest educational attainment levels (i.e., doctoral and professional degrees) were more than triple those with the lowest (Torpey, 2019). Also, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that workers with at least a degree or certificate earned more than the \$932 median weekly earnings for all workers. Even though employers desire low-skilled workers, high-skilled professions have seriously increased lately (Kallison, 2017). There has been a surge in college participation from current high school students and adult students could potentially increase enrollment numbers at colleges and universities. Adult students are another significant population that could potentially increase enrollment at higher education institutions (Kallison, 2017). Colleges have increasingly become the pursuit of older students seeking or returning to secure postsecondary credentials and degrees (Iloh, 2017).

Implications

Findings from this study provided insight into the perceptions of adult students and college leaders regarding the supports needed to best meet the needs of adult students to earn a degree or certificate at the study site. Understanding adult students' and college leaders' perspectives may better enable college leaders to meet adult students' needs, allowing these students to obtain their goals of earning a degree or certificate. Adult student motivation can have important implications for practice, namely assisting adult education institutions in developing programs that appeal to adult students' distinct motivations, thus, contributing to better achievement results, decreased dropout rates, and higher specialization (Rothes et al., 2017). Additionally, teachers and other education professionals can improve their pedagogical orientation and support according to their students' needs and motivations. They can also learn to value encouragement to help students become more initiative-taking and self-regulated in their learning (Rothes et al., 2017).

Summary

The problem addressed in this study was that, although colleges in Tennessee have been tasked with equipping at least 55% of adult students with a college degree by the year 2025 (Drive to 55, 2018), college leaders are struggling with how to best support this population of new adult students in obtaining degrees or certificates. The purpose of this qualitative research study, using a case study method, was to better understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site.

The review of the literature showed that adult students participate in educational activities to obtain a degree and to strengthen professional skills, pursue lifelong learning, make friends, expand their interpersonal network, and obtain a student identity for social welfare (Kao, 2017). Adult students face many barriers to completion, including family life, transportation, health, and, particularly, the availability of financial resources (Osam et al., 2017). Adult students require supports and services to help them successfully transition into taking on the demands and expectations of attending college as students (Karmelita, 2017). Adult students strive in countless aspects (Aljohani & Alajlan, 2020).

The presented findings from this study provided insight into the perceptions of adult students and college leaders regarding the support needed for adult students to earn a degree or certificate at the study site. Adult student motivation can have important implications for practice, namely assisting adult education institutions in developing programs that appeal to adult students' distinct motivations, thus, contributing to decreased dropout rates (Rothes et al., 2017).

Section 2 presented the research design and methodology employed to gather data for this qualitative case study. The results developed a professional development workshop for college leaders and faculty focused on understanding adult students' needs. Section 3 described a general idea of the professional development training and implications related to the training created based on the results of this study. This professional development workshop may improve programs, infrastructures, and course development by allowing college leaders and faculty to understand what supports adult students need to earn a degree or certificate at the study site. After implementing the

professional development workshop, adult students may have more success obtaining a degree or certificate at higher education institutions. In addition, I created a review of the literature to support the professional development training. Last, Section 4 examined the strengths of the professional development training and other possibilities to resolve the problem. Furthermore, readers learned in section four my point of view from the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

I used a qualitative methodology and case study design for this study. A qualitative methodology is to pursue and understand the explanation regarding individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The process of conducting qualitative research involves (a) emerging questions and procedures; (b) data typically collected in the participant's setting; (c) data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes; and (d) the researcher identifying interpretations of meaning from the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In qualitative studies, the researcher uses open-ended questions and interviews subjects in a semistructured fashion (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Interviews often occur in the participant's natural or quiet environment, such as a conference room (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Researchers analyze participants' interviews for a rich narrative to answer the research questions (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). For this study, individual interviews provided an in-depth understanding of adult-student and college-leader perceptions regarding support needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate at the study site. I conducted semistructured interviews with participants, letting them disclose their perceptions of needed support for adult students at HCC.

I chose a case study design because this study's goal was to develop a deeper understanding of a unique experience related to a particular group of people. (Farghaly, 2018). This case study focused on a single university and participants who attended or worked for the university, including adult students and college leaders. Case studies are

an arrangement of examination formed in many areas, specifically evaluation, in which the researcher creates a comprehensive investigation of a case (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Numerous disciplines have extensively used case study research to assess and develop theory, add to the humanistic understanding and existing experiences, and uncover the intricacies of complex social phenomena (Forrest-Lawrence, 2018). The adaptability of the case study has placed it at the front line of favored methodological approaches for many researchers (Forrest-Lawrence, 2018). A case study can explore, explain, and evaluate the research to develop theory, generate and assess hypotheses, and embrace varied epistemological orientations (Forrest-Lawrence, 2018). One of the compelling assets of the case study is its definite capacity to discover the intricacies of complicated social phenomena by showing consideration to the local position (Stake, 2006). A case study addressed the research questions of how adult students and college leaders perceived needed support for adult students to complete a degree or certificate successfully. The perceptions gathered during this research are only relevant to specifically this one site.

I considered other qualitative designs, such as grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. Grounded theory investigates the actions and effects of the behavior in a culture (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Establishing a theory was not the study's basis or intended goal but determining perceptions of adult students' support. Ethnography discloses culture, the behavior affiliated with it, and how it is known (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Ethnography involves immersing oneself and observing a specific culture. However, I did not study a particular culture in this study but the perceptions of

adult students and college leaders. I used phenomenology to better understand how phenomena emerge as lived in the world (Valentine et al., 2018). This study focused on an in-depth investigation of a specific case; therefore, phenomenology was inappropriate. Based on these factors, a case study design was the best fit for this study.

Participants

I recruited a purposeful sample of six adult students and six college leaders from HCC. Adult students were current students enrolled at HCC who were either first- or second-year students. Adult students enrolled at HCC majoring in various majors, including business management, communication, accounting, criminal justice, education, funeral service education, language and literature, and other offered majors at HCC, were eligible to participate. I selected college leaders from various departments and offices at HCC.

Sample and Access to Participants

Adult students expressed their willingness to participate in the study by contacting me using the information provided on the posted flyers. College leaders expressed their interest in participating in the study by responding to the electronic invitation I emailed to them. I emailed an invitation to adult students and college leaders interested in participating in the study. Information in the email was an introduction to the researcher, a description of the study's nature and intent, an informed consent form, and instructions on responding to the invitation. I emailed the informed consent form to the participants. I explained it in detail to better understand voluntary participation, potential risks involved

in participating in the study, and participants' rights to decline participation at any point. I explained the informed consent form to participants before the phone interview.

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

After approval from Walden University's IRB, approval #02-08-21-0571780, I began to recruit adult students and college leaders. Participants consisted of six adult students and six college leaders. I posted approved social media flyers on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to recruit adult students. I displayed brief information about the study, the participation requirements, and my contact information on the social media flyers. To recruit college leaders, I used HCC's public staff directory. I emailed invitations to college leaders at HCC, asking for their participation. I identified participants as current adult students or college leaders at HCC and stated their willingness to participate in the study. Upon the acceptance from adult students and college leaders, I scheduled one-on-one telephone interviews. I recorded phone interviews. I notified participants before the interview that I would be recording them. I ensured their privacy during the recorded interview before each participant signed a consent letter.

Establishing Researcher/Participant Relationships

In establishing the researcher/participant relationships with interviewees for any study, there is an abundance of factors to examine. The various relationships are often complex negotiations of roles that require some reflexivity, a commitment to human protection and ethics, and the credo of doing no harm (Allen, 2017). For this study, I established relationships with participants and built on trust and respect. The researcher's

respect for research design and respect for participant interests and protections are critical (Allen, 2017).

Protection of Participants' Rights

I informed participants that they did not have to continue participating in the study if they chose. Also, participants expressed their understanding that no consequences would impede their academic studies. Engaging in interviews created an intentional space where participants felt safe to disclose their opinions, concerns, and feelings. Mutual disclosure can allow a participant to discuss their painful experiences because the participant may sense empathy from the researcher (Allen, 2017).

Data Collection

The data collected in this study were qualitative, signifying adult students' and college leaders' perspectives. I reached the data using one-on-one, semistructured, and recorded interviews. The purpose of this qualitative methodology using a case study was to understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site. The data collection process began when I acquired approval from the IRB. Data collection included semistructured and one-on-one interviews with adult students and college leaders at HCC. I created interviews in the hope to learn about adult students' and college leaders' perceptions regarding supports needed for adult students to earn a degree or certificate at HCC. In addition, I created interview questions to investigate this project study's research questions. I listed sample interview questions below:

1. How would you describe adult students?

2. What motivated you to earn your bachelor's degree as an adult?
3. What would support look like for adult students?
4. What supports are currently available for adult students at your community college?
5. What supports would you like to see college leaders implement to successfully support adult students earning their bachelor's degree?
6. How do adult students identify supports provided by their college?

To assess my interview questions, I conducted a field test with two participants, one adult student, and one college leader. Because of implementing the field test, I avoided the repetition of interview questions. Each participant engaged in a one-on-one, semistructured recorded phone interview. I recorded each one-on-one interview using the iPhone Memo app on my password-protected iPhone. I deleted each recorded interview on my iPhone after I uploaded each interview to a password-protected computer. I transcribed interviews using Amazon Transcribe. After the completion of the transcriptions, I reviewed transcriptions to ensure correctness. I also used member checking to allow participants to review their transcribed responses for accuracy. Subsequently, I uploaded transcriptions in NVivo to begin coding. By using NVivo, I generated themes, codes, and categories. I used a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to manage the collected data.

Role of the Researcher

I was responsible for recruiting participants, recording interviews, and collecting and analyzing data. At the time of recruitment, all participants learned of my role in the

study. In addition, I disclosed my status as a doctoral student at Walden University. To alleviate bias, I informed participants that they did not have to respond to any questions that made them feel uncomfortable. I asked questions approved by Walden University's IRB.

I did not have any current professional or personal relationships with adult students or college leaders attending HCC, the site of the study. I had never attended HCC, nor was I ever employed at HCC. My role as an educator and researcher did not create any complications among participants. I ensured that privacy and confidentiality were of the utmost importance in this study.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collection occurred through interviews with six adult students and six college leaders. After conducting audio-recorded one-on-one interviews with participants, I transcribed interview transcripts using Amazon Transcribe. To check for accuracy, I concurrently examined the audio recordings of the interviews and transcriptions line-by-line. Afterward, I coded the transcripts using NVivo. NVivo is a software program to analyze text, video, audio, and other forms of data. Coding is the analytical development of classifying data. To achieve analysis of transcripts, I used NVivo in a central setting while categorizing themes, categories, and codes. Inductive coding, codes produced while exploring the collected data, generated themes, categories, and organization of codes allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the data. Once I coded and analyzed the data, I created categories. Afterward, four themes emerged.

