

**An Examination of Motivational Factors in High School
Dropouts Participating in General Education
Development Degree Programs**

by

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Abstract

According to the GED Testing Service (2011), over 18 million people have earned a GED credential since 1942. The results from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2007) show that 89% of Whites, 80% of Blacks, and 76.5% of Hispanics reported having a high school diploma. Therefore, individuals who have dropped out of school, but later realize they need to further their education, have an opportunity to better themselves by seeking to earn a General Education Development Degree (GED).

GED programs offer students an opportunity to further their education, but oftentimes there are motivational barriers which prohibit them from taking the necessary steps to enter and persist in such programs. In an effort to better understand why students would drop-out of high school, yet enroll in a GED program, this quantitative study was conducted to examine which factors, whether autonomous or controlled, influenced dropouts to pursue the equivalency of a high school diploma after leaving the traditional school setting. This study provides a summary of detailed results obtained from a questionnaire which posed questions to students that related to active participation, instructor suggestions for earning a GED, skills' enrichment, and self-determination.

The results of the study could lead to a better understanding of the motivations of those who pursue a GED, and the needs they have while in such program. The results revealed that Pearson correlations determined a low, weak, positive relationship between autonomous

regulation and controlled regulation. A two-way ANOVA determined a significant main effect for the variable Gender and the variable Autonomous Regulation. No gender and ethnic differences were found in GED students' self-regulation behaviors. Overall, there was a weak to moderate, positive correlation between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation. Increases in autonomous regulation scores were correlated with increase in controlled regulation scores.

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List of Abbreviations

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ASE	Adult Secondary Education
ACCS	Alabama Community College System
AAAE	American Association for Adult Education
ACE	American Council on Education
CVCC	Chattahoochee Valley Community College
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Education Development Degree
PI	Principal Investigator
SRQ-L	Self Regulation Questionnaire-Learning
SREB	Southern Regional Educational Board
SUSCC	Southern Union State Community College
SDT	Theory of Self Determination

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Earning a GED affords individuals the opportunity to achieve goals which would have otherwise been unattainable. In order to earn a GED, participants must be self-determined, and possess a certain amount of motivation, as motivation plays a key role in anything that people do, especially when the task is not mandatory or required. The theory of self-determination differentiates the types of regulation a person possesses, and the degree to which they represent autonomous (intrinsic), or controlled (extrinsic), regulation. Whether autonomous or controlled, self-regulation is the factor that facilitates an individual's ability to persist in a GED program, and earn a high school equivalency credential.

In Houle's (1961) sensitivity study of motivation, three subgroups emerged: the goal oriented learner, which is one who learns to gain specific objectives such as learning to speak before an audience; the activity-oriented learner who participates for the sake of the activity itself, rather than to develop a skill; and the learning-oriented learner who pursues learning for its own sake. There is a simplified version of Houle's model which was introduced by Allen Tough (1979). Tough's model suggests that adults learn to increase their self-esteem; to have a sense of pleasure and to impress others; and to possess certain pleasures or satisfactions. Regardless of whether one's beliefs mirror Houle's model or Tough's model on motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation plays a key role in an individual's ability to persist in an adult education program through completion.

Individuals drop out of school for many reasons. Oftentimes, those same people find themselves seeking out, and enrolling in, GED programs. After leaving the traditional school setting, some individuals wish to increase their likelihood of having a better life for themselves and their family—hence, intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, some participants have extrinsic motivating factors such as court orders, or social services’ referrals, which makes pursuing a GED mandatory. Regardless of the reason, successful completion of an adult education training program depends heavily on an individual and his/her ability to persevere.

This study, through an analysis of results from surveys completed by GED participants, attempted to answer the questions that related to non-completers and their motivation(s) to sign up for GED classes and pursue their high school equivalency credential after dropping out of high school. The results were generated from surveys administered to high school dropouts who were participating in GED programs provided free of charge by the state of Alabama. The goal was to try to ascertain whether a GED student’s motivation to learn in a non-traditional setting after dropping out of a more structured and traditional setting was more autonomous or controlled. The answers to the overarching questions can be used to help administrators of high schools strengthen their curriculum in an effort to increase student retention. Also, administrators of GED programs could use the information that was collected to better tailor their programs to fit the needs of the population they serve. Whether an administrator of a traditional or non-traditional school, the goal should be the same for anyone who attempts to use the results: increased student retention.

Statement of the Problem

This research was conducted as an attempt to understand why individuals are motivated to earn their GED after dropping out of school. In October, 2008, approximately three million 16-24 year olds were not enrolled in high school, and had not earned a high school diploma or alternate credential (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). According to the GED Testing Program Statistical Report (2010), in Alabama, there were approximately 797,910 adults, age 16 and over, who did not have a high school diploma in 2010. Of that number, 14,622, or 1.8% of candidates attempted to take and pass the GED exams. Only 8,973 of the 797,910 Alabama dropouts passed all five exams, and earned a GED credential. This left 788,937 people in 2010 without a high school equivalency diploma (GED 2000 Statistical Report, 2011). These numbers are staggering, especially in light of the reduced number of jobs available due to the downturn in the economy in recent years.

Although the dropout rate in Alabama is high, the success of the GED Testing Service is evident. More than 18 million people have earned a high school equivalency credential through the GED testing program since it was founded in 1942. Of that number, 472,913 Americans earned a GED credential in 2009 (GED Testing Service, 2010). Although the number of people who have earned a GED since the program's inception is impressive, a large number of today's youth are still dropping out of high school, and are not choosing to pursue a GED.

Since today's youth continue to drop out of school, there is a sense of urgency to tailor programs that might encourage potential dropouts to persist through high school, and earn a diploma. As a result, the data collected for this study can be used by school system administrators and middle and high school principals as a tool to implement programs that might aid in decreasing the dropout rate, and improve the retention rate. It can also be used by

administrators and directors of GED programs to strengthen their program, which might assist the students who need a second chance at completing their education.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between autonomous and controlled regulation among GED students who had not been successful in, and eventually dropped out of school. In addition, there was a focus on the gender and ethnicity of GED students, and whether either gender or ethnicity had an affect on autonomous and/or controlled regulation and the student's ability persist in a GED program and eventually earn a GED. Further, there was an investigation of whether or not there were gender and ethnic differences in GED students' self-regulation behaviors. This study contains information which might be utilized by adult educators and supervisors who work in the geographic areas studied when seeking to enhance the quality of their GED program.

This study focused on high school dropouts who were enrolled in adult education classes at Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC), which is located in South-East Alabama (see Appendix F), just across the Georgia line, and Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC), which is located in East-Central Alabama (see Appendix F). CVCC classes are located at the Phenix City campus. SUSCC classes are located at the Opelika campus, as well as at eight satellite locations throughout Chambers, Clay, Lee, and Randolph counties. The classes are provided free of charge by the state of Alabama.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. To what degree is there a relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation among GED students?
2. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect autonomous regulation?
3. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect controlled regulation?

Significance of the Study

Based on current dropout data reported by the Department of Education, the Census Bureau, and the National Center for Education Statistics, there is a need to aggressively pursue and develop stronger dropout prevention programs. As a result, the findings of this study can be used by school system administrators to strengthen their dropout prevention programs. They can also use the results to address the educational and instructional needs of students, as well as any behavioral issues which might be related to academic shortcomings. Stronger, more interesting course offerings, which capture the attention of students could be developed using the results, as these might increase the retention rate, and decrease the dropout rate. Also, a class that offers real-life solutions to motivational issues that today's students face might attract the attention of potential dropouts, as well as other stakeholders such as parents, teachers, mentors, civic groups, and community activists. Directors and administrators of GED programs will be able to use the information to better accommodate their participants and their individual needs.

Limitations

This study includes data which were gathered from GED students enrolled at two community colleges in Alabama. Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC) is located in South-East Alabama, just across the Georgia line, and Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC), is located in East-Central Alabama. Only current students, 19 years of age or older, who were enrolled in CVCC and SUSCC's Adult Education Program were surveyed. All five of CVCC's classes met at their main campus which is located in Phenix City, Alabama. Five of SUSCC's classes met on their main campus which is located in Wadley, Alabama. Southern Union's 13 other classes were held at satellite locations in rural areas of Alabama. The rural areas employed fewer teachers, and had a decreased number of resources and advertising opportunities available. Because of fewer advertising opportunities, these classes had lower enrollment numbers than the classes held in the urban areas.

Conversations between the Principal Investigator (PI) and the Adult Education Instructors revealed pertinent facts about the student population. The instructors stated that many of the students were unemployed as a result of the bad economy, and used their extra time to pursue a GED. They stated that a large portion of the students were not gainfully employed because of their lack of a high school diploma, and had not been able to go back to work as a result. Therefore, there were students who were forced to return to GED programs to further their education in an effort to pursue and/or secure employment, as well as to continue to draw unemployment compensation. As a result, this study is limited to the perception of those who participated in the survey, and their individual reasons for participating in GED programs at the time the surveys were administered.

The Adult Education Instructors stated to the PI that their enrollment numbers were lower since data were gathered during summer break. Some of the classes had numbers as low as one student. Others had no students attend class on the day the survey was administered. As a result of low numbers in some classes, and much higher numbers in other classes, the population that was surveyed varied widely depending on geographical location.

Currently, in Alabama, there are 20 community colleges, and four technical colleges that offer GED programs. GED programs are also offered at other locations throughout the state such as county jails and youth detention centers. Data were collected from adult education students who attended two of the Alabama Community College System's adult education programs. Therefore, many geographical areas in Alabama were not represented in the study.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

- A. All GED programs provide the same quality of leadership, instruction, guidance, and support.
- B. All students who entered a GED program exhibited self regulation characteristics throughout program completion.
- C. All participants answered questions accurately and honestly.
- D. All GED programs are funded equally.
- E. The majority of GED students are older, not younger adults.
- F. Students understood the definitions of terminology presented in the survey, and were able to accurately answer questions presented.
- G. All instructors have background in working with adults, not children or young adults.
- H. All students were good readers; therefore, understood survey questions.

I. All students surveyed came from the same type of background, and therefore, possessed the same background knowledge.

Definitions

Below are some terms which are used throughout the study.

1. Adult Education- any activity or program deliberately designed by a providing agent to satisfy any learning need that may be experienced at any stage of life by a person who is over the normal school-leaving age and no longer a full-time student.
2. Amotivation- inability or unwillingness to participate in a normal social situation. To be neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated; to be without intention or motivation for a particular behavior.
3. Andragogy- the art and science of helping adults learn; engaging the adult learner with the structure of a learning experience.
4. At-risk students- students who are not experiencing success in school and are potential high school dropouts.
5. Barriers- anything that obstructs, blocks, or impedes progress, access, etc.
6. Autonomous regulation- self-governing/determined; independent; a prototype of intrinsic motivation.
7. Black- a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
8. Controlled regulation- Extrinsically motivated activity that is more controlled by outside forces.
9. Dropout- a student, as in high school, who withdraws before completing a course of instruction.
10. Educational Attainment- the highest level of education an individual has completed.

11. Ethnicity- ethnic traits, background, allegiance, or association with a group such as African American or Caucasian.
12. Extrinsic Motivation- motivation that comes from outside an individual rather than from any internal or inner rewards, such as increased self esteem or being proud of oneself; motivation that is more controlled and less autonomous than intrinsic motivation.
13. Gender- one of the categories in such a set, as masculine, feminine, neuter, or common; sex.
14. General Education Development Degree (GED)- the equivalency of a high school diploma that is earned when a candidate passes a five-part test. This test certifies that the test taker has high school level academic skills.
15. High School Graduate- an individual who has received formal recognition from school authorities, by the granting of a diploma, for completing a prescribed course of study.
16. Hispanic or Latino- a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
17. Intrinsic Motivation- motivation that comes from inside an individual (autonomous) rather than from any external or outside rewards, such as money or grades.
18. Minority- a group differing, especially in race, religion, or ethnic background, from the majority of a population.
19. Motivation- the driving force by which humans achieve their goals; the will to do something. Motivation can either be intrinsic (autonomous) or extrinsic (controlled).
20. Pedagogy- the study of being a teacher or the process of teaching that is concerned with helping children learn.

21. Self Determination- a theory of motivation concerned with supporting our natural intrinsic tendencies to behave in healthy and effective ways; differentiates types of behavioral regulation in terms of degree to which they represent autonomous or self-determined (versus controlled) functioning.
22. Self Motivation- the ability to motivate oneself, to find the reason and necessary strength to do something, without the need of being influenced to do something by another person.
23. Student- a person who is formally engaged in learning while attending any learning institution; any person who studies, investigates, or examines thoughtfully.
24. White- A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five different chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction of the study, presenting the problem, purpose, research questions, limitations, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 includes a review of related literature, which relates to motivational factors in high school dropouts. Chapter 3 reports the procedures utilized in this study including the population and sample, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, which includes organization of data analysis, demographic results, and data analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further practice and research.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

Reglin (1993) surmised that there are approximately 25 million adults nationally who are high school dropouts, and each year another 750,000 students leave school without graduating. U.S. Census data indicated that more than 30 million adults- more than 16% of the US population- were without a high school credential (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Further, Census data for October 2008 revealed an increase in the previous years' numbers, as approximately three million 16 through 24 year-olds were not enrolled in high school, and had not earned a high school diploma or alternative credential. The 16 through 24 year-old age group accounted for 8% of the 38 million noninstitutionalized civilians in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Since millions of young adults are dropping out of school each year, there is a heightened need for adult education programs in the United States.

The lack of motivation has been cited as an underlying reason that many students do not complete high school (Reglin, 1993). Oftentimes, students leave high school with hopes and dreams of securing a job, a place to live, and transportation, but find that they are not able to do any of the things they thought they would be able to do because of the lack of an education. This realization oftentimes influences high school dropouts to pursue a high school equivalency, or

General Educational Development Degree (GED), through sources outside of the traditional school setting.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between autonomous and controlled regulation among GED students who had not been successful in, and eventually dropped out of school. In addition, there was a focus on the gender and ethnicity of GED students, and whether either gender or ethnicity had an affect on autonomous and/or controlled regulation and the student's ability to persist in a GED program, and eventually earn a GED. Further, there was an investigation of whether or not there were gender and ethnic differences in GED students' self-regulation behaviors. This study contains information which might be utilized by adult educators and supervisors who work in the geographic areas studied when seeking to enhance the quality of their GED program.

