

2022

Community College Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Role In Student Persistence

Courtney L. Grant
Walden University

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



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

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

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Courtney Grant

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

Review Committee

Dr. Mary Lou Morton, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Antoinette Myers, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Heather Caldwell, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Community College Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Role
In Student Persistence

by

Courtney Grant

MA, Western Governors University, 2015

BS, Purdue University, 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

August, 2022

Abstract

Research into community college (CC) education shows low percentages of student persistence in many CCs in the United States. The problem addressed in this study was the low rate of students completing CC in a southeastern state and across the United States. Many CC organizations are not meeting graduation standards set forth by accrediting bodies. The purpose of this basic qualitative study using open-ended interview questions was to explore CC faculty's (CCF) perceptions regarding their role in CC student persistence to complete the CC program. Currently furloughed CCF of this CC were interviewed to gather data on their perceptions. The conceptual framework that was used to guide this study are Reason's theory of the student matters and Tinto's theory of student departure. Key research questions were used to explore how faculty members perceive their role in student completion and what CCF perceive as motivating factors supporting student persistence. A basic qualitative method with interviews of seven CC faculty members was used in this study. Data were analyzed using open coding of interview transcripts. Findings revealed that participants felt that support of students was seen as an overarching role of the CCF. Additional themes developed were an under-preparedness by the organization of both CCF and students, negative student response to extrinsic factors usually resulting in withdrawal from the CC, and the noted importance of interpersonal interactions in the CC classroom. The findings of this study may be used by CCs to better prepare CCF to support greater student persistence and to improve graduation rates. Both of these can lead to positive social change by both providing a better prepared and qualified workforce as well as affording career and steady income opportunities to our community members.

Community College Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Role

In Student Persistence

by

Courtney Grant

MBA, Western Governors University, 2015

BS, Purdue University, 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August, 2022

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this paper to my family and supporters of this process. The family members who rallied behind me despite not knowing about what I am writing. To my daughters, whom I hope will find inspiration in hard work and dedication. And to my family in education; my doctoral team and the community college faculty with whom my path has crossed. I see you; I hear you and I know you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank those who have supported me throughout my journey with this project. Thank you to the countless faculty members, mentors, supervisors, and friends. However, the biggest impact in my village of support has been my encouraging husband, Tim, who spent countless hours entertaining our babies so “mom could write”; along with reading and editing when I had had enough. My very best friend, Drea, who endured innumerable, tearful conversations about how I would not, could not finish and who always reminded me that I could. My one and only classmate, Sara, with whom I was able to find solidarity when things seemed insurmountable. Finally, the biggest thanks of all to my chairperson, Dr. Mary Lou Morton, who has offered more feedback, support, guidance, mentorship, and direction than anyone has. Without her, I may have given up. There are not enough words in the dictionary to express my sincere gratitude to those listed above; I sincerely owe my future to each of them.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	8
Research Questions.....	9
Conceptual Framework.....	9
Nature of the Study.....	11
Definitions.....	13
Assumptions.....	13
Scope and Delimitations	14
Limitations	14
Significance.....	15
Summary.....	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	17
Literature Search Strategy.....	17
Conceptual Framework.....	19
Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts.....	20
The CC Development	22

CC Experience	23
Persistence.....	26
Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors	36
Classroom Engagement	39
Student Perspectives of Success	46
Summary and Conclusions	47
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	49
Research Design and Rationale	49
Role of the Researcher	52
Methodology.....	53
Participant Selection	53
Instrumentation	54
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection	
Recruitment.....	56
Data Collection	57
Data Analysis Plan.....	61
Trustworthiness.....	62
Ethical Procedures	64
Summary.....	65
Chapter 4: Results.....	67
Setting	67
Data Collection	69
Data Analysis	70

Results.....	73
Theme 1: Support as an Overarching Role of CCF	73
Theme 2: Under-Prepared by Institution	75
Theme 3: Student Response to Outside Factors	77
Theme 4: Interpersonal Interactions	79
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	81
Summary.....	83
Answers to Research Questions.....	84
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	86
Interpretation of the Findings.....	87
Limitations of the Study.....	92
Recommendations.....	93
Implications.....	94
Conclusion	96
References.....	98
Appendix A: Interview Questions	119
Appendix B: Interview Questions as Related to Research Questions	121

List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Data Analysis and Planning Timeline</i>	57
Table 2 <i>Interview Questions as Related to Research Questions</i>	59
Table 3 <i>Participant Demographics</i>	66

List of Figures

Figure 1 *Completion Rates by School Type* 8

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In this study, I examined the low completion rates at community colleges (CC) across the United States. The United States Department of Education released data on national graduation rates, citing an official CC graduation rate of 22% nationwide (Juszkiewicz, 2016). The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) reported 38% of all CC students earn a credential of some type (Juszkiewicz, 2016). These values fall below the threshold of many accrediting bodies that set benchmark graduation rates for CC. The focus college of this study, a small CC in the Southeastern United States, had a completion rate of 32%. In this study, I addressed a gap in practice and related literature by examining the personal influence of CCF on student persistence that helps them complete their program.

It is necessary to understand the reason behind low completion rates at the CC level. This study may result in social change due to greater CC student completion. Many CCs struggle with low student persistence; previous researchers have suggested that faculty impact is one of the strongest influences on CC student persistence (Hollis, 2015; Tinto, 2010). Yet there is little research on how CCF perceive their self-role in student completion. Gaining a better understanding of what CCF understand about guidance in student success and completion may impact CCF training, hiring processes, and continuing education.

In this study, I explored the perceptions of CCF about their role in student completion. By understanding these perceptions, CCs can better prepare faculty members, which may, in turn, improve student graduation rates. Higher graduation rates

can affect positive social changes by developing a better-prepared workforce, better-paying careers, and more successful college organizations. Chapter 1 includes the background on the topic as well as an explanation of the problem, purpose and nature of the study, and research questions. In addition, Chapter 1 includes a discussion of the conceptual framework, definitions of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations. Finally, Chapter 1 includes the significance and summary of this study.

Background

The focus of this study was the problem of below benchmark completion rates of CC students in the United States. While nearly 1.5 million students enroll in CCs each year, only between 22 and 40% of those earn any college degree within six years of enrollment (Crisp & Delgado, 2014; Juskiewicz, 2016). Many accrediting bodies, including the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), require higher graduation rates to meet guidelines (ACCSC, 2017). Ober et al. (2018) explored student graduation rates at 14 2-year and 4-year CC institutions and found that underprepared students or students who enroll part-time in college are less likely to graduate in the given time. Both administration and faculty's understanding of this is key to guiding students toward success (Ober et al., 2018). One of the biggest factors impacting student retention and graduation is faculty intervention (Hollis, 2015; Hope, 2016; Tinto, 1987, 2010). Similarly, Tinto (2010) identified faculty influence as one of the highest-ranking factors in students' reasons to stay enrolled in CC. Tinto (2010) also explored reasons for retention and reasons students stay enrolled. Tinto (2010) suggested that faculty engagement, interaction or rapport is among the highest rated reasons

students persist at CC. As with Ober et al. (2018) and Tinto (2010), Hope (2016) found that at CC, student satisfaction with classroom interactions and faculty has a major impact on the decision to stay enrolled with the CC.

Meeting graduation needs serves the purpose of meeting United States' workforce needs and results in career-based income for graduates. It is speculated that the United States will fall short of meeting workforce needs by 16 million graduates by the year 2025 (Price & Tovar, 2014). The Obama Administration challenged U.S. CCs to increase CC graduates by an additional five million by the year 2020 (Marcus, 2009). Data showing that CCs did not meet workforce needs and fell short of the Obama CC Completion Agenda were two reasons this issue of CC student graduation needed to be further investigated. One aspect of these graduation rates is CCF, which I focused on in this project. By studying CCF perceptions of their influence on student persistence to completion, I gained insight into what is understood by faculty members about how training should be adjusted. This information could be used to improve student completion and graduation rates, resulting in CCs meeting accreditation guidelines and promoting a healthy workforce.

Problem Statement

Over the past decade, higher education institutions have had a reduction in student completion for many colleges, specifically CCs (Tinto, 2010). The CC Review reported a 13% graduation rate for CCs in a two-year timeframe, improving to a 28% within 4 years (Chen, 2019). These low persistence numbers are incompatible with many accrediting body standards of 30% graduation rate within 150% of the programmatic timeframe

(ACCSC, 2017). Goldrick (2018) explained that in recent years, the cost of CC has risen, the mean annual income for household size has decreased, and resources for CC students have declined. This has led to challenges for the CC student and negatively impacted persistence toward degree-earning.

According to the website of a CC in a suburban Tennessee school district, the institution is experiencing low student completion rates. The issue many colleges face may be that not all faculty perceive their role in the classroom to be impactful (Gawronski, et al., 2016). Throughout the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, Tinto examined reasons for student departure from college (1987, 2010). As CCs have gained popularity over the past 20 years, some CC organizations have suffered the same student attrition troubles. Tinto (1987, 2010) concluded that student acceptance or rapport with institution representatives did positively affect student retention. Bailey (2017) expanded on Tinto's theory that inclusive student models and engaging classroom experiences lead to higher retention at the CC level. Bailey surveyed CC faculty and concluded that "educators are not always sufficiently motivated to improve their teaching craft" (p. 7). With the concern of low student completion rate in the local setting, the focus of this study was the gap in practice to better understand CCF perceptions of their role in student success.

Student success for this study is defined as graduation from a program of study. Fong et al. (2017) indicated that psychosocial factors, including acceptance and integration in the classroom, were among the biggest motivating factors for CC student persistence. Tinto (2010) pointed out that student retention has not improved significantly

in the past two decades. Paulson (2016) reported that the average post-secondary institution has a graduation rate of 56.5%. Further data suggested that the United States Department of Education reports some CCs with graduation rates as low as 22% (Juszkiewicz, 2016). While there have been theories regarding why completion rates suffer—including underprepared students, nontraditional students, and lack of campus support—there have been no definitive reasons given (Juszkiewicz, 2016; Tinto 2010). Additionally, Juszkiewicz (2016) noted that female students have higher graduation rates by 6%, as do students over the age of 24, citing an 11% higher graduation rate than those under the age of 24. Many accreditation bodies require higher than 60% graduation rates (ACCSC, 2017).

Student completion rates in the local setting have been below the accreditation standards; however, with recent CCF training on classroom influence, student completion rates have improved. The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) requires a 65% program graduation rate, and an 80% program graduate placement rate (ACCSC, 2017). According to the local CC website, their medical assisting program had a 45% graduation rate, which was below ACCSC accreditation. In the past 24 months, a focus on faculty development and training resulted in an improvement from 33% graduation rate to 45% graduation rate according to the most recent data on their website. As of 2019, the graduation rate in this same program is 51%, still below accreditation standards. ACCSC (2019) reports an average of 57% graduation rate among CC students within 6 years. This indicates a 43% rate of nonpersisters. This local CC setting is well below this 57% average.

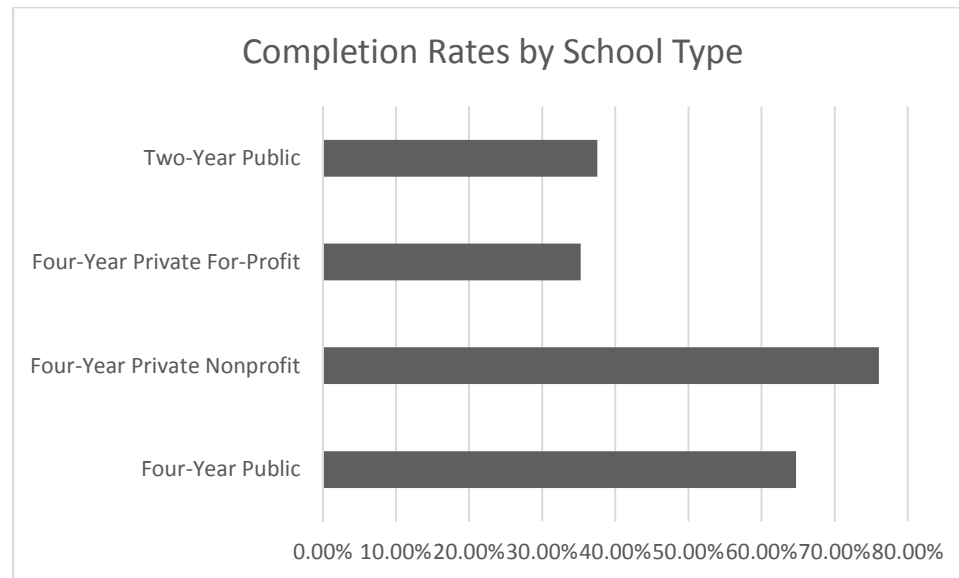
Among the in-service evaluations were numerous comments indicating an unawareness by the faculty of their role at the CC level. Four in-service opportunities are offered yearly, and two are required by each faculty member. The in-service topics focus on strengthening the classroom presence with topics such as classroom autonomy and improving rapport. Surveys are given at the end of each in-service to gauge takeaway responses from faculty members. Remarks received indicated some CCF were not aware that they could impact a student's feelings toward the class, organization, or even willingness to persist in college. It is imperative to get a better idea of CCF's perspective on their role in student persistence to better understand how to train and facilitate CCF in the battle against CC student persistence.

Many CCs struggle with student completion rates across the United States. Research varies on CC graduation rates; however, sources site rates between 22% and 38% (ACCSC, 2017; Juskiewicz, 2016). Accrediting bodies govern CCs to ensure best practices are being upheld, in addition to set thresholds for success. When CCs fail to meet these thresholds, accrediting bodies have the option of consequence on the organization. The overall mission of accrediting bodies is to ensure a well-prepared workforce by setting standards for CCs to be delivered through quality education (ACCSC, 2017). States vary by CC opportunity; however, according to the College Completion Chronicle (2016), approximately 50% of states are meeting graduation rate guidelines. Those most at risk are Mississippi with a 15% graduation rate at public CCs and 34% graduation rate at for-profit CCs, and Indiana at 8% and 53% respectively (College Completion Chronicle, 2016). Other states struggling to include Nevada,

Hawaii, Ohio, and Rhode Island (College Completion Chronicle, 2016). This shows a national need for solutions for CC student completion. As stated previously, there has been research done on the reasons students persist at the CC level; however, there is a gap in research and practice on whether CCF understand their role in student persistence.

Further data showed that 2-year institutions or CCs are among the lowest graduating organizations within the higher education facet. Using 6-year outcomes; Shapiro et al. (2018), discovered a 37.53% graduation rate at CCs versus nearly double for 4-year private nonprofit institutions at a 76.04% total completion rate. See Figure 1 for comparison. These results included students who completed degrees elsewhere, at the same location, and who were still enrolled at the original site (Shapiro, et al., 2018). This is an indicator that CCs need to improve their completion rates for both accrediting and financial purposes as well as support for student success. Figure 1 includes completion rates for colleges and universities in the United States:

Figure 1
Completion Rates by School Type



Note. Findings from a 2012 cohort followed for 6 consecutive years (Shapiro, et al., 2018)

Figure 1 shows that 2-year public CCs have some of the lowest completion rates of all higher education choices. Many students attending CCs will rely on their training and education received at the respective organization to better their quality of life. While a variety of factors go into the completion rates, I focused specifically on the CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence. It is one area that can be addressed at an institutional level and could result in higher persistence in a CC setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore CCF perceptions regarding their role in CC student persistence to complete the CC program. The role of CCF as explained by the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in Faculty Work in the Context of the CC (2007) described instruction, research, and institutional service as the core components of a full-time faculty member in a CC setting. Tinto (2010) explained that in

addition to these aspects, one key characteristic of CCF is relationship building and classroom engagement to develop rapport with CC students and improve graduation outcomes. Current literature does address low completion and graduation rates for CC students and why CC students decide to persist. However, there is little documented literature on faculty perceptions on why CC students persist. This is important because much of the literature on CC student persistence to graduate focuses on faculty engagement and involvement.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of CCF regarding their roles pertaining to student persistence. The research questions were:

Question 1: What do local CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?

Question 2: How do local CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?

Conceptual Framework

Reason (2009) evaluated CC student persistence conceptual framework from a variety of scholars. Reason (2009, p. 673) stated that relatively little research has been done exploring the connection between “students’ in-class learning experiences and persistence.” Tinto’s (1987, 2010) theory of student persistence indicates that the institution, and specifically the faculty members play an important role in student success. Braxton et al. (2008) stated that active teaching pedagogies lead to higher student satisfaction and a sense of well-being among CC students. Both higher quality

teaching, as well as active forms of teaching, were correlated to an increased likelihood of student persistence (Reason, 2009). Reason concluded that the biggest underlying factor of student success was engagement and a culture of “the student matters” (p.678). Reason’s concept of leadership is exemplified by accountability in the classroom, as well as the autonomy of CCF serving as leaders of their classrooms. Tinto (2017) focused on CC student persistence, stating the student experience “is most directly shaped by the broader campus climate and the students’ daily interactions with other students, academics, professional staff and administrators” (p.3). Dwyer (2017) further explored Tinto’s theory of student departure and investigated the theory as it relates to commuter schools. Dwyer (2017) found that Tinto’s theory of student-faculty interactions was consistent with his findings and concluded that these relationships are intertwined in the level of engagement as well as student persistence at organizations where students commute or are not present daily. Dwyer (2017) stated that active teaching results in better relationships and influences the persistence of students.

Ng (2017) studied activity and persistence in virtual learning groups. Ng (2017) suggested one of the top practices in virtual learning is frequent contact between the student and faculty. Ng (2017) also included developing reciprocity, prompt feedback, and active learning. All of these concepts are related to teacher-led learning and classroom presence.

Jones (2017) performed a quantitative study to examine the impact of a variety of theories in online learning communities. Jones (2017) found a positive correlation between teaching presence and positive course outcomes. This further shows that faculty,

faculty presence, and faculty interaction in the classroom can positively impact student persistence in CC.

The conceptual framework that I used for this study was Tinto's (1990) theory of student departure, and Reason's (2009) theory of the student matters intending to focus on CCF understanding of faculty role in student persistence. Together these theories build a framework of student persistence with CCF at the center. I used these theories to develop research questions and investigated deeper the extent to which CCF perceived their role in student persistence. I discuss these theories in greater depth in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a basic qualitative research study. Creswell and Creswell (2017) indicated studies that focus on observations, experiences, feelings, or perceptions are qualitative. The purpose of qualitative research studies is to gather information (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The data collection method that I used in this study was interviewing. Researchers can use interviews to gain personal perspectives from participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). The phenomena I investigated were the perceptions of CCF on their role in student persistence.