I conducted peer debriefing to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the findings. Peer debriefing stems from the teaching method of peer-assisted learning, which shows increased confidence, reduces stress and anxiety, and enhances learning. I enlisted a former Walden University doctoral student as the peer debriefer. The peer debriefer agreed to, read, and signed a confidentiality agreement before examining data. The debriefer did not have any questions and did not find errors in the findings.

Discrepant cases are findings that are opposite from or differ from the current patterns or understandings of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Discrepant cases ensure that a researcher does not coerce data to coincide with apparent notions or biases. However, discrepant cases interpret data in a particular way. For this study, no discrepant cases materialized in the data analysis. While participants expressed different opinions and ideas, the differences did not rise to the level of being a discrepant case. If discrepancies transpired, I would have investigated the datasets to unearth the reasons for the discrepancies. To resolve discrepancies, I would have communicated with the participants regarding discrepancies.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site. For the study to impact social change, I executed data analysis to answer the study's research questions and align with the goals. I used a case study qualitative method to provide developing themes that collected the adult students' and college leaders' responses related to the two research questions utilized for this project study and

presented in Section 1. Adult students consisted of students majoring in various concentrations, such as nursing, education, and funeral service. HCC leaders consisted of leaders from various college departments.

I generated data through semistructured recorded interviews with adult students and college leaders. After I transcribed recorded interviews, I used member checking after I transcribed recorded interviews to allow participants to review their responses and correct any errors. Member checking added credibility to the study's findings (Creswell, 2009). I replaced names with an alphanumeric code that determined if the participant was an adult student or a college leader. In addition, I included a sequential number after the alphanumeric code. Once I completed transcriptions, the coding process occurred. I used NVivo to accomplish coding. I coded adult students' and college leaders' responses to the interview questions and utilized them to create themes.

Coding Procedure

Once I transcribed each interview, I ensured they reread the transcripts to check for understanding. I began coding by using NVivo software. This program analyzed unstructured or semistructured data, such as interviews, surveys, field notes, web, and journal articles (Soehardi et al., 2021). The software looked for patterns and relationships in the transcripts. I created 10 codes using the NVivo software: (a) tuition; (b) scholarships; (c) services; (d) children; (e) classes; (f) night classes; (g) tutoring; (h) more classes; (i) resources; and (j) funding. I combined and refined the 10 codes and created four themes. From the data, four themes materialized: (a) more tutoring, (b) better scholarships, (c) evening childcare, and (d) evening classes. I used my password-

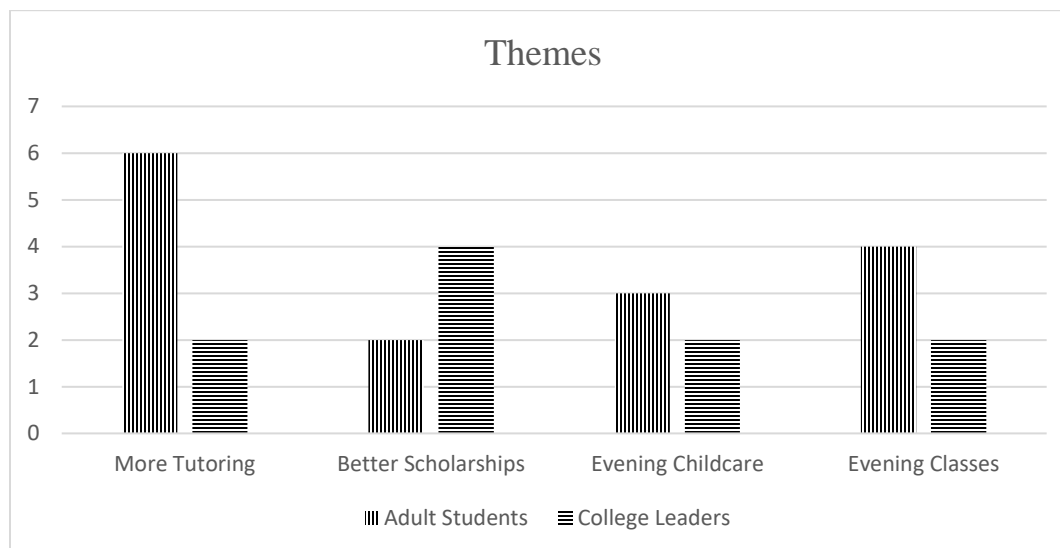
protected computer to save all notes. For organization purposes, an excel document I used an excel document for organization purposes and notes. I listened to each interview and reread each interview. I imported data into NVivo qualitative coding software for coding and determining themes.

Research Findings

The findings of this study provided adult students' and college leaders' perceptions of what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who were completing a degree or certificate at the study site. The 12 interviews helped provide themes reported among the six adult students and six college leaders. I developed four themes from the participants' responses to the data analysis process. The four themes that emerged were (a) more tutoring, (b) better scholarships, (c) evening childcare, and (d) evening classes (See Figure 1). Figure 1 shows four themes from semistructured interviews conducted with adult students and college leaders.

Figure 1

Perceptions of Supports Needed by Adult Students and College Leaders



Research Question and Theme 1: More Tutoring

Figure 1 shows that more adult students than college leaders believed tutoring services should expand. However, more college leaders than adults believed that better scholarships should increase. Nevertheless, more adult students than college leaders believed that evening childcare should expand. Adult students saw a need for more evening classes than college leaders. Compared to six adult students needing more evening classes, only two college leaders saw a need for more evening classes.

The first RQ is: What are HCC adult students' perceptions about what supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate successfully? During data collection, all participants provided their perceptions of various supports and resources adult students need to complete a degree or certificate at the study site. However, only eight of the 12 participants mentioned that more tutoring would support adult students'

need to complete a degree or certificate at HCC. All six adult students and two college leaders perceived that more tutoring would support adult students who would need to complete a degree or certificate at the study site. According to one participant, Adult Student 2,

As an adult student, I would love to see more tutoring opportunities. I have a full-time job and sometimes it is a challenge to find time to participate in tutoring at my college. I may need extra assistance with my work because the tutoring lab is no longer open when I get off from work. It is a challenge to be available for tutoring.

Also, this participant believed more tutoring would help her tremendously with her understanding of assignments. Another participant had a similar sentiment as this participant. According to College Leader 11:

I believe adult students would benefit from more tutoring to assist with their studies. Tutoring can include expanded tutoring hours to accommodate working students trying to obtain a degree. College leaders need to take more initiative-taking in retaining students.

Throughout the interview, one participant discussed ways college leaders can offer more tutoring to adult students enrolled at HCC. The participant discussed tutoring being virtual and in-person. Adult Student 1,

Adult students need more tutoring opportunities throughout the day. Tutoring can be in-person or virtual. There should be more options instead of one in-person

option. As adults, we work, have families, and have other circumstances. I know that having an in-person and virtual option would be fantastic.

Other participants, Adult Student 3 and Adult Student 4, would like more tutoring available for adult and traditional students due to the time constraints associated with adult students working. Participants explained that adult students might get off from work in the evening and may need help with their classwork. Having the option to receive help after working would be beneficial. Adult Student 3 mentioned that he struggles to balance his personal life with school. He sometimes becomes frustrated because he does not know how to do a math equation or conjugate in Spanish. This participant reported needing extra help to assist him in his class; however, when he is ready to focus on his coursework, the tutoring center at HCC is no longer open. Adult Student 3 chose to attend college to obtain a better job and to be a role model for his family. Adult Student 4 elaborated on how it would be easier if he could make it in time to the tutoring center at HCC; however, once he is off from work the tutoring center is no longer open. Adult Student 4 could hire a tutor to help him with his work; however, he does not have the extra money to afford a tutor.

Two participants felt that tutoring should be a priority for HCC. Participants felt there was not enough emphasis and exposure to tutoring at HCC. They felt a higher emphasis on sports and other extracurricular activities on campus. Adult Student 5 stated,

As an adult student, I would like to see tutoring as a priority at the college. When I attend class in the evening, nothing occurs on campus. I tend to go straight to my

class and leave directly after. There should be flyers and emails about the tutoring center on campus.

Adult Student 6 mentioned that she is unaware of where the tutoring center is on campus. Both participants discussed that if they knew the hours and where the tutoring center was, it would be a benefit to them.

Two participants, College Leader 7 and College Leader 10, believed increasing tutoring would be beneficial. They felt that the tutoring center is away from the main traffic areas on campus. To increase tutoring, College Leader 7 explained that the center would need to be easily accessible on campus for the usage of the tutoring to increase. Students need to know how and where to access tutoring on campus. For example, one participant stated that the tutoring centers could be near the library or the main entrance of the campus building. College Leader 10 pointed out that tutoring centers need to be in each building where classes are and “I would like to see more college leaders focus on and implement more tutoring on campus. Adult students are working adults with families and may not have a chance to take advantage of tutoring during the day.” The theme represented by data and the information gathered from participants helped to address the two research questions by providing tutoring as support for adult students to complete a degree or certificate successfully.

Research Question and Theme 2: Better Scholarships

The second RQ is: What are HCC college leaders’ perceptions about what supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate? Participants were able to provide their perceptions of the research study. Six of the 12 participants said better

scholarships would support adult students seeking a degree or certificate at HCC. Two adult students perceived that better scholarships would support adult students who would need to complete a degree or certificate; however, four college leaders mentioned that adult students would benefit from better scholarships. Adult Student 1 stated that more scholarships “would help tremendously. If there were more scholarships available, I would not be worried sometimes about how I am going to pay my tuition. Scholarships would play a key role in whether students would continue with school.”

Adult Student 3 expressed his concern with the importance of scholarships increased at HCC and stated, “I would love to see more scholarships geared towards people like me. I have other responsibilities outside of classes. I am important, just like a traditional student.”

College Leader 8 stated:

A significant challenge I see adult students face is paying for college. As we all know, college is expensive, and some adult students may struggle. Much of their income may be going towards their family. More scholarships would help.

Six of the participants interviewed had similar views on the importance of scholarships increased for adult students and felt that scholarships should be easily accessible to adult students. College Leader 9 stated:

Traditional students, I believe adult students, need more scholarships or financial aid to earn their bachelor’s. They have many obstacles that may hinder them, so providing them with the funds can make a world of difference for adult students.

College Leader 10 stated that education:

It should be free for all students. However, that is not the case right now. Students should see scholarships around campuses, especially adult students. Adult students are out of the loop regarding campus activities and services. They should have the right to obtain many scholarships as a traditional student.

Adult Student 4 and Adult Student 6 felt better scholarships would help them earn their degree or certificate at HCC. However, it is challenging to locate scholarships for adult students. Participant Adult Student 4 stated there are scholarships available “for students, but there are enough scholarships that cater to working adult students. I work hard to accomplish my goal to earn my degree and I must struggle to find scholarships to which I can relate.”