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History of Adult Education

The presence of Adult Education programs in the United States dates back over 150 years to the lyceum at Millbury, Massachusetts, in 1826 (Knowles, 1962). Over the past 150 years, adult education programs have grown and expanded to suit the needs of populations served. There have been major milestones in the area of adult education since the early beginnings of education. As individuals continue their quest for lifelong learning, these strides continue today.

Adult education during the entire Colonial period was essentially unorganized and primarily vocational. The educational institutions which existed were underdeveloped. Some of the institutions include common schools, private, vocational schools, secondary schools, libraries, churches, town meetings, and agricultural societies (Knowles, 1962).

Between the years of 1780 and 1865, a number of informal channels of adult education became well established, including daily newspapers, magazines, books and pamphlets, the theater, and local voluntary associations. Today, these sources would be considered

entertainment and not education, as they were in earlier times. The year 1826 marked the beginnings of an attempt of a national program of adult education, the American Lyceum. Although it was not established permanently, three institutional forms of adult education emerged. Those three institutions included adult schools, the library and the museum (Knowles, 1977).

Adult education institutions began to multiply in 1866. Although this period opened with hundreds of institutions whose focus was on adult education, it ended with thousands. Some of the institutions that were either created or firmly established include correspondence schools, summer schools, university extension, residential labor colleges, evening schools, junior colleges, settlement houses, social service agencies, parks and recreation centers, and national voluntary associations (Knowles, 1977).

Between 1920 and 1960, adult education became an important part of the American way of life. This time period marked the inception of a national organization for adult education, the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE), which held its founding meeting in 1926. The purpose of this organization was to promote the development and improvement of adult education in the United States, and to cooperate with similar associations in other countries (Knowles, 1977).

According to Knowles (1977), during this period the number of companies providing educational opportunities for their employees greatly increased. Because of the focus on industry, professional leadership for industrial education tended to become increasingly differentiated, and the subject matter of industrial education broadened and deepened. For the

first time, industry began providing facilities designed exclusively for education, and developed increasingly closer cooperation with formal educational institutions.

There was now a tendency toward the development of a broader and uniquely adult curriculum. Extension activities were now becoming important. People wanted to develop a methodology geared to the unique characteristics of adults as learners. Finally, the changing adult educational role of libraries was increasingly taken into account in the training of librarians.

Adult education is defined as instruction and education offered to individuals who are no longer attending school or college, and who voluntarily select such programs (Dejnozka, E.L. & Kapel, D.E. 1991). Cross (1981) contends that change is now so great and so far reaching that no amount of education during youth can prepare adults to meet the demands that will be made on them. Likewise, Steinbach (2000) describes five reasons why individuals' should pursue lifelong learning opportunities which include today's rapid pace of change; economic opportunity; quality of life; security; and human nature. Until there is a time when all young people choose to complete high school or attend college, the field of adult education will continue to prove to be an expanding field. Since individuals' pursuit of lifelong learning is partly responsible for this growth, the field of adult education will continue to evolve.

Providers of Adult Education Programs

Providers of adult education programs offer three different types of instruction that are intended to address the diversity of skill and characteristics of the adult learner population. These programs include the adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English as a second language (ESL). Adult basic education offers instruction targeting learners

with skills below the secondary level, roughly equivalent to grades one through eight. At this level, instruction is designed to improve basic reading, writing, numeracy (math), and functional and workplace skills to prepare students to move into ASE. Adult secondary education offers instruction targeting learners with educational attainment around secondary level. This level of instruction covers grades nine through 12. The curriculum is designed to improve reading, writing, numeracy, and functional and workplace skills to prepare students to pass GED tests and earn a GED credential. English as a second language offers instruction targeting non-native English speakers who wish to improve their English literacy skills, focusing on language aspects that may not be needed by those with English as their native language. Instruction at this level focuses on foundational listening and speaking, basic reading and writing, and functional and workplace skills for students who are not native English speakers. Normally, it is in the best interest for ESL students to complete the ESL courses before attempting ABE or ASE/GED instruction (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

Adult education programs serve students with a wide range of educational needs. Knox (1987) suggested that adult basic education serves one of four purposes. These purposes are: (1) promoting economic productivity; (2) stimulating political change; (3) increasing social equity; and (4) enhancing quality of life. Currently, the Alabama Community College System (2011) has three goals established to assist adults who enroll in their program. These goals are:

- Become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.

- Obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children.
- Complete secondary school or complete the equivalent of a secondary school education.

As a result of the aforementioned goals, adult education programs must include basic skills training, apprenticeships, work-related courses, personal interest courses, ESL classes, and part-time college or university degree programs (U.S. Department of Education, National Center of Education Statistics, 2006). In an effort to cover all of the identified areas of need of adults, instructors should be trained educators with skills and backgrounds in working with adults with a wide range of needs.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public pre-K-12 and higher education. The states served include Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Nearly 4.5 million young adults ages 25 to 44 did not have a high school credential in SREB states in 2008. Of those 4.5 million people, only 8% were enrolled in adult education courses. In Alabama, only 7,344 adults (4%) of those in the same age group were enrolled in an adult education program in 2008 (SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2009). This number has remained constant since 2005 (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Since there are so many people who lack a high school diploma/GED credential, there is an increased need for providers of adult education programs nationally, regionally, and in the state of Alabama.

States offer several pathways for high school dropouts to earn their GED credential via adult education programs. In Alabama, General Educational Development Degree/Adult Education Programs are governed by the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, Adult Education and GED Testing, which is classified under postsecondary education. Currently, in Alabama, there are 20 community colleges and four technical colleges that provide Adult Education Programs. The community colleges are: Alabama Southern, Beville State, Bishop State, Calhoun, Central Alabama, Chattahoochee Valley, Enterprise State, Gadsden State, George C. Wallace, George Corley Wallace, James H. Faulkner, Jefferson Davis, Jefferson State, Lurleen B. Wallace, Northeast Alabama, Northwest-Shoals, Shelton State, Southern Union, T.A. Lawson State, and Wallace Community College. The four technical colleges are: H. Council Trenholm, J.F. Drake, J.F. Ingram, and Reid State Technical College. There are other facilities that offer adult education programs and GED classes. For example, Alabama Institute for the Death and Blind, Shelton State-Bryce Hospital, Autauga County Family Support Center, and Lee County Jail all offer Adult Education Programs for their residents and/or inmates (Alabama Community College System, 2011).

In addition, there are a vast number of other entities and agencies that offer adult education programs. Some of these organizations have established themselves with the mission of continuing education, while others have the mission of lifelong learning. Schroeder (1970) attempted to establish a classification system of adult education agencies. According to Schroeder, there are four agencies by which an organization may be categorized. Type I agencies are established to serve the educational needs of adults with adult education being the central function. Type II agencies are established to serve the educational needs of youth which

have assumed the added responsibility of at least partially serving the need of adults with adult education being the secondary function. Type III agencies are established to serve both educational and non-educational needs of the community with adult education being an allied function employed to fulfill only some of the needs which agencies recognize as their responsibility. Type IV agencies are established to serve the special interests (economic, ideological) of special groups with adult education being a subordinate function employed primarily to further the special interests of the agency itself (Schroeder, 1970).

History of the GED Tests

The Test of General Educational Development is a standardized examination which, if passed, qualifies adults who have not completed high school to earn a high school equivalency diploma. Persons who pass the GED exam are considered to have an academic background equivalent to that of a regular high school graduate (American Educators' Encyclopedia, 1991). Since its inception in 1942, there have been four GED tests series released. Currently, there is a 1942, 1978, 1988, and 2002 version of the test. There is a new version of the GED tests series that is scheduled to be released in January, 2012.

Originally, the GED tests series was created to offer soldiers returning from World War II an opportunity to finish high school, and further their education. This test reflected an industrial era when a high school education was sufficient to qualify anyone who was looking for a job in an entry-level position. The majority of this test served as a measure of a test-taker's English mastery, as its focus was on the correctness and effectiveness of expression, and interpreting reading materials in the areas of social studies, science, and literature. Even though

this test was developed for soldiers, in 1947, the state of New York offered the GED exam to non-veteran adults. By 1974, less than 30 years later, the GED credential was issued in all 50 states. The 1942 version of the test was retired in 1977 (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

The 1978 series was marked by a shift in emphasis for the GED tests series which was in keeping with the end of the industrial age. As a result, a separate reading test was developed. This test was more of an application type of test. Although the tests' emphasis was still on high school outcomes, there was a focus on real-life situations (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

The third series was introduced in 1988. This change was characterized by an awareness of the shift from an industrial age to an information age. Technology was more commonly being used, yet the GED tests did not reflect a focus on the information age. A panel was commissioned to develop and present recommendations for changes to the test. There were five recommendations for changes that came from the panel, and those changes were made to the test. The changes were: the addition of an essay, an emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills, an increased reflection on adults' roles in society, an emphasis on understanding the sources of societal change, and an increase in contextual settings relevant to adults (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

The fourth series introduced is the current GED test, which was released in 2002. In today's society, a high school diploma or GED is needed to secure the majority of jobs. The focus of the current series is entry-level employment. Another focus is that the GED can be used

as a springboard to postsecondary education (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2011). A 5th edition version of the GED exam is scheduled to be introduced on January 1, 2012. According to information on the GED Testing Service website (2012), the new program, GED 20/20, will dramatically increase the number of test takers and GED credential recipients who are prepared to pursue postsecondary education opportunities (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2011).

The American Council on Education (ACE, 2011) and Pearson announced the creation of a ground-breaking new business that is designed to drive “the future direction, design and delivery of the GED testing program”. This program, named The GED 21st century Initiative, has three primary components, which include a GED test that is aligned with Common Core State Standards; a national test preparation program; and a transition network that connects GED test-takers to career and postsecondary educational opportunities. According to a press release from ACE president, Molly Corbett Broad, “This bold, far-sighted and innovative partnership will provide a new fresh approach toward an old and pernicious problem---the incredible waste of human talent represented by the millions of Americans who lack a high school diploma” (ACE, March 2012).

The GED exam must be written on a level which will prepare recipients to pursue endeavors that match the rapid growth of society. Since its inception, there have been four versions of the test released. The fifth version is expected to be released at the beginning of 2012. Each version of the test that has been released reflected the knowledge and skill level needed by those who were able to earn the GED credential (American Council on Education,

GED Testing Service, 2011). With the development of new programs and resources, the future of the GED is promising, as it will offer increased opportunities for those who attain the credential.

The GED Exam

The GED tests were developed by the General Educational Development Testing Services (GEDTS) of the American Council on Education (ACE). The test takes seven hours and five minutes to complete. The cost to take the complete battery the first time is \$50. If a candidate fails a portion of the test, they may retake the portion they failed at a cost of \$10 per section (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

According to Derika Griffin, Director of Adult Education at SUSCC, (personal communication, June 9, 2011) all students who attend a GED class governed by Southern Union are eligible to receive a voucher if they meet certain requirements. The voucher will cover the test fee of \$50 the first time the candidate takes the test. In order to receive the voucher, an individual must be enrolled in Southern Union's Adult Education Program, have a minimum of thirty hours of seat time in class, and make a raw score of at least 500 on the GED Practice Test. Students are allowed to take the GED Practice Test more than once, as there are multiple versions of the test available. The money to fund the vouchers is provided by the State of Alabama.

The GED test battery consists of five content area assessments: language arts, reading; language arts, writing; mathematics; science; and social studies. The reading portion of the language arts test consists of 40 questions and test takers are allotted 65 minutes to take the test.

The writing portion of the language arts exam is a two-part test which consists of an essay, and a selected response section, and candidates are given a total of 120 minutes to complete both tests. The social studies portion contains 50 questions to be completed in 70 minutes. The science segment has 50 questions that have to be finished in 80 minutes. Mathematics is the last portion of the test, and it contains 50 questions. Candidates are allowed 90 minutes to complete this portion (Southern Union State Community College, Adult Education Department, student pamphlet, 2010). In Alabama, the GED exams are administered, and may be taken by, potential recipients at one of the 47 sites throughout Alabama (Alabama Community College System, 2011). The GED exams are normed using high school seniors before becoming a final test form (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

Students are notified in writing of their results of the test. They are also given a telephone number which they may call to get their results after a designated number of days, usually one week. Adult Education Directors are also notified of the results, and are allowed to give the students their results. If a candidate fails the test, in whole or in part, they must wait a period of 6 weeks (42 calendar days) before retaking the test (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010). Each part failed costs the student \$10 per part to retake.

According to the GED Testing Service (2010), only 60% of graduating high school seniors would pass the GED tests on their first attempt. To pass and earn the GED credential, a test-taker must earn a minimum total standard score of 2250 on all five tests, and a minimum standard score of 410 on all content area tests. When passed, the GED test credential certifies

attainment of high school-level academic knowledge and skills (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

The GED test and the GED credential have been administered by the Department of Education in each of the 50 states in the United States since 1974. The test is currently administered as a pencil and pen type test, and takes just over seven hours to complete. Currently, there is not an option to take the test on-line. There are schools and programs on the internet that claim to administer the GED test, but they are not legitimate. Those receiving diplomas from an on-line school might find out later that what they received is an alternative diploma, or that the diploma came from a diploma mill. The GED Testing Service hosts the only nationally recognized high school equivalency program (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

The GED tests are offered in four different languages. There is a U.S. English language version, Canadian-English language version, Spanish-language version, and French-language version. In Alabama, the test is offered in English, Spanish, and French. The tests are accessible in audio and large-print in all language versions available. The test is offered in a Braille format in all versions except the French-language version (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2010).

Candidates may request testing accommodations if they have a disability that requires them to take the test in an environment that is contrary to the normal testing environment. Accommodations may be requested for those who have documentation of attention- deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, emotional mental health issues, a learning disability, or a physical/chronic

health disability. All requests must be made prior to the test date. The candidate must have their disability certified by a professional diagnostician, or an advocate. An advocate is defined as someone, other than the professional diagnostician, who helps the candidate request testing accommodations. The advocate must be a professional, as their certificate or licensure number must be indicated on the application for accommodations at the time that the applicant submits a request (Alabama Community College System, 2011).

