

Graduate Student Services for Career Switchers Pursuing Alternative Route Teacher
Licensure

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, my friends, and the many supporters I have come to know along my journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have been dreaming about writing this page for over 8 years; it is truly surreal that the day has finally come. There are many people I would like to thank for supporting me in achieving this goal.

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ABSTRACT

GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES FOR CAREER SWITCHERS PURSUING ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TEACHER LICENSURE

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This doctoral dissertation describes a study that explored needs and expectations for adult part-time graduate students enrolled in a career switcher alternative route teacher licensure program. The qualitative case study relied primarily on interview data and led to the development of the Facilitator-Blocker Theory for Career Switchers. The methodology used to conduct this inquiry is intended to serve as a resource for those seeking to engage in discipline-specific student affairs research. Findings are pertinent to both the student affairs and teacher education communities.

1. Introduction

Graduate Student Services for Career Switchers Pursuing Alternative Route Teacher Licensure

Like so many aspects of life, enrollment at a university opens the door to a wide array of options. As an example, the experience of purchasing a new laptop computer presents the consumer with a multitude of choices with regard to software, tutorials, virus protection programs, email clients, photo managers, web browsers, social networking memberships, games and more. In a similar vein college life presents the student with an abundant range of possibilities. From campus supports such as orientations, financial aid, registrar services, career counseling, writing assistance and library training to involvement in clubs and organizations, student government, research symposia or online communities, students on today's college campuses are being inundated with decisions about how to spend their time. For adult students (defined by Bash, 2003) as 25 years or older), particularly those who are returning to school part-time and also juggling a full plate of other life responsibilities, the wide array of opportunities for support and engagement on campus often seem daunting. Part-time graduate-level students often re-enter higher education while taking on other responsibilities that put strains on their time; these students often only access resources that are required for program completion (Polson, 2003). Just as a new computer purchase can potentially offer the user with an

abundance of new learning opportunities, so too can returning to the academy as an adult graduate student. But given the fast-paced, over-stimulated nature of society today, all too often computer users are not making the most of new technologies, and adult graduate students are not getting all they can out of higher education.

Career switchers in teacher education represent one variety of adult part-time graduate students who may not be accessing all of the resources the institution makes available. Career switchers are those students returning to the academy via an alternative route program in pursuit of a second career in teaching (Haselkorn & Hammerness, 2008). Given the strong credential focus of this type of program, how students experience the institution is largely secondary to their objective of gaining teaching licensure and finding employment. Career switchers tend to re-enter higher education with the sole purpose of gaining a credential to find a job. The problem, it seems, is that this group of adult graduate students may be missing opportunities for enhanced learning, personal growth and support. It is not clear whether adults choosing to transition into the field of teaching identify themselves as graduate students or whether they are necessarily aware of the services available to them. Due to their part-time, credential-focused nature, career switchers may not be capitalizing on the boundless resources available through their new higher education experience and it is unclear how the institution is helping them to do so.

There is a clear need for research that will better inform the student affairs and the teacher education communities on needs for career switchers. This line of inquiry will not only allow student affairs professionals to gain a better understanding of discipline-

specific needs for graduate student services, it will also provide student and academic affairs professionals with new avenues for collaborative student engagement around needs and expectations. Research on this topic also will inform teacher educators about best practices for program delivery, offering implications with regard to organization, staffing, resources, and strategies for the provision of services.

The current study sought to respond to the problem that has just been identified and was framed by the following two goals:

1. To understand the unique needs and expectations of adult graduate students preparing to become teachers through an alternative route
2. To understand institutional support for this population as it relates to student needs and expectations

These stated goals assisted in the development of a comprehensive literature review to be discussed in chapter two. The literature review centered around three disparate bodies of literature: alternative certification, adult and part-time learners, and graduate student services. In addition, attention was given to literature on career switchers, a small subset of the larger scholarship on alternative certification.

Led by the research goals and supported by the literature, the current study explored one alternative route to teacher certification from a new lens; the inquiry moved beyond a standard comparison of various alternative route programs to investigating one program more critically from a student services perspective. For the purpose of this study, the term student services describes a wide variety of supports and resources available to students in higher education. The study captured a better understanding of

whether one group of career switchers was taking full advantage of the resources afforded to them by the institution, and if not, why not. In addition, the study helped to validate current institutional efforts and assisted in uncovering findings that could potentially generate new avenues of support for this non-traditional student population. Important to note was that the study was conducted during a severe downturn in the economy, which may have influenced both the pool size and the level of anxiety among participants in making a career transition.

Theoretical Framework

A review of literature guided the development of a theoretical framework for the current study. The theoretical framework (see Figure 1.1) is based on the following premises:

- Career switchers are a subset of alternatively prepared teachers who tend to be adult/part-time graduate students
- Literature on adult and part-time learners and graduate student services has examined unique needs for populations with these characteristics
- Research has examined merits of alternative certification but not through the lens of student services

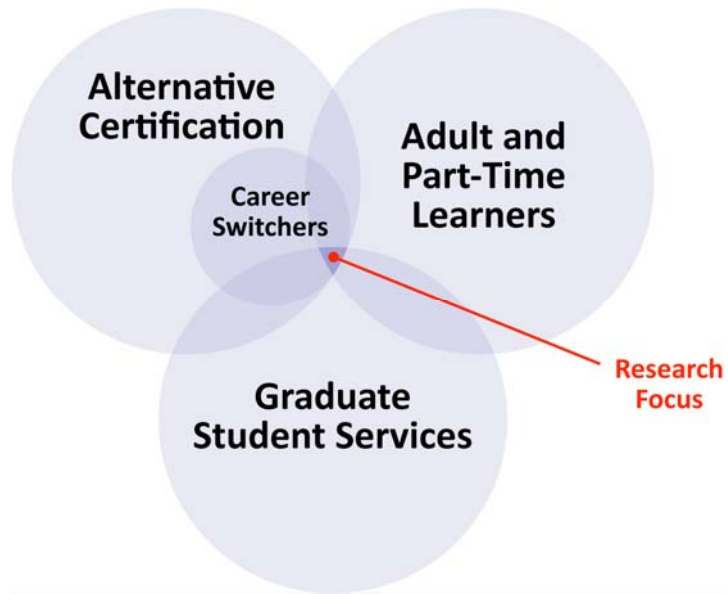


Figure 1.1 Visual representation of theoretical framework, with the nexus of the four converging circles representing the knowledge base gained from the current study. Copyright pending by L.D. Cohen.

Research Questions

Guided by the literature review presented in the next chapter, two research questions address the primary goals of the study:

1. What are Level I Career Switcher needs and expectations for student services in a university setting? What is needed and/or expected of the Career Switcher Program itself? What is needed and/or expected of the institution?
2. How have student services needs and expectations changed for Level II Career Switchers?

Definition of Terms

An understanding of the following terms and concepts will help the reader to understand the context of the proposed study:

Academic affairs - professionals offering student services through an academic unit within an institution of higher education.

