2007

Pieces to the puzzle

Ann L. Cracco
University of Northern Iowa

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PIECES TO THE PUZZLE

A Dissertation

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

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Dr. Susan Etscheidt, Chair

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Dr. J. Ana Donaldson, Co-Chair

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Dr. Victoria Robinson, Committee Member

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Dr. Lynn Nielsen, Committee Member

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Dr. Michael Klassen, Committee Member

Ann L. Cracco

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December 2007
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PIECES TO THE PUZZLE

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted

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Doctor of Education

Approved:

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Dr. Susan Etscheidt, Committee Chair

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Dr. Sue A. Joseph
Interim Dean of the Graduate College

Ann L. Cracco

University of Northern Iowa

December 2007
ABSTRACT

Because low-income, first-generation, and disabled individuals have limited access to postsecondary education, Congress established TRIO, a series of programs designed to provide access to college for this targeted population. One initiative suggested to aid in retention and graduation for these TRIO students was mentoring. This study examined the perceived benefits of faculty mentoring for first-generation TRIO students to facilitate retention and graduation rates at a Midwestern Community College. Three faculty members and three TRIO students were interviewed to determine their perception of the benefits of faculty mentoring. The results were consistent with the literature that students who have access to TRIO programs and a mentoring relationship are more likely to succeed in college compared to students without this assistance.
DEDICATION

To my Mom, Katie for showing me how to be strong
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“A true teacher is not the one with the most knowledge, but one who causes the most others to have knowledge.” (Neale Donald Walsch)

The decision to obtain the terminal degree in my field was one I pondered and prayed about, as it would take several years of my life and many sacrifices to be accomplished. Now, as I look back, I have to remember and be thankful to the people who were a source of constant encouragement and praise along that journey.

First, I want to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Susan Etscheidt for her patience along with her knowledge and willingness to share it with me. She was truly an inspiration and I was lucky to have her in my corner.

My thanks also go out to my committee: Dr. Ana Donaldson, Dr. Victoria Robinson, Dr. Lynn Nielsen, and Dr. Michael Klassen. I really appreciated the work all of you did to help me get through this process.

Thanks to my special friends Carol, Karen, and Anna, fellow doctoral students, for your support and encouragement. I remember all the times we used each other for sounding boards on an issue or two. When the journey seemed too long, at least one of you was always there to step up and lend an ear and kind words of support. Thanks also to Diana for always being there to listen.

I want to thank my parents, Katie and Vern for instilling in me and my siblings the importance of an education, especially for women. Thanks to my sisters Betty, Barb, Alice, and Veronica for being proud of me and encouraging me along the way.
A special thanks to Ken for believing in me and cheering me up when I had a bad day. You were always in my corner and respected me for what I had accomplished. Your friendship cannot be expressed in words. Thanks for saying “hello” to me.

And lastly, I want to thank my two sons, Sal and Joey, for standing beside me along this journey. Both of you are an inspiration to me. The biggest joy of my life has been being your mother. I strove for this degree, not only for myself, but to prove to both of you that if someone wishes something bad enough, it can be achieved, regardless of your age or the obstacles you may encounter along the way. I hope that my example will also inspire you throughout your life. I love you both with all my heart.


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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In today’s society, many individuals have limited access to postsecondary education (Gibson, 2003). This limited access population includes low-income, first-generation (students who’s parents never attended school beyond high school), or disabled individuals. Many individuals cannot envision attending college since they have no parent or other family member who has attended college (Noel, Levitz, & Saluri, 1985), or they come from a background of limited income. Individuals with either physical or educational limitations may also believe that college is something that is not possible for them. The federal government’s interest in offering equal educational opportunity has resulted in access and retention initiatives. To support this equal opportunity Congress established a series of programs to help low-income, first-generation, and disabled Americans enter college, graduate, and partake of and contribute to the enhancement of their own lives and society. One type of federal assistance designed to accomplish this task was TRIO programs. These programs were entitled TRIO programs because three components existed within the initiative. They were Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and Services for Disadvantaged Students. TRIO programs initiatives are intended to increase access and retention to post-secondary programs for historically underrepresented populations (Council for Opportunity in Education [COE], 2004).
TRIO Overview

TRIO programs are federally funded programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (COE, 2004). These programs are initiatives to increase access to post-secondary institutions for at-risk populations (i.e., students who are in jeopardy of receiving unequal educational opportunities due to social circumstances). The TRIO programs not only emphasize increasing access but also encourage participants to stay in school. The first of the initial programs, entitled Upward Bound (UB), was designed to provide support services for high school students to encourage their advancement to higher educational opportunities. Gear Up (GU), a subsidiary of UB, offers grants to low-income students to provide the opportunity of advancing through higher education (COE, 2004). The second program, Educational Talent Search (ETS), followed in 1968 and was designed to help middle and high school dropouts explore post-secondary options. The third program, initiated in 1971, was called Services for Disadvantaged Students (SDS), and was later renamed in 1978 Student Support Services (SSS). The purpose of this third program was to provide support to college students concerning challenges that may hinder either their educational or personal growth (Pizarro, 1999).

In 2005 Congress mandated that two-thirds of the students in TRIO programs must come from families with an income of under $28,000 and where neither parent had graduated from college. Currently, over 2,600 TRIO programs serve nearly 866,000 low-income Americans. Over 1,000 colleges in America offer TRIO programs to their students. The programs serve a diverse student population:

Thirty-seven percent of TRIO students are Caucasian (individuals from Northern European ancestors, term used in place of White), 35% are African-Americans.
(persons of African ancestry, used in place of term Black), 19% are Hispanics (persons of Latino American descent, used in place of Latino/a, Chicano/a, Hispanic-Latino and various other related terms), 4% are Native Americans, 4% are Asian-Americans, and 1% are listed as "Other," including multiracial students. Twenty-two thousand students with disabilities and more than 25,000 U.S. veterans are currently enrolled in the TRIO programs as well (COE, 2005, p.1).

Students who participated in the TRIO programs were four times more likely to obtain undergraduate degrees than those students who were not members of TRIO programs (COE, 2004). Nearly 20% of all Black and Hispanic minority students going into higher education in 1981 received assistance through TRIO Talent Search programs which provided academic, career, and financial counseling as well as assistance from the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) which provided the staff and leadership training authority. Statistics indicated that TRIO Student Support Services students were twice as likely to stay in college compared to those students who did not participate in the program (COE, 2004).

President G. W. Bush's FY 2006 Requested Budget for the U. S. Department of Education was $56 million. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) program, funded by the Department of Education, received $25.3 billion. TRIO programs' funding is within NCLB allocations. The federal government has evaluated TRIO as meritorious, allocating millions of dollars to the programs. The data indicate that TRIO programs are a method of realizing educational and life-changing possibilities for this limited access population of Americans (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a).
TRIO programs target at-risk students who are unable to obtain an adequate education due to their social circumstances (Rossi, 1994). A variety of conditions may impact a student’s pursuit of higher education:

At-risk students commonly come from broken homes, lack stable identification figures or role models, lack stable community ties because of their constant migration, have negative self-image, are limited in the expression and comprehension of language, and tend to be extroverted rather than introverted. (p. 5)

TRIO programs for at-risk students are intended to increase access to post-secondary education.

Problem Statement

Many individuals today, especially those identified as low-income, first generation, or disabled, have limited access to post-secondary educational opportunities. One federal initiative to address this concern is TRIO programs. TRIO programs were designed to not only provide access to an education but also increase retention and graduation rates for this population of individuals. Although these programs provide access to post-secondary educational opportunity, retention is still a major concern on college campuses (Seidman, 2005). Even though this population is present on campus, many still lack the knowledge or confidence to become successful and remain in college. Without the guidance needed to overcome the challenges of college life, students tend to drop-out. Some first-generation college students experience a smooth transition from admissions to graduation, others struggle through this process. The latter students sometimes encounter discouragement from family members, thereby lacking familiar
support. First-generation students are also susceptible to doubts about their academic abilities (Striplin, 1999).

One strategy to increase retention rates at post-secondary institutions has been to offer mentoring programs. Szelenyi (2001) stated that to raise retention rates, students need to successfully integrate into the environment of our college campuses. She suggested that: “Some common efforts at community colleges to achieve such integration are freshman seminars, mentoring programs, and strategies developed to create a supportive campus climate” (p. 3). Mentoring might provide the career and psychosocial assistance with the one-on-one attention students need to deal with the everyday concerns college students’ face (Szelenyi, 2001). This study researches the perception of faculty mentoring for first generation TRIO students in regard to retention. The potential value of a mentoring program in increasing the retention and graduation rates of TRIO students was the focus of this research.

Conceptual Frameworks

Several conceptual theories were examined to guide the research endeavor. These theoretical frameworks contributed to the development of the survey instrument and the data analysis process. The study utilized three theoretical frameworks: Cohen’s (1995) Mentoring Theory, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-determination Theory, and Tinto’s (1987) Retention Theory. These three theories guided the inquiry, in distinct yet complementary ways, of the perceived possible effect mentoring programs may have on retention for first-generation students in TRIO programs.
Cohen’s Mentoring Theory

Cohen (1995) focused on the one-on-one relationship that develops between the mentor and the adult learner. An adult learner is anyone eighteen and older who is already functioning in a postsecondary educational setting. Expanding Cohen’s work, Daloz, (as cited in Cohen), referred to a mentor as an adult learner who has taken on the responsibility of providing three key functions crucial to mentor and mentee relationships: support, challenge, and vision. These key functions are described as teaching the adult learner to think critically, to understand the importance of empathy, to take the initiative to consider diverse perspectives, and to take life as it comes in a positive light (Cohen, 1995).

Cohen (1995) believed that the roles of the mentor included: “(1) relationship emphasis, to establish trust, (2) information emphasis, to offer tailored advice (support), (3) facilitative focus, to introduce alternatives, (4) confrontive focus, to challenge, (5) mentor model, to motivate, and (6) mentee vision, to encourage initiative” (p. 3). Based on the beliefs of this theory, Cohen provided an interesting lens for viewing the perceived value of a mentoring program at MCC.

Cohen’s Mentoring Theory suggested that a mentor would be an outlet for students to find support and tutelage to guide them along the educational path. A mentor would be someone to talk with when the student felt alone and inadequate. The mentor would be someone who understands the frustrations of college and provides possible resources for overcoming their anxiety. The mentor would challenge the student to become intrinsically motivated to accomplish their goals. Mentors would be a source
of assurance to the students of their ability to succeed and assist them in the process of finding the skills or tools to help make it happen. Specific ideas or methods that were proven to be successful in the past would be introduced as possible guidelines for the student to emulate. Cohen believed that when students are able to visualize a future for themselves, a mentor could provide the support and resources needed to help complete the vision.

Many students who seek mentors have little concept of what opportunities are available or the strategies available to accomplish their goals. Mentors are a great resource for students because they put situations in perspective and instruct college students how to make better decisions and judgments. Cohen felt these mentors would be a benefit to adult learners by educating them on how to adjust and respond positively to various societal situations that exist within different cultures today (Cohen, 1995).

Cohen’s research on mentoring wove together the fields of adult psychology and applied interpersonal communication. His theory, based upon adult mentoring research, examined real-life experiences and self-assessment evaluations (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995), and proposed that the relationship between the mentor and the mentee should be one of complete trust between one another with the mentor possessing consummate skills in communication. The mentor would not be patronizing or judgmental if the mentee stumbled along his/her educational journey, but rather serve as a scaffold from which to lean upon when needed. The mentor would be able to let go when the mentee was ready to move ahead independently. Successful mentoring would extend life-long learning.
experiences and enhance the quality of personal growth by guiding the mentee to the opportunities that enhance not only their lives but the society where they live. Because Cohen’s Mentoring Theory focused on the important role mentors play in the learning and growth of the mentee, Cohen felt that the designated mentors needed to attend a mentor orientation and training program, as well as on-going mentoring workshops to keep the mentors updated on all current research (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995). These orientation trainings would include issues such as gender, ethnicity, age, mentor authority to ensure a good match, one that ensures trust, communication, understanding, and allows a genuine feeling of comfort between the two adult participants (Cohen, 1995).

Cohen’s Mentoring Theory was selected for this study because of its interpersonal communication component. Because the relationship between the mentor and the mentee must be based on trust and complete, honest communication, the mentee must feel that the mentor is someone who will facilitate learning and provide guidance. Without this type of trust, the interpersonal communication will be lost. The transition into college life for first-generation TRIO students might be greatly enhanced with a mentoring program. Mentoring may give TRIO students a successful role model who can help them achieve a goal that otherwise would have been an impossible feat. A mentor would also provide personal support when the student feels alone and in need of a friend. This support would heighten self-esteem and feelings of accomplishment (Cohen, 1995).

Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory

The second conceptual framework examined to guide this research was Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory. Deci and Ryan’s theory emphasized the
motivational component that influences personal decisions. There are two types of motivation that affect decision making. Intrinsic motivation is the drive or stimulation that originates from within oneself to act. The intrinsic rewards are the natural rewards obtained from performing a task, the initial forces that motivated us in the beginning. Chance (1992) explained intrinsic motivation as learning to cook because of all the smells, sights, and tastes that resulted from the experience.

Extrinsic motivation is attributed to individuals who chose to act in order to gain recognition or rewards. Vallerand, Gauvin, and Halliwell (as cited in Miles, 2000) defined extrinsic motivation as “the behavior people engage in for the rewards (or potential rewards) they perceive will be received upon goal attainment” (p 9). A perceived reward may include monetary gains or celebrity status, while perceived recognition may involve good grades or promotion. The recognition of obtaining good grades might be the motivation for entrance into a particular college with opportunities and benefits that otherwise would never have been afforded the student. The goal of obtaining a promotion due to certain tasks or behaviors might mean additional money, benefits, or acclaimed prestige within an organization (Miles, 2000).

Deci and Ryan proposed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation affect decision making. Individuals described as amotivated have no inclination to be moved to the next level of their lives and fail to push themselves to the challenges in life. They perceive themselves as happy and content just as they are. Deci and Ryan suggested that amotivated people may not be content, but lack the confidence or ability to expect to
achieve higher levels of success. Amotivated individuals believe they are not capable or worthy of attaining anything better than their current status (Miles, 2000).

Deci and Ryan suggested that in order for people to be intrinsically motivated they must sense the relevance of the perceived goal for themselves and the perceived competence to attain that goal. Once these are achieved, the individual feels a sense of unison with the perceived goal and makes the decision to attain it. These individuals would then be considered self-determined. The overall value of this theory is that the ability to internalize and integrate values will lead to a sense of self. When motivation becomes a matter of personal commitment, students will become more persistent in their studies, their perception of self-worth and esteem will increase, and they will play a greater part in choices and opportunities in their studies and their lives (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory contributed to this study of faculty perception of mentoring for TRIO students by proposing that the drive or desire to succeed (motivation) interacts with the human instinct to reach the full potential in life (self-determination). Self-Determination Theory suggested that individuals determined to improve their status and future opportunities through either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation will make personal decisions to achieve those goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Maslow’s (1970) Self-Actualization Theory, the need to recognize one’s potential and endeavor to achieve it, as cited in Myers (2005) aligns with Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory. Mentors may assist students in recognizing their potential and in moving forward to restore that potential. Mentors may also assist
students, whether self-determined or extrinsically motivated, in making decisions which
enhance future opportunities. In order for students to achieve their educational goals, they
must possess a level of self-actualization that allows them to push ahead and challenge
themselves to succeed. All students need a guide or mentor to accomplish this, but for
students requiring that extra help, mentoring might be the strategy that encourages them
to stay in school and graduate. Mentors would provide students with experiences and
direction to help them reach their full potential (Gwynne, 1997; Myers, 2005).

Tinto’s Retention Theory

The Retention Theory of Tinto (1987), the most commonly used and tested theory
in retention literature (Seidman, 2005), was the third conceptual framework examined to
guide this study. Tinto purposed that desirable retention rates would be accomplished if
colleges evaluated and accessed current retention programs to ascertain if they
maintained or increased student enrollments or if policies to improve retention needed to
be implemented. Tinto felt that if effective programs were in place, and if personal and
educational growth were both factored into their schooling, the student would stay in
college longer and eventually graduate (Tinto, 1987).

Tinto’s research statistics indicated that of the nearly 2.8 million students that
attended higher education institutions for first-time entrance in 1986, 1.6 million left
without the benefit of a degree. Seventy-five percent (1.2 million) of these students
would never return to our higher educational systems (Tinto, 1987). Current reports
continue to confirm these statistics (Seidman, 2005).
Tinto stated that one reason for poor retention was the individual's lack of stamina needed to stay in college and succeed. Therefore, the whole college community of educational institutions, faculty, and administrators, as well as students, are accountable for student success. Tinto found that students move from particular communities, areas, schools, and neighborhoods to a new and sometimes unfamiliar society of the college community. This transition for some students can be a very rewarding and challenging opportunity to meet people and explore new opportunities. Some entering students come from homes where other family members attended college and have shared those experiences. But for many other students they are the first in their family to attend college and have no way of relating this new experience to those of others. This unknown adventure means that they must assimilate into a community that is foreign and often scary, making the transition very difficult and causing many adjustment problems. Without stamina, students do not survive this transition (Tinto, 1987).

Durkheim (as cited in Tinto, 1987) proposed an Intellectual Suicide Theory that is related to the retention rate of students. This theory implied that leaving college and never returning to obtain a degree was actually like committing intellectual suicide. Tinto agreed with Durkheim that when an individual feels a part of a community, a valued member worthy of recognition and acceptance, the individual engages in activities that facilitate staying in that community. But when the individual feels outside the community with no perception of how to become a member, the individual will typically leave (Seidman, 2005; Tinto, 1987). Tinto believed that the process of belonging to a community and the academic and social interactions on and off campus is a longitudinal
process. The crucial factors in these interactions are: (a) the quality and number of times they occur in order to enhance the completion of the students’ goals and (b) commitment to graduate (Lenning, Beal, & Sauer, 1980).

Tinto believed so strongly in the retention and attrition theory that he wrote the forward in one of Seidman’s books (2005) in which he talked about the thirty years of research committed to the concerns and improvement of retention in our colleges and universities. Though differing opinions and theories existed as to how to accomplish this task, Seidman declared that the overriding components included academic preparation, commitment, and involvement on the part of the institution. While Seidman was definite that such qualities and components needed to be included in the retention and attrition theories, he felt that no one as of yet had been able to develop sufficient guidelines, policies, and practices on how to implement strategies for success in these areas (Seidman, 2005).

Tinto (n.d.) found no quick fix to the issue of retention in our schools. Tinto believed that it takes both faculty and administration working together in order to create educational committees within the campus to engage students. Tinto purposed that educators be focused on successful educational programs that would eliminate the dropout problem and that the institution have “an enduring commitment to student welfare, a broader commitment to the education, not mere retention, of students, and an emphasis upon the construction of supportive social and educational communities that actively involve students in learning” (Tinto, n.d., p. 2). Tinto was convinced that everyone in the institution, including faculty and staff, must have an enduring commitment to the students
they serve. All students, but especially first-generation college students, must have sufficient areas of support in their lives. Tinto suggested that this support can be provided through the use of faculty mentoring. Tinto felt that the quality and frequency of this faculty mentoring interaction contributes to student success and is a strong prediction of student learning (Tinto, n.d.).

Tinto was chosen as the third conceptual theorist because of his reputation in the retention area and the importance of an entire community of support to enhance retention. When students feel alone and outside the educational community, with no encouragement and guidance, they typically leave school. Through mentoring students would feel a sense of inclusion, consider themselves a part of the educational community, and stay in school.

Additional Theories

Several theoretical frameworks addressing mentoring were discarded due to lack of relevance and value to this study. These conceptual theories included Kram (1985), Zey (1984), Thibaut and Kelley (1959), and Sun, Lin, and Sun (2002).

Kram’s (1985) Mentoring Theory purposed that mentoring relationships in organizations and companies enhanced professional growth and development throughout one’s lifetime. Kram claims that there are nine mentoring functions; role modeling, acceptance, counseling, friendship, sponsoring, exposure, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments (Galbreith & Cohen, 1995).

Kram’s (1985) Mentoring Theory was not selected because the focus of this study was college TRIO students as they pursued and obtained a college education and the perceived effect mentoring had on that process. Kram focused on adults currently in the
workplace and how the benefit of a mentor within the organization affected both his/her performance at work and life in general. This theory could be a natural progression for TRIO students upon entering the workplace because their experiences and knowledge of mentoring relationships would already have been established.

Zey (1984) described the success rates of employees who had a mentor in terms of performance, quality of work, and selection of career paths. Zey proposed that mentoring provided the skills needed for upward mobility in the corporate world in addition to the positive benefits of such a relationship, such as learning to work with co-workers, supervisors, and having someone provide guidance and advice for the corporate world. Zey stressed the need for the mentoring element in the workplace and its effectiveness for both employer and employee (Zey, 1984).

Zey’s Mentoring Theory was of limited utility because, like Kram, his theory applied to post-school settings and individuals who had already entered the workplace. This study focused on current students still struggling with the demands of deciding on a career and working through the concerns and issues associated with first-generation TRIO students.

Thibaut and Kelly’s Social Exchange Theory (1959) addressed interdependence in relationships. This Social Exchange Theory focused on the various relationships that developed as a result of interacting and relating in dyadic relationships. This theory suggested that dyadic interactions influence our behavior and cognition, and help build close relationships (Holmes, 2000).
Sun, Lin, and Sun (2002) suggested that the Social Exchange Theory of Thibaut and Kelly served as a conceptual framework in disciplines such as: anthropology, economics, sociology, and social psychology. They also stated that this theory was based on three basic assumptions: (a) that social behavior is a series of exchanges, (b) that individuals attempted to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs, and (c) that when individuals received rewards from others, they felt obligated to reciprocate (Sun, Lin, & Sun, 2002).

The Social Exchange Theory by Thibaut and Kelly was not used because the cost-rewards theory had questionable application in this study. The focus of this study was tailored more to the interpersonal relationships and communication between mentor and mentee in educational settings rather than all relationships in general. This theory was also not selected because it seemed to apply more to social settings where society interacts with individuals rather than a situation where there is a one-to-one ratio. Mentoring between a mentor and mentee is an interpersonal relationship that typically involves a dyad, not several individuals combined in group settings.

Summary of Theories

The three conceptual theories selected for this study contributed to the design of this research in the following dimensions: Cohen’s Mentoring Theory was selected because of the interpersonal communication component of the theory. The relationship between the mentor and mentee must be one of complete trust and honest communication or interpersonal communication is lost. Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory was selected because it suggested that individuals determined to improve their status and
future opportunities through either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation will make the necessary personal decisions to ensure that it happens. Tinto’s Retention Theory was chosen because it suggested that if students feel engaged and a part of the educational community, they will have a sense of inclusion and remain in school. Without this encouragement, students will typically leave school and possibly never return.

These three theories served as the lens through which the investigative concerns and value of mentoring were examined. Based on these theories, questions addressing the possible perceived roles and effects of mentoring were developed.

**Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether a TRIO mentoring program for first-generation students could enhance retention at Midwestern Community College (MCC, pseudonym). This study utilized three theoretical concepts: Tinto’s (1987) Retention Theory, Cohen’s (1995) Mentoring Theory, and Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory to determine if a faculty mentoring program provided to first-generation TRIO students would improve retention rates at MCC. These theories added insight into why students decide to stay in or drop out of college, the perceived roles and benefits of faculty mentoring, and the influence of mentoring on student self-determination.

**Research Question**

This study sought to analyze the following question: Would a faculty mentoring program for first-generation TRIO students facilitate retention? By examining the perceived impact of a mentoring program, the access and retention goals of this federally-
funded initiative may be enhanced. It is not enough for students to have access to these programs; they must also stay in the program and graduate. This research sought to determine whether a mentor program would influence retention rates from the perception of faculty and students.