Before a candidate attempts to take the test, they should prepare, either at home, in class, or online. Candidates can prepare at home by using reading materials such as *Keys to GED Success*, which can be purchased at bookstores. Another option for home preparation is to use the resources provided by the American Council on Education such as *GED Connection*. *GED Connection* allows students to study at home by watching programs broadcast on PBS stations. If in-class preparation is the choice of a student, potential recipients should contact the Alabama Community College System to find one of the 20 community colleges and/or four technical colleges that offer adult education programs in Alabama.

Who Takes the GED Exams

Cross (1981) contends that there are characteristics of adult learners that can be categorized under three separate headings descriptive of the type of learning activity undertaken. The first category is described as organized learning activities. The learning activities in this category are for credit, and are offered by continuing education, community agencies and extension divisions. The second category, which includes just about everyone, is self directed learning. It is described by Cross (1981) as “probably the most overlooked avenue of activity in

the whole field of adult education” (p. 63). The third category, which consists of less than ten percent of people, is small group. This group includes adults who are pursuing formal learning for credit.

According to the Adult Learner Survey conducted in 2006, 46% of adult learners were between the ages of 25 and 44; an additional 35% were between the ages of 16 and 24; 43% of the population of adult learners are non-native adults; and 34% reported completing no education in the United States. Of this group, only 19% of participants were from the Midwestern region, 28% were from the Western region, and the remaining percent were from the Southern region, which represented the largest group, with 39% of the participants in adult education programs (U.S. Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics 2006).

Although a high school diploma is the best option for young adults, the GED is widely known as a second chance for high school dropouts to get back on track and further their education. According to a report conducted by the Southern Regional Education Board, more than 14 million people have earned a GED credential in the last 60 years (SREB, *Focus on the GED: Who Takes it and Why?*, 2002). This number is continuing to increase nationally, regionally, and in the SREB area (SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2009).

Since the minority population will be the fastest growing population, but the most likely to drop out of school (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October, 2009), and least likely group of people to pursue and earn the GED (U.S. Census Bureau), it is important to consider the numbers of the SREB region when making comparisons to those in the state of Alabama. According to the SREB Fact Book on Higher

Education (2009), in 2007, 84% of adults ages 25 and older in the United States had high school diplomas or GED credentials, 82% in SREB states had earned the same education, and 80% of Alabama residents had earned the high school diploma or GED credential. The number of Alabama residents who earned the GED credential, 80%, was up from 75% in 2000.

Earning the GED credential affords adults the opportunity to go to college, find a better paying job, support their families, be role models, and realize their dreams for a better life. Everyone from average Americans to celebrities, have benefitted from earning a GED. Some famous people who have earned their GED credential include Dave Thomas, founder of Wendy's restaurant; Ringo Starr, singer; Bill Cosby, actor; LL Cool J, singer; Redd Foxx, comedian and actor; and Sonny Bono and Cher, singers. Whether an individual is seeking to increase their knowledge or skill levels, earning a GED affords opportunities that would have otherwise been unavailable.

Gender and Ethnicity of GED Participants

According to SREB President, Dave Spence (2009), the SREB region will account for most of the nation's overall population growth in the next decade and beyond, and most of that growth will be among racial and ethnic minorities. When looking at minority groups (in this case Hispanics and Blacks only), as compared to whites in the United States, 80% of Blacks, 61% of Hispanics, and 87% of Whites earned a high school diploma or GED credential in 2008.

In 2005, Blacks represented 14% of diploma recipients in the United States; Hispanics represented 14%; and Whites represented 66% of the 100% of total recipients. In SREB states in 2005, 23% of diploma holders were Black; Hispanics represented 13%; Whites represented 60%

of the total recipients. In Alabama, the rate was 32% Blacks, 1% Hispanics, and 65% Whites. The prior percentages reflect the total number of graduates in each minority group as a percentage of the U.S. total of 100%. In every geographical area, Whites outnumbered minorities in degrees earned (SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2009).

In 2009, 788,314 candidates took the GED tests in the United States. There were 683,519 completers, or people who had taken all five tests. Of the number of candidates who were completers, 472,913, or 69%, passed all five parts of the test. Seventy one percent of the test takers had completed at least grade 10 of high school. Fifty point five percent of test takers were white, 24.4% were African American, 20.1% were of Hispanic origin, 2.5% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1.8% was Asian, and 0.7% was Pacific Islander/Hawaiian (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service 2010).

When looking at minority groups (in this case Hispanics and Blacks only), as compared to Whites in the United States, 80% of Blacks, 61% of Hispanics, and 87% of Whites earned a high school diploma or GED credential in 2008. In 2009, the status dropout rate reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau (Current Population Survey, 2009) reflected the number of 16 through 24 year olds in the United States who were not enrolled in school and who had not completed a high school program, regardless of when they left school. The status dropout rate in 2009 in the United States included 9.3% Blacks, 17.6% Hispanics, and 5.2% Whites (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau Current Population Survey, 2009).

The numbers reported for Alabama by the GED Testing Program Statistical Report (2010) indicated that there were 14,621 candidates with known gender who took the GED exam.

Of the total number, 53% of the candidates were male, and 47% were female. There were 14,168 test takers with known ethnicity. Of that number, 37% reported they were African American, 2% reported they were of Hispanic origin, and 59% reported they were White. In the United States in 2010, 673,168 candidates took the exam. Of that number, 25% of the people were African American, 20% were Hispanic, and 49% were White. Alabama's number of African American and White candidates was higher than the United States percentage, but the percentage of Hispanic test takers was noticeably lower than the U.S. average.

The percentage of GED test passers in Alabama in 2010 totaled 8,973. Of that number 55% of test passers were male, and 46% were female. For the same year, there were 8,716 who reported their ethnicity. African Americans accounted for 27% of the total number, Hispanics equaled 2%, and Whites equaled 69% of the total number. In Alabama, the overall pass rate equaled 62%. Of that number, 63% of candidates were male, and 60% were female. Further, 46% were African American, 66% were Hispanic, and 72% were White (GED Testing Program Statistical Report, 2010).

Reasons People Take the GED Exams

The American Council on Education, GED Testing Service (GED 2000 Statistical Report: Who Took the GED?, 2001), reported that GED test takers cited employment/increasing their chances of securing a job, and education as reasons for pursuing the GED. The study indicated that 31% of the 324,327 people in SREB states who took the GED cited employment as their reason for taking the test, whereas 64% of respondents gave education as their reason for

taking the GED tests. These numbers were almost equal to the national numbers, which were 30% and 65% respectively.

In March 2012, the nation was suffering from a high unemployment rate of 8.3% (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), and an inadequate education does not help a job seeker's chance of securing full-time and/or permanent employment. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (March, 2008), pursuing the GED to increase employability chances will not only prove to be smart, but more profitable. The results of the report indicated that in 2007, adults with high school diplomas or GED credentials earned 48% more than those with no high school diploma. Those who had a high school diploma or a GED credential earned approximately \$33,600; those who had some high school, but no diploma earned roughly \$24,900; and those who had less than a ninth grade education earned about \$22,700. The GED credential, for those who earned it, valued at least \$10,000 when compared to those who earned less than a ninth grade education, thus earning GED recipients approximately \$200 more per week over a year's time. The GED Testing Service (2011) reported that on average, adults earn an additional \$403,000 over their lifetime with a high school credential versus an adult without the credential or the GED equivalency. Furthermore, since 96% of companies accept the GED credential in lieu of a high school diploma, (Society of Human Resource Management, 2011), and 98% of colleges accept applications from adults who passed the GED test (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2011) earning the GED to increase employability chances places job seekers in a positive position when pursuing employment.

Education was the key motivating factor in the largest number of participants' lives, as 65% percent of participants in the United States, 64% in SREB states, and 67% in Alabama cited education as the reason for taking the GED test. Although education was given as a reason for pursuing the GED, the highest percent of the time in all geographic areas, reports show that students are not following through with their goals of continuing their education. Studies conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (2007) indicated that only 27% of adults in the United States, 25% in SREB states, and 21% in Alabama have a Bachelor degree or higher. The 2008 numbers show a slight increase from the 2000 numbers which were 24% in the United States, 23% in SREB states, and a 19% increase in percentage in the state of Alabama. A further breakdown of the numbers reported for the year 2000 show that 13% of black men in the United States, 12% in SREB states, and 10% in Alabama had earned at least a Bachelor degree. In the same year, 15% of black women in the United States, 15% in SREB states, and 13% in Alabama had earned at least a Bachelor degree. In 2000, 10% of Hispanic men in the United States, 12% in SREB states, and 13% in Alabama had earned at least a Bachelor degree. Lastly, in the same year, 11% of Hispanic women in the United States, 13% in SREB states, and 16% in Alabama had earned at least a Bachelor degree (SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2009). These numbers were not further broken down to show how many of those with a Bachelor degree had earned a GED versus a high school diploma, so one is left to wonder about those numbers, and whether having a high school diploma is an advantage to having a GED (SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2009). The numbers are fairly consistent in each category, with a slight increase in the number of Hispanic women in Alabama who had earned a degree.

Of the 811,200 people taking the GED test in the United States in 2000, 43% were 16 to 19 years old. The percentage was almost the same for those in SREB states who took the test, at 44%. Alabama's percentage of participants was 41% for this age group, which was slightly lower than the number of participants in the United States as well as the number of SREB states' participants. The 16-19 year old age group had the highest number of test takers, and also the highest number of GED credentials issued. When further breaking down and looking at the age group of 16-19 year olds, those who were 18-19 years old in all three areas (U.S., SREB states, and Alabama) earned the GED at a much higher rate. The 16-17 year olds were at 16%, 19%, and 10% respectively, whereas the 18-19 year olds figures were noticeably higher, at 29%, 27%, and 35% (American Council on Education, GED Testing Service, 2001).

In 2008, the majority of GED recipients in Alabama were 16-24 years old. There were a total of 8,916 GEDs awarded in the state in that year alone. This study suggests that of that total, 50% of those taking advantage of GED programs, and earning a GED in Alabama, were recent high school dropouts. This number is about the same as the national number for the same year, 52%. The number for SREB states was 50%. When comparing the 2000 and 2008 numbers, one might conclude that more young adults are choosing to drop out of high school, and are returning to pursue the GED (Southern Regional Education Board, 2009).

At-Risk Students

At-risk students are defined as those who will not be able to make the transition to adulthood successfully. These students will either fail in school or be failed by the system. Many of these students have parents who may be indifferent. They may have an undiagnosed

mental, emotional, or physical exceptionality that will interfere with their learning; they may come from non-English-speaking families; they may suffer from racial/ethnic/gender/religious prejudice; they may come from impoverished homes; or they may have a history of attending ineffective schools (American Educators' Encyclopedia, 1991).

At-risk students are further defined as those who are one or more years behind their age/grade level in basic reading or mathematics skills. These students may be ethnically, economically, or culturally disadvantaged students who are potential non-completers. At-risk students are further described as those who experience learning disabilities and/or difficulties, are discouraged or frustrated with school, have issues with absenteeism, participate in a free or reduced lunch program, and have been retained one or more times. Coming from a broken home, or where there is a working mother or a mother on welfare is also cited as reasons children might be at-risk of failure (Reglin, 1993).

Brodinsky and Keough (1989) contend that there are 15 characteristics that are highly predictive of dropping out of school. They are:

1. Student is two or more years older than his or her classmates.
2. Student is one or more years behind in grade level.
3. Student has made Ds or Fs in two or more subjects in the current or previous year.
4. Student shows little interest in schoolwork. Examples: does not do homework, says he or she does not like school, and does not respond in class.
5. Student is two or more years below reading level.
6. Parent(s) do not care whether student finishes school.
7. Student has a negative feeling toward school—indicates he or she has few or no friends and believes teachers are not fair.

8. Student does not belong to out-of-school organizations such as the Boy Scouts, 4-H, and church groups.
9. Student has a record of chronic absenteeism: is absent 20 or more days per year from school.
10. Student perceives that he or she is not liked by other students; has no personal friends.
11. Student has five or more siblings.
12. Mother dropped out of school at grade eight or earlier.
13. Father dropped out of school at grade eight or earlier.
14. Student is often absent due to ill health or tires easily in school.
15. Student has an IQ of 90 or below.

High School Dropouts

A dropout is one who is defined as an individual who leaves an activity, a course, a program, or a school before completing its requirements and who does so voluntarily (Dejnozka, E.L. & Kapel, D.E., 1991). A new term, dropout factory, was coined in 2001 and went viral in 2007 by Robert Balfanz, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, (SREB Fact book on Higher Education, 2009). The term dropout factory applies to any high school which has a high number of students who do not complete high school. A high school was classified as a dropout factory by the researcher if, on average, 60% or less of ninth-graders reach the senior year in three years. In 2007, 12% of the nation's public schools were classified as dropout factories. In Alabama during the 2007 school year, 45 high schools, or 12%, were classified as dropout factories. Alabama's percentage of dropouts matched the national number, but was smaller than the regional percentage, which was 18% (SREB Fact Book on Higher Education, 2009).

There is an array of reasons students give for dropping out of school. In random conversations between the Principal Investigator (PI) and GED students at SUSCC (June, 2011), some of the reasons given for dropping out of school were: did not like school, pregnancy, failed the graduation exam, failed classes, could not get along with peers, suspensions, did not like teachers, did not enjoy school, school was boring, too many rules to follow, felt dumb because of being so far behind, felt like teachers did not care, felt like an outcast, did not have any friends, was bullied by peers and nothing was done about it, absenteeism, moving around a lot, and had to get a job to help take care of my family.

A National Educational Longitudinal Study that was conducted from 1988 to 1992, when the students should have been graduating seniors, revealed reasons why students did not go on to graduate high school, and thus dropped out. Some of the reasons for dropping out included: did not feel safe at school, feelings of alienation in school, could not keep up with schoolwork, changed schools and did not like the new one, and got married or planned to get married. The most specific reasons were “did not like school” (46 percent), “failing school” (39 percent), “could not get along with teachers” (29 percent), and “got a job” (27 percent).

