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A Comparative Analysis of Levels of Importance, Satisfaction, and Engagement among Adult Learners and Tennessee Reconnect Recipients at two Community Colleges

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ABSTRACT

A Comparative Analysis of Levels of Importance, Satisfaction, and Engagement among Adult

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This primary goal of this study was to compare the levels of importance, satisfaction, and

perceived engagement between adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners at two

Tennessee community colleges. A two-group comparison research design using existing data

from two survey instruments was used for this study. The data was analyzed using descriptive

and inferential statistics based on the scales and subscales of the two surveys: Adult Learner

Inventory (ALI) and Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE). Because Tennessee

Reconnect is a new program, very little literature has been conducted targeting this specific

population. Therefore, this study attempted to add to this body of literature and fill the gap in

literature in regard to the Tennessee Reconnect population. Sixteen statistically significant

differences in importance and six statistically significant differences in satisfaction were found

between adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. These were found over all

subscales, except learning process. In all these differences Tennessee Reconnect adult learners

had higher mean importance and satisfaction levels. These findings show changes that have been

implemented since Tennessee Reconnect (i.e., professional advisors, career counselors, extended

hours of operation for student services, etc.) have led to an increase in the mean satisfaction rate

among Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. Statistically significant differences were also found

between adult learners and traditional college students in the areas of perceived engagement with

student services and faculty. Adult learners showed higher mean scores for engagement with

faculty inside the classroom and with student services such as tutoring and skills labs. However,

adult learners also showed the lowest mean satisfaction scores with these same student services.

These findings show there are areas that need improvement to better serve the Tennessee

Reconnect population, including changes to tutoring services and skills labs. This study provides

support for literature findings that adult learners are a different population of students with

different needs and requiring different or modified accommodations for success.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who have cheered me on, offered encouragement, advice, and kind words. My parents, Warren and Reva Moore, who have stood by me and believed in me when I doubted myself and didn't know if I could finish. My husband, Jason, and all my animals for their unconditional love and support, especially my dog Oliver who soaked up so many of my tears during this process. And lastly, my mammaw, Mattie Atkins, who was my number one supporter from day one. I know she is running up and down the streets of Heaven bragging to everyone about this accomplishment.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

In the Fall semester of 2018, the Tennessee Reconnect Act was implemented at all Tennessee community colleges and technical colleges. This Act was signed into law by then Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam as a way to help the state's adults receive a post-secondary education. With this post-secondary education, the hope was these students would gain new skills and be able to advance in the workplace (Tennessee Reconnect, 2017). Tennessee Reconnect offers a last-dollar scholarship for adults to attend a community college or technical college tuition-free. To qualify for the scholarship, the student must be at least 24 years old (or an independent student), be a resident of Tennessee for at least one year, not already have an associate or bachelor's degree, be admitted to an eligible institution, and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (Tennessee Reconnect, 2017). These eligibility qualifications are similar to the policy framework for creating free community college for adult learners suggested by Pingel, Parker, and Sisneros (2016).

In 2017, Tennessee had an estimated 900,000 adults with some college credits, but no degree. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) referred to this set of possible students as "the sleeping giant" (THEC, 2017). Of this 900,000, approximately 100,000 were three to six credits away from earning their degree (L. Hanemann, personal communication, November 19, 2017). According to Dr. Amy Moreland, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Policy and Strategy at TBR, those numbers are still the most recent numbers and do not yet reflect any impact made by Tennessee Reconnect just because of the timing of Tennessee Reconnect relative to survey data collection (A. Moreland, personal communication, April 2, 2021). In an attempt to reach this subset of adult learners, THEC has created Tennessee Reconnect Navigators. These community-based navigators reach out to and support adults locally to re-

enroll in post-secondary education. Currently these Tennessee Reconnect Navigators serve all 95 Tennessee counties (THEC, 2017).

Statistics on Tennessee adult learners show several trends. First, the majority of these students are Caucasian (68.7%), followed by Black at 21%. Second, the majority of these students are female (64.1%). Last, these students are more likely to attend college on a part-time status (68%). They are also more likely to require learning support/developmental classes (69%) (THEC, 2017).

Other students at Tennessee community colleges are generally composed of "traditional" college students. These students enter a post-secondary institution within two years of graduating high school (Eddy et al., 2006). Many times, these students are at community colleges because they are "ill prepared to successfully complete or finance their college education" (Kalogrides & Grodsky, 2011, p. 853). They generally rely on parents/guardians for financial support and do not work or only work part-time while attending college (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). There are several similar trends observed with this population. Like the adult learner population, the majority of the general student population is composed of females (59%), are Caucasian (73%), and are likely to require learning support/developmental classes (62%). However, these traditional college students are more likely to attend college full-time (65.5%) (Tennessee Board of Regent [TBR], 2017).

This research will focus on two Tennessee community colleges, Walters State Community College (WSCC) and Motlow State Community College (MSCC). WSCC has a 10-county service area, including Sevier, Jefferson, Greene, Claiborne, Hamblen, Hawkins, Grainger, Cocke, Union, and Hancock. To service these 10 counties, WSCC has campuses located in Morristown, Greeneville, Sevierville, and Tazewell. In each of these 10 counties, 25%

or fewer of the adults have a degree or certificate. Hancock County has the lowest percentage of adults with degrees at 14.5%. These 10 counties also have between fourteen and twenty-two percent of adults who have some college but no degree (THEC & Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation [TSAC], 2017). When looking at educational attainment in adults, Sevier County is ranked the highest in the service area. It is ranked 30th out of 95 counties. Hancock is ranked the lowest in the service area. It is ranked 87th out of 95 counties (THEC & TSAC, 2017). In addition to educational attainment percentages, WSCC's service area also contains two counties that are listed as "distressed" by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Those counties are Hancock and Cocke (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2020). WSCC's service area is served by the Northeast Tennessee Reconnect Navigator, which is directed by Terri Conduff (Tennessee Reconnect, 2020).

MSCC has an eleven-county service area, including Bedford, Cannon, Coffee, DeKalb, Franklin, Lincoln, Moore, Rutherford, Van Buren, Warren, and White counties. To service these counties, MSCC has campuses located in Moore County, Fayetteville, McMinnville, and Smyrna. In each of these 11 counties, between 12.6% and 42.2% of the adults have a degree or certificate. Van Buren County has the lowest percentage of adults with degrees at 12.6%. These 11 counties also have between seventeen and twenty-three percent of adults who have some college but no degree (THEC & TSAC, 2017)

These community colleges are serving both traditional and non-traditional students. The needs, motivations, personal issues, and academic preparedness play a role in what each population needs to be successful. It is important for institutions to understand these needs and motivations, therefore being able to provide the needed services to aid these students in being successful. Each population also has a different level of comfort and engagement with the

college, the support services, and the instructors. The implementation of the Tennessee

Reconnect Act and the influx of non-traditional students could make understanding these

differences more vital than before.

Statement of the Problem

Adult learners are a different population of students, with different motivations and

different obstacles to overcome when returning to college (Genco, 2005). They tend to be

dealing with more personal issues, be working full or part-time, and have different motivations

for returning to a post-secondary institution than are the traditional college student (Lin, 2016;

Stevens, 2014). These different life experiences and motivations often times mean this

population of students require different services and accommodations to be successful.

Studies have shown that adult learners as a population at post-secondary institutions

require assistance with many items not generally needed by the general student population

(Genco, 2005; Kallison, 2017; Lin, 2016; Osam et al., 2017). When researching the need of

childcare, Sallee and Cox (2019) found that, a small change to routine such as a sick babysitter

can easily sabotage academic studies for adult learners. Smith (2016) found that adult learners

are more likely to be affected by transportation issues such as sharing vehicles with partners or

spouses. These issues are in addition to assistance with institutional barriers such as technology,

course times, tutoring, orientations, and remedial courses (Fleming & Garner, 2009; Kallison,

2017; Lin, 2016; Osam et al., 2017).

WSCC and MSCC are two of the thirteen community colleges in Tennessee that have

begun the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect. Despite numerous research conducted on

adult learners, there has been little research completed on comparing importance, satisfaction,

and engagement of student support services available to adult learners on community college

campuses. In addition, there has been no research completed on this comparison for Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. Furthermore, there are many unknowns facing community colleges as they prepare for an influx of adult learners.

Significance of the Study

Former Governor Bill Haslam signed the Tennessee Reconnect Act in hopes of ultimately having these adult learners gain new skills to advance in the workplace (Tennessee Reconnect, 2017). In 2017, the United States Bureau of Labor released a report stating that by 2020, over 65% of adults pursuing employment will need some type of post-secondary credential (U.S. Bureau of Labor, 2017). This outlook is similar for Tennessee adults. New industries and opportunities for employment are rapidly growing in Tennessee; however, most of these new opportunities require a post-secondary credential (Torpey & Watson, 2013).

In addition to advancements in the workforce, studies have shown that achieving a post-secondary credential plays a major role in the adult learners' attitude toward life (Javed et al., 2016; Nikolaev, 2018; Nikolaev & Rusakov, 2016). This includes relationships with family and friends in addition to overall happiness with life (Javed et al., 2016). Nikolaev and Rusakov (2016) found that this positive attitude toward life from a post-secondary credential is more pronounced in non-traditional college students (i.e., adult learners). In another study, Nikolaev (2018) found that adults with a post-secondary credential reported higher levels of engagement and purpose and were more satisfied with life. Nikoleav noted that these trends are highest in those receiving associate and bachelor's degrees than those gaining graduate degrees.

The Tennessee Reconnect Act will assist adult learners in earning a post-secondary credential by providing help with tuition. However, Tennessee Reconnect will offer no assistance for many of the obstacles faced by adult learners. Some of these obstacles will require the

community college or TCAT offer the assistance to these adult learners. Surveys such as the Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) survey and Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) can be used to help determine what adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners find most important in community college services. These surveys can also be used to determine the levels of satisfaction these populations have with the current services being offered. Lastly, they can be used to determine levels of engagement adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners perceive they have with those student services and with their instructors.

Furthermore, this study will add research findings where there is currently no research. The study will not only look at general demographic information about Tennessee Reconnect students at WSCC and MSCC but will also look at importance and satisfaction levels of student services by adult learners before the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect. These before implementation results will be compared with levels of student services by adult learners after the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect. The study results could be used by community colleges to determine what other student support services are needed or which services need to be enhanced or expanded to assist Tennessee Reconnect adult learners in being successful in their pursuit of a post-secondary credential.

In addition to importance and satisfaction levels, this research will also analyze Survey of Entering Students Engagement (SENSE) results to compare perceived engagement by Tennessee Reconnect adult learners with student services and instructors. Understanding the engagement levels of this population could allow community colleges to tailor support services to these adult learners. It could also be used to create and/or offer professional development opportunities to faculty members on teaching approaches and methodologies most beneficial to Tennessee Reconnect adult learners.

Understanding the demographics of this population could also, aid community colleges in in recruitment in counties with low education attainment and low enrollment. It could help ensure in demand courses are offered at times conducive to adult learners and help determine number and types of remedial/learning support courses needed. Lastly, it could allow for an in-depth look at the adult learner population at WSCC and MSCC, with regards to age, ethnicity, gender, reception of Pell grants, military background, first generation status, credit hour status, etc. All of this information will help in preparing community colleges for future Tennessee Reconnect students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine, using ALI surveys and SENSE responses, the levels of importance and satisfaction and the perceived level of engagement adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners have in regard to student support services and course instructors. The ALI survey was created by Ruffalo Noel Levitz, LLC (RNL) to help colleges discover the institution's assets and areas that need improvement (RNL, 2020). SENSE is a survey created by the Center for Community College Student Engagement and has a goal of assisting community colleges in understanding student persistence (CCSSE, 2020a).

The implementation of student surveys at Tennessee community colleges are not required by TBR (A. Moreland, personal communication, June 18, 2020). However, both WSCC and MSCC have implemented at least one of these surveys to their general student population and/or adult learners. In addition, WSCC gave the ALI survey both before and after the implementation of the Tennessee Reconnect Act. This allows for a detailed comparison between importance and satisfaction levels of adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners at WSCC before and after Tennessee Reconnect implementation.

Research Questions

1. What are the differences in the levels of importance and satisfaction between adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College and at Motlow State Community College in 2016?

2. What are the differences in the levels of importance and satisfaction between adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2016 and the Tennessee Reconnect adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2019?

3. What are the differences in the levels of perceived engagement with instructors between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and other students enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2018?

4. What are the differences in the levels of perceived engagement with student support services between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and other students enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2018?

Delimitations of the Study

1. The study was delimited by focusing on only two community colleges of the thirteen community colleges in Tennessee. Adult learner inventory surveys have not been required by TBR (A. Moreland, personal communication, June 18, 2020). Therefore, very few community colleges have completed any type of inventories of their adult learner students. Administering and comparing adult learner surveys at all community colleges would provide a more comprehensive comparison of adult learner students at community colleges.

2. The study was delimited by not including information from any of Tennessee's colleges of applied technology (TCATs). Tennessee has 27 TCATs, each serving non-traditional

students and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. Research comparing the satisfaction and engagement of Tennessee Reconnect students attending TCATs with those attending community colleges would offer a view of adult learners in Tennessee.

3. Due to the geographically rural location and the demographic of the areas, generalizations to student populations other than those at Walters State Community College and Motlow State Community College may not be made. Both colleges serve rural counties with a similar demographic of students. Research comparing these community colleges with community colleges that serve urban counties with a different demographic of students could provide an overview of adult learners in Tennessee.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study only analyzed data from two years of Tennessee Reconnect implementation. With Tennessee Reconnect beginning in 2018, there are only two years of data available. Research looking at data after the initial first two years could provide a better picture of Tennessee Reconnect adult learners.

2. SENSE survey questions only ask about the first three weeks of college engagement. Perceptions, importance, and satisfaction can easily change after those first three weeks. Research asking similar questions after midterm of the semester could provide a better overview of student engagement.

Definition of Terms

Adult Learner – a student 24 years or older enrolled at a higher education institution (Conrad, 1993).

Community College – defined by Cohen et al. (2014) as any institution accredited to award the Associate in Arts or the Associate in Science as its highest degree.

Distressed County – a county that ranks in the worst ten percent of the nation's counties based on three economic indicators (three-year average unemployment rates, per capita market income, and poverty rates) (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2020).

Learning support courses – TBR defines learning support courses as the academic courses needed by a student to be successful in college level general education courses. These courses include reading, writing, and/or mathematics (TBR, 2020a).

Noncompleters – individuals who stopped attending or dropped out without receiving a degree, earned at least 45 credit hours, and had a minimum GPA of 2.0 (THEC, 2015).

Non-traditional Student – a student who meets one of the following criteria: delayed enrolled after high school, attends part-time, works full-time while enrolled, is financially independent, has dependents other than a spouse, or completed high school with a GED (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Persistence – percentage of students who return to college, any college, for their second year (National Student Clearinghouse, 2015).

Retention – continued enrollment within the same institution for the Fall semesters of a student's first and second year (National Student Clearinghouse, 2015).

Traditional Student – a student who meets one of the following criteria: enrolls full-time right out of high school, depends on parents for financial support, or either does not work during the school year or work part-time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 provides an introduction, statement of the problem, significance of the study, research questions, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, and definitions of terms.

A review of relevant literature is provided in Chapter 2. A generalized introduction of community colleges and adult learners will begin the chapter, including research on the motivation of adult learners to return to college. This is followed by a discussion of the Tennessee Reconnect Act. This literature review also discusses both WSCC's and MSCC's history, along with each county in their service area, with a special emphasis on educational attainment and distressed counties. Lastly, it will discuss theoretical framework that focus on community colleges and adult learners.

Chapter 3 describes the two-group comparison study that includes gathering data from an archival database and from an adult learner survey administered by the college. Explanations of the research processes that were used in this study are provided as well. Chapter 4 provides the results of the research as well as the data analysis. Chapter 5 contains the findings of the research, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2. Review of Relevant Literature

The History of Community Colleges

Community colleges were originally referred to as "junior colleges." The first junior college opened in 1901 in Illinois. The inception of junior colleges was partially due to William Rainey Harper, President of the University of Chicago. He suggested the creation of junior colleges as a way to abandon the teaching of freshman and sophomore level classes, including most general education courses (Cohen et al., 2014). As the president of the University of Missouri stated in 1896, "in freshman and sophomore years of college, not only are students identical, but the character of the teaching is the same" (Brint & Karabel, 1989, p. 24). It was thought that having these so called "junior colleges" would allow universities to focus more on becoming "research and professional development centers" (Cohen et al., 2014). This thought process caused many universities to eliminate their general education courses and their freshman and sophomore levels. Thus, the beginning of the junior college. Once accredited, these colleges were eligible to receive GI Bill funds and accept other forms of financial aid. Junior college students would complete their general education courses and then transfer into universities to finish their degree (Cohen et al., 2014).

As the role of these colleges transitioned from only offering general education courses to offering certifications and courses needed by their community, they became known as community colleges (Cohen et al., 2014). These institutions became not just transfer institutions; they became terminal schools, transfer schools, and offered whatever was needed in their community. They have also offered an opportunity for a post-secondary education to individuals who would not have a chance for one otherwise. Since their development, community colleges have continued to evolve and have taken on a niche in higher education that no other institution

covers. Today's community colleges are continuing this legacy by offering open door access for

academically underprepared students to attend a higher education institution and earn a post-

secondary credential (Bailey & Alfonso, 2005; Staley, 2013; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017).

In Tennessee, the establishment of community colleges began in 1955 by the Legislative

Council of the Tennessee General Assembly. In 1957, the Assembly published a report entitled

"Public Higher Education in Tennessee." This report was later referred to as the Pierce-Albright

report. According to Friedel et al., this "report called for the establishment of a statewide system

of 'regional-type institutions of higher learning' under the governance of the Tennessee State

Board of Education" (Friedel et al., 2014, p. 113).

Tennessee community and technical colleges have come to the forefront due to funding

initiatives such as Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect. These initiatives aim to

increase the number of Tennesseans with a post-secondary credential to 55% by the year 2025

(Tennessee Reconnect, 2017). With the help of these initiatives and other factors, Tennessee

community colleges saw a 2.2% enrollment increase during the Fall 2016 semester (THEC,

2017). Other funding for attending Tennessee community and technical colleges comes from

programs such as PELL Grants, GI Bill Funds, and HOPE Scholarships. PELL Grants are

awarded based on household income, approximately 60% of students in Tennessee receive some

amount of PELL Grants (Tennessee Government, 2020). GI Bill Funds are administered by the

Department of Veteran Affairs and when combined with other GI programs allow up to 48

months of full benefits if the student is taking at least six credit hours per semester (Tennessee

Government, 2020). The HOPE Scholarship money comes from the state lottery. It gives

students $1500 per semester to attend college. Students must be enrolled full-time (12 credit

hours per semester), and the student must enroll in a participating college within 16 months of

graduating high school (Tennessee Government, 2020).

History of Walters State Community College

Walters State Community College (WSCC), founded in 1970 as the sixth community college in Tennessee, serves ten counties with campuses in Morristown, Greeneville, Sevierville, and Tazewell. It is named after U.S. Senator Herbert S. Walters, who played a major role in Morristown being the location for the community college. This history is carried on by the mascot of WSCC being the "senators." It was created, in part, by a legislative response to the Pierce-Albright Report on Higher Education in Tennessee, which was published in 1957. The authors of the report had a goal to have a community college within 50 miles of commuting time of every Tennessean. During the time this report was written, Eastern Tennessee counties did not have higher education opportunities readily available to its citizens (WSCC, 2020a). It was created with an "open door" policy to serve the whole community. This "open door" policy has become an open access acceptance policy, with the emphasis still on serving the whole community. Serving the community has been a commonality through the entire history of WSCC, it has shaped its curriculum and created programs based on the needs of the community (WSCC, 2020a). These programs include a police academy, welding certification, clean energy certifications, and numerous health program certificates and degrees (WSCC, 2020a).

WSCC has a ten-county service area, which includes Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Sevier, and Union counties. Most of the Tennessee Reconnect population at WSCC will come from these ten counties. Therefore, it is important to understand the profiles of those counties. Both Hancock and Cocke are considered distressed counties by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Distressed counties are those that rank in the worst ten percent of the nation's counties based on per capita income, rates of

poverty, and rates of unemployment (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2020). Poverty rates range from 14% in Jefferson County to 25.8% in Hancock County. Median household income ranges from $47,264 in Jefferson County to $28,990 in Hancock County. According to County Profiles completed by THEC in conjunction with Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) (2017), in each of these ten counties, twenty-five percent or fewer of the adults have a degree or certificate. Hancock County has the lowest percentage of adults with degrees at 15.3%. These ten counties also have between fourteen and twenty-two percent of adults who have some college but no degree (THEC & TSAC, 2017). When looking at educational attainment in adults, Sevier County is ranked the highest in the service area. It is ranked 30th out of 95 counties. Hancock is ranked the lowest in the service area. It is ranked 87th out of 95 counties (THEC & TSAC, 2017).