Significance and Need for Study

The Department of Education reported that students who took part in TRIO programs were four times more likely to obtain undergraduate degrees than students who were not members of TRIO programs (COE, 2004). This suggested a significant contribution by TRIO programs in the retention and graduation of TRIO students. Many of these TRIO students have not known anyone, either from their family or peers, who have attended college. They lack the confidence it requires to picture themselves attending college and graduating. A faculty mentoring program for first-generation TRIO students may help support and increase retention rates on a broader scale. Through a relationship with a mentor, TRIO students might be afforded the support and encouragement to pursue their goals through graduation.

Delimitations

Although case study is, according to Merriam (1998), the best way to collect answers to research questions, offering a rich, descriptive in-depth view of a particular situation that highlights and attempts to understand meaning, there are limitations to this type of study. This type of research is time consuming and costly. The researcher, as the primary instrument, collects and analyzes data obtained from interviews or observations during the study. It is therefore important that this researcher is trained in the collection
and analyzing of data. Case study does not provide guidelines for the process of creating the final analysis, leaving the researcher to depend on feelings, insight, and training for analysis (Merriam, 1998).

Another concern, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), is the issue of ethics. Readers and writers of case study must be conscious of biases that can have an impact on the study. These biases can be in the form of political agendas to lack of communication between participant and researcher in regard to expectations of the study. Both of these scenarios can create a dissonance that impedes the final report. Guba and Lincoln both feel that an awareness of these situations, by the researcher, can prevent problems during the analysis process.

Personal Statement

When first starting the process of writing my doctoral dissertation, I was told by my Committee Chair that the topic should be something I felt strongly about and had the desire to obtain more research about in order to comprehend its impact on society as a whole. One of the things I felt passionate about was education and the opportunity for everyone to have access to that process.

As a young person growing up in a large family from a small town in the Midwest, the value of an education was something that my parents continually reinforced. They were very strong in their belief that their sons, as well as their daughters, had something to fall back on if one of us were ever to find ourselves in an unfortunate situation. My parents realized that an education would provide a better way
of life and lift us above the harsh world in which they struggled to raise their family. My father had an eighth-grade education and my mother had graduated from high school.

When I graduated from high school and started the process of higher education, my assumptions were that if I got a good education, I would get a good job, and then be able to support myself and hopefully have a good life. My first two years of college were spent somewhere between homesickness and learning how to avoid the educational process as much as I could. At some point, though, I realized that this good life that was coming my way would not materialize if I did not help it along with an education.

The next twenty years were spent, sometimes full-time and sometimes part-time, pursuing an education to prepare myself for life. Slowly I started to view learning and an education in a whole new light. Learning became something enjoyable rather than something required. Each new semester I would approach classes like a schoolgirl on her first day of class. I would buy the books before classes started so I could look them over. Even the smell of new books got the blood rushing in my veins. When anyone would ask why I kept getting more education, my reply would be that I just loved to learn new things.

During this time I obtained a Bachelors and a Masters Degree. In 1992 I obtained a position as part-time faculty at a local community college teaching Psychology. Through the years of discussions in class and conferences with students, it became clear that I had been very fortunate in my educational journey. I had been privy to opportunities that had enriched my studies and my life that other students had not. I realized that I had been blessed to possess the ability to grasp learning much easier than
others. My past learning had not necessarily come easy for me, but I had been able to overcome the challenges that came my way. From listening to the struggles and challenges that many of my students had or were still having, it dawned on me that many of them had not been so lucky.

Many of them were first-generation students, like myself, who did not have family to look to for reassurance that college was where they needed to be. Many of them had not been in school for years and had lost or never learned many of the requirements that were necessary to succeed in higher education. Also many of them were the learning-disabled students that years ago were not encouraged to continue beyond high school. A large percentage of students today are single parents struggling to raise families and get an education with limited funds.

One day while sharing our common concerns regarding the lack of preparation of our students, a fellow colleague told me about programs on campus called TRIO programs. She explained that it was a federally-funded program that assisted at-risk students succeed in college. When I asked what an at-risk student looked like, she went down a grocery list of the very situations I had heard my students talk about with me. All of this was spinning in my head as I approached my classroom. For the next several weeks I led class discussions into the direction of how learning takes place, the different learning styles that may be more successful than others, subject areas that appeared to be more difficult than others, all the while attempting to teach the students how to prepare themselves, not only for success in my class, but success in their future educational and life endeavors.
Gradually I started to notice that many of these TRIO students were beginning to do better on tests and applying themselves in a more constructive way. As they progressed, I was also aware of an increased sense of self-worth and feeling good about their accomplishments.

It was then that the seed was planted for me concerning the importance of programs, like TRIO, that were in place to help students recognize their potential and the means to accomplish it. The question for me then was to somehow measure the success of these programs in light of the overall achievements and possibilities for students that had previously been underrepresented.

One day after finding out who headed TRIO programs, a gentleman by the name of Steve Clark (pseudonym), I walked into his office and asked him to tell me about his programs. He proceeded to give me handouts and flyers explaining the function of the programs. I began asking questions like who are at-risk students, when and how this program began, and how to qualify for the program. Steve was very willing to talk about the TRIO programs and his eyes twinkled as he spoke about it. I could tell from his expression that this was an area where his passions existed.

For the past two years as I have contemplated a dissertation topic, it occurred to me that TRIO programs were the theme I wanted my research to explore. Along the years as I had seen students struggle, many of them succeeding and graduating to fulfill their dreams, while others gave up and dropped out of school, I knew I had to take a deeper look into the TRIO programs. I needed to find out what these programs entailed that made their students achieve and succeed. With education being such a priority in my life,
I had to learn the secret of these programs so that I could, in a small way, pass that knowledge onto my future students.

My current assumptions and expectations for this research will be to explore and analyze data that may help make TRIO programs a success at MCC and explore how the success of these programs might be enhanced. Students need to be aware of this program to make personal choices that help get the support and encouragement that is crucial for their success through higher education.

Summary

The problem of equal educational opportunities for first-generation, low-income, and disabled individuals in today’s society has been documented. The federal government has taken steps to address this problem by initiating several programs to increase underrepresented populations’ access to post-secondary opportunities. One such initiative is TRIO programs. Although TRIO programs may increase access, retention of students participating in the program is also a goal. Student retention continues to be a concern of post-secondary institutions.

Mentoring has been suggested as a possible strategy to improve retention and graduation rates. A variety of theoretical models have examined the process of mentoring and how interpersonal endeavors may impact retention. The theoretical frameworks selected for this study were Cohen’s (1995) Mentoring Theory, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory, and Tinto’s (1987) Retention Model. These models were selected due to their relevance regarding the theory of mentoring and retention.
The purpose of the study was to ascertain if a TRIO Mentoring Program for first-generation students would impact their successful advancement through the higher education process at MCC and lead to increased graduation rates. The research question was: What is the perceived value of a faculty mentoring program for first-generation TRIO students in facilitating retention?

The following chapter includes a literature review on TRIO programs as well as mentoring and retention studies to support each conceptual theory. Chapter III describes the methodology used to collect data for the study. Chapter IV presents the data and data analysis, and Chapter V includes a discussion of findings and implications.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter II contains a brief history of community colleges and TRIO Programs. The chapter then describes one particular TRIO Program at a Midwestern Community College. The chapter then explains the importance of keeping students in school by providing several studies done on retention theories. Mentoring, purposed as a possible strategy to improve retention and graduation rates, is discussed. Mentoring studies to support this strategy follows, concluding with a summary of the chapter.

Community Colleges

The history of community colleges dates back to the Morrill Act of 1860 which provided a tract of land for every state that belonged to the Union to build schools. At a time when the first two years of college were referred to as the 13th and 14th grades, several presidents of major American universities called for the establishment of the two-year college. They began to see the need for the two-year college to prepare students for the transition from high school to the university by offering all of the lower-division courses usually taught during the freshman and sophomore years. These two-year colleges would free universities to focus exclusively on upper-level studies and the demands of research. William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, started putting the two-year college theory into place by founding the first junior college at his institution. Joliet Junior College opened its doors as the first public two-year college in the United States in 1901 (Bahruth & Venditti, 1990).
This time in history was one of rapid change from an economy based on agriculture to one that saw the beginning of industry as we know it today (Apple, 1990). College officials realized that their curricula had to fit the needs of their students in ways that would enable them to support their families and move along in this rapidly changing environment.

Junior colleges eventually gave way to community colleges because as the number of students wishing to enroll began to increase, so did the need for the accessibility of these colleges. Junior colleges were often located miles from the general population, making attending that college a major concern. Community colleges were generally close to where more people lived, making it easier for more and more students to get to the college campus. Community colleges are typically open institutions, giving more opportunities for enrollment to the students who otherwise might not be admitted into four-year institutions (Apple, 1990).

Students attend college for a variety of reasons, including new technology, mandated education and job-related training, shift in careers, more women as head of households are forced to get an education to support families, or to fulfill a personal goal (Smith & Pourchot, 1998). They look at the educational journey as a process that can take them to new objectives and a fulfillment of goals.

Community colleges are the first choice for many Americans as: a preparation for a four-year degree, a way to up-grade current skills for career mobility or marketability, or an opportunity for many non-traditional students to return to school after either raising a family or making career changes in their life. It is the conscious decision by these
individuals to get an education in order to turn their lives around and have the opportunities that an education will afford them.

American community colleges of today enroll over 5,500,000 million college students. This means that half the students beginning postsecondary education in the United States enter the community college system. Nearly half (forty-six percent) of all first-year year college students and thirty-nine percent of all college students in general are enrolled at community colleges (Outcalt, 2002).

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the original War on Poverty statute, gave birth to TRIO programs. As TRIO programs were designed for first-generation, economically disadvantaged and disabled students, the vast majority of this targeted population seemed to find their way into the community colleges across the country (COE, 2004).

The typical open-door policy of many community colleges and the G.I. Bill of 1944 allowed the flow of veterans to enter college campuses. The Truman Commission on Higher Education of 1947 declared that all Americans regardless of race, religion, sex, or color should be granted the right to postsecondary education through the fourteenth grade paved the need for colleges. As junior colleges, or community colleges, as they were later renamed, provided this 13th and 14th grades, the need for two-year colleges increased dramatically (COE, 2004).

TRIO Programs

The Council for Opportunity in Education's mission is:

To advance and defend the ideal of equal education opportunity in postsecondary education. As such, the focus of the Council is assuring that the least advantaged
segments of the American population have a realistic chance to enter and graduate from a postsecondary institution. A secondary purpose of the Council is to provide a voice and a political vehicle for administrators, counselors, and teachers who are employed in institutionally, state and federally-funded opportunity programs, especially those professional with TRIO Programs. (COE, 2004, p. 1)

To achieve this goal, TRIO programs needed to provide access to higher education and be an advocate for students, help in the achievement of these educational goals through assistance in services, help facilitate the development of their education, and provide an environment that allowed the students to learn regardless of their diversity or learning styles. TRIO programs also needed to develop a community, both in school and out, with relationships that promoted the completion of a post-secondary education for this population. This mission statement is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is still in accord with the mission and goals of the TRIO programs. Annual performance reports must be submitted to the Department of Education (COE, 2004).

According to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Standards and Guidelines, the desired student learning and development outcomes from TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity (OEO) Programs are:

- Intellectual growth, effective communication, enhanced self-esteem, realistic self-appraisal, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behavior, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciating diversity, spiritual awareness, and personal and educational goals (COE, 2005, p. 1-2).

TRIO at Midwestern Community College

TRIO programs studied at MCC have been in existence since 2001. According to government mandates, the college may enroll one hundred sixty students per year. These students typically take three to four years to graduate. They are required at the end of
three years to either transfer to a four-year college or graduate (S. Clark, personal communication, May 25, 2005).

For the program to be considered a success by the Department of Education, 50% of TRIO students must have a good academic standing, meaning a GPA of 2.0 or better; 20% of the students must transfer; 20% of the students must graduate with either an AA or technical degree; and 50% of TRIO students must continue studies without stopping. TRIO programs at MCC for 2005 reported that 53.75% (86 students) were in good academic standing; 9.38% (15 students) transferred to another college; 18.75% (30 students) graduated with either an AA or technical degree; and 40% (64 students) continued their studies without stopping. Clark stated that the Department of Education considered TRIO programs at MCC to have been successful at achieving the objectives designed for the program and extended their grant for another four years. Clark stated that data comparing TRIO Students with Non-TRIO Students as far as transfer and graduation rates were not yet available, but he was hopeful that this data would be available sometime in the future (S. Clark, personal communication, May 25, 2005).

The Department of Education reported totals from TRIO programs for the number of graduates and transfer students over the past four years. These totals were included in the Student Support Services (SSS) program that illustrated the percentage of sampled grantees that met SSS program objectives from 2001-02. The objectives were persistence, good academic standing, graduation, transfer, and administration. Two-year colleges that participated in the study scored; 87.5% in persistence, 90.6% in good
academic standing, 76.7% in graduation, and 68% in transfer (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b).

Although these totals for MCC are only a snapshot of one cohort compared with national figures, with no explanation for increases or decreases, the figures indicated that the 50% objective for students with good academic standing exceeded the Federal Government's purposed percent by 3.75%. The graduation objectives of 20% or thirty-two students per year was just slightly below objective guidelines. With figures for persistence and transfer at 80% and 46% of purposed objective percentages for TRIO Guidelines, and considering the short time frame of TRIO programs at MCC, the results indicate TRIO programs have begun to be a successful and effective tool for TRIO students (S. Clark, personal communication, March 27, 2006).

Retention

Retaining students in TRIO programs is one objective studied by the Department of Education. Retention of students in post-secondary programs has been a goal and a challenge for many post-secondary programs (COE, 2004).

The most recently analyzed statistics from the Department of Education indicated several trends. In 2002, the fall enrollment in two-year institutions increased by 400% in a fifty-year period. The total college two-year and four-year enrollment as of fall 2002 reached a record level of 16.6 million students. An expected increase between 2004 and 2014 of an additional 14% is anticipated. Post-secondary degrees awarded during the 2003-2004 year totaled over 2,700,000 million. (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2004) These figures represented: twenty-four percent associate's degrees, fifty-one percent
bachelor’s degrees, nineteen percent master’s degrees, 3 percent first-professional
degrees, and 1 percent doctorate degrees granted during that period.

Although the number of students attending and graduating from MCC has
increased, the successful retention and graduation of all students at MCC is a concern of
the administrative officials. Some theorists have purposed reasons for attrition and
resolutions for retention.

Tinto (1987) focused on two goals related to student retention. First, he turned his
attention on the responsibilities institutions have in the overall development of their
students and their rate of completion and graduation. Second, Tinto theorized that
educational institutions should assess what specifically they are doing or not doing to
keep their students in college. He felt that if colleges and universities were concerned not
only with educational successes, but also students’ personal growth and places in society,
retention would not be an issue. Tinto theorized that students would stay in school if they
felt the education they were receiving would benefit more aspects of their life than just
what was scored on a test. The retention of a student needed to be based both on the
academic and social systems within an educational institution (Tinto, 1987).

Tinto (1987) found that over half of the students entering higher education for the
first time will never make it to graduation. Seidman (2005) and Tinto proposed that non-
graduates who do not obtain a degree may have at least obtained enough marketable
skills to obtain a position in the workplace. Yet, as Tinto stated, the advantages of staying
in college and obtaining a degree, especially a four-year degree, is a common well-known
requirement to an individual obtaining a prestigious paying job in the workplace (Tinto, 1987).

Retention Studies

Weidman (1985) using Tinto’s Retention Theory when studying female welfare recipients attending a community college, concluded that external factors outside the college setting would have an influence on these students and their retention issues. Weidman’s studies suggested that these female welfare students encountered pressures such as parenting and financial concerns outside the educational setting that needed to be considered and addressed in a retention theory in order for these students to achieve and succeed in school. Starks (1987) proposed:

Restructuring the model for returning women; it is more relevant to define academic integration as intellectual development than good grades, and that social integration means contact with fellow students, group work, and studying together more than participation in campus activities (Kerka, 1989. p. 2).

Tinto’s Retention Model was the basis for a study done by Nordquist (1993) to determine the reason college students drop-out of school. Tinto had previously argued that students leave college based on a combination of what the students personally bring to school and what the school does or does not do to keep the students in college. This study by Nordquist involved interviews from 18 students (12 female and 6 male) who had recently withdrawn from several colleges in Utah. Questions were asked as to the reasons for leaving school. The results were in congruence with Tinto’s Retention Model that suggested students who feel marginal and not part of the college community have feelings of isolation and drop-out of the system. These students felt disconnected from
campus life and the general ideal of the educational system and opted to leave (Nordquist, 1993).

Damon (1997), like Tinto, felt that the problem of retention in community colleges is an issue that administrators must also realize and address. He applied Tinto’s Retention Model, adapted by Nora, as cited by Damon (1997) to a public community college in Hawaii with an ethnically diverse student population of predominantly Asian-American/Pacific Islander in an institution where they were the non-majority. The study focused on first-generation community college students over a three-year period from Fall 1986 through Spring 1989.

This study focused on the student’s commitment to the institution as well as to his/her own personal goals and then highlighted effects of these commitments to academic and social interaction. The authors purposed that this process would lead to retention for the student. The focus for the study was the direct and indirect influence of family background, pre-college schooling, getting emotionally ready, and encouragement by significant others on the retention and success for students. The four variables used to reflect on retention were goal commitment, institutional commitment, academic integration, and social integration (Damon, 1997).

The results suggested that pre-college schooling had significant direct effects on retention as did academic integration. Social integration had no apparent effect on retention. Getting emotionally ready had positive and direct effects on the social and academic integration. Encouragement by others suggested a positive advantage toward goal commitment (Damon, 1997).
Brawer (1996), while studying attrition and retention studies in community colleges found that attending school full-time is a major issue in whether a student persists in school or leaves. According to Brawer, some of the other factors that negatively influenced persistence in college were students who work full time, students with a low GPA, minorities (other than Asian), obligations within the family, financial issues, and students of the female gender. These studies led colleges to implement intervention strategies in orientation, mentoring, and multiple strategy approaches for students.

These orientation programs for incoming students served to acquaint them to such issues as student expectations, ways to enhance positive relationships with faculty, adjustment suggestions for adapting to college life, as well as information concerning financial aid. Sixty-five percent of the enrolled students in this orientation program still persisted after four terms. Brawer’s mentoring strategy consisted of a handbook that suggested strategies for teacher-student relationships in the classroom to keep students attending college. The results of these mentoring studies indicated that the retention rates were higher in colleges where a faculty-student mentoring component was in place compared to colleges that did not have such a program (Brawer, 1996).

In a further explanation of student retention and attrition, Rendon, (as cited in Nutt 2003), conducted a study that found orientation and advisement, along with a positive relationship between the student and the college, were two main factors in determining if a student stays in or quits college. Rendon felt that at the core of retaining students was the face-to-face interaction with academic advising as the student began
their experiences in college. He felt advisors provide students with information on campus regarding institutional services, academic connections, and the personal connection that so many students need for retention and academic success.

According to Nutt, the collaborative connection between residence life and academic advising is a must for progressive retention rates. Retention of students in post-secondary settings is influenced by a variety of factors including financial, family related issues, degree of motivation, and support. Without successful retention, efforts to increase access will be futile (Nutt, 2003).

**Mentoring**

Theorists have long contemplated and discussed the problem of retention in our colleges. Various strategies have been suggested and studies done on how to improve retention for students. One such strategy to increase retention is mentoring for college students. Researches and educators have looked at the function and benefits that mentoring may have on the issue of retention.

Mentoring has been studied and analyzed by conceptual theorists such as Cohen (1995) as a possible strategy to improve retention and graduation rates for college students of today. Mentors have been around since the Greek and Roman times, as individuals who guide and direct another person on their journey through life. Cohen's focus is the one-on-one relationship that develops between the mentor and the mentee in areas of trust and interpersonal communication. Mentors may be that connecting link that determines whether students leave or stay to graduate. Faculty mentoring can provide the academic preparation for students to succeed and the commitment by both mentor and
mentee to strive for a relationship where mutual trust and confidence benefit the process. Mentoring can also be the beginning of involvement by the whole college community to ensure that students have the necessary opportunities to succeed (Cohen, 1995).

Mentoring is not a new concept, it has been in existence since the days of Homer’s Odyssey. When preparing for his epic voyage, Odysseus entrusted his son Telemachus, to Mentor, a friend of Odysseus. Mentor’s job was to assist Telemachus in the evolution from boyhood to manhood. Mentor was (as cited by Galbraith & Cohen, 1995; Cohen, 1995) someone who taught males their role expectations in the adult world.

Over the centuries Mentor’s task of helping youth reach manhood as a role model has been converted to the title of mentor, someone who guides and assists others in moving through a transition. Mentoring had previously been associated with such areas as business, nursing, and counseling, but over the last fifteen years it has become strongly associated with the area of education. The theory of mentoring has advanced in education for both the mentor and the mentee. The importance of mentoring for the student towards his/her advancement and achievement is of utmost importance to our colleges and universities as is utilizing trained and efficient faculty to guide these same students in their quest for success (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995).

Galbraith and Cohen (1995) felt there were many challenges and issues confronting the practice of mentoring. Some of these challenges are listed in Table 1 suggesting the following five misconceptions:
Table 1

Mentoring Misconceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misconception</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentee as primary beneficiary</td>
<td>Everyone should benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive results for mentor/mentee</td>
<td>Limited to duration and changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship same in all settings</td>
<td>Varies on depth and direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships readily available to all</td>
<td>Not everyone has access to one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor is key to growth and advancement</td>
<td>Unrealistic expectation from mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individuals may have several mentors that aid them during their journey through educational success just as mentoring may mean different things to different people.

Golian and Galbraith, (as cited in Galbraith & Cohen, 1995) after toying with several definitions of mentoring came up with this definition for mentoring:

A process within a contextual setting; involves a relationship of a more knowledgeable individual with a less experienced individual; provides professional networking, counseling, guiding, instructing, modeling, and sponsoring; is a developmental mechanism (personal, professional, and psychological); is a socialization and reciprocal relationship; and provides an identity transformation for both mentor and mentee (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995 p.1).

Galbraith and Cohen felt that successful mentoring can not only extend lifelong-learning experiences but also improve the quality of instruction.

Leung (1993) suggested that mentors need to take on the following roles: an encourager who is there to support mentees with their dreams and goals, a guide in the process of solving problems and resolving conflicts, and a role model who provides...
positive examples of dealing with conflicts and problems. A mentor needs to be a friend who displays attitudes of support, a teacher who provides appropriate measures to accomplish goals, and a coordinator of educational activities who emphasizes personal and academic growth through opportunities in leadership (Leung, 1993).

Phillips-Jones (1982) felt the mentoring relationship between the mentor and the mentee is one that must be nurtured by both parties. The idea that only the mentee benefits from a mentoring relationship is certainly not the case according to Phillips-Jones. She suggested that mentors go into a mentoring relationship for various reasons. The mentor may view the mentee as a son or daughter or the mentor may have had a significant mentoring relationship in their lives and they want to pass that experience on to others. Phillips-Jones referred to a mentor/mentee relationship as a two way exchange. She made a point of stating that “one quarter of all outwardly successful people, particularly those over forty-five or who have stayed in one organization for their entire careers, have had what we call a traditional mentor” (p. 80).

Murray and Owen (1991) provided an algorithm procedure that established a cost-effective employee professional development program for mentoring. Murray and Owen talked of many personal rewards for mentors in the mentoring process. Mentoring can be structured or facilitated, or mentoring may only happen. They felt by working with a structured mentoring program the mentor had the opportunity to change or prevent many of the mismatches that occur and can possibly spoil the entire process. In the It Just Happened Theory, Murray and Owen feared that the true passion for mentoring could be
lost and not create an effective and worthwhile relationship between the mentor and the mentee (Murray & Owen, 1991).