Fine and Zane (1989) tracked young male and female students in New York City who attended a public comprehensive high school in 1978. Fine spent an academic year attending both classes and administrative offices. She tracked 1,430 ninth graders through graduation or discharge, interviewing approximately 40%. Zane interviewed eighty young women about their experiences as students. She also included a focus group of low income black, Latino, and white students from Philadelphia Pennsylvania. Some reasons that these groups of students gave for

dropping out included family concerns, in-grade retention, negative relationships with educators, and feeling vulnerable as a female.

A study was conducted by the Community Health Research Group, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (1995), in an attempt to determine the role that alcohol and drugs played in students' decision to leave school. The study included students who were 16 to 19 years of age who had left school without receiving a high school diploma or GED certificate. The information was gathered using face-to-face, and telephone interviews. The most common reason given for leaving school was a disliking of school. After disliking school, students reported leaving high school early because of pregnancy, marriage, child care problems, disciplinary problems, academic problems, economic pressures, and legal problems. Other reasons included the student's own trouble with teachers or administrators, or a family member's trouble with teachers or administrators; illness or injury; moving or changing schools; and having trouble transferring. Only 15 percent of respondents attributed their dropping out to problems with alcohol and other drugs.

Perceived Barriers to Learning

There are several ways to gather and study perceived barriers to learning. Two of the most effective means of gathering information are face-to-face interviews, and questionnaires. A third way to gather information, which has proved effective, is to observe subjects to see what they do, rather than what they say. Finally, one might form hypotheses about barriers, and then test the hypothesis through experimental design (Cross, 1981). No matter what instrument is employed, there are results that prove that students often face obstacles that prevent them from

participating and/or persisting in programs which could ultimately change their career path.

Perceived Barriers to Learning were classified three ways in the national survey conducted for the Commission on Non-traditional Study (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974; Cross, 1981). Those three categories included situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers to learning.

Situational barriers resulted from circumstances from one's life at the time such as cost of school, time constraints, and lack of child care. The highest percent of respondents cited cost, including tuition, books, child care, and so on as being their biggest problem. Fifty-three percent of potential learners responded that one of the aforementioned was their barrier to learning. The lowest percent (3% of respondents) cited friends and family not liking the idea of them continuing their education as their barrier to learning (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974; Cross, 1981).

Based on conversations with adult education teachers (personal correspondence, July 6, 2011), the same students who had the time to participate due to unfortunate circumstances such as lay-offs, were the ones who did not have the money to come to class because of transportation issues, and the like. This seemed to be the sentiment echoed in every conversation that took place with both adult education instructors and students. These students's lack of transportation because of a layoff was their situational barrier.

Institutional barriers included amount of time required to complete program, strict attendance requirements, and too much bureaucracy in getting enrolled. The majority of the group cited not wanting to go to school full time as their reason for not wanting to participate.

Five percent indicated that there was no way to get credit or a degree, and that this prohibited them from being motivated (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974; Cross, 1981).

The third category was dispositional barriers, which included issues such as fear of being too old (17% of respondents, which was the highest number); not enjoying studying; and being tired of school. The smallest portion of the group indicated that they hesitated to seem too ambitious, and this was a barrier to their learning. Three percent of the group cited their ambitions as a barrier (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974; Cross, 1981).

Addison and Westmoreland (1999) defined some barriers to classroom achievement. A few of the barriers highlighted included: insufficient foundation skills, low self-esteem, teacher affinity, and educational evasion. They described insufficient foundation skills as a lack of background knowledge because of a lack of exposure to cultural activities. This lack of exposure could stem from a shortage of funding. As a result, students lack the same opportunities as their peers, and therefore, entered school without the appropriate skills. Low self-esteem is defined by a person's self-worth or self-concept. As a result, many students become discipline problems, display aggressive behavior, and rebel against authority figures. Teacher affinity, or rapport between the teacher and student, must be established before the student will view the teacher as someone who is there to help. If the student does not believe the teacher has his/her best interest at heart, he/she will become inattentive and refuse to cooperate. Lastly, educational evasion comes into play when a student has experienced more academic failure than success. As a result, the student will take the stance of doing nothing in order to make the teacher feel that he is not capable.

King (2002) conducted a study using males (51%) and females (49%) aged 16 to 23 years, who were high school dropouts. The group consisted of 119 current participants in GED programs located in the southern part of the United States. The survey listed 34 reasons associated with deterrents to participation in adult education. The results indicated that the primary barrier to participation related to family constraints and obligations. The subjects indicated they had a lack of encouragement from family and/or friends; they would have to reduce the amount of time they spent with family if they were to pursue the GED; had difficulty arranging child care; and had other family problems that affected participation.

The results from the National Adult Literacy Survey (1992), conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, revealed that high school dropouts reported various reasons for not completing high school. Several of those reasons include financial problems, personal problems such as pregnancy, incarceration, job or military service, lost interest, behavior, and academic problems. It is important to note that the reasons given for noncompletion may vary depending on factors such as race, gender, and region, to name a few.

Self-Regulated Learning

Ryan and Deci (2000) contend that self-regulation pertains to how people take in social values and extrinsic contingencies, and progressively transform them into personal values and self-motivations. Pintrich (1995) contends that there are three components or characteristics of self-regulated learning. Those components include control, goal, and the individual student. Control is described as when learners attempt to control their behavior, motivation, affect, and

cognition. Secondly, self-regulation centers around a goal that the student is attempting to accomplish. Lastly, the individual student—not someone else like a parent or teacher—must be in control of his actions, hence the “self” prefix in the term self-regulated learning.

The Theory of Self-Determination (SDT) differentiates types of behavioral regulation in terms of the degree to which they represent intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. A quote taken from Richard Ryan and Edward Deci’s webpage (February 12, 2012) contends that “To be self-determined is to endorse one’s actions at the highest level of reflection. When self-determined, people experience a sense of freedom to do what is interesting, personally important, and vitalizing.” Wehmeyer (1997) developed a list of characteristics of self-determined individuals. The characteristics include: choice making; decision making; problem solving; goal setting and attainment; self-observation skills; self-reinforcement skills; internal locus of control; positive attribution of efficacy and outcome expectancy; self-awareness; and self-knowledge. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are related to self-regulated learning and SDT. Intrinsic motivation and autonomous activity are terms that can be used interchangeably, as are the terms external motivation and controlled activities. With regard to the SDT, Ryan and Deci (2000) assert:

The fullest representations of humanity show people to be curious, vital, and self-motivated. At their best, they are agentic and inspired, striving to learn; extend themselves; master new skills; and apply their talents responsibly. That most people show considerable effort, agency, and commitment in their lives appears, in fact, to be

more normative than exceptional suggesting some very positive and persistent features of human nature.

Intrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Individuals who are intrinsically motivated have been able to develop a high regard for learning various types of course information without the inclusion of external rewards or reinforcements (Lei, 2010). Intrinsic motivation comes from inside an individual rather than from any external or outside rewards, such as money or grades. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated seek to improve their skills for many reasons. Some of the reasons given by GED students attending classes at Southern Union (personal correspondence, July 11, 2011) were: because it is important to them to accomplish their goals, because they would feel badly if they did not seek to improve themselves, because increasing their knowledge base is important, because learning is interesting, and because they would feel guilty if they did not continue to grow and improve, to name a few.

Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Those who are extrinsically motivated rely on rewards and desirable results, which act as a catalyst for their motivation (Lei, 2010). Those who are externally motivated act based on external rewards such as attention from others, monetary rewards, feelings of acceptance, material rewards, and being liked by others. Those who are extrinsically motivated might not receive any enjoyment out of the task they face; however, they will complete the task at hand because of the rewards they face upon goal accomplishment.

Both autonomous and controlled regulation have an effect on the degree of motivation in low-achieving students. Some motivational factors come from within high school dropouts who are pursuing their GED; therefore, they do not rely on others to motivate them to pursue their goals. These students, who are motivated from within, are intrinsically motivated. These students usually have more drive and determination than others.

Extrinsic motivation comes from an outside source which serves to support motivation. Mentors, family, friends, or tangible rewards can serve as extrinsic motivators. Some people need more motivation from the outside than others do because of a lack of faith in their ability to achieve their goals. Therefore, extrinsic motivation serves as more of a motivational factor than intrinsic motivation. Reglin (1993) stated that “educators must motivate students to meet high standards and work to their maximum potential” (p. 79), therefore, controlled regulation is an important factor to consider when teaching adults and motivating them to reach their full potential.

Motivational Factors

Motivation is defined as a psychological concept in human behavior that describes a predisposition toward a particular behavior to satisfy a specific need (American Educators’ Encyclopedia, 1991). Motivational factors may vary depending on a person’s age, race, and gender. What motivates one person to learn might not have the same affect on another person. Therefore, adult education administrators, directors, instructors, mentors, and advocates must continue to search for whatever it takes to motivate the student to learn and pursue the GED.

Wlodkowski (2004) surmised that motivation is governed to a large extent by emotions, and that a person's response to a learning activity reflects his or her culture. He described six major factors that are supported by research to influence motivation. Those factors include attitude, need, stimulation, affect, competence, and reinforcement.

Attitude is defined as a predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably toward particular people, groups, ideas, events, or objects. Needs are what an individual experiences internally, and these needs lead the person to move in the direction of a goal. Maslow organized a hierarchy of needs that were published in 1954, and these needs are organized from the lowest level need (need for food, water, sleep) to the highest level need (what a man can be he must be). Stimulation is the third factor that influences individuals, and has an affect on motivation according to Wlodkowski. In her article *They're Not Just Big Kids: Motivating Adult Learners* (2012), Thoms describes stimulation as a way of presenting students with learning that is beneficial to them, which sets the stage for their success. Affect is defined by Wlodkowski as the emotional experience—the feelings, concerns, and passions—of the individual learner or group while learning. Competence might help build confidence because the more a person feels successful, the higher their confidence level. The last of the factors that Wlodkowski reports to have influence on motivation is reinforcement. Reinforcement is any event that maintains or increases the probability of the response it follows (Vargas, 1977; Wlodkowski, 1985). All of these factors are proven to have an effect on people and their ability to persevere (Wlodkowski, 1985).

Wlodkowski (1985) surmised that aiding the learner in creating a positive attitude toward the instructor might possibly break down some of the barriers to learning. He highlighted 20 strategies for instructor use which might demonstrate the empathy and expertise of the instructor.

The strategies are as follows:

1. Share something of value with your adult learners. Sharing helps the learner see the instructor as a human being, and to break down any negative images.
2. Concretely indicate your cooperative intentions to help adults learn. Instructors must let the student know at the outset that there is a concrete means of assistance available, which will help alleviate their fear of failure.
3. To the degree authentically possible, reflect the language, perspective, and attitudes of your adult learners. Attempt to match the verbal and nonverbal behavior of the adult learner helps with establishing rapport.
4. When issuing mandatory assignments or training requirements, give your rationale for these stipulations. Since adults do not like busywork, the instructor must be careful when simply handing out assignments without rhyme or reason.
5. Allow for introductions. Instructors must be courteous and introduce themselves, and also give the learners time to introduce themselves.
6. Eliminate or minimize any negative conditions that surround the subject. Try not to associate subject matter with conditions such as pain, fear, anxiety, frustration, humiliation, or boredom.

7. Ensure successful learning. It is difficult for anyone to dislike a subject in which they are successful. Likewise, it is rare to find anyone who really likes a subject in which they are unsuccessful.
8. Make the first experience with the subject as positive as possible. The first time learners experience anything that is new or occurs in a novel or different setting, they are forming an impression that can have a lasting impact.
9. Positively confront the possible erroneous beliefs, expectations, and assumptions that may underlie a negative learner attitude. If the instructor thinks negative attitudes and/or beliefs exist, an appropriate discussion might be in order.
10. Associate the learner with other learners who are enthusiastic about the subject. The instructor should work to create opportunities for students to work with the more enthusiastic members of the group.
11. Encourage the learner. The instructor can give recognition for real effort, emphasize learning from mistakes, show faith in the adult's capacity as a learner, and work with the learner at the beginning of a difficult task.
12. Promote the learner's personal control of the context of learning. The instructor must help the adult learner realize that it is his/her own behavior that is most responsible for their learning.
13. Help learners to attribute their success to their ability and their effort. The student must be able to recognize the fruits of his/her labor.

14. When learning tasks as suitable to their ability, help learners to understand that effort and persistence can overcome their failures. If a learner experiences an unsuccessful learning outcome, there is very little the individual can do to improve unless that learner believes further personal effort has an impact on future learning tasks.

15. Make the learning goal as clear as possible. When the learner understands exactly what he/she is to learn, confusion cannot detract from his/her expectancy to succeed.

16. Make the criteria of evaluation as clear as possible. In the view of most learners, how they are evaluated will play a crucial role in determining how they objectively expect to do in any course or training session.

17. Use model similar to the learners to demonstrate expected learning. Any time instructors can provide examples of people such as the learners themselves successfully performing the expected learning activity, a significant step toward enhancing learner expectancy for success is reached.

18. Announce the expected amount of time needed for study and practice for successful learning. It is often very difficult for adult learners to estimate the amount of time a given course, assignment, or practice regimen might take.

19. Use goal-setting methods. This is an effective individualized approach to increasing a learner's expectancy for success.

20. Use contracting methods. In some circumstances, a learning contract (which is really a short form of goal setting) may be used as an agreement between the learner and the

instructor that specifies the exact ways to achieve and demonstrate the necessary learning goal.

Wlodkowski further indicates that after the student has a positive attitude toward instructor, the instructor may then begin working to motivate the student. Some motivators for adults might include offering expertise, showing enthusiasm, and demonstrating clarity.

Summary of Literature Review

Young adults are continuing to drop out of high school at an alarming rate. Minority students are dropping out of school at an even higher rate than their non-minority peers. Many of those dropouts are choosing to continue their education after finding that their options are severely limited after leaving school. The GED is a second chance for individuals to attempt to get their lives back on track after leaving school prematurely.

Preparation for the GED exam prior to testing is essential. A student has choices as to when and where they prepare. No matter what setting the student chooses, there is no substitution for prep time, as the current 2002 GED exam contents are in keeping with the standards set for high school graduates. There is a new version of the test due to be released in 2012 which will represent today's demands.