College Leaders 11 agreed that adult students would benefit from better scholarships and financial aid. She stated, “To support adult students, scholarships must be available and regularly discussed with this special population. How can adult students know about available funding if no one is discussing this with them and trying to put it out there?” College Leaders 10 stated:

Supporting all students should be our priority but putting more emphasis on adult students is necessary because they are a unique population. As a support, I want adult students to have more scholarships and financial aid available. We want them to succeed throughout their college years and graduate from our college with the necessary knowledge and skills to be meaningful adults in society.

This theme and the gathered information from participants helped to address the two research questions by providing better scholarships as support for adult students seeking to complete a degree or certificate successfully.

Research Question and Theme 3: Evening Childcare

The RQ for this section is: What are HCC adult students' perceptions about what supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate successfully? The next theme developed from data collection was that evening childcare. Participants in the study felt that flexible hours would help adult students complete a degree or certificate at HCC. Five out of 12 participants mentioned that evening childcare expanded would benefit adult students. Three adult students and two college leaders wanted to see evening childcare services expanded. Adult Student 3 stated,

What would help me dramatically is if the college had flexible hours for aftercare on campus. I have children, but afterward is no longer open when I attend my evening classes. I must find a family member or friend to look after my child. Leaving my child in the car is not an option. However, I could bring my child to class, but I do not want to distract other students in my class.

Another participant felt that an increase in evening childcare would benefit her. Adult Student 2 stated,

Unfortunately, I do not have a support system to watch my child while I attend class. However, to my understanding, the aftercare provided by the college closes right before my evening class. The college knows that students have children and

take evening classes. Consider that adult students in evening classes should have the same access to childcare as daytime students.

Adult Student 6 stated,

Sometimes I must bring my child to class because I do not have anyone to watch her. My professor says that it is no problem for my child to come to class with me, but I know she is being polite. I would love to see the college provide more hours for aftercare.

Two college leaders, College Leader 11, and College Leader 7 discussed the importance of flexible hours of on-campus aftercare. College Leader 11 stated,

Adult students have barriers, one of which may be having children or a family. It is vital to cater to an adult student with a child. The aftercare that stays open late for adult students who class in the evening is excellent support for adult students with children.

College Leader 7 stated,

If I were an adult student, I would want the college to provide more flexible hours for aftercare. I noticed that some adult students bring their children on campus after hours. Their child may be in the back of the class or waiting outside of the class.

This theme and gathered information from participants help address the two research questions by providing increased evening childcare support for adult students seeking to complete a degree or certificate successfully.

Research Question and Theme 4: Evening Classes

During data collection, participants provided their perceptions on what supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate at HCC. Out of the 12 participants, six participants mentioned evening classes for adult students. Adult Student 3 stated,

As an adult student with a job, children, and other obligations, I would like to see the college implement more classes in the evening. Sometimes the college does not offer the classes I need that semester, which puts me behind in graduating. So, I am stuck waiting for the college to offer the class I need in the evening.

Similarly, Adult Student 4 stated:

Having more classes online would be excellent for me as an adult student. With my busy schedule, attending class in person would not be convenient for me.

However, being able to take an online class would benefit other adult students and me so much.

When I asked college leaders about their perceptions about supports needed to complete a degree or certificate, two college leaders mentioned that more evening class options would be an excellent support for adult students to complete a degree or certificate at HCC. College Leader 8 stated,

That one support adult students need is more class options, which could consist of more classes available in the evening for our working adult students. I believe the college should take into consideration adult students. We try to offer more class options; however, we either do not have instructors for classes or funding to pay for more instructors. So, we have left offering as many classes as we can.

Similarly, College Leader 11 stated, “Adult students are busy people. They may have to take care of their family, have a full-time job, and have obligations. I believe adult students would benefit from more online classes. Online classes may provide adult students the flexibility.”

This theme and information gathered from participants help to address the two RQs by providing an increase in evening classes to support adult students who need to complete a degree or certificate successfully.

Evidence of Quality

Participants can view their email for themes and transcripts to reexamine. After reexamination, participants did not question the transcripts and had no further feedback. Utilizing member checking warrants credibility and allows participants to assure that the evidence is precise and that no disparities are evident. Afterward, I used peer debriefing to ensure details connecting to the study results were evident. Peer debriefing requires the researcher to provide detailed notes to another trained researcher (Scharp & Sanders, 2018). I engaged in peer debriefing with a former doctoral student at Walden University who understood the purpose of my study to ensure that the details were precise.

One pattern transpired among participants concerning supports for adult students. They all assessed that there should be supports for adult students completing a degree or certificate. However, participants had different perceptions about what adult students need. For example, some participants mentioned that more tutoring would support adult students and others mentioned that better scholarships would also be a great support.

Discrepant Cases

Once I examined the data, I provided each participant with a draft of the research findings to assess the data's interpretations and confirm the results' validity. I provided each participant in the study with an opportunity to discourse on the outcomes to inspect for discrepancies. Nevertheless, no discrepancies transpired in the data analysis; however, if discrepancies had occurred through the datasets, I would have investigated the datasets to uncover justifications or reasons for the discrepancies. I would have corresponded with participants to settle discrepancies. Nevertheless, there were no discrepant cases located in the study.

Accuracy of Data Analysis Procedures

I used member checking and peer debriefing to guarantee the findings' accuracy and credibility. A former doctoral candidate at Walden University represented the debriefer. I questioned a debriefer who was not involved in collecting and analyzing the data. The debriefer examined all materials, documents, and information relevant to the study. The debriefer created categories, codes, and themes throughout the data analysis to guarantee the credibility of the findings. The debriefer analyzed the study's materials, documents, and notes; they specified that the categories, themes, and codes correctly depicted the data gathered.

Summary

In this section, I analyzed the process for collecting evidence that depicted 12 carefully chosen adult-student and college-leader perceptions regarding supports needed for adult students completing a degree or certificate. I conducted a qualitative case study

with an interview approach to gather data from participants. NVivo was the instrument used to transcribe and code interview data. Findings showed that adult students and college leaders had different and similar perceptions regarding supports for adult students.

The four themes that resulted from the collected data were more tutoring, better scholarships, evening childcare, and evening classes. First, more tutoring is critical to adult students since these resources provide transitions for adult students and help adult students in need. Adult students require support and services to help them successfully transition into taking on the demands and expectations of college students (Karmelita, 2017). Second, better scholarships are critical for adult students who cannot afford college for several reasons. Financial aid (i.e., grants, loans, and scholarships) is critical to many students' ability to pay for higher education. However, after dropping out, adults must re-enter higher education (Clark, 2020). Third, evening childcare was critical for adult students who have children and cannot locate evening childcare services during class times. Students with children face the challenge of managing the childcare burden with study and work (Long, 2017). Fourth, evening classes are critical for adult students who have busy schedules and need class flexibility.

This project study used Maslow's hierarchy of needs to investigate supports needed to meet the needs of adult students and college leaders earning a degree or certificate. Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes a pyramid that includes self-actualization, which is "to become everything that one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1943). Self-actualization is to develop into all that one is competent of becoming, which

is at the highest point of the pyramid (Maslow, 1943). Adult Student 2 mentioned in the semistructured interview that increasing tutoring would help earn a degree or certificate at HCC. The findings from this study encompassed Maslow's hierarchy of needs would Adult Student 2; once supports from this study are in place, Adult Student 2 will earn a degree or certificate, enabling them to live a fulfilling life. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, esteem is having self-esteem, freedom, recognition, and status (Maslow, 1943). Adult Student 2 stated that increasing tutoring would help build confidence, contributing to earning a degree or certificate.

As a result of this study's findings, I developed a professional development training project to assist college leaders in creating and implementing supports for adult students completing a degree or certificate. The following section discussed a 3-day professional development training for college leaders. Section 3 included an introduction to the project, a rationale, a review of the literature, and a description of the project. In addition, Section 3 included an evaluation plan, potential barriers, and limitations.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Based on the results of this study, I designed a professional development training for college leaders entitled Supporting Adult Students (See Appendix A) so that college leaders at HCC may leave the training with an understanding of what supports are needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site. The training included four themes: more tutoring, better scholarships, evening childcare, and evening classes. Each module has a purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and target audience to assist college leaders with understanding supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate.

The findings of this study showed that adult students and college leaders at HCC had various opinions regarding supports needed to meet the needs of adult students earning a degree or certificate at the study site. Adult students mentioned supports they would like to see, such as more tutoring, better scholarships, evening childcare, and evening classes. College leaders must understand supports needed for adult students. Therefore, the professional development training is for college leaders to understand what supports adult students need to earn a degree or certificate.

Rationale

Adult students are a growing population at colleges and universities across the United States. Adult students face various barriers, which may make it more challenging for this population to earn a degree or certificate. According to the vice president of student affairs at HCC (personal communication, September 30, 2019), there is a

challenge in ensuring the college support adult students who have vastly unique needs from traditional-age students in obtaining a degree or certificate. HCC's adult students are usually working adults with multiple roles, which means they are workers, spouses, parents, and students (personal communication, September 19, 2019).

Creating and developing supports for adult students could help them complete their degrees. Based on the analysis of adult students' and college leaders' perceptions regarding needed supports, I created a professional development training for college leaders to understand what strategies and tools adult students need. The purpose of this qualitative methodology using a case study was to better understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site. To create the complete professional development training for college leaders, I considered the perceptions of adult students and college leaders. Section 2 described adult students' and adult students' perceptions regarding what support adult students need to complete a bachelor's degree. Using these data, I identified the four themes (i.e., More Tutoring, Better Scholarships, Evening Childcare, and Evening Classes). I aligned four themes with the goals of this study. College leaders must understand adult students' perceptions to help them progress and earn a degree. Additionally, the training could assist college leaders in understanding what they can do to assist adult students earning a degree or certificate.

Review of the Literature

This professional development training for college leaders will engage college leaders in a collaborative effort to create and implement supports for adult students to

complete a degree or certificate. I collected the literature in this review using Walden University's library to access various databases, such as Academic Search Complete, Education Sources, ERIC, Sage Journals, and Education Research Complete. In addition to using Walden University's databases, I used Google Scholar for this literature review. Search terms included *adult students, supports for adult students, professional development, cooperative learning, college infrastructures, supports and resources, advantages of Microsoft PowerPoint, college leaders, and community colleges.*

Supported by the current literature, four themes emerged from the data analysis results, including developing a professional development training, advantages of Microsoft PowerPoint, and cooperative learning. The literature presented supported the implementation of a professional development training for college leaders created to assist the development of supports to aid in adult students to complete a degree or certificate.