Alternative Certification - the body of scholarship and study of alternative routes to teaching licensure.

Alternative route - any program that leads to state-approved teaching licensure through a non-traditional teacher preparation program.

Career switcher - student returning to the academy via an alternative route in pursuit of a second career in teaching (Haselkorn & Hammerness, 2008).

Career Switcher (CS) - student enrolled in the Career Switcher Program (CSP) at the institution to be examined for the proposed case study.

Career switcher program - academic program offered by an institution of higher education, which is designed to allow career switchers to gain state-approved teaching licensure.

Career Switcher Program (CSP) - program to be examined for the proposed case study. This program is an approved Virginia Career Switcher Alternative Route to Licensure Program.

Level I Career Switcher - student enrolled in the Career Switcher Program (CSP) who is currently completing the first year of coursework and field experience requirements.

Level II Career Switcher - student enrolled in the Career Switcher Program (CSP) who has completed the first year of coursework and field experiences, and who is currently employed as a teacher or seeking teaching employment with a provisional career switcher license.

Provisional career switcher license - teaching license issued to a career switcher who has successfully completed Level I of a Virginia Career Switcher Alternative Route to Licensure Program (Virginia Department of Education (2010). Retrieved from http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/educator_preparation/career_switcher/index.shtml).

Student - term used to describe a member of the Career Switcher Program. Students may also be referred to as participants. The term student refers to an adult graduate student as not to be confused with a K-12 pupil.

Student services - describes a wide variety of supports and resources available to students in higher education.

Student affairs - professionals offering student services through centrally-based administrative units within an institution of higher education.

Teaching licensure - a credential granted to an individual who meets standards laid out by a given state.

Virginia Career Switcher Alternative Route to Licensure Program - program developed by the Virginia Department of Education to provide training to qualified career professionals seeking an alternative route to teacher licensure.

2. Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this review is to frame the current study by providing an overview of literature that has been explored in five major areas. Each section provides support for the larger examination of the graduate student services experience of career switchers in an alternative route teacher licensure program, which lies at the nexus of the study's theoretical framework. This review provides a contextual foundation for the current study, illuminates gaps and flaws in the literature, and suggests areas for further research. The literature review led to the development of the following research questions:

1. What are Level I Career Switcher needs and expectations for student services in a university setting? What is needed and/or expected of the Career Switcher Program itself? What is needed and/or expected of the institution?
2. How have student services needs and expectations changed for Level II Career Switchers?

Section I: Summary of the History of Teacher Education in America, provides an overview of the development of teaching as a professional training route and discusses the emergence of state education agencies as primary regulatory bodies for teacher licensing. The section introduces the alternative certification reform agenda as a divergence from traditional teacher training models.

Section II: Alternative Certification, explores the evolution of alternative teacher certification, providing context for its development and examples of how it has been widely defined. This section illuminates the expansive, yet incomplete and often flawed, body of literature relating to alternative teacher certification. Also included in this section is literature that exemplifies various perspectives through which alternative certification has been explored, noting that the *student services* perspective remains conspicuously absent. The section will lead to a working definition of alternative routes as an umbrella concept to include an array of so called non-traditional teacher education programs.

Section III: Career Switchers, presents career switcher programs as one of the many components of alternative certification (reflected in the theoretical framework as a small circle within the larger alternative certification circle). Current data on career switchers is provided as well as examples of how programs and candidates have been studied. Given that Career Switchers typically return to the academy as adult and part-time graduate students, the next two sections explore higher education from these perspectives.

Section IV: Adult and Part-Time Learners, provides definitions of both adult and part-time students, and offers findings on how learning and personal needs for these populations have been addressed institutionally.

Section V: Graduate Student Services, illustrates higher education's emerging attention to the support of graduate and professional students. Research presented covers

several key areas: assessment, professional socialization/involvement, retention, and potentially marginalized students.

The review of the literature concludes with a summary of the five sections as well as a synthesis of areas yet to be studied.

I. Summary of the History of Teacher Education in America

The issue of how to prepare teachers has been controversial for centuries (Lucas, 1999). Dating back to the colonial days in America, schoolmasters, scholars, and government officials debated the importance of teacher education and worked to identify the necessary components of effective teacher training. Since the 17th century, researchers have uncovered much valuable insight on teacher quality and its link to student achievement, but still today the debate on reforming teacher education continues.

To be a schoolteacher in the 17th century was not highly regarded. The “profession” at this time was marked by low pay, high turnover rates, and minimal social status (Lucas, 1999; Webb, 2006). Teachers in colonial America were regarded as necessary but not valuable. It was the common view that a basic knowledge of general subjects was sufficient to adequately educate children. There existed considerable variability in the level of content preparation that teachers possessed – some were equipped with college-level training, whereas others were barely able to read and write themselves. Webb (2006) pointed to the Massachusetts Act of 1654 as an early document demonstrating that *religious* rather than *professional* qualifications initially held more weight in the hiring of teachers. Often brought in as indentured servants as a

means for entering the “New World,” colonial teachers tended to be untrained immigrants with few employment options (Webb, 2006).

Signs of qualification criteria for employment of teachers began to emerge in the 18th century with more formal processes put into place to regulate hiring, licensing, and firing. To ensure consistency, town officials were charged with the responsibility of selecting teachers for their communities or delegating this task to appointed or elected school committees. A 1701 act of the Massachusetts General Court (*Acts and Resolutions*, 1701 as cited in Webb, 2006) legislated that town ministers held the authority of selecting school personnel. This early type of oversight preceded more focused attention on the importance of teacher qualifications. Webb asserted that “by 1712 the system of licensing schoolmasters had been established: The legislature established general qualifications that were applied at the local level” (p. 94). Among the prerequisites examined in early licensing were a teacher’s moral character, mastery of curriculum, and classroom management skills (Lucas, 1999). Although structure began to take shape within the field, low pay, increasing expectations for teacher performance, and steadily rising student enrollment figures presented challenges in the enticement of qualified individuals.

Though the outlook for teacher education was bleak, several 19th century activists rallied support for formal preparatory training, including James T. Kingsley, Samuel R. Hall, Henry E. Dwight, Charles Brooks, James G. Carter, Alexander D. Bache, Calvin Stowe, Horace Mann, and Henry Barnard, among others (Lucas, 1999). Because of the publicity engendered by these men, the mid-1800s saw the formation of teachers’

institutes as state-funded programs generally offering enrichment to in-service teachers in limited areas of theory and pedagogy. Around the same time was the emergence of normal schools and later teachers' colleges which had the first resemblance to modern-day higher education pre-service teacher-training. Rather than granting bachelor's degrees, normal schools and teachers' colleges offered certificates or licenses of instruction. As public education expanded within states, state governments created state normal schools and state teachers' colleges (Thelin, 2004). Later in the 20th century many of these normal schools and teachers' colleges shifted to four-year bachelor degree granting institutions, which were designated simply as state colleges (Webb, 2006). Resulting from much debate on the qualifications necessary for adequate teacher preparation (which considered the importance of both content knowledge as well as pedagogy) "a full baccalaureate program of study" (Lucas, 1999, p. 37) eventually became a requirement for teacher certification (Lucas, 1999; Webb, 2006). By the turn of the century teacher training departments (originally housed within departments of pedagogy and later designated as education schools) "became commonplace in the major colleges and universities" (Webb, 2006, p. 190).