Once I collected data, I used open coding to analyze the data. Saldaña (2015) stated that open coding can be used to group data. In qualitative research, coding is based on ideas emerging in the data such as similar behaviors, thought processes, indications, or meanings (Saldaña, 2015). Through analysis of interviews addressing faculty perceptions, I compiled thoughts and experiences and developed themes from the codes across all

interviews. These codes were used to begin to develop themes for this study. Themes can be used to shape the conclusions of a study (Saldaña, 2015).

I used basic qualitative research with an interpretive approach to data analysis. Creswell and Poth (2017) suggested a researcher look for similar stories, phrases, or themes. The interpretive approach involves making sense of the data rather than actual analyzation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I did not code answers in the traditional sense; rather I assigned them to a general category of response (Miles et al., 1994). For this research and data collection, I used the interpretative approach to data coding and searched for similar themes, phrases, or stories. Coding in a traditional sense refers to placing themes into numerical quantities to help give meaning (Miles et al., 1994). I used interpretive coding for this research project.

For the data collection process, I researched how to develop questions for participants. For the interviews, I selected willing participants to interview using a list of open-ended questions. The intention for these questions was to better understand the perceptions of CCF regarding CC student persistence and the faculty's role in student persistence. While some researchers argue against using interviews as data collection methods; interviewing has been a long-used technique to acquire opinion-based information to examine a topic (Denzin, 2008). Some complications associated with interviewing can be negotiating a neutral space, privacy in recordkeeping, and gaining desirable responses from participants (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). These can be valid arguments against interviewing; however, all reasonable efforts were made to avoid these

hazards. Finally, I organized the answers to these interview questions into similar themes to reach conclusions in this study.

Definitions

Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC): an accreditation body that was established in 1967. The primary purpose of the ACCSC is to educate students about trade, occupational or technical careers (ACCSC, 2017).

CC: Postsecondary education institutions that provide two-year degrees, workforce development, and skills training for career preparation or transfer to a 4-year university (Topham, 2016).

CC faculty: Vetted instructors at a CC designated to deliver accreditation-approved curriculum materials Degrees required may include Associate, Bachelor, or Master's depending on courses taught and which degree-seeking program is being delivered (Hollis, 2015).

Completion: Finishing a selected diploma or degree program within the allotted timeframe set forth by the organization (Juszkiewicz, 2016).

Graduation: Earning a diploma or degree within the allotted timeframe set forth by the organization by obtaining all credits necessary for completion (Juszkiewicz, 2016).

Assumptions

For this study, I assumed the following items to be true about the interview candidates. This included that each CCF member is a formerly paid employee of the target organization who has taught at least one course within the organization, but who is currently on furlough. Participation in the study was voluntary; therefore, only those

opinions representing candidates willing to participate in this study might have been represented. Additional assumptions were that candidates shared interview responses in an honest manner representative of their authentic feelings. I made these assumptions based on the narrowness of the candidate pool.

Scope and Delimitations

This study was specific to one Tennessee CC, and specifically the CCF employees with this campus. The assumptions and conclusions represent this demographic and cohort. There are many factors influencing CC student persistence; in this research, I concentrated on participant perception of their role in student persistence. I did not assume that these same assumptions and conclusions may be generalized to all CC within this district, state, or country.

Limitations

Limitations of this study included a small sample size limited to one CC compared to the workforce population. Additionally, limitations of the data collection process (interviewing) can create bias as well as be less generalizable than other data collection methods (Queirós et al., 2017). Candidate responses were limited to local CCF rather than other higher education instructors (e.g., University Professors, Tenured Faculty, etc.). Another limitation was the staffing pool at the time of interview admission. Approval for local CCF participation was not agreed upon by the focus organization due to the urgent shifts of COVID-19. Consequently, I contacted the IRB and they agreed that I may use currently furloughed faculty members. Staffing needs to change on a semester

basis, therefore the pool of candidates actively on campus or willing to participate may have changed.

Significance

The significance of this problem is that many CC organizations are not meeting graduation standards set forth by accrediting bodies. The importance of this study was to explore this CC issue from the perspective of the CCF member. Tinto's (1990) theory of student retention notes that students who feel involved at CCs are more likely to stay enrolled through completion. The frequency and quality of contact with faculty, staff, and other students have repeatedly been shown to be independent predictors of student persistence. At this institution, knowing this from previous research, allowed me to explore what current faculty perceive as their role and educate them on what impact they may have on student completion. What has been a challenge to locate is how the understanding of this impact reflects on student completion. In this study, I explored CCF's understanding of their role in student persistence. The goal for CCs is to improve student retention, completion, and placement rates; and as some research has shown, prepared and engaging faculty may be one key to aid in this effort. By increasing CC student completion and graduation rates, the workforce will be better prepared, as well as gainful employment reduces overall city, county, state, and national unemployment rates.

Summary

As many CC continue to face attrition issues and struggle to meet accreditation standards for retention and graduation rates, faculty is one area left less examined (ACCSC, 2017). Using interviews, this study functioned as an information tool to

understand what faculty identify as their role in CC student persistence. Several theories including Tinto (1987) have pointed out that CCF does influence a student's decision to stay enrolled in courses, and further complete the programs. However, little research has been done on what CCF understand about the role they play. In this study, I examined a small cohort of CCF at one southeastern CC, to better understand what faculty members perceive their role to be in student persistence. The outcome of this study will be used to enhance literature that supports faculty training and development as a key aspect of student graduation rates.

Chapter 2 includes a review of relevant research related to CCF, CC student persistence, and CCF perceptions on student persistence. I listed the review of research resources, search terms, and databases used. I also addressed the conceptual framework in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The presented problem for this study arose from CCF in a suburban Tennessee CC experiencing low student completion rates according to the data collected from the host website. Furthermore, CCs nationwide were experiencing low completion rates (ACCSC, 2017). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of CCFs regarding their roles in student completion at the focus CC. I completed an exhaustive search of related studies using a range of terms related to CCF perceptions, CC student retention, and CCF influence on CC student persistence. Literature on CC student retention is extensive (Mansfield et al., 2011; Tinto, 1987; Tinto, 2012; Venezia & Hughes, 2014). Additionally, literature supporting CCF engagement to support student success is abundant (Bonet & Walters, 2016; Masika & Jones, 2016; Silver Wolf & Perkins, 2017; Tinto, 2012). However, there is no literature on CCF perceptions of the influence they may have on CC student persistence. I addressed the gap in research in this study. In Chapter 2, I have outlined the literature research strategy, conceptual framework foundations, and key concepts and variables.

Literature Search Strategy

I used the following databases at the Walden University Library: Education Source, SAGE Journals, NCES Publications, ProQuest Central, US Department of Health and Human Services, and Google Scholar. I conducted an exhaustive review of the literature and have provided an abundance of information on student success, persistence, and retention at CCs. The purpose of the literature review was to assess the current data on CC student persistence, CCF involvement, and CCF perceptions of student success. I

used a variety peer reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, governmental reports, and several websites. I also used journals including *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *Community College Journal*, *The Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, *Educational Leadership*, *Reading Psychology*, *American Journal of Education*, and *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice* to locate specific articles related to CCF and CC student persistence.

In this literature review, I addressed the following topics: CC development, CC experience, student persistence at CC, persistence, intrinsic and extrinsic factors, classroom engagement, and student perspectives of success. The themes I used included CC persistence, CC student completion, CCF role in student completion, full-time versus adjunct retention rates, and CCF perceptions on student persistence. In addition, I used a myriad of search terms to identify literature available on this topic. Keywords used included: *CC*, *student retention*, *faculty engagement*, *faculty impact*, *student persistence*, *student retention in CC*, *faculty perceptions of student persistence in CC*, *full-time versus part-time faculty impact on student persistence*, *student departure at CC*, *CC student retention*, *faculty perceptions of student success in CC*, *theories of CC student persistence*, *theories of CC student retention*, *student perceptions of success in CC*, *reasons CC students persist*, and *faculty understanding of student persistence in CCs*. I selected a variety of deviations of these key terms and phrases; however, some combinations yielded no results. In some cases, I searched for a specific title stemming from relative literature that referenced a title. In addition, I searched Google.com to access private databases and specific academic organizational information. I also

searched the Walden University Dissertation publication database. For the Thoreau database, I searched the following terms: *CC experience*, *CC student persistence*, *CC student retention*, *persistence in higher education*, *faculty perception of student persistence*, *CC faculty perception of student persistence*, *CC classroom engagement*, *CC faculty engagement*, *student engagement and retention*, *student engagement*, and *persistence CC*. I noted that the use of Google Scholar often linked a “Find at Walden” option where I was redirected to Walden University Library to retrieve the literature.

In the case of *faculty perceptions of student persistence in CC*, results included many sources that focused on faculty retention within CCs. I continued efforts by rewording the search terms to include *CC faculty perceptions of student retention*; *student success*; *student failure* results focused on faculty retention. I was able to find little literature which explored, evaluated, researched, or asked about CCF perceptions of CC student persistence. Thus, the current study can serve to inform scholars as it addresses the practice of being a CCF member and CCF's perceptions of their role in student persistence.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research was CC student persistence as studied in Tinto's (1987) theory of student departure and Reason's (2009) theory of the student matters. Research methods in this study were guided by the theoretical framework of Tinto's theory of student persistence and departure (1987; 2010). Tinto (1987; 2010) stated that CC students are influenced by faculty and listed CCF as the reason that impacts their decision to persist in school. Tinto (2010) also reviewed organizational

practices that he thought encouraged CC students to persist. Furthermore, Barnett (2010) examined Tinto's (2010) theory of student departure, and through a quantitative study determined that faculty-student interactions did impact student persistence specifically in the CC setting. Tinto (2012) explained that while many researchers do recognize the importance of faculty engagement for CC student persistence, few colleges were able to translate this into action. The overarching positive influence was faculty involvement and engagement (Tinto, 2012). After I completed an exhaustive review of sources, very little literature was found on CCF perception of accountability or role in student persistence.

In further investigating and researching the topic of CC student persistence, I found Reason (2009), who concluded that CC students are also influenced by extrinsic factors. Reason (2009) further developed Tinto's theory and focused on the specific nature of student persistence in a CC setting. These factors are numerous; however, among them is faculty engagement (Reason, 2009). Reason (2009) delineated four areas of inquiry in terms of student persistence: (a) sociodemographic characteristics, (b) role of organizational behavior, (c) student sub climates, and (d) role of student environments within the institution. These are several areas influenced by faculty members. Reason stressed that CCF must understand the role of the classroom environment if the definitive goal is student persistence. In this study, I added to the scant literature about CCF perceptions of student persistence.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

The key concepts I selected for this study were CC student persistence, CC development, the CC experience, persistence of students in CC, intrinsic and extrinsic

factors, classroom engagement, and the student perspective of success. The first section covers when and how CCs developed, and the purpose behind them. Next, I presented the literature on the experience at CC, student life, and common obstacles to persistence. In the subsequent section, I refer to persistence at the CC institution, the definition of persistence, and how this relates to CC specifically. Next, I reviewed the term persistence including intrinsic and extrinsic factors that may impact persistence. In the following section, I focused on understanding classroom engagement, and then the final section includes how CC students understand persistence and success in the academic setting.

Many CCs struggle with student retention and completion (ACCSC, 2017). Not meeting accreditation standards can result in disciplinary action for the school, fines, or even revocation of accreditation standing (ACCSC, 2017). After reviewing the literature, I uncovered a myriad of information on CC student persistence and retention and ways to improve graduation percentages. Some literature I reviewed speculated on programs to help CC achieve these improved standings, while other research focuses on student relationships with institutions. Beginning with some of the first literature on CC student success, I established patterns identifying some of the biggest impacts on students' decisions to persist with a college career (see Tinto, 1987). Tinto (2006) reevaluated his theory of student departure, focusing on the same aspects as concluded in 1987. I found that this literature pointed out that student attrition is not the opposite of student persistence (Tinto, 2006); meaning that reasons for persistence are not the same as reasons for dropping out. One common theme, and the core on which Tinto had built much of his theory, is student engagement by faculty, both inside and outside the

classroom. Tinto (2006) also noted that his research revealed that, while effective practices have been identified to be congruent with improved student retention and persistence, many institutions have not implemented these actions.

The Community College Development

CCs have existed for decades and are continually evolving and changing to meet the needs of higher education demands. From offering a slightly shorter timeframe from the entrance to a degree to now offering full degrees online, the CC offers versatile learning for nontraditional students. Remenick (2019) defined nontraditional as adults who come from a lower socioeconomic class, have family or work obligations, are older students, or are students from other countries. CCs were derived from the former term *teacher college*, which were schools funded to develop and prepare primary school teachers as the nation faced a shortage (Ogren, 2005). These campuses opened as early as 1893 and are therefore deeply rooted in the American higher education system. These schools had schedules that accommodated students' schedules, awarded work for service done within the community, and even build populations where students were able to engage and foster non-academic skills such as leadership and volunteerism (Ogren, 2003). This is the foundation on which many CCs are built.

Finally, in this section, I address accreditation. Accreditation is the process CCs are expected to follow. The accrediting body sets forth guidelines for practice such as curriculum bylaws, faculty requirements, continuing education, academic standards, and corporate practices by which schools should abide (Accreditation and Preaccreditation Standards, 2009). These accreditation standards cover topics such as attendance, contact

hours, out-of-classroom work, grade point average, maximum timeframe to completion, and satisfactory academic progress which can often impact the experience for CC students. CC students experience struggles from navigating single parenthood to homelessness (Hallett & Freas, 2018). Hallett and Freas (2018) explored homelessness during the time students were enrolled in CC. These researchers examined several specific cases of homelessness in one CC, and the difficulties with persistence that ensued. Many students enrolled in CCs do face struggles such as joblessness, not enough food or finances, and lack of support (Hallett & Freas, 2018). These struggles in addition to accreditation guidelines such as attendance or GPA can create hurdles to persistence. If students have no safe place to sleep, no food daily, no childcare, or no transportation, staying enrolled in a college program often plummets. Understanding both accrediting guidelines as well and knowing what students often face during their time of enrollment may be one key to aiding in student persistence in CCs.

Community College Experience

The very premise on which the CC is constructed, which is targeting non-traditional students with a focus on both academic and non-academic skills, leads to a unique CC experience for students (Fong, et al, 2017). While not all CC students face struggles, many do. Some CC students choose to enroll in this type of institution to sort out plans, to be close to home, or to save some money during the first semesters of school.

Specific issues plaguing other CC students include housing, childcare, financial struggles, and transportation (Abdul-Alim, 2016; Morris, 2017). In addition to the cost of

tuition, living expenses, and even child-rearing costs, many CC students struggle to pay just day-to-day bills (Abdul-Alim, 2016). As a result of these stressors, many students feel their grades suffer. Abdul-Alim (2016) studied about 12,000 California CC students from varying backgrounds who reported on hardships of enrollment and persistence in CC. Students reported struggling with work/life balance and paying for necessities such as food or shelter and childcare costs (Abdul-Alim, 2016). This is congruent with other studies, which demonstrated that some CC students experience hardships. Wood, et al. (2016) reported that over 32% of CC students experience housing insecurity and 48.9% of CC students experience food insecurity. Data were gathered using the Community College Success Measure; which is comprised of over 124 items designed to assess the interpretation of campus climate, student involvement, and external pressures (Wood et al., 2016). This tool was dispersed to 90 campuses reaching over 25,000 CC students. There was a slight correlation in this study between students with insecurities having goals to complete a certificate program (Wood et al., 2016). This is a testament to how difficult college can be for some CC students. These nontraditional students face obstacles outside what traditional students struggle with just to obtain degree completion. CCF may be a key to their persistence and reaching the end goal of graduation.

Another factor for consideration is the selection of a CC institution rather than a traditional university by students themselves. Evans (2018) researched why students who had been admitted to traditional four-year organizations opted to enroll in a CC instead. Evans's (2018) case study covered 14 students enrolled in six colleges. A semistructured survey was given to each along with a case study analysis to determine the reasoning

behind the selection of attending CC versus a four-year. Among the reasons listed were financial impact, family influence, financial aid process, need to work while in school and the ability to transfer after a lower-level degree is earned (Evans, 2018). Of the top eight responses related to the decision to choose a CC over a 4-year institution, five of the top responses were associated with finances (Evans, 2018). These included transferring would save the family money, the cost of 4-year institution, the cost of 2-year institution, did not have to take out student loans, and did not want to take out student loans (Evans, 2018). This study indicated that while some students are eligible for, prepared for, and accepted at traditional four-year universities, they may still opt to attend CC.

Lowry (2017) also investigated the reason for “undermatching” a term given to students who could have attended four-year universities but instead chose to enroll in two-year institutions. Lowry concentrated on African American students who are enrolled in two-year colleges at a disproportionately high rate. This researcher conducted interviews with nineteen students at an urban CC; and found that family influence had one of the biggest impacts on school decisions (Lowry, 2017). The influence from family members can be in the form of replaying their own experiences, or a pressure to remain close to home as a necessary part of the household. While students in this study were academically eligible for traditional four-year institutions, they all opted for CCs instead. In a more recent study, Renn and Reason (2021) explored more current demographics of college students and reported that largely, the 21st-century learners have been more English-as-a-second-language students, working 30 or more hours per week, had a higher percent of disabilities, and were more often parents or the only working member of the

household. This is a critical difference between CC students currently versus students several decades ago. These studies show that the decision to attend CC is not one-fold. Students may have little direction, guidance, or financial resources to attend traditional universities therefore they choose the CC.

Persistence

Persistence has been described as “a behavioral event, whereby a person works through obstacles in the pursuit of a goal” (Howard & Crayne, 2019, p. 77). Howard and Crayne (2019) explained that persistence has a variety of meanings including stamina, perseverance, goal striving, ambition, and need for achievement. Each description has a slightly different association with success. Howard and Crayne (2019) studied these ideas of persistence using two types of studies a meta-analysis of persistence as well as an investigation of existing scales of persistence. These researchers concluded that the outcome of persistence itself was multifaceted and that multiple factors were responsible for persistence outcomes (Howard & Crayne, 2019). Furthermore, it was determined that there was not one singular factor that was more capable of predicting persistence outcomes than another. In an academic setting, persistence can be described as “the continual participation in an educational program until its completion” (Stevenson, 2013). Stevenson (2013) indicated that participant comprehension or interpretation of the term persistence is key to obtaining correlating perceptions. Persistence is a key to this study, making sure the CCF participants understand the meaning of persistence.