Developing Professional Development Trainings

Professional development programs focus on different theories of how students and teachers learn (Kennedy, 2016). The Latin word *profiteri* means *profession* in English. A profession is an occupation in which one publicly claims a skill (Mitchell, 2013) and “professional development is the strategy schools and school districts use to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their careers” (Mizell, 2010, p.1). Educators should immerse themselves in constant professional development to become more knowledgeable as professionals than they were the former year (Tyagi & Misra, 2021). As such, the professional development training program was

to introduce college leaders to literature about perceptions from adult students and college leaders regarding the support adult students need to complete a degree or certificate.

Extension professionals are to educate or train adult learners within specific content areas (Conner et al., 2018). As society becomes more information saturated, extension facilities must evaluate current educational programming and delivery methods to facilitate adult learning (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy Leadership Advisory Council, 2007). To best meet the needs of their adult clientele, extension educators should use new teaching models developed based on research (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy Leadership Advisory Council, 2007). According to Ota et al. (2006), the assumptions of andragogy may be deemed by extension educators when designing and facilitating training programs for adult learners. These assumptions aid adult learners in applying new knowledge and skills to environments outside the classroom (i.e., professional environments). Knowles developed the following beliefs of andragogy in early work and reprinted in the eighth edition of the textbook, *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (Knowles et al., 2015):

- the need to know,
- the learner's self-concept,
- the role of the learner's experiences,
- readiness to learn,
- orientation to learning, and

- motivation.

A professional development training has several crucial elements. Content is the first element. The professional development program must focus on content and pedagogical knowledge, provide opportunities for real-time implementation, and develop essential collaboration and reflection that lead to improved teacher practice and student achievement (Simos & Smith, 2017).

Successful professional development should also incorporate various components to assist the teachers' learning (Lauterbach et al., 2020). Another element to developing a professional development training is active learning. This active learning element focuses on teachers' knowledge within professional development sessions (Bates & Morgan, 2018). Interactive lessons are typically engaging for participants.

Feedback and reflection are other powerful tools in effective professional development employing during mentoring and coaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). While feedback and reflection are two distinct practices, they work together to help teachers move thoughtfully toward the expert visions of exercise they may have learned about or seen modeled during professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Advantages of Microsoft PowerPoint

Recent years have seen revolutionary changes in adopting new teaching methods, including computer-assisted learning, role plays, and audio-visual aids (Vishwekar & Basapure, 2016). In today's academic world, PowerPoint presentations have become common in showing how the fast-paced, visually attractive data-driven presentations typical of marketing and business have invaded even the most traditional settings

(D'Angelo, 2018). PowerPoint is a presentation computer program in schools and companies (Vishwekar & Basapure, 2016). PowerPoint is an easy-to-use, stable technology that readily comes with the Microsoft Office package of programs. Inexperienced students and instructors can use this technology with little effort or technological or instructional expertise (Uzun & Kilis, 2019). Microsoft® PowerPoint is an incorporation software (Carvalho et al., 2016). Teachers can organize their thinking through PowerPoint in planning what they should present (Uzun & Kilis, 2019). Teachers can also support and enhance the message they deliver via well-prepared presentations (Uzun & Kilis, 2019). They can also incorporate hypermedia tools, such as graphics, images, animations, and sound into their PowerPoint presentations (Uzun & Kilis, 2019). Slides may be well suited to learners with different learning styles (e.g., visualizers), as they enable instructors to present multiple sources (Uzun & Kilis, 2019).

Since the late 1990s, Microsoft PowerPoint has become the expected presentation genre (D'Angelo, 2018). Microsoft PowerPoint is an efficient way to demonstrate graphics and imperative information for the presenter (Vishwekar & Basapure, 2016). The software helps produce, edit, and store images without losing quality or resolution (Carvalho et al., 2016). You can also use PowerPoint to quickly lay out complex single-page presentations for production as flyers, posters, or postcards, or delivery as electronic files, such as pictures (Lambert, 2015). A suitable and visually attractive PowerPoint presentation requires general knowledge about the Slide Master functionality (Carvalho et al., 2016). It is possible to insert master slides (e.g., slides representing the preoperative period, imaging exams, and postoperative evaluation) with proper layouts (Carvalho et

al., 2016). Students believe this presentation helps them focus on the topic and increases their interest and motivation to study it (Baker et al., 2018).

The frequently cited advantage of using Microsoft PowerPoint® to teach is that it amplifies the organization of the lecture by offering not only an outline but also critical information and figures or images while distributing imperative information (Baker et al., 2018). PowerPoint presentations can also be an effective way of providing information in small segments. Individual slides include bullet points, pictures, charts, tables, and business diagrams (Lambert, 2015). Professionally designed themes visually enhance your message and provide a professional, coordinated appearance (Lambert, 2015). Recently, the most frequent distribution acts included incorporating PowerPoint presentations, lecturing using transparency and overhead projector, and the standard chalk and talk approach.

Cooperative Learning

During the 3-day professional development training, participants will break into groups to discuss several topics. Participants will engage in cooperative learning (CL). CL is a pedagogical practice that promotes socialization and learning among preschool to tertiary level students across different subject domains (Gillies, 2016). It contains students working simultaneously to accomplish popular goals or achieve group tasks (Gillies, 2016).

CL allows students to analyze problems from multiple perspectives, which helps them think more complexly (Loh & Ang, 2020). Studies show that CL provides a safe environment where students have opportunities to collaborate with others (Eryilmaz &

Cigdemoglu, 2019). For students who are too shy to ask teachers questions, CL provides them a platform to seek clarification from their peers (Loh & Ang, 2020). There is much debate about whether homogenous or heterogeneous groupings help students learn or put them at a disadvantage (Loh & Ang, 2020). The diverse group of students allows students to actively interact with various individuals while simultaneously learning about each other's differences (Loh & Ang, 2020). Setting clear instructions and task expectations play an essential role in the effective implementation of CL (Sumtsova et al., 2018).

Project Description

I aimed to provide college leaders at HCC with the strategies and tools to support adult students earning a degree or certificate effectively. The project developed from the results of this study is a 3-day professional development training. The goal of this professional development training is to allow college leaders at HCC to collaborate and learn strategies and tools to create supports for adult students. Learning outcomes of the professional development training are: (a) college leaders will be able to define and identify adult students; (b) college leaders will be able to explain the importance of supporting adult students, and (c) college leaders will be able to develop supports for adult students in earning a degree or certificate. The professional development training is a 3-day training for college leaders at HCC during the spring term. College leaders participating in the professional development training in the spring term may enable them to explore ways to implement supports for adult students at HCC in the fall.

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

For the professional development training, college leaders must have several resources, including laptops or devices, a projector, internet access, and Microsoft Office. HCC will provide a wireless internet connection to college leaders. Laptops or devices must allow internet. Participants must be able to connect to the internet to preview PowerPoint presentations and other virtual materials. Also, another needed resource for the professional development training is support from stakeholders. Support from stakeholders should include internal support from staff members, faculty, institutional partners, and external collaborations.

Existing supports at HCC include a projector for presentations in each classroom and meeting space. Also, another existing support is several convenient wall outlets for college leaders to plug in their devices and chargers. I will promote the professional development training to college leaders at HCC via email and flyers. The college's information technology department will provide technical assistance with the professional development training and assist with the connection to the projector.

Potential Barriers

For this project, there are two potential barriers. The first potential barrier is locating a space for the 3-day professional development training for college leaders. Limited space at HCC to hold a 3-day training may be an issue. The second potential barrier is scheduling a date and time for the professional development training. Many college leaders have busy schedules, which makes it a challenge to set a specific date and time for everyone to attend the training.

Implementation Plan and Timeline

The implementation plan for this professional development training will start with planning and organizing the training for college leaders. The designated leadership team will meet in March of the same year to determine the agenda and schedule for the May professional development training. The professional development training is a 3-day training from Wednesday through Friday in May. The in-person training will last from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. Participants will receive a 1-hour lunch break and several breaks between sessions. The training will include engaging PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and summative evaluation.

On the morning of Day 1, I will welcome college leaders to the professional development training and participants will enjoy a continental breakfast. I will introduce the professional development training and explain the purpose of the training to college leaders. Also, I will present a summary of topics during the 3-days. Next, I will present the current study using PowerPoint slides. Afterward, college leaders will discuss and compare their perceptions of supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. Later, I will introduce the literature on more tutoring needed for adult students.

During the afternoon training, college leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on more tutoring for adult students. Next, I will introduce literature on better scholarships for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. Afterward, college leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on better scholarships

for adult students. Lastly, the training will conclude with a summary of topics discussed during day one and a reminder about Day 2 training.

Table 1*Day One Agenda*

Time	Activity
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome and Continental Breakfast
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce the topics covered during training.
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Individuals will compare their perceptions of supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	PowerPoint: Present the results of the current study.
10:45 a.m. -11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on more tutoring for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on more tutoring for adult students.
2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Break
2:24 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on better scholarships for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on better scholarships for adult students.
4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of today's training.

On the morning of Day 2, I will begin with a welcome and overview of the agenda for day two. Also, I will introduce the topics discussed during Day 2 training and a summary of day one training. Afterward, I will introduce the literature on evening childcare for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. College leaders will break out into groups and share thoughts on evening childcare for adult students.

During the afternoon, I will introduce literature on evening classes and college leaders will break into groups and share their thoughts. Next, I will present a video to the college leaders regarding adult student techniques for facilitators. After the video, college leaders will participate in a think and share activity. College leaders will have an opportunity to share their thoughts about the presented video. Lastly, the training will wrap up with a summary of day two and a brief overview of what college leaders could expect on Day 3.

Table 2*Day Two Agenda*

Time	Activity
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome: Agenda
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce the topics discussed in today's training and summary of day one training.
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on evening childcare needed for adult students.
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on evening childcare for adult students.
11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on evening classes for adult students.
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on evening classes for adult students.
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Break
3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Video: College leaders will view a video regarding adult students' techniques for facilitators.
3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Think and Share: College leaders will share their thoughts about the video.
4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of today's training and a brief overview of what to expect on day three.

On the morning of Day 3, I will begin with a welcome and overview of the agenda for Day 3. Also, I will introduce the topics discussed during Day 3 training and a summary of Day 2 training. Subsequently, current adult students enrolled at HCC will discuss their experiences as adult students. Next, participants will watch a brief video regarding helping adult learners make better college decisions. Afterward, I will present a PowerPoint about what college leaders can do to implement supports for adult students. After the presentation, college leaders will have the opportunity to create a plan to implement supports for adult students and set a date to implement the supports. I will summarize the professional development training to wrap-up the training. Lastly, college leaders can submit a summative evaluation of the professional development training using Survey Monkey.