The shift to higher education teacher preparation in the mid-19th to early 20th centuries was coupled with the movement toward state teacher certification standards and the linkage of state licensure with the completion of a baccalaureate degree. State superintendents of education took on oversight of teacher regulations and examinations during a time when certification requirements steadily increased in rigor (Webb, 2006). Throughout the twentieth century state departments of education experienced ongoing

expansion. According to Tyack and Cuban (1995), “In 1890 there was, on average, one staff member in state departments of education for every 100,000 pupils; in 1974 there was one for about every 2,000” (p. 19). Today, all 50 states house a State Department of Education (or state agency) that oversees the teacher licensing process for that state (U.S. Department of Education, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html>). Although each state maintains its own licensing rules and requirements, national accountability standards set by the federal government (e.g., No Child Left Behind), standards put forth by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), along with content area guidelines set by specialized professional associations, provide an overall framework for state-approved teacher licensure in the United States. However, rising demands for teachers and declining levels of student achievement have led to concern about state intervention in the licensing process and has called into question the necessity of the education school as the primary vehicle for preparation (Fraser, 2002; Walsh, 2001a., 2001b.). Such concerns about traditional teacher training models in the late 1980s and early 1990s catapulted the growth and development of the alternative certification reform agenda (Hawley, 1992).

II. Alternative Certification

Over the past three decades teacher education has been under intense scrutiny. The 1983 Federal report *A Nation at Risk* highlighted a failing U.S. school system and set the stage for examining teacher qualifications in relation to student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Elements of the report suggested that teacher competence in the United States lagged behind that of other world regions. With decreasing numbers of teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff urban and rural areas, coupled with declining rates of student achievement, critics of traditional teacher education looked to alternative pathways in order to produce qualified teaching personnel (Hawley, 1992).

The nation's first alternative certification program was implemented in September 1984 by the state of New Jersey in response to a growing need to curb the number of emergency certificates issued in the state. New Jersey had become part of a national trend toward emergency certification. Other than areas of chronic shortage, such as special education and bilingual education, New Jersey's alternative certification program was able to "virtually eliminate – [*sic*] the use of emergency hiring procedures" (Hawley, 1992, p. 10). Though the introduction of the New Jersey Provisional Teacher Program was contentious in higher education, it was ultimately endorsed by the New Jersey State Board of Education and President Ronald Reagan (Carlson, K. in Gideonse, H., 1992). Supporters of the program, under Governor Tom Kean and Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman, provided justification through the release of a legislative study, which demonstrated that graduates of traditional routes to teaching in New Jersey were ill-prepared for the classroom (Klagholz, 2000). Requirements for New Jersey's alternative program essentially mirrored those of traditional preparation. The key difference between New Jersey's traditional and alternative routes was the internship requirement; whereas traditional programs required candidates to participate in a mentor-assisted, school-based internship, the alternative route incorporated full-time employment coupled

with in-service training (Klagholz, 2000). The variation of these two models reflected a core philosophical debate between proponents of alternative and traditional certification – that being the value of on-the-job training versus theory- and research-based training (Hawley, 1992).

During the time period when debates ensued within the teacher education community about the preferred preparation model, the shift toward alternative certification continued to gather momentum. Texas and California were close behind New Jersey in the development of alternative pathways; currently these three states remain “the most prolific alternate routes in terms of the production of new teachers” (National Association of Alternative Certification [NCAC] (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.teach-now.org/overview.cfm>). According to Hawley “By 1990, depending on whose count you believe, either 48 (AACTE, 1990) or 33 (Feistritzer, 1990) states provided for alternative teacher certification” (1992, p. 3). According to Feistritzer (2010), the National Association of Alternative Certification (NCAC) has determined that as of 2010 “Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia now offer 538 different alternate route programs.” (Retrieved from <http://www.teach-now.org/research.cfm>).

There have been ranging definitions and terms used to describe programs offering alternative teacher certification. Programs may include university-based undergraduate, graduate and post-baccalaureate programs, state-run initiatives, collaborations between universities and the state, collaborations between universities and school districts, school district-run programs, emergency routes, opportunities for those with special qualifications or recruitment programs such as Teach for America or Troops for

Teachers. Variations between and within each of these alternative options are considerable, however they all share the commonality of offering “shortcuts, special assistance, or unique curricula leading to eligibility for a standard teaching credential” (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001, p. 267). Alternative programs generally provide accessibility for those whose backgrounds and lifestyle do not fit with the structured nature of traditional certification (Turley & Nakai, 2000). These programs tend to offer reduced preservice preparation in the evenings or on weekends, and as noted previously, often allow non-licensed teachers to receive on-the-job training, while pursuing state certification. Entrants into alternative programs are often non-traditional preservice candidates who are transitioning from other professions, equipped with a strong content background in their given field.

In some cases, programs are given the alternative certification label because they lead to a type of license that is different than the traditional state-issued teaching license (P.M. Earley, personal communication, July 14, 2009). In other cases, candidates within an alternative program will complete requirements to gain eligibility for a standard teaching license within the given state. For this reason, the term alternative certification does not accurately characterize all programs of this nature. To establish reporting consistency, NCAC developed a classification system for categorizing the various alternative routes that exist from state to state. That there was a need to develop these 11 classifications demonstrates the evolving complexity of policy language within teacher education. The classifications are:

CLASS A is the category reserved for those routes that meet the following criteria:

The alternative teacher certification route has been designed for the explicit purpose of attracting talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree in a field other than education into elementary and secondary school teaching.

The alternate route is not restricted to shortages, secondary grade levels or subject areas.

These alternative teacher certification routes involve teaching with a trained mentor, and any formal instruction that deals with the theory and practice of teaching during the school year -- and sometimes in the summer before and/or after.

CLASS B: Teacher certification routes that have been designed specifically to bring talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree into teaching. These routes involve specially designed mentoring and some formal instruction. However, these routes either restrict the route to shortages and/or secondary grade levels and/or subject areas.

CLASS C: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, and transcript analysis of the candidate. They involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. The state and/or local school district have major responsibility for program design.

CLASS D: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, and transcript analysis. They involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. An institution of higher education has major responsibility for program design.

CLASS E: These post-baccalaureate programs are based at an institution of higher education.

CLASS F: These programs are basically emergency routes. The prospective teacher is issued some type of emergency certificate or waiver which allows the individual to teach, usually without any on-site support or supervision, while taking the traditional teacher education courses requisite for full certification.