In the Fall 2018-Spring 2019 semester, WSCC had a total enrollment of 6,144. Of those, 1,268 were adult learners and/or Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. Therefore, 4,876 were traditional aged college students. The average age of WSCC students during this time was 22 years old (WSCC, 2020b).

History of Motlow State Community College

Motlow State Community College (MSCC) opened in 1969 on land donated by the family of former Senator Reagor Motlow. The first year there were 551 students and 18 faculty members (MSCC, 2020a). During this time, MSCC had a service area of seven counties. In 1983, the service area was expanded to 11 counties (MSCC, 2020a). Today it has campuses in Moore County, McMinnville, Fayetteville, and Smyrna. It also has a teaching site in Sparta and a partnership in Shelbyville at the Middle Tennessee Education Center (MSCC, 2020a). MSCC has an "open door" policy and "continues to adapt and grow to meet the needs of current and

future students" (MSCC, 2020a, p. 1).

MSCC has an eleven-county service area, which includes Bedford, Cannon, Coffee, DeKalb, Franklin, Lincoln, Moore, Rutherford, Van Buren, Warren, and White counties (MSCC, 2020a). In addition, MSCC offers in-state tuition to three Alabama border counties: Madison, Jackson, and Limestone. Between 17.1% and 23.4% of the adults in these counties have some college, but no degree (THEC, 2020). When looking at education attainment, DeKalb is ranked the lowest at 72 out of 95 counites. Rutherford is ranked the highest at four out of 95 counties (Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2020). Of the three Alabama counties, Jackson and Limestone have between ten and 20 percent of their population with a post-secondary credential. Madison county has more than 20 percent of their population with a post-secondary credential (Rural Policy Research Institute, 2007). While those adult learners would not qualify for Tennessee Reconnect, they can attend MSCC using in-state tuition.

In the Fall 2018 semester, MSCC had a total enrollment of 6,886. Of those, 1,452 were adult learner students and/or Tennessee Reconnect students. Therefore, 5,434 were traditional aged college students. The average age of MSCC students during this time was 22 years old (MSCC, 2020b).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is the structure that strengthens the theory of a study. It introduces or describes theories that clarify why the study exists (Abend, 2008). There are several theoretical framework models for community colleges and adult learners that discuss variables and factors similar to those already discussed in this chapter. Those most discussed in literature are Lindeman (1926), Spady (1970), Tinto (1975), Pascarella (1980), and Bean and Metzner (1985).

Spady's (1970) model focused on the dropout process of students at post-secondary institutions. His model showed the decisions to dropout was connected to variables such as family background, academic potential, normative congruence, grade performance, intellectual development, friendship support, social integration, and institutional commitment (Spady, 1970). Tinto (1975) also studied the dropout process. He stressed the importance of differentiating between dropout due to academic failure and voluntary withdrawal. His model includes many of variables presented by Spady; however, it adds items such as pre-college schooling, faculty interactions, and goal commitment (Tinto, 1975). Pascarella (1980) focused his research on faculty and student interactions as a variable to student achievement and college outcomes. He specifically looked at faculty/student interactions outside the classroom in informal settings. His frameworks suggest these interactions are keys to student achievement and he noted these interactions are inversely correlated to institution size (i.e., community colleges are more likely to foster these faculty/student interactions than are larger universities) (Pascarella, 1980). Lindeman (1926) presents one of the earliest models on adult education. In his model he stresses the importance of having the curriculum built around the adult learner and their life experiences. His model is best summed up with the state, "in an adult class the student's experience counts for as much as the teacher's knowledge" (Lindeman, 1926, p. 166). The Bean and Metzner (1985) model focuses on attrition of nontraditional students. Their model (Figure 1) incorporates factors such as background and defining variables, academic variables, environmental variables, academic outcomes, and psychological outcomes with the intent to leave and dropping out of adult learners (Bean & Metzner, 1985).

Figure 1

Bean and Metzner's Conceptual Model of Nontraditional Student Attrition (1985)
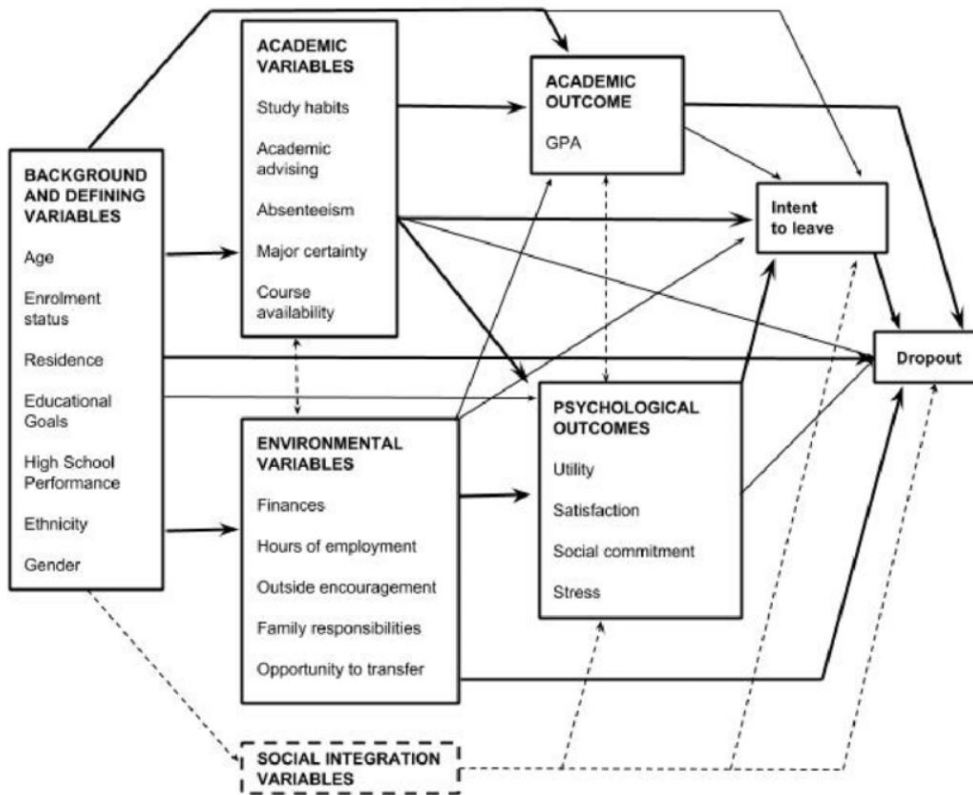
The theoretical framework for this study will use portions of each of these models. Based on these models, it is understood that there are many variables in play that can lead to students dropping out. Incorporating adult learners, instead of traditional college students, into the framework adds even more variables. Key components mentioned in these frameworks are the commitment of the institution and interactions/faculty relationships. Understanding what adult learners find important at institutions, what services they are satisfied with, and what level of engagement they perceive are the central themes of this study.

Common Characteristics of Adult Learners

Community colleges serve a demographic not normally found at other post-secondary

institutions. This demographic is adult learners or "non-traditional" students. Conrad (1993) defines this term as a student 24 years or older enrolled at a higher education institution. These students tend to share many characteristics (Genco, 2005; Lin, 2016).

1.) Being 24 or older

2.) Working full-time with part-time college enrollment

3.) Having family and/or child related obligations

4.) Balancing financial obligations in addition to attending college

5.) Being restricted by time limitations

Many research studies have focused on female adult learners. Lin found that compared to their male counterparts, females "experienced competing pressure of childcare, financial and school responsibilities (Lin, 2016, p. 119)." There is a higher percentage of female adult learners attending community colleges than males. According to Osam et al.

> a possible explanation for the decline in adult male college enrollment from a cultural perspective is that married men with family responsibilities may feel pressured to meet the traditional expectations of making ends meet to provide for their families, and thus are less likely to return to college. (Osam et al., 2017, p. 56)

In additions to these characteristics, Stevens (2014) found that adult learners tend to be very goal oriented and extremely motivated. They work well independently, although they do often require extra time with instructors. Lastly, while they do not always have college credits, they do have years of life and work experiences to bring to the classroom (Genco, 2005).

Tennessee currently has an estimated 900,000 adults with some college credits, but no degree (THEC, 2017). THEC refers to this set of possible students as "the sleeping giant" (THEC, 2017). Of this 900,000, approximately 100,000 are three to six credits away from

earning their degree (E. House, personal communication, June 2, 2018). In an attempt to reach this subset of adult learners, THEC has created the Tennessee Reconnect Community. Currently there are ten Tennessee Reconnect Communities across the state. The last three were launched in early 2018. Together, these will serve all 95 counties (THEC, 2017), reaching out to support adults to re-enroll in local post-secondary education. According to THEC, the first three Tennessee Reconnect Community sponsored regional events for adult "noncompleters" were held in March 2016 (THEC, 2017).

Statistics on Tennessee adult learners show several trends. First, the majority of these students are Caucasian (68.7%), followed by African American at 21%. Second, the majority of these students are female (64.1%). Lastly, these students are more likely to attend college on a part-time status (68%). They are also more likely to require learning support/developmental classes (69%) (THEC, 2017).

In the Fall of 2017, WSCC had a student enrollment of 6,125. Of those, 1,049 were adult learner students. Adult learners earned 700 of the degrees or certificates of the 1,957 degrees and/or certificates awarded during the 2016-2017 academic year. Those adult learners majored primarily in three programs, health professions and related services, liberal arts and sciences, and business management and administrative services (THEC, 2017). These majors are the most common chosen by adult learners at most Tennessee community colleges (THEC, 2017).

In the Fall of 2017, MSCC had a student enrollment of 6,622; 956 were adult learner students. Adult learners earned close to 300 of the degrees or certificates of the 852 degrees and/or certificates awarded during the 2016-2017 academic year. Those adult learners majored in primarily three programs, liberal arts and sciences, health professions, and engineering (THEC, 2017). Engineering is not typically a program chosen by adult learners at most Tennessee

community colleges (THEC, 2017).

Reconnect Navigator is the Reconnect Community that services both the WSCC and MSCC service areas. This community offers support, advisors, and connections to community college information and staff (Tennessee Reconnect, 2020). Reconnect Navigator staff also attend community events and sets up booths with more information. The goal is to share college information with as many adults as possible. This outreach is especially important in some of the most rural, secluded counties in the service area.

Adult Learner Perceptions of Community Colleges

There are many reasons why adult learners decide to attend community colleges over a four-year institution. Many of those reasons involve their perceptions and attitudes of community college. According to Barcinas et al. (2016) these perceptions can include an environment that values learning and has open access policies allowing them to serve students that would not have the opportunity to attend a four-year institution. Adult learners value that community colleges are focused on learning and have faculty members that use many teaching techniques in the classroom (Barcinas et al., 2016; McCallum, 2012). Barcinas et al. (2016) also found that adult learners believe community colleges offerings and schedules are more accommodating to the needs of adult learners than are offerings at four-year institutions. As one student in their study stated, "I have a family and need to attend part-time, community college made that an available option" (Barcinas et al., 2016, p. 22). In addition to traditional offerings and schedules, community colleges generally offer a variety of online courses that work well for adult learners working full-time and balancing schoolwork with a family time (Iloh, 2019). These perceptions are best summed up by a participant in Barcinas et al.'s study who stated this of community colleges and adult learners:

maybe they didn't do things the way they were supposed to. Maybe they went to jail, or

had a baby too young, or maybe they had a nice life and something bad happened. Now

years later here they are and truthfully, they are the ones who motivate the rest of us.

When I first started here, I didn't really get it. I grew as a person. I realized over time

what open access really means and how everybody…everybody is here to get better. You

have to let people be who they are and be ready to help them when they take the next step

in life…community colleges do that (Barcinas et al., 2016, p. 22).

Adult Learners Drop out of College and Motivations for Returning to College

There are many reasons why an adult learner might have dropped out of a post-secondary

institution. Hensley and Kinser (2001) found that items such as a negative academic experience,

perceived lack of academic skills, lack of direction, and family factors were top reasons why

adult learners dropped out of institutions. Results from adult learner surveys at WSCC showed

that students dropped out due to personal issues (i.e., family issues, illness, substance abuse

issues, and divorce), lack of available childcare, and lack of transportation, in addition to funding

issues (WSCC, 2017). Other studies have found that adult learners are more likely to dropout

while taking online courses (Hiltz, 1997; Phipps & Merisotis, 1999). These studies support

Tinto's (1993) findings that adult learners require more interactions with their learning

environment and faculty member. These interactions are less likely to occur in an online course.

Intrinsic and psychological motivations also play a role in adult learners quitting or dropping out

of college. These intrinsic motivations include home responsibilities, work responsibilities, and

financial responsibilities (Goto & Martin, 2009; Stevens, 2014). Psychological motivations can

include lack of support, anxiety, or depression (Osam et al., 2017; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg,

2017).

A large part of the impending success of Drive to 55 involves those 900,000 Tennessee adults with some college credits, but no degree or certificate. Tennessee Reconnect could help bring those 900,000 back to finish their post-secondary education by providing the financial coverage. However, there are many confounding factors other than financial issues to explore when investigating what motivates adult learners to return to a post-secondary institution.

Sense of Purpose and Self Awareness

Hensley and Kinser (2001) found many adult learners decide to return to a post-secondary institution because they know what they want to do with their lives and have found their sense of purpose. This self-awareness was not there when they were a traditional college-aged student. Baby boomers are also more likely to enroll at post-secondary institution to take classes that give them a sense of purpose and that they find interesting (Parks et al., 2013). This group of adult learners are also more likely to choose community colleges to take these courses (de Medeiros et al., 2007). For many adults, entering a post-secondary institution is a life-long ambition of earning an advanced degree or new knowledge (Hardin, 2008).

Advancement in the Workplace

Community colleges work with the community of which they are a part. Often that involves creating programs for business and industries in that community (Cohen et al., 2014). This creation of non-credit programs, certificate programs, and even associate programs motivate adult learners to come back to community colleges to earn credentials to advance in their workplace (Genco, 2005). To make the idea of returning to college more appealing, many workplaces offer programs to pay for courses or reimburse employees who are successful in their courses (Hensley & Kinser, 2001). Studies have also shown that even if these adult learners do not graduate, just having some college credits has a positive impact on wages (Kim & Baker,

2015).

Career Changes

Many times, adult learners return to a post-secondary institution due to being laid off from a job or a workplace shutting down. Research has shown that enrollment at community colleges increases during economic recessions as adults return to colleges in hopes of gaining credentials for new careers (Barshay, 2020; Samuels et al., 2011). Vien (2010) found that up to 75% of older adults return to a post-secondary institution to prepare for a new career. For students entering college due to job loss, college itself can become an added worry due to lowered or lack of income to provide for their families (Hardin, 2008). In addition, this financial impact is observed more in women returning to college as they are often returning due to divorce or death of a spouse (Allen, 1993).

Intrinsic Motivations

The same intrinsic factors that lead some adult learners to dropout or quit college are also some of the same that have them return. Hensley and Kinser (2001) found that commitment to family, especially children, is a common factor for adult learners to return to college. In their study, many students mentioned wanting to serve as a role model for their children and earning a degree was one way to do that. Financial issues can be a factor that causes adult learners to dropout; however, those issues can also lead to adults returning to college in hopes of earning a degree to increase earnings (Goto & Martin, 2009).

Services Targeting Adult Learners

Based on the literature, there are many areas where services and/or accommodations could assist adult learners in achieving successful outcomes. These services can be broken down into several categories. Many of these services or accommodations are currently offered in some

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form at either WSCC, MSCC, or both and would only need to be slightly modified or extended.

These services include outreach, technology, financing, life and career planning, learning

process, transitions, student support services, and learning outcomes.

Outreach

Of the services targeting adult learners, one of the most important is outreach. Outreach

involves recruitment of adult learners by colleges. The recruitment efforts should be focused on

areas with low educational attainment and those counties labeled as distressed counties (Hebel,

2006). While MSCC does not have any distressed counties in their service area, they do have low

educational attainment counties, including the three border counties in Alabama (MSCC, 2020b).

There are two counties in WSCC's service area that are listed as distressed, Hancock and Cocke.

Hancock County is a rural county in northeastern Tennessee. It has an area of 222.3 square miles

and a population of 6,577 (Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development,

2018). Hancock County is listed as a distressed county by the Appalachian Regional

Commission. Appalachian Regional Commission ranks counties based on a three-year average

unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate. The counties that rank in the

bottom 10 percent are labeled as the most economically distressed counties in the nation

(Tennessee Government, 2018). Based on the Appalachian Regional Commissions' results,

Hancock County is ranked as the 3,062 most distressed county out of 3,113 counties

(Appalachian Regional Commission, 2018). The County has a poverty rate of 27.3% and a three-

year average unemployment rate of 9.1% (Tennessee Government, 2018). Being a distressed

county has affected the educational attainment of Hancock County. According to the THEC and

TSAC Higher Education County Profile for Hancock County (2018), the County is ranked 87 out

of 95 counties for educational attainment: with only 15.1% of the adult population having a post-

secondary degree.

According to WSCC's Director of Admissions and Enrollment Development, a key component of recruitment is involving the county residents. In a rural county, groups (including those from colleges) not from the county are sometimes viewed as outsiders and are not always listened to by the county residents. These groups have realized that to be fully successful in the county, they must rely on individuals from inside the county for assistance. These individuals play and will continue to play a vital role in the educational attainment (A. Swinson, personal communication, July 12, 2020).

Technology

Many adult learners fear they are behind their traditional-aged classmates regarding technology (Genco, 2005). Having a technology helpdesk or tutoring service available outside of normal time could help these adult learners feel more confident in online courses and courses that require an online component or online learning management system (Fleming & Garner, 2009). Having these services available in the evenings, weekends, and even online could help adult learners feel more at ease in the classroom (Fleming & Garner, 2009; Genco, 2005). Stavredes (2011) found that for adult learners to have successful interactions in online classes and with technology use, faculty must utilize teaching strategies that are effective for adult learners. Chaffin and Harlow (2005) found that older adults require more assistance with learning technology, but once they learn the technology they are just as competent using them as younger adults.

Financing

While Tennessee Reconnect does cover the cost of tuition, it does not provide any additional funds for living expenses. Because of this, most adult learners will need, at least, a

part-time job while attending college. Sisselman-Borgia and Torino suggested creating "experiential learning" opportunities for adult learners such as internships in the student's field of study (Sisselman-Borgia & Torino, 2017 p. 3). The student would gain not only classroom knowledge but would then be able to apply that knowledge in the field. These opportunities could additionally be created as "independent study" courses and allow the student to earn college credit (Sisselman-Borgia & Torino, 2017, p. 9).

There are many opportunities available for additional financial aid and scholarships to assist with fees and living expenses. However, adult learners struggle more than traditional-aged college students with navigating the financial aid system (Michelau & Lane, 2010). In addition, those adult learners who do navigate the system still struggle with negative experiences dealing with no one answering their questions and/or returning their calls (Goncalves & Trunk, 2014). In addition, many times there are an abundance of resources available, but they are difficult to comprehend or access by adult learners (Sallee & Cox, 2019).

Life and Career Planning

Life and career planning involve the use of personal and career counselors and the implementation of internships or work-based learning opportunities for adult learners. Personal and/or career counselors are found on almost all college campuses (M. Duff, personal communication, July 12, 2020). Knox and Farmer define the purpose of these counseling services "to assist adult learners in exploring personal aspirations and available opportunities and to make plans related to their educational development" (Knox & Farmer, 1977, p. 390). According to Luzzo (1999), adult learner career and personal counseling needs are very different than those of traditional aged college students. This population exhibits more self-efficacy and stronger decision-making attitudes toward careers. They are mature and know what they are

looking for in a career (Luzzo, 1999). To be effective, counselors need to have an understanding of college life, but also an understanding of personal issues such as work and family life (MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994).

Internships and/or work-based learning opportunities have long been a way for college students to gain insight into their desired profession or career (Giordani, 2010). However, this traditional approach of working full-time for little to no pay can pose issues or additional challenges to adult learners. Many times, it would require them to quit their current jobs, thus losing insurance and benefits, which is not feasible when providing for a family (Mosenson & Mosenson, 2012). According to Petz (2009), this approach can leave adult learners exhausted, possibly leading to accidents. New approaches for internships and/or work-based learning opportunities designed for adult learners involve having them take on additional responsibilities in their current workplace (Gelinas, 2014). This is especially helpful for adult learners looking to advance in their current workplace. Other options include partnerships formed between colleges and businesses that lead to interns being hired after their internship is complete (Varty, 1994).