Table 3*Day Three Agenda*

Time	Activity
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome: Agenda
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	PowerPoint: An overview of topics discussed during day one and day two.
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Current adult students discuss their experience as an adult student enrolled at HCC.
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Video
11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch
12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	PowerPoint: Discuss what college leaders can do to implement supports for adult students.
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	College leaders will create a plan to implement supports for adult students and set a date to implement the supports.
2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Break
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of the professional development training and college leaders will submit a summative evaluation.

Roles and Responsibilities of Those Involved

For this study, I am responsible for suggesting the professional development training to the college. Also, I will serve as the facilitator for the professional workshop program. As the facilitator, I will train other presenters to facilitate the training to college leaders in the future. Collaborating with leaders and advisors will help with communication, planning, and implementing the professional development training. College leaders will be responsible for actively listening, learning, and engaging in the professional development program. In addition, college leaders are responsible for suggesting ways to modify or implement supports at HCC. Finally, college leaders will have the responsibility to complete a summative evaluation.

Project Evaluation Plan

Due to this research study, college leaders may benefit from training to support adult students in completing a degree or certificate. As a result, the professional development training will concentrate on expanding college leaders' awareness of adult students' and college leaders' perceptions and supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate at HCC. The rationale for evaluating this professional development training is to establish if the goals and outcomes of the training were successful. Consequently, a summative evaluation will be employed to assess the success of the professional development training in expanding college leader awareness of adult student perceptions and supports for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. The evaluation instrument is in Appendix A. Summative evaluations will measure and document the training program's ability to meet the course objectives and stakeholders'

expectations (Champagne, 2021). The data can drive revisions or modifications to the structural strategies and materials while teaching and learning are in progress (Champagne, 2021). The goals of this professional development training are for college leaders to learn and understand the following supports for adult students:

- more tutoring,
- better scholarships,
- evening childcare, and
- evening classes.

Outcome evaluations measure a program's effectiveness in producing change and achieving the desired program outcome, goals, and objectives (Champagne, 2021).

Outcome evaluations focus on the effect the training had on learners and their organizations (Champagne, 2021). The evaluation presents important feedback from participants regarding the training and the overall efficacy of the training. A summative evaluation will play a vital assessment tool at the end of the professional development training.

The stakeholders who would benefit from the results of the evaluations are college leaders at HCC. College leaders can use the strategies and tools raised in the training to support adult students in completing a degree or certificate. The evaluation results will also contribute to developing this training for future use to improve the needs and supports of adult students. The evaluation will conclude through the participation of a survey by college leaders partaking in the professional development training at HCC. The survey will include several 5-point Likert scale items to determine if college leaders

believe the goals of the professional development training transpired. A Likert scale has various answer options from either side of the spectrum. In addition, I will include in the survey open-ended questions. The open-ended questions will allow college leaders to provide more in-depth answers regarding the effectiveness of the training, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions.

Project Implications

The problem addressed in this study was that, although colleges in Tennessee have been tasked with equipping at least 55% of adult residents with a college degree by the year 2025 (Drive to 55, 2018), college leaders have been struggling with how to best support this population of new adult students in obtaining a degree or certificate. I will address this study's problem and the resulting findings through professional development training designed to increase college leaders' awareness of supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate at the study site. College leaders may benefit from this training as it will give them the knowledge to implement supports for adult students on campus.

This project also holds probable social change implications for adult students and college leaders at HCC. First, this training may help to understand what supports adult students need. Also, if college leaders implement the information from the professional development training at HCC, this may improve adult students' completion of a degree or certificate. Supports at HCC may help adult students pay for college and complete a degree or certificate. After obtaining a degree, adult students may be able to begin a higher-quality career and provide for themselves and their families. Additionally, the

results of this project may assist other college leaders at various colleges and universities in supporting adult students.

Summary

Areas of focus that resulted from the review of the literature were developing professional development training, the advantages of Microsoft PowerPoint, and cooperative learning. The focus on Microsoft PowerPoint for the review of the literature is due to the presentation program used during the professional development. I presented data and other imperative information to participants using Microsoft PowerPoint. It is essential to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the presentation program. Developing a professional training is critical for ensuring that knowledge and skills are advanced. Participants will learn valuable information supporting adult students completing a degree or certificate. Adult learners require supports and services to help them successfully transition into taking on the demands and expectations of college students (Karmelita, 2017). The advantages of Microsoft PowerPoint are critical to understand since PowerPoint is the presentation platform during the 3-day professional development training. Cooperative learning is breaking people into small groups to discover new concepts and acquire new knowledge. Each theme is imperative in supporting college leaders' 3-day professional development training.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative methodology using a case study was to better understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site. In this qualitative case study, I explored adult students' and college leaders' perceptions regarding supports for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. Data collected were from 12 interviews with six adult students and six college leaders at HCC. Findings from this study revealed adult students' and college leaders' perceptions regarding needed supports to best meet the needs of adult students to complete a degree or certificate, including the desire for (a) more tutoring; (b) better scholarships; (c) evening childcare; and (d) evening classes. As a result of the findings, I developed a 3-day professional development training for college leaders. In Section 4, I concluded this study project with a discussion of the project's strengths and limitations, as well as the research conducted. In addition, I examined and considered the recommendations, implications, and applications of this study. Lastly, to conclude Section 4, a summary captured the study's essence.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The objective of this project was to provide college leaders at HCC with the strategies and tools to effectively support adult students in earning a degree or certificate. The professional development training will enable college leaders to consider supports for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. An additional strength of the professional development training created from this study was that the training would

allow college leaders to come together to collaborate, interact, and develop with each other to create necessary supports for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. Many college leaders may have busy schedules, making it a challenging to collaborate and interact with other college leaders on campus. This professional development training may be the exact setting for college leaders to converse with each other and share ideas.

Project Limitations

A potential limitation of the professional development training is the duration of the 3-day professional development training at HCC. College leaders who participate in the training will be out of their offices and unable to tend to their everyday duties and tasks. The professional development training can occur several times during the year to accommodate college leaders' schedules to address this limitation. Another limitation of the professional development training may be that the training might not allow enough time for college leaders to develop supports for adult students fully. College leaders may collaborate outside of the training to create supports for adult students. Lastly, another limitation of the professional development training may be a lack of participation and buy-in from college leaders at HCC. College leaders may have their views or perspectives regarding supporting adult students at HCC. To address this limitation, it would be best to try to converse with college leaders and understand their perspectives about adult students at HCC.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Although the professional development training was the method selected to have the most impact so that college leaders at HCC may provide an understanding of what

supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or certificate at the study site, there is an alternative method that could address the problem. One approach to address the problem is using another research design, such as the phenomenological design. The phenomenological design examines lived experiences to understand how people comprehend their experiences. I would explore participants' views or beliefs using focus groups, observation, or interviews.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

The time pursuing my doctoral degree has been an overwhelming experience for me. Over the past six years, I have endured life's pressure while staying focused on my project study. This doctoral journey has not been painless for me. Despite my challenges as a doctoral student, this research has made it available for me to improve my research skills. Because of the literature, I understand the supports for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.

Performing a review of the literature on supports for adult students to complete a degree or certificate presented me with several suggestions based on ways to support adult students. I had the opportunity to read peer-reviewed articles that featured information regarding adult students and the needed supports for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. Also, I had the opportunity to collect data from adult students and college leaders. In the end, the data from the analysis generated themes, which created the subject matter, purpose, and organization for the outline of the project.

When I created the project for this study, I envisioned developing something effective, practical, and addressing a local problem in higher education. I recognized that

I needed to achieve something that would impact adult students and college leaders. Along these lines, I needed to decide on a project that would be current and influential. On that premise, I decided to foster a professional development training that focused on providing college leaders at HCC with the strategies and tools to support adult students in earning a degree or certificate effectively. This professional development training for college leaders may be a solution to the local problem. The intent of the training will assist college leaders in collaborating and examining supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. The components of the professional development training will consist of goals, the target population, and evaluation. Some professional development training creators may use various assessment tools to establish the effectiveness of the professional development. A summative evaluation will measure the effectiveness of this professional development training.

During my journey as a doctoral student at Walden University, I have acquired new skills as a scholar-practitioner through collaboration with peers and colleagues. I have learned to speak, write, and research like I have never known before. However, I was determined to succeed and conquer as much as possible. In addition, I have grown professionally and personally. Initially, my purpose in pursuing a doctorate was to obtain a higher degree. However, since pursuing a doctorate, my purpose has been to change adult students' lives. In addition, I have discovered how to research issues for resolution.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to better understand what supports were needed to best meet the needs of adult students who are completing a degree or

certificate at the study site. As I think about all that I have learned as a doctoral student, it is evident that this study may impact social change. As a doctoral student, I have learned that trying to bring about social change is not an easy task to complete. Many adult students encounter various barriers that make completing a degree or certificate challenging. Adult students face barriers, such as taking care of a family, working at a job, and attending class. Developing and implementing supports is essential for adult students to thrive, complete a degree or certificate, and have a successful future. The professional development training will allow college leaders to develop additional skills to support adult students.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Although this study focused on adult students and college leaders, future research may center on adult students and faculty members. Research can focus on adult students' and faculty members' perceptions regarding supports needed to best meet adult students' needs. Since faculty members work directly with adult students, faculty members could provide crucial insight into imperative supports for adult students in completing a degree or certificate. Another alternative approach would be conducting the study at a four-year college instead of a two-year community college. Research at a four-year college may provide mixed results due to an increased four-year college population.

Conclusion

I never thought I would be in the position I am in currently. I am a doctoral student working toward obtaining my doctorate in higher education leadership at Walden University. Getting a doctoral degree was never in my vision. As I grew older and

understood my willingness to achieve better in life, I decided to further my education and begin my journey toward a doctoral degree at Walden University.

The problem addressed in this study was that, although colleges in Tennessee have been tasked with equipping at least 55% of adult residents with a college degree by the year 2025 (Drive to 55, 2018), college leaders have been struggling with how to best support this population of new adult students in obtaining degrees or certificates. The purpose of the professional development training was to provide college leaders at HCC with the strategies and tools to effectively support adult students in earning a degree or certificate at the study site. To foster a 3-day professional development training for college leaders, I explained adult-student and college-leader perceptions regarding supports once conducting 12 semistructured one-on-one interviews with adult students and college leaders. In analyzing the data for my study, I answered the following research questions:

RQ1: What are Horizon Community College adult students' perceptions about what support adult students need to complete a degree or certificate successfully?

RQ2: What are Horizon Community College leaders' perceptions about how to best support adult students when completing a degree or certificate successfully?

Increased necessary support should better serve adult students in completing a degree or certificate and provide them with an opportunity to flourish. The findings from this study revealed that adult students and college leaders disagreed on the same supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. However, I gathered the following from interviews: (a) more tutoring, (b) better scholarships, (c) evening

childcare, and (d) evening classes. This study is meaningful because it provided insight into what supports adult students need to complete a degree or certificate at HCC. In addition, the study provided a 3-day professional development training intended to provide college leaders at HCC the professional training to improve their awareness of adult students and supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate at HCC. This study will inform college leaders of the supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate. Thus, because of this study, college leaders will have the opportunity to influence the lives of adult students completing a degree or certificate domestically and internationally.