After making this second attempt at attaining an education, motivation plays a key role in an individual's ability to persist and reach their goal. This motivation may come from either inside as intrinsic motivation (autonomous) or outside factors as extrinsic motivating (controlled)

forces. Whether intrinsic or extrinsic, students must have a driving force in their effort to improve their lives.

Sometimes there are perceived barriers that inhibit motivation. Although individuals face hardships that may become barriers, they must find some way to persist and reach their goal(s). When barriers inhibit motivation, an individual must learn to overcome the roadblocks, and persevere despite the situation. With a combination of motivation, perseverance, and preparation, a student cannot go wrong in his/her pursuit of the GED.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Introduction

This chapter provides the step-by-step procedures used in conducting this study. Chapter 3 is organized into five sections. The sections included are the introduction, research questions, methods, population and sample, instrumentation, reliability and validity, data collection and analysis procedures, and summary.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between autonomous and controlled regulation among GED students who had not been successful in, and eventually dropped out of school. In addition, there was a focus on the gender and ethnicity of GED students and whether either gender or ethnicity had an effect on autonomous and/or controlled regulation and the student's ability persist in a GED program, and eventually earn a GED. Further, there was an investigation of whether or not there were gender and ethnic differences in GED students' self-regulation behaviors. This study contains information that may be helpful to adult educators and supervisors who work in the geographic areas studied when seeking to enhance the quality of their GED program.

This study focused on high school dropouts who were enrolled in adult education classes at Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC), which is located in South-East Alabama (see Appendix F), just across the Georgia line, and Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC), which is located in East-Central Alabama (see Appendix F). CVCC classes are located at the Phenix City campus. SUSCC classes are located at the Opelika campus, as well as at eight satellite locations throughout Chambers, Clay, Lee, and Randolph counties. The classes are provided free of charge by the state of Alabama.

Reglin (1993) surmised that there are approximately 25 million adults nationally who are high school dropouts, and each year another 750,000 students leave school without graduating. U.S. Census data indicated that more than 30 million adults- more than 16% of the U.S. population- were without a high school credential (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Further, Census data for October 2008 revealed an increase in the previous years' numbers, as approximately three million 16 through 24 year-olds were not enrolled in high school and had not earned a high school diploma or GED.

Educational data on high school dropout rates reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the Department of Education show that there is a need for stronger, more effective, dropout prevention programs. There is also a need for stronger, more supportive adult education programs that aid in reducing the number of participants who drop out of the program before completion, and increase the number of individuals who earn their GED. Therefore, the findings that emerged from this study may assist school board members, administrators, and principals of schools in redesigning their dropout

prevention programs, in an effort to increase graduation rates. In addition, administrators and directors of adult education programs might find the information useful in developing more effective programs that attract more individuals, and retain those individuals once they enroll in the program.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. To what degree is there a relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation among GED students?
2. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect autonomous regulation?
3. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect controlled regulation?

Methods

The data source for this study included high school dropouts who were enrolled and participating in GED programs at Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC) and Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC). Southern Union State Community College's main campus is in Wadley, Alabama, which is located in East-Central Alabama. Chattahoochee Valley's main campus is located in Phenix City, Alabama, which is located in South-East Alabama, just across the Georgia line. Both colleges are a part of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). The ACCS is managed and operated by the Department of Postsecondary Education.

SUSCC has nine class sites, eight of which are satellite locations located in both rural and urban areas. There are 17 separate classes that are held at those nine locations. Five classes are located on the Opelika campus, and 12 classes are located at satellite locations throughout Chambers, Clay, Lee, and Randolph counties. Classes are held in the mornings, midday, and evenings. Southern Union has a full-time adult education director, and 15 adult education instructors.

Chattahoochee Valley Community College has five GED classes where students can enroll in, and attend classes. All of their classes meet in one location, which is located on their main campus in Phenix City, AL. CVCC offers classes in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. Chattahoochee Valley has a full-time adult education director, and five adult education instructors.

The target population included high school dropouts attending adult education classes at two junior colleges located on the eastern side of Alabama. In October, 2008, there were over three million high school dropouts in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to data reported by the State of Alabama, Department of Education, during the 2009/2010 school year, there were 217,585 students enrolled in school in Alabama. Of that number 3,934 dropped out of high school. The graduation rate was 87.65% for the 2009/2010 school year for the entire state of Alabama.

Chattahoochee Valley Community College is located in Phenix City which is in Russell County, Alabama. Russell County has two public school systems that include Phenix City Schools and Russell County School System. Phenix City Schools reported an 89.53%

graduation rate for the 2009/2010 school year, which is slightly above the state average. Russell County School System reported an 80.69% graduation rate, which is below the city schools' as well as the state graduation rate.

Southern Union State Community College's main campus is in Wadley, Alabama which is located in Lee County, Alabama. Lee County has two public school systems that include Lee County School System and Opelika City School System. Lee County's graduation rate was 89.01% and Opelika City's graduation rate was 86.16% for the 2009/2010 school year. When comparing the two public school systems in Lee County, Lee County has a slightly higher graduation rate, while Opelika City has a slightly lower graduation rate.

SUSCC also has GED class sites located in Chambers, Clay, and Randolph Counties. Chambers County School System reported an 84.45% graduation rate, which is below the state graduation rate. Clay County School System reported a graduation rate above the state rate at 94.2%. Randolph County has two school systems which include Randolph County School System, and Roanoke City School System. Randolph County reported a graduation rate of 88.82%, and Roanoke City Schools reported a graduation rate of 93%. Both of Randolph County's school systems have a graduation rate above the state rate.

The quantitative method was used to collect data for this study. The quantitative approach is about measurement; therefore, this method was the most suitable for gathering data from GED students while using the SRQ-L assessment. There were both strengths and weaknesses to using this approach. One strength was it enabled the researcher to collect data on processes that were not directly observable. Secondly, it was well-suited when making

comparisons between groups, i.e., race and gender. Also, generalizations were establishable, and answer to the question “how many” were readily available. The process of gathering data was efficient when using this approach. Finally, this approach can be used for analysis and explanation of (causal) dependencies between social phenomena.

Some weaknesses encountered while using this approach were that it simplified and compressed complex reality, as only five selected response options were given. It was difficult to determine a description of the participants’ perspectives, intentions, and meanings. For these reasons, this approach is only applicable for measurable (quantifiable) phenomena. Lastly, using this approach made it difficult for the PI to answer why there were statistical differences, etc.

The SRQ-L questionnaire (see Appendix A) was used to survey the participants. The survey asks three broad questions about why people engage in learning-related behaviors. This questionnaire was developed by Ryan and Connell (1989). They have granted permission to users to adapt the questionnaire as needed to refer to the particular course or program being studied. Although the questionnaire was formed with just two subscales, controlled regulation and autonomous regulation, the responses that are provided are either intrinsic or extrinsic. Data were gathered using a face-to-face collection method in the classroom setting. All of the questionnaires were administered during the month of July, 2011. After data collection was completed, the results from the questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Population and Sample

Although these graduation rates are representative of the school systems which are located within the counties the adult education programs are located, they do not necessarily represent the students enrolled in those programs. Graduation data does not represent students who live outside of the areas represented, and commute to the GED class sites. Students could be transient students, or could have moved to the area after dropping out of high school and relocating to the area where an adult education program is in existence. None of the school systems reported graduation rates below 10 percentage points of the state graduation rate; however, none of the systems reported 100% graduation rates.

Probability sampling was used to select participants for this study. In probability sampling, in the most frequently encountered situations, each individual has an equal chance of becoming a part of the sample (Downie & Heath, 1974). Simple random sampling is a type of probability sampling, and is the basic sampling method of survey research (Powell, 1997).

Downie and Heath (1974) contend the following about probability sampling:

Only when we deal with probability samples can we know the frequency distribution of the sample statistics generated by the sampling procedure repeatedly applies to the same population. It is this knowledge that allows us to infer from a sample to its population. Randomization is essential to probability sampling and therefore to statistical inference itself. When sampling procedures are not carried out like this, the resulting sample is said to be biased. (p. 154)

The sample consisted of 95 students who were currently enrolled in adult education programs at either CVCC or SUSCC. The student population included both male and female students. Students of all races and nationalities were invited to participate. The student population sampled ranged from 19-70 years of age. Students were given the opportunity to opt out, without any risk or harm. There were no rewards given for participation in the study. The students were receptive and welcoming to the PI. All who participated showed a willingness to participate in the data collection process.

Data were gathered over a month's time period during the month of July, 2011. The PI distributed and collected all surveys. In an effort to avoid coercion, Adult Education Instructors were asked to leave the classroom while students completed the surveys. The Adult Education Directors and Adult Education Instructors were accommodating, and open to the data collection process.

Instrumentation

The students were surveyed using the SRQ-L. The format for this questionnaire was introduced by Ryan and Connell (1989). The questionnaire was formed with just two subscales which assess domain-specific individual differences in the types of motivation or regulation a person encompasses: Controlled Regulation, and Autonomous Regulation. These two subscales measure the degree of internal and external motivation an individual possesses.

The survey contained 13 Likert-scale type questions. Question numbers 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, and 13 of the survey measured autonomous regulation, and question numbers 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 12 measured controlled regulation. A Likert scale is a psychometric scale that was

developed by Rensis Likert (1932), who was an American educator and organizational psychologist. The scale contained ordinal response choices ranging from 1 to 5. The number one indicated not at all true, and the number five indicated very true. Likert-scales are used to construct a sum-variable to increase accuracy and reliability of measurement.

There are limitations of using Likert-scales. They may be confusing, and they have an elevated measurement error. Further, no one can say that participants know the equal distance between response choices since there are a limited number of choices available (Chimi & Russell, 2009). The students were instructed to indicate their response to each question by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

There was a demographic section on the front page of the survey. Participants were asked to indicate their sex, race, and age. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The participants were asked to complete the survey during their regular class time. Individuals were prompted, via recruitment script (see Appendix C), as to how and when to complete survey. The questionnaire was issued in pen and paper format. Some of the benefits to using questionnaires include: everybody gets the same questions, researcher can ask more complex questions, participants are willing to divulge more information without face-to-face contact, participants are less likely to try to impress interviewer, they are relatively inexpensive, and they can be computer based.

Reliability and Validity

Both reliability and validity refer to the quality of the measurement being examined. Reliability refers to the quality of a test such that it is consistent. Simply, it's whether a test, or whatever is used as a measurement tool, measures something consistently (Salkind, 2008). The extent to which data collection instruments yield consistent results with minimal error is a demonstration of the concept of reliability (Shannon & Ross, 2008). When data are reliable, there will be a highly consistent result when measures are repeated.

Validity refers to when the quality of a test, such that it measures what it says it does. Validity is the property of an assessment tool that indicates that the tool does what it says it does (Salkind, 2008). Validity refers to what is measured, or the construct that is measured (Ross & Shannon, 2008). There are two types of validity: external validity and internal validity. External validity refers to the relationship of sample to population. If data is not representative of the population, then the results of the measurement are not valid outside the sample, and cannot be generalized. Internal validity refers to the relationship between the theoretical concepts and the measures used (Ross & Shannon, 2008).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data were collected using a SRQ-L questionnaire. The questionnaire assessed domain-specific individual differences in the types of motivation or regulation an individual possesses. The format for the questionnaire was introduced by Ryan and Connell (1989). The questionnaire asked why the respondent performed a specific behavior, and then provides several possible reasons that have been preselected to represent the different styles of regulation or motivation.

According to Cross, “in recent years, the use of survey questionnaires has been far and away the most popular method for studying adult motives for learning” (1989, p. 88).

Data collection took place over a month’s period in July, 2011. The surveys were administered in questionnaire form. The questionnaires were administered by the PI. Surveys were administered in adult education classrooms. The data collection process was very informal, but structured. Data were collected at the following locations: Circle of Care, Valley, AL; Southern Union State Community College, Opelika, AL; Randolph-Roanoke Area Vocational School, Wedowee, AL; Christian Memorial Church, Roanoke, AL; Clay County High School, Ashland, AL; Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Phenix City, AL;

The PI took the following steps in gathering data:

1. Upon completing all requirements of Auburn University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), including Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training (see Appendix G), and receiving approval from the IRB, the Principal Investigator (PI) contacted, via telephone, e-mail, and/or in person the directors of Adult Education at SUSCC and CVCC prior to arriving to collect data.

2. The PI was granted permission, by the directors via e-mail and/or acknowledgement of receipt of Site Authorization Letter (see Appendix D), to recruit all current GED students, who were currently enrolled in their class, and at least 19 years of age.

3. The PI contacted, via e-mail and/or telephone, the Adult Education Instructors from each of the 17 classes at SUSCC to verify a date and time of arrival prior to survey administration.

4. The Adult Education Director contacted all Adult Education Instructors at CVCC via e-mail to confirm the proposed data collection date.

5. The Adult Education Instructor gave a brief introduction to the students as to what was about to take place, and then left the room.

6. After the Adult Education Instructor left the room, the PI read the Recruitment Script (see Appendix C) verbatim.

The Recruitment Script reads as follows:

My name is Angela Herring, a graduate student from the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology, at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to examine the motivations of high school dropouts who are participating in GED programs. You may participate if you are 19 years of age or older, and are currently enrolled in one of Southern Union State Community College's GED Programs. Please do not participate if you are not 19 years old.

As a participant, you will be asked to take a brief survey containing questions that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. There are no known risks involved with your participation in this survey. There are no benefits or compensation for your

participation. There are no privacy issues related to participating in this survey, as no personal data will be collected.

If you think you would be willing to participate, please stay in the classroom and a survey and Information Letter telling you more about the study will be given to you. When you finish with the survey, please return it to me enclosed in the envelope provided.

Do you have any question? If you have questions later, please contact me at (334)863-5950, or you may contact my advisor, Dr. James Witte, at (334)844-3054.

Thank you!

7. After reading the script (see Appendix C), the students were again told that they could not to participate unless they were at least 19 years of age, the age of majority in the state of Alabama.

8. After all students who were not 19 had exited the room, and the remaining students agreed to participate, the PI gave each student an Information Letter (see Appendix B) to read and keep for their future reference, and a survey (see Appendix A) to complete.