CLASS G: Programs in this class are for persons who have few requirements left to fulfill before becoming certified through the traditional approved college teacher education program route, e. g., persons certified in one state moving to another; or persons certified in one endorsement area seeking to become certified in another.

CLASS H: This class includes those routes that enable a person who has some "special" qualifications, such as a well-known author or Nobel prize winner, to teach certain subjects.

CLASS I: These states reported that they were not implementing alternatives to the approved college teacher education program route for licensing teachers.

CLASS J: These programs are designed to eliminate emergency routes. They prepare individuals who do not meet basic requirements to become qualified to enter an alternate route or a traditional route for teacher licensing.

CLASS K: These avenues to certification accommodate specific populations for teaching, e.g., Teach for America, Troops to Teachers and college professors who want to teach in K-12 schools. (National Center for Alternative Certification (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.teach-now.org/classes.html>)

For the purpose of this study, the term alternative route will be used to describe any program that leads to state-approved teaching licensure through a non-traditional teacher preparation program. The Career Switcher Program suggested as the population to be studied in Chapter 3 is one example of a program that falls within the larger alternative route umbrella. This specific career switcher program is a post-baccalaureate program within an institution of higher education (This particular program offers students the option of completing a Masters degree once licensure requirements have been met). The program is designed for those with five or more years of professional experience who seek secondary education licensure. The Career Switcher Program fits into Class E of the NCAC alternative route options (National Center for Alternative Certification (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.teach-now.org/classes.html>).

Since the inception of alternative route programs in the early to mid 1980s, a large number of studies have been conducted on the merits of alternative versus traditional teacher preparation; however the scholarship has not given us a clear answer on whether one route is superior to another. Studies have been conducted comparing alternatively

versus traditionally prepared teachers and candidates in the areas of attitudes and dispositions, licensure test scores, as well as the achievement of the students they teach (Cleveland, 2003; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002; Earley, Goldberg & Huie, 2005; Fowler, 2002; Golhaber & Brewer, 2000; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2005; Jelmberg, 1996; Karge, Glaeser, Sylva, Levine, & Lyons, 2006; Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998; Reichardt, 2001; Simmons, 2005; Topolka Jorissen, 2003; Turley & Nakai, 2000; Zeichner & Shulte, 2001; Zumwalt, 1996). Studies have examined university-based programs as well as non-university based programs like Teach for America (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Mathews, 2004; Decker, Mayer & Glazerman, 2004). Though it is important to note this literature for contextual evidence of the existing scholarship on alternative certification, further analysis of these studies is unnecessary as they exceed the scope of the current study. Lacking in the literature on alternative certification is an examination of student services provided or not provided to candidates within alternative route programs. This gap in the literature provides a foundation for the current research.

III. Career Switchers

Among the various alternative routes to teaching licensure lie career switcher programs; these programs are designed to meet the needs of non-traditional mid- or second-career professionals who desire to enter the teaching profession after having spent time working in another field. A recent survey of non-teaching individuals aged 24 to 60 holding bachelor's degrees revealed that 42% would consider teaching as a career in the future. Similarly, 43% of the participants surveyed indicated that they had considered

teaching in the past (Haselkorn & Hammerness, 2008). These numbers suggest that a good portion of the population with previous work experience in fields other than teaching has the potential to switch into the teaching field. In addition to providing today's degreed workforce with a second career option, career switcher programs provide policy makers with a strategy to address teacher shortages by pulling from a pool of candidates who bring with them professional and life experience that may enhance classroom outcomes (Haselkorn & Hammerness, 2008).

Several researchers have examined career switchers from the perspective of their transition into the classroom (Hedrick, 2005; Mayotte, 2001; Mayotte, 2003). Similar to the proposed study to be described in Chapter 3, Mayotte (2001, 2003) presented a case study examining four second-career teachers. Rather than examining participants during their preparation program as the current study proposes, Mayotte sought to understand perceptions of second-career teachers during their first year of teaching. Her larger dissertation study (2001) focused on how career switchers' first career impacted their current teaching experience; the study also sought to identify necessary supports for career switchers as they make the transition to their new role. Mayotte used multiple data sources, including interviewing, observations, teacher artifacts, and an open response survey to gather data. Findings supported a "boundaryless career concept (Arthur, 1994; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994)" (p. 683) where "work experiences go beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting and that individuals accrue knowledge in the form of competencies through ongoing and changing work experiences" (p. 683). The career switchers in Mayotte's study reported the accrual of competencies from previous work

into their teaching experiences; however the researcher found that these competencies alone were not enough to ease the participants' transition into a new profession.

Mayotte's study illuminated the importance of adequate school-based support structures and mentoring opportunities for emerging second-career teachers. Missing from the inquiry was an examination of support structures available to participants prior to career switcher program completion; the researcher did not consider the preparing institution's role in supporting career switchers.

Hedrick (2005) raised the prevalent issue of teacher shortages, framing her dissertation study around an understanding of common reasons for attrition in the field. She then turned to a group of six career switchers, examining reasons for their retention in teaching and within particular schools. In addition to interviewing and observing the new teachers, Hedrick also spoke with each of their principals in an attempt to understand the principals' influence in retaining second career teachers. Her findings revealed the strong impact of relationships and working environments on a career switcher's likelihood to remain within a particular school; personal commitment to teaching surfaced as a more likely influence on whether the career switchers would remain in the field.

Mayotte's Hedrick's studies focused on the career switchers as they entered their first year of their teaching profession. They sought to understand career switchers as individuals (their demographics, prior careers, and perspectives on teaching), as well as the climates and cultures of the schools in which these professionals work as novice teachers. Although the studies hinted at needs for adequately preparing new teachers,

they did not look to the preparation program itself as a source of support in affecting career switchers' future satisfaction and/or comfort in the field. Ryan and Spangler (1991) examined programs by conducting an evaluation of a master's level alternative route career switcher program at Otterbein College. Otterbein's career switcher program was developed in the late 80s due to a growing non-traditional student population coupled with increasing national attention on alternative certification. Both summative and formative evaluation techniques were used to provide the researchers and faculty members with regular input on student reactions. Ryan and Spangler's evaluation study allowed for on-going feedback and programmatic adjustments, however, their study was intended primarily to facilitate local decision-making at Otterbein.

Morton, Williams, and Brindley (2006) also sought to examine the experience of career switchers prior to the completion of their preparation program. Career switchers in a master of arts in teaching (MAT) program participated in a year-long internship program, where they simultaneously completed licensure course requirements. Interns were paired with a mentor teacher who provided support throughout the year. The study examined the impact of mentoring for interns as well as clashes between school and previous work cultures on interns' transition to the classroom. The author offers recommendations for those delivering career switcher programs, suggesting that faculty provide opportunities for dialogue around the transition from past work culture to the school building. Morton et al. concluded "teacher educators have to help career switchers capture their occupational and personal strengths while assisting them to

integrate into a school culture that is often misunderstood and elusive to novice teachers” (p. 49).