References

- Aljohani, O. H., & Alajlan, S. M. (2020). Motivating adult learners to learn at adult-education schools in Saudi Arabia. *Adult Learning, 31*(4), 150-160.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159519899655>
- Allen, M. (2017). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* (Vols. 1-4). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411>
- Alshebou, S. M. (2019). Non-traditional students in a traditional college—A feminist perspective. *International Education Studies, 12*(7), 28-41.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v12n7p28>
- Baker, J. P., Goodboy, A. K., Bowman, N. D., & Wright, A. A. (2018). Does teaching with PowerPoint increase students' learning? A meta-analysis. *Computers & Education, 126*, 376-387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.08.003>
- Barcinas, S. J., Kachur, T. A., Akroyd, D., McCann, H. N., & Zheng, Y. (2016). Adult learner perceptions and experiences in a Community College engaged in intensive student success reforms. *Adult Education Research Conference*.
<https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2016/papers/3>
- Bates, C. C., & Morgan, D. N. (2018). Seven elements of effective professional development. *The Reading Teacher, 71*(5), 623-626.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1674>
- Bellare, Y., Smith, A., Cochran, K., & Lopez, S. G. (2021). Motivations and barriers for adult learner achievement: Recommendations for institutions of higher education. *Adult Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159211059574>

- Biney, I. K. (2021). McClusky's theory of margin and its implications on adult learners in higher education institutions. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 28(1), 98-118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477971421989337>
- Bok, G. (2021). Adult learners' challenges in distance learning: A case study in Universiti Sains Malaysia. *Issues in Educational Research*, 31(1), 19-36. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier31/bok.pdf>
- Bowers, A., & Bergman, M. (2016). Affordability and the return on investment of college completion: Unique challenges and opportunities for adult learners. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 64(3), 144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2016.1229102>
- Brandes, H. (2017, April 20). *Hitting the books: Tips for adults starting, returning to higher ed studies*. The Journal Record. <https://journalrecord.com/2017/04/20/hitting-the-books-tips-for-adults-starting-returning-to-higher-ed-studies/>
- Carvalho, F. S. R., Chaves, F. N., Soares, E. C. S., Pereira, K. M. A., Ribeiro, T. R., Fonteles, C. S. R., & Costa, F. W. G. (2016). Educational utilization of Microsoft PowerPoint for oral and maxillofacial cancer presentations. *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention*, 17(4), 2337-2339. <https://doi.org/10.7314/apjcp.2016.17.4.2337>
- Champagne, J. (2021). Is it assessment or evaluation? *ATD: Talent Development*, 75(2), 20-22. <https://www.td.org/magazines/td-magazine/is-it-assessment-or-evaluation>
- Clark, A. (2020). What works for today's students-satisfactory academic progress reset.

Higher Learning Advocates. <https://higherlearningadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SAP-reset-v.4.pdf>

Conner, N., Dev, D., & Krause, K. (2018). Needs assessment for informing extension professional development trainings on teaching adult learners. *Faculty Publications, Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies*.

https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/famconfacpub/246?utm_source=digitalcommons.unl.edu%2Ffamconfacpub%2F246&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.

https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_609332/objava_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.

D'Angelo, L. (2018). PowerPoint presentations in the classroom: Re-evaluating genre.

Language Value, 10(1), 29-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6035/LanguageV.2018.10.3>

Darling-Hammond, L., Hylar, M., Gardner, M., & Espinoza, D. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. *Learning Policy Institute*.

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

Davis, S. K., & Hadwin, A. F. (2021). Exploring differences in psychological well-being and self-regulated learning in university student success. *Frontline Learning*

Research, 9(1), 30-43. <https://doi.org/10.14786/flr.v9i1.581>

DiFranza, A. (2019, April 24). Degree vs. certificate programs: What's the difference?

Northeastern University. <https://www.northeastern.edu/bachelors-completion/news/degree-vs-certificate/>

Drive to 55. (2018). *Home*. <https://driveto55.org>

Ellis, H. (2019). Pursuing the conundrum of non-traditional student attrition and persistence: A follow-up study. *College Student Journal*, 53(4), 439-449.

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A612581075/AONE?u=tel_oweb&sid=googleScholar&xid=a5668205

Eryilmaz, M., & Cigdemoglu, C. (2019). Individual flipped learning and cooperative flipped learning: The effects on student's performance, social, and computer anxiety. *Interact. Learn. Environ*, 27, 432-442.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2018.1522652>

Extension Committee on Organization and Policy Leadership Advisory Council. (2007).

2007 report. Washington, DC: National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/famconfacpub/246>

Farghaly, A. (2018). Comparing and contrasting quantitative and qualitative research approaches in education: The peculiar situation of medical education. *Education in Medicine Journal*, 10(1), 3-11. <https://doi-org/10.21315.eimj2018.10.1.2>

Forrest-Lawrence, P. (2018). Case study research. In: Liamputtong P. (eds) *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*. Springer, Singapore.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6_67-1

- Gillies, R. M. (2016). Cooperative learning: Review of research and practice. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, 41(3), 39-54.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n3.3>
- Glowacki-Dudka, M. (2019). How to engage nontraditional adult learners through popular education in higher education. *Adult Learning*, 30(2), 84-86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159519833998>
- Gulley, N. (2021). Challenging assumptions: 'Contemporary students,' nontraditional students,' 'adult learners,' 'post-traditional,' 'new traditional.' *SCHOLE: A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education*, 36(1), 4-10.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1937156X.2020.1760747>
- Housel, D. A. (2020). When co-occurring factors impact adult learners: Suggestions for instruction, preservice training, and professional development. *Adult Learning*, 31(1), 6-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177.10451595198499110>
- Iloh, C. (2017). Not non-traditional, the new normal: Adult learners and the role of student affairs in supporting older college students. *Journal of Student Affairs*, 27(2017-2018), 25-30. <http://dx.doi.org/10.25675/10217/194265>
- Juszkiewicz, J. (2020, July). *Trends in community college enrollment and completion data, Issue 6* [PowerPoint slides]. American Association of Community Colleges.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED610261.pdf>
- Kallison, J. M., Jr. (2017). The effects of an intensive post-secondary transition program on college readiness for adult learners. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 67(4), 302-321. <https://doi-org/10.1177/0741713617725394>

- Kao, I. (2017). A study on the impact of the occupational performance of teachers in adult education institutions on instructional satisfaction. *MATEC Web of Conferences* 199(01038). <https://doi.org/10.1051/mateconnf/201711901038>
- Karmelita, C. (2017). Fundamental elements of transition program design. *Adult Learning*, 28(4), 157-166. <https://doi-org/10.1177/1045159517718328>
- Kasworm, C. E. (2018). Adult students: A confusing world in undergraduate higher education. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 66(2), 77-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2018.1469077>
- Kaur, S. (2016). Student support services in higher education: A student perspective. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(126-132). <http://oaji.net/articles/2016/1170-1465571546.pdf>
- Kennedy, M. (2016). How does professional development improve teaching? *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 945-980. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626800>
- Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., III, & Swanson, R. A. (2015). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315816951>
- Koivisto, M. (2019). Work, family, and school – balanced postgraduate programs for full-time workers in Finland. *International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning*, 12(3), 14-23. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijac.v12i3.11254>
- Korhonen, V., & Portaankorva-Koivisto, P. (2021). Adult learners' career paths – from IT profession to education within two-year study programme in Finnish university

context. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 40(2), 142-154.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2021.1900939>

Lambert, J. (2015). *Microsoft PowerPoint 2016 Step by Step: MS PowerP 2016 Step by Step*. Microsoft Press, 2015.

<https://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/9780735697799/samplepages/9780735697799.pdf>

Lauterbach, A. A., Benedict, A. E., Yakut, A. D., & Garcias, A. A. (2020). Improving vocabulary outcomes in inclusive secondary science classrooms through professional development. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 31(1), 56-74.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1046560X.2019.1661738>

Loh, R. C. Y., & Ang, C. S. (2020). Unravelling cooperative learning in higher education: A review of research. *Research in Social Sciences and Technology*, 52(2), 22-39. <https://doi.org/10.46303/ressat.05.02.2>

Long, B. (2017). Helping women to succeed in higher education: Supporting student-parents with childcare.

https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/attachment%201.pdf

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396. <https://doi-org/10.1037/h0054346>

McHenry, K. L., & Flora, B. H. (2017). Key elements of a state master plan in higher education. *Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education*, 13(1), 41-46. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1139148.pdf>

- McLeod, S. (2018). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Simply Psychology*.
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/simplypsychology.org-Maslows-Hierarchy-of-needs.pdf>
- Mitchell, R. (2013). What is professional development, how does it occur in individuals, and how may it be used by educational leaders and managers for the purpose of school improvement? *Professional Development in Education*, 39(3), 387-400.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.762721>
- Mizell, H. (2010). Why professional development matters. *Leaning forward*.
<https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/professional-development-matters.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2018). *Digest 2017*. [Data set].
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tablesdt17_303.40.asp
- Novotný, P., Brücknerová, K., Juhaňák, L., & Rozvadská, K. (2019). Driven to be a non-traditional student: Measurement of the academic motivation scale with adult learners after their transition to university. *Studia Paedagogica*, 24(2), 109-135.
<https://doi.org/10.5817/SP2019-2-5>
- Okyere, E. (2015). Challenges and coping strategies of adult learners in tertiary institutions: A case study of university of cape coast in Ghana. *Journal of Studies*, 5(4), 131-144. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jse.v5i4.8161>
- Osam, E. K., Bergman, M., & Cumberland, D. M. (2017). An integrative literature review on the barriers impacting adult learners' return to college. *Adult Learning*, 28(2), 54-60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159516658013>

- Ota, C., DiCarlo, C. F., Burts, D. C., Laird, R., & Gioe, C. (2006). Training and the needs of adult learners. *Journal of Extension*, 44(6), Article 6TOT5.
<https://www.joe.org/joe/2006december/tt5.php>
- Panacci, A. G. (2017). Adult students in mixed-age postsecondary classrooms: Implications for instructional approaches. *College Quarterly*, 20(2), n2.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1142552.pdf>
- Phillips, L. A., Baltzer, C., Filoon, L., & Whitley, C. (2017). Adult student preferences: Instructor characteristics conducive to successful teaching. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 23(1), 49-60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477971416683488>
- Powers, N., & Wartalski, R. (2021). The academic advising experiences of adult learners: Preliminary findings from one department. *American Association for Adult and Continuing Education*, 10(1). <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/ts/vol10/iss1/2>
- Pozdnyakova, O., & Pozdnyakov, A. (2017). Adult students' problems in the distance learning. *Procedia engineering*, 178, 243-248.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2017.01.105>
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. SAGE Publications.
- Robertson, D. L. (2020). Adult students in U.S. higher education: An evidence-based commentary and recommended best practices. *Innovative Higher Education*, 45(2), 121-134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-019-09492-8>
- Roths, A., Lemos, M. S., & Goncalves, T. (2017). Motivational profiles of adult learners. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 67(1), 3-29.