Mentoring, usually associated with only women and minorities, is now planted firmly in the global world of leadership in the workplace. Large companies, both American and international, are turning to mentoring as a way for new employees to seek out the more experienced employee or employer for questions and clarification in their jobs (Murray & Owen, 1991).

Zey (1984) discussed success rates of employees who had a mentor to evaluate performance and quality of work and the choosing of career paths that are more likely to foster or create this mentor/mentee relationship. Zey asserted that mentoring could very well be the path leading to upward mobility. He suggested the benefits of the mentor/mentee relationship in regard to the acquiring and selection process of the more desired positions and the profits gained by positive relationships among co-workers and supervisors.

Faulkner (2000) wrote about the Mentor/Role/Model Program, founded in 1991 by three retired educators who decided to be friends to youngsters who struggled with their identity and were at-risk for dropping out of school and life. The focus for the program was academic achievement, self-esteem building, cultural enrichment, and recreation. This mentoring program influenced these youth and suggested that mentoring relationships with unrelated adults can truly make a significant and major contribution to the development of youth, not only in education, but in society in general. Some of the
schools referred students to the program, but a large portion of students enrolled themselves or asked their parents to do it for them (Faulkner, 2000).

Evans (1992) felt strongly about the importance of school systems in the search for mentors in the community. Evans felt that adult non-teachers can provide a mentoring service that would have a positive effect on the whole community, not just the educational institutions. Evans proclaimed that the best known mentor in America was a gentleman by the name of Eugene M. Lang. Lang graduated from Public School 121 in East Harlem and several years later was asked to come back and give the sixth grade commencement service to 61 students. He claimed that as he sat and looked out over the crowd before his speech he realized that his previously prepared speech did not fit the audience. Instead, he made his famous promise to the students. He simply stated if they stayed in school and graduated, he would pay their college tuition. Five years later 52 of those 61 students were still in school compared to the 30 that statistics had previously expected would still remain. Lang, under the umbrella of I Have A Dream Foundation (IHAD), today has a program in 27 classes in New York City, totaling thirteen hundred students. In 1983 Evans was appointed to the Presidential Advisory Board on Private Sector Initiatives. This committee in 1983 established the National Symposium on Partnerships in Education to promote joint support between the private sector and the public schools (Evans, 1992).
Mentoring Studies

Many studies have been done on student mentoring which have suggested success with this type of strategy on retention and graduation rates. The following studies shed light on the previous research done to promote the success of mentoring.

Mattinson (2004) conducted a study that concentrated on e-mentoring for on-line courses to ten child-care and education college students. First-year students in recent years seemed to have had a higher drop-out rate. Mattinson suggested that if second-year students mentored first-year students who had difficulties with the coursework, the success rate might increase. He felt that if e-mentoring proved to be successful, it would improve retention rates, achievement, and personal growth for the student.

Mattinson soon discovered that e-mails were flowing between students and at times even copied to him. He felt he was a support person and facilitator for the communication being exchanged between the mentor and mentee. After the study had been in effect for six months Mattinson distributed a questionnaire whose results suggested positive relationships were being developed between the mentors and mentees, some even arranged to meet with one another face to face. The participants stated that they enjoyed the online chats with each other and felt a sense of support derived from the virtual experiences. Mattinson suggested this e-mentoring study continue for at least another year for further evaluation and assessment (Mattinson, 2004).

Exstrom (2003) conducted a qualitative research case study in which the goal was to interview four current TRIO students at a large Midwestern college in regard to their academic and socially related experiences at that college. There was no mention as to

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how this particular sample had been chosen. Their backgrounds as far as family and community were also factored into the study.

The significance of the study indicated that enrollments of first-generation and low-income students have not maintained equity with overall student population enrollments. The study showed that the money to afford an education is still a factor, that family support to encourage that student to seek an education is often absent, and few role models are available to emulate. In addition, these students had limited knowledge as to college opportunities. The opportunities may be increasing in colleges, but the number of enrolled students in this under-represented group still indicated disproportionate numbers may feel alone, isolated, racial tension, and lacking security. These feelings lead to the under-representation of first-generation, low-income students in our colleges. Exstrom believed that mentoring would be an opportunity to augment the educational experience for this population (Exstrom, 2003).

Mentoring studies such as these have been conducted to purpose and support the positive impact mentoring may have on several aspects of an individual’s life and successes. Mentoring may mean the difference between staying in school and dropping out for many TRIO college students of today. The studies suggested a possible correlation between the two.

Summary

Chapter II included a review of relevant literature pertaining to the history of community colleges, TRIO programs, and a description of a particular TRIO program.
was illustrated in this study. Retention theorists and retention studies were included, as well as the history of mentoring and mentoring studies.

Chapter III describes the research methodology used for this qualitative case study. The rationale for this particular method is provided and the research procedures and selection of participants are discussed.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter III looks at the definition and various types of qualitative research. The chapter describes case study as one type of qualitative research and why it was chosen as the methodology for collecting data for this study. The procedure for data collection and the selection of participants are discussed. The data analysis process is also described.

Qualitative research is a method of data collection that involves looking for answers to particular situations or problems through narrative interviewing with participants (Merriam, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (as cited in Creswell, 1998) define qualitative research as: “studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 15).

Four forms of qualitative research are grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and case study. All of these various types of qualitative research consist of the researcher collecting data from participants in an attempt to understand and make some meaning from the data. Grounded theory involves taking the data and analyzing the similarities and differences that emerge. This permits the data to be arranged into categories, allowing patterns to develop. These patterns or relationships then become the grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Ethnography is used by researchers to analyze society and the culture(s) that may impact an individual’s life. Although data for qualitative research may be collected with similar techniques, ethnography examines the societal factors that affect everyday life. These factors can range from neighborhoods, schools, peers, to family and religious beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Merriam, 1998).
Phenomenology looks at the composition of an experience. Spiegelberg (as cited in Merriam, 1998) states that a researcher must first have an understanding of the experience or phenomenon and then search for examples that clarify the experience. The goal is to determine not only what happened but the process that lead to it happening. Finally, the researcher needs to evaluate how it happened so that the true understanding of the phenomenon can be realized.

Case study is used when the researcher wishes to obtain a rich, in-depth understanding of a situation or experience in an attempt to find meaning. This is accomplished through construction rather than discovery. Merriam (1998) describes qualitative case studies as:

A particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education. A case-study approach is often the best methodology for addressing these problems in which understanding is sought in order to improve practice. (p. xiii)

Case study allows for an intense, descriptive narrative between researcher and participant regarding a particular situation where data obtained may provide help for society (Merriam, 1998). The benefit of using case studies is that it allows data to be collected from interviews, past records, observations, videotapes, photographs, and documents, all the while being able to take as much time as needed to interact with participants. One of the unique features of qualitative research is that the primary instrument is the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Eisner (1998) claimed that usefulness is the most important test of any qualitative study. This usefulness can exhibit itself in the form of comprehension, anticipation, and its function as a guide or map. Eisner felt that qualitative research can encompass not only education, but human behavior in general.
Qualitative research has been established as a scholarly method of inquiry, one that takes its place in the artistic world. Qualitative researchers must possess certain abilities in order to draw genuine, heartfelt, and honest responses from the participants, the type of responses that separate qualitative research from quantitative research (Eisner, 1998).

Qualitative research was used for this study because it best fit the type of methodology that would provide the descriptive data desired to answer the research question. Contemplating all the various forms of qualitative research, case study was selected as the methodology for gathering the data that would contribute to the research. Case study provided the researcher with the opportunity to obtain a thick descriptive, in-depth insight into the personal responses of the participants. Merriam (1998) defined thick description as a “term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (p. 29-30). This insight was obtained by interviewing participants and analyzing responses from interview questions. Hatch (2002) states, “interviews are used to uncover the meaning that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds” (p. 91). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) state that:

Asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first. The spoken or written word has always a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions and how carefully we report or code the answers. Yet interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings. (p. 61-62)

The researcher chose not to be a participant observer. Adler and Adler (as cited in Merriam, 1998) refer to a participant observation as an “active membership role” in which researchers are “involved in the setting’s central activities, assuming
responsibilities that advance the group, but without fully committing themselves to members' values and goals" (p. 101). Merriam (1998) talked about the difficult role of the participant observer by stating:

Participant observation is a schizophrenic activity in that one usually participates but not to the extent of becoming totally absorbed in the activity. At the same time one is participating, one is trying to stay sufficiently detached to observe and analyze. It is a marginal position and personally difficult to sustain. (p. 94)

Although the role of participant observer is someone who is able to reach a great depth of information and confidentiality from the participants, the researcher felt that the design of the study would best be suited by interviewing, rather than participant observation. The researcher felt a rich, descriptive dialogue with faculty and student participants would yield the needed responses from the study.

The Setting

Midwestern Community College (MCC) was located in a middle-sized Midwestern community of approximately 90,000 people. The student population was approximately 5,000 students. The college was divided into a Technical Department and an Arts and Sciences Department. The student enrollment was divided between 2,700 students in the Technical area and 2,500 students in the Arts and Sciences area. MCC was a feeder college into four, four-year colleges in the area. The surrounding community was agricultural-based with three major manufacturing industries that helped support the community. The college attracted students primarily from a 50-60 mile radius to attend this campus. The college was situated on the outskirts of the city, creating commuter students. MCC started in 1957 when the Area Vocational/Technical School in practical nursing was first opened. Twenty-six years later the decision was made to become a
comprehensive community college with the addition of an Arts and Sciences Department. Then in 1993 the college officially renamed itself, Midwestern Community College.

Gaining Entry

Application for permission to conduct this study was made through the University of Northern Iowa’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The application made the following proposal:

This research is important because there is a population of low-income, first-generation, or disabled individuals who still have limited access to postsecondary education in our country. The primary purpose of this research is to ascertain whether a TRIO mentoring program for first-generation students could enhance retention at a Midwestern Community College.

Information will be collected from TRIO students and faculty members based on a series of interview questions designed by the researcher on the participant’s perception of the roles and benefits of mentoring. Responses from the first interview will be analyzed and compiled into patterns or categories in order to establish central themes. Based on these themes, a second set of questions will be designed to expand on initial questions. The second set of questions will be analyzed and added to existing themes or used to create new ones.

This study examines faculty mentoring for first-generation TRIO students as a potential strategy for improving retention in this targeted population. The benefits of such a study would add insight into keeping an otherwise underrepresented population of individuals in our educational institutions.
Written permission was first obtained from the Dean of Arts and Sciences on the campus of Midwestern Community College to conduct the study and then the application for approval was submitted to the University of Northern Iowa's IRB. It was the hope of the researcher that results of this study could someday be utilized by administration as guidelines in establishing mentoring programs on campus to increase retention rates for students.

MCC was chosen for this study because the researcher had been a faculty member there for over sixteen years. Over the years, the researcher had developed a rapport with many faculty, staff, and administrators who continually supported the college's devotion to students, and who possessed the vision and willingness to actively engage in helping students reach their potential. Due to proximity and familiarity with faculty and students, the researcher felt comfortable using MCC faculty and students as participants. This proximity and familiarity offered an excellent window of opportunity for accessibility to contact students and faculty. All participants were acquainted with the researcher's office and contact phone as well as e-mail addresses, so the issue of flexibility was always in place. This proximity also allowed last minute changes, schedule arrangements, and a meeting place for interviews.

The researcher had previously met with the Director of TRIO services and obtained verbal permission to pursue a study of TRIO students. The researcher was interested in creating strategies that helped retention rates for MCC'S TRIO students on campus. The impact and benefits of TRIO programs for student success had been something that the researcher had seen first-hand among students. Initially the research
question of how faculty mentoring for first-generation TRIO students would facilitate retention was approached because mentoring was suggested as one possible strategy for the retention issue on campuses all over the country.

TRIO’S Function and Mission at MCC

This community college had a TRIO program in place that served 160 students who qualified for the program. The program was new to this campus, currently in the second term of existence. There were four staff members and a director who facilitated the program. The TRIO programs included peer-tutoring services, scholarship applications, information on transfer deadlines, instruction on reading/writing proficiencies, helping participants fill out financial aid applications, and being a liaison between student and faculty with issues concerning the student’s successful advancement through school.

The mission for the TRIO Program at MCC was:

Midwestern Community College’s TRIO Student Support Services is dedicated to helping low-income and first-generation college students and individuals with disabilities graduate from college. Services include assistance with securing financial aid; personal, academic and career counseling; academic instruction, peer-tutoring; assistance with transition to four-year programs from two-year institutions; cultural enrichment activities and leadership workshops; and activities specially designed for students with limited English proficiency.

(Hawkeye Community College TRIO brochure, 2005. p.2)

Participants and Recruitment Plan

A purposeful sampling was used to select participants for the study. In purposeful sampling:

People or other units are chosen, as the name implies, for a particular purpose. For instance, we might choose people who we have decided are typical of a group or
those who represent diverse perspectives on an issue. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 206)

Three faculty and three students were the focus of the study. The researcher selected two faculty members from the Arts & Sciences Department and one from the Technical Department, all of which had taught for at least four years at MCC. Arts & Sciences was selected because it is the largest department on campus and courses within the department are required for all students attending the college. The requirement of at least four years of teaching would have provided the faculty members with the opportunity of being familiar with the classes, types of students on this particular campus, and the challenges and concerns students have entering college for the first time. These more tenured faculty would be more acquainted with the issues and fears brought to college along with the expectations of the students than either first year teachers or less experienced teachers would realize. The researcher chose faculty from both departments. The three faculty members were selected based on previous experiences and knowledge of the faculty member by the researcher. This selection was based on observations and evaluations of the faculty member’s interaction with students and the researcher’s perception of the interpersonal and emotional intelligence on the part of the faculty member.

The recruitment process for the three TRIO students consisted of identifying three previous first-generation TRIO students from the researcher’s classes who had been in the program for at least one semester or more. This purposeful sampling assured that the student had enough time and experience in college to evaluate the benefits of a mentor.
The TRIO students were selected based on the researcher’s perception of past first-generation TRIO students from her classroom who had exhibited a commitment to their education and who seemed willing to explore new ideas. They realized the challenges involved in college and were open to suggestions of how faculty could be involved in a positive way with students outside the classroom.

Both students and faculty were asked if they would be interested in participating in a study of how faculty mentoring would affect the retention rates of TRIO students from the perspective of that particular TRIO student or faculty member. Once verbal consent was obtained from both faculty and students, they were asked to sign a consent form that stated the purpose and intent of the study, as well as guaranteeing their confidentiality, and giving them permission to terminate the study at any time. A signed copy of this consent form was given to each participant. Ethical codes and requirements were respected. A completed Human Participants Review Committee Application was submitted to the Internal Review Board (IRB) and accepted prior to the data collection process. This application ensured the confidentiality of the participant’s identity, guaranteed their physical and emotional safety, explained why this study was important, and detailed the participant selection for the study. Because the faculty and students were allowed to decline participation in the study, allowed to stop the study at any time, and the fact that none of the students were current students of the researcher, the issue of coercion due to any power or control on the part of the researcher was not a concern.
Description of Faculty

Madeline. Madeline is a 26 year old married woman with no children. She is an international faculty member from Moscow. Her dimples grin as she opens up to people, speaking excellent English with only the slightest hint of an accent. Madeline has taught for the past five years in the Communication department at the college. She is very outgoing and devoted to providing her students with the best possible education she can give them. Madeline is a doctoral student at the local university, pursuing her Doctorate in Education and trying to balance teaching with her own classes.

Sharon. Sharon is a 60 year old married woman with a married daughter. She has spent almost forty years in education, encompassing pre-school to college teaching. Undoubtedly, teaching and students are her passion. Her volunteer work in her church and at the local elementary schools as a clown and ventriloquist are a testimony to her giving and loving nature. Sharon has taught in the early childhood area for over fifteen years at the college.

Debbie. Debbie is a 43 year old married woman with two step-sons. She has a spontaneous laugh and always seems to have a smile on her face. When Debbie speaks of her students and teaching, an aura of sunshine appears around her as she expounds on the experiences. Listening to her stories of students and the joy she derives from them glorifies the traditional reasons individuals enter the teaching profession. Debbie teaches courses in General Psychology, Psychology of Gender, and Human Sexuality. She has been at the college for almost ten years.
Description of TRIO Students

Cindy. Cindy is a 43 year old divorced mother with a 24 year old son and a 22 year old daughter, neither of whom still reside at home. For the past three and a half years she has lived with her live-in boyfriend, Rick. Cindy is a very personable, happy person who greets you with a smile and an almost flippant type of personality. Her humor is quick and thunders from deep inside her soul. She is very honest about her feelings and not hesitant to express her emotions and opinions. Cindy’s spirituality comes through in her words and is definitely something she is passionate about. She is pursuing a degree in Urban Ministry with a desire to work in missions.

Mary. Mary is a 39 year old single mother of two young boys, ages six and eleven. Neither of the fathers of her sons contribute to their support. She is a shy woman, one who seems reluctant to speak unless actually called upon to do so. Mary appears hesitant to express her opinion for fear of possibly being wrong and then criticized. The one thing she feels passionate about is her two sons and her responsibility of providing them with a good life. Her goal is to obtain a degree in Human Services and work specifically with educating single parents as to the various resources and services available for them.

Nona. Nona is a 27 year old divorced woman with no children. She lives with her mother until she can graduate and get a job. She is a very cautious young woman who hesitates to express her opinions until she feels she can trust those around her. Her smile
is warm and almost childlike, as is her giggle. If needed, however, Nona could produce a
strong position of survival. Nona’s goal is to obtain a degree in forensics and work in a
Chicago crime lab.

Why a Community College?

When asked what persuaded her to attend a community college Cindy stated:

“Because it’s a smaller atmosphere. I liked the smaller class room size. I would say to as
far as expense too, I mean it’s a lot less expensive to go to Midwestern for two years and
then go on to a four year college.”

Cindy was later asked to explain why smaller classroom size and cheaper made a
community college more desirable. She replied:

Well, as far as...because I’m a non-traditional student if I can save money
anywhere I can. I think it’s a transitional thing for me. I’ve already had a little bit
of knowledge about Midwestern as well anyway from before. Knowing that it’s
smaller classroom size, knowing that there’s a lot of non-traditional students that
go there. So that’s a very very much more comfortable atmosphere. Being able to
afford that type of education. The teaching staff there care about their students.
It’s not just like you’re a number and you’re a name and that’s it. That’s what I
really like about the smaller classroom sizes especially. If you really are
struggling with something if you can’t get in touch with your teacher at least you
have someone that you can go to and they can help you out. The TRIO program
for example. Maybe if I couldn’t get in touch with one of my instructors about
something I could go to TRIO. There’s somebody there that can help me out with
something or they can point me in the right direction. It’s just like you said about
the other different programs that they are involved in. It’s just amazing. It’s great.

Mary stated that the reason she attended a community college was: “I hadn’t
gone to school for 20 years so I didn’t want to start big, I wanted to start small. And I
even talked to Paul (a TRIO advisor), he said a four-year college, academically, if you
are having troubles, they won’t support you as much as a two year college. Yeah, he said
either you sink or swim and that made my mind up.”
Mary was then asked to explain why she felt that because a community college is smaller and more supportive it would help her be more successful in college. Her response was: “I need one...especially with my learning disability we do choose a college that will be supportive academically and not all colleges out there will. I want a college that will have academic support. I guess my philosophy is that it will be better academically. I think you would learn more. The instructor or professor would have more time individually for the students than a larger classroom.”

Nona stated that what persuaded her to attend a community college was: “Money!! I knew I wasn’t going to be able to afford a university college.” Nona was later asked to explain further on the statement that one of the things that persuaded her to attend a community college was the cost. She replied: “Community college or none at all. Major. Yes. I didn’t come from a very rich background. I’m not saying we were poor poor, but middle class isn’t really worth much of anything. It was just always me and my mom. So I knew that I wouldn’t be able to afford a four-year college. That was just going to be way out of my reach.” All participants had clear reasons for their decision to attend a community college.

**Data Collection**

**Interviews**

Interviews served as the primary data source. The study entailed a composite of interviews, tape-recordings, personal notes, journaling from the researcher, and transcription. Interviews were conducted on MCC’S campus, a prearranged spot such as a library, bookstore, local restaurant, or the participant’s home. The intent was that these
interviewing areas would be comfortable, with some degree of privacy, so that the participants felt relaxed and at ease. Interviews in the library were conducted in one of the private rooms available for one-on-one conferences. These interviews were tape-recorded and the researcher took notes that were also later transcribed. The transcription was done within one to two days of the interviews to avoid the possibility of memory loss or confusion of data. The transcription was done by a non-participatory individual to circumvent any bias or previous assumptions.

The researcher met two times with each of the six participants for a period of sixty to ninety minutes each time. Both sessions consisted of a series of questions compiled by the researcher. The first session started out by asking participants a series of questions, first for demographics, and then to examine the level of experience and knowledge of mentoring as an opening point of reference. The participants were questioned as to their definitions of what a mentor/mentee relationship consisted of, levels of self-determination, and some of the concerns with retention of students in school. The researcher analyzed responses from the initial session and developed further interview questions for elaboration and clarification in order to answer the research question of how they perceived a faculty mentor would help with retention for first-generation TRIO students. By using this approach, the researcher hoped to elicit a thought-provoking, open dialog among all participants. Arrangements were then scheduled by the researcher for the second session of questions with participants.

The interview questions were in a semi-structured format, starting with a set of initial questions, allowing for subsequent flexibility for the researcher, students, and
faculty members in a more in-depth type of question and answer format. An open-ended style of questioning was used to elicit more information and dialogue from the respondent. This type of format allowed for analysis of previous responses and preparation for future inquiry. The questions were designed to correspond and align with three conceptual theories: Cohen's (1995) Mentoring Theory; Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-determination Theory; and Tinto's (1987) Retention Theory. The interview instruments are included in Appendix A, along with a copy of the consent form.

The first meetings with participants were designed to elicit responses based on previous experiences concerning the roles performed by a mentor and the perceived beneficial effects of mentoring. The researcher strove to obtain responses that elicited meaningful guidelines in regard to future mentoring programs in TRIO programs at MCC.

The researcher, through the qualitative research method of face-to-face meetings with the participants, hoped to establish a rapport with the faculty and students. Using member checks ensured accuracy verification on the part of the interviewer to indicate that the study was authentic and that data were correct. The goal throughout the study was to maintain an open line of communication between the interviewer and the participants.

At the second session, previous responses from the initial questions were read back to the participant as a member check (Merriam, 1998) to guarantee that the researcher had captured the full meaning for accuracy and extent of the responses. This member check allowed the participant to listen and clarify any initial incorrect or
misunderstood response. By this approach, the researcher hoped to elicit a guarantee as to the accuracy and intended meaning from each participant. The second round interview questions are located in Appendix B.

The questions in the second session were flexible enough to enable the interviewer to adjust to the climate and content of the sessions based on responses from previous questions. The second session was intended to establish effective, positive reasons for the implementation of a faculty mentoring component in TRIO programs at MCC.