Stevenson (2013) addressed persistence issues in higher education such as transferring to another program or institution, creating a better home life, or having a shift

in goals. Still, other researchers suggest that higher education institutions should not consider nonpersisters or drop-out students unsuccessful, but rather should view this a positive outcome in terms of the student exiting the university to enter new social or work avenues (Brunsdon et al., 2000). Unfortunately, a path of leaving the CC does not assist the educational organization with accreditation-compliant outcomes.

The concept of persistence is subjective and can hold different meanings for each student (Datu et al., 2018; Howard et al., 2019; Li et al., 2018). Datu et al. (2018) linked positive academic outcomes to perseverance for long-term goals using Filipino high school students. In this study, 447 Filipino high school males were studied to determine the link between grit (determination) and the meaning of life and reflected a positive association with lowered levels of depression. In this case; while not focusing on CC students; the concept of perseverance, grit, persistence, and determination has shown to have positive effects on students.

In another study, grit and mindfulness were associated with well-being in Chinese adolescents (Li et al., 2018). Grit or perseverance (persistence) was linked positively to subjective well-being (Li et al., 2018). The main objective of this study was to assess the different indicators of well-being. Each of the listed reasons may be a reason that students leave a specific program, and are deemed a non-completer, but from the student perspective, he/she has chosen to persist in that home life, a shift in goals, or attain alternate education. What these studies fail to define is toward what goal is the student persisting (i.e. education, paying rent, working a job, etc.). Therefore a key in this study was to define what persistence means in this case.

Persistence is a major issue facing CC across the United States. The key to CC student persistence eludes many researchers, as numerous studies have been done on this topic, but the key to success remains a mystery to most theorists. Stewart et al. (2015) assessed persistence in CC students using Tinto's (1993) model of institutional departure. Stewart et al. examined ACT scores, high school GPA, and GPA of first-semester CC students across 3,213 students. The results showed that high school grades and first-year college grades were more statistically significant in terms of predicting student persistence (Stewart et al., 2015). This study may suggest that mentoring, tutoring, and student services departments can hold more influence in determining favorable student persistence and possible resources to support students at the CC level.

Hatch and Garcia (2017) addressed persistence in an academic setting. They focused on CC student advising to improve student engagement and subsequently to positively impact persistence. Like Stevenson (2013), who studied online student persistence and barriers to success, Hatch, and Garcia pointed out that persistence held a variety of meanings to students, and depending on age, confidence in plans to graduate, and advising efforts all played a role in student persistence. The literature shows that barriers to persistence are a valid concern when it comes to CC student completion and persistence. The CC and other higher education organizations consider any individual who does not complete a degree to be a 'non-completer', withdrawn, or dropped. The aforementioned are statuses attached to students who do not persist. As college stakeholders obtain more data, a focus on persistence versus withdrawal reasons may be worth further investigation.

Student Persistence at Community College

CC student persistence has been widely studied for decades. Tinto (1987) was one of the first researchers to consider a correlation between postsecondary student departure and reason for departure. Retention in this study is considered to be influenced by student persistence. In other words, student persistence is congruent with retention. Accreditation standards for many CCs are completion or persistence rates. Not meeting accreditation standards can result in disciplinary action for the CC such as fines or even revocation of accreditation standing (ACCSC, 2017). When a student ceases to persist and leaves college for any reason, it is widely termed attrition. Attrition rates vary widely but are higher in community or career colleges and online programs (Jordan, 2014). Persistence is a concern for many CCF.

Goldrick (2018) concentrated on completion rates in CC students and reported that for a large population of CC students, basic needs such as housing, food, and childcare were not being met. This conundrum leads students to choose between working or taking care of a child and attending class. Additionally, Goldrick (2018) warned that more CCs are offering less support to CC students, yet the cost of CCs has risen in recent years as well as the mean income for larger household sizes has decreased. All of these factors lead to roadblocks in terms of persistence. The suggestion for a solution is to create a task force and educate front-line workers such as faculty, librarians, and other academic staff (Goldrick, 2018). Goldrick (2018) also stated that “proactive, caring outreach is essential” in terms of security on campus to feel engaged, as well as to

promote persistence (p. 9). This is another researcher who supports faculty involvement as part of the solution toward CC student persistence.

The evolution of CCs; and, specifically, the effectiveness of such organizations, has only recently begun to be evaluated. Head (2011) suggested success within a CC is evaluated using the three A's: assessment, accreditation, and accountability. Assessment and accreditation are terms widely used in higher education, and accountability is a term less often found in the research of CCs. Head explained that "many CC practitioners assume they understand the concept of institutional effectiveness without worrying about its definition" (p. 9). What CC practitioners (CCF) understand is key to the concept of the current study. As such, institutional effectiveness can be reflected in the assessment of students such as pass rates or grades, in terms of accreditation compliance, or the case of this study, student persistence. Of course, student persistence in many organizations is assessed through accreditation standards and therefore meets two of the three A's of this evaluation method.

One question that can arise from Head's (2011) explanation of institutional effectiveness is how CCF fit into the puzzle. If faculty members are the pillars of the organization; often facilitating most of the student contact, it is important to know how the institution can include these practitioners to meet the metrics set forth by accreditation. CCF do influence student persistence in many cases (Davidson, 2015; Davidson & Wilson, 2017). The biggest challenge seen in many schools is that CCF are not aware of this influence (Davidson & Wilson, 2017; Dwyer, 2017; Glass et al., 2017; Wood & Newman, 2017). Glass et al. (2017) focused on first-generation and non-first-

generation CC students of international background and the influence of professor (CCF) interaction, engagement and out-of-class contact in determining persistence and success within the classroom. This quantitative study assessed the sense of engagement by international CC students attending school in the US. In this study based on reported results, both first-generation and non-first-generation CC students reported high levels of engagement when the CCF member connected in an out-of-class manner (Glass, et al., 2017). Davidson (2015) studied metrics set forth by CCs to determine success, and how CCs proactively addressed these metrics. Davidson and Wilson (2017) expanded on types of student engagement and found that social and academic engagement both influence student persistence. Finally, Wood and Newman (2017) studied 340 African American CC students using the CC Survey of Men (CCSM). The focus of this study was to determine if faculty-student engagement benefited Black men at these CC campuses (Wood & Newman, 2017). The results showed that Black students who had an engagement of informal nature with CCF members were 23% more likely to persist through the college course than those who reported no CCF casual engagement (Wood & Newman, 2017). All of these studies included CCF as a piece of the puzzle toward CC student persistence.

In 2009, former President Barak Obama called on CCs to increase the number of CC graduates by 5 million over a subsequent 10-year period. Boggs (2012) expanded on this initiative indicating CCs have now become more global, offering an open door. CCs have now become the largest and fastest-growing segment of U.S. higher education (Boggs, 2012; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Juszkievicz (2017) pointed out that

while overall higher education enrollment has been on the decline, CCs have experienced the least impact on this trend. Furthermore, the graduation rates at CCs have increased by two percent since 2013 (Juszkiewicz, 2017). While the increase is positive, it is not enough for CCs to meet accreditation metrics. Bailey (2017) noted that educators, policymakers, and reformers have called for a concentrated effort to improve the completion agenda set forth. Bailey (2017) performed a meta-review of country-wide CCs that had demonstrated success in persistence and shown better outcome metrics. This included the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) which put into action a guided pathway system of courses improving graduation rates from 7% to 15% over three years (Bailey, 2017). The Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP) of CUNY employed a reform that follows students from registration to graduation, including financial assistance, full-time attendance, extensive advising, and frequent counseling which led to an 18% increase in graduation rate with this group (Bailey, 2017). This puts more focus and impact on student persistence to both meet the 2009 goals proposed by former President Obama; as well as to continue to meet the needs of the growing workforce.

Persistence in a CC setting was assessed by Clotfelter et al. (n.d.). They found that outcomes may vary by institution depending on variables such as transferrable credits, earning a certificate, or even obtaining an employment position within a skilled trade. Davidson and Wilson (2013) build on Tinto's theory of CC student persistence and focused specifically on social integration and academic integration in the CC classroom. Davidson and Wilson (2013) looked closer at Tinto's theory of student retention as it

pertains to nontraditional students such as those who often attend CC. This study examined the difference in academic versus social integration (Davidson & Wilson, 2013). This study focused specifically on the terms for integration (social or academic); and where the difference stood. Davidson and Wilson (2013) concluded that while nontraditional students enrolled at the CC venues did benefit from social and academic integration; it was unable to be determined when academic integration ended and where social integration began. A ten-minute conversation before class about the weekend activities can be considered social; however, in an academic setting and is facilitated by a CCF member, the authors pointed out that this could be considered an ice-breaking activity conducive to the academic atmosphere (Davidson & Wilson, 2017; Mertes, 2015). This adds depth to the current study as I explore how CCF perceive student persistence.

I found that a recent aid to support CCF practices and pedagogy focused on implementing change in instruction and organization (Venezia & Hughes, 2014). Venezia and Hughes (2014) publish quarterly insight and hands-on strategies to help CCs in the application of the completion initiative. The completion initiative refers to practices that are intended to reach a vast number of students and have a measurable impact on student persistence and success through college completion. This literature focuses specifically on faculty engagement and the implantation of change (Venezia & Hughes 2014). The authors focused on change leadership versus change management, encouraging CC administration to lead by example what expectations are to be exhibited in the classroom setting (Venezia & Hughes, 2014). The researchers have shown these practices to be an

effective management strategy in the CC setting regarding faculty understanding of their role (Venezia & Hughes, 2014). Hatch and Garcia (2017) evaluated factors that improved persistence in CC students after the first weeks in school. The outcome of this quantitative study showed faculty involvement is one variable in CC student persistence. Data used were from the 2010 Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) administered to 3,956 CC students over 13 colleges (Hatch & Garcia, 2017). A statistical finding from this study exhibited a positive correlation between the role of academic support and social support in a CC setting that was impactful for both short- and long-term student persistence.

Mansfield et al. (2011) explored CCF perceptions of student retention and factors that impact attrition. This is one of a few studies that investigated student success from a CCF perspective. Tinto (2012) explained that while many theorists have identified academic and social engagement as a key factor in student persistence, this understanding does not tell practitioners how to implement this action. It should be noted that student attrition is not the same as persistence, and reasons for leaving may be different from the reasons that students persist. Persistence is identified as the decision to remain enrolled in a class or program, while attrition or drop-out is identified as the student deciding to leave a program or class (Hart, 2012; Stewart, Lim & Kim, 2015). This study will examine the topic of student persistence as perceived by CCF.

CCF influence has been shown to positively correlate with CC student persistence (Bonet & Walters, 2016; Masika & Jones, 2016; Silver Wolf et al., 2017). Bonet and Walters (2016) determined that the more engaged a student was with a faculty member,

the better the attendance exhibited by the student. This study was conducted using a CC in New York with a sample size of 267 CC students; and analyzed the short-term effects and outcomes of learning communities (Bonet & Walters, 2016). Bonet and Walters (2016) pointed out that CCF lead learning communities and are responsible for the content, engagement, and take-away of the community. In Bonet and Walters (2016) study 8% of students failed a course when enrolled in a learning community versus 28% of students enrolled in sections of the same course that were not learning community focused. Another aspect of CCF influence is that in addition to community, it creates a classroom of practice, meaning, and identity (Guerra, 2015; Martin, 2018; Masika & Jones, 2016). Masika and Jones (2016) outlined the specific aspects of a CC classroom culture that encouraged student persistence, which included student sense of belonging, and engagement for retention. The basis for the Masika and Jones (2016) study was Wegner's social theory of learning. This theory focuses on four components: learning community, practice, meaning, and identity. Masika and Jones gathered data in focus groups consisting of first-year CC students enrolled in a Business Management program. The conclusion of this study found that CCF who employed communities of practice within the classroom had students who reported a better sense of community, a stronger sense of belonging, and a firmer commitment to persistence than those not involved (Masika & Jones, 2016). Baéz et al. (2016) noted similar findings when they assessed the overall risk of departure versus persistence in CC students. The conclusions of this study indicated that "Persisters reported they were more sociable than nonpersisters. Persisters reported more receptivity to personal counseling, financial guidance, and institutional

help than nonpersisters” (Baéz et al., 2016, p. 16). These studies support the idea that CC students need social and academic integration to best support the student to persist in a CC setting. Together these studies reflect the idea that persistence may start in the classroom. While each CC student is different, multiple studies have shown a stronger correlation between CCF engagement and involvement with higher CC student persistence than those learning communities with less focus on engagement and integration.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors

Some researchers look at intrinsic versus extrinsic factors when studying student persistence in CC research. McClelland (1985) theorized that human motivation is a joint effort between effort and ability. Motivation is key to persistence. He explained that personal causation is made up of intent, skills, motivation, and cognition (McClelland, 1985). Kaplan and Patrick (2016) built on McClelland’s theory to include intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as environmental factors. Kaplan and Patrick (2016) reviewed theories on motivation and motivation in learning environments. The need for connections to emotional experiences or even positive feedback can be generalized as intrinsic factors. However, this can also work negatively when extrinsic factors elicit negative emotions (Kaplan and Patrick, 2016). Parsons (2020) suggested that CC students often face stigma regarding their ability to complete college. The author explained that some of these intrinsic factors may be overcome by mindfulness, compassion, and forgiveness by the college administration team. The problem faced by many higher education organizations is elemental to this human motivation perspective.

At a fundamental level, the organization must compete with all other extrinsic and intrinsic factors to move up the student's priority hierarchy.

Persistence follows motivation or vice versa in higher education and human nature (McClelland, 1985). McClelland (1985) also claimed that environmental factors (such as educational institutions) hold relatively low authority for many individuals about persistence; rather the highest rate of persistence was that which was self-driven. For this study, I will be focused on CCF influence and perceptions of what drives students to persist in school. Both internal and external factors drive students to persist; the goal was to study what faculty members understand these factors to be. By McClelland's (1985) theory, CCs should focus on what motivates each student individually rather than focusing on internal changes in hopes of impacting student persistence. For example, many CCs offer a student services department that is aimed at addressing student needs on a personal level. Watson et al. (2018) stated that student services representatives often serve as financial coaches, aid in housing needs, legal needs, childcare, food security, and navigation of public benefits. A large study conducted at San Jose Evergreen CC District (SJECCD) concentrated on strengthening institutional effectiveness by aiming persistence efforts at student services teams by creating collaborative partnerships to enhance learner outcomes (Watson et al., 2018). With enrollment into these partnership programs such as United Way programs, financial coaching, and language literacy programs SJECCD experienced a 93% persistence rate for students participating in two or more programs (Watson et al., 2018). While these extrinsic factors may or may not

play a role in student persistence, they are among those tackled by the student services department.

Additional researchers provided insights about extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Yu (2017) conducted a quantitative study of extrinsic motivational factors of CC persistence using Tinto's (2010) and Astin's (1984) theory of the *Student Involvement Model*. Yu used national data gathering including Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and Beginning Postsecondary Students, to identify variables that explain students' possibility of college persistence. Positive intrinsic factors toward a degree or certificate completion included being a female student, high school GPA, and being a full-time student (Yu, 2017). These can be used as starting points for CC when considering enrollment as coaching points throughout the enrollment process for CC students. This information suggests that factors that are outside the organizational control may have some influence on student persistence.

Other researchers suggested that CC student persistence is more affiliated with intrinsic factors such as family background versus extrinsic factors such as faculty involvement (Rendon et al., 2000). This literature specifically challenges both Tinto's (1993) and Astin's (1985) theories of student involvement with the institution. Rather, this literature points out two flaws in these theories; students prone to drop-out (or non-persistence) are less likely to engage in activities that are considered inclusive, and validation is more valuable to persistence than engagement (Rendon et al., 2000).

Classroom Engagement

Classroom engagement has been an underlying concept throughout this paper. Bonet and Walters (2016) addressed high-impact practices in the classroom citing student-faculty engagement as one of the highest. For this study, the researchers considered students enrolled in learning communities (small cohorts of each singular class). For this study, a survey was given to willing participants of the learning communities at the end of a selected class period, which gauged the level of interaction with a respective faculty member and class outcome (Bonet & Walters, 2016). Bonet and Walters (2016) found a positive correlation between these members of the learning community, engagement, and class outcome (pass rate).

One of the most common names associated with student success in the CC classroom is Tinto (1987). Tinto has dedicated much of his research to exploring student success and completion, and what motivates CC students. Tinto proposed a theory of CC student departure, which focused on student departure numbers as an indicator of overall CC health. This theory suggested that effective retention for CC students lies primarily in the college's obligation to students directly (Tinto, 1987). In other words, it is the CCs' responsibility to encourage students to persist. Since that time, many scholars have researched alternative avenues to this theory, some even dispelling the theory itself; however, the overarching background for this study will be Tinto's theory of CC student departure.

Davidson and Wilson (2014) challenged Tinto's original theory from 1975 in that the primary focus was traditional, residential students. CC historically does not cater to

either. Davidson and Wilson (2014) agreed that academic and social integration within the CC are valuable aspects of a student's likelihood of completion; however, the parameters of 'social' and 'academic' are not clearly defined. This does propose, similarly to Tinto, that integration within the classroom is a constructive start for student retention; and specifically, CC student persistence. As an extension of the classroom, the faculty member is most responsible for classroom integration; however, there is little literature on CCF understanding or perception of this role in student success and CC student persistence.

The CC Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was given to students at participating colleges on a national level to interpret engagement levels in an engagement study (Lancaster & Lundberg, 2019). Lancaster and Lundberg's (2019) work expanded on Bonet and Walters' conclusion and found that 75% of CC students reported a sense of belonging or connection to the institution based on interactions with CCF. Lancaster and Lundberg (2019) developed this research further to include qualitative behaviors exhibited by CCF which empirically impacted student success. These practices included quality of the relationship between CCF and student, course emphasis, discussion of career plans, and confidence in performing new skills. The conclusion of this study indicated that faculty with full-time status or longer tenure with teaching in a higher education organization provided students with better-perceived classroom experiences (Lancaster & Lundberg, 2019). While both Lancaster and Lundberg's (2019) and Bonet and Walter's (2016) studies focused on the impact of classroom engagement on student success or persistence, neither asked faculty their opinion on what creates a productive

learning environment. Yet, another more recent study, Burke (2019), compiled several theorists' data comparing information on CC student persistence or departure. Burke (2019) found that there is a strong correlation between student engagement in the CC and higher retention rates (persistence). Addressing faculty opinion, Dwyer (2017) suggested that while much research has indicated school relationships influence persistence, it is an under-researched and undervalued area of exploration. While there has been an abundance of literature studying classroom engagement at the CC level, little has been done to ask the ones in charge of the classrooms if they are aware of these findings.