<https://doi.org/10.1177.0741713616669588>

- Rutberg, S., & Bouikidis, C. D. (2018). Focusing on the fundamentals: A simplistic differentiation between qualitative and quantitative research. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, 45(2), 209-213. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/focusing-on-fundamentals-simplistic/docview/2028125771/se-2?accountid=14872>
- Ryan, B. J., Coppola, D., Canyon, D. V., Brickhouse, M., & Swienton, R. (2020). COVID-19 community stabilization and sustainability framework: An Integration of the Maslow hierarchy of needs and social determinants of health. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 14(5), 623–629. <https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2020.109>
- Scharp, K., & Sanders, M. (2018).: What is a theme? Teaching thematic analysis in qualitative communication research methods. *Communication Teacher*, 33(2), 117-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2018.1536794>
- Shi, H. (2017). Planning effective educational programs for adult learners. *World Journal Education*, 7(3), 79-83. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v7m3p79>
- Simos, E., & Smith, K. (2017). Reflections on transformative professional development: Improving practice and achievement. *English Leadership Quarterly*, 39(3), 2-4. <https://library.ncte.org/journals/ELQ/issues/v39-3/28957>
- Singh, J., Matthees, B., & Odetunde, A. (2021). Learning online education during COVID-19 pandemic-attitudes and perceptions of non-traditional adult learners. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 29(4), 408-421. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-12-2020-0147>

- Sněhotová, J., Urban, K., & Votava, J. (2021). Self-direction. In Němejc, K., Bakay, E. M. (Eds.), *CATCH 21st century skills: Teaching materials* (pp. 97-134). Czech University of Life Science Prague, Institute of Education and Communication.
- Soehardi, F., Putri, L. D., & Dinata, M. (2021). NVivo software training for young researchers. *Mattawang: Journal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2(1), 8-13.
<https://jurnal.ahmar.id/index.php/mattawang/article/view/265>
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple Case Study Analysis*. New York.
- Student support services program. (2019). *U. S. Department of Education*.
<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/index.html>
- Sumtsova, O., Aikina, T., Bolsunovskaya, L., Phillips, C., Zubkova, O., & Mitchell, P. (2018). Collaborative learning at engineering universities: Benefits and challenges. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 13(1), 160-177. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v13i01.7811>
- Sun, Q. (2019). Conspiring to change the learning environment for adult learners in higher education. *Adult Learning*, 30(2), 89-90.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159519834959>
- Torpey, E. (2019, February). U. S. bureau of labor statistics education pays.
https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2019/data-on-display/education_pays.htm
- Tyagi, C., & Misra, P. K. (2021). Continuing professional development of teacher educators: Challenges and Initiatives. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(2), 117-126. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1287544.pdf>
- Uzun, A. M., & Kilis, S. (2019). Impressions of pre-service teachers about use of

powerPoint slides by their instructors and its effects on their learning. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 6(1), 40-52. <https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.547253>

Valentine, K. D., Kopcha, T. J., & Vagle, M. D. (2018). Phenomenological methodologies in the field of educational communications and technology. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 62(5), 462-472. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-018-0317-2>

van Rhijn, T. M., Lero, D. S., Bridge, K., & Fritz, V. A. (2016). Unmet Needs: challenges to success from the perspectives of mature university students. *Canadian Journal for the study of Adult Education*, 28(1), 29-47. <https://cjsae.library.dal.ca/index.php/cjsae/article/view/4704>

Venegas-Muggli, J. I. (2020). Higher education dropout of non-traditional mature freshman: The role of sociodemographic characteristics. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 42(3), 316-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2019.1652157>

Vishwekar, P. S., & Basapure, P. H. (2016). Assessment and comparison of teaching effectiveness of chalk and talk and microsoft powerpoint presentation. *Journal of Evolution of Medical and Dental Sciences*, 5(85), 6327-6331. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A471144434/HRCA?u=anon~a54b94d3&sid=googleScholar&xid=9c00befd>

Zimmerman, B. J. (1990). Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: An overview. *Educational psychologist*, 25(1), 3-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep2501_2

Appendix A: The Project

Agenda for Professional Development Training

INTRODUCTION

This professional development training will occur over the course of three consecutive days. The purpose of this professional development training is to provide college leaders at HCC with an understanding of what supports are needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate at HCC. The training included four themes titled *Tutoring Services Expanded, More Scholarships Increased, Evening Childcare Services Expanded, and Alternative Attendance Options Increased*. The goals for this training are for college leaders to understand and implement a) tutoring services expanded, b) more scholarships increased, c) evening childcare services expanded, and d) alternative attendance options increased for adult students completing their degree or certificate. The training will assist college leaders in understanding what they can do to assist with adult students earning a degree or certificate at HCC.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. College leaders will be able to define and identify adult students.
2. College leaders will be able to explain the importance of supporting adult students.
3. College leaders will be able to develop and implement supports for adult students in earning a degree or certificate.

TRAINING MATERIALS

1. Laptops and/or devices
2. Access to the internet and Zoom
3. Access to Microsoft Office

Day One

Time	Activity
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome and Continental Breakfast
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce the topics covered during training.
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Individuals will compare their perceptions of supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate with results of the current study.
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	PowerPoint: Present the results of the current study.
10:45 a.m. -11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on more tutoring for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on more tutoring for adult students.
2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Break
2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on better scholarships for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on better scholarships for adult students.
4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of today's training.

Day Two

Time	Activity
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome: Agenda
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce the topics discussed in today's training and summary of day one training.
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on evening childcare for adult students.
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on evening childcare for adult students.
11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on evening classes for adult students.
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on evening classes for adult students.
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Break
3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Video: College leaders will view a video regarding adult students' techniques for facilitators.
3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Think and Share: College leaders will share their thoughts about the video.
4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of today's training and a brief overview of what to expect on day three.

Day Two

Time	Activity
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome: Agenda
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	PowerPoint: An overview of topics discussed during day one and day two.
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Current adult students discuss their experience as an adult student enrolled at HCC.
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Video
11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch
12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	PowerPoint: Discuss what college leaders can do to implement supports for adult students.
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	College leaders will create a plan to implement supports for adult students and set a date to implement the supports.
2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Break
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of the professional development training and college leaders will submit a summative evaluation.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Professional Development Training for College Leaders

Perceptions of Support Adult Students at a Community College

Holle Lynn Ford
Walden University
2022

Day 1 Agenda

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome and Continental Breakfast	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on more tutoring for adult students.
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce the topics that will be covered during training.	2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Break
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Individuals will compare their perceptions of supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate with results of the current study.	2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on better scholarships for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	PowerPoint: Present the results of the current study.	3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	College leaders will break into groups and share their thoughts on better scholarships for adult students.
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Break	4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of today's training will be discussed.
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on more tutoring for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.		
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch		

Topics During Training

- ✓Presentation regarding results from current study.
- ✓Introduce literature on more tutoring for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
- ✓Introduce literature on better scholarships for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
- ✓Introduce literature on evening childcare needed for adult students.
- ✓Introduce literature on evening classes for adult students.
- ✓College leaders viewed a video regarding why adult students matter and benefits of continuing education for adult students.
- ✓Discuss what college leaders can do to implement supports for adult students.

Discussion

College leaders will compare their perceptions of supports needed for adult students to complete a degree or certificate with results of the current study.

Results of Current Study

- ❖ More Tutoring
- ❖ Better Scholarships
- ❖ Evening Childcare
- ❖ Evening Classes

BREAK

Literature on More Tutoring

- Over the past two decades, there has been significant upward growth in the number of adult learners entering higher education (Karmelita, 2017).
- Adult learners require supports and services to help them successfully transition into taking on the demands and expectations of college students (Karmelita, 2017).
- Currently, many colleges do not offer adult learners effective student services and support (Marade, 2019).
- Community college faculty and staff should seek opportunities that break the cycle of the status quo and support opportunities for adult learners to alter the existing social class structure (Deggs, 2018).
- It is critical that a coming together of college leadership, policymaker, and department head is needed to address adult learners' true concerns (Marade, 2019).
- As a unit, Student Support Services is responsible for meeting the mental health, physical health, and social and emotional needs of students and addressing barriers that might prevent students from achieving their full potential (Unterman et al., 2016).

LUNCH

Small Group Discussion

College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on more tutoring for adult students.

Please discuss in your small group and be prepared to share to the entire group.

BREAK

Literature on Better Scholarships

- Financial aid—grants, loans, and scholarships—is critical to many students’ ability to pay for higher education, but for adults who are re-entering higher education after stopping out, it is especially important (Clark, 2020).
- Although adult learners (aged 25–34) have comprised over 33% of all enrolled students in US institutions of higher education, researchers have consistently found adult learners are under-supported by federal and institutional financial aid, leading these students to experience high dropout rates and low graduation rates (Taylor, 2019).
- Most of the largest state financial aid programs don’t account for the unique circumstances adult students bring, which could indirectly shut them out of post-secondary opportunities (Pingel & Holly, 2017).
- Longitudinal research focused on adult learners have suggested these students are often the neediest students on college campuses, as adult learners often pay expenses such as the cost of raising children, paying mortgages, and carrying insurance policies—the traditional, aged 18-24 students do not (Taylor & Bicak, 2019).
- Of research related to the effects of financial aid and financial aid knowledge, [Chen and Hossler \(2017\)](#) recently learned nontraditional adult learners pursuing two-year, associate degrees were most likely to drop out in their third year, with the average associate degree completion time being 3.3 years (Chen & Hossler, 2017).

Literature on Better Scholarships

- A wide range of state-funded programs offer student financial aid for postsecondary education and related costs (Taliaferro et al., 2016).
- However, these state programs generally favor traditional-age college students and are often not fully accessible to adult students, particularly those with low incomes (Taliaferro et al., 2016).
- Although [Chen and Hossler \(2017\)](#) found adult students are more likely to drop out during their third year of an associate degree program than traditionally aged peers, financial aid was an effective tool to curb dropout rates but not increase degree completion (Chen & Hossler, 2017).
- Providing timely information and advice about financial aid is an essential step towards improving the utilization of the financial aid among community college students (McKinney, 2017).
- College leaders work closely with their financial aid directors to identify an appropriate counselor-to-student ratio for their institution (McKinney, 2017).
- This approach would place more realistic expectations on counselors and help ensure that every student who needs advice about paying for college has access to the information they need to make informed decisions (McKinney, 2017).