The Faculty Interviews. The setting for the first round of interviews with faculty started with Sharon. We made arrangements to meet on a Saturday at 10:00 at the public library for our first meeting. The second round of interviews with Sharon took place at the same library on Sunday at 2:00 a week later. We reserved a private conference room on the second floor, as we felt this would better serve our purposes not only for privacy but also because the room had electrical outlets. A tape recorder was used to tape the interview plus notes were taken by the researcher throughout the interviews. The room was small and contained a table and three chairs. The room was painted white with stark walls, no clock or paintings of any kind were present. Sharon seemed relaxed during the interviews, sometimes stopping to think through her responses before she spoke. But throughout the entire interviews, Sharon was always very free with her responses and never gave any hesitation or reluctance to reply to a question. Both interviews lasted one and a half hours, after which time the researcher and participant parted ways.
Debbie was the second faculty participant interviewed. As with Sharon, both interviews were conducted in the same location. The interviews were held in the lab outside Debbie’s office on campus because she shared an office with three other faculty members. Her interviews were scheduled at times during the day when the lab was closed for privacy. The first meeting was held at 4:00 on a Friday and 4:00 the following Wednesday. The lab was a medium sized room with four round tables, four chairs to each table. Along two sides of the room were computer stations for students to use. On a table in one corner was a coffee pot and small refrigerator. The left wall was covered with a bulletin board indicating school calendar and upcoming events on campus. Above the computer area hung a clock. Debbie’s office was at the far end of the room, straight in from the door off the hall. The interviews lasted an hour and a half. They were tape recorded and notes were taken by the researcher.

Madeline’s first interview was held in the researcher’s home at the kitchen table on a Sunday at 10:00. This location seemed the best site considering time flexibility for both researcher and participant. The kitchen was small, with a table along the one side of the room. The researcher served tea and cookies to make the scene more relaxed and informal. Madeline appeared very comfortable with the situation. No other sounds were heard throughout the house allowing for privacy. The interview lasted one and a half hours. The second interview with Madeline took place on campus in her office. The office was quite large, with desks for several other faculty, none of which were present at the time. Madeline felt very much at ease and answered the questions in a relaxed and
casual fashion. The interview lasted one hour. It was tape recorded and additional notes were taken by the researcher.

The Student Interviews. The interviews with Mary were both held in her home with her two sons present. We sat at a card table along one side of the living room. Her sons were watching TV in their bedroom to the left, but several times during the interviews one or the other would come into the living room to eavesdrop or ask a question about what was taking place. At those times Mary would politely answer their questions and ask them to return to their room so we could continue with the interview. At one time the phone rang, at which time, like with the interruptions of her sons, the tape recorder would be shut off and then turned back on when the situation resumed. The home was modest, but clean. There was no carpet or rugs on the floor, nothing adorned the walls. It resembled a humble but warm and comfortable environment. Mary thought out each question before answering, appearing to be very honest in her responses. She seemed at ease with the interview. Both interviews lasted one and a half hours. They were tape recorded and notes were taken by the researcher.

The interviews with Cindy were both held at a restaurant close to her home. She doesn't drive, so she bicycled to both sessions. We sat at tables near the back corner for privacy and both of us ordered food and enjoyed the company of each other during the meals. Both times only three to four other tables were occupied, giving us the luxury of not being disturbed. Occasionally the waitress would come by to see if we needed anything, but after spotting the tape recorder and our conversation, she finally left us to our business. The tape recorder was turned on and the interview commenced. Cindy was
very open and eager to answer the questions, sometimes beginning her response with a
giggle or a pause. Her answers were given in an honest, heart-felt fashion. Her sense of
humor would often blend into her response, adding authenticity and humility. The
interviews both lasted approximately one hour. The researcher took additional notes
along with the tape recording.

The first interview with Nona took place at a local Barnes and Noble store. We
found a corner with a small table and two chairs nestled in the children's section. We sat
down and proceeded to begin the interview. It was not long before we realized that this
spot was not the best choice because within minutes of starting the interview children
appeared and decided that this area was the spot to be. But we stuck it out and continued
the interview. We found ourselves raising our voices to be heard, but eventually it
became a game to see how much information we could gather before our voices were
drowned out. Many times there were pauses as we giggled and admired the little people
reading and enjoying their books and puzzles. Nona was very relaxed and seemed
comfortable answering the questions, sometimes pausing to get her thoughts together or
rephrase a sentence. Throughout the interview a sadness would sometimes come across
her face, but almost as though she sensed the sadness, she would smile and proceed. The
second interview was held at a local restaurant where both of us enjoyed a meal. We sat
at a table in a corner away from the entrance or any potentially busy sections. After the
meal the interview started. Nona again was relaxed and open with her responses. This
time she seemed almost giddy as she spoke of her upcoming move to Illinois for school.
She had graduated from Midwestern and was continuing her education at another college.
Many of Nona’s responses were given without hesitation, always making sure that her responses were an accurate description of her meaning. Again, both sessions were tape recorded and the researcher took additional notes to be transcribed at a later date. Both interviews lasted approximately one hour.

Data Analysis

“Rigor in qualitative research derives from the researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, and interpretations of perceptions, and rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1998, p. 50). Hatch (2002) states that: “Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others” (p. 148). Interpretive content analysis is a method used for qualitative data analysis (Merriam, 1998). This type of analysis was used to enumerate the data collected for any themes or patterns that appeared in response to questions asked of the participants. Once these patterns were established, categories were constructed that synthesized relevant characteristics that were used in the content of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Each of the three-tiers of analysis were guided by the conceptual frameworks of Cohen’s (1995) Mentoring Theory; Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory; and Tinto’s (1987) Retention Theory.

First-tier Analysis

Strauss and Corbin (1990) purposed a three-tier data analysis process for qualitative research. The first-tier analysis consisted of the researcher obtaining demographic or background information on each of the participants as well as an analysis
of the responses to the initial interview questions (see Appendix A). The researcher
maintained field notes and recorded audiotapes of participants' sentence by sentence
responses to questions in regard to their knowledge and expectations of mentoring and
the role they see mentoring playing in educational success for TRIO students in the area
of retention. Field notes and audiotapes were transcribed by a neutral party to avoid any
possible misinformation or bias on the part of the researcher. Each individual transcript
was chronologically read and analyzed by the researcher. This first round of analysis
created an initial coding which consisted of assigned single or multiple word codes that
appeared in response to interview questions. These initial codes were then examined for
frequency or commonality between participants. Common categories and subcategories
emerged from this activity. For example, when asked what was important in a successful
mentoring relationship, participants responded: “Trust and confidentiality,”
“Boundaries,” “One-On-One Attention,” and “Help with problem-solving decisions.”
These initial codes and categories are presented in Table 1.

Second-tier Analysis

Second-tier analysis consisted of organizing responses from the initial coding into
categories or sub-categories through selective coding, and preparing questions for the
second round interviews. Patterns that emerged from the initial codes were re-examined
by using content analysis to organize the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This second-tier
analysis organized the data into meaningful categories following the first round of
interviews. These categories and themes are presented in Table 1 for students and Table 2
for faculty. Using second-tier analysis themes and categories, a set of second round
questions were comprised, asking participants to clarify or expound on previous category or subcategory responses. Second interviews were conducted and field notes were again taken and the sessions audio taped for transcription. The same neutral party transcribed the notes and audiotapes. The transcribed responses were given to the researcher and sentence by sentence examined and analyzed. Initial codes and categories were independently confirmed by a researcher with expertise in qualitative research. The second round of questions for faculty and TRIO students are included in Appendix B.

Third-tier Analysis

The intent of the third-tier analysis was to organize the second round of data collection into categories for comparison with initial categories from first round questions for establishing of central patterns or themes. These second set of categories are in Table 3 for students and Table 4 for faculty. The second goal of the third-tier analysis was to further explore the data in relation to the research question: Would a faculty mentoring program for first-generation TRIO students facilitate retention and graduation rates? Axial coding, the process of building connections within categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was the procedure used to establish themes in the third tier analysis. Themes emerged as categories were organized into relation to the research question. The themes to facilitate retention and graduation rates from the students are included below and in Table 5 and 6.

Five themes were identified from the student data:

1. A faculty mentors program could assist in addressing the academic challenges faced by students.
2. Faculty mentors may serve as trusted confidants in addressing students’ personal challenges.

3. A faculty mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates by providing one to one attention.

4. An effective faculty mentor must be respectful of boundaries.

5. A faculty mentoring program at MCC would attenuate commitment and self-determination of students.

Four themes were identified from faculty data:

1. By serving as a partner in problem-solving a faculty mentor builds student’s confidence in completing school.

2. A faculty mentor can connect and communicate with students, create a sense of belonging.

3. A faculty mentor must be trustworthy and respect boundaries.

4. By giving individual attention and time, faculty mentors could positively impact student retention and graduation.

_Exit Checks_

Once the research study was complete, the researcher submitted a set of materials to the director of TRIO programs at MCC that included interview data and analysis, a review of mentoring literature, and a history of TRIO programs. It was the hope that these materials would provide positive outcomes in persuading the enactment of a mentoring component into the existing TRIO programs at MCC. The mission was to assist the college in recognizing and understanding the possible correlation between
faculty mentoring and retention rates for their TRIO students. The director confirmed and validated the themes identified in the research. Journaling by the researcher throughout the study gave insight not only into the personal thoughts and emotions of the researcher, but also the researchers understanding of the personal thoughts and emotions of the participants.

**Summary**

The researcher selected qualitative research because it is a rich and descriptive form of inquiry that helped understand and explain the world by asking questions from participants. Case study was chosen as the qualitative research methodology of collecting data for the study because it provided a richer, more in-depth lens from which to view the data. Merriam (1998) stated: “Case studies, especially qualitative case studies, are prevalent throughout the field of education. This type of research has illuminated educational practice for nearly thirty years” (p. 26).

The research procedure consisted of a purposeful sampling of three faculty members and three TRIO students from MCC who took part in the study. A biographical description of faculty and TRIO students was included. The faculty members and TRIO students met twice with the interviewer to discuss their views regarding how faculty mentoring for first-generation TRIO students would be a possible strategy to improve the retention rates of TRIO students.

The data collection was obtained by interviewing each of the three faculty members and TRIO students twice during the summer for at least one hour. A physical description of the interviews was outlined. A series of questions were asked of the
participants at both sessions, the second set based upon previous responses from
questions asked by the researcher. Questions involved ascertaining the effect mentoring
may hold for TRIO students at MCC.

Data analysis consisted of collecting and arranging data into categories or patterns
based on a three-tier analysis procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The results of the
analysis are presented in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

This study was designed to explore the perceived value of faculty mentoring for first-generation TRIO students to facilitate retention and graduation rates. The setting was a Midwestern community college with a student population of approximately 5,500 students. The participants were three faculty and three TRIO students from the college. Six interviews, 60-90 minutes each in duration, were conducted over a period of eight weeks. Two rounds of questions were asked each participant to determine their perception of how a faculty mentoring program might enhance retention and graduation rates at MCC.

Findings: Students

The data analysis revealed five themes from the students interviewed. The students reported that a faculty mentoring program at MCC might assist retention through addressing academic challenges, personal challenges, and improve retention and graduation rates. The faculty mentor, respectful of boundaries, could attenuate student self-determination and commitment.

Theme 1: A faculty mentoring program could assist in addressing academic challenges faced by students.

All three students agreed that a faculty mentoring program could help students overcome academic barriers. They provided examples of academic difficulties and how assistance from a mentor could address these difficulties.
Nona provided an example of an academic challenge she encountered:

I think it was when I started Constitutional Law. I think what it was, was that I wasn’t really ready at that point. I didn’t understand the law part of it just yet, and they threw me in this class and there was a book about yeah thick and you had to read 15 pages a day and we had to give a brief. I said “oh my God how am I going to do this brief? I have to act like a lawyer. I can’t do this”. I had a paper about six pages long that I had to study on this case and I had to present that. Rewrite it all in my own words? I kept thinking “I’m just going to go do it”. So the day of my brief, I was wearing the nice clothes, I was standing up there like I’m hot stuff and he ripped me apart, he tore every word, he shredded them. I remember just laughing at him because I couldn’t do anything else but laugh. It was either cry, laugh, or puke, or all three.

Nona expressed that the assistance of a faculty mentor would help solve problems and barriers to graduation before they became serious: “You need to [talk to a mentor] when you have the problem before it gets worse.” Getting assistance when problems first appear would minimize academic barriers for students.

Cindy reported similar academic challenges with a statistics class:

I guess as far as an educational level, I would say the biggest challenge was getting through statistics. That was killing me. That was at the same time I had my stroke so I was out of school, it was September of last year. So I was in the hospital, I was overloaded. I had a large class load and they were really intense. I had to do a lot of writing and papers. Then I was trying to do stats and I had no idea what we were doing. I missed a lot of class and it was really a challenge. I ended up with a C in that class and I thought I was going to get an F.

She confirmed that faculty mentors would help address academic problems faced by students: “They [mentors] just are so encouraging. You can get through anything. No matter what. Sometimes you just need a sounding board.” By providing academic assistance, a mentor would help students “get through” difficulties at school. Faculty mentors would help by taking “one step at a time.” They could “ask questions to make
me respond so I would get the wheels turning.” Cindy confirmed that this assistance could overcome academic barriers.

Mary also reported academic challenges and self-doubt as to whether she could resolve those problems: “My first class was Human Relations, and I remember the first test, I fell apart and I failed it. I was thinking ‘should I stay in school? What should I do?’ All those crazy thoughts.” She understood that a faculty mentoring program could address both academic and personal challenges. Mary said “I think [a faculty mentoring program] would help...We could have help with personal issues and academic issues. Because of the mentoring. You have somebody there supporting you with academic and personal issues.” She expressed that such assistance with academic barriers would help students stay in school.

All three students reported having academic challenges at MCC. The students were convinced that a faculty mentoring program would help in addressing their academic challenges.

Theme 2: Faculty mentors may serve as trusted confidants in addressing personal challenges.

All three students talked about personal challenges they had encountered in their lives. They confirmed that a faculty mentor would serve as someone who would help address these personal challenges.

Cindy described her personal challenges and beginning her program at MCC:

I came from the school of hard knocks more than anything else as far as from high school until now...I think I put a lot of pressure on myself just to succeed and then when I made some mistakes it ended up where I was pregnant before I was out of school. That really just pretty much put a damper on a lot of my issues
about myself. About what I really wanted to do. I kind of put myself on the back burner and let everything else push forward and then I started having resentments about that and that didn’t help my attitude at all. I started having a bad attitude and resentments against people. I have to even say that I have resentments against my own kids because of the fact that I felt that their needs came first and I was always back here. I just know that now, with the focus that I have on my education, if you just don’t stop yourself from doing the things that you want to do, nothing can stop you. If you keep telling yourself that you can’t do it, you’re not gonna do it. If you tell yourself you’re gonna do it, come hell or high water, you’re gonna do it. It all has to do with your attitude. You can enjoy your life or you can say it sucks. I think too that once you verbalize and you hear yourself say those words, you almost have to live up to your own words.

Cindy recalled the fear of beginning school at MCC:

The first day, and I took a summer class, and it was a comp class and it was a night class. My instructor was a hoot. I guess the first day I would say that I was a little shy. I was excited to be there, but I was also scared. I was scared how I was going to do. I’m not very good at just sitting down and getting things done on the right amount of time. I’m a major procrastinator. I think I maybe talked to a couple of the gals the first day, made comments to them. I kind of checked people out, I check out personalities. It was a little overwhelming.

Cindy described how a faculty mentor could be a confidential partner:

I guess maybe mentor and accountability partner kind of mean the same thing except maybe mentor is more on an educational level maybe. I would guess that a mentor to me would be somebody that I can confide in. That you can break down to and just say, ‘I don’t have a clue’, I just don’t have a clue and I really just need your help on this. Somebody that you can tell in confidence and you know that it’s going to stay with that particular person. And that they’re going to just let you learn things from them as you. And you have to take that time and I really think that it takes a certain amount of time. You can’t rush somebody into thinking that it’s going to work.

Cindy believed that a faculty mentor could serve as a confidant and help not only with academic problems but with personal issues, too.

Mary confided that “in high school they told me I could never go to school.”

When Mary started at MCC she recalled:
I was so scared. I was so nervous. Scared that I was going to drop out of school like I did when I was at a beautician school. I thought maybe I won’t fit in because I’m older than everyone else. I was thinking should I stay in school, what should I do, all those crazy thoughts. I just felt overwhelmed. Emotionally drained…I can do it, I gotta do it for myself and my kids.

Mary described a previous mentoring relationship to illustrate the importance of a faculty mentor:

I had Kelly, she was awesome, but she is gone so now I have no one. I was scared out of my mind going back to school because I hadn’t been in school since 1986. So I was very scared, but she showed me a lot of skills that I didn’t have, how to read a textbook. I have a learning disability in reading and writing. Like she showed me how to read a textbook.

Mary suggested that a faculty mentor would be:

Someone who guides you and helps you. I’ve had bad experiences with mentors and if they get impatient then I get mad and then I lose what I’ve been working on. [Trust] is really important…I talked to her about personal issues and I didn’t always share that with everybody.

Mary, too, emphasized that a mentor could assist with personal issues providing a trusting relationship and established students could confide in mentors to receive assistance with personal problems.

Nona also described personal challenges: “I was always afraid to try these classes, a little hesitant. As I got into college and I took one course, I thought that was way out of my reach and I was real hesitate but I had to take it.” Nona added:

You’re gonna have your bad days. I think you just have to push through it. It’s almost like a puzzle of your life. You always gotta find that piece that’s gonna fit next. If you stop, then your life is incomplete and you’re just living like a little blob. Your puzzle is just laying there. You gotta put that together until it’s all put together. You can’t just quit. Maybe you lose a piece here and there but you find it eventually.
Nona described her previous mentoring relationship as:

Um, I would have to say it was in high school, and his name was Mr. Dawson. He was a co-op or special ed. teacher and I was messing up pretty bad. I mean, skipping and all that, and if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have even made it to college. My parents were so mad that they were at their wits’ end. He said ‘I care about you even if nobody else cares about you, I care about you. I’m not going to let you mess up’. He told me that just because I have a learning disability doesn’t mean you can’t overcome it...When he’d answer you or tell you something, he was very bold about it. He wanted to make sure that his point was across. So you didn’t feel like he was just saying it to make you feel better. He’d be very direct and bold with his answers. You understood exactly what he was saying.

In discussing the trust issue with a faculty mentor, Nona replied:

You should be able to tell your mentor things and have them be there no matter what was said. Maybe you’re not sure the thing that they’re teaching you...maybe you’re not hearing it right, maybe they need to reiterate on things. If there’s a personal issue that’s between you two or something is happening at home, you should be able to say something to them without them blabbing it or judging you or turning you away from whatever is going on in your life.

Nona confirmed that a faculty mentor must be trustworthy if she/he assists with personal problems. Students would benefit from faculty confidants who offer help with personal issues.

All three students were able to share personal challenges about school. They also described previous mentoring relationships that had impacted their lives. Based on these experiences, the students were able to confirm qualities needed in a faculty mentor.

Theme 3: An effective faculty mentor must be respectful of boundaries.

All three students discussed the issue of boundaries in a faculty-student mentoring relationship. It was agreed that the boundaries should be set at an educational level, not a personal level.
Cindy discussed her views on boundaries. She stressed the importance of maintaining a professional relationship:

Level... now see if I was going to be a mentor, I would probably go to any level that needed to be gone to. You know, short of giving the answers, you know what I'm saying. There's a difference between actually guiding someone and helping them. And then there's enabling them. You can feed a person for a day, but then you teach them how to fish and you feed them for a lifetime. That's how I feel about it. I would prefer, yeah, I would prefer to just be a mentor-mentee relationship. Just keep it on the educational level and I don't think that you should get into personal.

Later when Cindy was asked to give an example of what boundaries she believed should be in a mentoring relationship she responded:

I would say that boundaries would be that if it's a subject that is not being broached by the student, then it shouldn't be broached by the mentor. If I don't talk about my personal life to the mentor, I don't believe the mentor should have to talk about my personal life. Or ask me questions about my personal life, unless I kind of give them the initiative per se. Just not to be condescending. I expect a mentor to be there to be helpful. I guess maybe I have certain expectations of a mentor that if you're going to condescend me and you think that I'm stupid about something, then I don't need you as a mentor. I need a mentor that's going to be understanding about my disability at this point in this particular subject or whatever the case may be. I expect them to understand on a one-on-one basis and just be compassionate about it and be empathetic about it.

Cindy concluded that the student would establish the boundaries for the mentor-mentee relationship. If the student prefers an academic or educational focus, the mentor should respect that.

Mary also discussed the nature of the mentor/mentee relationship. She discussed boundaries constructed in the mentoring relationship:

Yeah, I think there should be boundaries. There should be boundaries on a professional level. Like for Edward (math mentor), it was very hard. We didn't click, so I only saw him a couple times. He lost patience with me and I threw a paper across the floor and it took me a year to go back to him. Kelly was patient and she was understanding. No, I guess there was no boundaries with Kelly.
To Mary, professional boundaries were based upon the fact that, depending on the personalities of a mentor, those boundaries may vary.

Nona, too, talked about boundaries and crossing boundary lines:

It should stay simple and it can go outside the education, but never cross that boundary. Because then you are not really being a mentor, it's a relationship. They shouldn't just take someone under their wings and mentor them and just kind of drift off from them. You need to stay with the progress because sometimes the mentee feels like maybe they're not the only one you're mentoring. They need to be able to know that you're there...Don't drift so far apart from them that they think that they can't ask you questions any more or they think you're not mentoring them anymore...a mentoring program would help and guide you. But it's you that is really pulling yourself along.

She added:

You don't have to feel like you're all alone. I couldn't have done it without them. I knew that if I was having a problem I could go to them. They weren't going to turn me away or say you should have worked harder. I think that you should separate personal from your business, your professional. You don't want things to go a little too far. You don't want to get so close to the person that maybe intimacy becomes more than what it should be. I think it should strictly be...I'm not saying you can't be their friend. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying there should be boundaries in all mentoring cases because let's face it, it gets ugly if things get crossed. Feelings get hurt. You said something I didn't like or I didn't like the way you said that. You just need to have your boundaries so that both of you guys understand what not to cross and what not to say. I think before you even mentor you need to sit down with the person and throw those rules out there. If you don't, you don't know where you're crossing the line at. You don't know what that person's boundary is. You don't know what they would like you to say, what not to say to them. You don't know that. You have to have your rules, your boundaries set before you mentor anybody. They need to know what you're comfortable with and what they're not comfortable with so that you can continue doing that. If you don't it's just chaos and then both parties get hurt because you've crossed boundaries. Maybe even put it in writing if you have to.

Nona similarly discussed the importance of boundaries and that boundaries must be comfortable for students. She cautioned against mentors “crossing” boundary lines.
All three students confirmed that an effective mentor-mentee relationship should be respectful of boundaries. They agreed that the mentoring should be educational and not personal.

Theme 4: A faculty mentoring program at MCC would accentuate the commitment and self-determination of students.

The students talked about their commitment and motivation to complete their schooling. They all agreed that a faculty mentoring program would enhance their commitment and motivation.

Cindy was asked what motivated her to finish her education. Her response was:

I wanted to make some complete total changes in my life. I had gone through a lot of drug and alcohol abuse, and I was trying to get sober. I was trying to stay in recovery and I thought I just don’t want to be anybody’s gopher anymore and that’s how I felt when I was a secretary. I wanted to actually be in peer-on-peer relationships with the people I work with, and I knew I wanted to do something other than that. I love college. I love it, I love to learn. I just absolutely love education and I know that for some reason I just knew I was going to do good.