One study explored the engagement factor of using social media within a classroom setting. Datu et al. (2018) gathered quantitative data on 700 Filipino university students to determine if Facebook involvement impacted academic engagement. The outcome of this study concluded that factors such as self-expression positively correlated with academic engagement; however, that misuse of the Facebook application or even abuse/overuse negatively correlated to engagement in the classroom (Datu et al.,2018). In this study, the parameters of the Facebook involvement, organization of Facebook groups, and administration of the Facebook group site were done by the faculty member. While it indicated only one positive aspect of social media use, it may offer some insight as to other options for CC to try in terms of student engagement in the classroom.

While a large body of research has been done regarding CC classroom engagement, a bulk of it has been qualitative. However, Alicea et al. (2016) developed a quantitative model for assessing CC classroom engagement. A combination of focus groups, surveys, and observations was used to determine the subjective level of

engagement and relative persistence rates for students in selected classes from 3 northeastern CCs (Alicea et al., 2016). The factors included academic engagement, relational engagement, and cognitive engagement, all of which were found to be statistically significant in student satisfaction (Alicea et al., 2016). The mixed-methods study aimed to examine relationships between the learning environment and CC student engagement and performance (Alicea et al., 2016). As a result, the study concluded that all three factors were deemed significant regarding student satisfaction and therefore student persistence.

Tinto (1997) concluded these same areas of academic engagement, relational engagement, and cognitive engagement were of high importance when it came to student persistence. Dudley et al. (2015) surveyed 63 students using the CC Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and suggested student perception, faculty expectations and characteristics, and institutional support were among the factors that engaged students at the CC level. Further research advised a student's intent to return (persist to the subsequent semester) was strongly dependent on that student's dedication to returning (persisting) (Luke et al., 2015). Of 1,191 students surveyed, statistical significance was shown regarding intent to return and actual student persistence to a subsequent semester (Luke et al., 2015). Wood and Moore (2015) also concentrated on student engagement and persistence activities for students transferring into a new institution.

Recommendations included campus support, academic engagement, predictive modeling, an established academic plan, and a campus 'buddy' (Wood & Moore, 2015). And lastly, a study related to student-teacher dialogue and student outcomes was done in Great

Britain at the elementary school level (Howe et al., 2019). The study concluded that among varying factors and outcomes, student engagement and attitudes were improved with the increased richness of student-teacher dialogue (Howe et al., 2019). While this was done at the elementary level, the principle can be expanded to higher education with a similar philosophy. These practices are encouraged to improve student persistence when handling transfer students. Research, both qualitative and quantitative, has shown repeatedly that CC student engagement influences retention/persistence results for students (Dudley, et al., 2015; Luke, et al. 2015; Wood & Moore, 2015). It can be argued that CCF is responsible for all three factors surrounding CC student persistence: academic, relational, and cognitive engagement.

One struggle pertaining to CCF and engagement stems from the hiring practices of many CCs. Often due to smaller class sizes, class hours, or even the number of classes offered, a vast majority of CCs hire adjunct or part-time faculty members (Hope, 2016). As such, these faculty members often have full-time practitioner careers which demand most of the focus and time for these CCF. Hope (2016) addressed onboarding and orientation for part-time CCF, and the importance of informing them on student success initiatives, engagement, and classroom expectations. While research supports classroom engagement and CCF are responsible for classroom culture, then the attention toward training CCF for the engagement should be of prime importance within the CC organization.

Miller (2017) pointed out that often at CCs, faculty members are experts in their respective fields; however, they are not exposed to curriculum delivery prior to hiring.

With little comprehension of the teaching profession or the understanding of the value in student-faculty relationships, this may be one clue as to the misunderstanding of the role of CCF in student persistence. Further, Miller (2017) sought to provide a practical model for student retention using faculty as the core centerpiece. Miller (2017) focused on faculty and staff professional development along with student orientation as the best foundations for student completion success (Miller, 2017). Faculty development can be in the form of lunch and learns, in-service training, online coaching, and other direct guidance improving knowledge on student engagement. Student orientations focus on campus expectations, student expected outcomes, and preparedness to inform students of the upcoming academic anticipations. In all cases, the outcome goal is the same, to guide the student toward success and persistence.

As an extension of Tinto's theory of student departure, and model for student persistence it is the intention of the current study to explore CCF's perceptions of their role in success for CC students. Longwell-Grice and Longwell-Grice (2007) performed intensive case studies regarding first-year, working-class students to test faculty engagement as a factor in student retention at the CC level. Results continued to support Tinto's (1987, 1990, 1997) theory of student departure that CCF does impact the decision for students to persist during the first year of CC. Based on these findings, it was recommended to discuss with CCF how they were perceived by first-generation, working-class students (Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice, 2007). With this recommendation, it can be surmised that CCF was not aware of this correlation. Practical

models such as Miller's (2017) may prove useful if there is a gap in understanding faculty (personal) role in student persistence.

Little research has been done on CCF perceptions of personal role in CC student persistence (Gawronski et al 2016). This literature is one of the first to assess CCF perceptions of student persistence (Gawronski et al 2016). Inclusive teaching practices refer to individualized accommodations to meet each student's learning style or needs. CC now enrolls nearly 50% of the nation's undergraduate population, many of which are ranked deficient in basic reading, writing, or math skills (Gawronski, et al 2016; Rao et al., 2014). Furthermore, some research suggests that certain demographics of college students (Caucasian males) are reluctant to seek assistance in a CC setting (Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice, 2007). With the increased number of CC students, the surge of diversity and the research supporting hesitation of some students to seek assistance, CCF awareness of their role in success is imperative. This supports Tinto's theory that colleges and specific faculty members must be proactive in involvement with students.

Although most literature supports student engagement; there are notable critics to Tinto's theory of student departure. One of these studies investigated Tinto's theory in depth and suggested that while the model does support a positive correlation between academic and social integration at the college level, it neglected to factor in students who had not adopted Western culture and social norms (French, 2017). Another study that challenges Tinto's theory of student departure is Johnson and Stage's (2018) study which evaluated ten high-impact practices among CCs to improve retention. It was found in this study that the correlation between retention practices and actual graduation rates may be

minimal (Johnson & Stage, 2018). It may be argued that these students could be impacted differently by social or academic climate. For example, students may not have been accustomed to social immersion in an academic setting or the term 'social' itself may have alternate meanings in their culture.

Student Perspectives of Success

Yet another aspect to the puzzle of success in CC is the student perspective. Acevedo-Gil and Zerquerta (2016) investigated student perspectives of success, and what factors the students felt were most impactful during the first year. A common theme was faculty support during this first year to encourage retention (Acevedo-Gil & Zerquerta, 2016). This study also showed a direct influence of CCF on the role of student success during the first year of CC according to the student perspective. Furthermore, the support of CCF went beyond just classroom learning, into relationship building (Acevedo-Gil & Zequerta, 2016). Students reported that they felt more comfortable with CCF who built the learning experience around engagement and welcomed open communication (Acevedo-Gil & Zequerta, 2016). This provides insight into the student perspective of the CCF role. One of the major recommendations in the Acevedo-Gil and Zequerta (2016) research is for CCF to adopt a pedagogy of trusting relationships and approachability, which encourages student communication as well as student persistence. Students' relationships with campus officials (faculty, student services, and admissions representatives) are impactful and meaningful to a significant number of CC students (Acevedo-Gil & Zequerta, 2016; Crisp & Delgado, 2014; Ozaki & Renin, 2015).

Furthermore, students' perception of CC investment may impact their persistence level. Savage et al. (2019) investigated Tinto's model of student departure using an investment model as a theoretical framework. In this study, the commitment level and perception of CC commitment level supported student persistence and overall outcomes (Savage et al., 2019). The students' perception of how committed the organization was in supporting them had an impact on their level of persistence for these students. In terms of student persistence, the piece missing is whether the campus officials are aware of this impact. Campus culture and engagement matter when it comes to student persistence. The Acevedo-Gil and Zequerta (2016), research showed a positive relationship between student persistence at the CC level and CCF influence.

Summary and Conclusions

Key concepts derived from the literature review included student perspectives of success, CC student persistence, persistence, and classroom engagement. I discovered an underlying theme emerged focusing on extrinsic factors in CC student persistence, and how classroom engagement can encourage internal motivation within the student. While students decide to leave college for a myriad of reasons, faculty and classroom engagement are rarely a reason for departure. Notably, one section missing from this literature review is faculty perceptions on student persistence in the CC setting. Throughout this review of literature, I was able to uncover a scant amount of information on this specific topic. Faculty perceptions of faculty persistence were found, as well as faculty perceptions of student drop-out; however, I could not locate articles on this specific issue, which further demonstrates a gap in literature that the current study

addressed. The faculty members are those who set the classroom culture, gain knowledge about each student, are the students' motivating factors, and implement strategies on how to aid the students in persistence; CCF perspectives on student persistence will provide valuable insight as to how institutions can better assist in curriculum delivery, faculty training and ultimately student persistence.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore CCFs' perceptions of their roles pertaining to student completion at the focus CC. I selected a qualitative research design to explore CCF perceptions regarding their role in student persistence in the focus CC setting using interviews. I explored what CCF think student success means, as well as what role CCFs think they play in student persistence

In Chapter 3, I discuss the research design and rationale for this study. The basic qualitative nature of this study will address the gap in the literature on CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence. Furthermore, I discuss the researcher's role along with the methodology of the study including participant selection, instrumentation, and procedures for recruitment. Data analysis is presented in addition to the trustworthiness and ethical procedures of this study.

Research Design and Rationale

For this study, the research design I chose was a basic qualitative approach. I selected interviewing as the primary collection tool. A basic qualitative study allowed me to explore the perceptions of faculty members at the local CC (see Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). The purpose of this study was to add to the body of literature by exploring the perceptions of CCF on their role in student persistence. This study informed scholars on CCF perceptions of personal role in student persistence which aligns with the basic qualitative approach. The basic qualitative approach should be used to inform research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

I considered other qualitative approaches such as case study, ethnographic method, grounded theory, and the phenomenological method. A case study allows the researcher to follow in-depth, one subject by using a variety of data collection methods (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Because, in this study, I proposed to obtain the perceptions of faculty in the CC setting using only interviews, a basic qualitative study was best. Creswell and Poth (2017) specified basic qualitative studies with the use of perspective, perception, or ideology.

In ethnographic studies, the researcher is required to be immersed in a setting unfamiliar to them (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Creswell and Creswell, 2017) In the case of higher education, I am a current faculty member and have been so for several years. This subject matter is one with which I am familiar. In ethnographies, the researcher often spends a prolonged period in the research setting to immerse herself or himself in the data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I interviewed CCF using question/answer style research. Therefore, an ethnographic study was not appropriate in this case.

Another qualitative research method I reviewed was the grounded theory study. This was not appropriate for this particular study as the goal of this study is not to develop a new theory (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Yet, another method I considered was phenomenology. A traditional phenomenological study describes the experiences of a group about a certain experience; however, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of individual CCF members. In a phenomenological study, the researcher would carry out multiple interviews about experiences shared by a group (Hesse-Biber &

Leavy, 2010). To best understand individual perceptions of how CCF impacts students in the classroom. This does not fit the goal of the current study and participants will be interviewed once. I determined that a basic qualitative question-and-answer series was the best fit for exploration. Examining these perceptions allowed me to determine if better processes for teacher orientation are necessary.

I did consider a quantitative research design. In this case, it was not selected for this study because quantitative designs require a hypothesis to be accepted or rejected (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Creswell and Creswell (2017) described quantitative research as a tool for investigating primary knowledge such as cause and effect or testing hypotheses. The purpose of quantitative research studies is to analyze data using statistics, or acceptance or rejection of hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). For this research project, I was looking for opinions and perceptions from CCF to investigate. Flick (2018) explained qualitative research is a tool used to produce information that is practical and relevant to a topic for the purpose of adding to the body of study or for the promotion of practical solutions to problems. Additionally, research on CCF perceptions of classroom roles is limited; therefore, using a quantitative approach would have led to inaccurate research questions.

I chose the basic qualitative research design for this study to inquire about participant perception of a problem. The study included a candidate pool of CCF at a small Tennessee CC as interviewees to best fit the purpose and scope. In a basic qualitative research design, a straightforward method of data collection is the best approach as in interviewing or collecting surveys (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I chose to

interview as it allowed for smaller sample size; but details could be excavated with follow-up questions and gentle probing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2025). By interviewing, I allowed participants to share perceptions freely, adding to the data collection. Because I did not select to do a case study, immersion method of data collection, new theory development, or propose a hypothesis, a basic qualitative research design was the best fit for the stated collection and use of data.

Role of the Researcher

My career in higher education includes being a faculty member at the focus CC, program director, and director of education at the focus school. My role in each position has guided me in my understanding of CC and CCF expectations and job descriptions. Because of my role as program director, I have built a supervisory role over faculty members in my discipline; however, as director of education, I do not directly supervise any specific faculty members currently. I have developed a positive working, professional relationship with many of the participants, while others are part of our online division and have not worked within a brick-and-mortar setting where I am located. Participants were informed that responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared with other CCF or administration. My professional relationship with my participants is not evaluative so should not have influenced responses. Each faculty member reports to a program director. The program director is responsible for faculty evaluations, discipline, and accolades. I did not include any program directors in my interview candidate pool as the program directors do report directly to me in a supervisory position. I had no contact with the CCF regarding this study before the time of the interviewing. I refrained from

discussing my study to maintain the integrity of the data collected as well as to adhere to compliance with the Walden University ethical standards of conduct.

One measure I used to reduce bias for this study was the use of an independent reviewer. The reviewer was not associated with my current CC nor had a background in the subject matter for which I interviewed. The selected candidate was also familiar with doctoral-level qualitative research. The reviewer assessed the interview questions for bias and will review the responses. The reviewer evaluated the transcripts for potential bias. Finally, the selected reviewer signed the confidentiality agreement provided by Walden University to protect the privacy of the data collected. This was all implemented to reduce bias and contribute to the credibility of this study.

Methodology

Participant Selection

Participant selection included current CCF within the focus CC organization over whom I do not hold supervisory power. Contributors were from a pool of current CCF who had taught at least one course over the past 12 months in a face-to-face classroom setting. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IRB and I agreed that the candidate pool for this study would be currently furloughed CCF. CCF were from a variety of background disciplines including healthcare, business, and computer programming. I did not include faculty members with no on-ground classroom experience over 12 months in interviewing invites. The goal was to have a minimum of 10 CCF to interview; however, at the time of interviewing only seven CCF were in the

pool of currently furloughed CCF at this institution. All seven agreed to participate. This pooling sample provided a variety of responses to combine for a deeper evaluation.

In the school's faculty portal, each CCF member is identified by the year of employment; and if they are an instructor online (OL); the ground (OG); or hybrid (HY). I considered the first 10 respondents as primary candidates. The CC employs faculty from various backgrounds including trades as well as academia. The size of the specific campus I studied was 109 students and 19 faculty members. The campus follows a traditional CC demographic with a variety of students. There is a higher concentration of nontraditional students such as single parents, first-generation college students, ESL students, and the military.

Instrumentation

For this research study, I conducted interviews with participants using the interview questions listed in Appendix A. I wrote these questions based on the problem of student persistence in CC institutions, the conceptual framework, and the literature review. I developed interview questions using recognized theories in qualitative interviewing methods along with information from the literature review (see Appendix A). Lodico et al. (2010) suggested preparing open-ended questions and preparing questions that are formative or are presented to evaluators for change. I developed interview questions that I intended to produce formative answers. The interview questions were reviewed by my chairperson as well as the URR and were approved by all parties.

Basic qualitative research is best used when investigating people's opinions or attitudes toward an issue (Percy, et al., 2015). Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained qualitative research as a researcher collecting open-ended data with the intent of forming themes. Because of the method of using perceptions and opinions, a qualitative research design was the most appropriate approach to this study. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) explained qualitative research as a "particular way of asking questions and a particular way of thinking through problems" (p. 3). Due to the open-ended, inductive, exploratory nature of this study; rather than a desire to find answers or solutions, a basic qualitative study was the best approach (see Denzin, 2008). Conversely, quantitative data uses information to uncover correlations, which is not the case for this study (Kothari, 2004). Thus, I chose to use, qualitative, not quantitative methods.

I selected a basic qualitative approach due to the subjective nature of the content being studied and the desire to search for patterns and formulate ideas based on interview responses. The selection of a basic qualitative research methodology provided a study that will add to the body of literature on the topic of CC student persistence and subsequent graduation rates from the perspective of CCF. I used interviews to develop deeper answers to the research questions. Kvale (1996) explored using interviewing for qualitative research and found that interviews are used to describe the meaning of themes, as well as to better understand what the subjects are saying. Furthermore, interviewing is intended to get a better, more in-depth comprehension of the story surrounding an interviewee's experience (McNamara, 1999). By interviewing CCF regarding experiences related to CC classroom teaching experiences related to student persistence, I

searched for a better understanding of CCF's general perceptions of their role in CC student persistence. I used semi-structured interviews in this study. I created a list of questions and gave interviewees the freedom to speak more unreservedly about topics. A basic qualitative interview can be used for interviewees to open up about topics (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). If an interviewee provided limited information, I was able to insert a request for expansion such as "Can you expand on that topic?" "What else can you tell me?" or "Can you explain further?" I used these prompts to produce greater details.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection Recruitment

For recruitment procedures, participation was voluntary. Once I obtained approval for doing research from a personally affiliated CC and Walden University, I contacted faculty members not under my direct supervision via email available through personal email. I distributed an email to all eligible candidates with information regarding this study; a link was included to the informed consent and a disclaimer of voluntary participation. I explained the purpose of the study, explained that I am a doctoral student at Walden University, and reviewed the voluntary nature of participation. I sent this invitation to faculty members who have had at least one consecutive year of teaching on-ground courses at the focus CC, but who are currently on furlough due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each candidate implied consent by clicking on the email link to the informed consent and completing that form. If for any reason a participant did complete the informed consent but did not wish to participate, the CCF was not obligated to participate.

Data Collection

I sent an email to eligible candidates. I assured respondents that participation was voluntary and responses would be kept confidential. I provided all CCF with an explanation of the study. Once a faculty member responded that they were interested in the interview, I emailed an informed consent, and the candidate responded with the signed consent form. The CCF member was able to request a date/time most convenient to their schedule. I submitted a list of interview questions to each interviewee for review.

The interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewee and lasted 30 to 60 minutes. The interview occurred just one time per faculty member unless any data were unclear, then a follow-up interview was scheduled. I intended the location of the interview to ideally be on the campus; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all sessions were done virtually. Therefore, all virtual interviews were scheduled using either Microsoft Teams or Zoom. I recorded interviews via recording device for transcribing purposes, and participants were alerted of this before the start of the process. Once the interview ended, this ended the participant's involvement in the study unless clarification or follow-up was required. I emailed transcripts of each interview, along with initial conclusions to respective participants, and the faculty member was asked to check the transcript for accuracy. This is referred to as member checking and is a common validation technique used by qualitative researchers to ensure trustworthiness (Brit, et al., 2016). I included any suggested edits made by interviewees. I thanked all participants for their time and contribution, and this ended the debriefing process. Table 1 depicts the timeline of data collection and analysis.

Table 1*Data Analysis and Planning Timeline*

Timeline	Task	Completed By
Week 1 Day 1	Send Invitation Email	Self
Week 1 Day 2	Follow up with Agreeable Participants	Self
Week 1 Day 3	Schedule Interviews	Self
Week 1 Day 4	1-2 Interviews	Self
Week 1 Day 5	1-2 Interviews	Self
Week 2 Day 1	1-2 Interviews	Self
Week 2 Day 2	1-2 Interviews (complete)	Self
Week 2 Day 3	Complete Interviews if needed	Self
Week 2 Day 4	Transcribe Interviews	Self
Week 2 Day 5	Transcribe Interviews	Self
Week 3 Day 1	Analyze Data for Common Themes (words, phrases)	Self
Week 3 Day 2	Analyze Data	Self
Week 3 Day 3	Analyze Data	Self
Week 3 Day 4	Analyze Data	Self
Week 3 Day 5	Analyze Data	Self

To substantiate the purpose of each interview question, I have linked in Table 2 which interview question relates to which research question. When considering interview questions, each question should be deliberate and serve a purpose in research (Olson, 2016). Interview questions in the case of basic qualitative research should be designed to gather insight specific to the research questions posed (Olson, 2016). In Table 2, I explain which interview questions are written to gather data about which research question.

Table 2**Interview Questions as Related to Research Questions**

Interview Question	Research Question
How long have you been with this current institution, and what is your current rank and/or title?	Rapport/Introduction
Tell me about any other positions you have held in academia other than this current position, and how long you have worked in this field in total.	Rapport/Introduction
What are your thoughts on CC student persistence? Why do you think students choose to either persist or drop out during CC tenure?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
If you think personal (intrinsic) factors motivate students to persist, what are those reasons? If you think extrinsic factors motivate students to persist, what are those reasons?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
What do you think the role of faculty or staff has in a student's desire to persist in college?	How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?
Do you feel prepared by the organization to assist students who are struggling with either intrinsic or extrinsic factors?	Interview Questions continued How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?
How do you think students deal with outside factors that drive them to withdraw from school?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
What do you think the terms <i>faculty engagement</i> or <i>classroom culture</i> mean?	How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?
Who has prepared you to be a classroom leader?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
Is there anything else you would like to add/share about your thoughts on CCF perceptions of their own role in student persistence?	

Data Analysis Plan

I did all the data analysis after the interviews were complete so as not to bias myself in terms of “searching” for terms during interview. During analysis, I listened to the recording of each interview at least three times and noted common words, phrases, ideas, or concepts. I started with the first interview and transcribed each interview on a personal computer. I analyzed data compiled from the personal interviews using open coding and categorized it into major themes (Saldaña, 2016). Because of the variety of responses in qualitative data such as opinions, thoughts, perceptions, and experiences, I cannot distribute strict grouping as with facts, numbers, counts, or measures (Gibbs, 2018). In other words, this was initial open coding (Saldaña, 2016). Using the qualitative data from this study; I related similar perceptions, behaviors, or actions as ideas emerged. I also reviewed and made notes about each transcript.

I coded all data via initial open coding (Saldaña, 2016). Initial coding allows the researcher to use an open-ended process that does not have a specific formula (Saldaña, 2016). With open coding, the patterns emerge from the data (Saldaña, 2016). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) suggested using literal codes as in similar words or phrases to begin initial coding. I used a dual approach of literal coding and analytic coding, which is more interpretative and captures ideas and concepts (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). This aligned with qualitative research in the purpose of exploration of the topic of CCF perceptions. The goal was to collect and group data for exploration and understanding using these emerging ideas that I gathered via the coding methods.

I kept the identification of participants anonymous; and also assigned representative terms such as Participant 1, Participant 2, (P1, P2, etc.) for interviewing and analysis. Once all interviews were complete, I used initial open coding to extract both analytic and literal codes from interview responses. For this process, I kept memos in an ongoing research journal throughout the interview. Saldaña (2016) suggested using memos and journals, to notate themes among interview transcripts. In addition, I kept a separate reference of my thoughts on the interviews and data throughout the analysis process and interviewing to reduce my own bias. Referring to notes taken during the interviews as well as the recorded transcript allowed for the researcher to make an appropriate analysis of the data collected (Saldaña, 2016).

Trustworthiness

Because of the qualitative nature of this study, the trustworthiness was not based on facts, values, or a reliable numerical outcome (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For qualitative research, the data must be dependable, stable, and consistent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Hesse-Biber (2010) clarified trustworthiness as elimination of researcher bias. Because of the nature of interviewing in qualitative research, I was directly interacting with the participants. Korstjens and Moser (2018) identified the criteria for trustworthiness to include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. I address each of these below.

Credibility is confidence in the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this study, to assure credibility, I encouraged participants to review the recorded

interviews to listen for errors in response. I also encouraged them to review transcripts to ensure I have not added, edited, or deleted anything inadvertently.

Transferability is the ability of the details of the study to be transferred to other settings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I provided detailed steps on the interviewing process and questions to allow this study to be conducted by other researchers if desired. By engaging in these transparent techniques, and specific steps of the data collection process, data analysis, and conclusions, the study will be able to be replicated by future researchers.

Dependability is the consistency of the findings over a period of time (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this research study, I used the reflective journal to keep personal opinions separate from data analysis to further instill dependability in this study. As a part of the reflective journal, I kept detailed notes on responses, feelings, and potential biases in order to separate personal feelings from data. By implementing these precautions, I was able to ensure dependability to my most diligent ability.

Confirmability is the degree to which the conclusions can be confirmed by other researchers (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). One way to allow confirmation of research results by other researchers is through reflexivity. Reflexivity is the look into potential personal biases (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Another method I used to establish confirmability was by including markers for theoretical and methodological framework throughout this paper (McInnes et al., 2017). These items will ensure to future researchers that the conclusions made have derived from a sound framework.

Finally, reflexivity is the ability of the researcher to self-reflect about personal biases (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As stated previously, I kept a section of notes that reflect my thoughts on the interviews as I conducted them. These notes were not used in the data collection, but served as reflexivity and informed analysis within this study. I provided all steps in the interview process, questions used, and data collection methods for subsequent use if needed. For simplicity, I requested a colleague, unrelated to the study in any manner, to review interview questions for bias, unreliability, or error (Olson, 2016). I made transcripts of the interviews available to each participant to check for accuracy, and if discrepancies were noted, these were corrected. Finally, I posted seven interview transcripts in the Walden course to provide integrity and transparency.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures are key to maintaining the integrity of the data and the study itself. Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained that the use of personal thoughts, feelings, or experiences warrants a qualitative approach. However, the use of personal information may pose ethical dilemmas for some research studies. Three pillars of ethics define any qualitative study: informed consent, right to privacy, and protection from harm (Denzin, 2008). Participants were given informed consent regarding the study itself, voluntary participation, and rights to anonymity. Because I, as the researcher, was involved in interviewing, permission for recording was obtained prior to interview commencement. Recording reduced errors in transcription or notetaking by allowing me to return to the interview multiple times for recorded verification of what was said by the interviewee (Olson, 2016). I kept recordings for the transcription process and throughout the process

of the study through to the publication of the final report. But I will not share these transcripts with anyone unrelated to the study itself. Outside of myself and the independent reviewer, data will be protected from any outside influence or opinion. I kept data locked in a secure location for 5 years post publication of this study in accordance with research standards. Avoidance of harm is a subjective notation; however imperative. Because the subjects were colleagues, I took care to refrain from any harm (mental or emotional) (Denzin, 2008). No participant was under my direct supervision, and I had no contact with these faculty members prior to the interviewing regarding this study. The voluntary participants were not under supervision of myself, and I assured them that no repercussions will occur regardless of their contribution to the study . At any point, the participant could have changed his or her information or withdrawn entirely prior to the publication of the study.

Summary

The problem of declining graduation rates and lowered CC student persistence among many CCs is the driving force behind this study. The purpose was to explore CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence and how he or she feels they may be an influence on students. I chose a basic qualitative study; to gather data to explore CCF perceptions. The goal was to compile the data collected into themes for an analysis of ways in which CCF feel they may or may not influence student persistence in the CC setting. I intend that this study will add to the body of literature on CC student persistence, but will approach the problem from a new perspective. The findings of this study can stimulate social change by shedding light on a little-researched topic of CCF

perceptions of their roles, to determine topics for future research as well as ideas for improving student persistence and subsequent success from a faculty perspective.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of CCF, and specifically the CCF perceptions of their roles pertaining to student persistence. With new goals for CCs outlined in the last several years by academic administration aimed at higher graduation rates, the goal for this study was to add to the body of literature surrounding CC student persistence. The research questions were RQ1: What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence? RQ2: How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?

The current body of literature has a strong focus on intrinsic and extrinsic factors impacting student persistence toward CC completion; however, I was able to find minimal collections available that sought to understand the CCF role or more specifically how CCF perceive their role in student persistence. In Chapter 4, I review the findings of the data collection process and evaluate data results and analysis per qualitative research guidelines. I have included detailed findings and a summary of the overall results.

Setting

The setting for this study was an urban city in the Southeastern region of the United States. The location was specific to a CC having been established within the community for over 3 decades. I selected participants in this study who had been employed by this CC for at least 1 academic year. Participation in this study was voluntary and no compensation was offered. None of the interviewees were under my direct supervision.

During this study, one influence did redirect the original plans. The IRB had approved the original proposal, but subsequently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our CC closed for several months and upon re-opening, many of the faculty were furloughed. This included many who I intended to interview. Due to this shift in available faculty and the CCs' subsequent reluctance to allow me to interview the remaining faculty, I approached the IRB with a decision to interview faculty who were currently furloughed and not actively involved with the organization. This was approved by the IRB. Below is a table representing the demographic of the interviewees.

Table 3
Participant Demographic

	Age	Years with Focus CC	Total Years Teaching	Gender
1-5				
6-10				
11-15				
16-20				
21-25				
26-30	1			
31-35	1			
36-40				
41-45	1			
46-50	1			
51-55				

56-60	2		
61-65	1		
1-3			
3-5		3	2
5-7		1	
7-9		1	1
9+		2	4
Female			4
Male			3

Data Collection

For the data collection process, I used personal interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams and Zoom applications. This was done due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of face-to-face contact via in-person meetings. I conducted in-depth interviews with seven CCF from the local CC. I sent each participant who had consented to be interviewed a list of interview questions before the scheduled interview. I encouraged each participant to suggest several days and times that they may be available to speak with me via Microsoft Teams. Once a date and time were agreed upon, I sent a follow-up confirmation email the day prior to the interview. I then send the participant the link to the Microsoft Teams chat room and instructed them to join at the scheduled time. I instructed all participants to use audio only and not video since the interview would be recorded. As each interview commenced, I thanked the participant for agreeing

to speak with me and for their time. I reminded them that the interview would be recorded and obtained verbal consent noted in the recordings. I asked each of the questions on the interview list and listened carefully for the response. During each interview, I prompted for further information if or when it was necessary or appropriate. After each interview, I thanked the participant again.

The last step in this process was to hand over the transcripts to an independent reviewer. A colleague of mine, unrelated to the University, CC, or my profession, but knowledgeable about post-master's dissertations reviewed the transcripts for inaccuracies. Any person with access to any research data signed a pledge of confidentiality. I have kept this signed pledge with transcripts in a locked computer that only I have access to. After the independent reviewer looked at each one, I was agreeable to follow up on any recommendations found by this person. The independent reviewer did not find any unusual circumstances in the seven transcripts.

Data Analysis

After transcribing and reviewing each transcript three times, I was able to begin data analysis. For data analysis, I coded similar words, patterns, and ideas. I began the coding using initial open coding. Saldana (2016) suggested open coding to gather initial concepts for inclusion into categories based on group concepts. Open coding is the first step in the qualitative research analysis process and requires the researcher to break up data into distinct codes (Saldaña, 2016). With this method of coding, I grouped words, ideas, and patterns without having to use a distinct formula (Saldaña, 2016). Appendix C presents a table of corresponding interviewees and specific words and phrases used.

After each interview, I listened to the recording first, and on the second round of listening, I began to transcribe. I worked my way through each interview typing exactly what was asked and responded appropriately. After the interview was fully transcribed, I listened to the interview a third time while following along with the transcription to ensure accuracy. I emailed the entire transcription back to the corresponding participant for an accuracy check. Once the member verified the accuracy, I began keeping a notebook of each question and common words, ideas or phrases that emerged from each participant's response. No changes were indicated or requested by any of the seven participants. I recorded the common ideas, themes, and phrases in Appendix C.

It should be noted that during this time, I had to change the data collection process slightly as the nature of the organization changed during the data collection phase. I was not allowed to conduct interviews in-person or on-campus, therefore I gained approval to gather the data virtually via teleconference calls and audio recording. I recorded all data using the audio record function of Microsoft Teams or Zoom (depending on interviewee preference). Each interview lasted less than 1 hour with any follow-up lasting less than 30 minutes for reviewing transcriptions. As noted previously, I shifted to using furloughed employees and was able to contact them via personal email addresses. I gathered these prior to being released for our brief close-down with the permission of each faculty. Other than the process for contacting the CCF and the employment status of the CCF, I did not change the procedure of the interviews from the proposed structure.

From the coded transcripts, I pulled out similarities in interviewee responses. I gathered trends in phrases, words, or concepts to get a better idea of the results. After the

first assessment of literal coding, I implemented analytical coding to group ideas and notions together. Analytical coding is a process used by qualitative researchers to group nonnumerical data (Olsen, 2016). By using this two-step approach to organize and review data results, I gained a clearer model of the similarities and differences in result responses for developing categories and themes.

I developed four themes from initial open coding followed by deeper analytical coding. Themes included the following: (a) support as an overarching role of CCF, (b) faculty felt under-prepared by the institution for supporting students, (c) negative student response to outside factors, and (d) importance of interpersonal interactions. I grouped in this manner to allow for the development of a deeper understanding of the perception of the interviewed faculty regarding each interview question using analytic coding based on the initial open coding. Centered on collective responses, I was able to identify trends, which included the term support to describe the person role CCF felt was their main role in the classroom. Additionally, I identified another common code as a generalized but collective perception that students often stop responding, give up, a ghost (or stop contacting the school), or just quit altogether more frequently in response to extrinsic factors. Another code revealed a feeling of having inadequate or no training by the institution upon hire or having inadequate resources for the students to be successful. I intended to categorize these into themes that would add to the body of research on the topic of CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases can be considered outlying results in the data collection pool (Denzin, 2008). These results may be notably different than other results in similar categories. To address the discrepant responses, I included all abbreviated responses to each question by each participant in Appendix C. While some qualitative research models are built upon discrepant cases to disprove a given theory, this research was intended to add to the body of literature on CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence (see Denzin, 2008). Discrepant cases are important as they can show the depth and breadth of research and add value in terms of data collected (Denzin, 2008).

Results

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I kept detailed notes of the common words, ideas, or phrases used by each interviewee. Several themes emerged after the development of codes and analytic coding in terms of CCF perception of their role in student persistence. I developed four themes from the interviews conducted as follows: (a) support as an overarching role played by the CCF, (b) under-preparedness by institution, (c) student response to outside factors, and (d) interpersonal interactions. I will next discuss each of the four themes, and I will address how research question was answered.

Theme 1: Support as an Overarching Role of CCF

I developed theme 1 from the coding process and discovered the overarching perception that support of the students was at the core of what the role of CCF should be. When asked about CCF's role in student persistence, all seven interviewees reported that

they played some role in CC student persistence. The reasons were varied, but no candidate responded that CCF had no role in student persistence. Six of the seven interviewees used the word support in their responses.

PI stated, “Provide direction, support, and quality instruction.” P3 said, “...to encourage and support students when I have them in class” meaning to offer motivation, mentorship, and to keep them from failing. P4 reported that the role of faculty was to provide, “Educational support and interpersonal support to be the most effective.” P5 provided a more personable focus saying the role was to be, “Welcoming, fun, friendly, supportive because I think that students respond to me a lot better.” P6 stated, “I think my main role to help students persist is to offer support within the classroom.” P7 explained that the role of the instructor was to be “...part of their support system.” P2 also responded similarly to P7 that the faculty or staff role is, “Recognition, respect, creating connection.”

Of the responses above, only three CCF mentioned support without mentioning the classroom or instruction. This shows a common theme of personal role or accountability in terms of student persistence at the CC level. A common word used by all CCF in relation to CCF's role in student persistence was the term support. This word was used by 85% of the interviewees in some derivation. Overwhelmingly, CCF perceived themselves to play a supportive role in CC student persistence. Support, in this case, is meant to supply the CC students with what is vital for success including educational training and resources, but also to provide emotional encouragement, connection, and interpersonal support for success in the CC setting.

Theme 2: Under-Prepared by Institution

Another common theme, idea, or phrase that I uncovered throughout this study was an under-preparedness felt by the CCF themselves to best assist students, as well as an under-preparedness by the institution to assist students directly. This is important because CCF identified support as the main function of their role, but very few of them felt prepared by the institution to support students in need. I asked question 8 regarding how participants felt the CC prepared them for student success, to dive deeper into what CCF felt the educational organization had done to prepare them to handle CC students with extrinsic crises. Responses were reflective including P1's response, "You know, to be honest, I think this college hasn't prepared me much." P2 reported "no training up front," meaning this participant felt there had been training in the academic arena nor on handling students on a social platform. P3 recounted, "I can't think of anything." P4 stated,

I mean, I had no training on student needs in the social-emotional areas. They did get me my computer and had the IT guy work with me to set it up, and I shadowed another teacher for maybe a week. But as far as training for my actual teaching role, no. And nothing on how to handle this population.