Learning Process

Learning process focuses on how adult learners learn. Adult learners do learn differently, according to Knowles (1984). He found that adult learners focus more on application than on acquisition. Compton et al. (2006) state that adult learners are more likely to consider themselves workers, as opposed to seeing themselves as students. According to Aslanian (2013), adult learners do best in courses that teach them how to do a task, rather than courses that focus more on theory. They need to view the course or the material as pertinent before they want to learn (Ahissar et al., 1992). In addition to pertinent material, adult learners need to feel they are completing material by their own choice (i.e., self-motivation) (Oettingen et al., 2016). This

population was found to have a greater motivation for learning but lack confidence in the classroom environment (Bye et al., 2007). Faculty members can assist adult learners by encouraging them to learn. This can be done by creating positive attitude in the "four important attitudinal directions" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017, p. 184). Those attitudinal directions are toward the instructor, toward the subject, toward their self-efficacy for learning, and toward the specific learning goal or performance.

Apart from the faculty members, introductory/first year college experience courses can also assist adult learner in the college learning process (Black et al., 2016). According to the Institute of Education Sciences (2016), these college experience courses assist students who are not academically prepared for college (including many adult learners) with study skills and coping strategies. In addition, these courses also introduce students to campus resources and career planning (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992).

Transitions

Transition programs are any program or service that aids students in transitioning to college (Community College Research Center, 2016). These can be bridge programs that offer adult learners the chance to quickly reach college ready level through intensive, fast-paced courses offered in the weeks before college semesters start. Kallison (2017) found that these programs result in statistically significant increases in college readiness, even in those who did not pass placement exams for being college ready. These programs could help reduce the need of learning support and/or developmental courses for adult learners. Many other research studies have shown that these types of programs positively affect student outlook and performance (Espinoza & Espinoza, 2012; Hollins, 2009; Karp et al., 2013; Kolenovic et al., 2013).

Other transition programs can include intensive and intrusive orientations and advising

sessions. The need for first year student orientations is well documented in literature (Espinoza & Espinoza, 2012; Kallison, 2017; Kolenovic et al., 2013). One of the best examples of successful use of intrusive advising is the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at the City University of New York system of community colleges (CUNY). The program began in the Fall semester of 2007 with 1,132 students. ASAP assists students in earning associate degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports (CUNY, 2017a). In this program, students are steered toward an intensive, full-time curriculum and are provided with financial supports as well as mandatory interactions with counselors and advisers to ensure that they stay on track (Cohen et al., 2014). According to Giegerich (2012), this program refuses to allow students to fail.

The goal of the program is to have students earn an associate degree within three years of enrollment (CUNY, 2017a). To assist in this endeavor, students are supplied waivers for tuition and fees, MetroCards for transportation, and additional assistance for textbooks and course materials. In addition, the students are provided comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, personal counseling, and tutoring (Cohen et al., 2014). To support the targeted low-income and minority demographic, coordinators offer special class scheduling options with other ASAP students during hours that accommodate standard work schedules (CUNY, 2017a).

ASAP differs from other programs due to the structured and intrusive approach of the curriculum and support services. To start the program, students must complete a CUNY assessment test in each reading, writing, and math. These assessments will determine if the student needs to be placed in remedial classes before beginning college level courses. For the program to work as described, students must choose a major as they apply for the program. Each participating community college has a list of accepted and unaccepted majors. Common

exceptions include allied health sciences majors in nursing, radiologic technology, nuclear medicine, and medical laboratory technician (CUNY, 2017b).

The program has been most successful with community college students who need remedial education. A study found that students in ASAP were ten percent more likely to enroll in each subsequent semester. The program also increased the average number of credits earned over two years by 7.6 credits. The same study found that ASAP increased the proportion of students who earned an associate degree in two years by 5.7 percentage points (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 2014). In 2010, fifty-five percent of the initial cohort had earned their associate degree. This is compared to twenty-five percent in a comparison group (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 2014).

Student Support Services

Renirie found that "while the traditional high school-college pipeline is often enabled by school systems, administrators, recruiters, and parents, the path to college for adults can be more challenging" (Renirie, 2017, p. 315). This challenge makes student support services important for adult learners. Adult learners require more assistance with admissions (applications and acceptance) and navigating financial aid (completing FAFSA, applying for scholarships, and student loans) (Brewer & Yucedag-Ozcan, 2013). In addition to support services for enrolling adult learners, colleges must also have support services to assist in retention and persistence this population (Kasworm et al., 2002). Powers (2017) also recommends dedicated support services for subpopulations of adult learners, including veterans. As stated previously, many times there are an abundance of resources available, but they are difficult to comprehend or access by adult learners (Sallee & Cox, 2019). Support services can aid in this challenge.

Learning Outcomes

For this study, learning outcomes include prior learning assessments, placement exams, and assessments conducted in each class. Adult learners enter post-secondary institutions with years of life experiences (Knowles, 1984). Many times, these experiences come from time spent in the workforce (Field, 1993). PLAs are a way these students to earn college credit for these experiences (Freed & Mollick, 2009). Depending on the post-secondary institution, evaluation of these PLAs can involve giving the students final exams of certain classes or having the student complete a portfolio that is evaluated by faculty of the course (Lamdin, 1997). Hayward and Williams (2015) found that utilizing PLAs led to higher graduation rates at community colleges. WSCC offers college credit for prior learning including dual credit, departmental assessment, military experience, certifications and licensures, exams and tests, and experiences at Tennessee technology centers (WSCC, 2020c). MSCC focuses on prior learning earning from TCATs, especially in their general technology major (MSCC, 2013).

Adult learners are entering a post-secondary institution after being away from school for some years. To assist students in preparing for college level courses, many colleges require adult learners to take placement tests such as the Compass Test or Accuplacer Test (College for Adults, 2020). These tests replace ACT or SAT scores that are used for placing traditional-aged college students. These tests are broken down into reading, math, and writing. Students must make a certain score (that score depends on the college) to enter college level courses (College for Adults, 2020). Many colleges, including WSCC and MSCC, offer bridge programs or transition programs to assist students in preparing for these placement tests (WSCC, 2017).

Learning outcomes also includes assessments for courses that adult learners are enrolled. Each course offers a set number of assessments that is detailed in the course syllabus. Studies

have shown that adult learner assessment execution is positively correlated to learning approaches and attitudes (Feeley & Biggerstaff, 2015). These findings could make those college experience/first year study skills courses even more important to adult learners.

Challenges Facing Adult Learners

Adult learners are, in general, dealing with more personal demands and challenges than are traditional-aged college students (Genco, 2005). Many adult learners are balancing family life and college demands, in many cases these personal demands can force them to choose between family obligations and succeeding in their post-secondary education (Barrington, 2017; Genco, 2005; Panacci, 2015). Personal demands and challenges can include personal responsibilities, academic preparation, psychological challenges, and challenges engaging in college (Genco, 2005).

Personal Responsibilities

For adult learners, personal responsibilities can take on many forms. They can include home responsibilities, work responsibilities, transportation issues, and/or childcare issues. Home responsibilities are a challenge facing all students, but especially adult learners (Lin, 2016). Home responsibilities can include taking care of a spouse, children, aging parents, in addition to running a household (Lin, 2016). Personal responsibilities appear to be more of a barrier for female adult learners than for male adult learners (Home & Hinds, 2000; Osam et al., 2017). Literature indicates that female adult learners are quickly becoming the swiftest growing population of students on college campuses (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002; Lin, 2016; Scott et al., 1996). For this population, family responsibilities, especially caring for young children was found to be the biggest barrier to their academic success (Kirk & Dorfman, 1983; Lin, 2016; Quimbly & O'Brien, 2004).

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Male adult learners are more impacted by work responsibilities (Osam et al., 2017). According to Hostetler et al. (2007), male adult learners are more likely continue working full-time while attending college. This could be due to the stereotype that males should be the head of the household and providing financially for the family (Osam et al., 2017). Thus, work schedules and class schedules introduce challenges for this population (Genco, 2005).

As with home and work responsibilities, transportation issues are common challenges that keeps students out of the classroom. Adult learners are more likely to be commuters and rely on vehicles, public transportation, or carpooling (Goto & Martin, 2009; Smith, 2016). Bray (2020) found that college students, on average, spend close to $1800 each year on transportation costs. Smith (2016) found that many students, especially those attending rural community colleges, can travel a 52-mile round trip, just to attend classes. The Institute for College Access and Success (2016) surveyed students about challenges and obstacles to obtaining an education and found that 85% of the students spend part of their financial aid and grants on transportation. Several even mentioned situations where financial aid was delayed, and they almost had to dropout due to not having transportation costs. Several community colleges have devised ways to assist their students with this challenge. Umpqua Community College in Oregon offers gas vouchers to students to assist with transportation challenges before financial aid checks are distributed. Each voucher is in the form of a $15 gas card (Umpqua Community College, 2020). Other colleges, such as Ozark Technical Community College in Missouri, share information about nonprofits that help with oil changes and information about the local transportation authority (Love, 2018). In addition to the cost of travel, students can also experience sudden expenses such as car repairs. Love (2018) found that many colleges have "emergency funds" to assist students with sudden expenses.

Adult learners listed childcare as one of the top reasons why they quit attending school or as a factor in determining if they could return (Lin, 2016; Osam et al., 2017; Stevens, 2014). Sallee and Cox (2019) add to this by stating even small changes to schedules such as a sick babysitter or school closure can sabotage academic studies for adult learners. Carey-Fletcher (2007) found campus childcare to be a crucial element to the academic success of single mothers. Baskerville (2013) found that childcare access leads to greater success for parents at community colleges. Champion and Kyle (1992) stated community colleges should offer childcare programs that include 1) a laboratory preschool program, 2) educational programs in Early Childhood Education, 3) a degree and certificate program, 4) continuing education programs and conferences, 5) programs for school age children, and 6) programs for special needs children. In 2003, over 50% of America's community colleges offered some form of childcare. That number dropped to 44% in 2010 (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2010). However, the number of adult learners with children who are enrolled in community colleges has increased from 3.2 million to 4.8 million in 2015 (New, 2016). Reasons for the decline in childcare centers on campus include liability issues and lack of funding (Sallee & Cox, 2019).

For community colleges leery of liability issues, voucher or grant programs are another option (Genco, 2005). Lenoir Community College in North Carolina offers Child Care Grants that are funded by the state and paid directly to state licensed day care centers. There are eligibility requirements for the grant including a minimum GPA of 2.0, having at least half of the course load on campus, enrolling in at least 10 credit hours, and being a North Carolina resident (Lenoir Community College, 2020). Similar grant options are available for adult learners with children at Wake Technical Community College and Salt Lake Community College (Salt Lake Community College, 2020; Wake Technical Community College, 2020).

Academic Preparation

Many adult learners are entering their post-secondary institution after being away from a

classroom environment for several, sometimes many, years (Genco, 2005). Panacci contended,

"adults often have different classroom experiences and needs than full-time traditional students

who enroll immediately after school and who do not have other major responsibilities and roles

that compete with their studies" (Panacci, 2015, p. 1). To assist in this possible lack of academic

preparedness, many colleges offer learning support or developmental classes. TBR defines

learning support courses as the academic courses needed by a student to be successful in college

level general education courses. These courses include reading, writing, and/or mathematics

(TBR, 2020a). Community colleges use ACT scores or placement tests to determine which

students need which courses. The number of students requiring a learning support class or

classes has slowly dropped over the past five years (THEC, 2017). In 2011, over 75% of entering

freshman needed at least one learning support class. This number has dropped to 62% in 2016

(THEC, 2017). The most common learning support class needed is math. This is followed by

writing, and then reading. The number of adult learners needing learning support/developmental

classes is higher than those of traditional-aged college students. According to THEC's Adult

Learner Fact Book (2017) in 2016, 68.8% of adult learners required at least one learning

support/developmental course.

There are many proponents and critics of learning support or developmental classes

found in literature. Proponents including Lazarick (1997) suggested learning support courses

enable those under prepared students a chance to be successful in college. Critics including

Melguizo et al. (2008) argued that the costs of these courses outweigh the benefits. The cost

being the amount of time it takes these students to transfer to a four-year college. They found

that students needing all the learning support courses (reading, writing, and mathematics) spent, on average, 5 years at a community college before transferring to a four-year institution.

Self-Doubts/Psychological Challenges

Psychological barriers can include fear of failure or attitude toward the future. While many of these barriers must be faced and dealt with by the individual adult learner, institutions can offer help. For example, Osam et al. (2017), found that some barriers including fear of failure could be partially alleviated by institutional factors including the formation of faculty relationships. Goto and Martin (2009) expanded on this by stating that simply having staff members that explain the available institutional resources and procedures can go a long way in helping break down psychological barriers. Lin (2016) showed that the formation of a social support system between adult learners and classmates (either with other adult learners or with traditional-aged college students) can help improve some of those psychological barriers.

In addition to peer and institutional support, a support system of family and friends can also assist with psychological barriers for adult learners. Heagney and Benson (2017) found that adult students are more likely to be successful in college when they have emotional and general support from family and friends. Emotional support can include family and friends who care, who help with finances, who provide childcare, who are available to talk to and who will listen (Plageman & Sabina, 2010). This emotional support is extremely important in the success and determination of female students, who tend to experience more anxiety and apprehension toward college (Lin, 2016).

Engagement

Engagement focuses on the interaction of adult learners with classmates, clubs, support services, and faculty members. Research has shown that student levels of engagement are

positively correlated to student gains such as GPA and retention (Astin, 1993; Carr, 2016; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh et al., 2007). Cabrera et al. (2002) found that engagement and interactions with classmates and college peers through clubs and sports led to higher levels of academic achievement. In addition to academic achievement, Tinto (1997) found that this engagement and interaction leads to increased persistence in college. Kuh (1993) found that outside of interactions with classmates, interactions with college services (such as student support services, tutoring, library, and counselors) are associated with increases in retention, persistence, and overall satisfaction of adult learners.

The largest area of engagement for students that is tied to student success is with faculty members (Rabourn et al., 2018). Because many adult learners are balancing work and family in addition to school, traditional class times do not always work for them (Lin, 2016). For this reason, many adult learners take online and evening courses (Genco, 2005). Traditionally, at both WSCC and MSCC, the evening courses and many of the online courses are taught by adjunct instructors. Many of these instructors are also working full-time in other professions and are not required to hold office hours or be available to the students outside of class times. Research has shown that a key to success for adult learners is forming relationships with faculty members (Osam et al., 2017). It is difficult to form those bonds when faculty members are not available outside of class times. Osam et al. (2017) included the unavailability of faculty and the shortage of evening, weekend, and online courses as "institutional barriers" that hinder the success of adult learners. Hagedorn expanded on this further by stating, "fostering staff, faculty, and student interactions that support the confidence and self-efficacy of adult learners may be equally important" as the courses themselves (Hagedorn, 2005, p. 28). Students quickly form opinions about their instructor and the instructor's personality, and these opinions correlate with

the student's performance in the class (Karge et al., 2011; Lewis, 2006). Silliman and Schleifer (2018) found that 76% of adult learners state they require caring instructors who know how to teach. Knowing how to teach, according to adult learners, involves content knowledge, communication, and attitude toward students (Hill, 2014; Hughes, 2015).

Conclusions and Recommendations

With the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect, more adult learners than ever will be entering the WSCC and MSCC campuses. WSCC and MSCC must prepare for this influx of non-traditional students. There are many services and/or accommodations that literature suggests could assist in helping these adult learners succeed in their post-secondary educational career. These items include offering accommodations that can assist students in dealing with not only academic barriers, but personal and financial barriers as well. Literature of conceptual theories of community colleges and adult learners also support these types of accommodations for student persistence and attrition.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine the levels of importance, satisfaction and the perceived level of engagement adult learners, Tennessee Reconnect adult learners, and the general student population at two community colleges have in regard to student support and course instructors.

Research Design

A two-group comparison design using existing data will be used for this study. In regard to existing data, there are advantages and disadvantages. First, the use of existing data is cost effective. Once approval has been acquired, existing data is usually free to access or costing only a small service charge (Cheng & Phillips, 2014). In addition, using existing data generally offers faster access to data than does the process of collecting the data oneself (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Lastly, using existing data can often mitigate confounding factors. For example, using existing data is preferred over conducting surveys with students attending college during a global pandemic (M. Duff, personal communication, October 8, 2020). Disadvantages of using existing data can include missing or partial data, omitted variables, too much data, and questions regarding validity and reliability of data (Cheng & Phillips, 2014).

Two-group comparisons using existing data have been used by numerous researchers interested in the relationship between two test groups. Sproat (2018) used a two-group comparison approach to look at the success rates between students enrolled in online (web based) anatomy courses and those enrolled in on-ground (traditional face to face) anatomy courses at a community college. He found students enrolled in on-ground anatomy courses were more successful (earning higher grades and receiving acceptance into nursing schools). Grubb (2015) utilized a two-group comparison approach to compare outcomes of dual enrollment students with

those of the general student population enrolled at a community college. He found dual

enrollment students were more likely to earn higher GPAs and were more likely to graduate than

the general student population. Using this approach, Garman (2012) compared success rates of

traditional aged and adult learner students enrolled in face-to-face sections of biology courses

with those of students enrolled in online sections at a community college. She found that there

was no significant difference in success rates of traditional aged college students in online versus

face-to-face classes. However, her findings do show that adult learner success rates were

significantly higher in face-to-face biology courses. Like these studies, this study will focus on a

comparison of two groups at community colleges. Similar to those aforementioned studies, this

current study on levels of importance, satisfaction and engagement will focus on a comparison of

groups at two community colleges. However, this current study differs from other studies in that

it will compare two groups based on response to two surveys that examined items such as levels

of importance, satisfaction, and perceived levels of engagement.

Population Profiles

The populations to be utilized for this study will come from two different research sites,

WSCC and MSCC and three different time periods. In 2016, both WSCC and MSCC

administered the ALI survey to their adult learners. During that time point, WSCC had 1,001

adult learners. Of those, 639 identified as female and 362 identified as male. Examination of

ethnicity shows 925 listed their primary ethnicity as Caucasian, 24 listed Black, 22 listed

Hispanic, and 30 listed other. Only 361 of those 1,001 attended the college as a full-time student

(TBR, 2020b). The other 640 attempted less than 12 credit hours. During this same time point

MSCC had 908 adult learners. Of those, 579 identified as female and 329 identified as male.

Ethnicity responses show 714 listed as Caucasian, 106 listed as Black, 33 as Hispanic, and 55 as other. Of those 908, only 239 attended college as a full-time student (TBR, 2020b).

In 2019, the ALI was administered again at WSCC. This is the year after Tennessee Reconnect was implemented at all Tennessee community colleges. During this year, WSCC had 1,411 adult learners enrolled. Of those 960 identified as female and 451 identified as male. Ethnicity responses show 1,249 listed Caucasian as their primary ethnicity, 40 listed Black, 57 listed Hispanic, and 65 listed other. Only 485 of the 1,411 attended as full-time students (TBR, 2020b).

The last time point in this study is 2018. This is the year the SENSE survey was administered at WSCC. During this year, WSCC had 1,297 adult learners. Of those adult learners, 873 identified as female and 424 identified as male. Reporting of ethnicity shows 1,165 listed their primary ethnicity as Caucasian, 49 listed Black, 41 listed Hispanic, and 42 listed other. Only 442 of the 1,297 attended WSCC full-time (TBR, 2020b). The general population had a total enrollment of 4,916 during the 2018 year. Of those 3,075 identified as female and 1,841 identified as male. Reports for ethnicity show 4,297 listed Caucasian as their primary ethnicity, 103 listed Black, 297 listed Hispanic, and 219 listed other. Of those 4,916 students enrolled, 3,774 attended college as a full-time student (TBR, 2020b).

Instrumentation

The two surveys to be analyzed for this study are the SENSE and ALI. Both surveys were purchased and administered by the testing sites. Blank copies of these surveys can be found in Appendix A.

SENSE is the Survey of Entering Student Engagement. The SENSE survey was first launched in 2007 by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCSSE). It is

administered during the "fourth and fifth weeks of the fall academic term to students in courses randomly selected from those most likely to enroll entering students" (CCSSE, 2020a, p. 1). The survey explores students' perceptions of engagement with both student support services and faculty members (CCSSE, 2020a). The goal of the survey is to help retain and support students entering the post-secondary institution. This is done by asking questions about interactions with different aspects of student support services offered at WSCC and faculty/classroom interactions. The SENSE survey contains six benchmarks that are areas that are important to entering students' college experiences and educational outcomes. These benchmarks are early connections, high expectations and aspirations, clear academic plan and pathway, effective track to college readiness, engaged learning, and academic and social support network (CCSSE, 2020a). For this study, the last two benchmarks will be utilized for a comparison between adult learners and the general student population. In 2006, the CCSSE conducted a large-scale validation study of the SENSE instrument. This study was important because it focused on use of the SENSE survey in community colleges. The finding "validates the relationships between student engagement and a variety of student outcomes in community colleges-including academic performance, persistence, and attainment" (CCSSE, 2020b, p. 2). Furthermore, Harris (2014) tested the reliability and consistency of the survey for determining student success in urban community colleges. She found the survey to have "strong consistency and good construct reliability" and found a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.85 (Harris, 2014, p. 73). In the thirteen years since its inception, the SENSE survey has been utilized in numerous studies researching different aspects of engagement. De los Reyes (2008) analyzed over 13,000 SENSE surveys to compare the engagement between entering and returning students. She found that returning students are more engaged and more likely to persist than entering students. In addition, she also

found that at risk students (minorities, first generation, and those needing developmental classes) showed higher levels of engagement than other students. Taylor (2013) analyzed the survey over a three-year period to determine differences in engagement of students at Texas community colleges in regard to ethnicity, gender, college GPA, and dual enrollment credits. She found no significance in engagement based on these characteristics. However, she did find a significant positive relationship between engagement in high expectations and aspirations and engaged learning.