Later when she was asked to explain further why she felt an education could make changes in her life she replied:

Because of the fact that the way that society works these days and with the job market. It’s almost that you have to have a degree to be able to get into anything that will really make a difference. I guess what I mean by making a difference is that the field that I want to go into is either like a ministry field or a family services field, social work kind of. You have to have at least a bachelor’s degree to get into that particular field…it’s not just necessarily the classes I’ll be taking, it’s gonna be the people I’m gonna be around. It’s gonna be this particular type of person is gonna be in this job area. The more information that we can get provided for us and if we can get into any kind of job shadowing or a mission type thing where you can go and help at a certain place,... it’s just going to make a real huge difference. It’s not just about book learning. It’s about learning on the job and learning from other people.
When asked how committed she was to finishing school Cindy replied:

There’s no doubt about it. One hundred percent committed…what I care about is doing God’s will, that’s my absolute gift, that is my focus right now. …I don’t think that I would have gotten the grades I got or done the work that I did without the encouragement of the TRIO program or the other mentors that I had. I would have never guessed that I would have done such a good job. It’s because of that encouraging atmosphere. When you’re talking about the TRIO program especially and the mentors there, they totally focus so much positive energy into your education it’s unbelievable. It’s just awesomely unbelievable. That’s what really pushes you to achieve. All you gotta do is just take one step after another and you can achieve anything you want. What you have to do is you have to stay in these types of programs that will encourage you and show you and teach you how important it is just to keep one foot in front of the other. You don’t have to strive to get total ‘A’s’ or be on the Dean’s list. But you can strive to get better than what you are at that point.

Cindy was asked if she believed that she would benefit in achieving her educational goals with the assistance of a mentor or did she feel she could do it on her own. Her reply was:

To be truthful, I really believe that having other people back me up is so much more strength. It’s just like having a rope. You’ve got more than one piece and that makes it stronger and stronger every time. So when you have people there to encourage you and to back you up and to help you…I tell you what, when you have this mindset from before that you don’t have anybody to help you or you’re just not sure and you go into a situation where you have a mentor or the TRIO program and they’re just there to push you along saying, ‘You know what, I know you got it in you’, it just makes you try even harder. [Mentors] have so much more understanding about that access…They’ve got so many different ways to get through the hard parts. Things I don’t have a clue about, but they do. And that’s what they’re there for.

Mary discussed the decision to further her education and her motivation to graduate. She reported: “I’m motivated by myself…that always bothered me that [my siblings] have a degree and I never did.” Her motivation was also influenced by family factors: “Also for my boys. To come off of public assistance. Able to provide for my family.”
When Mary was first asked how committed she was to finishing school she replied: “Very committed, that’s why I’m going to Maywood. I mean, why waste $12,000 if you’re not going to finish.” Mary was later asked to explain further her commitment and motivation to finish school. Her response was: “Part of my commitment is my kids. I have to do it for myself and my kids. The only way I’m going to have a better life is to finish my college education.”

While Mary took responsibility for her future (“I am. Totally”), she also recognized her need for outside assistance: “Midwestern is very good at helping people with disabilities providing resources to them... At TRIO, the resources are already there. They had the computer lab and they had the reading and writing and the math instructor. Then they had different pamphlets that helped you. Pamphlets on test-taking and writing notes.”

Mary confirmed that her motivation was enhanced by support from others:

There’s no way I could have done it on my own. Especially being so scared as I was when I first entered MCC. I wouldn’t have been successful because Kelly told me how to read the textbook and we practiced tests together. She laid the foundation for me so I could be successful.

Nona’s story about pursuing post-secondary opportunities was similar to Cindy’s. She reported:

I think it’s important that women get as much education as they can. I grew up in a home where my mom always taught me that women are just as equal as men. And I feel that if a man can have a doctorate degree so can I. [Women] feel independent, they don’t have to depend on anyone else. This is a man’s world, and I’m just not going to settle for that.
Nona discussed how her decision to continue her education made her feel independent:

I think what it is is that maybe when women go through high school they kind of believe maybe that their duties stop there. I believe women who get more educated have more prospects that happen in their life. They further themselves more than the woman who just had a high school education. I don’t want someone knowing me as ‘Oh, you just went through high school.’ I want to be noticed. Career. You don’t have to rely on anybody else but yourself. I’m not saying you can’t rely on someone, but I choose not. I choose to rely on myself. I want to buy my own diamond ring. I want to buy my own car. It’s self-fulfillment knowing you didn’t have to rely on someone else. It doesn’t matter if you’re male or female. Just relying on yourself feels so good.

When Nona was first asked how committed she was to finishing school she replied: “Very committed. One of my goals is to be Dr. G Medical Examiner, Dr. Chow, or write my own book, which I’m going to do anyways.” Later when Nona was asked if there were any other individuals other than the ones she had already mentioned that had motivated her to graduate or be on her own she responded:

My mom. She has always encouraged me to continue further and further and further in my education. I think that her being so independent throughout her life paved the way for me to be so independent. She didn’t have to rely on anybody. Just to see her so proud of me now means the world.

Nona commented that her “Mom” had “motivated her to graduate.”

Nona accepted responsibility for her future (“I am”), and the importance of making her own life choices:

Well, nobody else can live your life but you. You have to decide and make choices in your life that maybe you wouldn’t normally choose. Nobody else is going to make choices for you. So you need to buck up and say okay, this is my life, what am I going to do with it? So something doesn’t work out, you try something else.
Despite her self-determination, Nona also reported that support from others was critical to her success:

I've always had problems learning things through all my life time. I would try to do it on my own at first and if that didn't work, I'd probably have to seek help somewhere else just because maybe I didn't understand all the material.

All three students expressed and talked about their commitment to finishing school and what motivates them to do so. They all confirmed that a faculty mentoring program at MCC would have an influence on their commitment and self-determination to graduate.

**Theme 5: A faculty mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates by providing one-to-one attention.**

All three students confirmed that a faculty mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates. They felt the one-to-one attention given by a mentoring relationship was definitely a contributing factor to retention and graduation rates.

When Cindy was asked if she felt a faculty mentoring program would help with retention she stated: “Absolutely. There’s no doubt about it. They have the peer mentoring where you can have peer-to-peer mentoring or they have the mentors or the teachers that help you with certain subjects in the library.” She stated that “a one-to-one faculty mentor could provide helpful undivided attention. I expect their undivided attention when it’s time for me to have that undivided attention.”

Cindy commented on students’ hesitation to ask for help by saying:

Do not be too proud to ask for help. There’s nothing wrong with asking for help. I feel that a lot of students, especially the younger ones, are too proud to say they’re failing. Instead of saying anything to anyone about their failing, they’ll just drop
out. That's sad to see that happen. I believe that if they did not have the TRIO mentoring program at Midwestern that the retention would not be very good. I know that a lot of the students in the TRIO program had trouble in the past completing. They might even possibly be GED people that had never finished high school, maybe even quit school in 9th grade when they were 16. They might come from an African American or a different culture of classroom where education just wasn't that big of a deal. Nothing is more important than your education. Even though you're going through this mess right now, just keep coming to school. Just keep bucking up. Just hold on. You'll never regret your education.

When Cindy was asked if a faculty mentoring program would help with graduation rates she responded: "Oh, absolutely. There's no doubt about it. Oh yeah... There's no doubt that the statistics will show that people that are involved in a TRIO program graduate. I don't have any doubt in my mind." Cindy was convinced that the one-to-one attention provided by a faculty mentoring program would help students stay in school. She also believed that this individual attention would improve retention rates.

Mary agreed that a faculty mentor would be "a positive influence." Mary added that personal attention would be helpful: "but mostly it's one-on-one attention. I thrive on that the most. That's when I learn the most, when it's one-on-one." Mary similarly confirmed that the one-to-one attention in a mentoring program would assist students: "I think more kids would graduate." The attention would improve retention and graduation rates, she believed.

Nona also advised:

I think you should use your resources. There's no excuse. You have it there, use it. You gotta do everything you can. If you don't and you fail and you didn't use it, so why complain about it. It was there. You didn't ask. How do you know they're not gonna say 'yes'.
Nona agreed that the one-to-one attention was the key: “They need to be confined and talked to with you and only you in the room. I think if they are going to do something, they need to do it.” She added ” You don’t have to feel like you’re all alone.” Nona stated that being in TRIO helped her stay in school. She replied: “I think that when I joined TRIO, my GPA was 1.87 something. It was really bad. I was about to get kicked out of school it was so bad. But the smaller environment let me focus more.”

All three students confirmed that the one-to-one attention aided in their ability to stay in school and graduate. This one-to-one relationship would be enhanced through a faculty mentoring program at MCC.

Additional Influences

In addition to the themes concerning faculty mentors, the student participants described additional influences keeping them in school. Cindy reported that it was more than the institution:

I think that first thing is God. I guess it’s just that, it’s funny, it’s just this intuition, that my life is going to be much better once I get an education. Some of the instructors, they have given me a lot of support. A lot of my friends, a lot of people I deal with at church, people from discovery. A lot of my recovery friends, my parents are pretty good supporters.

She further explained that:

I think these people just encourage me, to know that after all this time I still want to do something. I guess just encouragement. I don’t think there’s anyone that I talk to that ever discourages me from going for those goals.

Cindy described a spirituality that guided and motivated her: “I would say that me and God. God first and then me. God’s pretty much guiding, he’s the one that makes the
plan for me I’m just doing the work.” When asked to explain further what God’s part in her future was, Cindy replied:

It’s all planned out for me through God. God’s got a plan for me. I might not specifically know what it is right now. I really do not know, but I know that God’s got a plan for me to go somewhere and it’s going to be something positive and it’s going to be exciting. He’s going to put me into a situation that I’m just absolutely gonna love. I just know that.

Similarly Mary discussed the personal and family factors that kept her in school:

“The power from within.” She noted that this power from within is “How you feel about yourself. The motivation that I have, or positive self-talk keep on reinforcing. My kids, I have to keep on going.”

Nona also discussed family influences that contributed to her stamina to stay in school:

The fact that I don’t want to live with my mom for the rest of my life. We’re too alike. I want to make sure she’s set in her own house. You know, she has what she needs so she’s set so I can get set. Because you only get one mom, regardless of what she thinks of you; you only get one mom. So the stamina of making sure she’s ok and that I have something to do with my life, that keeps me going.

Nona further stated:

I didn’t mean that I didn’t want to live with her for the rest of my life. It’s the fact that I didn’t want to have to be on her...how do I want to say this? I didn’t want to have her think that I would be under her feet all the time. That she knows that I can be independent because she’s always had to take care of me all my life. Always. I want her to be able to have her independency and her freedom too. So by me doing this she has her space and I have mine. Because lets fact it, you can’t live underneath your parent’s feet the rest of your life. I don’t want to make it sound bad and hurt her feelings, but that’s just how I feel. She needs her independency and so do I.

All three participants confirmed that there had been additional influences keeping them in school. Cindy reported that in addition to all the support she had received from
friends and family, her faith in God had been a huge factor in her staying in school. Mary reported that her motivation from within to succeed for her and her kids, coupled with the resources from MCC had helped keep her in school. Nona stated that her desire to take responsibility for her life and her choices, along with becoming independent, helped keep her in school.

Summary

The data analysis revealed five themes for the students. They confirmed that a faculty mentoring program could assist in addressing academic challenges faced by students. Faculty mentors may serve as trusted confidants in addressing personal challenges. They felt that an effective faculty mentor must be respectful of boundaries. The students confirmed that a faculty mentoring program at MCC would increase commitment and self-determination. Finally, the students confirmed that by providing one-to-one attention, a faculty mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates.
Results: Faculty

The data analysis revealed four themes from the faculty participants. The faculty reported a mentoring program could assist in problem-solving, create a sense of belonging, and provide individual time and attention. Characteristics of the faculty mentor include trustworthiness, confidentiality, and a respectfulness of boundaries.

Theme 1: By serving as a partner in problem-solving, the faculty mentor builds student confidence in completing school.

Sharon described the faculty mentor as someone who could help students set realistic goals and solve problems:

Based on a realistic appraisal of the potential student, a student might want to come in and say 'I want straight A's, I want to graduate with a gold tassel.' You need to help realize that perhaps that they might be setting themselves up for failure because if that’s their only measure of success and they have two kids at home, and a twenty hour job.

Sharon viewed the mentoring role as helping students learn “how to solve the problems themselves and eventually working yourself out of a job without damage.” She thought the mentor should not help by “walking them through every step” but rather by serving as “a sounding board” until “the students become more and more confident in their abilities.”

Sharon advised that it is important for students to “solve their own problems.” Using a problem-solving model, “you should be able to see the student without much prompting from you, using that model.” A faculty mentor could assist students by building their confidence and not “seeing problems as insurmountable”. Sharon described a mentor as a “facilitator” who would “ask clarifying questions to help a student
determine their focus.” The mentor would assist in helping students “outline their options and once again help them use their focus or their interests to determine which of those options would be most beneficial perhaps helping determine their goals and once again how to reach their goals.” She clarified that a mentor would help students solve problems rather than solve their problems.

Help is not giving solutions to problems. Asking questions and keeping the students focused, a mentor would listen or ask open-ended questions to get to know what the student’s goals were, what their challenges were, what their strengths were and in education we’re taught to work from strengths.

The mentor would build the students confidence by focusing on their strengths as together they solved problems:

Remember what were your goals, what are the challenges you are faced and let’s go back. What are the strengths that you have in helping them understand how perhaps they can use their strengths to deal with their challenges and always keep them focused on what is your goal.

The mentor would also be “aware of the resources that would be available that the student might not know of” to assist in addressing problems.

Sharon therefore thought that it was important that a mentor build students confidence and problem-solving skills by acting as a sounding board. By asking questions focused on the strengths and goals of the student, the faculty mentor would be someone who would help students make decisions based on increased confidence and abilities.

Madeline also discussed the importance of a problem-solving dialogue between mentor and student: “when both the mentor and the mentee are willing to come and sit again at the table and discuss things, there’s an open dialogue. It shouldn’t just be the
willingness to talk.” The mentor should follow up to make sure problems were solved:

we talked about something last week and that was the week when the students had the chance to put those suggestions into practice so I would follow up on that and see if some things worked out or not. You could just talk about it and have a dialogue about it.

The assistance a mentor provides in problem-solving would be both discussion and follow up:

You shouldn’t be moving on unless you know that, as a professional, the issues that were supposed to be addressed last week were addressed the way you would want them to be addressed and were completed. You have to follow up and make sure that you can move on.

Madeline stated that once the mentoring relationship is built with the student: “the success of their work is related to how trustworthy their relationship is and how much they trust each other.” She also replied that the work of the mentor:

is not just to be a helpful source, but a confident source to the student about the options and the help that he/she may get...it’s crucial that the mentor is friendly, can relate to his problems, can understand the issues and kind of understand the background, where the student is coming from as well...not just to show you, but maybe give some practical suggestions and help with practical solutions versus just walking you through the possibilities.

Madeline stated that she had never been a mentor, but:

I think that a mentor is a person that, initially, puts some investment into the student and trusts the student to some degree to help the mentor work it out and work the relationship out. It’s a relationship and it’s a quality for this relationship that is constantly growing and hopefully constantly growing bigger to end in a successful outcome for both the student and the mentor.

Madeline was very positive that an open dialogue with student and mentor would create a trusting relationship where problems and options could be discussed. Even though she
had never been a mentor, she was convinced that if both student and mentor were willing to invest the time and energy needed for a successful mentoring relationship, it would work.

Debbie also confirmed that solving problems with students helps build their confidence:

I think that you can begin to see it when somebody begins to believe in themselves. There’s a different tone about the conversation. Instead of that self-doubt being there, more of the enthusiasm. I remember students telling me what they’ve accomplished in another class. I think you actually can see that physically sometimes. Sometimes you can hear it in the conversation. I like to call it that they have developed their voice. They can speak out now and say certain things.

The mentor helps students build confidence through successful problem-solving.

Debbie proposed that this problem-solving role of a faculty mentor could enhance retention:

I think that once they start doing some of those things, once they feel somewhat connected on campus, once they are attending regularly, once they are taking advantage of some of the resources they are going to be more successful. I think that success breeds success and it makes them feel like ‘this is where I belong and I can do this’ and that goal doesn’t seem quite so far off. It actually seems doable.

This confidence would give students the resolve to stay in school.

Debbie described a mentor as “an experienced person serving as sort of a guide, a resource person, to either a student or a less experienced person in their field, whether in school or at work.” Thus a mentor could help students solve problems both at school and in life: “So the mentoring would be beyond just how to make it through school” but also helping students make life decisions:

A guide is somebody who can, not necessarily tell somebody what the path is, but more help somebody find or discover what path they want to take. Then based on
what they want to do, try to guide them along the way. So not necessarily telling them what to do, but helping them with their options and helping them discover for themselves. I think that a mentor doesn’t necessarily have all the answers to things, but has enough knowledge about different situations that they can be a resource that can point to other people or offices or places where you can get information.

The mentor could guide students through both academic and personal problems.

Debbie saw the role of a mentor as: “serving as a role model” for problem solving. The faculty mentor would be “a model for decision-making; you’re a model for how to do certain things because you’ve done it.” Debbie confirmed that confidence for students can be built by improving their problem-solving skills. This confidence will help the students become more successful in school. A mentor would be a resource to help students obtain information about options for their life.

All faculty members described a problem-solving role for mentors. Rather than solving problems for students, mentors could assist students in solving their problems. This assistance would build students’ confidence and help them stay in school.

Theme 2: A faculty mentor can connect and communicate with students, creating a sense of belonging.

All three faculty agreed on the importance of making connections and communicating with students. Faculty felt that these connections with the college would create a sense of belonging for the students.

Debbie confirmed the importance of helping students make connections:

if a student can make connections they’re going to be more likely to be successful. A variety of different kinds of connections. Connections with their peers, other students. Connections with teachers. Connections with the subject matter itself. I think within the context of a mentoring relationship that’s maybe one of your jobs as a mentor. Connections to the college as a whole and to the
various resources that are available that they may either not be aware of. Or because maybe they’re first generation students and they just don’t know how college works. Make sure that they avail themselves of all the different kinds of resources. Even go with them. I think it’s important for the mentee to feel like somebody believes in them. It’s that constant in a person’s life. So I think the mentor can kind of be that, a constant source of the guidance and faith in them and that sort of thing.

Debbie identified “connecting” as essential to the mentor-mentee relationship:

I think it’s the responsibility of a mentor to get to know the mentee in terms of somewhat personally and educationally/professionally, their goals. To learn about them, to listen… I think it’s their responsibility to help them make connections with other people, various resources and so forth both in the college and in the community. It’s not just about learning the facts from the classes. It’s looking at things differently, having new experiences… beginning to think differently about things as they have new experiences and conversations with you. They may have a little bit broader perspective on things. You can see the beginnings of more critical thinking.

Debbie stressed the importance of mentors helping students make personal and professional connections.

Debbie explained why TRIO students need such connections:

I think of first generation students that I have known I think one of the main challenges is simply the unfamiliarity with how college works. This could be something as simple as what classes should they take, how many classes should they take, what classes should they take together or not? If you take these things are you going to be overwhelmed with reading and those kinds of things. A challenge may be the study skills. Not that they’re not bright and capable but it’s one thing to be a capable person. It’s another thing to have the specifics skills you need to do well in classes. So whether it be even just managing their time and finding the time to study, how do you read a textbook effectively, how do you take notes. Even the expectation that you should be taking notes. Students who are overwhelmed by just the size of this campus.

Mentors could help students in this unfamiliar environment create a sense of belonging:

I think that, unfortunately, college is a lot of hoops and processes involved. Even with just getting registered for classes at first. The kinds of testing they may have
to do, finding financial aid. All those sorts of things. If you don’t know about that, if you haven’t really had experience with that, that in of itself can be almost overwhelming. *You almost quit before you even get started.* Or maybe you do get registered, but maybe there’s problems with financial aid and so forth. Or they don’t necessarily perhaps even understand how they can use some of the various resources on campus. So if you don’t know about Academic Support and all that they can do for you there. Or if you’re even uncomfortable going to talk to your professor. Because again, you’re not necessarily comfortable with the college environment. That could keep you from being successful.

By connecting with students, the mentor could help students feel more comfortable in school.

Debbie proposed that a faculty mentor program could help connect students to the campus and build a sense of belonging:

I think mentors, within the TRIO programs, could provide an orientation to college. It’s fine, too, to have a one-day orientation and so forth. Yeah, we can bring you to campus and you can see all these people and we’ll walk you around and give you information. But you also need somebody that you can go back to, because you forgot what they said and it was overwhelming to see everything and meet everybody and all that. I think that definitely could help.

A mentor could provide on-going support for students. With a sense of belonging, students would stay in school:

I think that to keep a student in school the most important thing is that they have to feel that they actually belong in school. That they somehow are connected to this place. That they feel comfortable talking to some people. That they know where things are. That they know that if they’re having difficulty there’s ways to fix that. Everybody needs somebody to talk to and to figure things out. I think maybe that’s one of the biggest things. They have to have resources…the mentor could provide at least the beginning of connections, feeling connected to the college. Not only are they connected to the mentor, but the mentor serving as a resource could foster other kinds of connections within the college.

Debbie reported that the mentor-student connection was essential to retention:

To me, a big part of the mentor relationship too is the stability. That there is this one person there that, even if you’re not taking classes with them anymore, they’re still there for you. You can still check in with them. It’s like the one
constant. Maybe if every other thing is changing, there’s the constant that you can go back to.

Debbie felt that making connections with other people and the college itself was important for students. She felt students need to be familiar with how the college works and what resources are available. Debbie proposed that a faculty mentor would help make those connections and create a sense of belonging for students.

Sharon also talked about mentors making connections for students: “you don’t leave them in the lurch, you connect them to someone with that expertise to handle it.”

She discussed why such connections are important for first-generation students:

for the first time they are away where nobody is telling them they have to study...It could be that they don’t have the support, whether they don’t have the support from family members or significant people in their lives, either they don’t have that support to begin with, or the support dwindles. If it’s a first-generation, many, many people that have never been in the educational system don’t understand how much time and emotional energy it takes to do educational things well. For many of them a lot of high school education experiences are still negative, they don’t feel smart; sometimes they don’t feel comfortable in the group, the class, and the people they come in with. Many of them are introverted, they don’t all have, they have always had trouble making connections with people and here they feel isolated sitting in a group of thirty students, they perceive that everybody else knows more than they do.

She believed that students feel uncomfortable asking or answering questions in class.

Sharon stated that these TRIO students also have additional pressures as they try to balance home and school:

they might have a father or a husband saying ‘you’re paying for this, how’s this going to help you get a job’?...how are they going to fit their life outside of school with what school requires of them? Even with support. Family and friends might say, ‘Oh, I think it’s great. I support you in this.’ But when the crunch comes and dinner is not on the table because you’re finishing a paper, all of a sudden all of that starts pulling at you and they either lay a guilt trip on you or you lay a guilt trip on yourself because you’re pulled in those ways. Previous negative high school experiences. Self-fulfilling prophecy. If you’ve been told often enough and
your experiences are often enough in failure, you begin to believe that of yourself. So you come into it going ‘I can’t do this.’ ...if your experiences have been such that you haven’t been successful, that’s what you believe about yourself.

Sharon suggested that a faculty mentoring program at MCC might mitigate some of these negative experiences by building connections for students:

the students would have somebody they could talk these issues through with, figure out options. There would be someone on their side helping them figure out how to use their own strengths to figure how to manage some of these issues.

Sharon thought the faculty mentor would be a “cheerleader” since “a lot of students need somebody that really thinks they’re special. Also, perhaps they can see that there are people that do care and would miss them if they were gone.”

As the mentor helps build connections, they create a sense of belonging for students, which helps keep them in school:

making a connection to people, whether it be students, mentor, an instructor results in keeping them in school. I know financial considerations are huge. Perhaps helping them find ways to finance their education, scholarships, grants, work study. Once again a role a mentor could take making sure they’re aware of all the support that’s available to them academically. Academic support, planning a study guide, tutoring.