P6 noted, "The educational institution, none, but from my social work, I have learned some." This is reflective of the lack of perceived training by the CC. Three interviewees did report that some subsequent training had been done in the form of seminars or in-service presentations on how to assist struggling students, but there was a noted lack of initial perceptual preparedness by the CCF that were interviewed for this

study. This theme demonstrates that the CCF interviewed did not feel much on-campus preparation before classroom instruction on how to handle a classroom regardless of previous teaching experience.

Five out of seven of the participants reported a perception that the institution provided no training or preparation to them to handle student persistence or to troubleshoot for students struggling with intrinsic factors (such as lack of academic progress, weak support system, history of failure). Three out of seven interviewees reported “none” (P1, P4, P5, P6 and P7) with P3 stating, “Yeah, we have had some training, but it focuses on academic, not external support. They provide technology support for us to be successful.” And P7 remarked, “there is an academic advisor, but one staff covers the entire campus.” These responses allude to a perception of inadequate support for student persistence. Two responders reported some tools or technology had been given to assist in this manner, and weekly mentor feedback. The majority of responders (5 out of 7) reported no formal training in classroom leadership, they reported a perception of being self-taught or learning by trial and error. Four of the seven participants reported that they had no formal or official training in classroom leadership prior to their teaching experience stating (P1) “trial and error method”, P3 who reports, “I have been mostly self-taught.” Where P4 remarked, “I do what works for me”; and P7 responded, “I took one course after I started.” The other participants indicated they had some training. P2 said, “Well, I mean, I have a certification in LMS platforms, and my other degrees, certifications and trainings have really prepared me for this job, I think.” P5 stated, “faculty development” and “evaluation tools” were part of the training they

received. It was unclear if the evaluation tools were used for the faculty member to receive feedback or for the CCF to provide feedback to students. Two CCF did report some trainings they were given (P2 and P5); however, none of the participants named a specific training, on-boarding section, inservice or preparation course given for what they all perceived to be a high-value risk factor for persistence versus withdraw. This is notable as often CCF are not required to have previous teaching experience.

Since the CC student population is not consistent with a traditional college population, training in the subject of classroom expectations, or preparation as a CC faculty member may provide better success in terms of CC student outcomes.

Interviewees were divided in response to question 9 regarding institutional support for CC students. However, three of the respondents indicated either no or lacking support for the students at this organization. The responses were P1, “there are none.” While P6 stated “We do have an academic advisor, but she doesn’t deal with outside stressors.” And P7 remarked “the one person we have is really inadequate for our total student population”. These responses allude to a perception of inadequate resources or support for current students at this organization. Other responses to this question were considered outliers such as P2 “we do have a student government” and P3 “We send personalized emails...” This theme depicts a lack of institutional support for students as well as faculty themselves.

Theme 3: Student Response to Outside Factors

The results of the interview inquiry yielded theme 3, the CCF perception on how CC students reacted or responded to outside factors. Question 11, asked about CCF

feelings on how they perceive CC students respond to outside stressors such as financial stress, loss of a job, childcare struggles (no childcare, can't afford childcare), loss of a partner, medical diagnosis, or abrupt need to find new housing. They were asked to provide examples if applicable. The responses to this question were also telling in that all seven participants reported that CC students deal with outside life factors by withdrawing from school. P1 stated in response to how students handle extrinsic stressors, "Well, number one, students withdraw." P2 responded, "Usually, they lose momentum. I have seen them drop out and return and get into a tough cycle. Fundamentally, for many, life factors cause them to withdraw." The third participant stated, "...they usually react massively and quit everything." While P4 responded with, "they react negatively, leaving everything in the past." P5 stated,

You know, I didn't know how stressful it could be for some students. When I first started teaching, I was kind of shocked by how much help the students needed. They would frequently give me excuses as to why work wasn't done, or why they couldn't come to class. It was only my second semester that I realized how, like, fragile these learners are. It's like they become overwhelmed and give up with no warning, and just ghost us. But almost none of those stressors are school related.

P6 answered, "If it becomes too big, the students just give up." And P7 stated "...from my experiences, they generally drop out." The perception is that many outside factors which may be unrelated to school often causes the learner to withdraw and not persist at obtaining their certificate or degree. One hundred percent of the interviewees reported that their perception of student response to outside stressors that may bring them

to withdraw from school was that the student will simply withdraw or quit school. So, I can surmise that the majority of faculty are aware that outside stressors need to be addressed or the student will be at high risk for not persisting. That is coupled with the majority responses to question 9, regarding institutional support for students, as being no support or inadequate support points to a CCF perception of a high rate of withdrawal when outside factors are at stake.

Theme 4: Interpersonal Interactions

The last theme I developed from the data is the emphasis each interviewee placed on personal and interpersonal interactions and communication when it came to student engagement. The responses were varied in terms of specific words used, but ideas were similar focusing on shared experiences and getting to know a sense of the person. I wrote question 13 to dive deeper past question 12. If I can gather an understanding of some CCF perceptions of *what* is faculty engagement, can we better explore their perceptions of faculty engagement in their classrooms? Questions 12 and 13 focused on engagement in their respective classrooms. There was a follow-up/prompt to this question which read, “please give examples of experiences.” Most participants chose to give examples which included P1 example of, “I ask each student where they are from and their reason for being here.” P2 reported that “face-to-face interactions” is what makes their classroom unique and engaging. P3 shared that “sharing experiences and bringing characters to life really provides a creative learning environment that pulls my students in.” P4 stated, “...it’s not one-size-fits-all.” P6 reported that, “I get to know each student personally, I invest in things like their kids’ names, motivation for school, and things like that.” P7

says they, “stay fresh and innovating” meaning they adopt new initiatives, language, and ideas from semester to semester to remain relevant and inviting to new classes and potentially returning students. And P5 responded that, “it changes based on the modality in which I’m teaching.” A common idea I noted in these responses focused on a personal level of interaction (shared experiences, getting to know learners). Gathering these ideas and concepts led to this theme. I documented the ideas of engagement, getting to know students, and staying present in the classroom. I found the term personal/interpersonal reflected in the responses as a deep inclination to connect with students and create a sense of relevance in the classroom. This is the core of interpersonal connection and interactions.

One responder indicated (P1), “asking personal questions to better know the students”, while P4 suggested that students, “can only really hear us if they know we care about them.” These responses each allude to interpersonal connection, making yourself available, and being transparent, and investing in personal connections were ideas that these participants perceived as governing student engagement. Each was able to give specific examples of what he/she has done in the classroom to encourage these interpersonal relationships. There was a majority consensus in terms of CCF perception that engagement in the classroom led to improved student persistence.

In this study, I was able to use initial coding as I collected the participant responses and turned those codes into themes. Using common words, ideas, or phrases I grouped interviewee responses into categories based on similar perceptions. Words and phrases with related meanings were categorized into categories, and those categories

were then compared to see what common themes may emerge. For this study, the four themes were (a) support as an overarching role of CCF, (b) under-prepared by the institution, (c) negative student response to outside factors, and (d) interpersonal interactions were established for the outcome of this study. The goal in this study was to explore these themes to add to the body of literature related to CCF student persistence.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I implemented multiple measures to ensure evidence of trustworthiness within this study as well as to ensure this qualitative data has been researched exhaustively. In Chapter 2, I conducted a comprehensive literature review using a variety of online databases including the Walden University library, local public library, and Google Scholar online database. Each provided scholarly literature which aided the body of information. There were many overlapping findings including works by Tinto (1987), Astin (1984) and Juskiewicz (2016, 2017). The latter articles reference the former.

Regarding the trustworthiness of data collection and research, I have used a method of member checks. Kornbluh (2015) suggested that member checks are one of the markers of a gold standard in qualitative research. While there is some controversy regarding qualitative research and trustworthiness, member checks create a balance of information where the participant can review his/her respective data for inconsistencies, incongruencies, and inaccuracies. This can be done before data coding to ensure that accurate data from candidates were used. Kornbluh (2015) presented several other strategies for creating trustworthiness in qualitative research by including member checks in the data analysis process. In this process, not only did I complete an exhaustive

literature review of material available to researchers regarding CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence, but I also gathered actual perceptions from current or former CCF. I allowed each CCF to review his/her transcription before data analysis for exactitude and provide feedback where necessary. This ensured that I was using the best practice in terms of data collection. In addition, deep responses and probing led to rich data collection from interviewees.

Credibility as a part of trustworthiness is the confidence in the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this study, to assure credibility, I encouraged participants to review the recorded interviews to listen for errors in response. I also encouraged them to review transcripts to ensure I had not added, edited, or deleted anything inadvertently. Lastly, data were triangulated as I included interviews with faculty within this CC that teach in different departments. Once transcripts were reviewed by participants, no additional edits were necessary.

Transferability is the ability of the details of the study to be transferred to other settings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I provided detailed steps on the interviewing process and questions to allow this study to be conducted by other researchers if desired. By engaging in these transparent techniques, and specific steps of the data collection process, data analysis, and conclusions, the study will be able to be replicated for future researchers in similar settings.

Dependability is the consistency of the findings over a period of time (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this research study, I used the reflective journal to keep personal opinions separate from data analysis to further instill dependability in this study.

Confirmability is the degree to which the conclusions can be confirmed by other researchers (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). One way to allow confirmation of research results by other researchers is through reflexivity. Reflexivity is the look into potential personal biases (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I kept a reflective journal to reduce some personal biases, as well as enlisted an outside colleague to review transcripts for errors. Another method I have used to establish confirmability was by including markers for theoretical and methodological framework throughout this paper (McInnes et al. 2017). These items will ensure to future researchers that the conclusions made have been derived from a sound framework and thorough analysis.

Moreover, after each interview, a summary of the interview was reviewed with the subject. This safeguarded against inconsistencies at the end of each interview. Seven in-depth interviews were conducted with various faculty members covering a variety of departments at a local CC. Faculty tenure ranged from 1 year to 12 years, and the furloughed faculty had previously held roles in different areas of the curriculum. This allowed me to sample perceptions from different programs within the same CC. This was a method of analyzing several differing points of view for this data collection.

Summary

I conducted this study to explore CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence. Seven in-depth interviews were performed to study the perceptions of faculty from different departments at one CC. A total of 16 questions were asked, the first three being qualifying questions to vet the participant in terms of tenure and CCF role. The last question I asked was a general invitation to provide any information not covered by the

interview questions. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and member-checked by the respective interviewee. A table of response summaries is listed in Appendix C. I extracted common themes from the data provided after the initial coding of participant responses had been evaluated.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1

What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?

From the data I collected and analyzed, it is evident that CCF are not seeing the reasons students persist as clearly as they are seeing the reasons students withdraw. While most of the participants were able to identify reasons students persisted, the overwhelming responses focused on reasons CC students drop out or on the lack of support by the institution regarding student persistence. Each participant was able to identify at least one intrinsic and one extrinsic factor which they perceived as being influential in student persistence efforts. Intrinsic factors are internal characteristics such as self-motivation, self-esteem, or personal drive. And extrinsic factors are characteristics such as dependent children at home, sole income earner, or outside family pressures. CCF were able to name many reasons that CC students did not persist, and it may be assumed that they can recognize that troubleshooting these obstacles would lead to better CC student persistence. Nearly all CCF acknowledged that their role in the classroom could potentially influence student's positive student relationships, or at very least lead to more engaged CC students. However, many of them also acknowledged that they had little to no training in how to achieve this.

Research Question 2

How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?

For some questions the responses were profoundly similar while others had much more varied replies. I noted some common themes such as CCF's perception of their responsibility for classroom culture and engagement. Additionally, I documented a remarkable congruency among responses for reasons student withdraws, or what CCF feel cause students to not persist which were outside or extrinsic factors. To answer this research question, I return to Theme 4. I uncovered a deep commitment by the CCF to engage their students in the classroom. Despite the common perception that they were ill-prepared by the organization to be in the classroom, nearly all respondents recognized their role as a teacher at the CC level was one of academic, personal, interpersonal, and even social support. However, not many of them were able to articulate what that meant or how to achieve it. They unanimously responded connection, communication, and feeling engaged in the classroom led to better interpersonal interactions in the classroom. Notably, none of them responded that engagement, connection, or sense of belonging was congruent with persistence. However, it was evident to me in the enthusiasm of the interviews whilst discussing classroom management, engagement strategies, and CCF role, that they inherently had a desire to create this type of culture in the classroom. Responses may be an indirect recognition of their role in having the ability to drive students to persist in some cases, but none of the interviewees articulated this directly.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore CCFs' perceptions of their roles pertaining to student completion at the focus CC. I conducted this study to add to the body of literature surrounding CC student persistence. I identified the problem in this study by the low persistence rates at a local middle southwest CC. I used a qualitative research design to explore CCF perceptions regarding their role in student persistence in the focus CC setting using interviews. I conducted a total of seven in-depth interviews with furloughed faculty from a variety of different programs at the focus CC. Data were transcribed and member-checked to ensure trustworthiness. The outcome of this study demonstrated several common themes among the interviewees. These themes were (a) support as an overarching role of CCF, (b) under-prepared by the institution, (c) negative student response to outside factors, and (d) interpersonal interactions. These encompassed ideas such as CCF feeling their role in the classroom was to be a source of support to students, but that they and the students are under-prepared for the CC journey that many students face. Furthermore, almost all respondents felt that when extrinsic factors arose, most CC students tended to retreat from school in response and that interpersonal interactions were among the most important factors influencing students to persist. This demonstrated faculty saw some barriers to student success and feeling the urgency to be engaged, but not feeling prepared to do so.

After an exhaustive literature review on CC student persistence, I determined that there was inadequate research on CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence at the CC level. I aimed to reveal some of those perceptions from CCF at the target CC. I

completed seven in-depth interviews with CCF who had 1 full year or more of on-ground teaching experience with this organization, but who was also currently on furlough with the college. This saturated the candidate pool for this study. The goal was to add to the body of literature and research on CC student persistence by diving into the subject from a different angle. Because very little was found in the literature review related to CCF perceptions on how they may impact student persistence, I hope that this research will lead the way for further research. The findings of this study established several common themes among the participants including (a) support as an overarching role of CCF, (b) under-prepared by the institution, (c) negative student response to outside factors, and (d) interpersonal interactions. These categories did not encompass every aspect of the CCF interviews but summed them up well in terms of categories and ideas that emerged.

Interpretation of the Findings

After completing the interviews, I completed the transcriptions, member-checks, and data analysis on these in-depth interviews. As listed in Chapter 4, I used open coding to identify various themes. In this section, the themes identified will be compared to the data from the literature review done in Chapter 2. I was interested to reflect on the interview feedback and how it was likened to the data collected.

I examined Miller's (2017) practical model of student persistence and the involvement of the CCF. I focused on student persistence with the CCF at the center. Success as a CCF requires a high level of training before and during tenure with a higher education institution. If the interviewed CCF perceive they are not getting the training, CCFs need to be aware of this, as it could be a risk factor in decreased student persistence.

Lancaster and Lundberg (2019) found that 75% of CC students reported engagement as part of the reason they persist in higher education. Stevenson (2013) argued that the term persistence can be subjective and that it can mean a variety of outcomes in higher education. For this study, the term persistence means to complete the duration of the assigned program to certificate or degree attainment within the focus college. I uncovered a high response rate indicating that engagement was important in the classroom, but CCF perceive extrinsic or outside major stressors to be the highest risk factor for students to not persist. Yu (2017) identified several extrinsic factors which were congruent with CC student persistence including female gender, high school GPA, and family support. It can be presumed that elements inconsistent with these characteristics may be risk factors for CC students. The lack of perceived training should be addressed with the focus of CC to uncover any opportunities for a proper preparation with new faculty to train and coach them for the target demographic they will be educating. The self-awareness of the personal role of CCF in student persistence does not present as strongly through this study. While this group of CCF felt connected to their students and had a desire to be engaging, they were not able to equate engagement with persistence.

I conducted the literature review to include an emphasis on qualitative research that supports engagement in the classroom, organizational support, and a sense of belonging in the CC classroom. Gauthier (2021) found that some CCF perceive that CC programs may be stigmatized for a lack of soft skill or inclusion training and a greater focus on trade skills training. From this study I can glean that CCF feel under-prepared to handle roadblocks for students, but they do perceive a sense of responsibility to engage

students in the classroom. CCF in this study perceive the reasons for withdrawing among students as non-persistence is closely associated with extrinsic factors such as dependents/children, financial hardships, or personal crises, but do not consider themselves equipped to assist with persistence issues at the beginning of their tenure at the focus CC. Goldrick (2018) supported this idea by finding that CC students often must choose between basic life needs and education. In this study, the CCF reported not only a lack of preparedness for themselves as classroom leaders but also a lack of preparedness for CC students to be successful. This is important and the focus school should be informed that this is the perception, as it could lead to further risk factors for lower persistence rates among students. The deficit is the institutional support of current or prospective students in a CC setting and the resources offered for subsequent success.

Other ideas revealed in this study were congruent with studies in the literature review. Goldrick (2018) found that students who felt connected to the faculty members were more likely to persist. In the current study, all the CCF interviewed reported that a sense of connection and interpersonal relationships were a key to engagement in their classroom. The data gathered from this study confirms Tinto's (1994) theory of student engagement, support, and connectedness as being key from both a faculty and student perspective. This is consistent with the idea that students need to feel a sense of belonging and value in their CC organization and classrooms (Tinto, 2017). In this aspect, the perceptions of CCF interviewed from this CC and the supporting studies were similar.

One last item to note is the ability of the CCF to compete with any negative factors that may be causing students to not persist. Kaplan and Patrick (2016) concluded that a variety of extrinsic and intrinsic factors could be responsible for learner departure from CCs, but that factors such as engagement, connection to the institution, support, and drive to persist could be enough to combat these negative elements and drive the student to persist. To create a culture of engagement, connection, and support, CCF needs to be prepared by the organization and feel the students are equally prepared. In this study, it was evident that this pool of CCF did not feel either scenario was accurate. Additionally, all the interviewees agreed that support as part of their fundamental role as a CCF but did not seem to formulate that this support was an integral part of student persistence. Furthermore, they all reported that when faced with tough external situations, in most cases this caused the students to give up or withdraw. Evans, et al. (2017) reported that students from low socio-economic backgrounds, similar to some of the students attending CCs, had higher levels of persistence when met with a strong support system. In this study, the CCF can recognize that support, encouragement, and connections are part of the elemental role, but these did not translate into higher student persistence.