9. The PI read the Information Letter (see Appendix B), to the students, and asked if they had any questions or concerns.

10. The PI collected all surveys upon completion, thanked the participants, and exited the classroom to retrieve the Adult Education Instructor so students could resume class.

Students are continually enrolling and exiting GED programs. Adult education instructors reported to the PI that they do have an attendance policy, but often find that it is hard to enforce because of all of the personal struggles and hardships attendees face. As a result, there were no follow-up procedures used to collect data from those who were not present on the day data were collected. There were no non-respondents, as all students who were 19 years of age or older agreed to participate, and completed a survey on the day the survey was administered.

Survey results were analyzed by first entering demographic data and questionnaire responses into Microsoft EXCEL. After the data entry process was complete, data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 16.0 for Windows). SPSS is an easy-to-use data editor that allows the user to, according to Green and Salkind (2008), “select items from a drop-down menu to make appropriate transformation of variables; click options from another menu to create graphs of distributions of variables; select among various statistical analyses by clicking on appropriate options, and more” (p. xi).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to conduct four types of analyses of the study data. First, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics were computed on the data from the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L, Ryan & Connell, 1989). These included the calculation of frequencies and percentages of observations that make up each one of the categories for that variable. Summary statistics were also calculated for SRQ-L subscales. This includes calculating the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis statistics. The skewness

and kurtosis statistics were used to illustrate the distribution of the variables and whether or not they are non-normal. Pearson's correlations were used to evaluate the relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the relationships between the continuously distributed variables of the SRQ-L and the demographic variables gender and ethnicity. Multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to examine the impacts the gender and ethnicity of the students had on SQR-L Autonomous Regulation and Controlled Regulation subscale scores.

Summary

Data were collected from students, 19 years of age or older, who were enrolled at Chattahoochee Valley Community College and Southern Union State Community College. The quantitative method was selected as the research method to use for this study. The SRQ-L questionnaire was used to gather data. According to Cross, (1981), surveys and questionnaires are an effective way to assess adults' motives for learning. This study was conducted to ascertain high school dropouts' motivations to pursue their high school equivalency diploma now versus when they were in high school.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between anonymous and controlled regulation among GED students who had not been successful in, and eventually dropped out of school. In addition, there was a focus on the gender and ethnicity of GED students, and whether either gender or ethnicity had an effect on autonomous and/or controlled regulation and the student's ability to persist in a GED program and eventually earn a GED. Further, there was an investigation of whether or not there were gender and ethnic differences in GED students' self-regulation behaviors. This study contains information which might be utilized by adult educators and supervisors who work in the geographical areas studied when seeking to enhance the quality of their GED programs.

This study focused on high school dropouts who were enrolled in adult education classes at Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC), which is located in South-East Alabama (see Appendix F), just across the Georgia line, and Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC), which is located in East-Central Alabama (see Appendix F). CVCC classes are located at the Phenix City campus. SUSCC classes are located at the Opelika campus, as well as at eight satellite locations throughout Chambers, Clay, Lee, and Randolph counties. The classes are provided free of charge by the state of Alabama.

The research questions analyzed in this chapter include:

1. To what degree is there a relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation among GED students?
2. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect autonomous regulation?
3. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect controlled regulation?

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis obtained from the responses of students to Ryan and Connell's (1989) Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L). The chapter is organized in three sections: (a) descriptive statistics, research questions and hypotheses, and (c) summary.

Descriptive Statistics

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a significance level of .05. The .05 level corresponds to a 95% probability of a correct statistical conclusion when the null hypothesis is true. The preliminary analysis of data included: (a) assessing quality, (b) examining biases, (c) resolving missing data problems, and (d) evaluating the need for transformations. Key variables were reviewed using a histogram; the normality of the histogram was evaluated to discern sample distribution.

To determine analytic procedures that were appropriate to use when examining the data, certain diagnostic tests (e.g., Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) Goodness-of-Fit Test, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances) were calculated and assessed. Based on this assessment, parametric procedures were used to test null hypotheses.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to conduct four types of analyses of the study data. First, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics were computed on the data from the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L, Ryan & Connell, 1989). These included the calculation of frequencies and percentages of observations that make up each one of the categories for that variable. Summary statistics were also calculated for SRQ-L subscales. This includes calculating mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis statistics. The skewness and kurtosis statistics were used to illustrate the distribution of the variables and whether or not they are non-normal. Pearson's correlations were used to evaluate the relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation. A factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the relationships between the continuously distributed variables of the SRQ-L and the demographic variables gender and ethnicity.

Reliability of the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed to assess the internal consistency of the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L, Ryan & Connell, 1989). Reliability is the consistency of measurement, or the degree to which a test, or whatever is used as a measurement, measures the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same subjects (Salkind, 2008).

According to Green and Salkind (2003), "a measure is reliable if it yields consistent scores across administrations" (p. 309). In order to test the reliability of the research instrument, the researcher first verified that all items used the same Likert-type metric and no items needed to be reverse-scaled. The Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true) for each statement listed within the instrument.

According to Green and Salkind (2003), three assumptions must first be met before calculating coefficient alpha. The first of these assumptions is “every item is assumed to be equivalent to every other item” (p. 311). The second of these assumptions is “errors in measurement between parts are unrelated” (p. 311). The third and final assumption is “an item is a sum of its true and its error scores” (p. 311). The researcher felt confident that all three assumptions were met before proceeding to perform a reliability analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 16.0 for Windows).

The reliability of the revised and adapted 9-item instrument was tested and the Cronbach’s alpha was .739. The two factors were also tested for reliability. Internal consistency for the autonomous regulation scale was .601; internal consistency for the controlled regulation scale was .711 (see Table 1). The findings indicate that each subscale has adequate internal consistency reliability. Alpha coefficients and correlations between items were computed using version 16.0 of SPSS for Windows.

Table 1

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the Revised and Adapted Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire

Scales	Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficients
Autonomous Regulation	.601
Controlled Regulation	.711
Total Instrument	.739

Landis and Koch's (1977) benchmarks were employed to determine reliability. The benchmarks were denoted as (a) 0 to .20 as "slightly reliable"; (b) .21 to .40 as "fairly reliable"; (c) .41 to .60 as "moderately reliable"; (d) .61 to .80 as "substantially reliable"; and (e) .80 to 1.0 as "almost perfect" (Landis & Koch, 1977, p. 168).

An examination of the items revealed that several items had low item-correlations. Because of the reliability analysis, four items (3, 6, 9, and 12) in the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L) were deleted. Items which yielded low correlations (an *r* of .30) either with the subscale or with the total were deleted.

The SRQ-L provides a total of three scores for each participant: (a) the autonomous regulation subscale (ARS) score; (b) the controlled regulation subscale (CRS) score; and (c) the Relative Autonomy Index score. Since the Relative Autonomy Index score is comprised of further calculation of the two subscales, analysis of the Relative Autonomy Index scores was not performed. The ARS score was determined by averaging participant answers to the following questions: 1, 11, and 14. It should be noted here that the original ARS was comprised of items 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 13, and 14. The CRS score was determined by averaging participant answers to the following questions: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10. The original CRS was comprised of items 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 12. One item (#13) was inadvertently omitted from the distributed questionnaires, resulting in an adapted and revised two-factor, 9-item SRQ-L (see Appendix A).

Response Rate

The sample population for this study consisted of 95 students enrolled in adult education programs at CVCC and SUSCC. All (100.0%) students in the program completed and returned the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L, Ryan & Connell, 1989). According to Babbie (1990), "a response rate of at least 50% is generally considered adequate for analysis and

reporting. A response rate of 60% is considered good, and a response rate of at least 70% is considered very good” (p. 192).

Demographic Results

The first demographic item asked for the gender of survey respondents. Almost 6 out of every 10 students surveyed (57.9%) were females. In the second demographic item, participants were asked to choose the category that best describes their ethnicity. Some examples of choices given include: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American, or White or Caucasian. Of the surveys received, a majority of respondents (52.6%) described themselves as Black or African American ($n = 50$); 47.4% described themselves as White or Caucasian ($n = 45$). The mean age of respondents was 31.21 ($SD = 11.98$), with a median of 28.

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the range and mean, as measures of central tendency (see Table 2), as well as the skewness and kurtosis (see Table 3). According to George and Mallery (2005), values for both skewness and kurtosis between ± 1.0 are considered excellent but values between ± 2.0 are also acceptable. The skewness and kurtosis are within the ± 1.0 value for controlled regulation and within the ± 2.0 value for autonomous regulation.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Autonomous Regulation and Controlled Regulation for GED Students

Variable	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Autonomous Regulation	95	2.33	5.00	4.47	.68
Controlled Regulation	95	1.00	5.00	3.48	.87

Table 3

Skewness

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	<i>S.E.</i>	Statistic	<i>S.E.</i>
Autonomous Regulation	-1.376	.247	1.024	.490
Controlled Regulation	-.333	.247	.038	.490

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The results of the analysis used to answer the research questions developed for this study and test their associated hypotheses are presented in this section. All decisions on the statistical significance of the findings were made using an alpha level of .05.

Null Hypothesis Related to Research Question 1

The study poses the following research question: “To what degree is there a relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation among GED students?”

H_01 : There is no significant relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation among GED students.

H_{A1} : There is a significant relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation among GED students.

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test this hypothesis. The level of significance to reject the null hypothesis was set at .05. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The Pearson product-moment correlation ranges from -1.00 to +1.00. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) have answered the question specific to how strong the relationship needs to be to make it meaningful. Three ways have been presented: First, the strength of the relationship; second, by examining the statistical significance; and third, by investigating the square of the correlation coefficient. Best and Kahn (1998) presented the following criterion for measuring the magnitude of a correlation:

1. .00 - .20 --- very weak or negligible relationship
2. .20 - .40 --- weak, low relationship
3. .40 - .60 --- moderate relationship
4. .60 - .80 --- substantial relationship
5. .80 – 1.0 --- high to very high relationship

Best and Kahn (1998) also suggest two limitations that should be considered when interpreting correlation data and findings. First, the coefficient does not prove cause-and-effect relationship or causality. Second, “a zero or even a negative correlation does not necessarily mean no causation is possible” (p. 373).

Table 4 displays the correlations between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation. The correlation is positive and statistically significant. As shown in Table 4, a weak, low relationship was found between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation ($r = .388, p < .001$). The r^2 of .1505 indicates that 15.05% of the variation in controlled regulation can be

explained by the variation in autonomous regulation. Based upon these findings, H_01 was rejected in favor of H_A1 .

Null Hypothesis Related to Research Question 2

The study poses the following research question: “Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect autonomous regulation?”

H_02 : There is no significant difference between genders of GED students with regard to autonomous regulation.

Table 4

Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L) Inter-correlations

SRQ-L Scales		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1. Autonomous Regulation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.388**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	<i>N</i>	95.000	95
2. Controlled Regulation	Pearson Correlation	.388**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	<i>N</i>	95	95.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note. The row labels in the first column show the number and names of the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L) scales. The column labels across the top correspond to the same SRQ-L scales.

H_A2_1 : There is a significant difference between genders of GED students with regard to autonomous regulation.

H_{02_2} : There is no significant difference between ethnicities of GED students with regard to autonomous regulation.

H_{A2_2} : There is a significant difference between ethnicities of GED students with regard to autonomous regulation.

H_{02_3} : There is no significant interaction among genders and ethnicities of GED students with regard to autonomous regulation.

H_{A2_3} : There is a significant interaction among genders and ethnicities of GED students with regard to autonomous regulation.

A factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed with gender (female and male) and ethnicity (African American and Caucasian) as the independent variable and autonomous regulation as the dependent variable. The significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$. Levene's test of equality of error variances was not statistically significant, $F(3, 91) = 2.340, p = .079$; thus, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that the assumption of equal variances was violated. Table 5 provides the analysis of variance summary. The factorial ANOVA yielded a non-significant interaction, $F(1, 91) = .459, p = .500$, which indicates that the relationship between gender and ethnicity is the same. The ANOVA yielded a significant main effect for gender, $F(1, 91) = 5.786, p = .018$, partial $\eta^2 = .060$; and a non-significant main effect for ethnicity, $F(1, 91) = .153, p = .697$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. Partial Eta squared for the gender variable indicated that 6.0% of the total variation in autonomous regulation was explained by gender; 0.2% of the total variation can be explained by ethnicity. Based upon these findings, H_{02_1} was rejected in favor of H_{A2_1} . H_{02_2} was not rejected. H_{02_3} was not rejected.

Table 5

ANOVA for Autonomous Regulation of Male and Female GED Students by Ethnicity

Source	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	1	2.607	5.786	.018*	.060
Ethnicity	1	.069	.153	.697	.002
Gender x Ethnicity	1	.207	.459	.500	.005
Error	91	.451			
Total	94				

* $p < .05$.

These ANOVA results show that females scored significantly higher than males (4.61 vs. 4.27, respectively) on autonomous regulation. While no statistically significant differences existed between ethnicities, African Americans scored higher on autonomous regulation than their Caucasian peers (4.51 vs. 4.41). Means and standard deviations are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Autonomous Regulation Means

	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>N</i>
Female			
African American	4.68	.55	31
Caucasian	4.53	.61	24
Total	4.61	.58	55
Male			
African American	4.25	.78	19
Caucasian	4.29	.78	21
Total	4.27	.77	40
Total			
African American	4.51	.68	50
Caucasian	4.41	.70	45
Total	4.47	.68	96

Null Hypothesis Related to Research Question 3

The study poses the following research question: “Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect controlled regulation?”

H_{03_1} : There is no significant difference between genders of GED students with regard to controlled regulation.

H_{A3_1} : There is a significant difference between genders of GED students with regard to controlled regulation.

H_{03_2} : There is no significant difference between ethnicities of GED students with regard to controlled regulation.

H_{A3_2} : There is a significant difference between ethnicities of GED students with regard to controlled regulation.

H_{03_3} : There is no significant interaction among genders and ethnicities of GED students with regard to controlled regulation.

H_{A3_3} : There is a significant interaction among genders and ethnicities of GED students with regard to controlled regulation.