Haselkorn and Hammerness (2008) conducted nation-wide focus groups to better understand what drew individuals to a teaching career or what kept them from choosing to enter the field. Their research illuminated several deterrents specific to career switchers, including Psychological and Social Stressors, Salary and Other Monetary Benefits, and Geography. The first category, Psychological and Social Stressors, suggests that teacher education programs need to be attuned to the challenges career switchers face in their transition to teaching. The authors noted “social and psychological stresses naturally accompany substantial life changes, particularly in relationship to a career choice that affects professional status, community standing, and family economic stability” (p. 19). Although the research identified deterrents that keep career switchers from entering teaching, the authors did not examine how the institution might address some of these stressors; thus suggesting a need for future study into institutional efforts to combat career switchers’ attrition.

The literature on Career Switchers is far from expansive; however several studies have been conducted that examine this population through various lenses. Lerner and Zittleman (2002) looked at Career Switchers from the gender perspective using the domains of career motivations, obstacles encountered, and salient factors that brought them to teaching to better understand differences between men and women who choose teaching as a second profession. Their survey study revealed few differences between the genders on each of these domains, but suggested that females were more inclined than

males to plan for teaching in an urban setting. Hart (2008) presented a report discussing a February 2008 study which similarly examined motivations and opinions of potential Career Switchers; this study involved interviews with a national sample that provided a broad overview of who might want to become a teacher and why. After initial screening of 2,292 interview participants, the study included a total of 1,110 target respondents who were defined as potential teachers. A large portion of Hart's findings, which were reported as percentages, tended toward a theme of personal reward versus low pay as primary indicators of why potential teachers might choose or not choose to enter the field. Most relevant to the current study was the following finding:

Potential teachers know little about teacher preparation and licensure. After hearing descriptions of various possible features of preparation pathways, potential mid- and second-career teachers place the greatest importance on programs being close to where they live, being tailored to mature adults with work experience, and moving them quickly into the classroom, with experienced teachers available for mentoring and support. (Hart, 2008, p. 3)

Haselkorn and Hammerness (2008) summarized Hart's (2008) finding by recommending programs be designed to "take into account the specific needs of adult learners" (which they define as those who are college educated) (p. 6). The authors cited Knowles' (1990) *Seven Principles for Adult Learners* as an example of a knowledge base that may prove useful in helping teacher educators design programs for career switchers. Knowles' work will be discussed in greater detail in the section that follows.

IV. Adult and Part-Time Learners

Adult Learners

Before examining a program that prepares career switchers for teaching, it is important to understand general principles about how adults learn. Malcolm Knowles, considered the “Pioneer of Adult Education” (Bash, 2003), developed the integrative concept of andragogy; andragogy was organized around Knowles’ belief that “adults learn best in informal, comfortable, flexible, nonthreatening settings” (Knowles, 1990, p. 54). Andragogy was traditionally interpreted in Europe as “adult accompanying adult in the learning process” (Carlson, 1989 as cited in Bash, 2003, p. 27) but was later redefined by Knowles to mean “an emerging technology for adult learning” (Carlson, 1989 as cited in Bash, 2003, p. 27). Knowles’ work contrasted androgogy with pedagogy, emphasizing that for adults, learning must be learner-directed versus teacher-directed. This concept guided Knowles in his development of conditions of learning for adults. As noted in the previous section on career switchers, Knowles’ principles provide an effective theoretical foundation for those designing programs for older/mature-aged students. Knowles (1990) suggested the following for adult learning to occur:

1. The learners feel a need to learn.
2. The learning environment is characterized by physical comfort, mutual trust and respect, mutual helpfulness, freedom of expression, and acceptance of differences.
3. The learners perceive the goals of a learning experience to be their goals.

4. The learners accept a share of the responsibility for planning and operating a learning experience, and therefore have a feeling of commitment toward it.
5. The learners participate actively in the learning process.
6. The learning process is related to and makes use of the experience of the learners.
7. The learners have a sense of progress toward their goals. (p. 85-87)

Knowles (1990) defined the term adult in four ways, from biological, legal, social, and psychological perspectives. He suggested that the psychological definition, that “we become adult psychologically when we arrive at a self-concept of being responsible for our own lives, of being self-directing” is most crucial from the viewpoint of learning (p. 57). Though Knowles did not use a specific age to define adult, Bash (2003) labeled adult learners as generally described as 25 or older, falling several years above the traditional 18-22 year old college-aged student (p. 25). Bash also suggested that based on shifting national demographics the age of adult learners is on the rise. Bash and others draw from historical classifications and definitions of adult learners to identify needs for this population in 21st century higher education.

Guided by Knowles’ principles, Bash identified a number of traits that he determined to be consistent among adult learners; these included: autonomous, self-directed, have accumulated life experiences, goal oriented, relevancy-oriented, practical, need for respect, and assertive. Various researchers have attempted to study these and other traits to better assess adult learning needs and the optimal conditions under which nontraditional adult students experience higher education. The literature reveals that

adult learning in higher education focuses on a range of non-traditional students, including areas such as continuing education, professional education, literacy, community development, as well as undergraduate education. The current study, to be described in the next chapter, emphasizes adult learners at various ages pursuing a professional teaching credential at the graduate level. The populations cited in the literature presented next do not precisely correspond with the population involved in the current study, yet there is value in understanding experiences of adults at varying ages who return to the academy for ranging purposes.

Stone (2008) reported on a qualitative study involving in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 students at the University of Newcastle in Australia; this smaller research project was to be later included in a larger dissertation study. Stone's work sought to examine the experiences of *mature-age students* (ages 32-52) who came to the University for the completion of their undergraduate education via an alternative entry program. Participants were largely female and largely first-generation college students coming from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Although Stone noted that analysis of the interview data was "at a very early stage" (p. 268) at the time of publication, she was able to identify five themes to consider when attempting to understand the experiences of mature-age students. Findings tended to fall into the categories of: Beginnings, Challenges, Resilience, Identity, and Future.