Sharon thought mentors could help connect school with students’ goals and “help them keep their eyes on the prize.” Mentors would help students celebrate “small victories” while not “depending on outside people to always validate what they do.” Sharon thought that a faculty mentor would help students “make connections, network out” and provide feedback to the students: “The feedback would be small successes and meeting a challenge before it becomes overwhelming.” These connections might help keep students in school.
Madeline also described the challenges TRIO students face and how faculty mentors may help:

The faculty mentor has to make sure that he or she is available for conversation and is flexible in understanding that not everybody comes from the same background and not everybody has the same issues...the students are first-generation, so they're not exposed to post-secondary experiences as much as other students. There’s none in the family. They need extra guidance, extra communication about it. They need extra help finding sources.

Mentors can create a sense of belonging:

They need to make sure that they adjust and transit to this college experience in a fashion that they feel comfortable in a classroom. Overall, get to know the student and then make sure that everything is done for him to feel most comfortable in the environment of a college setting.

Mentors could help students feel comfortable in the college environment and create a sense of belonging.

Madeline believed that the connection between the student and mentor enhanced retention:

your relationship with your mentors, your relationship with your college, it’s teachers, obviously if the teachers find enough time to make him or herself available, if the mentor’s work is working, that keeps them in school and gives them an opportunity to be successful, a success story.

Madeline confirmed that mentors would create a sense of belonging for students and help them transit into the college environment. She believed that the connection between the student and the mentor would keep the student in school.

All respondents agreed that a sense of belonging was directly related to students staying in school. All believed that faculty mentors could help build that sense of belonging by connections and communication with students. For first-generation students, such connections were vital.
Theme 3: By giving individual attention and time, a faculty mentor could positively impact student retention and graduation at MCC.

Faculty agreed that the individual attention and time provided by a faculty mentor could have a positive impact on the student-mentor relationship. Faculty also felt a positive relationship would have a positive effect on retention and graduation for students at MCC.

Madeline suggested that a faculty mentoring program would positively impact student retention and graduation if the mentors would be “available whenever the student needs them” and “commit to the student.” Mentors would need to “devote as many hours as needed… to make things work. That’s the only way to make them work.” Madeline was convinced that:

a positive relationship with a mentor certainly will help retain the student…If the student is exposed to a mentor right away, they build a trustworthy relationship. The mentor’s job is to encourage and foster the processes of retention and graduation.

Madeline was confident that the time provided by a positive mentoring relationship would definitely help students stay in school and graduate.

Sharon also believed that “time is the biggest commitment to a mentee,” in order to “really delve in depth enough to really understand how to help them.” The mentor must also “follow through on any promises” and “keep their word” to students:

It’s part of being trustworthy that you will follow it through. If some circumstance happens that you can’t, you find a way for the student’s needs to be filled by some other way… It’s a marriage. It’s like a wedding.
Sharon also believed a faculty mentoring program at MCC would assist with retention for TRIO students:

as they meet these challenges, use their strengths, they develop confidence and so there is more of a chance that they will stay because they feel more confident. They’ve got support behind them. They will probably feel more confident that they’re able to meet the challenges. As the mentoring goes along, the student should develop more self-confidence...it would be a definite plus and help the graduation rate.

Sharon also confirmed that the time commitment to a mentoring relationship was crucial for it to be successful. She confirmed that a faculty mentor would assist with retention and graduation for students.

Debbie also discussed the importance of the mentor’s time and commitment to student mentees. Mentors “certainly committed to being available” would influence retention and graduation rates:

They need to feel like they belong here, that they can be successful here. They need the resources to help them be successful here. I think that a mentor can point out all of those kinds of things, can help them along, certainly make them feel like they belong.

Debbie confirmed the importance of time and commitment to the mentoring relationship and helping the students feel like they belong. She felt this mentoring relationship would have a positive impact on retention and graduation rates.

The three faculty agreed that if mentors devoted adequate time and attention to students, retention and graduation rates would be positively impacted. Commitment to helping students along with availability were viewed as important factors in a faculty mentoring program.
Theme 4: A faculty mentor must be trustworthy, maintain confidentiality, and respect boundaries.

All three women discussed the importance of trustworthiness in the mentor-student relationship. They felt it was important for the faculty mentor to maintain confidentiality as well as the need for mentors to respect students’ boundaries.

Madeline discussed the importance of trust for both the student and the mentor. While the student must develop “some initial trust or some confidences in the mentor” the mentor also “has certain investment into the student and part of his investment is that he trusts the student to follow some of his advice and follow some of his suggestions.” Madeline believed that if this trust exists, the transition into college for the student is smoother and will lead to the success of the student.

She explained that “it takes both the mentor and the student to develop trust” and that both the student and the mentor would have an investment in this relationship. To establish trust, the mentor must be familiar with the student’s background and relate to “where the student is coming from.” She stated:

as they work together, I think they hopefully start trusting each other more and the actions that the student takes, having talked to a mentor and been through some mentoring sessions, I think results in either more or less trust for the mentor.

Although the importance of a trusting relationship with a mentor was very important for TRIO students: “first-generation students, probably more than other student, need the guiding and need some other eyes to the whole process.”

While a mentor must be able to relate to students and understand their background, the mentor must also respect boundaries:
there is a boundary of professionalism and just like being a teacher, I do not engage in any personal relationships with my students... Just like with any other profession, we work with people and we are people. So the idea here is to stay within the limits of professional. That is, not get involved personally. Not try to develop a friendship outside. It's crucial to have the boundaries between college and not college.

Madeline suggested that while the relationship “would be built on trust between the student and the instructor,” the mentor must also maintain professional boundaries. She believed that mentors must get to know the students personally in order to support them. However, the relationships must be professional.

Sharon agreed that trust was a key to a successful student-mentor relationship:

“The mentee has to trust the mentor first of all to be willing to focus the student’s agenda. Also confidentiality could be important. Trust and their knowledge of the process and the System.” Trust is built when the mentor is “willing to set aside the time to develop a relationship” and listen to the student.

Sharon confirmed the importance of both trust and professionalism in the mentor-student relationship:

Trust is I think a foundational piece. I believe in a mentoring relationship trust is almost at that rock bottom. What I meant by trust was somehow, and I’m not sure how this is done, somehow both the mentor and the mentee have to have confidence that what they are saying is going to be held in confidentiality. There is not going to be judgment of what is said. I think the mentee has to be assured that the mentor is going to maintain a professional space... Trust is that confidence in the other person’s ability to treat this in a professional way.

Sharon echoed Madeline’s conviction that for first-generation TRIO students this trusting relationship was essential:

Especially with a student that has experienced difficulties in the past, being successful in life...if someone is having difficulties dealing with the academic life, and often life in general, they need to be accountable to somebody. They
need to have a sounding board. They need to have somebody they trust. There needs to be some kind of relationship where they sense that somebody really cares what happens to them. Mentoring, that one-on-one over time, is going to be the only way to do it.

Sharon also echoed Madeline’s advice that mentors must be respectful of boundaries:

You are not their friend... Because it is a professional relationship, there has to be some kind of boundary set up. It’s almost like a psychiatrist with a patient. If there’s not some kind of boundary to protect both the mentor and the mentee I think it would be easy to get into either a power relationship when you’re solving all their problems. There also has to be some kind of emotional space because sometimes people become emotionally dependent on someone who is in a helper role. That’s dangerous because there’s no guarantee that you’re going to be around forever. In a mentor/mentee relationship the professional side has to end somewhere. That doesn’t mean that you can’t continue on and after you’re out of the professional relationship still remain contact and things change then. But while you’re in that mentor/mentee, it’s too dangerous not to have boundaries. It’s for your protection and the mentee’s protection.

Sharon offered that while a mentor should be “a caring person, a nurturer,” there must also be “boundaries in place.” Mentors must know students personally but interact “professionally.”

Sharon confirmed that trust and confidentiality were key to a successful mentoring relationship. She also echoed that boundaries must be respected and that the relationship must remain professional at all times.

Debbie similarly expressed the importance of trust and confidentiality in the mentor-student relationship: “I think trust is very important. I think that if you don’t have that you don’t really have a relationship. I think mentoring is a relationship between people. Some sort of bond between people...a give and take.” This means the relationship is both personal and professional.
Confidentiality was part of the trust-building process:

I don’t think that a mentoring relationship is going to work or is going to be worth much if there’s not trust there. I tend to think of trust as the basis for any human relationship that we have. For it to be worthwhile for the mentee or the mentor there has to be trust there. There has to be... confidentiality.

Debbie shared that the mentor must be viewed as trustworthy.

Debbie confirmed that establishing boundaries was important in the mentor-student relationship, particularly for TRIO students:

There is a power differential between the mentor and the mentee. Especially in this setting at college. They’re the student, you’re the professor. The professionalism has to be maintained. So it’s a personal relationship and you are sharing some things with each other. But on the other hand, there is that line that you can’t cross. It’s hard to define that line even. You can feel it I think. I rely on that. There’s this sense that you share, but you can’t share quite all of who you are because then it gets uncomfortable. You can kind of feel if that’s happening.

Debbie recognized the challenge of maintaining professionalism:

So many of the students that I think are really in need of mentoring and guidance have so many personal issues that they’re dealing with. It’s hard to separate. You can’t really say ‘I’m only going to mentor you on educational and professional things and we’re not going to deal at all with the personal things in your life’ because they are so intertwined. You can’t ignore those things.

She clearly perceived that although the boundary of professionalism needs to be in place, the personal issues of students can sometimes interact with their academic concerns.

Yet Debbie also recognized the importance of establishing boundaries:

in a mentoring role, you do have to keep in mind that this is a professional relationship and not really a personal relationship. That doesn’t mean that you don’t talk about personal issues and so forth. But you do it in a way that is respectful and professional and not crossing the line to turn it into a friendship relationship... The mentor should also share things about themselves, but there’s a line that you know that you shouldn’t necessarily tell them everything. You’re not there to unload on them.
Debbie observed that a mentor should: “truly have a desire to have some sort of connection and effect on people in some way” and should maintain confidentiality to build trust: “I can’t hardly separate the issues of trust and confidentiality...confidence in the relationship, confidence in each other.” She offered that trust, confidentiality, and respect for boundaries were characteristics of effective mentors.

All respondents agreed that trust was an important element to a successful student-mentor relationship, especially for first-generation TRIO students. Confidentiality was considered a part of the trust-building process. All believed that boundaries must be respected.

Summary

While this study was done with participants from different backgrounds and various levels of educational experiences and knowledge, the results suggested that both faculty and TRIO students perceived a faculty mentoring program would facilitate retention and graduation rates at Midwestern Community College for TRIO students. Data were categorized into five major themes for students and four major themes for faculty. These themes established common findings based on responses from participants in response to interview questions.

The five themes that developed from data collected from TRIO students were: a faculty mentoring program could assist in addressing academic challenges faced by students; faculty mentors may serve as trusted confidants in addressing personal challenges; an effective faculty mentor must be respectful of boundaries; a faculty mentoring program at MCC would accentuate the commitment and self-determination of
students; and a faculty mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates by providing one-to-one attention.

The four themes that developed from faculty were: by serving as a partner in problem-solving the faculty mentor builds student confidence in completing school; a faculty mentor can connect and communicate with students creating a sense of belonging; by giving individual attention and time, a faculty mentor could positively impact student retention and graduation at MCC; and a faculty mentor must be trustworthy and respect boundaries.

The consensus among the students was that a faculty mentoring program could help address the academic challenges students faced as well as serve as a trusted confidant with personal challenges. However, the students felt a faculty mentor must be respectful of boundaries. The students felt that a faculty mentoring program at MCC would increase the commitment and motivation needed to enhance retention and graduation rates due to the one-to-one attention given to students by a mentor.

Faculty agreed that by helping students succeed in problem-solving, confidence in completing school would be increased. A sense of belonging by the student would be maintained through connecting and communicating with the faculty mentor. Boundaries and trust would be important in keeping the faculty-mentee relationship in tact. The individual attention and time provided by a faculty mentor could definitely have a positive impact on student retention and graduation at MCC.
All participants felt free to express emotions and feelings without fear of judgment or criticism. The researcher felt that the responses were given in an honest, heartfelt manner, with an expression of openness and genuineness.

Chapter V includes conclusions from the study and recommendations for further study in the research area.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many individuals today have limited access to postsecondary education (Gibson, 2003). This limited access population includes low-income, first-generation, and disabled individuals. Whether this limited access is due to family history or income levels, individuals have been dissuaded from envisioning postsecondary educational opportunities. In an attempt to ensure that all individuals have an equal educational opportunity, the federal government has promoted initiatives in the form of programs to increase access for this population. One such type of program was TRIO, established in 1965 under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (COE, 2004). TRIO program initiatives are intended to increase access and retention to postsecondary programs for historically underrepresented populations.

Although federal initiatives have been introduced to ensure equal educational opportunities for first-generation, low income, and disabled individuals through TRIO programs, the retention and graduation rates for this population still remains a problem. TRIO programs provide access to college for this population, but keeping historically underrepresented individuals in school once they have enrolled still remains a concern for educators across the country. Faculty mentoring has been suggested as one possible solution to the retention and graduation problem.

The focus of this study was guided by the research question: Based on the perception of three faculty and three first-generation TRIO students at a Midwestern community college, would faculty mentoring facilitate retention and graduation rates for
first-generation TRIO students? Using questions modeled after Cohen’s (1995) Mentoring theory, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory, and Tinto’s (1987) Retention Theory, the researcher interviewed three faculty members and three TRIO students. Responses were compiled into themes and categories establishing expectations and qualities required for a successful mentoring relationship, levels of commitment, and if retention and graduation rates for TRIO students would be strengthened and secured through a faculty mentoring program based on perceptions of the participants involved in the study.

Through the analysis of the data collected, five themes emerged for the TRIO students and four themes emerged for faculty. The students and faculty reported that a mentor should be someone who helps by asking questions, provides direction and focus, acts in a professional manner, is a source of information and confidence, and is willing to invest time in a mentoring relationship. Trust was considered an important part of the mentoring relationship. All participants felt that the mentoring relationship should be on an educational level rather than include any personal issues, unless those personal issues were intertwined with educational concerns and caused a direct impact on their academic success.

The findings suggest that faculty and TRIO students alike perceived a faculty mentoring program in the TRIO program would facilitate retention and graduation for first-generation students. Faculty mentoring was perceived to be a guiding force that would enable the students to remain in school and reach their full potential.
Student Themes

The five themes emerging from students’ data were: (a) a faculty mentoring program could assist in addressing academic challenges faced by students; (b) faculty mentors may serve as trusted confidants in addressing personal challenges; (c) an effective faculty mentor must be respectful of boundaries; (d) a faculty mentoring program at MCC would accentuate the commitment and self-determination of students; and (e) a faculty mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates by providing one-to-one attention.

Academic Challenges

The first theme established for students in this study was a faculty mentoring program could assist in addressing academic challenges faced by students. As Nona expressed, talking to a mentor addresses “the problem before it gets worse.” This factor has been previously confirmed in the literature: “Those who are socially, financially, or academically underprepared or under supported, particularly are in need of mentoring in college” (Vivian, 2005, p1). Vivian felt that mentoring is a positive contributor for college students, especially for those students at-risk for failure and dropping out of the system. He felt, however, that these at-risk students are less likely to seek out mentoring relationships than other high performing students. For this reason, Vivian felt colleges and universities should actively encourage faculty to seek out and participate in mentoring relationships with these under-supported students (Vivian, 2005). Vivian confirmed that a faculty mentoring program could assist in helping students address the academic challenges encountered in school.
Spanier (2001) also talked about teaching in the 21st century as an area where students of today learn most effectively when they can make knowledge applicable to their existing lives and body of understanding. He spoke of historically underrepresented groups of students, such as first-generation students, and the retention concerns for this segment of the student body. Spanier felt that these students are especially in need of a strong network of support and encouragement. He confirmed that faculty play an important role in addressing the academic needs of students. Faculty mentoring would certainly be beneficial in the struggle for retention in our colleges and universities (Spanier, 2001).

Grimmett, Bliss, Davis, and Ray (1998) conducted a study to assess the client satisfaction of 68 graduates of the Ron McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program at a major state university. The focus of the study was to determine what particular components best prepared these students for graduate school. The results of the study confirmed that there was a strong need by students for social and professional mentoring. While family and friends could provide a base for support, these students faced academic challenges that exceeded the realm of either family or friends. The study confirmed that “the presence of empathetic and knowledgeable adults on the college or university campus with whom these students can interact and confide exerts a positive influence upon their persistence rates. Thus, the need for mentoring is clear” (p. 405).

This theme suggested that a faculty mentoring program could help students face academic challenges encountered in school. The literature confirmed that the academically under-prepared or under-supported, such as first-generation students, are
particularly in need of support and encouragement. Studies confirm that a mentoring relationship for this population would assist in retention and graduation rates.

**Trusted Confidants**

The second theme for students established in this study was that faculty mentors may serve as trusted confidants in addressing personal challenges. Cindy described a mentor as "somebody you can tell in confidence and know it's going to stay with that particular person." This theme was confirmed by Trubowitz (2004) when he stated that the mentor's task is: "To allow the mentee to pour out feelings, to express worries, and to identify problems and questions that will become the basis for ongoing discussions" (p. 60). Trubowitz felt that if a mentee feels free to openly communicate, a relationship based on trust and understanding will develop. This line of communication can include telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to foster a level of commitment that enhances the mentoring relationship. The mentor should first meet with the mentee to establish any expectations or guidelines essential to the success of the relationship. Listening by the mentor to the thoughts and feelings of the mentee creates trust. Trubowitz also stated that the stages of development in mentoring relationships first start with the mentors "Making suggestions, providing resources, and offering direct guidance based on their years of experience and accumulated knowledge" (p. 61). Trubowitz confirmed that faculty mentors could serve as confidants in helping students address personal challenges related to school.

Gay (1994) defined mentoring as: "a supportive relationship between a youth or young adult and someone who offers support, guidance and concrete assistance as the
younger partner goes through a difficult period, takes on important tasks or corrects an earlier problem” (p. 4). Mentoring is described as an important part of lifelong learning in an individual’s personal survival kit. Gay confirmed that mentoring is a one-to-one relationship which allows the growth of a trusting confidential relationship (Gay, 1994). Tabbron, Macaulay, and Cook (1997) also confirmed that “mentoring is a one-to-one process of helping individuals to learn and develop and takes a longer-term perspective which focuses on the person’s career and their development” (p. 6).

Bouquillon, Sosik, and Lee (2005) suggested that trust and identification were two factors frequently mentioned when discussing the different theories involved in mentoring relationships. They proposed that the quality and effectiveness of mentoring were enhanced when mentees could trust and identify with their mentors. Bouquillon et al. believed that:

Trust involves the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party. (p. 240)

When a mentee perceives the mentor to be a concerned, open and reliable individual, the element of trust is established in the mentoring relationship. Identification is achieved when the mentee develops a concept of self-image derived from their association with a mentor. Mutually trusting mentoring relationships create strong social ties within the dyad that support mentoring functions. Bouquillon et al. suggested that mentors provided three functions; psychological support in the form of acceptance and friendship, role modeling of attitudes and values, and career development (Bouquillon et al., 2005).
Gibb (1994) confirmed that mentoring relationships are a safe place for students to discuss many different types of issues. He felt that part of the credibility of a mentoring relationship for the student is knowing that the mentor is not in a position to, or concerned with, using any information obtained through the relationship to judge or assess the student. As safe confidants, mentors could help students with these personal problems affecting their educational progress.

Aragon (2000) also confirmed the positive benefits of mentoring relationships when he discussed research done at Northeastern Illinois University with a minority student mentoring program known as Partners for Success. The program was designed to provide guidance to students in learning about the university, academic and career success, in addition to increasing the personal growth of the student through the individual interaction with a mentor. Over the course of a five year span research indicated a measurable positive correlation between students’ participation in the mentoring program and retention.

This theme confirmed that in addition to academic concerns, a faculty mentor could also help with personal issues in the students’ life that may encumber their success in school. Knowing that the mentoring relationship is one where the student is not being evaluated, but able to speak freely, creates an open and honest line of communication between the mentor and mentee.

Respectful of Boundaries

The third theme emphasized the need for mentors to establish professional boundaries. Nona reported “you just need to have your boundaries so both of you guys know what not to cross and what not to say.” Smith (2005) confirmed that mentoring was
a relationship of caring, where a more experienced professional offered to assist in the
development of a range of behaviors for a less experienced individual. He felt that
mentors can be a watchful eye over the lives, careers, and development of the mentee. He
felt that this relationship must be based on respect, regardless of the level of commitment.
Smith also confirmed the third theme for students in this study, which suggested that an
effective faculty mentor must be respectful of boundaries. He believed that one of the
characteristics of an effective mentoring relationship was that boundaries needed to be set
to prevent any invasion of confidentiality issues. Smith felt that mentors need to be
supportive and protective, always reinforcing to the mentee that the relationship is safe.
He confirmed the need for boundaries in the mentoring relationship to ensure that
confidentiality must be maintained at all times (Smith, 2005). Ostrum (1997) also
confirmed that relationships with students must have boundaries. She felt that mentors
could build this student/teacher connection, all the while maintaining a professional
relationship with students without addressing personal issues that were not connected to
their academic success.

Amundson (2002) talked about boundaries that are readily attached to situations
where two people come together to discuss and seek advice, whether in a counseling or
mentoring situation. He stated that most people think the focus for these sessions must be
divided into either career or personal problems, not realizing that many times one is
influenced by the other. He discussed the matter of thinking outside the normal array of
boundaries in terms of problem definition, space, time, social context, and strategies.
Amundson felt it was “important to recognize the broader social and economic context”
(p. 139) that individuals find themselves involved in today. When a mentor looks at the
educational challenges a mentee may be going through, personal issues may also need to be factored in to find solutions to problems (Amundson, 2002).

Katherine, as cited in Marshall (2001) defines a boundary as: “an edge or limit that defines a person as separate from others” (p. 2). Webb, also cited in Marshall (2001) defines boundaries as: “contextually based limits prescribed through individuals’ cultural, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual doctrines” (p. 2). Boundaries are equally important in career counseling or advising relationships as well as in personal therapy and counseling relationships. Marshall stated that: “Boundaries define your identity, bring order to your life, and protect you from violators. They preserve your purpose and goals in life, including work life” (p 3). He believed boundaries help keep an individual safe from intruders into the inner soul of an individual. Boundaries can be very flexible or clear cut and precise. Marshall felt that boundaries need to be clear and stated as briefly as possible to avoid misunderstanding. He believed that individuals need to be prepared to follow through with their boundaries and not be persuaded to relent by pressure from outsiders. Timing is important, making sure that the individual is ready to establish and enforce their boundaries. A support system must be established to discuss and confirm boundary requirements. Because trust is a critical element, private information shared in the relationship needs to be carefully evaluated and selected by the individual doing the sharing. In a mentoring relationship, boundaries are important and play a crucial role in the success of the relationship. When appropriate boundaries are established and implemented, with both parties accepting and acknowledging these boundaries, the
mentoring relationship can better serve the individuals involved in the relationship (Marshall, 2001).

This theme confirmed that a mentoring relationship was one in which a supportive person assists in the development of another individual. This relationship must be based on confidentiality and respect for boundaries that apply to the students' educational progress.

Self-determination

The fourth theme for students established in this study was that a faculty mentoring program at MCC would accentuate the commitment and self-determination of students. Mary noted “there’s no way I could have done it on my own...she laid the foundation for me so I could be successful.” Day (2006) felt that the benefits to mentors for students included: “emotional satisfaction, psychological well-being, growth of the mentor’s reputation, and rejuvenation and creativity” (p. 2). Day was convinced that these mentoring relationships not only provided advice and emotional support to the mentee’s but also the ability to learn coping skills to change negative experiences into learning adventures. Learning new coping strategies would teach the mentee to rethink actions, allowing them to take the driver’s seat in their lives rather than remain a passenger. The result would be a feeling of self-worth and positive self-image (Day, 2006). Day confirmed that a faculty mentoring program where students’ self-esteem was reaffirmed would increase self-determination and commitment for students.
Hoffman (2003) stated that: “Promoting students self-determination provides an excellent framework within which to teach students how to make effective choices and decisions” (p 2). Self-determination is defined as:

a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one's strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-determination. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society (p 2).