The ALI survey is the Adult Learner Inventory. This survey was created by a partnership between Ruffalo Noel-Levitz (RNL) and The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) in 2002 (RNL, 2020). It measures how satisfied adult learners are with various aspects of the college and what is important to them (Flint, 2005). According to RNL (2020), the goal of this survey is to allow colleges to better understand the needs of adult learners and address those to increase student success. This is usually done by looking at the gap values or percentages. The gap values are the differences between the importance level and the satisfaction level (i.e., the higher the gap value the larger the difference between the level of importance and level of satisfaction) (Flint, 2005). The ALI survey is divided into eight scales. These scales are outreach, life and career planning, financing, assessment of learning outcomes, teaching-learning process, student support systems, technology, and transitions. Outreach focuses on how and when institutions conduct outreach to adult learners. Life and career planning focus on how the institution assists adult learners in reaching their goals. Financing deals with scholarship and payment options available for adult learners. Assessment of learning outcomes is how institutions gauge "knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners" (RNL, 2020). Teaching-learning process assesses methods of instructions used to teach adult learners.

Student support systems focuses on support the student has both inside and outside the college. Technology deals with how the institution uses technology to assist in the learning experience. Lastly, transitions look at how the institution is assisting adult learners in transitions from college to the workplace or four-year institution (RNL, 2020). The statistical reliability of the ALI was tested using 155 students who took the survey twice. This revealed a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.80 (RNL, 2017). Internal validity tests show an overall coefficient alpha for importance of 0.79 and 0.83 for satisfaction (RNL, 2017). Hawk (2018) utilized this ALI to measure differences in adult learner satisfaction with outreach services. She found that females were more satisfied with the outreach than were males. She also found no difference in levels of satisfaction when factoring in race of adult learners (Hawk, 2018). Mugdh (2004) used the ALI survey to measure adult learner satisfaction with numerous college experiences. She found that adult learners value responsiveness and relationships most. This responsiveness and relationship correspond to both the student services and faculty and learning categories. Davaasambuu et al. (2020) studied the importance and satisfaction rates in adult learners with English as a second language at a community college in New York. They found the biggest gap to be in the area of academic services. They recommended items such as "extending registration times, having additional college and career advisors on staff, and training existing staff on customer service skills" to assist in enrollment and persistence (Davaasambuu et al., 2020, p. 57).

To that end, this current study is unique compared to the other studies mentioned due to several different characteristics. First, this study will utilize results from both surveys (SENSE and ALI) to answer research questions related to levels of importance, satisfaction, and engagement. Other studies have focused on one or the other of these surveys, but never look at both. Second, this current study will offer a comparison between ALI surveys, not only at two

different institutions, but also at the same institution at two different time points. This is unique as the first survey takes place before the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect. Thus, allowing to test if Tennessee Reconnect implementation changed any satisfaction or importance levels or if it bridged any gaps found in the pre-Tennessee Reconnect survey results. Lastly, this study will breakdown the SENSE survey to compare entering adult learners with traditional aged college students in regard to perceived engagement. Previous studies have not compared engagement based on age of returning students.

Data Collection

A database of archival data from the Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment at WSCC was used to collect the needed demographic data for this study. The WSCC Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment also provided demographic data and survey responses for WSCC adult learners and/or Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and the general population. Of the two surveys conducted, the ALI was conducted via email and the SENSE survey was administered to students in the classroom. The ALI survey was sent to all adult learners enrolled at WSCC during the timeframe the survey was used. The survey was sent to these students via their college email address. According to Debbie McCarter, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Compliance at WSCC, the ALI survey is voluntary. Students can opt out without any penalty. They consent to the survey when they click on the email link (D. McCarter, personal communication, October 20, 2020). Dr. McCarter further explains that the SENSE survey is given in class and includes the requirement of reading the following script to the students (D. McCarter, personal communication, October 20, 2020).

Today I will administer this survey as part of the college's participation in the *Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE).* The survey focuses on institutional practices and student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college, and your answers will help Walters State to understand your experiences at the college and to improve programs and services for all students.

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. If you are under the age of 18, <u>please do not complete</u> the survey. If you have completed the survey in another class, you are welcome, but not required, to take the survey again; however, please remain in the classroom during the administration.

Note that the survey booklet has questions on both sides of the page (**show survey to students).**

Please look at the last item (#39) on page 7 of the survey instrument. As you can see, it asks for your student identification number. Please enter either your social security number or your College-wide Student Identification (W) number, without hyphens or spaces, starting in column one. While providing your student ID number is optional, we encourage you to provide it to support further research about how our college can best promote student success. Please be assured that your responses to this survey will remain confidential and individual responses will not be reported.

As you complete the survey, please remember that you are responding based on your experience at **WALTERS STATE** and **not only in this particular class**. The questions specifically ask you to recall the time leading up to and through the end of the first three weeks of your first academic term at this college. You may use only #2 pencils, **no pens,** to fill-in the circles. We appreciate your participation.

At MSCC, ALI data was provided by the Director of Adult Initiatives, Allison Barton. According to Ms. Barton, the ALI was sent via email to all adult learners during a designated time frame. The survey was completely voluntary. Consent was given when the survey link was clicked. An incentive of a giveaway prize (usually a drawing for a gift card) was used for incentive to have students complete the survey (A. Barton, personal communication, October 23, 2020). Data was collected based on approval from Internal Review Boards (IRB) at East Tennessee State University, WSCC, and MSCC.

Data Analysis

This study will use statistical analyses performed using SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 27 (IMB Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA). Sample size will be determined based on a power analysis. To calculate a power analysis, several pieces of information are needed. First, is the statistical test being used. For this research, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test will be utilized to answer the four research questions. This calculation also requires an α value. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the α value is called the Type 1 error rate and "refers to the risk we want to take in saying we have a real non-zero correlation when in fact this effect is not real" (p. 152). This study will use an α value of 0.05. The third item needed for a power analysis calculation is the β value. This value is called the Type II error rate and refers to a false negative effect (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, a β value of 0.20 will be used. The last item need for the power analysis calculation is an estimate of the size of correlation (r). To determine the r value for this study, an average of r values in similar studies (those focusing on post-secondary institutions and/or meta-analysis) will be used. Fong et al. (2017) looked at critical thinking and student success at community colleges. For their research, they calculated a r value of 0.28. Shachar and Neumann (2003), performed a meta-analysis looking at differences

between student success in traditional face to face courses and distance education type courses. For this study, a r value of 0.37 was used. Later in 2010, Shachar and Neumann published a second study on this same topic and used a r value of 0.257. Huber and Kuncel (2016) used a r value of 0.61 in their meta-analysis study focusing on if and how colleges teach critical thinking to students. Based on these studies, a r value of 0.38 (0.28 + 0.37 + 0.257 + 0.61 = 1.517/4 = 0.38) will be used for this study. These four pieces of information were then plugged into the G*Power software program per Creswell and Creswell (2018). A sample size of 58 was calculated for this study.

To answer research question one, a one-way ANOVA was used to examine the differences between adult learners enrolled at WSCC in 2016 and adult learners enrolled at MSCC in 2016 and their levels of importance and satisfaction. The independent variables for this question will be adult learners enrolled at WSCC and MSCC in 2016. The dependent variables will consist of questions listed in the ALI survey. The categories of the survey include outreach, life and career planning, financing, assessment of learning outcomes, learning process, student support systems, technology, and transitions. An example question listed under the transitions category is "I receive guidance on which classes will transfer to programs here and elsewhere" and a question under the technology category states, "technology support is available to me when I need it."

To answer research question two, a one-way ANOVA was used to examine the differences between adult learners enrolled at WSCC in 2016 and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners enrolled at WSCC in 2019 and their levels of importance and satisfaction. The independent variables for this question consisted of adult learners enrolled at WSCC in 2016 and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners at WSCC in 2019. The dependent variables consisted of

questions listed on the ALI survey. The categories of the survey include outreach, life and career planning, financing, assessment of learning outcomes, learning process, student support systems, technology, and transitions. An example question listed under the learning process category is "my instructors respect student opinions and ideas that differ from their own" and a question under the student support systems category states "this college initiates many opportunities for me to connect with other adult learners."

To answer research question three, a one-way ANOVA was used to examine the differences between perceived engagement with faculty members between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners enrolled at WSCC in 2018 and the general student population at WSCC in 2018. The independent variables for this question will be Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and the general student population enrolled at WSCC during 2018. The dependent variables are the questions from the SENSE survey dealing with faculty engagement. Example questions from this portion of the SENSE survey include "I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class" and "asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class."

To answer research question four, a one-way ANOVA will be used to examine the differences between perceived engagement with student support services between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners enrolled at WSCC in 2018 and the general student population at WSCC in 2018. The independent variables for this question will be Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and the general student population enrolled at WSCC during 2018. The dependent variables are the questions from the SENSE survey dealing with student support services engagement. Example questions from this portion of the SENSE survey include "I was able to meet with an advisor at times convenient for me" and "at least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name."

Summary

   Chapter 3 presented the research methodology of this research. Information concerning research design and research questions were explained. In addition, the population, data collection methods, instrumentation, and data analysis methods were detailed.

Chapter 4. Results

The purpose of this study was to determine, using ALI surveys and SENSE responses, the levels of importance and satisfaction and the perceived level of engagement adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners have in regard to student support services and course instructors. The study focused on the following research questions: (a) What are the differences in the levels of importance and satisfaction between adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College and at Motlow State Community College in 2016? (b) What are the differences in the levels of importance and satisfaction between adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2016 and the Tennessee Reconnect adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2019? (c) What are the differences in the levels of perceived engagement with instructors between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and other students enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2018? (d) What are the differences in the levels of perceived engagement with student support services between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and other students enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2018?

ALI Survey

WSCC administered the ALI survey during 2016 and 2019 and MSCC administered the ALI survey in 2016. In 2016 the survey was administered to 208 adult learners at WSCC and 217 adult learners at MSCC. Once all incomplete survey entries were removed, 67 participants were left for the WSCC dataset and 65 were left for the MSCC dataset. In 2019, it was administered to 252 adult learners. Once all incomplete surveys were removed, 61 participants were left. These participants were entered and coded into SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 27 (IMB Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA). Using the "select cases" function, SPSS randomly selected 61 cases from each of the WSCC 2016 and MSCC 2016. A power analysis was performed using G*Power

software program to determine the required sample size for analyses. Four pieces of information were plugged into G*Power software program to determine the required sample size: (a) statistical test being used (one-way ANOVA), (b) alpha value (0.05), (c) beta value (0.20), and (d) size of correlation (r value of 0.38 based on average of values used in similar studies). This produced a sample size of 58. A one-way ANOVA was used to examine the differences between levels of importance and satisfaction between adult learners at WSCC and MSCC.

Participant Demographics

Participant demographics for the ALI survey come from three different datasets at two different community colleges and at two different time points. The first time point is 2016. The participants from the two datasets of 2016 survey responses show 32% male (17 WSCC and 22 MSCC) and 68% female (44 WSCC and 39 MSCC), In addition, the participants are 89% White (58 WSCC and 51 MSCC), 57% are married (35 WSCC and 34 MSCC), 60% have children (40 WSCC and 34 MSCC), and 49% are first generation college students (35 WSCC and 25 MSCC). The second time point is 2019. The participants from the one dataset from 2019 include 77% female (47), 95% White (58), 52% married (32), 72% have children (44), and 52% are first generation students (32).

Levels of Importance and Satisfaction at MSCC and WSCC

As seen in Table 1, a one-way ANOVA was used to compare the differences in importance and satisfaction factors between adult learners at MSCC and adult learners at WSCC in 2016. This analysis found one statistically significant difference in levels of importance and two statistically significant differences in levels of satisfaction. The only significant difference $(F(1,120) = 2.656, p = 0.031, \eta^2 = 0.038)$ in levels of importance was found in the scale of outreach with the survey question "I am able to choose course delivery that fits my life

circumstances (e.g., on this campus, other campuses, online, in my community, at my workplace). WSCC adult learners found this statement significantly more important (M = 6.72, SD = 0.552, 95% CI [6.58, 6.86]) than did MSCC adult learners (M = 6.42, SD = 0.902, 95% CI [6.19, 6.65]). There were two significant differences observed in satisfaction levels, both in the scale of transitions. The first significant difference ($F(1,120) = 5.975$, $p = 0.014$, $\eta^2 = 0.049$) was with the statement "my studies are closely related to my life and work goals." While both groups were satisfied with this statement, WSCC adult learners had a higher mean score (M = 6.48, SD = 0.744, 95% CI [6.28, 6.67]) than MSCC adult learners (M = 6.03, SD = 1.17, 95% CI [5.73, 6.33]). The last statistically significant finding in satisfaction levels ($F(1,120) = 6.426$, $p = 0.037$, $\eta^2 = 0.036$) was found with the survey question "this college explains what is needed for me to complete my program here." WSCC adult learners are "satisfied" with this statement (M = 6.36, SD = 1.05, 95% CI [6.09, 6.63]) while MSCC adult learners were "somewhat satisfied" (M = 5.90, SD = 1.34, 95% CI [5.56, 6.24]).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Levels of Importance and Satisfaction by Adult Learner Participant at WSCC and MSCC in 2016

Importance or Satisfaction	Group	WSCC Adult Learners n = 61	MSCC Adult Learners n = 61	
		M/SD	M/SD	*p* value
Importance	I am able to choose course delivery that fits my life circumstances (e.g., on this campus, other campuses, online, in my community, at my workplace)	6.72/0.552	6.42/0.902	0.031*
Satisfaction	My studies are closely related to my life and work goals	6.48/0.744	6.03/1.17	0.014*
Satisfaction	This college explains what is needed for me to complete my program here	6.36/1.05	5.90/1.34	0.036*

Note: *significant at 0.05; **significant at 0.01

Levels of Importance and Satisfaction Based on Other Demographics at WSCC and MSCC

The ALI survey also included demographic information for gender, ethnicity, marital status, presence of children, and first-generation status. Analysis was also performed on these variables to look for differences in means among levels of importance and satisfaction.

Gender. As seen in Table 2, analysis of gender showed the highest number of differences in means. There were thirty-eight differences in means found with levels of importance.

However, there were no differences in means found with levels of satisfaction. When looking at these findings, it is important to note that the sample size for this analysis included 83 females and only 39 males. However, it is interesting to note that all differences observed involved females finding the statement more important than males. Research on gender and community colleges shows mixed findings. Shea and Bidjerano (2016) found that females are more likely to earn an associate degree while at a community college, but James et al. (2016) found that retention and persistence between males and females at community colleges were not significantly different.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Levels of Importance by Adult Learner Gender at WSCC and MSCC in 2016

Group	Female *n = 83*	Male *n = 39*
	M/SD	M/SD
My program allows me to pace my studies to fit my life and work schedules	6.79/0.536	6.46/0.854
Sufficient course offerings withing my program are available each term	6.71/0.634	6.26/0.818
This college assists students who need help with the financial aid process	6.64/0.789	5.74/1.60
My instructors involve me in evaluating my own learning	6.49/0.722	6.05/1.26
Staff are available to help me solve unique problems I encounter	6.65/0.688	6.10/1.02
This college provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan	6.65/0.706	6.21/0.922

Group	Female n = 83 M/SD	Male n = 39 M/SD
I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me	6.66/0.686	5.92/1.30
I have a clear understanding of what I'm expected to learn in my class	6.78/0.469	6.46/0.789
This college offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies	6.52/0.875	6.00/1.26
Technology support is available to me when I need it	6.56/0.814	6.21/1.00
Processes and procedures for enrolling here are convenient	6.63/0.693	6.31/0799
I receive guidance on which classes will transfer to programs here and elsewhere	6.54/0.914	6.15/1.01
Advisors are knowledgeable about requirements for courses and programs of interest to me	6.72/0.611	6.23/0.872
Billing for tuition and fees is tailored to meet my specific needs	6.72/0.548	6.31/0.977
My instructors provide timely feedback about my academic progress	6.70/0.639	6.31/1.00
This college uses technology on a regular basis to communicate with me	6.63/0.675	5.92/1.30

Group	Female *n = 83* M/SD	Male *n = 39* M/SD
I receive timely responses to my requests for help and information	6.65/0.593	6.31/1.03
This college periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences	6.30/0.996	5.85/1.20
My studies are closely related to my life and work goals	6.65/0.670	6.33/0.868
I receive the help I need to develop my academic skills, including reading, writing, and math	6.66/0.649	6.00/1.32
I can make payments or inquires about tuition at times that are convenient for me	6.66/0.630	6.00/1.39
I receive the help I need to stay on track with my classes	6.70/0.557	6.38/0.711
I am able to choose course delivery that fits my life circumstances	6.72/0.611	6.25/0.938
This college initiates many opportunities for me to connect with other adult learners	6.19/1.13	5.56/1.41
I am able to obtain information I need by phone, fax, e-mail, or online	6.66/0.547	6.28/0.971
This college makes many support services available at convenient times and places	6.58/0.700	6.26/0.880

Group	Female *n = 83* M/SD	Male *n = 39* M/SD
Technology enables me to get the services I need when I need them	6.61/0.641	6.23/1.03
This college explains what is needed for me to complete my program here	6.71/0.530	6.44/0.882
This college provides one-stop shopping for most student support services	6.55/0.800	6.21/0.978
Mentors are available to guide my career and life goals	6.52/0.771	5.95/1.05
Most instructors use a variety of teaching methods	6.57/0.665	6.20/0.951
I have many ways to demonstrate what I know	6.18/0.989	5.66/1.11
This college evaluates students' academic skills for placement in reading, writing, and math	6.34/1.05	5.89/1.18
I can receive credit for learning derived from my pervious life and work experiences	6.52/0.846	6.05/1.07
Instructors incorporate my life and work experiences in class activities and assignments	6.46/0.754	5.97/1.06
The learning experiences within my program of study challenge me to reach beyond what I know already	6.60/0.604	6.18/0.913

Group	Female n = 83	Male n = 39
	M/SD	M/SD
When I miss a deadline or fall behind in my studies, someone from the college contacts me	6.36/1.04	5.54/1.57

Marital Status. The sample size for marital status included 53 single adult learners and 69 married adult learners. No differences in means were found in levels of importance or levels of satisfaction with this variable. While no differences were found, Oyinlade (1992) found that married students at community college were more motivated and generally had a higher GPA than non-married students.

Presence of Children. When analyzing the variable of presence of children, the sample included 74 adult learners with children and 48 adult learners without children. Results found six differences in means in levels of importance and 13 differences in means in levels of satisfaction. The first statistically difference is found with the statement "my instructors provide timely feedback about my academic progress." This survey question showed a difference in mean with both levels of importance and levels of satisfaction. Adult learners without children found this statement more important (M = 6.79, SD = 0.410, 95% CI [6.67, 6.91]) than do adult learners with children (M = 6.43, SD = 0.937, 95% CI [6.21, 6.64]). Adult learners without children were also more satisfied with this statement (M = 6.52, SD = 0.743, 95% CI [6.30, 6.74]) than are adult learners with children (M = 5.85, SD = 1.28, 95% CI [5.55, 6.14]). Five additional differences were found with levels of importance. The first of these differences was found with the statement "this college assists students who need help with the financial aid process." Adult learners without children found this statement more important (M = 6.65, SD = 0.635, 95% CI

[6.46, 6.83]) than did adult learners with children (M = 6.16, SD = 1.40, 95% CI [5.83, 6.48]).