Stone's study emphasized some of the more psychological elements of returning to school at a mature age (e.g., development of confidence, identity formation), however it also uncovered themes often found in literature on adult learners. Consistent with

Kuwan and Larsson's 2008 report on best practices for assessing adult learners, Stone's work revealed a large emphasis on vocation – students' objective to find a job and engage in coursework that is applicable to their desired field of work. In addition, Stone's study illuminated the challenges and barriers faced by returning students, including:

financial struggles; lack of time; difficulties with organizing and prioritizing; dealing with changes in relationships with partners and children; and balancing the needs of study with the needs of family, home, partners and children. (Stone, 2008, p. 275)

The challenges she identified fit nicely into several of the obstacle categories Kuwan and Larsson (2008) suggested that adult learning researchers should examine, including:

General attitudes towards life-long learning; Learning dispositions (e.g., fear of failure, self-confidence); Individual preference for learning methods; Personal life situation (e.g., family situation, health problems, etc.); Learning environment (at work and private); Institutional framework (time-schedule of courses, costs, regional disparity etc.); Transparency (need for more information or consultancy on life-long learning). (Kuwan & Larsson, 2008, p. 60)

Kuwan and Larsson's (2008) categories, along with Stone's (2008) themes add validity to the work of Kisamore, Aldridge, Alexander, and White (2008). These authors drew from Malcolm Knowles' (1990) concept of andragogy and used his principles for adult learning in the development of their own 12 tips for teaching working professionals who have returned to higher education. Supported by data from the National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES] (2008), Kisamore et al. saw an increasing need to consider

teaching techniques and strategies for nontraditional adult students returning to the academy. Their paper offered strategies for teaching business professionals; however, the primary emphasis of the report focused on catering to adults (over the age of 35) who returned to school for continuing education in any professional field.

The recommendations offered by Kisamore et al. (2008) emphasized teaching specifically, but could be extrapolated to other higher education domains. It might be useful to examine the applicability of these tips when considering student services that take place outside of the classroom. For example, the first of the 12 tips, “Acknowledge and alleviate their fears,” (p. 4) seems to apply to various aspects of the higher education process – from admission, to registration details, to actual in-classroom learning and pressures for high achievement. Literature on adult learning addresses the fact that nontraditional adult learners tend to be much more interested and engaged in the learning process than traditional-age students (Bash, 2003; Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Knowles, 1990). The fourth tip presented by Kisamore et al., “Recognize adult learners’ desire to assimilate new information with old information and the possibility that they will sometimes make incorrect linkages,” (p. 9) highlights this notion and also points out that often what adults may think they know is not always correct in the given context. This may hold true in the classroom as well as in their negotiation of the institution as a whole – from knowledge of processes, to required forms and procedures, to their awareness and understanding of various resources that could prove beneficial to them during their program – adult learners may often be challenged by the need to assimilate new knowledge.

Another tip the authors suggested, “Realize students will want to focus more on practical application of acquired knowledge and less on learning pure theory,” (p. 7) again illuminates the vocational theme that frequently emerges in the adult learning literature. Understanding the practical goals of this population is important for both instructors as well as institutional administrators, as embracing this reality will have implications not only for job preparation, but also for student satisfaction levels, and ultimately program reputation. Coupled with this tip, is another, “Be responsive to business and industry changes that may affect the students and their careers” (p. 15). Although the authors intended this tip specifically for instructors of business professionals, it seems reasonable that it could apply to any discipline, and is especially relevant in our current economy. Kisamore et al. recommended that instructors build in class time to address current industry-related issues, and if necessary, bring in guest speakers as experts to speak on a given area of interest. The work presented by Kisamore et al. is practice-based, not research-based, suggesting the need for future study on needs and expectations of adult learners.

Shugart (2008) discussed a 2007 report released by the American Council on Education (ACE), *Framing New Terrain: Older Adults & Higher Education* that identified barriers keeping 55-79 year old adults from furthering their education. Shugart noted that the barriers emphasized in this report were lack of effective outreach, age and its accompanying responsibilities, lack of transportation, support services, financing, and ageism as reasons why this mature-aged population may stay away from higher education. Although the emphasis of this report was on an older adult population,

Shugart suggested that the findings have applicability for any adult students who are considered non-traditional. According to Shugart, the ACE study differentiated between the traditional-student and the non-traditional student, and found that institutions of higher learning to be “not well-designed for the needs of adult learners, most of whom are ‘employees who study’ rather than ‘students who work’” (p. 19). Shugart noted that although the growth of mature-aged students on campuses has not grown as quickly in proportion to the growth seen in traditional-aged students, that still, “our institutions remain poorly adapted to their [adult] needs” (p. 19).

Part-time Learners

Part-time learners comprise a large subset of adult learners. Roche, Shale, and Kelly (1996), Kember, Lee, and Li (2001), and Yum, Kember, and Slaw (2005) have focused their work specifically on the needs of this population.

Roche, Shale, and Kelly (1996) present analysis of data from two Canadian universities, which support their assertions on the differentiated nature of part-time students. Negating a prior assumption in the literature that all part-time students are alike, the authors sought to draw out differences among what they believed to be a rather heterogeneous student population. The authors drew attention to a definition presented by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) that part-time students are “those who enroll with a total credit load less than 75 percent of the normal full-time credit load” (O’Brien, 1992, p. 2 as cited in Roche et al., 1996, p. 4). They highlighted that this definition is often blurry, and that frequently in the literature the term part-time student is “used synonymously with ‘adult student,’ ‘mature student’ and even for ‘non-

traditional student’” (p. 5). The authors stressed the recognition of important qualitative differences among part-time students – part-time students could range from traditional-aged undergraduate students taking just three courses while maintaining part-time employment, to adult students enrolled in their first degree program, to mid-career professionals seeking an advanced degree. Given these inherent variations, the authors called attention to the institutional necessity of being prepared to implement varying responses based on the specific and unique needs of a given group of part-time students. This idea of tailoring institutional responses relates to the current study on the graduate student services experience of career switchers. As noted earlier, career switchers represent a unique population of part-time adult students; the literature suggests the need for research that will help institutions hone in on the unique needs of this group. As Roche et al. stated “too often part-time students are ill-defined by virtue of haphazard policies and, in consequence, are often poorly accommodated by the host institutions” (p. 5).

Studies by Kember, Lee, and Li (2001) and Yum, Kember, and Slaw (2005) referenced Tinto’s well known theory of student departure, which speaks to the need for both academic and social integration on campus in order to foster engagement, thereby increasing the likelihood for retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 53). Both studies drew attention to the fact that Tinto’s model was developed for the traditional undergraduate student, not the non-traditional part-time student, and that Tinto himself “cautioned against extrapolations to other modes of study” (Yum et al., p. 304). Thus, researchers in both studies examined the unique needs of part-time students, Kember et

al. from the perspective of coping, and Yum et al. from the perspective of sense of belonging. Both studies were part of a larger examination of the holistic experience of part-time students and involved semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 53 part-time students across various Hong Kong universities. Though the studies were conducted outside of the U.S., in both cases authors implied applicability of their findings to any institutions serving part-time student populations. The studies failed to note potential cultural factors that might influence findings in other regions.

Kember et al. (2001) looked at students' sense of belonging at the class level, among the teaching staff, at the department level, and at the university level. Findings generally revealed stronger affiliations at the class and teaching level than at the university level. More experienced students tended to feel a connection with their department whereas those just beginning a program were less likely to feel such a sense of belonging at this level. Using evidence from their data, the researchers reported on methods that teaching staff, departments, administrators, and universities could take to foster a greater sense of belonging among their students. Findings stressed the importance of cohesive class groups in facilitating this sense of belonging. Recommendations focused on classroom experiences but did not address what role, if any, student or academic affairs professionals could play in impacting students' sense of belonging.