Hoffman believed self-determination involved students' acquiring the confidence to make choices and decisions concerning their future based on educated assumptions of their existing strengths and possibilities (Hoffman, 2003). Mentoring was perceived to be the catalyst that would allow students to take control of their lives and be successful.

Watts, Cashwell, and Schweiger (2004) studied the humanistic approach in regard to counseling students. They believed that if an individual is intrinsically motivated they will take charge of their lives and careers. They suggested that self-determination is one of the factors that appears to contribute to this motivation to succeed. Watts, et al. stated that: “Self-determination involves a basic, innate propensity that leads people to engage in interesting behaviors out of choice and their own needs rather than obligation or coercion” (p 17-18). In researching the role self-determination plays in this intrinsic motivation, the authors noted that when students were presented material in a way that they could personally relate to and were given options as to their learning styles, students were more likely to become self-determined and take an active part in the process (Watts, et al., 2004). Mentoring is the outlet whereby students could be guided and assisted with options to intrinsically motivate them to take control of their lives and develop the self-
determination needed to succeed in school. Mentoring would increase their commitment to themselves and their future.

This theme confirmed that mentoring relationships, in addition to helping students with academic concerns, also assist in teaching students coping strategies with everyday life. These strategies would enable students to make better choices and learn from previous experiences. This learning would allow students to increase their self-esteem and promote their own future success.

**One-to-one Attention**

Theme five for the students was that a faculty mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates by providing one-to-one attention. As Cindy stated “a one-to-one faculty mentor could provide helpful undivided attention.” James (1991), while working to establish and develop a student retention program, researched factors that might provide a service for students to aid in the retention issue. He confirmed that the major component of service for students was the one-on-one relationship provided by mentors. Mentors were compiled of faculty, full and part-time, staff and administrators selected by the project director. The following criteria was used for this selection:

“Successful record of working with students, diverse backgrounds and interests, professional training and experience, academic and personal counseling skills, knowledge of the college and its resources, and desire to serve as a mentor (demonstrated by the application process)” (p. 59). Matching of student to mentor was primarily based upon the “Major or program of interest, skills to be developed, interest in student services such as tutoring, study skills counseling, and career assessment/planning, and assistance
needed to achieve personal and career goals” (p. 59). This type of matching allowed mentors in students’ program of study or interest and assistance in successfully completing their goals.

Each semester mentors attended training workshops which concentrated on effective strategies for helping mentors initiate positive mentoring relationships. Students selected to participate in the program received support from the Tutoring Center, Writing Center, Counseling (Career Assessment) Center, and Vocational Support Services. Staff from these support areas also attended workshop training programs. Results indicated that student participation in the program increased two and a half times from spring to fall enrollment. Mentor participation in the program increased almost eight times in two years. Retention for students who participated in the program also increased (James, 1991).

James (1991) confirmed through his research that the one-on-one relationship provided by faculty mentoring enhanced retention and graduation rates. He concluded that training workshops suggesting strategies for positive mentoring relationships proved successful.

All five themes were confirmed and consistent with prior research that a faculty mentoring program could help students address academic concerns they encounter as first-time college students in their family. Faculty mentors could help with personal issues that may affect their academic success. While faculty mentors would increase the self-determination of students, mentors must also respect the students’ boundaries. The
one-to-one attention given by faculty mentors would keep students in school and graduating.

Faculty Themes

The four themes for faculty were: (a) by serving as a partner in problem-solving the faculty mentor builds student confidence in completing school; (b) a faculty mentor can connect and communicate with students creating a sense of belonging; (c) a faculty mentor must be trustworthy and respect boundaries; and (d) by giving individual attention and time, a faculty mentor could positively impact student retention and graduation at MCC.

Problem-solver

The first theme for faculty established from the study was that by serving as a partner in problem-solving, the faculty mentor builds student confidence in completing school. Sharon clarified “help is not giving solutions to problems [but rather] asking questions and keeping the student focused.” Stone (2004) confirmed that mentors asking good questions encouraged the mentee to begin the process of critical thinking that leads to informed decision making options. She talked about the importance of communication, active listening, and positive feedback as essential factors in building the mentoring relationship. Stone believed that: “A mentor needs to identify his or her mentee’s unique skills and capabilities and work with him or her to make the most of those talents” (p.2).

Day (2006) also confirmed that a faculty mentoring relationship provided the mentee with the ability of learning coping skills to make better problem-solving decisions in the future. She defined a mentor as someone who: “performs the fatherly (and/or
motherly) tasks of teaching, caring, criticizing, helping, and offering constructive suggestions in both career and personal matters” (p.1-2). Day felt mentors could help mentees rethink actions, allowing them to take the drivers seat in their lives rather than being a passenger. The result is a feeling of self-worth and positive self-image (Day, 2006).

Trubowitz (2004) stated that the mentor’s task is: “To allow the mentee to pour out feelings, to express worries, and to identify problems and questions that will become the basis for ongoing discussions” (p. 60). He stated that a good mentoring relationship should reach a point where the mentee is able to stand alone and provide solutions based on critical and evaluative choices. Trubowitz stated that the stages of development in mentoring relationships first start with the mentors: “Making suggestions, providing resources, and offering direct guidance based on their years of experience and accumulated knowledge” (p. 61).

Kerka (1998) suggested that learning is most practical in situations where new knowledge and skills are utilized by individuals when constructing meaning for themselves. She felt:

Experts facilitate learning by modeling problem-solving strategies, guiding learners in approximating the strategies while learners articulate their thought processes. Experts coach learners with appropriate scaffolds, or aids, gradually decreasing assistance as learners internalize the process and construct their own knowledge and understanding (p. 3).

Galbraith and Cohen (1995) as cited in Kerka stated that:

Mentoring provides two primary functions: career/instrumental and benefit from their mentor’s knowledge, contacts, support, and guidance. The psychosocial function is the internal value of the ongoing interpersonal dialogue, collaborate critical thinking, planning, reflection, and feedback (p. 4).
Boreen, Niday, and Johnson (2003) believed that an important aspect of mentoring is assisting students in setting goals and that mentors need to: “provide realistic encouragement and be a sounding board for decision options for students” (p. 79). They felt mentors could be someone students could talk to about various problems they were encountering and assist with strategies for improvement. Mentors could be a knowledgeable reference for resources on campus, and an advocate for the student. They felt mentors need to have a genuine interest in students and that the mentoring relationship evolves as the student grows or as he or she requires change (Lagowski & Vick, 1995). Tabbron et al, (1997) also described a mentor as someone who is a sounding board, someone who encourages an individual to question themselves and promote broader thinking. One mentee described the role of a mentor: “he helped me to find my own solution to problems and allowed me to see what I wanted out of life” (p. 7).

All these researchers confirmed that a mentoring relationship would provide the skills that students need to think critically and learn to effectively problem-solve. The resources that mentors would contribute to the relationship are valuable tools in guiding and supporting students.

Connect and Communicate

The second theme for faculty established in the study was that a faculty mentor can connect and communicate with students, creating a sense of belonging. Debbie stated “I think it’s the responsibility of a mentor to get to know the mentee...to learn about them, to listen...I think it’s their responsibility to help them make connections.” Merlevede and Bridoux (2003) worked with individuals who had previously been involved in a mentoring relationship and confirmed that a mentor must connect with the mentee. Both mentor and mentee need to get to know one another, sharing experiences.
and aspirations. Both parties must establish a rapport and feel invested in the relationship for that connection to take place. Mutual trust leads to determining the achievable goals that need to be accomplished for a successful mentoring relationship. This will create a sense of commitment (Merlevede & Bridoux, 2003).

Williamson and Fenske (1992) suggested that faculty mentoring played a significant role in graduate school in helping students develop a professional identity and in becoming accumulated as a member into their chosen professions. In a study done to increase the number of minority doctoral students, Williamson and Fenske utilized the Nettles Conceptual Model of Factors Related to Minority Students' Experiences and Outcomes in Their Doctoral Programs, as cited in Williamson and Fenske (1992). This particular model is a campus environment model used to determine the perceived fit between minority students and faculty or administrators. Attention was focused on interaction between mentors and advisors, comparing students' needs, frustrations, and rewards within the doctoral program. The rationale for the study was that through faculty mentoring, minority doctoral students could later become faculty to then mentor future minority doctoral students to increase minority faculty at colleges for future mentors and role models.

Data were gathered from 214 students in six Southwestern universities in five bordering states. Approximately 90% of the universities responded to the study. Principal Components Factor Analysis was used to distinguish 21 satisfying factors of the doctoral programs. The results indicated that 9 (42.9%) factors related to some aspect of faculty mentoring. This study confirmed that faculty mentoring is one of the key elements in connecting with students and helping to create a sense of belonging (Williamson & Fenske, 1992).
Sagor, as cited in Pelsma and Arnett (2002), suggested that in order for students to succeed in the educational setting, they must possess resilience. He defined resilience by the acronym CBUPO: “the feelings of Competence, Belonging, Usefulness, Potency, and Optimism” (p.174). Sagor believed that students need to: “(a) experience evidence of academic success (competence), (b) be shown that they are valued members of a community (belonging), (c) believe that they make a real contribution (usefulness) and (d) feel empowered as decision-makers (potency) (p. 174). Sagor felt that resilience provided the individual with the strength to confront everyday obstacles (Pelsma & Arnett, 2002).

Ross-Thomas and Bryant (1994) in an attempt to improve retention and graduation rates through mentoring at a southern university, implemented a two year, two-model program with campus personnel and community professionals as mentors. The intent was that mentoring increases the students’ feelings of belonging to the college environment, therefore, students will become empowered and remain in school. The university enrolls a large number of under-prepared, high risk students who are less likely to complete a program. Four objectives were developed:

- to assign each freshman enrollee to a mentor; to increase the retention rate of enrolled freshmen by 15%; to decrease the probation rate of enrolled freshman by 15%; and to increase the mean cumulative average of enrolled freshmen by 5% (p. 2).

The first model, the Prevention Model, consisted of 375 administrators, faculty and staff who volunteered to be mentors for freshmen students. This model was designed to suggest behaviors that increased the chances for successful academic achievement. The second model, the Clinical Model, consisted of 20 community professionals, many of whom were successful graduates of the university. These mentors worked with
readmitted students to the university who were on probation after having successfully appealed their suspension. The Clinical Model focused on the benefits of obtaining a college education and were motivational by design.

The results of the two-year program indicated that for objective one; 100% of students in both models were assigned mentors. Objective two required a 15% increase in retention rates for freshmen; a 27% increase occurred for both the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school year. Objective three called for a 15% decrease in freshmen probation rates; Fall of 1990 experienced a 16% decrease in probation for freshmen and 10% decrease in Spring 1991. Fall of 1991 showed a 15% decrease and Spring of 1992 experienced a 23% decrease in freshmen probation rates. These figures indicated a 16% overall decrease for students enrolled in the two mentoring models. Objective four called for a 5% increase in the mean cumulative average for freshmen students; Fall 1990 indicated an 11% increase and Spring 1991 indicated a 7% increase. Fall 1991 experienced a 33% increase and Spring 1992 experienced a 16% increase in cumulative averages. These figures indicated a 15.5% overall increase for students enrolled in the two mentoring models.

Ross-Thomas and Bryant believed that underprepared students, especially black students, “in transition from high school to college need to feel connected and unthreatened to maximally engage themselves in learning” (p. 4). The two model mentoring program they implemented at the university confirmed the fact that if students feel connected and part of the college environment, they will succeed in school. This sense of belonging was strengthened by the use of mentors from the college and the community (Ross-Thomas & Bryant, 1994).

This theme was confirmed that when students feel connected with a college or university, a sense of belonging is created. This sense of belonging helps students
succeed in college. This theme also confirmed that faculty mentoring is the path that leads to the feeling of belonging.

Individual Attention and Time

Theme three for faculty established in the study was that by giving individual attention and time, a faculty mentor could positively impact student retention and graduation at MCC. In describing the importance of individual attention and time, Sharon stated “it’s a marriage. It’s like a wedding.” Smith (2005) confirmed that: “mentors could be a watchful eye over the lives, careers, and development of the mentee, being accessible and available for advice and affirmation” (p. 38). He felt mentoring was a nurturing process where information was shared and guidance in a caring venue was transferred. Smith felt the most important element in the mentoring relationship was listening. He was also aware that the time commitment required for a successful mentoring relationship was something mentor and mentee should be willing to commit to (Smith, 2005).

Daloz (1999) as cited in Vivian (2005) stated that these concerns can be overcome by a faculty member who sees the task of a mentor as a “guide who hasthe specific tasks of: engendering trust; seeing the student’s movement; giving the student a voice; introducing conflict; emphasizing positive movement; and keeping an eye on the relationship” (p. 3-4). These tasks take place in stages, while supporting, challenging, and providing vision to the student. Daloz stressed that one of the initial factors for a positive mentoring relationship is the mentee’s belief in their capabilities in college and their commitment to being an active participant in their education rather than an observer (Vivian, 2005). Vivian was convinced that a faculty mentoring program would positively impact the retention and graduation rates of the at-risk college student.
Szelenyi (2001) believed that a crucial factor in the retention of college students was the transition and integration into the environment of college life. Mentoring programs were thought to be one of the ways of achieving this integration. Szelenyi believed that: “mentors, by providing career-related and psychosocial assistance to their proteges, provide the individualized attention students need in dealing with the everyday problems they encounter in the college environment” (p. 4). Szelenyi believed that a strong factor in keeping students in school was building on the diverse needs of students and integration into the educational environment (Szelenyi, 2001). He confirmed the positive impact faculty mentoring could have on retention and graduation rates.

Searcy and Lee-Lawson (1995) discussed the fact that: “mentoring is a process that develops over time and is ongoing” (p. 307). Mentoring could require a large commitment of time on the part of the mentor, either on a constant level or on an as-needed basis. But Searcy and Lee-Lawson both agreed that the mentee must feel that the mentor will always make time for him or her, regardless of any time restraints placed on the mentoring relationship. They confirmed that the time required for a positive mentoring relationship does impact the success of the relationship (Searcy & Lee-Lawson, 1995).

Hurte (2002) discussed the scenario that often mentoring is considered only in the area of career advisement to enhance career possibilities near the end of the students’ schooling. He felt mentors provide the support, positive role modeling, and instruction students need throughout their entire academic career. Hurte felt that “By providing academic, career-related psychosocial assistance to their protégé’, mentors also provide the personalized attention minority students need dealing with the everyday problems they may encounter in the college and university environment” (p. 1). He confirmed that
mentoring programs positively influenced student retention. Hurte felt that matching of mentor and mentee were crucial to the success of the mentoring relationship as was training sessions for both parties. He stressed mentoring as a practical tool in combating the issues with retention and graduation rates in colleges (Hurte, 2002).

This theme confirmed that the individual time and attention given to students by a faculty mentor would assist in keeping students in school and graduating. Faculty mentoring would be helpful throughout the students’ academic career by being a resource in acclimating them into the college environment and instilling in students the drive to succeed.

**Trustworthy, Maintain Confidence, and Respect Boundaries**

The fourth theme for faculty established in the study was that a faculty mentor must be trustworthy and respect boundaries. According to Debbie “I don’t think a mentoring relationship is going to work or be worth much if there’s not trust there.” Smith (2005) confirmed that boundaries must be set and confidentiality maintained at all times to prevent any invasion of confidentiality issues. He was convinced that mentors needed to be supportive and protective, always reinforcing to the mentee that the relationship is kept safe.

Nelson, Summers, and Turnbull (2004) suggested that there are many dimensions to human relationships, one of which is boundaries. They define the term boundary as: “a metaphor for rules and limits, which can lead to a sense of safety” (p. 153). Nelson et al. believed that this sense of safety exists when there is a balance of closeness or distance in the relationship and the dual roles that tend to exist. The dual role may be that of the more professional role where parties are more formal and only one role, with rigid boundaries. The other role is where family and friends interact, interchanging roles as the
need arises. While there is currently no definite set of rules defining boundaries, most research does suggest the importance of some restrictions when dealing with the everyday issues people encounter.

Nelson et al. conducted a study with 137 family members of special education children and 53 professional participants who were either administrators or direct services providers in the fields of education, human and social services, health care, or a combination of fields. The purpose of the study was to establish what a successful relationship compared to an unsuccessful relationship would look like in the area of boundaries. The first round of questions were collected from family members only, asking them to describe a successful relationship and then an unsuccessful relationship they had encountered. Transcribed copies of data were then sent to family members to verify meaning and understanding of responses. At this point codes were established based on categorical responses. The second round consisted of reporting data from round one to the professional participants for review. From this review, major themes that consistently appeared were established to develop tentative definitions.

The three key themes that were identified were availability and accessibility; breadth of responsibility; and dual relationships. Availability and accessibility related to boundaries because professionals need to be open to times, places, and situations that enable interaction to occur rather than limited restrictions. Breadth of responsibility applied to the fact that if clear boundaries are not stated, their role or narrowly interpret their job requirements. Dual relationships applied to situations when common courtesies and a friendly exchange, in an attempt to develop a rapport, could crossover from a therapeutic relationship to one that oversteps professional prescribed boundaries (Nelson, et al., 2004). As the study confirmed, mentoring relationships like any other relationship
require clearly stated boundaries for success. Mentees need to know that what they share is safe with the mentor and will not be held against them or repeated. They also need to know that information provided will be used only to ensure a positive experience.

Hoover and Frieman (2002) stated that:

The use of a formal agreement can facilitate a healthy mentoring process by clarifying expectations at the onset of the process for both the mentor and the mentee. Without an agreement, mentors and mentees often have conflicting expectations of each other (p. 1).

They suggested that although boundaries can be challenging, having them facilitates a healthy mentoring relationship. Hoover and Frieman proposed mentors should recognize the freedom of the students to deal with their own personal issues and have students’ needs come first. They proposed that mentees should only ask for assistance with matters pertaining to their profession, they should take full responsibility for their choices, and they should set career goals based on their own values. Both mentor and mentee must deal with boundary issues in a positive fashion in order for the mentoring relationship to be successful (Hoover & Frieman, 2002).

Literature confirmed that mentees need to trust that information shared with their mentors is safe and that personal issues will not interfere with the mentoring process. One sure way to ensure this positive mentoring relationship is through clear cut, stated boundaries.

All four themes for faculty were confirmed and consistent with prior research that a faculty mentor can assist students in developing strategies for problem-solving techniques that can help with retention. Through faculty mentoring, students can feel connected with the school and create a feeling of belonging. Boundaries must be established and the individual attention and time given by the faculty mentor can impact
retention and graduation at MCC.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations for further research are proposed. First, methods of assessing the effectiveness of faculty mentoring programs must be identified. Gibb (1994) stated that:

Mentoring outcomes for learners can be expected to manifest themselves as changes in skills, knowledge and attitudes. Such changes are conventionally related to concerns with ‘learning’, ‘psychosocial’ and ‘career’ benefits. That is mentoring can have outcomes related to learning, the development of the person, and the development of their career. (p. 34)

Because mentoring operates at a very individual level, each individual involved in the mentoring process has different results from the experience (Gibb, 1994). Is there a methodology to assess the value and effect of that experience? Many studies involve a self-report method of evaluation. This involves either a survey or interview technique where the participant is asked a series of questions in an attempt to rate a mentoring relationship. Various forms of a Likert scale can also be utilized whereby the participant, on a scale of zero to one or ten, or highly agree to highly disagree, must rate the relationship based on their own personal experiences. Is it possible to devise a more uniform method of measurement that can be used and accepted when assessing the possible benefits of a mentoring program? Do reliable and valid instruments or scales exist for this function? What would that method look like considering the factors and individual concerns involved in mentoring relationships?

Could that student have attained the same end result without the mentoring relationship? Could the student have attained even greater success if a different mentor
had been in the relationship? Was the student able to absorb the mentoring to only attain a present goal or was the student able to digest learning and meaning from the experience for future success and attainment? If the mentoring relationship did not work, why not? These are some of the questions future researchers must ask about faculty mentoring relationships or programs.

For example, Grimmett, Bliss, Davis, and Ray (1998) conducted research to measure the effectiveness of McNair program components such as mentoring in preparing McNair students for graduate school. Eleven questions were asked dealing with concerns like: “What were the participants’ expectations of mentors?” (p. 407), “how satisfied were the participants with their mentors?” (p. 407), and “did the participants believe that the McNair program played a significant role in their successful participation in graduate studies?” (p. 407) Surveys were distributed to 42 graduates from a university with a McNair program. The purpose of the study was to ask these graduates to examine the qualities of a mentor.

The surveys asked these alumni to rate their McNair mentoring relationship based on eight key categories. The eight categories were mentor as: “Researcher; as Academic Advisor; as Counselor; as Teacher; as Advocate; as Guide to Academic Culture; as Constructive Critic; and as Role Model” (p. 411). A degree of importance was factored and calibrated for each of the eight individual categories. A four-point Likert-type scale was used to evaluate ratings of efficacy ranging from 0 to 1. Findings suggested that McNair program mentors were “relatively more effective as teacher advocates, and guides to academic culture, and relatively less effective as academic advisors” (p. 414). However, the mentor was often not affiliated as a faculty member in the same department as the mentee, thus creating a possible lack of adequate concern for the student’s
progress. These results may have changed had the student and faculty mentor been associated within the same department (Grimmett et al., 1998).

Second, longitudinal studies should be undertaken to determine if faculty mentoring programs provide positive long-term effects as compared to Jacobi's (1991) question of whether or not mentoring is "a quick fix for what ails undergraduate education today" (p. 506)? There appears to be much confusion as to what is really being measured and to what extent is the level of success. Jacobi stated that adding to the confusion of mentoring is that by definition it may mean something different in higher education, in the business sector, and in the field of Psychology.

Jacobi suggested that the studies that have been done acclaiming the positive benefits of mentoring toward academic achievement lack empirical support. She further stated that "the mentor relationships are by-products rather than causes of high achievement. Further, their operational definition of mentoring emphasizes role modeling to the exclusion of direct assistance with professional development or emotional support" (p. 515). Jacobi confirmed that these studies, while implying that mentoring may positively impact retention and achievement, they do not address the function of the mentoring relationship as a whole (Jacobi, 1991).

The question is asked whether or not these students could have been just as successful in school without being involved in a mentoring relationship. A common statement heard on college campuses is that the more time and effort a student invests in their own education, the more successful they will become. If a longitudinal study was done with students currently involved in a mentoring relationship and students not involved in a mentoring relationship and they were tracked over a two-year or four-year period of time, would results convey which group proved to be more successful
academically? Would the study indicate that students with a mentor succeed because of the individual attention and time focused on their particular needs, or would it prove that if students invest time, energy, and effort into their own education and success, they could succeed on their own?

Third, comparison studies should be conducted to determine if faculty mentoring programs are more effective than other organized programs that promote academic success such as peer group support programs (students volunteering to assist other students with advice and counseling), academic support divisions (departments within colleges that provide assistance with educational issues and coursework), tutoring (offices on campus that provide direct one-to-one assistance with particular courses and testing), and departmental based faculty support teams (faculty within specific departments that provide assistance to students in their particular areas). Is any one type of support more successful than another, or could multiple types of programs serve students best? Would one program produce a more immediate success rate than another program?

Fourth, the purposeful sampling of this research resulted in six women respondents. Future research might explore the perceptions of other respondents of a different gender, ethnicity, age, or educational experience.