The next difference in levels of importance is with the survey question "this college periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences." Adult learners without children found this statement "important" (M = 6.44, SD = 0.741, 95% CI [6.22, 6.65]), while adult learners with children found this statement "somewhat important" (M = 5.97, SD = 1.22, 95% CI [5.68, 6.25]). The next survey question with a difference in mean is "I can make payments or inquiries about tuition at times that are convenient for me." Again, adult learners without children found this statement more important (M = 6.69, SD = 0.511, 95% CI [6.53, 6.84]) than did adult learners with children (M = 6.29, SD = 1.17, 95% CI [6.02, 6.57]). The survey question "I can receive credit for learning derived from my previous life and work experiences" also showed a difference for levels of importance. Adult learners without children found this statement more important (M = 6.58, SD = 0.738, 95% CI [6.36, 6.79]) than did adult learners with children (M = 6.22, SD = 1.04, 95% CI [5.98, 6.47]). The last difference for levels of importance was with the statement "the learning experiences within my program of study challenge me to reach beyond what I know already." Once again, adult learners without children found this statement more important (M = 6.66, SD = 0.476, 95% CI [6.52, 6.80]) than did adult learners with children (M = 6.33, SD = 0.848, 95% CI [6.14, 6.53]). Twelve additional differences in means were observed in levels of satisfaction. These can be seen in Table 3. All differences show adult learners without children are more satisfied with the statements than are adult learners with children. Oyinlade found that married students without children or dependents "outperformed all other martial categories" (Oyinlade, 1992, p. 39).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Levels of Satisfaction by Adult Learner Presence of Children at WSCC and MSCC in 2016

Group	Children Present *n = 74*	No Children Present *n = 48*
	M/SD	M/SD
My instructors involve me in evaluating my own learning	5.66/1.31	6.18/1.14
I receive guidance on which classes will transfer to programs here and elsewhere	5.38/1.43	6.00/1.17
This college offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies	5.02/1.78	5.71/1.42
Advisors are knowledgeable about requirements for courses and programs of interest to me	5.79/1.27	6.39/0.916
I receive the help I need to develop my academic skills, including reading, writing, and math	5.95/1.27	6.42/0.820
I am encouraged to apply the classes I've taken towards a degree or certificate	5.95/1.18	6.39/1.10
This college initiates many opportunities for me to connect with other adult learners	5.41/1.45	5.95/1.20
My instructors respect student opinions and ideas that differ from their own	6.08/1.21	6.52/0.898
I am able to obtain information I need by phone, fax, e-mail, or online	5.93/1.42	6.42/0.963

Group	Children Present $n = 74$	No Children Present $n = 48$
	M/SD	M/SD
Technology enables me to get the services I need when I need them	6.09/1.17	6.50/0.743
Mentors are available to guide my career and life goals	5.35/1.59	5.97/1.32
The frequency of interaction with my instructors is satisfactory	6.05/1.05	6.47/0.874

Ethnicity. A few mean differences were found when analyzing ethnicity. However, due to the sample size these findings will not be discussed. Only 13 out of 122 students did not identify as White. Due to this extreme unequal sample size, these results are mostly likely skewed.

First Generation Status. For the variable first generation status, the sample consisted of 60 adult learners who were first generation college students and 62 adult learners who were not first-generation college students. No statistically significant differences were found in levels of satisfaction or importance with this variable.

Levels of Importance and Satisfaction Before and After Tennessee Reconnect at WSCC

As seen in Table 4, a one-way ANOVA was used to compare the differences in importance and satisfaction factors between pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners at WSCC in 2016 and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners at WSCC in 2019. Sixteen significant differences of importance were found, and six significant differences of satisfaction were found. It is interesting to note that all importance differences showed Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found the items more important than did the pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and all

satisfaction differences showed pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were less satisfied with scale items than Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. It is also interesting to note that no significant differences of importance or satisfaction were found under the scale of "learning process." Differences were observed in all other scales.

Only one significant difference of importance and no significant differences of satisfaction were found with the scale of transitions. The statistically significant difference $(F(1,120) = 4.336, p = 0.010, \eta^2 = 0.055)$ [of] importance was found with the survey question "I am encouraged to apply the classes I've taken towards a degree or certificate." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found this statement close to "very important" (M = 6.79, SD = 0.487, 95% CI [6.66, 6.91]), while pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found this "important" (M = 6.41, SD = 1.00, 95% CI [6.15, 6.67]).

The scale of financing has two statistically significant difference in levels of importance and three statistically significant difference in levels of satisfaction. The first significant difference $(F(1,120) = 3.967, p = 0.044, \eta^2 = 0.033)$ was found with the statement "this college assists students who need help with the financial aid process." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found this statement close to "very important" (M = 6.69, SD = 0.647, 95% CI [6.52, 6.85]), while pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found this "important" (M = 6.33, SD = 1.22, 95% CI [6.02, 6.64]). This survey question was also found to have a statistically significant difference in satisfaction $(F(1,120) = 20.49, p = 0.003, \eta^2 = 0.070)$. Pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were "somewhat satisfied" with this service (M = 5.44, SD = 1.74, 95% CI [4.77, 5.63]), while Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were "satisfied" with the service (M = 6.26, SD = 1.22, 95% CI [5.95, 6.57]). The second statistically significant difference found with levels of importance $(F(1,120) = 2.369, p = 0.029, \eta^2 = 0.039)$ and satisfaction $(F(1,120) = 7.377, p = $

0.039, $\eta^2 = 0.035$) was found with the survey question "I can make payments or inquiries about tuition at times that are convenient for me." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had a higher mean score for importance (M = 6.77, SD = 0.529, 95% CI [6.64, 6.91]) and satisfaction (M = 6.34, SD = 1.06, 95% CI [6.07, 6.62]) than pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (importance: M = 6.49, SD = 0.829, 95% CI [6.28, 6.70]; satisfaction: M = 5.85, SD = 1.50, 95% CI [5.46, 6.23]). The last statistically significant difference (F(1,120) = 37.90, p = 0.001, $\eta^2 = 0.099$) in the financing scale is with the satisfaction of the statement "I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me." Pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were "somewhat satisfied" with this item (M = 5.00, SD = 1.91, 95% CI [4.51, 5.49]), while Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were "satisfied" with the item (M = 6.11, SD = 1.46, 95% CI [5.74, 6.49]).

In the scale of outreach there were two statistically significant differences found with levels of importance, but no statistically significant differences were found with levels of satisfaction. The first significant difference (F(1,120) = 3.615, p = 0.011, $\eta^2 = 0.051$) was found with the statement "staff are available to help me solve unique problems I encounter." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found this item close to "very important" (M = 6.77, SD = 0.559, 95% CI = 6.63, 6.91]), while pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found this item "important" (M = 6.42, SD = 0.903, 95% CI [6.19, 6.66]). The second significant difference (F(1,120) = 1.844, p = 0.016, $\eta^2 = 0.047$) was observed with the statement "I receive the help I need to make decisions about courses and programs that interest me." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had a higher mean score for importance (M = 6.79, SD = 0.487, 95% CI [6.66, 6.91]) than did pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.54, SD = 0.621, 95% CI [6.38, 6.70]).

The scale life and career planning yielded two statistically significant differences in

levels of importance and one statistically significant difference in levels of satisfaction. The first statistically significant difference ($F(1,120) = 1.844$, $p = 0.040$, $\eta^2 = 0.035$) observed in levels of importance was found with the statement "this college provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had a higher mean score for importance ($M = 6.79$, $SD = 0.487$, 95% CI [6.66, 6.91]) than did pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners ($M = 6.54$, $SD = 0.787$, 95% CI [6.33, 6.74]). The second statistically significant difference ($F(1,120) = 3.279$, $p = 0.015$, $\eta^2 = 0.049$) found in the levels of importance was with the survey question "mentors are available to guide my career and life goals." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were close to finding this item "very important" ($M = 6.75$, $SD = 0.537$, 95% CI [6.62, 6.89]), while pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found the item "important" ($M = 6.42$, $SD = 0.884$, 95% CI [6.19, 6.65]). The last statistically significant difference ($F(1,120) = 13.779$, $p = 0.024$, $\eta^2 = 0.041$) found in the scale life and career planning was found in the levels of satisfaction for the statement "sufficient course offerings within my program are available each term." Pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were "somewhat satisfied" with this item ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.68$, 95% CI [4.76, 5.63]), while Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were "satisfied" with the item ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.57$, 95% CI [5.46, 6.27]).

The scale of student support system saw two statistically significant differences in importance levels and one statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels between pre-Tennessee Reconnect and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. The only significant difference ($F(1,120) = 24.795$, $p = 0.003$, $\eta^2 = 0.070$) found with satisfaction levels was found with the statement "this college offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies." Pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were "somewhat satisfied" with this statement ($M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.80$, 95% CI [4.63, 5.56]), while Tennessee Reconnect adult

learners were "satisfied" (M = 6.00, SD = 1.51, 95% CI [5.61, 6.39]). The first of the two

significant differences (F(1,120) = 1.385, p = 0.040, η^2 = 0.035) with importance levels comes

from the statement "I receive timely responses to my requests for help and information." Both

groups of students found this statement "important." However, Tennessee Reconnect adult

learners were closer to finding this "very important" (M = 6.84, SD = 0.416, 95% CI [6.73,

6.94]), than were pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.62, SD = 0.687, 95% CI [6.44,

6.79]). The last statistically significant difference (F(1,120) = 3.615, p = 0.017, η^2 = 0.047) found

was with the survey question "this college provides one-stop shopping for most student support

services (registration, financial aid, advising, textbook purchases, etc.)." Tennessee Reconnect

adult learners had a higher mean score for importance (M = 6.75, SD = 0.567, 95% CI [6.61,

6.89]) than pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.41, SD = 0.955, 95% CI [6.16,

6.65]).

The scale assessment of learning outcomes has three statistically significant differences

in importance levels and one statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels. The first

statistically significant difference was found in both importance levels (F(1,120) = 9.475, p =

0.001, η^2 = 0.087) and satisfaction levels (F(1,120) = 8.393, p = 0.034, η^2 = 0.037) with the

statement "this college periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences."

Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had a higher mean score for both importance (M = 6.67, SD

= 0.625, 95% CI [6.51, 6.83]) and satisfaction (M = 6.11, SD = 1.29, 95% CI [5.78, 6.44]), than

were pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (importance: M = 6.11, SD = 1.13, 95% CI [5.83,

6.40], satisfaction: M = 5.59, SD = 1.41, 95% CI [5.22, 5.95]). The next statistically significant

difference (F(1,120) = 5.123, p = 0.036, η^2 = 0.036) in levels of importance is found with the

survey question "I have many ways to demonstrate what I know." Tennessee Reconnect adult

learners have a higher mean score (M = 6.51, SD = 0.994, 95% CI [6.25, 6.76]) than pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.09, SD = 1.13, 95% CI [5.81, 6.39]). The last significance (F(1,120) = 4.721, p = 0.008, η^2 = 0.057) found in levels of importance is from the statement "this college evaluates students' academic skills for placement in reading, writing and math." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had a higher mean score (M = 6.70, SD = 0.641, 95% CI [6.54, 6.87]) than did pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.31, SD = 0.941, 95% CI [6.07, 6.55]).

The last scale of technology has four significance differences in levels of importance and no significance differences in levels of satisfaction. The first significant difference (F(1,120) = 2.369, p = 0.014, η^2 = 0.049) was observed with the survey question "technology enables me to get the services I need with them (registering, paying bills, accessing library, etc.)" Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had a higher mean score in importance (M = 6.82, SD = 0.428, 95% CI [6.71, 6.93]) than did pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.54, SD = 0.765, 95% CI [6.35, 6.74]). The second technology difference (F(1,120) = 5.123, p = 0.011, η^2 = 0.053) found was with the statement "I receive the help I need to improve my technology skills." While both groups of students found this statement "important," Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were closer to finding this statement "very important" (M = 6.70, SD = 0.587, 95% CI [6.55, 6.85]) than were pre-Tennessee Reconnect students (M = 6.29, SD = 1.08, 95% CI [6.01, 6.57]). A statistically significant difference (F(1,120) = 2.369, p = 0.041, η^2 = 0.034) was also found with the statement "technology support is available to me when I need it." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had a higher mean score in importance (M = 6.75, SD = 0.537, 95% CI [6.62, 6.89]) than did pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.47, SD = 0.906, 95% CI [6.24, 6.71]). The last significant difference (F(1,120) = 2.656, p = 0.014, η^2 = 0.049) was found with the

statement "information is available online to help me understand what I need to do next in my program of study." Tennessee Reconnect adult learners again had a higher mean score (M = 6.78, SD = 0.487, 95% CI [6.66, 6.91]) than did pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners (M = 6.49, SD = 0.788, 95% CI [6.29, 6.69]).

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Levels of Importance and Satisfaction by Adult Learner Participant at WSCC in 2016 and 2019

Importance or Satisfaction	Group	2016 Pre-Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	2019 Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	
		M/SD	M/SD	*p* value
Importance	I am encouraged to apply the classes I've taken towards a degree or certificate	6.41/1.00	6.79/0.487	0.010**
Importance	This college assists students who need help with the financial aid process	6.33/1.22	6.69/0.647	0.044*
Importance	I can make payments or inquires about tuition at times that are convenient for me	6.49/0.829	6.77/0.529	0.029*
Importance	Staff are available to help me solve unique problems I encounter	6.42/0.903	6.77/0.559	0.011*

Importance or Satisfaction	Group	2016 Pre-Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	2019 Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	
		M/SD	M/SD	*p* value
Importance	I receive the help I need to make decisions about courses and programs that interest me	6.54/0.621	6.79/0.487	0.016*
Importance	This college provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan	6.54/0.787	6.79/0.487	0.040*
Importance	Mentors are available to guide my career and life goals	6.42/0.884	6.75/0.537	0.015*
Importance	I receive timely responses to my requests for help and information	6.62/0.687	6.84/0.416	0.040*
Importance	This college provides one-stop shopping for most student support services	6.41/0.955	6.75/0.567	0.017*
Importance	This college periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences	6.11/1.13	6.67/0.625	0.001**

Importance or Satisfaction	Group	2016 Pre-Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	2019 Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	
		M/SD	M/SD	*p* value
Importance	I have many ways to demonstrate what I know	6.09/1.13	6.51/0.994	0.036*
Importance	This college evaluates students' academic skills for placement	6.31/0.941	6.70/0.641	0.008**
Importance	Technology enables me to get the services I need with them	6.54/0.765	6.82/0.428	0.014*
Importance	I receive the help I need to improve my technology skills	6.29/1.08	6.70/0.587	0.011*
Importance	Technology support is available to me when I need it	6.47/0.906	6.75/0.537	0.041*
Importance	Information is available online to help me understand what I need to do next in my program of study	6.49/0.788	6.78/0.487	0.014*
Satisfaction	This college assists students who need help with the financial aid process	5.44/1.74	6.26/1.22	0.003**

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Importance or Satisfaction	Group	2016 Pre-Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	2019 Tennessee Reconnect Adult Learner *n = 61*	
		M/SD	M/SD	*p* value
Satisfaction	I can make payments or inquires about tuition at times that are convenient for me	5.85/1.50	6.34/1.06	0.039*
Satisfaction	I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me	5.00/1.91	6.11/1.46	0.001**
Satisfaction	Sufficient course offerings within my program are available each term	5.19/1.68	5.87/1.57	0.024*
Satisfaction	This college offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies	5.09/1.80	6.00/1.51	0.003**
Satisfaction	This college periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences	5.59/1.41	6.11/1.29	0.034*

Note: *significant at 0.05; **significant at 0.01*

Levels of Importance and Satisfaction Based on Other Demographics at WSCC

The ALI survey also included demographic information for gender, ethnicity, marital status, presence of children, and first-generation status. Analysis was also performed on these variables to look for differences among levels of importance and satisfaction.

Gender. As seen in Table 5, analysis of gender showed the highest number of differences in means. There were twenty-five differences found with levels of importance. However, there were no differences found with levels of satisfaction. When looking at these findings, it is important to note that the sample size for this analysis included 91 females and only 31 males. However, it is interesting to note that all differences observed involved females finding the statement more important than males.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Levels of Importance by Adult Learner Gender at WSCC in 2016 and 2019

Group	Female *n = 91*	Male *n = 31*
	M/SD	M/SD
This college assists students who need help with the financial aid process	6.65/0.779	6.09/1.37
Staff are available to help me solve unique problems I encounter	6.74/0.593	6.19/1.05
This college provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan	6.80/0.477	6.25/0.929
I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me	6.74/0.549	6.13/1.05

Group	Female *n = 91* M/SD	Male *n = 31* M/SD
I have a clear understanding of what I'm expected to learn in my classes	6.82/0.411	6.48/0.769
This college offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies	6.69/0.661	6.03/1.19
Processes and procedures for enrolling here are convenient	6.78/0.512	6.45/0.809
Advisors are knowledgeable about requirements for courses and programs of interest to me	6.84/0.402	6.42/0.847
Billing for tuition and fees is tailored to meet my specific needs	6.78/0.467	6.32/0.945
My instructors provide timely feedback about my academic progress	6.80/0.476	6.48/0.961
This college uses technology on a regular basis to communicate with me	6.72/0.667	6.25/1.06
This college periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences	6.51/0.874	6.06/1.09
I receive the help I need to develop my academic skills, including reading, writing, and math	6.77/0.496	6.42/0.922
I can make payments or inquiries about tuition at times that are convenient for me	6.72/0.578	6.35/0.950

Group	Female n = 91 M/SD	Male n = 31 M/SD
I receive the help I need to stay on track with my classes	6.82/0.411	6.48/0.724
I'm evaluated on the knowledge and skills I'll need in my life and career	6.64/0.675	6.22/1.02
This college initiates many opportunities for me to connect with other adult learners	6.37/1.15	5.68/1.68
My instructors respect student opinions and ideas that differ from their own	6.74/0.507	6.39/0.882
Most instructors use a variety of teaching methods	6.62/0.663	6.22/0.990
I receive the help I need to make decisions about courses and programs that interest me	6.74/0.491	6.45/0.722
The frequency of interactions with my instructors is satisfactory	6.71/0.583	6.42/0.848
I can receive credit for learning derived from my previous life and work experiences	6.55/0.847	6.16/1.00
Instructors incorporate my life and work experiences in class activities and assignments	6.53/0.848	6.09/1.19
The learning experiences within my program of study challenge me to reach beyond what I know already	6.68/0.575	6.32/0.908

Group	Female *n = 91*	Male *n = 31*
	M/SD	M/SD
When I miss a deadline or fall behind in my studies, someone from the college contacts me	6.56/0.819	5.97/1.49

Marital Status. When comparing levels of importance and satisfaction by the variable marital status, no differences in means were found with levels of importance and three differences in means were found with levels of satisfaction. Analysis was performed on a sample of 55 single adult learners and 67 married adult learners. The first difference was found with the statement "I receive the help I need to improve my technology skills." Single adult learners were "satisfied" with this statement (M = 6.44, SD = 1.07, 95% CI [6.15, 6.72]), while married adult learners were "somewhat satisfied" with this statement (M = 5.88, SD = 1.36, 95% CI [5.55, 6.21]). The next difference found was found with the survey question "I receive timely direction on how to transfer to four-year colleges and universities." Single adult learners were more satisfied with this statement (M = 6.11, SD = 1.35, 95% CI [5.74, 6.47]) than were married adult learners (M = 5.56, SD = 1.57, 95% CI [5.18, 5.95]). The last difference was observed with the survey statement "billing for tuition and fees is tailored to meet my specific needs." Again, single adult learners were more satisfied with this statement (M = 6.31, SD = 1.21, 95% CI [5.98, 6.63]) than were married adult learners (M = 5.85, SD = 1.28, 95% CI [5.54, 6.16]).

Presence of Children. Analysis of the variable presence of children found one difference in means in levels of importance and nine differences in mean in levels of satisfaction. For this analysis, the sample size was 84 adult learners who have children and 38 adult learners without children. The only difference observed with levels of importance was with the statement "when I

miss a deadline or fall behind in my studies, someone from the college contacts me." Adult

learners without children found this statement more important (M = 6.76, SD = 0.542, 95% CI

[6.58, 6.94] than did adult learners with children (M = 6.25, SD = 1.19, 95% CI [5.99, 6.50]. As

seen in Table 6, analysis of difference in satisfaction levels for adult learners with and without

children yielded nine differences in means. In all nine of these differences, adult learners without

children where significantly more satisfied with the statement than were adult learners with

children.