Regarding support in CCs for faculty and students, Stewart et al. (2015) suggested that direct institutional support was integral in the reinforcement of student persistence. However, from this study, CCF perceptions reflected a lack of organizational/college support for both themselves as well as the students. Dudley et al. (2016) also found that institutional support for faculty and students was among some of the biggest reasons for improved student success; however, this study revealed that the CCF at the focus

organization felt an overwhelming lack of support or training for themselves or the students. Savage et al. (2019) indicated in their study that students who felt supported by the institution had overall better persistence rates. While I did not investigate student perceptions directly, the CCF perceptions of a lack of institutional support could be one underlying factor impacting the low persistence outcomes at this CC.

In this study, another theme was that CCF unanimously indicated that support was an integral part of their job at the college. Davidson and Wilson (2017) found that social and academic integration were among some of the strongest correlators to CC student persistence. While all seven interviewees in this study responded that support was one of the biggest roles they played, none of them connected that concept to persistence or engagement. Davidson (2015) explained that social integration can lead to a foundation of academic engagement. This can create a culture of safety in the classroom, and therefore act as a supportive environment. The CCF responses were congruent with this theme of a supportive classroom environment but faculty did not articulate specifically what it was that created that culture of security and rich learning that might lead to impactful engagement and higher levels of persistence.

The data I gathered from this study reflected deep and surprisingly consistent perceptions of CCF at this organization. I anticipated having varying responses to the interview questions from each participant. In some cases, each question had similar responses from all seven interviewees. I was surprised by this fact, and it added to the body of research on this topic. I was driven to research this topic in depth following my own experiences as a faculty member. It had not occurred to me that I may be an integral

piece of the retention/persistence puzzle. I understood my faculty role to be the delivery of instruction. Only through my experience as a director was I able to reflect on the why and how of student persistence and it begged the question: Do faculty realize how valuable they may be in the big picture? This study demonstrated that faculty do realize they play a role in support for the students but may lack also the understanding of how to get there, or what support means in this arena. This is one step in a positive direction for student persistence.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study included several factors. The first of which was a small sample size. While I did support the in-depth interviews with substantive questioning and follow-up, ideally, a larger sample size would have resulted in more data to analyze. This study had seven participants who were all furloughed from this focus CC. This reached saturation of the given population but did not have an equal representation of programmatic feedback. Olsen (2016) suggested using a saturated pool for the richest data collection allowable. This means I was able to interview all faculty furloughed during the study phase, and the faculty represented a variety of programs within the CC. The original goal was to interview 10 CCF; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing changes in faculty at the CC, I had to revise the plan for furloughed faculty members, which totaled seven in number.

The second limitation was reflected in the interview questions. I wrote the interview questions, and they were reviewed by my chair member, second member, and the URR, and all approved. Upon analyzing the data, I realized that some of the questions

should have had to follow-up portions. It was not until I was analyzing data that I noted where I may have asked for more clarification or a more in-depth response. I did not do this upon initial interviewing to respect both the time of the participant as well as their privacy, allowing them to share only what they were comfortable sharing. Denzin, 2008 suggested allowing for freedom with answering in semistructured interviews to allow for the highest integrity. I feel I retrieved solid data for analysis but see where I could have gone deeper in some instances. For future studies I will plan prompts ahead of time in the event I need to dig a little deeper into interview responses.

The last limitation to this study was my stakeholder role in this study. I serve as academic program director and while I did not interview any CCF who directly reported to me, I have a connection to the CC and the outcomes of the organization. I kept detailed notes, transcripts, and a reflexive journal. I provided interviewees with debriefings and did member-checks on transcripts to ensure accuracy. I recognize that personal role as program director may impact interpretation of the data, but the research journal assisted me by challenging my biases.

Recommendations

The findings in this study highlight the endless need for qualitative research on CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence. Recommendations for future research include studying the CCF role from a student perspective, or an administrative perspective. The body of literature specifically related to CCF perceptions of their role in student success is lacking. The researchers invested in higher education, specifically CCs,

could benefit from hearing this perspective to better understand how CCF can play a role in student persistence, or what the organization can do to improve this perception.

An additional recommendation would be a larger sample size or a sample size from a larger organization. I sought 10 CCF for in-depth interviews but after not receiving authorization to interview current faculty, I was approved to interview furloughed faculty members due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to this smaller sample size, I may not have reached complete data saturation even though I reached participant saturation.

Lastly, some of the information found in this study was consistent with research done by others and related theorists. In this study, I noted a lack of perceived support or preparation for CCF in terms of handling students who are at risk of withdrawal. The CC community may benefit from a study evaluating successful or unsuccessful training tools or onboarding practices at CCs.

Implications

In this study, I explored the perceptions of CCF members on their role in student persistence. The results of this study helped to demonstrate what CCF perceive to be their role in terms of support and engagement in the classroom but seemed to be incongruent with studies that indicated CCF is part of the reason that CC students persist. The results can impact a social change by looking at onboarding and training programs to ensure that perception more closely mirrors qualitative outcomes from previous studies.

Furthermore, if the perception of CCF is that neither they nor the students are being supported or prepared in a way to sustain healthy student persistence, then policies,

procedures, and practices may be further investigated in future studies to uncover more about these perceptions.

The results of this study can positively impact student persistence and better outcomes for CCs moving forward by diving deeper into what CCF perceive that they are missing to be successful as a classroom leader. The study findings highlighted how CCF have a strong correspondence to support in the classroom as it relates to their role in student persistence. A question that needs to be asked in more depth would be the definition these CCF had for the term support. While the results strongly related CCF support to student persistence, none of the CCF reported that faculty or college support was among the reasons that students persist. Martin and Collie's (2019) longitudinal study related to teacher-student interactions and engagements included a favorable correlation between the number of positive interactions and relationships and the level of engagement. These data were consistent with the findings that positive classroom culture and student-faculty relationships are valuable to CCF. Martin and Collie's (2019) additionally substantiated that these relationships can improve engagement and therefore improve persistence rates among CC students.

What is evident after the completion of this study is that the perception of CCF does not match what previous studies have determined. What was left up to question, was who is responsible for this? Through this study, I have brought to the surface a basic disconnect between the accountability of CCF in their role in student persistence, while accenting their desire to create connections and to support their students. This concept

may serve as a platform for future studies and should add to the body of literature on current CC student retention data.

Conclusion

CC faculty members have an integral role in the CC organization. They are the most prominent student-facing employees of the college. They spend the most time with the students and are often the biggest support system the students have within the organization. The hermeneutic character of this study captured CCF perceptions using the interview process. The analysis of the data yielded four themes which were: (a) support as an overarching role played by the CCF, (b) under-preparedness by institution, (c) student response to outside factors, and (d) interpersonal interactions. All of these emerged as data that were collected and analyzed from in-depth interviews.

The emphatic responses of the participants in this study indicated that they take their role as CCF seriously and are invested in the success of the students. Participants' perceptions of preparedness by the organization or support within the institution may be lacking. Whether or not this is accurate, has not been assessed. But it was evident that these CCF would like to better understand their role and how it may impact student persistence. One interviewee may have said it best, "I guess my goal is to provide a supportive, involved, nurturing classroom where learning produces students who try so much harder, even if the student's intrinsic motivation fails. I just don't know how to get there on my own." CCF strives to produce well-prepared students for the workforce, and it is evident that both students and faculty agree the role goes beyond just curriculum delivery. CCs must shift the way they invest in CCF and help them to alter their

perception of the role they play in student persistence. By making this shift and aiding CCF in perception of preparedness and accountability, more students may be supported in persisting to graduation, thus being the change *they* wish to see in this world.

References

- Abdul-Alim, J. (2016). Juggling act: many low-income CC students struggle with balancing a full course load and working to take care of financial responsibilities outside of school. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, 15(8), 10.
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/683589f22bea274186170c52d13fd9f2/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=27805>
- Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. (2017) <http://www.accsc.org>
- Accreditation and Pre Accreditation Standards, 34 C.F.R §602.16 (2009).
<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text>
- Acevedo, G. N., & Zerquera, D. D. (2016). CC first-year experience programs: Examining student access, experience, and success from the student perspective. *New Directions for CCs*, 2016 (175), 71–82.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20213>
- Alicea, S., Suárez-Orozco, C., Singh, S., Darbes, T., & Abrica, E. J. (2016). Observing classroom engagement in CC: A systematic approach. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(4), 757–782. <https://doi-org./10.3102/0162373716675726>
- Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5 (2), 272–28.
[https://Ensuringthequalityofthefindingsofqualitativeresearch4%20\(3\).pdf](https://Ensuringthequalityofthefindingsofqualitativeresearch4%20(3).pdf)

- Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25(4), 297–308.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1999-01418-006>
- Baéz, A., Rodríguez, V., & Suarez-Espinal, C. (2016). College student inventory overall risk and persistence for first-year students in the college discovery program at Bronx community college. *HETS Online Journal*, 7, 2–20.
https://touro scholar.touro.edu/gssw_pubs/37/
- Bailey, T. (2017). CCs and student success: Models for comprehensive reform. *Educause Review*, 52(3), 32-44. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20217>
- Barnett, E. b. (2010). Validation experiences and persistence among CC students. *Review of Higher Education*, 34(2), 193–230. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2010.0019>
- Boggs, G. R. (2012). The Evolution of the community colleges in America: Democracy's colleges. *Community College Journal*, 82(4), 36–39.
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/1376e176d5df61d35b87ec9d1b262823/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=232>
- Bonet, G., & Walters, B. R. (2016). High impact practices: Student engagement and retention. *College Student Journal*, 50(2), 224–235.
https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1101&context=kb_pubs
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: a tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation?. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1802-1811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>

- Brunsdon, V., Davies, M., Shevlin, M., & Bracken, M. (2000). Why do HE students drop out? A test of Tinto's model. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 24(3), 301–310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/030987700750022244>
- Burke, A. (2019). Student retention models in higher education: A literature review. *College and University*, 94(2), 12–21. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/3801c2272f50c82853ddee876e93347d/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1059>
- Chen, G. (2019). The Catch-22 of CC Graduation Rates. *Community College Review*. <https://www.communitycollegereview.com/blog/the-catch-22-of-community-college-graduation-rates>
- Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., Muschkin, C. G., & Vigdor, J. L. (2013). Success in community college: Do institutions differ? *Research in Higher Education*, 54(7), 805–824. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9295-6>
- College Completion Chronicle (2017). College completion. Who graduates from college and who doesn't and why it matters. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. <https://collegecompletion.chronicle.com>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Daliborka-Luketic/publication/320521456_Book_Review_Nacrt_istrazivanja_kvalitativni_kvantitativni_i_mjesoviti_pristupi/links/5a8ad103aca272017e62aa7a/Book-Review-Nacrt-istrazivanja-kvalitativni-kvantitativni-i-mjesoviti-pristupi.pdf

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.

https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/55010759/creswell_Qualitative_Inquiry_2nd_edition-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1655740144&Signature=bsft~lvVz9PgwP~7fJMcY1mdEu2Zwk6Fu-HweEPDG4iUl~bo-DFEMCJN4h8e0SLL2NVYs~2rIDnihNoq-NbJ3~0K8CT49TpvpxHMP8DBjtf6Uql4OGdbjYrhjj02vtSjcJ6qlZ1ZwuF1Ncn9~HOUgwwJZVprGHCmlhmCJliVn0uCNzg1S0UD12Z5oRzo2FfLiBVkqmrTqzFsQN6TezGi1SAhEhivsnT267MqojAbkgK6mL3ktR-JU~8vuKxFFpOB314wp20olVyheVpKHOUyzJMBDRwld1iPA-10jMkfsRmYihimIIW-h7xNSmfmp3S5avEYM-ZVYdppfvgnjL4A_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

Crisp, G., & Delgado, C. (2014). The impact of developmental education on community college persistence and vertical transfer. *CC Review*, 42(2), 99–117.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552113516488>

Datu, J. A. D., King, R. B., Valdez, J. P. M., & Eala, M. S. M. (2018). Grit is associated with lower depression via meaning in life among Filipino high school students. *Youth & Society*, 51(6), 865–876.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118x18760402>

Datu, J. A. D., Yang, W., Valdez, J. P. M., & Chu, S. K. W. (2018). Is Facebook involvement associated with academic engagement among Filipino university

students? A cross-sectional study. *Computers & Education*, 125, 246–253.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.06.010>

Davidson, J. C. (2015). Precollege factors and leading indicators: Increasing transfer and degree completion in a community and technical college system. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(11), 1007-1021.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2014.919619>

Davidson, C. C., & Wilson, K. (2013). Reassessing Tinto's concepts of social and academic integration in student retention. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory, & Practice*, 15(3), 329-346. <https://doi:10.2190/CS.15.3.b>

Davidson, J. C., & Wilson, K. B. (2017). CC student dropouts from higher education: Toward a comprehensive conceptual model. *CC Journal of Research and Practice*, 41(8), 517-530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2016.1206490>

Denzin, N. K. (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (Vol. 3). Sage Publications.

Dietz-Uhler, B., & Hurn, J. E. (2013). Using learning analytics to predict (and improve) student success: A faculty perspective. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 12(1), 17-26. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203731864-7>

Dorner, M. A., & Scott, E. C. (2016). An exploration of instructor perceptions of community college students' attitudes toward evolution. *Evolution: Education and Outreach*, 9(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12052-016-0055-x>

Dudley, D. M., Liu, L., Hao, L., & Stallard, C. (2015). Student engagement: A CCSSE follow-up study to improve student engagement in a community

- college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(12), 1153-1169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2014.961589>
- Dwyer, T. (2017). Persistence in higher education through student-faculty interactions in the classroom of a commuter institution. *Innovations in Education & Teaching International*, 54(4), 325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2015.1112297>
- Eddy, P. L., & Khwaja, T. (2019). What happened to re-visioning community college leadership? A 25-Year Retrospective. *CC Review*, 47(1), 53–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552118818742>
- Evans, J. J. (2018). Mismatched: A case study to understand why NC students choose to enroll in CCs after being admitted into four-year institutions. (Doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC). <https://repository.lib.ncsu.edu/bitstream/handle/1840.20/35485/etd.pdf?sequence=3>
- Evans, W. N., Kearney, M. S., Perry, B. C., & Sullivan, J. X. (2017). Increasing community college completion rates among low-income students: Evidence from a randomized controlled trial evaluation of a case management intervention (No. w24150). National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w24150/w24150.pdf
- Faculty work in the context of the community college. (2007). *Association for the Study of Higher Education; Higher Education Report*, 32(6), 33-54.
- Flick, U. (2018). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

- Flynn, L., Ruiz, M., Wilson, H., & Pere, C. (2015). Retention of undergraduate students: Faculty practices that are most supportive. *Celebrating Differences: Rural and Urban Schools at the Crossroads of Change*, 30, 160. <https://www.acres-sped.org/files/d/7c7bed89-de8f-4d0f-9fb5-c41d9d39e174/2015acresconferenceproceeding.pdf#page=160>
- Fong, C. J., Davis, C. W., Kim, Y., Kim, Y. W., Marriott, L., & Kim, S. (2017). Psychosocial factors and community college student success: A meta-analytic investigation. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(2), 388-424. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653479>
- French, A. (2017). Toward a new conceptual model: Integrating the social change model of leadership development and Tinto's model of student persistence. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 16(3), 97. <https://doi.org/10.12806/v16/i3/t4>
- Gauthier, T. (2021). A survey of faculty perceptions of community college career and technical education. *Journal of Research in Technical Careers*, 5(2), 45. <https://doi.org/10.9741/2578-2118.1106>
- Gawronski, M., Kuk, L., & Lombardi, A. R. (2016). Inclusive instruction: Perceptions of community college faculty and students pertaining to universal design. *Journal of Postsecondary Education & Disability*, 29(4), 331. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1133816.pdf>
- Gehrke, S., & Kezar, A. (2015). Unbundling the faculty role in higher education: Utilizing historical, theoretical, and empirical frameworks to inform future research. *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 93-150).

Springer International Publishing, New York City, NY.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12835-1_3

Gibbs, G. R. (2018). *Analyzing qualitative data* (Vol. 6). Sage Publications.

https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/Thematic_coding_and_categorizing.pdf

Glass, C. R., Gesing, P., Hales, A., & Cong, C. (2017). Faculty as bridges to co-curricular engagement and community for first-generation international students. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(5), 895-910.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1293877>

Goldrick, R. S. (2018). Addressing community college completion rates by securing students' basic needs. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2018(184), 7–16.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20323>

Guerra, J. C. (2015). *Language, culture, identity and citizenship in college classrooms and communities*. Routledge.

Hallett, R. E., & Freas, A. (2018). Community college students' experiences with homelessness and housing insecurity. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 42(10), 724–739. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2017.1356764>

Hart, C. (2012). Factors associated with student persistence in an online program of study: A review of the literature. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 11(1).