Finally, future research should explore the impact of problem-solving skills and guidance learned in a mentoring relationship beyond the college classroom setting. Are these positive outcomes something only to be utilized while in school to successfully complete a degree or are they critical components to take outside the classroom and use to be productive, adjusted, competent citizens in today’s world? It would be interesting to evaluate the critical thinking and evaluation skills acquired through the mentoring
relationship in relation to other factors that individuals’ come in contact with during the process of daily living.

Summary

These future explorations may provide effective guidelines for measuring successful mentoring programs. Mentoring may be considered a reliable, long-term method for increasing retention and graduation rates rather than something only looked upon as a band aid to the educational issues on college campuses. Future explorations may share comparisons of other programs on campus designed to assist students with academic success. And finally, future explorations may show that faculty mentoring programs assist students with creating problem-solving skills that help beyond the classroom and into their future lives.

Conclusions

The journey of retention and increased graduation rates is something faculty, administrators, students, and educators have struggled with for many years. Some students are fortunate enough to find a faculty mentor who is willing to engage in a mentoring relationship that fosters support for academic and personal success. Other students, however, flounder in a sea of anxiety and doubt, all the time questioning their role in college and society as a whole. They see the task of getting an education as something beyond their reach, with no one to guide or support.

The three conceptual frameworks utilized for this research, Cohen’s (1995) Mentoring Theory; Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory; and Tinto’s (1987) Retention Theory were helpful in the interpretation of the data. All frameworks contributed to an understanding of the perceptions from both the faculty and
students. Themes were established confirming the need for caring, supporting college communities as suggested by Tinto. Deci and Ryan’s theory that self-determination enhances personal goals emerged as an important function of the mentor relationship. The characteristics of a mentor described in Cohen’s theory were confirmed by both faculty and student respondents.

For first-generation TRIO students, this journey is especially difficult and troublesome. Because they are the first in their family to attempt to obtain a postsecondary education, they lack the support and knowledge that would assist them in the confidence and sense of belonging that is crucial for the success of these students. Many are afraid to seek the necessary help due to their lack of either knowing about such a resource, or the fear of rejection may keep them from searching out such a relationship. A faculty mentoring program could provide first-generation students the support and guidance necessary to complete a postsecondary program.

The six participants in this study offered a look into the perceived effects of a faculty mentoring program for first-generation TRIO students at a Midwestern community college. Their stories and candid testimonials gave witness to the roles, characteristics, and benefits of a faculty mentor. They also confirmed that a faculty mentoring program at MCC would enhance retention and graduation rates for TRIO students.

The findings of this study were consistent with the literature in suggesting a faculty mentoring program would assist in addressing academic challenges faced by students and be a trusted confidant for personal challenges. The literature also discussed the importance of boundaries and that a faculty mentoring program would accentuate the self-determination and commitment of students. Researchers confirmed that a faculty
mentoring program could enhance retention and graduation rates by providing that one-to-one individual attention and time students needed to be successful.

The findings were also consistent with the literature in suggesting that faculty mentors would serve as a problem-solver who helped build confidence in completing school and would connect and communicate with students to create a sense of belonging for the student. The literature confirmed that the individual attention and time given to the student by the faculty mentor would positively impact retention and graduation at MCC. The importance of trust and boundaries was also confirmed.

Although government programs may provide access to educational opportunities for previously underrepresented populations, many of these students continue to experience difficulty staying in school and graduating. Mentoring programs at postsecondary institutions were suggested as one possible strategy that might provide the one-on-one assistance students need to be successful in school.

The focus of this study was to determine the perception of the affect of faculty mentoring for retention of first-generation TRIO students. The literature researched for the study confirmed that, indeed, mentoring relationships could assist in helping students face the challenges encountered in school. Mentoring relationships could build the students self-determination and create better problem-solving skills needed to remain in school and graduate.
EPILOGUE

Over the last decade or more, many colleges and universities have developed and implemented mentoring relationships between students and a mentor. Jacobi (1991) stated that: “These interventions reflect the belief that mentoring can improve students’ levels of academic achievement, assist students at risk for attrition to graduate, feed the pipeline to graduate schools and the professoriate, and humanize large and impersonal institutions” (p. 526). Mixed reviews are reported concerning the success of such mentoring relationships. Some research indicates that no empirical evidence exists to substantiate the efficacy of these mentoring programs, while other research proudly exalts the positive benefits of mentoring relationships.

The study done by this researcher provides evidence that these selective participants perceived that faculty mentoring would play a crucial role in the academic success of college students. However, this researcher also admits to the need for more research on the role of mentoring and providing adequate measurement or scales to assess the overall success of the mentoring relationship and its impact on educational achievement. While finding a more reliable or valid measurement may not be an easy assignment, the end result of such an endeavor may lock in the positive attributes of cementing mentoring programs across the country.

The results of this study were not so much surprising to me as they were students address both academic and personal problems. In my work with students I have fulfilled both roles. The students also confirmed that mentors could enhance self-determination, but must be respectful of boundaries. I feel I have impacted my students determination to graduate and am aware that they expect me to maintain certain boundaries. Importantly,
confirming that a faculty mentoring program would enhance retention and graduation rates was consistent with my personal belief.

Faculty themes were also not surprising but confirming. The need for mentors to assist with problem-solving, to connect with students, to provide individual attention, and to maintain trust and boundaries are characteristics I believe are essential to a successful faculty/student relationship.

Over the course of my educational journey I have personally had informal mentors along the way. Some may have only been someone whom I admired from afar and attempted to model. But there have also been several individuals who have genuinely taken me by the hand and walked me through an experience or trial in my life. Each experience was a unique learning adventure. There are many wonderful individuals out there who would make great mentors to someone in need of guidance. I would hate to think that the talents of the mentor would be wasted due to the lack of available mentoring relationships.

I have also been a mentor to students who were in need of support and guidance. For some, it may have been help with a career option or what course would further their particular program. For others it was a personal issue that was threatening their academic success or feelings of self-doubt regarding their ability to succeed in school. Regardless of the issue, it was clear through my mentoring that what I was doing meant a lot to these students. The fact that someone took the time and energy to assist them on a one-to-one basis made the difference between staying in school and quitting. I was proud to have been a part of each of my mentoring relationships.
Table 2

First Round Student Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>More confidence</td>
<td>Excited/Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Fit in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Enhance skills</td>
<td>Step by step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Draw/visualize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undivided Attention</td>
<td>Invests time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Builds confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Just education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be there</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Let be self Codes</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Determination</td>
<td>Self-Motivation (important for me)</td>
<td>Life changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smaller</td>
<td>Loves school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheaper</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Table 3

*First Round Faculty Categories*

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<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Resourceful problem solver</td>
<td>See student improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Open dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making a connection</td>
<td>Selling responsible goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel they belong</td>
<td>Feels someone believes in them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Getting to know mentee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helps look at things differently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Categories</td>
<td>Codes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helps student have more experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priorities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional energy</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliar with college</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study skills</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of college</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative high school, experiences</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone to talk to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Help with problems</td>
<td>Someone to care about them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time to build relationship/get</td>
<td>Source of information, inspiration, confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to know</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Focuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No personal issues</td>
<td>Experienced person</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(teaching/training)</td>
<td>Role model</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Approachable</td>
<td>Big issue</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Caring/nurtures/interest in student</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust/rapport</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Real life practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goals and options</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sounding board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not their friend</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male/female (not assigned)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can’t solve all problems</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Time and willingness</td>
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<td>Available</td>
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<td>Bring resources Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow through</td>
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<td>Committed</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Know students</td>
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Table 4

*Second Round Student Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>More confidence</td>
<td>Excited/Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Fit in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scared</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Enhance skills</td>
<td>Step by step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Draw/visualize</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undivided Attention</td>
<td>Invests time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helps</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be there</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Honesty</td>
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<td>Respect</td>
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<td>Students Categories</td>
<td>Encouragement Codes</td>
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<td>Cheaper</td>
<td>Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Quitters</td>
<td>Trouble in the past completing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal and academic support</td>
<td>Help through problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation rate</td>
<td>Success rate</td>
<td>Less drop out rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal support</td>
<td>More support with academic and personal issues</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 5

*Second Round Faculty Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Resourceful problem solver</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Making a connection</td>
<td>Selling responsible goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Getting to know mentee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helps look at things</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>differently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Helps student have more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priorities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional energy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliar with college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative high school experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone to talk to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone to care about them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Help with problems</td>
<td>Source of information, inspiration, confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time to build relationship/get to know</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Focuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No personal issues</td>
<td>Experienced person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(teaching/training)</td>
<td>Role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approachable</td>
<td>Big issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring/nurtures/interest in Student</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust/rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Real life practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Goals and options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sounding board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not their friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male/female (not assigned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can’t solve all problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time and willingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Determination</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bring resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Categories</td>
<td>Faculty Categories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>Codes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Committed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Know students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Positive relationship</td>
<td>Establish future helpful relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation rate</td>
<td>Take your time</td>
<td>Take longer but still graduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 6

*First Student Question: Would a TRIO faculty mentoring program at MCC help students stay in school?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>QUITTERS:</td>
<td>PERSONAL AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trouble in the past</td>
<td>ACADEMIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>completing</td>
<td>SUPPORT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Help through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Drop out less</td>
<td>Backgrounds where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal and</td>
<td>education is not a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>academic issues</td>
<td>big deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Backgrounds where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nona</td>
<td>About to be kicked out of school</td>
<td>Need to do most of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needed academic support</td>
<td>work yourself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Second Student Question: Would a TRIO faculty mentoring program at MCC help students graduate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>SUCCESS RATE:</th>
<th>PERSONAL SUPPORT:</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>High success rate</td>
<td>Statistics show more graduate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Less drop out rate</td>
<td>More support with academic and personal issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nona</td>
<td>Personal support (knee surgery)</td>
<td>Don’t feel alone Won’t turn away “Reach out and grab it” (help)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

*First Faculty Question: Would a faculty TRIO mentoring program at MCC help students stay in school?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Positive relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Establish future helpful</td>
<td>Help meet challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationship</td>
<td>Use strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop confidence to meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feel they belong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Successful resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9

*Second Faculty Question: Would a faculty TRIO mentoring program at MCC help with graduation rates?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthy relationship if exposed to mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage and foster process of graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Take longer but still graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Take longer but still</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie</td>
<td>Retain long enough to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>graduate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

FIRST RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first set of research questions for the faculty was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty 1st Round Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohen’s Mentoring Theory:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-on-one Relationship</td>
<td>What is your definition of mentoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What would a mentee look like to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>How important is trust in a mentoring relationship and how do you instill it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>What are key steps in guidance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Are there any boundaries in a mentoring relationship? Explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>How are you qualified to be a mentor and what roles do you bring to the relationship?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>Have you ever been mentored? Describe and explain what effect it had on you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>What level of commitment are you willing to give to a mentee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Potential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto’s Retention Theory:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Growth</td>
<td>What are the characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship for the educational growth of the student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>What do you feel are the responsibilities of a mentor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>What are the challenges of a student in the TRIO Program and what can a mentor do to alleviate that stress?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment</td>
<td>What do you think it takes to keep a student in school? What role does a mentor play in that retention?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first set of questions for the students was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT 1st Round QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohen’s Mentoring Theory:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One-on-one Relationship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guidance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrinsic Motivation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extrinsic Motivation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto's Retention Theory:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

SECOND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The second set of questions for the students was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>2nd Round</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohen's Mentoring Theory</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-On-One Relationship</td>
<td>Give other ways that a mentor helped you.</td>
<td>1. Could you give an example of how your mentor was “humble”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>1. Could you give me an example of how someone who mentored you helped you succeed?</td>
<td>1. Could you explain in a little more detail what you meant when you mentioned that a mentor must be patient and willing to invest time to build a relationship?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>Cindy</th>
<th>Nona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about the importance of trust in the mentoring relationship.</td>
<td>me some examples of how Pam and your Aunt Linda (your mentors) answered questions and provided guidance?</td>
<td>definition suggest that a mentor must be trustworthy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How did your mentors initially ensure you of confidentiality?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidance</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your theory on boundaries in a mentoring relationship?</td>
<td>1. What does your previous statement mean when you mentioned that the level of guidance that you would expect from a mentor was at any level?</td>
<td>Could you talk to me further about boundaries for mentors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Could you explain further on your statement that the boundaries in a mentoring relationship should be educational, not personal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could you give me an example of what you</td>
<td>1. Could you give me an example on how you would maintain the</td>
<td>Could you explain what you meant when you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Please give me an example of one of the new things you have tried since going back to school?</td>
<td>meant when you said that you expected respect and attention from a mentor?</td>
<td>mentors undivided attention?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Give me an example of how Rita (your previous mentor) gave you positive reinforcement to increase your self-confidence?</td>
<td>2. How would you maintain the level of expertise/knowledge in the mentoring relationship?</td>
<td>1. Could you explain further how God has helped with your self-confidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Could you explain what you meant when you said that watching and interacting with others increased your self-confidence?</td>
<td>2. Could you give me an example of how education has helped with your self-confidence?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Could you tell me more on how the attaining of an education has increased your self-confidence?</td>
<td>3. Please explain what elements of your personality have allowed you to be more open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>1. Could you talk a little more about this motivation that drives you to further your education?</td>
<td>1. Aside from the fact that you said you loved learning and going to school, could you explain further on why an education could make changes in your life for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Would you benefit in achieving your educational goals with the assistance of a mentor or do you feel you could do this on your own?</td>
<td>2. Would you benefit in achieving your educational goals with the assistance of a mentor or do you feel you could do this on your own?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>Cindy</th>
<th>Nona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>smaller class sizes and being more supportive will help you be more successful in college?</td>
<td>smaller classroom size, lower cost, and the fact that it was a comfort zone due to previous enrollment in a community college make this type of college more desirable to you?</td>
<td>the cost of a community college persuaded you to attend one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Could you explain how being a non-traditional student, being ADD, and a single parent have helped motivate your willingness to attend college and succeed?</td>
<td>2. Why do you think your personal attributes such as extroverted, open, and truthful will help you be successful in college?</td>
<td>2. How have the fact that you are eccentric, goofy, hardworking, and confident helped you become successful in college?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Commitment</th>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>Cindy</th>
<th>Nona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Could you explain further on your commitment and motivation to finish college?</td>
<td>1. Other than the statement that God has you focused to finish college, what other factor has contributed to your motivation to graduate?</td>
<td>1. Other than the advisors and other individuals you had previously mentioned that helped motivate you to graduate, were there any others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You said you were totally committed to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Nona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>finishing school, if you had a faculty mentor would that enhance your graduating or could you have done this on your own?</td>
<td>2. You said you were totally committed to finishing school, if you had a faculty mentor would that enhance your graduating or could you have done this on your own?</td>
<td>that stand out in your memory?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. You said you were totally committed to finishing school, if you had a faculty mentor would that enhance your graduating or could you have done this on your own?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Potential</td>
<td>How would helping single parents with available resources guide you toward your full potential?</td>
<td>How do you think missionary work will help you reach your full potential?</td>
<td>How will working in the Chicago Crime Lab help you obtain your full potential?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Did the fact that you had a disability effect your decision to go to a community college?</td>
<td>How did motivation and commitment help you focus in college?</td>
<td>Did the fact that you had a disability effect your decision to go to a community college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinto's Retention Theory</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Nona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Growth</td>
<td>How can you succeed and increased self-esteem help keep you in college?</td>
<td>How has this difference in you today contributed to your educational growth?</td>
<td>How will knowing more about yourself and not being afraid to say things enhance your educational growth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamina</td>
<td>Could you explain how the power from within keeps you in school?</td>
<td>In what ways do God, some instructors, and several other groups of people help keep you in school?</td>
<td>1. Could you explain in more detail about your statement that your stamina to stay in school is based on your desire to make sure your mom is okay and you have something to do with your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I’m looking at retention rates at MCC (Midwestern Community College), do you feel that a faculty mentor would help keep you in school?</td>
<td>2. I’m looking at retention rates at MCC (Midwestern Community College), do you feel that a faculty mentor would help keep you in school?</td>
<td>2. I’m looking at retention rates at MCC (Midwestern Community College), do you feel that a faculty mentor would help keep you in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Nona keep you in School?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the resources in a school that you feel could help you with your future?</td>
<td>Could you please explain what you think God's part is in your future?</td>
<td>Could you talk more about how you feel you are responsible for your future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>1. After all the feelings on your first day of school of being scared, nervous, overwhelmed, and emotionally drained, what still kept you in school?</th>
<th>How did the fact that you were excited, scared, and that you checked people out contribute to your staying in school?</th>
<th>After all the feelings of trying to be yourself, but still being scared on your first day of school, what was still a guiding force that kept you coming back to school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How did you contact Sue (your advisor), or did she contact you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjustment</th>
<th>1. In regard to the experience you had in your Human Relations class, could you share with me the feelings you encountered that helped</th>
<th>1. Could you explain how John, Daryl, and some of the instructors have contributed to you staying in school?</th>
<th>1. Share with me some of the ways that this instructor in Constitutional Law throughout the semester enabled you to stop letting things bother</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>Cindy</th>
<th>Nona</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>keep you in school?</td>
<td>2. Were there other challenges that you have faced? Explain.</td>
<td>you so you would want to stay in college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Were there other challenges that you faced? Describe.</td>
<td>3. One of my research questions is whether or not a faculty mentoring program would help students at MCC. What do you think? Would a faculty mentoring program help students stay in school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. One of my research questions is whether or not a faculty mentoring program would help students at MCC. What do you think? Would a faculty mentoring program help students stay in school?</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. One of my research questions is whether or not a faculty mentoring program would help students at MCC. What do you think? Would a faculty mentoring program help students stay in school?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The second set of questions for the faculty was as follows:

**Faculty 2nd Round Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohen’s Mentoring Theory</th>
<th>Madeline</th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Debbie</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-on-One Relationship</td>
<td>Could you explain further how someone who established a relationship, helped, was a source of information, inspirational, someone who was professional and had confidence would make for a good mentor?</td>
<td>Could you go into more detail on what you mean by the statement that your definition of a mentor was someone who helps, asks questions, and keeps students focused?</td>
<td>Could you please explain further your definition of a mentor as an experienced person and a role model?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Could you tell me what you mean when you say that trust is a big issue in a mentoring relationship?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Could you explain further the importance of trust in a mentoring relationship?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>1. Could you please explain why you think the key steps in guidance are trust,</td>
<td>1. Could you explain further your statement that the key steps in guidance for you were</td>
<td>1. Could you explain further how you feel learning about the student and becoming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Could you explain further when you stated that the boundaries in a mentoring relationship were that it should be professional and not involve personal issues?</td>
<td>demonstrated examples of real life, and to guide? 2. Would a faculty mentoring program provide the guidance you’re describing?</td>
<td>the time to build a relationship, help with goals and options, and help students identify problems? 2. Would a faculty mentoring program provide the guidance you’re describing?</td>
<td>a sounding board are the key steps in guidance? 2. Would a faculty mentoring program provide the guidance you’re describing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If a mentoring program was offered at MCC what kind of involvement</td>
<td>1. Why do you think that the boundaries of not being their friend, can’t solve their problems, and stay away from personal issues should be in place for a mentor/mentee relationship? 2. If a mentoring program was offered at MCC what kind of involvement</td>
<td>1. Could you explain further what you meant when you stated that the boundaries in a mentoring relationship were professionalism, the male/female issues, and the personal issues that may intertwine?</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>boundaries would you expect?</td>
<td>boundaries would you expect?</td>
<td>2. If a mentoring program was offered at MCC what kind of boundaries would you expect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>If a faculty mentoring program was initiated at MCC would you be interested in serving as a mentor? Why or why not?</td>
<td>If a faculty mentoring program was initiated at MCC would you be interested in serving as a mentor? Why or why not?</td>
<td>If a faculty mentoring program was initiated at MCC would you be interested in serving as a mentor? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory</td>
<td>1. Would you try and envision the effect a mentor might have had on you? 2. What would</td>
<td>1. How did the experience of having a mentor show you the ropes, help you avoid the pitfalls, teach you to listen,</td>
<td>1. How did the experience of being mentored by someone who showed an interest in you, sparked and inspired</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
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<td>1. Describe what that level of commitment would mean to you where you were willing to commit time and your resources to a mentee?</td>
<td>motivate you to serve as a faculty mentor?</td>
<td>consider other options, and have the opportunity to watch someone teach well help you become a better teacher?</td>
<td>you help you become a better teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How committed would you be to initiating a faculty mentoring program at MCC?</td>
<td>2. What would motivate you to serve as a faculty mentor?</td>
<td>2. What would motivate you to serve as a faculty mentor?</td>
<td>1. Could you explain in more detail that level of commitment where you would be willing to commit, give time, and be willing to follow through as your level of commitment to a mentee?</td>
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<td>1. Could you explain further what you meant when you mentioned that you were committed to getting to know your students and being available?</td>
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<td>2. How committed would you be to initiating a faculty mentoring program at MCC?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Potential</td>
<td>1. Do you feel the students here at MCC are motivated and determined to stay in school and complete their program of study?</td>
<td>1. Do you feel the students here at MCC are motivated and determined to stay in school and complete their program of study?</td>
<td>1. Do you feel the students here at MCC are motivated and determined to stay in school and complete their program of study?</td>
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<td>2. Would faculty mentoring help students' motivation and determination to stay in school and complete their program of study?</td>
<td>2. Would faculty mentoring help students' motivation and determination to stay in school and complete their program of study?</td>
<td>2. Would faculty mentoring help students' motivation and determination to stay in school and complete their program of study?</td>
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<th>Tinto’s Retention Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Growth</td>
<td>1. As a mentor, how would improvement of the student and the development of an open</td>
<td>1. Last time you mentioned that the characteristic (s) of a successful</td>
<td>1. Last time you mentioned that the characteristic (s) of a successful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>dialogue, the characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship, be recognized by the mentor?</td>
<td>mentoring relationship were setting responsible goals, students learning to solve their own problems, and becoming more confident. How would a mentor recognize these factors taking place?</td>
<td>mentoring relationship were making connections, being aware of resources, feeling someone believes in them, and having a constant in their life. How would a mentor recognize these factors taking place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How would these factors help keep a student in school?</td>
<td>2. How would these factors help keep a student in school?</td>
<td>2. How would these factors help keep a student in school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Responsibility | Could you explain how being professional, knowledgeable, flexible, and being there for the student are responsibilities of a mentor? | What would supplying resources for students, having expectations for the student, and possessing integrity look like to a student? | How would a mentor take on the responsibilities of a mentor of getting to know the mentee, learning about them, listening, encouraging, helping them make new |

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<th>Transition</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Could you explain further how one of the challenges in keeping TRIO students in school today was communication?</td>
<td>1. Could you explain further how the challenges for a TRIO student of deciding on priorities, time management, support, emotional energy, and previously negative High School experiences would keep students from staying in school and graduating?</td>
<td>1. Could you explain further how being unfamiliar with college, their study skills, and the size of the college would keep students from staying in school and graduating?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you feel a faculty mentoring program might address the communication challenges?</td>
<td>2. Do you think a faculty mentoring program in TRIO would help with some of these challenges?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustment</td>
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<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Could you explain how a mentor could help with the things needed to keep a student in school such as funding, campus activities, trust, confidence, and professionalism?</td>
<td>1. How would having a faculty mentor help students stay in school with such things as making connections, utilizing resources, getting feedback, and helping with options?</td>
<td>1. How would having a faculty mentor help keep students in school with such things as feeling they belong, someone to talk to, resources, stability, connections, someone to care about them and support them?</td>
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<td>2. Would a faculty mentoring program at MCC assist in retention?</td>
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<td>2. Would a faculty mentoring program at MCC assist with retention?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Would a faculty mentoring program at MCC assist with graduation rates?</td>
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