Table 6

*Means and Standard Deviations for Levels of Satisfaction by Adult Learner Presence of Children
at WSCC in 2016 and 2019*

Group	Adult Learners with Children *n = 84*	Adult Learners without Children *n = 38*
	M/SD	M/SD
Advisors are knowledgeable about requirements for courses and programs of interest to me	6.01/1.33	6.52/0.862
Billing for tuition and fees is tailored to meet my specific needs	5.86/1.38	6.47/0.861
My instructors provide timely feedback about my academic progress	5.92/1.33	6.55/0.724
I am encouraged to apply the classes I've taken towards a degree or certificate	6.11/1.21	6.63/0.633
My instructors respect student opinions and ideas that differ from their own	6.19/1.28	6.68/0.574

Group	Adult Learners with Children *n = 84*	Adult Learners without Children *n = 38*
	M/SD	M/SD
Most instructors use a variety of teaching methods	5.86/1.48	6.47/1.00
My instructors encourage student-to-student interactions through a variety of techniques	5.85/1.44	6.36/0.785
Instructors incorporate my life and work experiences in class activities and assignments	5.51/1.83	6.26/1.06
The learning experiences within my program of study challenge me to reach beyond what I know already	6.11/1.21	6.63/0.675

Ethnicity. While analysis of ethnicity did produce several differences, those will not be discussed due to sample size. This sample size had one American Indian, one Asian, three Black, one Hispanic, one Multi-racial, and 115 White adult learners. Any findings would be skewed due to the very uneven sample size distribution.

First Generation Status. When analyzing for the variable first generation status, the sample size was 67 adult learners who were first-generation college students and 55 adult learners who were not first-generation college students. Interestingly, there was no differences in importance or satisfaction levels with this variable.

SENSE Survey

WSCC's SENSE survey was administered to 825 students in 2018. Those responses were divided by age group (traditional college students and adult learners). Once all incomplete survey

entries were removed, the dataset contained 67 adult learners and 530 traditional college students. The dataset was then entered and coded into SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 27 (IMB Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA). Using the "select cases" function, 67 cases from the 530 traditional college student group were randomly chosen by SPSS. Statistical analyses were performed on the sample of 67 adult learners and 67 traditional college students. A power analysis was performed using G*Power software program to determine the required sample size for analyses. Four pieces of information were plugged into G*Power software program to determine the required sample size: (a) statistical test being used (one-way ANOVA), (b) alpha value (0.05), (c) beta value (0.20), and (d) size of correlation (r value of 0.38 based on average of values used in similar studies). This produced a sample size of 58. An ANOVA was used to examine the differences between perceived engagement with both faculty and student services between adult learners and traditional college students.

Participant Demographics

The sample population analyzed from the SENSE survey was composed of thirty-six percent males (20 adult learners and 28 traditional college students) and sixty-four percent females (47 adult learners and 39 traditional college students). This supports THEC's findings that the majority of community college students in Tennessee are female (THEC, 2017). Ethnicity breakdown included six Black students (4 adult learners and 2 traditional college students), four Hispanic students (2 adult learners and 2 traditional college students), one hundred twenty-three White students (61 adult learners and 62 traditional college students), and one traditional college student who listed 'other' as their ethnicity. Thirty-seven percent of this sample group have children (47 adult learners and 2 traditional college students) and sixty-three percent do not have children (20 adult learners and 65 traditional college students). Twenty-three

percent of participants were married (27 adult learners and 4 traditional college students). Seventy-seven percent were not married (40 adult learners and 63 traditional college students). Lastly, twelve students listed their high school grade point average (GPA) of an A (4 adult learners and 8 traditional college students), forty-four listed their GPA of A- to B+ (14 adult learners and 30 traditional college students), thirty-two listed B (18 adult learners and 14 traditional college students), thirty-three listed B- to C+ (20 adult learners and 13 traditional college students), seven listed their high school GPA as a C (7 adult learners and 0 traditional college students), and six listed their GPA as a C- or below (4 adult learners and 2 traditional college students).

Perceived Engagement with Faculty by Adult Learners and Traditional College Students

As seen in Table 7, a one-way ANOVA comparing the mean scores of adult learners and traditional college students found a statistically significant difference in six survey questions. The first question of a statistically significant difference $(F(1,132) = 4.976, p = 0.027, \eta^2 = 0.036)$ in mean scores is "instructors had activities to introduce students to one another." This analysis revealed that the mean score for adult learners was significantly higher $(M = 3.641, SD = 1.07, 95\%\ CI = [3.38, 3.90])$ than the mean of traditional college students $(M = 3.209, SD = 1.17, 95\%\ CI\ [2.92, 3.49])$. Adult learners "agreed" that instructors introduced students to other students while traditional college students felt "neutral" about this statement.

The second statistically significant difference $(F(1,132) = 7.425, p = 0.007, \eta^2 = 0.053)$ in mean scores is "I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class." Mean scores for adult learners were significantly higher $(M = 4.552, SD = 0.610, 95\%\ CI\ [4.40, 4.70])$ than the mean of traditional college students $(M = 4.223, SD = 0.775, 95\%\ CI\ [4.03, 4.41])$. While both groups "agreed" with the statement, adult learners were closer to "strongly agreeing" with

the statement.

The question "I asked questions in class or contribute to class discussions" was found to have a statistically significant difference $(F(1,132) = 8.871, p = 0.003, \eta^2 = 0.063)$. Mean scores for adult learners were significantly higher $(M = 3.134, SD = 0.625, 95\% \text{ CI } [2.98, 3.29])$ than the mean of traditional college students $(M = 2.731, SD = 0.914, 95\% \text{ CI } [2.51, 2.95])$. Adult learners were more likely to have stated they asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions "two or three times," while traditional college students stated they did this "once."

The next statistical significance $(F(1,132) = 10.108, p = 0.002, \eta^2 = 0.021)$ was found in the survey question "participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)." Mean scores for adult learners were significantly higher $(M = 1.761, SD = 1.06, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.50, 2.02])$ than the mean scores for traditional college students $(M = 1.283, SD = 0.623, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.13, 1.44])$. Traditional college students were more likely to state they "never" participated in supplemental instruction, while adult learners were more likely to state they participated in supplemental instruction "once."

The fifth survey question to show statistical significance $(F(1,132) = 4.084, p = 0.045, \eta^2 = 0.030)$ stated "discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor." Adult learners were found to have a significantly higher mean score $(M = 2.447, SD = 0.942, 95\% \text{ CI } [2.22, 2.67])$ than traditional college students $(M = 2.134, SD = 0.851, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.93, 2.34])$. While both groups stated they had discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor "once," adult learners were closer to having done this "two or three times."

The last statistically significant difference $(F(1,132) = 6.260, p = 0.014, \eta^2 = 0.045)$ was found with the survey question "receive grades or points on assignments, quizzes, tests, or papers, etc." Adult learners were found to have a significantly higher mean score $(M = 3.641, SD$

= 0.483, 95% CI [3.52, 3.76]) than traditional college students (M = 3.358, SD = 0.792, 95% CI

[3.16, 3.55]). While both groups stated they had received grades or points from instructors "two

or three times," adult learners were closer to stating they received grades "four or more times."

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for Perceived Engagement with Faculty by Adult Learners and Traditional College Students

Group	Adult Learners *n = 67*	Traditional College Students *n = 67*	
	M/SD	M/SD	*p* value
Instructors had activities to introduce students to one another	3.64/1.07	3.20/1.17	0.027*
I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class	4.55/0.610	4.22/0.775	0.007**
I asked questions in class or contribute to class discussions	3.13/0.625	2.73/0.914	0.003**
I participate in supplemental instruction	1.76/1.06	1.28/0.623	0.002**
I discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor	2.44/0.942	2.13/0.851	0.045*
I receive grades or points on assignments, quizzes, tests, or papers, etc.	3.64/0.483	3.35/0.792	0.014*

Note: *significant at 0.05; **significant at 0.01

Perceived Engagement with Faculty Based on Other Demographics

SENSE survey results include other demographic categories, other than age. These categories include gender, marriage status, presence of children, high school GPA, and ethnicity. Several of these categories showed differences in means.

Gender. When analyzing perceived engagement with faculty by gender, only one statement was found to have a difference. That statement is "asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to class." Females were found to have a higher mean score (M = 2.5581, SD = 0.902, 95% CI [2.36, 2.75]) than males (M = 2.1458, SD = 0.945, 95% CI [1.87, 2.42]). Females were more likely to state they asked the instructor for help "two or three times." Finding only one difference based on gender is opposite of most recent literature. Studies have found that faculty engagement and interaction differs by student gender (Pascarella, 2006; Sax et al., 2005). Females are more likely to receive increased levels of emotional and academic security from interacting with faculty members.

Ethnicity. No differences were observed when analyzing perceived faculty engagement based on ethnicity. Many studies have found significant differences with faculty engagement and interaction based on student ethnicity (Cole, 2004; Kim, 2006, Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). These studies found that faculty engagement tends to have a more positive impact on the goals and ambitions of White students. However, it is important to note that the sample population analyzed had numbers that could easily skew results, with only eleven students being an ethnicity other than White.

Marital Status. Four differences in mean were found when analyzing perceived faculty engagement and marriage status. The first difference was found with the statement "all instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college."

Married students had a higher mean score (M = 4.3226, SD = 0.832, 95% CI [4.01, 4.63]) than nonmarried students (M = 3.9320, SD = 0.854, 95% CI [3.76, 4.10]). Students who were married were more likely to "agree" that faculty members shared information about available services.

Then next difference was found with the survey question "I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class." Married students had a statistically higher mean score (M = 4.6774, SD = 0.541, 95% CI [4.48, 4.88]) than nonmarried students (M= 4.3010, SD = 0.739, 95% CI [4.16, 4.45]). While both students agreed with the statement, married students were more likely to "strongly agree."

The third difference was found with the statement "ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions." Married students had a higher mean score (M = 3.2581, SD = 0.631, 95% CI [3.03, 3.49]) than nonmarried students (M = 2.8350, SD = 0.830, 95% CI [2.67, 2.99]). Married students were more likely to state they asked questions "two or three times" compared to "once" by nonmarried students.

The last difference in mean was found with the survey question "come to class without completing readings or assignments." Nonmarried students had a higher mean score (M = 1.5437, SD = 0.711, 95% CI [1.40, 1.68]) than married students (M = 1.1613, SD = 0.522, 95% CI [0.970, 1.35]). While both groups of students stated they "never" came to class without completing assignments, nonmarried student averages were closer to "once."

These findings are supported by the literature. Busselen and Busselen (1975) provided one of the earliest literature reviews of the differences between married and nonmarried students in regards to college attendance. Their review found that married students are more likely to utilize services offered of the college and form relationships with faculty members. Later studies show very similar findings (Genco, 2005; Lin, 2016).

Presence of Children. Results from analyzing perceived faculty engagement and presence of children in the household yielded six differences in means. It is interesting to note, that all four differences found between married and nonmarried students are also differences seen between students who have children and those who do not. Students with children had results similar to married students. The other two differences were from the statements "turned in an assignment late" and "receive grades or points on assignments, quizzes, tests, or papers, etc." Students with children had a higher mean score (M = 3.673, SD = 0.474, 95% CI [3.54, 3.81]) than students without children (M = 3.400, SD = 0.743, 95% CI [3.23, 3.56]) for the statement "receive grades or points on assignments, quizzes, tests, or papers, etc." Both groups stated they received grades "two or three times," however, students with children were closer to stating "four or more times." Students without children were more likely to state they turned in an assignment late (M = 1.494, SD = 0.717, 95% CI [1.34, 1.65]) than students with children (M = 1.244, SD = 0.480, 95% CI [1.11, 1.38]). These findings are also supported by literature. As with research on married students, studies have found that students with children are more likely to utilize services and form bonds with faculty members (Busselen & Busselen, 1975; Genco, 2005; Lin, 2016; Osam et al., 2017).

High School GPA. Two differences were observed when analyzing perceived faculty engagement and student high school GPA. Those two differences were found with "not turn in an assignment" and "participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)." Students with high school GPAs of a B- to C+ and those with a C- or below are more likely to state they have not turned in an assignment "once" (M = 1.6667, SD = 0.889, 95% CI [1.35, 1.98]) and (M = 1.6667, SD = 1.03, 95% CI [0.583, 2.75]), while other student answers were closer to "never." Students with a C average were more

likely to state they participated in supplemental instruction between "once" and "two to three times" (M = 2.5714, SD = 1.27, 95% CI [1.39, 3.75]), while other students stated they "never" or only "once" received supplemental instruction.

Perceived Engagement with Student Services by Adult Learners and Traditional College Students

As seen in Table 8, a one-way ANOVA comparing the mean scores of adult learners and traditional college students found a statistically significant difference in five survey questions dealing with perceived engagement with student services. The first statistically significant difference ($F(1,132) = 5.356$, $p = 0.022$, $\eta^2 = 0.039$) was found with the survey question "used academic advising/planning." Adult learners had a significantly higher mean score (M = 2.089, SD = 0.30, 95% CI [1.89, 2.29]) than traditional college students (M = 1.776, SD = 0.735, 95% CI [1.60, 1.96]). Adult learners were more likely to have used academic advising "once," while traditional college student responses were closer to "never."

The second statistically significant difference ($F(1,132) = 10.178$, $p = 0.002$, $\eta^2 = 0.072$) was seen with the survey question "used face to face tutoring." Adult learners had a significantly higher mean score (M = 1.611, SD = 1.03, 95% CI [1.36, 1.86]) than traditional college students (M = 1.164, SD = 0.510, 95% CI [1.04, 1.29]). Adult learners were more likely to state they used face to face tutoring "once." While traditional college students stated they "never" used face to face tutoring. The third significant difference ($F(1,132) = 5.050$, $p = 0.026$, $\eta^2 = 0.037$) was found with how satisfied students were with their face-to-face tutoring. Traditional college students were more likely to "not applicable" on this question (M = 0.5075, SD = 1.08, 95% CI [0.244, 0.771]). This result fits with the finding of traditional college students stating they never use face to face tutoring. Adult learners stated they were "not at all" satisfied with face-to-face

tutoring (M = 0.9851, SD = 1.37, 95% CI [0.652, 1.32]).

The last two statistically significant findings deal with use (F(1,132) = 12.045, p = 0.001, η^2 = 0.084) and satisfaction (F(1,132) = 6.001, p = 0.016, η^2 = 0.043) of skills labs (writing, math, or other skill lab). As with face-to-face tutoring results, traditional college students stated they "never" used skills labs (M = 1.447, SD = 0.875, 95% CI [1.23, 1.66]) and satisfaction level was closer to "not applicable" (M = 0.7463, SD = 1.16, 95% CI [0.464, 1.03]). Adult learners were more likely to have used skills labs "once" (M = 2.119, SD = 1.32, 95% CI [1.79, 2.44]). They were also more likely to be "not at all" satisfied with the skills labs (M = 1.298, SD = 1.44, 95% CI [0.948, 1.64]).

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for Perceived Engagement with Student Services by Adult Learners and Traditional College Students

Group	Adult Learners n = 67	Traditional College Students n = 67	
	M/SD	M/SD	p value
Used academic advising/planning	2.089/0.300	1.776/0.735	0.022*
Used face to face tutoring	1.611/1.03	1.164/0.510	0.002**
Satisfied with face-to-face tutoring	0.9851/1.37	0.5075/1.08	0.026*
Used skills labs	2.119/1.32	1.447/0.875	0.001**
Satisfied with skill labs	1.298/1.44	0.7463/1.16	0.016*

Note: *significant at 0.05; **significant at 0.01*

Perceived Engagement with Student Services Based on Other Demographics

As with perceived faculty engagement, other demographics on the SENSE survey include

gender, ethnicity, marriage status, presence of children, and high school GPA.

Gender. When analyzing perceived engagement with student services by gender, six

statements were found to have a difference in mean. The first two statements deal with the use

and satisfaction of face-to-face tutoring. While both males (M = 1.0833, SD = 0.347, 95% CI

[0.982, 1.18]) and females (M = 1.5581, SD = 0.977, 95% CI [1.34, 1.77]) stated they "never"

used face-to-face tutoring, the female average was closer to "once." Females were also more

likely to be "not at all" satisfied with face-to-face tutoring (M = 1.0233, SD = 1.35, 95% CI

[0.733, 1.31]), while males stated, "not applicable" (M= 0.2500, SD = 0.838, 95% CI [0.007,

0.493]).

The second set of differences were found with use and satisfaction of financial assistance

advising. Females stated they used financial assistance advising "once" (M = 2.0116, SD = 1.03,

95% CI [1.79, 2.23]) and were close to being "somewhat" satisfied with the financial assistance

advising (M = 1.6047, SD = 1.36, 95% CI [1.31, 1.90]). Males were in between "never" using

financial assistance advising and using it "once" (M = 1.54, SD = 0.771, 95% CI [1.32, 1.77])

and were "not at all" satisfied (M = 1.02, SD = 1.38, 95% CI [0.621, 1.42]).

The next difference was found with the statement "an advisor helped me to select a

course of study, program, or major." While both males and females "agree" with this statement,

the mean score for males is higher (M = 4.33, SD = 0.753, 95% CI [4.11, 4.55]) than the mean

score for females (M = 4.00, SD = 0.894, 95% CI [3.81, 4.19]).

The last difference was observed with the statement "used transfer credit assistance."

Both males and females both state they "never" used transfer credit assistance. However, the

mean score for males was found to be higher (M = 1.17, SD = 0.429, 95% CI [1.04, 1.29]) than the mean score for females (M = 1.04, SD = 0.212, 95% CI [1.00, 1.09]).

Ethnicity. No differences were found with perceived engagement with student services by the variable ethnicity. However, due to the sample size differences, these findings are most likely skewed.

Marriage Status. Results for perceived engagement with student services by marriage status yielded two differences. The first difference was observed with the statement "the very first time I came to this college, I felt welcome." While both married and nonmarried students "agreed" with this statement, married students had a higher mean score (M = 4.54, SD = 0.675, 95% CI [4.30, 4.80]) than nonmarried students (M = 4.20, SD = 0.677, 95% CI [4.07, 4.33]).

The second difference was found with the statement "satisfied with academic advising." Married students stated they were "somewhat" satisfied with academic advising (M = 2.16, SD = 1.00, 95% CI [1.79, 2.53]), while nonmarried students were between "not at all" and "somewhat" satisfied (M = 1.62, SD = 1.28, 95% CI [1.37, 1.87]).

Presence of Children. Results for presence of children and perceived engagement with student services produces three differences. These three findings begin with the statement "satisfied with job placement services." Both students with and students without children marked this response as "not applicable." However, student without children exhibited a higher mean score (M = 0.294, SD = 0.843, 95% CI [0.112, 0.476]) than students with children (M = 0.020, SD = 0.143, 95% CI [-0.021, 0.061]).

The second difference was observed with the statement "satisfied with online tutoring." Again, both students with and without children marked this statement as "not applicable." However, students without children exhibited a higher mean score (M = 0.306, SD = 0.873, 95%

CI [0.117, 0.494]) than students with children (M = 0.041, SD = 0.199, 95% CI [-0.017, 0.098]).

The last difference was found with the statement "used transfer credit assistance." Both students with and those without children stated they "never" used this service. However, students with children had a higher mean score (M = 1.16, SD = 0.425, 95% CI [1.04, 1.28]) than students without children (M = 1.05, SD = 0.213, 95% CI [1.00, 1.09]).

Since studies have found that adult learners are more likely to be married and have children (Genco, 2005; Lin, 2016; Osam et al., 2017), it is surprising that many of the significant differences observed with those demographics are not significant differences observed with participants.

High School GPA. Two differences were observed with high school GPA and perceived engagement with student services. The first difference was found with the statement "used face-to-face tutoring." Students with a C average (M = 2.14, SD = 1.07, 95% CI [1.15, 3.13]) or a C- or below average (M = 2.00, SD = 1.55, 95% CI [0.374, 3.62]) were more likely to have used the computer lab "two or three times," while all other students stated they "never" used the computer labs.

A similar trend is observed with the second difference with the statement "used computer labs." Students with a high school GPA of C- or below were more likely to state they used the computer labs between "two or three times" and "four or more times" (M = 3.50, SD = 1.22, 95% CI [2.21, 4.78]), while all other students stated they used the computer labs "never."

Chapter 5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The goal of this study was to compare the levels of importance, satisfaction, and perceived engagement between adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners at two Tennessee community colleges. Several studies were found in the literature that focus on adult learners and community colleges and that utilized the ALI and SENSE survey instruments at community colleges. However, because Tennessee Reconnect is a new program, very little literature has been conducted targeting this specific population. This study attempted to add to this body of literature and fill the gap in literature in regard to the Tennessee Reconnect population. The findings discussed provide support for the idea that adult learners are a different population of students with different needs and requiring different or modified accommodations for success. This chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the study's research questions and end with recommendations for policy makers and practice and recommendation future research.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This study used statistical analyses of pre-existing survey data at two Tennessee community colleges to answer four research questions: (a) What are the differences in the levels of importance and satisfaction between adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College and at Motlow State Community College in 2016? (b) What are the differences in the levels of importance and satisfaction between adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2016 and the Tennessee Reconnect adult learners enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2019? (c) What are the differences in the levels of perceived engagement with instructors between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and other students enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2018? (d) What are the differences in the levels

of perceived engagement with student support services between Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and other students enrolled at Walters State Community College in 2018? All four research questions were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA to look for statistically significant differences between two different populations of students.