Although the Career Switchers examined in the current study were enrolled in a four-year institution at the graduate level, there is value in looking at the community college literature for a richer understanding of non-traditional part-time adult student

needs. Noting that “nontraditional students are more likely to attend a community college than traditional students,” Philibert, Allen, and Elleven (2008) decided to map Donaldson and Graham’s (1999) model of college outcomes for adults on a group of students in a community college setting (p. 583). Findings indicated that nontraditional students varied from traditional students in regards to the three constructs of Donaldson and Graham’s model, Prior Experience & Personal Biographies, the Connecting Classroom, and Life-World Experience. Through their research, Philibert et al. reiterated the point that Shugart (2008) and others have made that “most academic programs are built upon traditional models” (p. 583) and thus require some restructuring in order to meet the needs of their unique populations. Further, Philibert and her colleagues caution researchers from generalizing findings on student success, given variations in learning needs from population to population.

In staging their research, Philibert et al. (2008) spoke to the notion that “for nontraditional students, the classroom defines the college experience” (p. 586) and that “the classroom serves as the pivotal hinge with adults utilizing their various roles in life such as student, worker, citizen, and family member to make meaning of their college experience” (p. 586). Given the assertion that the classroom serves as the pivotal hinge for adult learners, it seems fair to ask what role, if any, student services (both academic and student affairs) should play in the lives of these students. The next section of this literature review will examine student services for graduate and professional students. Given the large number of graduate and professional students who fall into the category

of adult part-time learners there is a need to examine unique needs at this level, particularly through a student services lens.

V. Graduate Student Services

Adult education and part-time student literature calls for the need to restructure higher education to better meet needs of non-traditional populations (Kisamore, Aldridge, Alexander, & White, 2008; Kuwan & Larsson, 2008; Philibert, Allen, & Elleven, 2008; Roche, Shale, & Kelly, 1996; Shugart, 2008; Stone, 2008). The emphasis on retooling this aspect of higher education, though, has predominantly come through changes within academic programs. Often faculty and program coordinators within academic units take into account their knowledge of adult learning when developing curriculum and delivery methods for this population (Kehrhahn, Sheckley, & Travers, 2000). Less attention has been placed on the role that student services or student affairs professionals could play in adult learning and development, particularly at the graduate level. In recent years the student affairs community has expanded its focus to the needs of graduate and professional students. As evidence of this shift, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), a consortium of 34 professional organizations working together to promote quality services and programs in higher education, recently approved a set of standards for Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services (GPSPS) (Dean, 2008). This new set of standards was informed by a team of practicing student and academic affairs administrators, including chairs of specialized groups within the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Administrators (ACPA). The standards were included in

the seventh edition of the CAS book of Standards and Guidelines, published in August, 2009. “These standards respond to real-time student needs, the requirements of sound pedagogy, and the effective management of 40 areas consistent with institutional missions” (Brandes, 2009, p. 26). In developing the GPSPS standards, committee members relied on a range of literature addressing needs of this population. Topics on graduate and professional student needs have circled around themes of needs assessment (Elkins Neshaim, Guentzel, Gansemer-Topf, Ewing Ross, & Turrentine, 2006), professional socialization and involvement (Brandes, 2006; Brandes & O’Dair, 2009; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Pontius & Harper, 2006), retention (Hesli, Fink, & Duffy, 2003), career services (Lehker & Furlong, 2006), and potentially marginalized graduate students (Brandes, 2006; Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2006; Pontius & Harper, 2006; Trice, 2004).

Brandes and O’Dair (2009) provide a current snapshot of graduate and professional students, outlining key issues to be considered for this population, including: academic-based communities, important relationships, work/life/family balance, different financial concerns, time on campus, funding variability, and self-perception. They differentiate master’s/professional students from doctoral students on a number of dimensions, and offer strategies for helping graduate and professional students find connections and build community within their domains. Areas noted range from information on off-campus parking to the creation of groups and communities of interest to the development of social and cultural events. The authors also addresses the importance of targeting programs and services such as orientation, career services,

writing support, health and wellness, family life support, and off-campus support, which can “serve as anchors for students on campus” (p. 26).

Elkins Nesheim et al. (2006) advocate for individual institutional assessment around graduate and professional student needs. Their work speaks to the heterogeneous nature of this population, as well as the diversity of programs and interventions from campus to campus and discipline to discipline. The authors identify four clusters where current research has focused, including student attrition, student experiences, socialization to a profession, and programming. They outline several assessment strategies to keep in mind when conducting research in student affairs and offer considerations around access and timing, the political landscape of graduate education, how information is being used, and recognizing limits of assessment methods and results. Previous assessments have indicated the strong need for careful design of programming and services for distinct graduate populations; for future study the authors recommended involving stakeholders and sharing information when appropriate.

Brandes (2006) responded to the literature’s recommendations around socialization and involvement by exploring the development of graduate student centers. Brandes delineates clear needs for graduate student space, listing essential amenities such as “well-equipped meeting rooms; lounges with tables and chairs for studying and comfortable furniture for socializing; a dining hall, café, or coffee bar, and perhaps even a pub; recreation or game rooms, with TV’s, game tables, and board games...etc.” (p. 87). She writes about the lack of connectedness graduate and professional students feel and notes the effectiveness of creating a dedicated space for social integration and

professional networking. Student involvement is a central theme for most graduate student centers, where graduate and professional students can thrive professionally and socially with enhanced opportunities for engagement. Brandes advocates for cross-discipline initiatives, professional and academic programming, and various networking opportunities. Brandes also offers The McDougal Graduate Center at Yale, as a case example in that “the center provides an excellent illustration of how student space, specific student life and professional development services, professional directors, and intensive student involvement have dramatically changed the nature of the graduate school experience at Yale” (p. 95).

Complimenting Brandes’ (2006) work on involvement, Gardner and Barnes (2007) used socialization as their conceptual framework in studying involvement among graduate students. Working with a sample of 10 doctoral students studying higher education administration, they used interview techniques to learn more about why students became involved, what they perceived as benefits to involvement, and what their involvement looked like. The researchers sought to better understand the advantages of involvement on both a local level (e.g., departmental student groups) and on a national level (e.g., professional associations) in terms of how students became socialized within their academic programs and within their given field. With a fairly diverse sample in terms of race and gender, as well as phase in program (coursework, dissertation, or graduated) and professional aspirations (faculty or administration), the findings resulted in the following four themes: qualities of graduate involvement, continuum of involvement, influences upon involvement, and outcomes of involvement.

Related to the first theme, qualities of graduate involvement, the term professional development emerged as a common phrase heard during the 60-90 minute interviews.