A factorial ANOVA was employed with gender (female and male) and ethnicity (African American and Caucasian) as the independent variables and controlled regulation as the dependent variable. The significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$. Levene's test of equality of error variances was not significant, $F(3, 91) = 2.493, p = .065$; thus, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that the assumption of equal variances was violated. Table 7 provides the ANOVA summary. As summarized in Table 7, the ANOVA yielded a non-significant main effect for gender ($F_{(1, 91)} = .080, p = .778$) and ethnicity ($F_{(1, 91)} = .727, p = .396$). Results further provided a non-significant interaction of gender and ethnicity ($F_{(1, 91)} = .060, p = .807$). Based upon these findings, H_{03_1} was not rejected. H_{03_2} was not rejected. H_{03_3} was not rejected.

The results indicated that the African American and Caucasian groups had similar controlled regulation scores (3.56 vs. 3.39, respectively) and no differences existed between females and males (3.51 vs. 3.44, respectively). Furthermore, no interaction effects were obtained (see Table 8).

Table 7

ANOVA for Controlled Regulation of Male and Female GED Students by Ethnicity

Source	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	1	.062	.080	.778	.001
Ethnicity	1	.559	.727	.396	.008
Gender x Ethnicity	1	.046	.060	.807	.001
Error	91				
Total	94				

Table 8

Controlled Regulation Means

	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>N</i>
Female			
African American	3.60	1.02	31
Caucasian	3.40	.68	24
Total	3.51	.89	55
Male			
African American	3.50	.80	19
Caucasian	3.39	.91	21
Total	3.44	.85	40
Total			
African American	3.56	.94	50
Caucasian	3.39	.78	45
Total	3.48	.87	95

Summary

This chapter presented the research findings of this cross-sectional study and explained the findings in relation to the posed research questions. The researcher used Microsoft Excel[®] and SPSS Version 16.0 software to complete the data analysis required for the study.

Descriptive statistics were described and interpreted. Pearson correlations determined a significant positive correlation between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation. The

null hypothesis was rejected, as it could be concluded that each participant's answer to a self-assessment of their own autonomous regulation behavior was indeed significantly positively related to the corresponding self-assessment of their own controlled regulation behaviors. A factorial analysis of variance determined a significant main effect for the variable Gender and the variable Autonomous Regulation. No gender and ethnic differences were found in GED students' controlled self-regulation behaviors. The conclusions and recommendations that were developed from these findings are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between autonomous and controlled regulation among GED students who had not been successful in, and eventually dropped out of school. In addition, there was a focus on the gender and ethnicity of GED students, and whether either gender or ethnicity had an affect on autonomous and/or controlled regulation and the student's ability to persist in a GED program, and eventually earn a GED. Further, there was an investigation of whether or not there were gender and ethnic differences in GED students' self-regulation behaviors. This study contains information which might be utilized by adult educators and supervisors who work in the geographic areas studied when seeking to enhance the quality of their GED program.

This study focused on high school dropouts who were enrolled in adult education classes at Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC), which is located in South-East Alabama (see Appendix F), just across the Georgia line, and Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC), which is located in East-Central Alabama (see Appendix F). CVCC classes are located at the Phenix City campus. SUSCC classes are located at the Opelika campus, as well as

at eight satellite locations throughout Chambers, Clay, Lee, and Randolph counties. The classes are provided free of charge by the state of Alabama.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. To what degree is there a relationship between autonomous regulation and controlled regulation among GED students?
2. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect autonomous regulation?
3. Do gender (female, male) and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian) of GED students affect controlled regulation?

Summary

The goal of this study was to examine the reasons people attend GED classes. The central focus was autonomous and controlled regulation, and how either/or influenced students' decisions to enroll and participate in GED programs. Motivation and self-determination both play key roles in an individual's decision to better his/her life. Sometimes, self-determination isn't enough, so people depend on the encouragement of others to pursue their goals. When people are self-determined, they are intrinsically motivated. On the other hand, when a person is extrinsically motivated, he/she is often more controlled by outside forces.

There are GED classes and programs offered across Alabama, but in order for the programs to be successful, they must meet the needs of those who participate. In order to meet

the needs of students, adult education coordinators have to know the needs of their students. Once those needs are identified, adult education coordinators can tailor their programs in a way that might enable participants to be successful.

There are many tools that can be used to assess a student's motivation. Ryan and Connell (1989) developed the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SQR-L) which was used to gather data for this study. The SQR-L was used to survey students who were attending GED programs administered by two community colleges in Alabama. Students who were enrolled were asked to complete a survey which contained 13 Likert scale questions. The response rate was 100%, as all students who were at least 19 years of age, the age of majority in Alabama, agreed to participate.

Students from Southern Union State Community College and Chattahoochee Valley Community College were surveyed. Data were gathered from African American and Caucasian students, as no other populations were present on data collection days. Although the majority of the class locations were located in rural areas, there were some sites that were located in cities such as Opelika and Phenix City. All sites were located in Alabama, as both SUSCC and CVCC are both part of the Alabama Community College System.

Conclusions

The results of this study revealed that female students are more motivated to attend classes and earn their GED than male students. However, according to the GED Testing Program Statistical Report (2010), in Alabama the number of male test taking candidates (53%) exceeded the number of female candidates (43%). The number of male GED recipients (55%)

also exceeded number of female recipients (46%). Although results of this study revealed that female students are more motivated to attend GED classes, it is important to note the geographic areas surveyed, and that the aforementioned numbers presented by the GED Testing Program are for the entire state of Alabama, and not just for the areas surveyed. As a result, the focus of administrators of GED programs should be on both male and female students, and how to enhance motivation in both groups of students. While motivating female students to earn a GED should be central to creating a plan, the retention of male students must also be a part of that plan.

In an effort to ascertain what is needed by individual students to increase their motivation to earn their GED, administrators and Adult Education Instructors could survey students to see what their immediate needs are. Cross (1981) surmised that the two most effective means of gathering information are face-to-face interviews, and questionnaires. These means of collecting data might cause students to buy in to the process and take ownership of their learning. Also concerned administrators might cause students to get on board, and be more willing to continue through program completion. Oftentimes students value being heard, and are more willing to participate when they feel like their opinions matter.

The willingness of students to participate in surveys can be witnessed from Table 9 of the GED Testing Program's Statistical Report (2010), where there was a 97% response rate under Percentage of Candidates Reporting Various Reasons for Taking the GED. As an Adult Education Instructor, I often involve my students in the decision-making process. I intentionally take a back seat, and let them decide what works best for them when deciding things such as

when to take breaks during class, and how lessons should be presented. When students feel they have a role in planning, they tend to exhibit a newfound sense of empowerment.

In an effort to increase participation among males, administrators should examine the literature to see which strategies have proven successful in motivating male students. According to Fine and Zane (1989), in a study conducted over a year's time in inner city, students reported reasons such as negative relations with educators as reasons for dropping out of high school. Wlodkowski (1985) highlighted 20 strategies that instructors can use to incite the empathy and expertise of the instructor. If instructors show that they care about the students and their well-being, they might find success by using the Wlodkowski's strategies.

Instructors should also plan to visit successful programs to see what is working and what did not work for those programs. Ideas could be generated from students by administering surveys, think tanks, and roundtables. Some of the strategies that I have observed that increases participation and motivation among male students include providing individualized attention, hosting recognition programs, including high-interest learning materials, and instruction that involve movement for kinesthetic learners.

Implications for Practice

Tailor Programs

Since female students are more motivated to attend classes, it can be assumed that male students are more affected by controlled, not autonomous, regulation. As a result, adult education administrators and instructors should tailor programs where males would have more of

an opportunity to receive rewards that would motivate them to persist throughout program completion. These students should be afforded an opportunity to complete projects where they receive praise and recognition. Instructors should strive to make information meaningful to the male student, and tap into the students' needs and interests. Lastly, instructors should learn more about male students' challenges, obstacles, and distractions, and provide them with information that might help them be more focused both at home and in class.

Educators often face the reality of not having enough funding to create and deliver lectures and lessons that excite and motivate students. They are faced with the challenge of creating high-end lessons on a shoestring budget. As a result, some instructors use textbooks and workbooks that are readily available, but are not very appealing to students, especially male students. Therefore, adult education administrators must strive to hire instructors with a background in program writing, and not merely hire certified teachers. Instructors who have an adult education degree have most likely been required to take classes in program writing, which is a plus when working with adults who exhibit controlled regulation tendencies.

Provide transportation

Although there was not a qualitative section on the survey, random conversations between the PI and students yielded many comments and concerns. Two issues that continued to come up in conversations, whether with students or instructors, included the lack of transportation (male students) and the lack of child-care services and/or funding for child care available for students (female students). The argument could be made that a decrease in concern

on the student's part with regard to transportation and child care might cause an increase in their focus on achieving their goal of earning a GED.

In order for students to be successful in GED programs, and potentially earn their GED, transportation should be readily available, easily accessible, and provided at a low to no cost. There should be federal and/or state funding that is designated solely for transportation costs. This funding should be earmarked on a quarterly basis, as needs might be greater at different times of the year. Oftentimes, programs do have monies available, but they sometimes dwindle as the need increases, or as the year progresses. There needs to be a steady flow of money that is earmarked for transportation use only, so that students can be comfortable with their choice to pursue their GED and make a better life for themselves and their families.

Transportation issues are common in rural areas, as no public transportation exists, fewer jobs are available, and travel from place to place must be done by car, as everything is spread out. This was certainly the case in each city and each class site where students were surveyed. Many of the participants stated that they had to make tough decisions with regard to attending class, as they were often faced with a shortage of money, and had to pick and choose where to spend what money they had readily available. According to Drika Griffin, Director of Adult Education at SUSCC (2012), students can opt to register for online classes offered by the college. This new option was offered based on the high number of requests from instructors to help students who were struggling financially. The only drawback to this option is the need for a computer and internet access at home, which many economically disadvantaged students do not have.

Since high schools have students who choose to drop out, there also needs to be collaboration at the local level. Local school systems could encourage those who drop out by collaborating with GED sites. The counselors and/or administrators should be in constant contact with GED instructors so they can coordinate with each other on the needs of the students they serve. If the need happens to be transportation, schools should strive to use the transportation they have available to help those students to travel back and forth to class. The cost of transportation would be decreased since most GED classes only meet two or three times a week.

Transportation can be classified as one of the barriers, titled a situational barrier, which was defined by Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs (1974). Since transportation is not provided to those attending classes at either SUSCC or CVCC class sites, but it has been mentioned time and again as a barrier to attending classes, the issue should certainly be addressed. Providing transportation could be given in the form of tokens, vouchers, or bus rides upon request. These services might improve learner persistence, and increase retention and completion rates among GED participants. Collaboration on the local level might bridge the gap between dropouts and GED recipients; thus, affording high school dropouts the opportunity to increase their likelihood of having a stable life for themselves and their families.

Provide Child Care Assistance

Although motivating male students to attend GED programs emerged as an issue, retaining female students cannot be overlooked. Oftentimes, female students have situational barriers such as childcare issues (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974; Cross, 1981), which prohibit

them from achieving their goals. In an effort to decrease a student's inability to come to class due to child care issues, administrators need to focus attention in this area.

The issues with transportation were somewhat the same as with child care. The student's and instructors expressed the need for child care, and the lack of funding available to pay for the needed service. Although there were classes offered during the day when children were in school, some mothers and fathers had smaller children who did not attend school, and needed childcare in order to attend classes. When faced with the decision of whether to take the money readily available to pay bills or pay for additional child care to attend GED classes, most people would probably choose to pay their bills.

Child care options could include on-site daycare, vouchers for babysitting services, or money to pay daycare bills when students attend all classes in a given week. Making attendance a mandatory requirement to receive the daycare services provided could decrease the amount of time it takes for a student to complete their GED. When parents feel that their children are being taken care of, they are more likely and willing to leave them to attend class. As a result, providing daycare options might increase attendance and perseverance among students.

In an effort to increase attendance, adult education coordinators should consider offering transportation and child care services. If the money is not a part of the yearly budget, they should seek assistance from outside sources such as the Department of Human Resources, local school systems, and other state agencies. It might also be to the advantage of adult education coordinators to hire a part-time grant writer to seek funding from private and anonymous

sources. Adult education coordinators must be resourceful, as they deal with individuals with needs and issues.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some recommendations for further research in relation to this topic include:

1. Examine the motivations of students enrolled in GED programs in border states, including Georgia, Florida, and Mississippi, and compare the results. Examining motivations of students in these other SREB states would give researchers a broader perspective into what motivates students to pursue their education in this region of the country.
2. Examine the motivations of GED students participating in programs at different times of the year. For example, consider whether students are more motivated to enroll and attend class in the summer when school is out vs. fall, because of the lack of parental obligations in the summer vs. the fall.
3. Increase the number of data collection sites by including more sites in the Alabama Community College System. It is important to look at students' motivations within the Alabama Community College System as a whole, and not just GED programs within the system.
4. Increase the number of participants by extending data collection period over two semesters vs. one semester. Some students take off in the summer to be with their children, and some students do the opposite; enroll in the summer when they have more

time because their children are out of school. Extending the data-collection period could possibly increase the number of participants.

5. Include a qualitative section on the survey so that the data collection process could include face-to-face interviews. This would allow the researcher to ask students about their motivations to attend GED classes.
6. Include an on-line version of the survey, and solicit input from students at other GED sites. This alternative data-collection method could increase the number of participants.
7. Separate data collection results by class site. This would enable the researcher to compare student responses by site.
8. Examine motivation of students and instructors in each site, and compare the responses to ascertain whether there is a varied response in motivation of students based on the instructor's motivation.
9. Expand the survey so that races such as Hispanic could be included. There might be a significant difference in a students' motivation based on race.
10. In an effort to collect specific information on students' motivation(s) to attend GED classes, open-ended questions could be added to the survey.
11. Add questions to the survey that relate barriers to attendance such as transportation and child care.

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Appendices

Appendix A- LEARNING SELF-REGULATION QUESTIONNAIRE (SRQ-L)

Demographic Information

The following information will be used for research purposes only. The information you supply here is anonymous, and will not be used for identification purposes.

Directions: Place an “X” in the applicable blank(s) below.