With regards to the first research question, statistically significant differences between WSCC and MSCC adult learners were found for one item in levels of *Importance category: course delivery that fits my life circumstances* (p = 0.031). Both WSCC and MSCC adult learners felt that choosing a delivery method that fits their life circumstances was *"important."* Two differences were found in levels of *Satisfaction category: studies are related to life and work goals* (p = 0.014) and *college explains what is needed to complete my program* (p = 0.036). Both WSCC and MSCC adult learners felt that the studies in their college courses relating to their life and work goals was "*important.*" MSCC adult learners felt that the college explaining what is needed to complete their program was *"somewhat important,"* while WSCC adult learners felt this item was *"important."* These findings are not surprising, because both colleges have a similar demographic of students and are both found in more rural type areas in Tennessee. It is expected that these students would have similar ideas of importance and satisfaction. Bye et al. (2007) found that nontraditional students with a similar upbringing reported similar intrinsic motivations toward a post-secondary education than did students with different upbrings. Davaasambuu et al. (2020) looked at satisfaction rates with student services and again found comparable views between students with similar backgrounds. Lastly, Rabourn et al. (2018) found that nontraditional students from the same general area are likely to experience similar barriers and impediments when engaging in higher education.

In addition to answering research question 1, the differences in means of levels of

importance and satisfaction were compared for other demographic variables. While these findings cannot be termed "statistically significant" due to varying sample sizes, some interesting differences were observed. First, adult learners who identified as female at MSCC and WSCC showed higher mean scores for importance than did adult learners who identified as males. However, males and females were similarly satisfied with the items. There are gaps in the literature in regard to gender and levels of importance and satisfaction. Most literature has focused in on the multiple roles female adult learners are balancing when returning to college (Barrington, 2017; Baskerville, 2013; Carey-Fletcher, 2007; Lin, 2016). Second, no differences in means of levels of importance and satisfaction were found between married and non-married adult learners at MSCC and WSCC in 2016. This finding differs from literature results that found that married students utilize more college services, are more motivated to finish their degree, and generally end up finishing with a higher GPA than non-married students (Oyinlad, 1992). Third, mean differences showed adult learners at WSCC and MSCC in 2016 without children recorded higher mean values for importance and satisfaction than adult learners with children. This finding is supported by the literature that found students without children or any dependents were more focused on their college classes and college services, more motivated, and performed better in classes than students with children (Oyinlade, 1992). Next, differences in means were found when looking at levels and importance and satisfaction based on ethnicity of adult learners at MSCC and WSCC in 2016. However, the extreme unequal sample size skewed the findings. Literature has found differences in attitudes toward community colleges based on ethnicity. Ancis et al. (2000) found that minority students at predominately White campuses reported higher pressure to conform to stereotypes and unfair treatment from college services staff and faculty. Lastly, the variable of first-generation status showed no differences in means between

adult learners at MSCC and WSCC in 2016. This finding differs from the literature that found

due to them being more academically underprepared and lacking a support system; first-

generation students are more likely have positive attitudes toward and more likely to utilize

support services and other extra services offered by the college and its faculty (Inman & Mayes,

1999).

With regards to the second research question, statistically significant differences between

pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners at WSCC were

found for sixteen items in levels of *Importance* and six items in levels of *Satisfaction*. Breaking

these findings down by scale item shows one significant difference of *Importance: encouraged*

to apply classes toward degree (p = 0.010) in the scale transitions. Tennessee Reconnect adult

found this statement *"very important,"* while pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners found it

"important." Espinoza and Espinoza (2012) found that transition programs, especially those that

focus on advising are critical for adult learners. Kallison (2017) found similar results and

suggested intrusive advising to be the best approach for adult learners. The hiring of professional

advisors and having a student success center at WSCC occurred after the implementation of

Tennessee Reconnect. It is the job of these services to assist students in the transition process.

The scale of financing has five statistically significant differences. Two of the survey

statements were found in both *Importance* and *Satisfaction* categories: *college assists students*

with financial aid process (*Importance:* p = 0.044; *Satisfaction:* p = 0.003) and *can make*

payments at times convenient for me (*Importance:* p= 0.029; *Satisfaction*: 0.039). One statement

was found significant only in the *Satisfaction category: received information about sources of*

financial assistance (p = 0.001). In each of these, Tennessee Reconnect adult learners felt

"satisfied" with the item, while pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners were *"somewhat*

satisfied" with the item. Tennessee Reconnect adult learners also had higher mean values for

importance, than did pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. When looking at financing,

literature shows that adult learners struggle more than their traditional aged counterparts with

navigating the financial aid process and understanding resources that are available (Michelau &

Lane, 2010). Sallee and Cox (2019) found that colleges have many resources available to help

with financing (scholarships, grants, and loans), however adult learners struggle to access this

information and to understand this information. WSCC has recently formed a partnership with

EdAmerica to create a Walters State support team. These team members are outside WSCC and

answer questions regarding admissions and financial aid from 8 am until 5:30 pm. This allows

for staff on campus to focus on face-to-face or virtual meetings with students and allows for

services outside the normal business hours (C. Earls, personal communication, May 7, 2021).

The scale of outreach found two statistically significant differences with levels of

Importance category: staff help solve unique problems (p = 0.011) and *received help to make*

decisions about programs (p = 0.016). Tennessee Reconnect adult learners had higher mean

scores for these statements. Bergerson and Petersen (2009) found that outreach is a critical part

of recruiting, retention, and persistence of adult learners. This is an even more important tool

when dealing with destressed counties (A. Swinson, personal communication, July 12, 2020).

Since the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect, WSCC has worked on outreach, especially in

Hancock and Cocke counties (both of which are distressed counties). This has resulted in several

courses being offered at Hancock County high school and a new Newport Education Center in

Cocke County, which offered its first courses in January 2021 (M. Duff, personal

communication, May 5, 2021).

The scale life and career planning found three statistically significant differences. Two

were found in the *Importance category: college provides help to develop education plan* (p = 0.040) and *mentors guide my career and life goals* (p = 0.015). One significant difference was found with the *Satisfaction category: sufficient course offerings are available* (p = 0.024). Again, Tennessee Reconnect adult learners recorded higher mean scores with each of these statements. Luzzo (1999) found that adult learner life and career planning needs are unique to that population. Therefore, individuals working with this population need to understand the needs and personal obligations of adult learners (MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994). During the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect, WSCC created a position of Coordinator of Adult Learners. This individual assists adult learners with both advising and career planning. In addition, the college has a counseling office to assist in personal and career planning (E. Dean, personal communication, May 5, 2021).

The scale of student support system had three statistically significant differences between pre-Tennessee Reconnect and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. One significant difference was found in the *Satisfaction category: college offers strategies to help cope with pressure* (p = 0.003) and two significant differences in the *Importance category: receive timely responses to requests* (p = 0.040) and *college provides one-stop shopping for support services* (p = 0.017). Tennessee Reconnect adult learners recorded significantly higher mean scores in each of these statements. Lin (2016) found a support system between adult learners and classmates can result in an increase in retention, persistence, and overall emotional health. Rabourn et al. (2018) found similar results with support systems from engagement with faculty members. Currently at WSCC, there are no implemented programs focusing on support systems for Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. The relationships are formed and fostered by the adult learners individually.

The scale of assessment of learning outcomes found four statistically significant differences between pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. One difference was found in both the *Importance* and *Satisfaction categories: college evaluates my skill level* (*Importance:* p = 0.001; *Satisfaction:* p = 0.034). Two additional significant differences were found with the *Importance category: I have ways to demonstrate what I know* (p = 0.036), and *the college evaluates academic skills for placement* (p = 0.008). In each of these statements, Tennessee Reconnect adult learners have a higher mean score than pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. Field (1993) found that adult learners enter a post-secondary institution with knowledge and experience from working in the workforce. Freed and Mollick (2009) found that finding a way to incorporate all those work and life experiences using prior learning assessments (PLAs) can allow for adult learners to earn college credit. Hayward and Williams (2015) found that community colleges that implemented PLAs experienced higher graduation rates. When looking at placement services, exams such as the Compass Test or Accuplacer Test are utilized to determine if adult learners require learning support or developmental courses (College for Adults, 2020). WSCC utilizes both PLAs and placement tests for adult learners (WSCC, 2020c). With the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect, WSCC has incorporated more bridge type programs to assist adult learners in preparing to take placement tests. They are also working to modify and incorporate more into their current PLA plan (E. Dean, personal communication, May 5, 2020).

The scale of technology has four significance differences between pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners and Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. All four differences were found in the *Importance category: technology allows enables services I need* (p = 0.014), *receive help to improve technology skills* (p = 0.011), *technology support is available* (p = 0.041), and

information is available online (p = 0.014). With each of these statements, Tennessee Reconnect adult learners recorded higher mean scores than pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. Genco (2005) found that adult learners do not feel as confident with technology or technology requirements as traditional college students. Both Fleming and Garner (2009) and Stavredes (2011) found that having technology assistance and helpdesks available during and outside of normal business hours can lead to higher confidence of adult learners in utilizing technology. WSCC does offer a technology helpdesk. However, this helpdesk is not available outside normal business hours. There are courses available that assist in improving technology skills, however these courses are not a part of many programs of study requirements and thus not covered by certain financial aid options (E. Dean, personal communication, May 5, 2021).

Very little research has been conducted on Tennessee Reconnect students after the implementation of the program. However, these findings offer evidence that the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect at WSCC has created a more positive experience for adult learners. These survey item differences were found in all survey scales, except for learning process. In this survey, learning process was the only scale that had questions dealing with classroom experiences and experiences with faculty members. This provides evidence that the classroom experience has not been impacted by the implementation of Tennessee Reconnect.

As with research question one, the differences in means of levels of importance and satisfaction were compared for other demographic variables. Again, these findings cannot be termed "statistically significant" due to varying sample sizes. These results mirror the findings from research question one, except for one variable. This sample group showed several differences in means with satisfaction levels between married and non-married adult learners at WSCC. Non-married students recorded higher mean scores in satisfaction than married students.

If married students are less satisfied because they are the group using the services more, this supports the literature that found married students utilize more college services (Oyinlad, 1992). Thus, non-married students could be satisfied with the services only because they have not used them to find the issues or limitations.

Results from research question three shows six statistically significant differences between adult learners and traditional college students in regard to perceived engagement with faculty members. Adult learners felt they were more engaged with faculty members with items: *instructors introduce students to one another* (p = 0.027), *knew how to get in touch with instructor* (p = 0.007), *asked questions in class* (p = 0.003), *participated in supplemental instruction* (p = 0.002), *discussed assignment with instructor* (p = 0.045), and *received grades or points on assignments* (p = 0.014). Each of these items focus on engagement with faculty members inside the classroom environment. The finding that adult learners perceive themselves to have a higher level of engagement with faculty members inside the classroom is expected. At WSCC, many faculty members commonly discuss how engaged adult learner students are inside the classroom. It is interesting to note that no statistically significant differences were found between adult learners and traditional college students when looking at engagement with faculty outside the classroom (i.e., attending office hours, extra tutoring, etc.). This finding makes sense, as adult learners are more likely to have more outside commitments than traditional college students. These findings are supported by literature. Rabourn et al. (2018) found that adult learners were more engaged with faculty members, exhibited more positive views of classroom teaching methods, and had more interactions with classmates inside the classroom than traditional college students. However, outside the classroom interactions showed opposite findings. Traditional college students reported more outside the classroom engagement with

faculty members and more outside the classroom engagement with classmates (Rabourn et al., 2018). This is further supported by the findings of Goto and Martin (2009) and Hagedorn (2005) that found adult learners are more likely to attend classes and then leave campus to focus on their personal life commitments (house, family, children, work).

In addition to answering the research question, the differences in means of perceived engagement with faculty was also compared for other demographic variables. Again, these findings cannot be termed "statistically significant" due to the difference in sample size. First, in general, no large differences in means were observed with perceived engagement with faculty for the variable of gender. This is not supported by literature. Several studies have found that females are more likely to perceive they are highly engaged with faculty members and classmates both inside and outside the classroom (Lin, 2016; Pascarella, 2006; Sax et al., 2005). Second, the variables of marital status and presence of children exhibited similar differences for perceived engagement with faculty. These variables showed that married students with children show a higher perceived engagement with faculty inside the classroom than non-married students and students without children. These findings match literature findings in that adult learners are more likely to be married and have dependents and are more likely to be engaged with faculty inside the classroom (Genco, 2005; Goto & Martain, 2009; Hagedorn, 2005; Lin, 2016; Rabourn et al., 2018). Next, the variable of ethnicity showed no differences in means based on perceived faculty engagement. This is not supported by the literature. Studies have found that White students perceive a higher level of engagement with faculty members inside and outside the classroom than do other ethnicities, this is especially true in predominately White institutions (Cole, 2004; Kim, 2006; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). Lastly, the variable of high school GPA shows that, in general, high school GPA plays only a small role in perceived level of engagement

with faculty at the college level. Students with a high school GPA of a C+ or below are more likely to engage with faculty outside the classroom for supplemental instruction. Research has shown that students with lower high school GPAs are more likely to perceive high levels of faculty engagement inside and outside the classroom (Carrell & Kurlaender, 2020).

Results from research question four shows five statistically significant differences between adult learners and traditional college students in regard to perceived engagement with student support services. Adult learners felt they were more engaged with student services with items: *used academic advising* ($p = 0.022$), *used face to face tutoring* ($p = 0.002$), *satisfied with face-to-face tutoring* ($p = 0.026$), *used skills labs* ($p = 0.001$), and *satisfied with skill labs* ($p = 0.016$). The key information from these findings is the perceived engagement with the student support services of face-to-face tutoring and skills labs (math lab, writing lab, etc.). Adult learners felt significantly more likely to engage with these services than traditional college students. This finding is not surprising given that adult learners have been away from the school environment longer than traditional college students, and thus would be more likely to need tutoring or skills lab help. While adult learners felt they were more engaged with the services, they felt "not at all satisfied" with the engagement of these services. There are many reasons why adult learners felt "not at all satisfied" with these services. For example, the tutoring lab utilizes traditional college students as tutors. These students are high performing students receiving a scholarship. However, it is possible that adult learners are not comfortable with having these younger students as tutors. Another reason could be the availability of these services do not extend to times needed or desired by adult learners. These findings are supported by literature. In their book, Fleming and Garner (2009) discuss the special accommodations needed by adult learners and those include tutoring and study labs. They recommend these services be available

during peak times for adult learners. Lin (2016) found that lack of access and availability of tutoring services created a major barrier for female adult learners returning to college. Osam et al. (2017) found that one of the biggest barriers facing adult learners is the amount of time they have been away from the school setting. To help alleviate or mitigate these barriers, Osam et al. (2017) also recommends offering tutoring and skills labs to place adult learners on an even playing field with traditional college students. Kallison (2017) found that while adult learners are more likely to require assistance from tutoring, they are also more likely to encounter barriers or challenges utilizing these services.

As with research question three, the differences in means of perceived engagement with student support services was also compared for other demographic variables. First, key findings with the variable gender include the lack of satisfaction with face-to-face tutoring and the lack of satisfaction with financial assistance advising. Females were more likely to use these services, but both groups were unsatisfied with the engagement of these services at WSCC. This finding is supported by the literature. Fhloinn et al. (2016) found that female students were more likely to use tutoring services and that it was mostly used due to assignment help. Males were found to use the service for more general reasons (i.e., struggling, need help) (Fhloinn et al., 2016). Second, a few differences were found with the variables of marital status and presence of children, however, none of these differences were large enough to discuss in detail. Lastly, variables of ethnicity and high school GPA show results similar to those from research question three.

Conclusions

This research provides evidence to support the literature that adult learners are a different population of student and therefore require different and/or additional accommodations and

services. Findings from research question one demonstrates that adult learners at Tennessee community colleges with comparable demographics have similar levels of importance and satisfaction. The satisfaction levels with offerings could be due, in part, to both community colleges being under the same governing body, TBR. TBR sets certain standards that each community college must include. This helps creates consistency between community colleges.

Findings from research question two provides data to support changes WSCC has implemented since the start of Tennessee Reconnect. Tennessee Reconnect students exhibited a higher mean score for satisfaction with the college's services than pre-Tennessee Reconnect adult learners. WSCC implemented items including employing a coordinator of adult learners, offering extended hours for student support services, and offering courses in different formats and at a variety of times. However, additional accommodations including programs to assist with support systems and technology could further assist adult learners.

Findings from research question three show that adult learners have a higher perceived engagement with faculty members inside the classroom than do traditional college students. However, perceived engagement outside the classroom shows no significant differences between adult learners and traditional college students. This makes sense as adult learners are more likely to leave directly after classes to deal with personal obligations.

The findings from research question four show that there are areas of student services where improvements are needed. These include services such as face-to-face tutoring and skills labs. These are services where adult learners show perceived engagement and dissatisfaction. This shows that adult learners are more likely to use these services, thus modifications and changes should be made with this population in mind.

Recommendations for Practice and Policy Makers

The findings from this study offer several areas for recommendations to practice and policy makers. The first area is for policy makers at WSCC and MSCC. These policy makers need to continue to make changes with the needs of adult learners in mind. It is recommended that the colleges form focus groups of Tennessee Reconnect adult learners to assist in changes. This is especially needed with student support services such as tutoring and skills labs. Before changes can be made to these services, policy makers need to understand why Tennessee Reconnect adult learners are dissatisfied with the current offerings. Perhaps a focus group could be drawn from the students who completed the ALI or SENSE surveys used in this study. More in-depth questioning regarding services and accommodations could further explain findings or discover shortcomings with this research. Additionally, this group would form a good basis for a qualitative or mixed methods study to further investigate the findings and explore any gaps in this study. One qualitative study was found that utilized a focus group of Tennessee Reconnect recipients. This study consisted of seven students and focused on retention (Dean, 2020).

In addition to focus groups, it is recommended that both colleges look for ways to increase engagement of Tennessee Reconnect adult learners outside the classroom. This could be accomplished through offering more family events, where adult learners could bring their children along. This could also be done through off campus family trips. These would be even more effective if college faculty members were involved. Other recommendations include student clubs or organizations specifically designed for adult learners. This would allow for student engagement outside of the classroom with others who have similar goals and obstacles. Cabrera et al. (2002) recommended the formation of clubs or sports teams to assist in creating outside the classroom engagement and belonging for adult learners. In a 1993 study, Kuh

recommended interaction with faculty, classmates, and student services outside the classroom to increase overall college satisfaction for adult learners.

This study also provides some important findings for policy makers in other states beginning the process of developing programs similar to Tennessee Reconnect. Recently, the President of the United States proposed the American Families Plan, which contains plans for free community college for all students. While this Plan has not be signed into Law, it should have states thinking about what free community college would look like for them. Currently, 17 states have some version of free community college (Bisht, 2020). However, only four of those states have requirements that allow for adult learners to receive free community college (Bisht, 2020). Of those four, many of the requirements would make it difficult for adult learners to maintain the requirements (i.e., maintaining a full-time student status, completing community service hours, etc.) (CSN, 2021). It is recommended that policy makers in other states use Tennessee Reconnect as a template and additionally incorporate the changes suggested in this study for MSCC and WSCC policy makers.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study found several interesting and noteworthy findings, however, it also brought to light other areas that need more research. First, the latest survey utilized was from one year after Tennessee Reconnect implementation, currently Tennessee Reconnect has been in implemented at all Tennessee community colleges for three years. Analyses to see if these results are still being observed would provide a strong foundation for the recommended changes for policy makers. Second, the world has been dealing with a global pandemic for the past year, research is needed to see how this has impacted Tennessee Reconnect adult learners in particular, especially considering their personal obligations. Research looking at adult learners has shown that the

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pandemic has caused them to change their educational plans, that could be true for Tennessee Reconnect adult learners as well (Donaher, 2020). Lastly, many differences in means were found with the demographic variables. This was especially true for the variable gender. More research is needed to see if these findings were due to sample size differences or if they are actually statistically significant differences. Because this study was done using predominately White community colleges, no findings for ethnicity could be discussed. Studies have shown that ethnicity does play a role in levels of importance, satisfaction, and engagement at colleges (Cole, 2004; Kim, 2006, Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). Similar research is needed at community colleges with a more diverse student population to see if the same findings are found. A surprising finding from this study was the lack of differences in means between first-generation and non-first-generation adult learners. More research is needed on this demographic variable to see if these results are accurate. Any additional research could help ensure adult learners at Tennessee community colleges receive the services and accommodations to assure continued success and to ensure the Tennessee Reconnect program is available for future generations.

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APPENDIX: Blank ALI and SENSE Surveys

Adult Learner Inventory

ⓘ About the responses   −

Each item below describes an expectation about your experiences with this program.

On the *left*, tell us how <u>important</u> it is for your program to meet this expectation.