Small Group Discussion

College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on better scholarships for adult students.

Please discuss in your small group and be prepared to share to the entire group.

Wrap-Up

A summary of today's training will be discussed.

References

- Chen, J., Hossler, D. (2017). The effects of financial aid on college success of two-year beginning nontraditional students. *Research in Higher Education*, 5(81), 40-76. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-016-9416-0>
- Clark, A. (2020). What works for today's students-satisfactory academic progress reset. *Higher Learning Advocates*. <https://higherlearningadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SAP-reset-v.4.pdf>
- Deggs, D. & Miller, M. (2018). At the intersection of community expectancy and critical theory: Emerging perspectives to support student needs. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 4(9), 653-656. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2018.1524336>
- Karmelita, C. (2017). Fundamental elements of transition program design. *Adult Learning*, 28(4), 157-166. <https://doi-org/10.1177/1045159517718328>

References

- Marade, A. (2019). Higher education for working-class adults- together, we can make it work. *Adult Higher Education Alliance*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED597806.pdf>
- McKinney, K. P. (2017). Student loan debt for community college transfer students and how debt information letters impact future borrowing decisions. https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td/4104?utm_source=scholarsjunction.misstate.edu%2Ftd%2F4104&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Pingel, S., & Holly, N. (2017). Seeking Support: State financial aid programs and adult students. Policy Analysis. *Education Commission of the States*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED577459.pdf>
- Taliaferro, W., & Duke-Benfield, A. E. (2016). Redesigning state financial aid to better serve nontraditional adult students: Practical policy steps for decision makers. *CLASP, September*. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publication-1/Redesigning-State-Financial-Aid-to-Better-Serve-Nontraditional-Adult-Students.pdf>

References

Taylor, Z., & Bicak, I. (2019). What is the fafsa? An adult learner knowledge survey of student financial aid jargon. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 2(5), 94-112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147791418824607>

Unterman, R., Bloom, D., Byndloss, D., & Terwelp, E. (2016). Going away to school: An evaluation of SEED DC. *New York: MDRC, June*

Welcome to Day 2

Day 2 Agenda

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome: Agenda	3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Break
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature the topics that will be discussed in today's training and summary of day 1 training.	3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Video: College leaders will view a video regarding adult students' techniques for facilitators.
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on evening childcare for adult students.	3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Think and Share: College leaders will share their thoughts about the video.
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break	4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Wrapup: A summary of today's training will be discussed and a brief overview of what to expect on Day three.
10:30 a.m. - 11:45 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on evening childcare for adult students.		
11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch		
12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	PowerPoint: Introduce literature on evening classes needed for adult students.		
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	College leaders will break out into groups and share their thoughts on evening classes for adult students.		

Summary of Day 1

- ✓Presentation regarding results from current study.
- ✓Introduce literature on more tutoring for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
- ✓Introduce literature on better scholarships for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.

Literature on Evening Childcare

- Many students are older than traditional college students: almost one in five students at public four-year colleges is age 25 or older, as is about one in three students at public two-year colleges (Kena et al., 2016).
- More than one in four college students (4.8 million) are parents with dependent children, and over 40 percent of these student parents are single mothers (Wesley, 2018).
- Older students are particularly likely to be female, with almost twice as many women as men among students over age 35 in 2010 (Kena et al., 2016).
- Childcare is the most significant factor that affects the quantity and quality of time that student parents have available for their studies (Wladis et al., 2018).
- The high costs of childcare are particularly burdensome for single parents pursuing a postsecondary education (Wesley, 2018).
- Despite the increase in student parents on campus, over half leave school before earning a degree (Wesley, 2018).
- Less than half (44 percent) of U.S. community colleges now offer childcare on-site, down from 53% in 2003-2004 (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016).
- Student parents who attend institutions with childcare centers often note the difficulty in securing a space for their children (Sallee et al., 2019).

Literature on Evening Childcare

- The lack of dependable childcare might be partly due to the fact that the FAFSA does not take child-care costs into account when calculating student need and awarding financial aid (Long, 2017).
- About 49 percent of four-year public colleges provided campus childcare in 2015, lower than the 55 percent that did so in 2003–04 (Long, 2017).
- Better access to affordable childcare—on college campuses and in communities more widely—could lead to significant increases in degree attainment among single mothers, improving their long-term economic security and benefiting their children and society more broadly (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2018).
- Colleges can build partnerships with childcare resource and referral services, and provide childcare information, on college campuses and websites (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2018).

BREAK

Small Group Discussion

College leaders will break into small groups and share their thoughts on evening childcare for adult students.

Please discuss in your small group and be prepared to share to the entire group.

LUNCH

Literature on Evening Classes

- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018) reported between 2001 and 2015, US higher education experienced a 35% increase in enrollment of postsecondary students aged 25–34 (Taylor, 2019).
- However, higher education institutions continue to create and adhere to policies that favor traditional college students (Rabourn et al., 2018).
- Adult students, especially at-risk adults, need manageable college workloads and flexible scheduling options to maximize their potential for educational attainment (Khemani, 2017).
- Compared to the traditional-aged students, these adult learners were more likely to take online classes, to be enrolled part-time, and to have started their education at another institution (Rabourn et al., 2018).
- Offering flexibility in course selection and delivery requires significant collaboration from college administrators and instructors, to be able to offer training during nontraditional hours (e.g., evenings, summers), and often requires major changes to learning management systems, to allow students to access content electronically (Khemani, 2017).
- Most courses are offered Monday through Friday, with reduced offerings during the summer (Khemani, 2017).

Literature on Evening Classes

- This schedule is difficult to accommodate for many students, particularly students with jobs or family responsibilities, recently dislocated workers, and veterans, who return from active duty at various times throughout the calendar year (Khemani, 2017).
- Offering flexibility becomes essential when working with students who are also juggling work and family responsibilities (Enos, 2019).
- Hybrid classes combining classroom time and online study have become essential to the success of programs such as the school's MBA and master's in health administration programs (Enos, 2019).

Small Group Discussion

College leaders will break into small groups and share their thoughts on evening classes for adult students.

Please discuss in your small group and be prepared to share to the entire group.

BREAK

Video

View video at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8leJYqI_dNw&t=384s

Think and Share

College leaders will share their thoughts about the video.

Wrap-Up

A summary of today's training will be discussed and a brief overview of what to expect on Day 3.

Resources

- Enos, G. (2019). University finds success in blending traditional, new approaches. *The Successful Registrar*, 19(4), 7-7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tsr.30598>
- Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2016). Student parents' access to campus childcare continued to decline in 2015. *Institute for Women's Policy Research*. <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Q051-Campus-Child-Care-2002-15.pdf>
- Kena, G., Hussar W., McFarland J., de Brey C., Musu-Gillette, L., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Rathbun, A., WilkinsonFlicker, S., Diliberti M., Barner, A., Bullock Mann, F., and Dunlop Velez, E. (2016). The condition of education 2016. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC. Retrieved <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>
- Khemani, D. (2017). Meeting student needs through flexible delivery systems: Michigan's M-CAM experience. *Social Policy Research Associates*. <http://www.spra.com/wordpress2/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Meeting-Student-Needs-through-Flexible-Delivery-Systems.pdf>

Resources

- Rabourn, K., Breck Lorenz, A., & Shoup, R. (2018). Reimagining student engagement: How nontraditional adult learners engage in traditional postsecondary environments. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 66(1), 22-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2018.1415635>
- Sallee, M. W., & Cox, R. D. (2019). Thinking beyond childcare: Supporting community college student-parents. *American Journal of Education*, 125(4), 621-645. <https://doi-org/10.1086/704094>
- Taylor, Z. W., & Bicak, I. (2019). What is the FAFSA? An adult learner knowledge survey of student financial aid jargon. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 25(1), 94-112. <https://doi.org/10.1177.1477971418824607>
- Wesley, A. (2018). Five things student affairs professionals can do to support adult learners. NASPA Research and Policy Institute Issue Brief. *NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education*.
- Wladis, C., Hachey, A. C., & Conway, K. (2018). No time for college? An investigation of time poverty and parenthood. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 89(6), 807-831. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2018.1442983>

Welcome to Day 3

Day 3 Agenda

8:30 a.m.- 9:00 a.m.	Welcome: Agenda
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	PowerPoint: An overview of topics discussed during day one and day two.
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Current adult students discuss their experiences as an adult student enrolled at HCC.
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Video
11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch
12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	PowerPoint: Discuss what colleges leaders can do to implement supports for adult students.
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	College leaders will create a plan to implement supports for adult students and set a date to implement the supports.
2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Break
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Wrap-up: A summary of the professional development training and college leaders will submit a summative evaluation.

Topics Discussed During Day 1 & 2

Day 1

- ✓ Presentation regarding results from current study.
- ✓ Introduce literature on more tutoring for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.
- ✓ Introduce literature on better scholarships for adult students to complete a degree or certificate.

Day 2

- ✓ Introduce literature on evening childcare needed for adult students.
- ✓ Introduce literature on evening classes needed for adult students.
- ✓ College leaders viewed a video regarding adult student techniques for facilitators.
- ✓ College leaders will take a tour of the campus to support service departments.

Personal Experiences

Current adult students will discuss their experiences as an adult student enrolled HCC.

BREAK

Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGlQdtvJNcw>

LUNCH

Discussion

College leaders will discuss what they can do to implement supports for adult students.

Small Group Discussion

College leaders will break into small groups and create a plan to implement supports for adult students and set a date to implement the supports.

Please discuss in your small group and be prepared to share to the entire group.

BREAK

Wrap-Up

- Complete the training evaluation by using Survey Monkey.
 - Sign into your email.
 - Locate an email from me.
 - Click on the survey invitation in your email.

- Thank you for participating in the professional development training.

POST-EVENT FEEDBACK SURVEY USING SURVEY MONKEY

Thank you for attending the Professional Development Training for College Leaders.
Your feedback will help us to improve future events.

1. Overall, how would you rate the training?
 - Excellent
 - Very Good
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
2. What did you like about the training?
3. What did you dislike about the training?
4. How organized was the training?
 - Extremely organized
 - Highly organized
 - Somewhat organized
 - Not so organized
 - Not at all organized
5. Was the training length too long, too short, or about right?
 - Much too long
 - Too long
 - About right
 - Too short
 - Much too short
6. The presenter was knowledgeable and effective.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not applicable
7. This professional development training provided me with research-based strategies to assist students in meeting academic standards.
 - True
 - False
8. I gained knowledge and skills to implement this professional development into my job.
 - True
 - False
9. The professional development training offered sufficient and appropriate opportunities for networking.

- True
- False