Sex:

____ Male

____ Female

Race:

____ White

____ Black/African American

____ American Indian or Alaskan Native

____ Asian Indian

____ Chinese

____ Filipino

____ Japanese

____ Korean

____ Vietnamese

____ Native Hawaiian

____ Guamanian or Chamorro

____ Samoan

____ Other Pacific Islander

Age: _____

Learning Questionnaire

The following questions relate to your reasons for participating in GED classes. Different people have different reasons for participating in GED classes, so I want to know how true each of these reasons is for you. There are three groups of items, and the questions in each group pertain to the sentence that begins that group. Please indicate, by placing a check mark in the appropriate box, how true each reason is for you by using the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5

Not at Somewhat Very
all true true true

Questions:	1	2	3	4	5
A. I will actively participate in GED classes:					
1. Because I feel like it's a good way to improve my skills and my understanding of the high school concepts I missed.					
2. Because others would think badly of me if I didn't earn my GED.					
3. Because having a GED is an important part of being successful.					
4. Because I would feel badly about myself if I didn't study and earn my GED.					
B. I am likely to follow my instructor's suggestions for earning my GED:					
5. Because I would likely earn my GED if I do what he/she suggests.					
6. Because I believe my instructor's suggestions will help me effectively prepare to take the GED test.					
7. Because I want others to think that I am a good student.					

8. Because it's easier to do what I'm told than to think about it.					
9. Because it's important to me to do well in class.					
10. Because I would probably feel guilty if I didn't comply with my instructors' suggestions.					
C. The reason that I will continue to broaden my GED skills is:					
11. Because I'm increasing my knowledge base, and it's exciting to have new ways to interact interpersonally with people in my life.					
12. Because I would feel proud if I did continue to increase my academic ability.					
13. Because it's interesting to use the skills I've attained on my job, with my family, and friends, and in class.					



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

INFORMATION LETTER

For a Research Study entitled An Examination of Motivational Factors Influencing High School Dropouts Participating In General Education Degree (GED) Programs

You are invited to participate in a research study which is being conducted to examine and analyze the motivational factors of students participating in GED programs. This study is being conducted by Angela Herring, Principal Investigator, under the direction of James Witte, PhD, Associate Professor, Educational Foundations Leadership and Technology in the Auburn University Department of Education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student participating in a GED program, and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research you will be asked to fill out a survey which includes questions that pertain to your motivation to pursue your GED. Your total time commitment will be approximately 10 minutes.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? Although there are no direct benefits for you if you choose to participate in this study, we hope the results of the study will impact you positively in your future participation in adult education programs.

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
document for use from
5/31/11 to 5/30/12
Protocol # 11-188 EP 1105

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Educational Foundations Leadership and Technology, or Southern Union State Community College.

Your Privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. Neither your name, nor any other identifying information will be collected on the survey, and you will not be asked for identifying information at any other time during your participation in this study. Information obtained through your participation will be used to fulfill an educational requirement and may be used in publication and/or presentations.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Angela Herring at (334)749-8480, or James Witte at (334)844-3054. You may keep this letter.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)844-5966 or e-mail at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

Angela H. Herring 6/9/11

Investigator obtaining consent Date

Angela H. Herring

Printed Name

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
document for use from
5/31/11 to 5/30/12
Protocol # 11-188 EP 1105

Page 2 of 2



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

INFORMATION LETTER

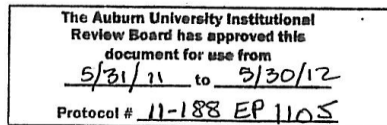
For a Research Study entitled An Examination of Motivational Factors Influencing High School Dropouts Participating In General Education Degree (GED) Programs

You are invited to participate in a research study which is being conducted to examine and analyze the motivational factors of students participating in GED programs. This study is being conducted by Angela Herring, Principal Investigator, under the direction of James Witte, PhD, Associate Professor, Educational Foundations Leadership and Technology in the Auburn University Department of Education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student participating in a GED program, and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research you will be asked to fill out a survey which includes questions that pertain to your motivation to pursue your GED. Your total time commitment will be approximately 10 minutes.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? Although there are no direct benefits for you if you choose to participate in this study, we hope the results of the study will impact you positively in your future participation in adult education programs.



Page 1 of 2

4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5221; Telephone: 334-844-4460; Fax: 334-844-3072

w w w . a u b u r n . e d u

Appendix C- Recruitment Script

My name is Angela Herring, a graduate student from the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology, at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to examine the motivations of high school dropouts who are participating in GED programs. You may participate if you are 19 years of age or older, and are currently enrolled in one of Southern Union State Community College's GED Programs. Please do not participate if you are not 19 years old.

As a participant, you will be asked to take a brief survey containing questions that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. There are no known risks involved with your participation in this survey. There are no benefits or compensation for your participation. There are no privacy issues related to participating in this survey, as no personal data will be collected.

If you think you would be willing to participate, please stay in the classroom and a survey and Information Letter telling you more about the study will be given to you. When you finish with the survey, please return it to me enclosed in the envelope provided.

Do you have any question? If you have questions later, please contact me at (334)863-5950, or you may contact my advisor, Dr. James Witte, at (334)844-3054. Thank you!

Appendix D- Site Authorization Letter/E-mail

RE: Dissertation request

Darlene Thompson [darlene.thompson@cv.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, July 06, 2011 4:09 PM

To: Angela Herring

Ms. Herring,

We welcome the opportunity to allow you to collect data from our Adult Education students. There are a few students in our program under 19 years of age; therefore, you will need to confirm the age before surveying each student.

I look forward to meeting you.

Darlene

Chattahoochee Valley Community College
Darlene Thompson | Director of Adult Education | WKO Instructor
2602 College Drive | Phenix City, AL 36869
p: (334) 214-4807 | f: (334) 214-4864 | e: darlene.thompson@cv.edu

From: Angela Herring [mailto:herriah@tigermail.auburn.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, July 06, 2011 4:24 PM

To: Darlene Thompson

Subject: Dissertation request

Good afternoon,

My name is Angela Herring. I am an adult education instructor at Southern Union, and a doctoral student at Auburn University. I am in the process of collecting data for my doctoral dissertation, and am using GED students as my data source. I was wondering if you would be in agreement for me to use the GED students at your site. If so, please respond to this e-mail confirming that you approve this request. I have attached, for your review, the Site Authorization Letter that I provided to SU as well as the Information letter that each student will receive prior to agreeing to take the survey. Each student must be at least 19 years old to participate. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (334)863-5950 home; (334)863-0085 cell. Thanks in advance,
Angela Herring

SOUTHERN UNION STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

June 9, 2011

Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Human Subjects Research
307 Samford Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study, An Examination of Motivational Factors Influencing High School Dropouts Participating in General Education Degree (GED) Programs, presented by Angela Herring, a doctoral candidate at Auburn University, I have granted permission for the study to be conducted at Southern Union State Community College.

The purpose of the study is to determine what motivational factors are influencing students to persist in GED programs. The primary activity will be administration of the SRQ-L Survey. This survey presents questions which measures an individual's motivations. Only students in Southern Union State Community College's GED program are eligible to participate.

I understand that the data collection period will occur over a two week time period, which will allow approximately one day at each GED program site. This is a one-time event, which will last for approximately 25-30 minutes at each site during normal classroom instruction time. I expect that this project will end no later than summer semester, 2011. Mrs. Herring will contact and recruit our students, and will collect data at Southern Union State Community College's satellite GED sites.

I understand that Mrs. Herring will ensure that all students are at least 19 years old, the age of majority in Alabama. I have confirmed that she has the cooperation of the classroom teachers. Mrs. Herring has agreed to provide to my office a copy of all Auburn University IRB-approved, stamped consent documents before she recruits participants on campus. Any data collected by Mrs. Herring will be kept confidential and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in her Auburn University advisor's office. Mrs. Herring has also agreed to provide to us a copy of the aggregate results from her study.

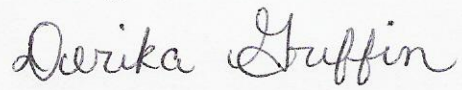
Wadley Campus
P.O. Box 1000
Wadley, AL 36276
256/395-2211

Opelika Campus
1701 LaFayette Pkwy.
Opelika, AL 36801
334/745-6437

Valley Campus
Fob James Drive
Valley, AL 36854
334/756-4151

If the IRB has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone number listed above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Derika Griffin". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Derika Griffin, Director
Adult Education Program
Southern Union State Community College

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM**

For Information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: hsubjec@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/>

Revised 03.26.11 – DO NOT STAPLE, CLIP TOGETHER ONLY.

Save a Copy

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: May 17, 2011.

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one): FULL BOARD EXPEDITED EXEMPT

2. PROJECT TITLE: An Examination of Motivational Factors in High School Dropouts Participating in General Education Degree Programs

3. Angela Herring Doctoral Candidate EFLT (334)863-5950 herriah@auburn.edu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR TITLE DEPT PHONE AU E-MAIL

229 Cauthen Circle, Roanoke, AL 36274 334-844-3072 angela.herring@cowetaschools.or
MAILING ADDRESS FAX ALTERNATE E-MAIL

4. SOURCE OF FUNDING SUPPORT: Not Applicable Internal External Agency: _____ Pending Received

5. LIST ANY CONTRACTORS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, OTHER ENTITIES OR IRBs ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT:
Southern Union State Community College

6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

<p align="center">6A. Mandatory CITI Training</p> <p>Names of key personnel who have completed CITI: Angela Herring ✓ James Witte ✓</p> <hr/> <p align="center">CITI group completed for this study: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Behavioral <input type="checkbox"/> Biomedical</p> <p align="center">PLEASE ATTACH TO HARD COPY ALL CITI CERTIFICATES FOR EACH KEY PERSONNEL</p>		<p align="center">6B. Research Methodology</p> <p>Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology</p> <p>Data Source(s): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Data <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Data Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Data collection will involve the use of: <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview / Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6D) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Internet / Electronic <input type="checkbox"/> Audio / Video / Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Private records or files</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 5/31/11 to 5/30/12 Protocol # 11-188 EP 1105</p>									
<p align="center">6C. Participant Information</p> <p>Please check all descriptors that apply to the participant population. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Males <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Females <input type="checkbox"/> AU students Vulnerable Populations <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)</p> <p>Persons with: <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Disabilities</p> <p>Do you plan to compensate your participants? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>		<p align="center">6D. Risks to Participants</p> <p>Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality*</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Coercion</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Deception</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Physical</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Psychological</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Social</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</td> </tr> </table> <p align="center">RECEIVED 6/14/11</p> <p>*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality*	<input type="checkbox"/> Coercion	<input type="checkbox"/> Deception	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychological	<input type="checkbox"/> Social	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality*	<input type="checkbox"/> Coercion										
<input type="checkbox"/> Deception	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical										
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychological	<input type="checkbox"/> Social										
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:										
<p>Do you need IBC Approval for this study? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - BUA # _____ Expiration date _____</p>											

FOR OHSR OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN OHSR: 6/14/11 by G/B PROTOCOL # 11-188 EP 1105
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: 5/31/11 by KJE APPROVAL CATEGORY: 45 CFR 46.110 (7)
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: _____ by _____ INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW: 1 year
COMMENTS: original in 5/23/11; APR-EP 5/31/11 KJE

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES

PROJECT TITLE: An Examination of Motivational Factors in High School Dropouts Participating in General Education Degree Programs

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
 - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Human Subjects Research
 - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
 - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Human Subjects Research in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise OHSR, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Human Subjects Research before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Angela Herring

Printed name of Principal Investigator


Principal Investigator's Signature
(SIGN IN BLUE INK ONLY)

May 7, 2011

Date

B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
2. I certify that the project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol using conventional or experimental methodology.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
4. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
5. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant adverse events and/or effects to the OHSR in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
6. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the OHSR by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.
7. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology

James Witte

Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor


Signature (SIGN IN BLUE INK ONLY)

5/18/2011
Date

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Sherida Downer

Printed name of Department Head


Signature (SIGN IN BLUE INK ONLY)

5/15/2011
Date

Appendix F Map of GED Class Sites Surveyed



CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Course In The Protection Human Subjects Curriculum Completion Report Printed on 10/18/2011

Learner: Angela Herring (username: herriah)

Institution: Auburn University

Contact Information Department: Educational Foundations Leadership and
Technology
Phone: 334-863-0085
Email: herriah@auburn.edu

IRB Member: This Basic Course is appropriate for IRB or Ethics Committee members.

Stage 1. Basic Course Passed on 10/11/10 (Ref # 5088479)

Required Modules	Date Completed	Score
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction	10/11/10	3/3 (100%)
Students in Research	10/11/10	10/10 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBR	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles	10/11/10	7/7 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBR	10/11/10	4/5 (80%)
The Regulations and The Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	10/11/10	4/5 (80%)
Basic Institutional Review Board (IRB) Regulations and Review Process	10/11/10	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk in Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	10/11/10	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBR	10/11/10	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBR	10/11/10	3/3 (100%)
Social and Behavioral Research for Biomedical Researchers	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Records-Based Research	10/11/10	2/2 (100%)
Genetic Research in Human Populations	10/11/10	2/2 (100%)
Research With Protected Populations - Vulnerable Subjects: An Overview	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBR	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Prisoners	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Research with Children - SBR	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Minors	10/11/10	3/3 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)

Schools - SBR		
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Pregnant Women, Human Fetuses, and Neonates	10/11/10	3/3 (100%)
International Research - SBR	10/11/10	3/3 (100%)
International Studies	10/11/10	1/1 (100%)
Internet Research - SBR	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Group Harms: Research With Culturally or Medically Vulnerable Groups	10/11/10	3/3 (100%)
FDA-Regulated Research	10/11/10	4/5 (80%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections	10/11/10	5/6 (83%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	10/11/10	4/4 (100%)
Hot Topics	10/11/10	no quiz
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	10/11/10	2/2 (100%)
The IRB Member Module - "What Every New IRB Member Needs to Know"	10/11/10	6/6 (100%)
Auburn University	10/11/10	no quiz

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be **affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be considered scientific misconduct by your institution.**

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
 Professor, University of Miami
 Director Office of Research Education
 CITI Course Coordinator

Return