On the *right*, tell us how <u>satisfied</u> you are that your program is meeting this expectation.

Level of importance...

1 - Not important at all	5 - Somewhat important	1 - Not satisfied at all	5 -Somewhat satisfied
2 - Not very important	6 - Important	2 - Not very satisfied	6 - Satisfied
3 - Somewhat unimportant	7 - Very important	3 - Somewhat dissatisfied	7 - Very satisfied
4 - Neutral	N/A - Does not apply	4 - Neutral	N/A - Does not apply

...Level of satisfaction

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   1. My program allows me to pace my studies to fit my life and work schedules.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   2. Sufficient course offerings within my program are available each term.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   3. This college assists students who need help with the financial aid process.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   4. My instructors involve me in evaluating my own learning.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   5. I receive the help I need to improve my technology skills.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   6. I receive timely direction on how to transfer to four-year colleges and universities.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   7. Staff are available to help me solve unique problems I encounter.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   8. This college provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   9. I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   10. I have a clear understanding of what I'm expected to learn in my classes.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   11. This college offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

`1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`   12. Technology support is available to me when I need it.   `1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A`

10% Complete

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	13. Processes and procedures for enrolling here are convenient.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	14. I receive guidance on which classes will transfer to programs here and elsewhere.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	15. Advisors are knowledgeable about requirements for courses and programs of interest to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	16. Billing for tuition and fees is tailored to meet my specific needs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	17. My instructors provide timely feedback about my academic progress.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	18. This college uses technology on a regular basis to communicate with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	19. I receive timely responses to my requests for help and information.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	20. This college periodically evaluates my skill level to guide my learning experiences.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	21. My studies are closely related to my life and work goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	22. I receive the help I need to develop my academic skills, including reading, writing, and math.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	23. I can make payments or inquiries about tuition at times that are convenient for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	24. I receive the help I need to stay on track with my classes.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	25. I'm evaluated on the knowledge and skills I'll need in my life and career.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	26. I am able to choose course delivery that fits my life circumstances (e.g., on this campus, other campuses, online, in my community, at my workplace).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	27. I am encouraged to apply the classes I've taken towards a degree or certificate.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	28. This college initiates many opportunities for me to connect with other adult learners.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	29. My instructors respect student opinions and ideas that differ from their own.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	30. I am able to obtain information I need by phone, fax, e-mail, or online.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	31. This college makes many support services available at convenient times and places.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	32. Technology enables me to get the services I need when I need them (registering, paying bills, accessing library, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	33. This college explains what is needed for me to complete my program here.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	34. This college provides "one-stop shopping" for most student support services (registration, financial aid, advising, textbook purchases, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	35. Mentors are available to guide my career and life goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	36. Most instructors use a variety of teaching methods.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

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Each item below describes an expectation about your experiences with this program.

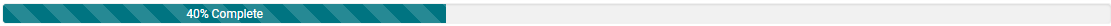On the *left,* tell us how important it is for your program to meet this expectation.

On the *right,* tell us how satisfied you are that your program is meeting this expectation.

Level of importance...

1 - Not important at all	5 - Somewhat important	1 - Not satisfied at all	5 -Somewhat satisfied
2 - Not very important	6 - Important	2 - Not very satisfied	6 - Satisfied
3 - Somewhat unimportant	7 - Very important	3 - Somewhat dissatisfied	7 - Very satisfied
4 - Neutral	N/A - Does not apply	4 - Neutral	N/A - Does not apply

...Level of satisfaction

30% Complete

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	37. I have many ways to demonstrate what I know.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	38. My instructors encourage student-to-student interactions through a variety of techniques.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	39. Information is available online to help me understand what I need to do next in my program of study.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	40. I receive the help I need to make decisions about courses and programs that interest me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	41. Staff are available to help me with the employer tuition reimbursement process.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	42. This college evaluates students' academic skills for placement in reading, writing and math.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	43. The frequency of interactions with my instructors is satisfactory.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	44. I can receive credit for learning derived from my previous life and work experiences.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	45. Instructors incorporate my life and work experiences in class activities and assignments.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	46. The learning experiences within my program of study challenge me to reach beyond what I know already.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	47. When I miss a deadline or fall behind in my studies, someone from the college contacts me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	48. Campus defined item defined by institution	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A

About the responses

Each item below describes an expectation about your experiences with this program.

On the *left*, tell us how <u>important</u> it is for your program to meet this expectation.

On the *right*, tell us how <u>satisfied</u> you are that your program is meeting this expectation.

Level of importance...

1 - Not important at all	5 - Somewhat important
2 - Not very important	6 - Important
3 - Somewhat unimportant	7 - Very important
4 - Neutral	N/A - Does not apply

...Level of satisfaction

1 - Not satisfied at all	5 -Somewhat satisfied
2 - Not very satisfied	6 - Satisfied
3 - Somewhat dissatisfied	7 - Very satisfied
4 - Neutral	N/A - Does not apply

40% Complete

49. Campus defined item defined by institution

50. Campus defined item defined by institution

51. Campus defined item defined by institution

52. Campus defined item defined by institution

53. Campus defined item defined by institution

54. Campus defined item defined by institution

55. Campus defined item defined by institution

56. Campus defined item defined by institution

57. testing

50% Complete

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   58. Ability to transfer credits as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   59. Credit for learning gained from life and work experiences as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   60. Ability to design my own program as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   61. Cost as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   62. Tuition reimbursement from employer as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   63. Availability of financial assistance as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   64. Requirement for current or future job as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   65. Reputation of institution as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   66. Flexible pacing for completing a program as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   67. Convenient time and place for classes as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   68. Availability of online courses as factor in decision to enroll

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A   69. Distance from campus as factor in decision to enroll

Each item below describes an expectation about your experiences with this program.

On the *left*, tell us how <u>important</u> it is for your program to meet this expectation.

Level of importance...

1 - Not important at all	5 - Somewhat important
2 - Not very important	6 - Important
3 - Somewhat unimportant	7 - Very important
4 - Neutral	N/A - Does not apply

On the left, tell us how important each of the following factors were in your decision to enroll at this institution.

60% Complete

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	70. Labor union support/endorsement as factor in decision to enroll
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	71. Courses held at employment site as factor in decision to enroll
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	72. Employer endorsement as factor in decision to enroll
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	73. Program accreditation by professional organization or trade group as factor in decision to enroll
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	74. Availability of child care as factor in decision to enroll
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	75. Availability of program I wanted as factor in decision to enroll
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	76. High rate of job placement as factor in decision to enroll
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A	77. Time required to complete program as factor in decision to enroll

About the responses —

Choose the *one* response that best applies to you for each of the questions below.

70% Complete

Summary Questions

1. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your program?

[⌄]

2. Would you recommend your program to other adult learners?

[⌄]

About the responses

The following demographic items are asked to help us better respond to the data you have provided.
Please indicate the best response for each of the following items.

80% Complete

Demographic Questions

1. My gender

[▼]

2. My age category in years is

[▼]

3. I describe myself as

[▼]

4. My current marital status

[▼]

5. I support dependents in my household

[▼]

6. Dependents in my household are (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Pre-school age
- [ ] Elementary School age (kindergarten through elementary)
- [ ] Middle School/High School age
- [ ] College Student
- [ ] Elderly or Disabled Adult
- [ ] Does not apply

7. My current enrollment status is

[▼]

8. Number of hours I'm employed outside the home

[▼]

9. My educational plans at this time are to

[▼]

10. At this college, my objective is to

[▼]

11. To date, I have completed

[▼]

12. I received or plan to receive credit at this college from (check all that apply)

- [ ] Previous college credits earned at another institution
- [ ] Evaluation of learning from military training
- [ ] Evaluation of learning from prior job or life experience
- [ ] Credit through testing
- [ ] Other sources
- [ ] Not applicable

The following demographic items are asked to help us better respond to the data you have provided.
Please indicate the best response for each of the following items.

90% Complete

Demographic Questions

13. The highest level of education I completed before enrolling at this college was

[⌄]

14. English is the language normally spoken in my home

[⌄]

15. I am the first person in my family to attend college

[⌄]

16. I am paying for college. (check all that apply)

☐ Myself
☐ Grants or scholarships
☐ Loans
☐ Tuition reimbursement from employer
☐ Veterans' benefits
☐ Other

17. I began my enrollment at this college

[⌄]

18. Number of hours I am involved with volunteer activities each week

[⌄]

19. Campus demographic item #1

[⌄]

20. Campus demographic item #2

[⌄]

21. Selection of Program/Major:

[⌄]

Final Thoughts....

22. How likely is it that you would recommend our institution to a friend or colleague?

○ 0 - Not at all likely
○ 1
○ 2
○ 3
○ 4
○ 5 - Neutral
○ 6
○ 7
○ 8
○ 9
○ 10 - Extremely likely

23. Please enter any comments you would like to share with this institution.

Remaining Characters: 2048

[   ]

SURVEY OF ENTERING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Instructions: It is essential that you use a No. 2 pencil to complete this survey. Mark your answer as shown in the following example:

CORRECT MARK ⬤
INCORRECT MARKS ⊘ ⊗ ⊖ ⊙

1. **Have you taken this survey in another class THIS SEMESTER/QUARTER?**
   ○ Yes   ○ No

2. **Thinking about THIS SEMESTER/QUARTER, how would you describe your enrollment _at this college_?**
   ○ Full-time   ○ Less than full-time

3. **Did you begin college at this college or elsewhere?**
   ○ Started here   ○ Started elsewhere

4. **While in high school, did you earn college credit for one or more courses?** (Mark all that apply)
   ○ No
   ○ Yes, at this college
   ○ Yes, at a different college
   ○ Yes, at my high school

5. **In addition to taking courses at this college, were/are you also enrolled at a 4-year college or university during YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER?**
   ○ Yes   ○ No

6. **How many semesters/quarters have you been enrolled _at this college_?**
   ○ This is my first semester/quarter
   ○ This is my second semester/quarter
   ○ This is my third semester/quarter
   ○ This is my fourth semester/quarter
   ○ I have been enrolled more than four semesters/quarters

7. **How many courses did you enroll in for YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER _at this college_?**
   ○ One   ○ Three
   ○ Two   ○ Four or more

8. **Did you add or drop any classes within the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER _at this college_?**
   ○ Yes, without discussing my decision with a college staff member or instructor
   ○ Yes, after discussing my decision with a college staff member or instructor
   ○ No, I did not add or drop any courses

9. **Of the courses you enrolled in during YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER _at this college_, how many did you drop after the first day of class?**
   ○ None   ○ Two   ○ Four or more
   ○ One   ○ Three

10. **When did you register for your courses for YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER _at this college_?** (Mark only ONE)
    ○ More than one week before classes began
    ○ During the week before classes began
    ○ During the first week of classes
    ○ After the first week of classes

PLEASE DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

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11. **The following statements are about this college's orientation for new students.** (Mark all that apply)
- ○ I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes
- ○ I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes
- ○ I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first semester/quarter at this college
- ○ I was not aware of a college orientation
- ○ I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues

12. **This set of items asks you about your earliest experiences _at this college_. To respond, please think about your experiences FROM THE TIME OF YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND THIS COLLEGE THROUGH THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER.**

	Yes	No
a. Before I could register for classes I was _required_ to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math	○	○
b. I took a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.)	○	○
c. I was exempt from taking a placement test at this college	○	○

13. **My placement test scores indicated that I needed to take a Developmental course (also referred to as Basic Skills, College Prep, etc.) in the following areas.** (Mark all that apply)
- ○ Didn't take a placement test
- ○ Developmental Reading
- ○ Developmental Writing
- ○ Developmental Math
- ○ Didn't place into any Developmental courses

14. **This college _required_ me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER.**
- ○ Yes   ○ No

15. **With regard to financial assistance (scholarships, grants, or loans, etc.) to help with your college costs, mark a response for each of the following items.**

	Yes	No
a. I applied for financial assistance (scholarships, grants, or loans, etc.)	○	○
b. I was notified I was eligible to receive financial assistance (scholarships, grants, or loans, etc.)	○	○
c. I received financial assistance funds (scholarships, grants, or loans, etc.) before classes began	○	○

16. **When did you first apply for financial assistance.** (Mark only ONE)
- ○ 3 or more months before classes began
- ○ 1 to 2 months before classes began
- ○ Less than 1 month before classes began
- ○ After classes began
- ○ I did not apply for financial assistance

17. **In which of the following types of courses were you enrolled during your FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER _at this college_?** (Respond to each item)

	Enrolled	Not enrolled
a. Developmental Reading (also referred to as Basic Skills, College Prep, etc.)	○	○
b. Developmental Writing (also referred to as Basic Skills, College Prep, etc.)	○	○
c. Developmental Math (also referred to as Basic Skills, College Prep, etc.)	○	○
d. An English course taught specifically for students whose first language is not English (ESL, ESOL)	○	○
e. A course specifically designed to teach skills and strategies to help students succeed in college (e.g., a college success or student success course)	○	○
f. An organized "learning community" (two or more courses that a group of students take together)	○	○

18. This set of items asks you about your earliest experiences _at this college_. To respond, please think about your experiences FROM THE TIME OF YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND THIS COLLEGE THROUGH THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER. (Respond to each item)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome	○	○	○	○	○
b. The instructors at this college want me to succeed	○	○	○	○	○
c. All the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter were available at times convenient for me	○	○	○	○	○
d. I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me	○	○	○	○	○
e. An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major	○	○	○	○	○
f. An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them	○	○	○	○	○
g. An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter	○	○	○	○	○
h. A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school (work, children, dependents, etc.) to help me figure out how many courses to take	○	○	○	○	○
i. The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
j. A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance	○	○	○	○	○
k. All instructors had activities to introduce students to one another	○	○	○	○	○
l. All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college	○	○	○	○	○
m. All instructors clearly explained course grading policies	○	○	○	○	○
n. All instructors clearly explained course syllabi (syllabuses)	○	○	○	○	○
o. I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class	○	○	○	○	○
p. At least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name	○	○	○	○	○
q. At least one other student whom I didn't previously know learned my name	○	○	○	○	○
r. At least one instructor learned my name	○	○	○	○	○
s. I learned the name of at least one other student in most of my classes	○	○	○	○	○
t. I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college	○	○	○	○	○
u. I am prepared academically to succeed in college	○	○	○	○	○

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19. During the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER _at this college_, about how often did you do the following? (Respond to each item)

	Never	Once	Two or three times	Four or more times
a. Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	○	○	○	○
b. Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	○	○	○	○
c. Turn in an assignment late	○	○	○	○
d. Not turn in an assignment	○	○	○	○
e. Participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)	○	○	○	○
f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	○	○	○	○
g. Work with other students on a project or assignment during class	○	○	○	○
h. Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments	○	○	○	○
i. Participate in a required study group outside of class	○	○	○	○
j. Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class	○	○	○	○
k. Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with another student about coursework	○	○	○	○
l. Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework	○	○	○	○
m. Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	○	○	○	○
n. Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class	○	○	○	○
o. Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance	○	○	○	○
p. Receive grades or points on assignments, quizzes, tests, or papers, etc.	○	○	○	○
q. Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	○	○	○	○
r. Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family, co-workers, etc.)	○	○	○	○
s. Skip class	○	○	○	○

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20. This section asks three questions about a variety of college services. Answer ALL THREE QUESTIONS for each service indicating (1) whether you knew about it, (2) how often you used it, and (3) how satisfied you were. To respond, please think about your experiences FROM THE TIME OF YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND THIS COLLEGE THROUGH THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER.

	(1) Did you KNOW ABOUT it?		(2) How often did you USE it?				(3) How SATISFIED were you with it?			
	Yes	No	Never	Once	Two or three times	Four or more times	Very	Some-what	Not at all	N/A
a. Academic advising/planning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Career counseling	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Job placement assistance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Face-to-face tutoring	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Online tutoring	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Writing, math, or other skill lab	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Financial assistance advising	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Computer lab	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. Student organizations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
j. Transfer credit assistance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
k. Services to students with disabilities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

21. This set of items asks you about your earliest experiences _at this college_. To respond, please think about your experiences FROM THE TIME OF YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND THIS COLLEGE THROUGH THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER. (Respond to each item)

Within a class, or through another experience at this college:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
b. I learned to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses	○	○	○	○	○
c. I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability	○	○	○	○	○

22. Thinking about your experiences FROM THE TIME OF YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND THIS COLLEGE THROUGH THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER, what has been your MAIN source of academic advising (help with academic goal-setting, planning, course recommendations, graduation requirements, etc.)? (Mark only ONE)

○ Instructors   ○ Friends, family, or other students   ○ College Web site
○ College staff (not instructors)   ○ Computerized degree advisor system   ○ Other college materials

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23. Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?
○ Yes   ○ No

24. During the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST SEMESTER/QUARTER _at this college_, about how many hours did you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

	None	1–5	6–10	11–20	21–30	More than 30
a. Preparing for class (in a typical 7-day week)	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Working for pay (in a typical 7-day week)	○	○	○	○	○	○

25. When do you plan to take classes _at this college_ again?
○ I will accomplish my goal(s) during this semester/quarter and will not be returning
○ I have no current plans to return
○ Within the next 12 months
○ Uncertain

26. While in high school, did you

	Yes	No	N/A
a. Take math every school year?	○	○	○
b. Take math during your senior year?	○	○	○

27. Would you recommend this college to a friend or family member?
○ Yes   ○ No

28. In what range was your overall high school grade average?
○ A   ○ A– to B+   ○ B   ○ B– to C+   ○ C   ○ C– or lower

29. Your sex:
○ Male   ○ Female

30. Mark your age group.
○ Under 18   ○ 20 to 21   ○ 25 to 29   ○ 40 to 49   ○ 65+
○ 18 to 19   ○ 22 to 24   ○ 30 to 39   ○ 50 to 64

	Yes	No
31. Are you married?	○	○
32. Do you have children who live with you and depend on you for their care?	○	○
33. Is English your native (first) language?	○	○
34. Are you an international student or nonresident alien?	○	○

35. What is your racial/ethnic identification? (Mark only ONE)
○ American Indian or Native American
○ Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
○ Native Hawaiian
○ Black or African American, Non–Hispanic
○ White, Non–Hispanic
○ Hispanic, Latino, Spanish
○ Other

36. What is the highest academic certificate or degree you have earned? (Mark only ONE)
○ None   ○ Vocational/technical certificate   ○ Bachelor's degree
○ GED   ○ Associate degree   ○ Master's/Doctoral/Professional degree
○ High school diploma

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37. Please indicate whether your goal(s) for attending _this college_ include the following:
(Respond to all three)

	Yes	No
a. To complete a certificate	◯	◯
b. To obtain an Associate degree	◯	◯
c. To transfer to a 4–year college or university	◯	◯

38. Who in your family has attended at least some college? (Mark all that apply)

◯ Mother
◯ Father
◯ Brother/Sister
◯ Child

◯ Spouse/Partner
◯ Legal Guardian
◯ None of the above

39. Please provide your student identification number by filling in the corresponding ovals. For example, in the first column, indicate the first number or letter in your student ID number, and so forth. (OPTIONAL)

(Please begin here)

Additional Items
(Please respond to these items if requested)

	A	B	C	D	E			A	B	C	D	E
1	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		13	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
2	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		14	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
3	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		15	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
4	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		16	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
5	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		17	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
6	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		18	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
7	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		19	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
8	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		20	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
9	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		21	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
10	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		22	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
11	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		23	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ
12	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ		24	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ	Ⓓ	Ⓔ

SAMPLE

Your responses will remain confidential.
No individual responses will be reported.

Thank you for sharing your views.

SCANTRON   Mark Reflex® EM-276910-2:654321

PLEASE DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA

SERIAL #

KELLY ANN MOORE-ROBERTS

Education:	Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2021
	Graduate Certificate Community College Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2018
	M.S. Environmental Health, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2008
	B.S. Biology, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2005
	A.S. Biology, Walters State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee, 2003
	Public Schools, Rutledge, Tennessee
Professional Experience:	Assistant Professor of Biology, Walters State Community College; Morristown, Tennessee, 2015-Present
	Adjunct Professor of Biology, Walters State Community College; Morristown, Tennessee, 2010-2015
	Research and Development Technician, Colortech, Inc. Morristown, Tennessee, 2008-2013
	Graduate Assistant, East Tennessee State University, College of Public Health, 2005-2008
Honors and Awards:	TSTA Board of Directors, 2021-2023

TSTA Higher Educator of the Year, 2019

WSCC Mobile Fellow, 2019

Certifications: Apple Certified Teacher

National Geographic Certified Teacher

Extracurricular: WSCC Science Club Advisor

WSCC QEP Mentor

WSCC RHiTA Mentor

Tennessee Achieves Mentor

Creating faSCInating TEaCHers Co-Founder

WSCC Biology Internship Coordinator