<https://www.dvc.edu/academics/online-education/pdfs/Factors-Online-LitReview.pdf>

- Hatch, D. K., & Garcia, C. E. (2017). Academic advising and the persistence intentions of CC students in their first weeks in college. *Review of Higher Education, 40*(3), 353–390. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2017.0012>
- Head, R. B. (2011). The evolution of institutional effectiveness in the community college. *New Directions for CCs, 2011*(153), 5–11. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.432>
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2010). *The practice of qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Hollis, L. (2015). The significance of declining full-time faculty status for community college student retention and graduation: A correlational study with a Keynesian perspective. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 5*(3), 1-7. [https://research.phoenix.edu/sites/default/files/publication-files/Keynesian_Perspective_FINAL%20\(1\)_1.pdf](https://research.phoenix.edu/sites/default/files/publication-files/Keynesian_Perspective_FINAL%20(1)_1.pdf)
- Hope, J. (2016). Support part-time faculty to boost student retention, completion rates. *Dean & Provost, 17*(10), 6-7. <https://doi:10.1002/dap.30197>
- Howard, M. C., & Crayne, M. P. (2019). Persistence: Defining the multidimensional construct and creating a measure. *Personality and Individual Differences, 139*, 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.11.005>
- Howe, C., Hennessy, S., Mercer, N., Vrikki, M., & Wheatley, L. (2019). Teacher–student dialogue during classroom teaching: Does it really impact on student outcomes?. *Journal of the Learning Sciences, 28*(4-5), 462-512. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2019.1573730>

- Johnson, S. R., & Stage, F. K. (2018). Academic engagement and student success: Do high-impact practices mean higher graduation rates?. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 89(5), 753-781. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2018.1441107>
- Jordan, K. (2014). Initial trends in enrollment and completion of massive open online courses. *The international review of research in open and distributed learning*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v15i1.1651>
- Jones, C. R. (2017). *Examination of Online CC Students: Community of Inquiry Theoretical Model* (Doctoral dissertation, McKendree University, Lebanon, IL).
- Juskiewicz, J. (2016, March). *Trends in Community College Enrollment and Completion Data, 2016*. American Association of Community Colleges. <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/83047/TrendsinCommunityCollegeData2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Juskiewicz, J. (2017). Trends in community college enrollment and completion data. *American Association of Community Colleges*. <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/86967/CollegeEnrollment2017.pdf>
- Kaplan, A., & Patrick, H. (2016). Learning environments and motivation. *Handbook of Motivation at School*, 2, 254-274. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315773384-20>
- Kornbluh, M. (2015). Combatting challenges to establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(4), 397-414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2015.1021941>

- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 120-124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>
- Kotamraju, P., & Blackman, O. (2011). Meeting the 2020 American graduation Initiative (AGI) goal of increasing postsecondary graduation rates and completions: A macro perspective of community college student educational attainment. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 35*(3), 202-219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2010.526045>
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International, 15(4), 16-21.
- Kruglanski, A. W., Chernikova, M., & Kopetz, C. (2015). Motivation science. *Emerging trends in the social and behavioral sciences: An Interdisciplinary, searchable, and linkable resource*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0104>
- Kvale, S. (1996). The 1,000-page question. *Qualitative Inquiry, 2*(3), 275-284. <https://doi.org/10.29173/pandp15073>
- Lancaster, J. R. & Lundberg, C. A. (2019). The influence of classroom engagement on CC student learning: A quantitative analysis of effective faculty practices. *Community College Review, 47*(2), 136–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552119835922>
- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care, 4*(3), 324. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.161306>

- Li, J., Lin, L., Zhao, Y., Chen, J., & Wang, S. (2018). Grittier Chinese adolescents are happier: The mediating role of mindfulness. *Personality and Individual Differences, 131*, 232-237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.05.007>
- Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtle, K. H. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice*. John Wiley & Sons. <http://golshanlc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Methods-in-Educational-Research.pdf>
- Longwell-Grice, R., & Longwell-Grice, H. (2007). Testing Tinto: How do retention theories work for first-generation, working-class students? *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 9*(4), 407-420. <https://doi:10.2190/CS.9.4.a>
- Lowry, K.M. (2017). CC choice and the role of undermatching in the lives of African Americans. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice 41* (1), 18-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2015.1125315>
- Luke, C., Redekop, F., & Burgin, C. (2015). Psychological factors in community college student retention. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 39*(3), 222–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2013.803940>
- McClelland, D. C. (1987). *Human motivation*. Cambridge University Archive.
- McInnes, S., Peters, K., Bonney, A. D., & Halcomb, E. J. (2017). An exemplar of naturalistic inquiry in general practice research. *Nurse Researcher, 24* (3), 36-41. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2017.e1509>
- McNamara, C. (1999). General guidelines for conducting interviews. *Missouri Institute of Science*.

- Mansfield, M., O'Leary, E., & Webb, S. (2011, January 1). Retention in higher education: Faculty and student perceptions of retention programs and factors impacting attrition rates. *Online Submission*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521416.pdf>
- Marcus, J. (2009). Obama plans a windfall for US sector's poor relation. *Times Higher Education*, (2009), 18-19. <http://jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/09-1-11.pdf>
- Masika, R., & Jones, J. (2016). Building student belonging and engagement: Insights into higher education students' experiences of participating and learning together. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 21(2), 138-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2015.1122585>
- Martin, A. J., & Collie, R. J. (2019). Teacher–student relationships and students' engagement in high school: Does the number of negative and positive relationships with teachers matter?. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 111(5), 861. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000317>
- Martin, M. (2018). Mindfulness and transformation in a college classroom. *Adult Learning*, 29(1), 5-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159517744752>
- Martin, K., Galentino, R., & Townsend, L. (2014). Community college student success: The role of motivation and self-empowerment. *Community College Review*, 42(3), 221-241. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552114528972>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons. http://www.mid-contracting.com/sites/default/files/webform/careers_webform/_sid_/pdf-

[qualitative-research-a-guide-to-design-and-implementation-sharan-b-merriam-elizabeth-j-tisdell-pdf-download-free-book-589423f.pdf](#)

Mertes, S. J. (2015). Social integration in a community college environment. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(11), 1052-1064.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2014.934973>

Mertes, S. J., & Jankoviak, M. W. (2016). Creating a college-wide retention program: A mixed methods approach. *Community College Enterprise*, 22(1), 9-27.

<https://home.schoolcraft.edu/cce/22.1.9-27.pdf>

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., Huberman, M. A., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Sage Publications.

https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/43491723/Miles_Huberman_Data_analysis-with-cover-page-

Miller, N. (2017). A model for improving student retention in adult accelerated education programs. *Education*, 138(1), 104-114.

<https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/prin/ed/2017/00000138/00000001/art00012>

Morris, C. (2017). Report: Financial pressure swamping community college students. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, (4), 7.

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/72fa86c29508d358ccf36400c5870494/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=27805>

- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *The European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>
- Ng, J. C. (2017). Interactivity in virtual learning groups: Theories, strategies, and the state of literature. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 7(1), 46. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2017.7.1.840>
- Ober, D. R., Beekman, J. A., & Pierce, R. L. (2018). Analyzing four-year public university and two-year college graduation rates. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(4), 221-247. <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v6i4.3129>
- Ogren, C. A. (2003). Rethinking the “nontraditional” student from a historical perspective: State normal schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 74(6), 640-664. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2003.0046>
- Olson, K. (2016). *Essentials of qualitative interviewing*. Routledge Publishing. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315429212/essentials-qualitative-interviewing-karin-olson>
- Ozaki, C. C., & Renn, K. A. (2015). Engaging multiracial college students. In S. J. Quaye & S. R. Harper (Eds.). *Student Engagement in Higher Education: Theoretical and Practical Approaches for Diverse Populations* (2nd ed., pp. 91–104). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203810163-12/engaging-multiracial-college-students-casey-ozaki-kristen-renn>

- Parsons, S. (2020). Mindfulness and retention: A potential solution to the lack of persistence of CC students. Theses, 30.
https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=minfulness_theses
- Paulsen, M. B. (2016). *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 31). J. C. Smart (Ed.). Springer. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kevin-Dougherty/publication/251353470_The_Evolving_Role_of_the_Community_College_Policy_Issues_and_Research_Questions/links/5feca87d299bf140885dd9b6/The-Evolving-Role-of-the-Community-College-Policy-Issues-and-Research-Questions.pdf
- Percy, W. H., Kostere, K., & Kostere, S. (2015). Generic qualitative research in psychology. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(2), 76-85. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2097>
- Queirós, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(9), 369-388. <https://doi:10.5281/zenodo.887089>
- Rabito, E. R., Hoffman, J. L., & Person, D. R. (2015). Supplemental instruction: The effect of demographic and academic preparation variables on CC student academic achievement in STEM-related fields. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 14(3), 240-255. <https://doi:10.1177/1538192714568808>

- Rao, K., Ok, M. W., & Bryant, B. R. (2014). A review of research on universal design educational models. *Remedial and Special Education, 35*(3), 153-166.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932513518980>
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage Publications.
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=2--9DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT20&dq=Qualitative+research:+Bridging+the+conceptual,+theoretical,+and+methodological&ots=m9tL5dQOWw&sig=KwqOSFb>
- Reason, R. D. (2009). An examination of persistence research through the lens of a comprehensive conceptual framework. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*(6), 659-682. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0098>
- Remenick, L. (2019). Services and support for nontraditional students in higher education: A historical literature review. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 25*(1), 113–130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477971419842880>
- Rendón, L. I., Jalomo, R. E., & Nora, A. (2000). Part II: New theoretical directions: theoretical considerations in the study of minority student retention in higher education. *Reworking the Student Departure Puzzle* (pp. 125-156).
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv176kvf4.10>
- Renn, K. A., & Reason, R. D. (2021). *College students in the United States: Characteristics, experiences, and outcomes*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=gEcsEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT8&dq=College+students+in+the+United+States:+Characteristics,+experiences>

[+and+outcomes&ots=tAXHU4c2SQ&sig=ZYzVekhW9MO8qllBY1iHeVKW3MU#v=onepage&q=College%20students%20in%20the%20United%20States%3A%20Characteristics%2C%20experiences%2C%20and%20outcomes&f=false](#)

- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd Ed.). Sage Publications. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/>
- Savage, M. W., Strom, R. E., Ebesu Hubbard, A. S., & Aune, K. S. (2019). Commitment in college student persistence. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 21(2), 242-264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025117699621>
- Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Huie, F., Wakhungu, P., Yuan, X., Nathan, A & Bhimdiwala, A. (2018, February). Completing college: A state-level view of student completion rates (Signature Report No. 14a). National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/NSC_Signature_Report_14_StateSupp.pdf
- Silver Wolf, D. P., Perkins, J., Butler-Barnes, S. T., & Walker, T. J. (2017). Social belonging and college retention: Results from a quasi-experimental pilot study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(5), 777-782. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0060>
- Sogunro, O. A. (2015). Motivating factors for adult learners in higher education. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4(1), 22-37. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v4n1p22>
- Stevenson, T. (2013). Online student persistence: What matters is outside the classroom. *Journal of Applied Learning Technology*, 3(1), 21–25.

<https://www.ebsco.com/find-my-organization?returnUrl=https%3a%2f%2fsearch.ebscohost.com%2fwebauth%2fLogin.aspx%26direct%3>

- Stewart, S., Lim, D. H., & Kim, J. (2015). Factors influencing college persistence for first-time students. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 43(4), 12-20.
<https://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1724>
- Stewart, S., Paterson, N., & Ferguson, S. (2017). Bridging the gap between access and persistence in higher education in the Caribbean. *Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress*, 1(1), 36-51. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jump.v1i1.35>
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. University of Chicago Press. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED283416>
- Tinto, V. (2010). From theory to action: Exploring the institutional conditions for student retention. In *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research* (pp. 51-89).
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-8598-6_2
- Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action*. University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (2017). Reflections on student persistence. *Student Success*, 8(2), 1.
<https://doi/10.5204/ssj.v8i2.376z>
- Topham, S. (2016). A Delphi study of the understanding of the definition of student success in California CCs and its impact on practice. Doctoral Dissertation, Brandman University.

https://digitalcommons.umassglobal.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1081&context=edd_dissertations

Watson, W., Esquivel-Swinson, A., & Montemayor, R. (2018). Collaborative impact and professional development: Effective student services for immigrant populations amid growing inequality. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 42(11), 778–782.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10668926.2018.1448727>

Wood, J. L., Harris, F., & Delgado, N. R. (2016). *Struggling to survive, striving to succeed: Food and housing insecurities in the community college*. Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL).

https://cdn.kpbs.org/news/documents/2016/12/05/STRUGGLING_TO_SURVIVE_-_STRIVING_TO_SUCCEED.pdf

Wood, J. L., & Moore, C. S. (2015). Engaging community college transfer students. In S. R. Harper & S. J. Quaye (Eds.), *Student Engagement in Higher Education* (2nd ed., pp. 271–306). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1037/e510792010-003>

Wood, J. L., & Newman, C. B. (2017). Predictors of faculty–student engagement for black men in urban CCs: An investigation of the CC survey of men. *Urban Education*, 52(9), 1057-1079. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915623343>

Worthington, M. (2010). Differences between phenomenological research and a basic qualitative research design. *Capella University*. [TemelNitelAratrma%20\(1\)](#)

Yu, H. H. ed. (2017). Factors associated with student academic achievement at community colleges. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 19(2), 224–239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115612484>

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Close gap

1. How long have you been with this current institution? This is to satisfy the protocol of using CCF who have been employed for a minimum of one year with this organization.
2. What is your current rank and/or title? This is to satisfy the requirement of using CCF who are responsible for instruction, as well as to show these CCF are not under my direct supervision.
3. Tell me about any other positions you have held in academia other than this current position, and how long you have worked in this field in total. This is to satisfy the background requirement of knowledge in instruction, as well as build credibility for CCF thus more reliable results.
4. What are your perceptions of CC student persistence? Prompt: Why do you think students choose to either persist or drop out during CC tenure?
5. What personal (intrinsic) factors do you think to motivate students to persist?
Prompt: please explain personal experiences
6. What extrinsic factors do you think to motivate students to persist? Prompt: what are those reasons?
7. Please describe your perception of the role of faculty or staff in CC student persistence.

8. How do you feel you have been prepared by the organization to assist students who are struggling with intrinsic factors? How do you feel you have been prepared to assist students struggling with extrinsic factors?
9. How do you describe institutional support for student persistence?
10. How would you describe a productive learning environment?
11. How do you think students deal with outside factors that may bring them to withdraw from school? Prompt: Please explain any personal experiences you have in this.
12. Please describe your perception of *faculty engagement*.
13. How do you perceive faculty engagement in your classroom? Prompt: Please give examples of experiences.
14. Please describe your perception of what *classroom culture* means and how it may influence CC student persistence.
15. Please discuss your preparation for becoming a classroom leader. Prompt: describe any training, experiences, or examples you may have.
16. Is there anything else you would like to add/share about your thoughts on CCF perceptions of their role in student persistence?

Appendix B: Interview Questions as Related to Research Questions

Interview Questions as Related to Research Questions

Interview Question	Research Question
How long have you been with this current institution, and what is your current rank and/or title?	Rapport/Introduction
Tell me about any other positions you have held in academia other than this current position, and how long you have worked in this field in total.	Rapport/Introduction
What are your thoughts on CC student persistence? Why do you think students choose to either persist or drop out during CC tenure?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
If you think personal (intrinsic) factors motivate students to persist, what are those reasons? If you think extrinsic factors motivate students to persist, what are those reasons?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
What do you think the role of faculty or staff has in a student's desire to persist in college?	How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?
Do you feel prepared by the organization to assist students who are struggling with either intrinsic or extrinsic factors?	Interview Questions, continued How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?
How do you think students deal with outside factors that drive them to withdraw from school?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
What do you think the terms <i>faculty engagement</i> or <i>classroom culture</i> mean?	How do CC faculty members perceive their role in student persistence?
Who has prepared you to be a classroom leader?	What do CC faculty members think are the reasons for student persistence?
Is there anything else you would like to add/share about your thoughts on CCF perceptions of their own role in student persistence?	

Appendix C: Interview Responses by Interviewee

Table 3
Coding of Responses by Participant

Question	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Perceptions on CC student persistence	Degree, career Health problems, family problems, history of unsuccessful records	Long history of being unsuccessful, minimum engagement, negative self-perception	Engagement level	Time management, past negative experiences, financial problems	Lack of outside support, new career, outside demands	Desire to graduate, support system and outside interruption	A lot drop out
Intrinsic Factors	Self-driven	Help family, better way of life	Self-improvement, self-driven	Change of career/job opportunity	Self-confidence, self-worth, desire for change	Self-worth, better pay scale	Desire to set an example for their kids
Extrinsic Factors	Graduation	Family support, teachers, mentors	Parental encouragement	Children	Peer relationships, family, and friends support	Better pay scale, degree attainment	Better job
CCF role in student persistence	Provide direction, support and quality instruction	Recognition, respect, creating connection	Encourage, support	Educational support and interpersonal support	Welcoming, fun, friendly, supportive	Support within the classroom	Part of their support system
Institutional Preparedness	Hasn't prepared me much, self-taught,	My mentors provide weekly feedback, student	Provide the tools and technology for us to be prepared	No training on student needs in the social-	The educational institution, none, but from my	I can't think of anything formal; I have learned	Nothing up front, that was a learning curve, some

		support center		emotional areas	social work, I have learned some	most from on-the-job work	in-service along the way
Institutional Support for Student	Lacking, does not resolve issues, just pushes them down the road	Accessibility, food banks, celebrations, student government	Provide attendance tracker, contact methods for students, personalized emails	Teach them to be long-range survivors	Academic, social, and mental health resources	They do have advisors but that focuses mostly on academic success	Student services, but one person covers the entire campus
Productive Learning Environment	Engaging, retain and apply concepts, peak students' interests	Students feel engaged and motivate, understand expectations and assessment	Constant student-instructor interaction and engagement	The whole student is addressed, not merely purveyor of information but developed of relationships	Professional engagement from faculty and staff and is relevant	Inviting and engaging, a place they want to be	Interesting topics, use different teaching techniques to keep students engaged
Deal with outside factors	This is the number 1 reason students drop out	Many outside factors cause students to withdraw	They react massively and quit everything, due to lack of life experience, role of faculty is to provide a listening ear, shoulder to help them stay engaged	Negatively, it is a learned response	Adult learners often become overwhelmed and give up	Generally if something comes up that feels too big, the students just give up	They usually drop out
Your perception	Personal engagement	Designing a course with	Not restricted to classroom,	Students don't care	Based on faculty-to-	Let your students	Faculty are responsible

of faculty engagement	into the lives of the students, getting to know students, reaching out before they reach out to me	required student interaction	but also be personal, professional, but connected	how much you know until they know how much you care, create a safe place for students	faculty and faculty-to-student interactions	know you, it can be personal and professional or academic	for the engagement level in the class
Faculty engagement in your classroom	Ask why they are in college and where they are from	Face to face interactions, discussion boards, case studies, text messages, feedback	Not one-size-fits-all, diverse,	Bringing character to life, having shared experiences	It differs based on the modality of how I am teaching	I get to know each student, sometimes assigning nicknames, get to know their personalities	Stay fresh, and innovative, change things daily
Classroom culture	Treat each other professionally, I am strict but not demanding, operant conditioning, culture of the classroom can positively influence	Based on the structure of the course	Students should feel their presence matter	Connection, set the tone for comfort and that will translate to happy space of learning	The interpersonal relationship between faculty and student	The 'vibe' of your classroom, expectation, mentorship, and level of engagement	The expectations in the classroom

	student's persistence						
Personal Preparation toward being a classroom leader	Trial and error, model behavior expectations, transparency	Degrees, certifications and training courses on instruction and online instruction when needed	Faculty development and faculty development plan	Have been self-taught, working with diverse student population	Using evaluation tools	Mostly doing what works for me, no one really taught this to me	I did take one course after I started teaching about being a classroom leader