The authors noted that:

Making a clear connection to the theoretical framework of socialization, the concept of professional development is often used interchangeably in the literature on professional socialization as the socialization experienced by the graduate student that prepares him or her both for the academic world and its expectations while also preparing them for the professional role and its associated values and culture. (Gardner & Barnes, 2007, p. 375)

Students involved in the study made frequent reference to the professional development opportunities they were afforded through their involvement. At the local level, students spoke of peer interactions and leadership opportunities, whereas at the national level, they noted mentoring and career connections. It was clear in talking with students that consistent with the second theme, there was a continuum of involvement. Some students maintained more superficial associations with professional organizations, whereas others took more active roles including presenting at conferences (nationally) or serving as an officer (locally). Focus from local to national involvement also seemed to shift over time, with students approaching the dissertation becoming more connected with their profession (at conferences, etc.) rather than their local peer group.

Gardner and Barnes' (2007) third theme highlighted that students were influenced to become involved by both their faculty and their peers. Some programs were more direct in requiring such involvement, whereas others offered softer encouragement. The

authors divided their final theme, “outcomes of involvement,” into three sub-themes, which included networking, connecting the classroom to the community, and professional development. Each of these sub-themes emerged as essential aspects of the students’ socialization into their profession. A noted limitation of this study was the fact that only higher education administration students were involved. Because research has shown that “disciplines have their own particular qualities, cultures, codes of conduct, values, and distinctive intellectual tasks” (Gardner & Barnes, 2007, p. 371) it is likely that faculty within different academic units might show varying levels of encouragement and expectations around graduate and professional student involvement.

Complimenting this study is one conducted previously by Hesli, Fink, and Duffy (2003) that used the faculty perspective to look at how best to support the graduate student experience. In an attempt to better understand factors leading to retention and success in graduate school, the researchers surveyed a sample of political science doctoral students. Findings indicated that lack of funding or employment opportunities were major factors leading to attrition in men; women, on the other hand, primarily left due to lack of support and an “unfriendly” atmosphere. The index of dissatisfaction they developed found that overall “the best predictor of level of dissatisfaction . . . is whether the graduate student receives sufficient encouragement, mentoring, and consultation from faculty” (p. 801). The researchers suggest that academic departments need to be more attuned to the creation of nurturing environments that will support student retention. What Hesli et al. fail to note is the role that student affairs professionals can play in fostering an environment more conducive to satisfaction.

Lehker and Furlong (2006) spelled out the challenges facing graduate and professional students as they enter the professional realm. The authors suggested that job market trends and lack of adequate preparation for specific niche positions leave many students feeling under-prepared as they complete their degrees; to address these challenges they offered two premises for providing career services to this population. “First, graduate students will be drawn to services and resources that they believe are specifically for them;” and “second, there is no-one-size-fits-all approach to career services for graduate students” (p. 75). Lehker and Furlong’s premises speak for themselves, but open up the door to ranging approaches for providing career services that will meet the professional socialization needs of graduate and professional students. The authors suggested that career services can be centralized or based within academic units. Centralization offers a broader focus on career development in a neutral atmosphere where students can feel comfortable exploring options both within and beyond their field of study. Academically-based services may be more targeted toward specific interests by providing students with focused contacts in organizations of interest. Both approaches can be advantageous to students, but both have their drawbacks. Centralized services, though often thorough and developmentally oriented, may miss the mark in terms of identifying specific employers that may be better aligned with the direction students are seeking. Conversely, academically-based services may be too targeted, and have the potential to force students in a direction they are not looking to take. Focus on student development becomes paramount in career services, where understanding individual student circumstances is critical to best assisting students with the challenges they will

inevitably face throughout their studies. Lehker and Furlong asserted that “In all likelihood, a campus will not employ only one model of career services, either through a centralized office or academic units. Instead, career services might be accessed from a variety of sources” (p. 77).

Lehker and Furlong went on to address career services needs specific to both PhD and masters students who are engaging in research-based programs. They highlighted the distinct needs which range from exposure to career options, to nonacademic career exploration, to job search support, to transitions to graduate school for each of these populations. Through career counseling and advising, intentional programming, alumni and networking resources, and traditional placement services, career services professionals are able to meet student needs and empower them to become involved in their own professional socialization experience.

Attention to potentially marginalized students has also emerged as an important theme throughout the literature (Brandes, 2006; Pontius & Harper, 2006) with particular attention to international students (Trice, 2004). Trice examined potentially marginalized international graduate student populations and provided implications for student affairs professionals in helping these students combat alienation in their new culture. Using a social capital theory framework, the author reports on past findings, which have shown that “international students who spend time socially with American students are more satisfied academically and better adjusted culturally to their experience abroad” (p. 672).

Feelings of alienation in graduate school are common not only for international students but also for the graduate student population as a whole. Hyun et al. (2006)

looked closely at mental health needs and utilization of counseling services for this population. Using a cross-sectional survey, the researchers gathered data from full-time graduate students at a large western university. Results showed that almost half of the population surveyed reported some form of emotional or stress-related problem over the past year. The majority of students were familiar with the on-campus availability of counseling services, with women (at 82.1%) being more aware than men (at 67.2%). Additional findings showed that 30.9% of the population survey had actually made use of some form of mental health services during their time in graduate school.

Overall findings from the Hyun et al. (2006) study indicate the need for mental health intervention for graduate and professional students is critical. Feelings of depression, exhaustion, and financial instability ranked high as stressors leading students to seek counseling. Although help-seeking was high, the authors indicated that it was not universal. For this reason, they recommend that student affairs professionals do more to increase an awareness of these services. Also notable was the difference in numbers of students reporting emotional issues and the number of students actually seeking help. The researchers urge faculty and administrators to be aware of students needing these services and to actively promote them on campus. They laid out three policy implications: Prioritization of mental health education and awareness, Re-examination of the pedagogical tradition of graduate school, and Building linkages for graduate student social and administrative support. Although the authors noted several limitations to the study, they emphasized the importance of future research in the area of mental health delivery and utilization for graduate student populations.

The articles summarized thus far have illuminated both research-based and practical recommendations for intentional planning and programming on the part of student affairs professionals in order to create dynamic, professionally and personally nurturing atmospheres for graduate students. As a final demonstration of this call from the graduate student services research community, Pontius and Harper (2006) laid out seven principles for good practice in graduate student engagement. Intended as benchmarks for assessing quality in graduate education, these principles evolved from the work of Chickering and Gamson (1987) along with that of a group of student affairs administrators who came together under the auspices of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in 1997. Pontius and Harper suggested that a program exhibits quality in student engagement when it:

- 1) Continually strives to eradicate marginalization among underrepresented populations;
- 2) Provides meaningful orientation to the institution beyond academic units;
- 3) Invests resources in communication with graduate and professional students;
- 4) Facilitates opportunities for community building and multicultural interaction across academic units;
- 5) Partners with academic schools and departments to create engagement plans for students;
- 6) Enhances career and professional development;

7) Strategically assesses satisfaction, needs, and outcomes. (p. 53)

Conclusion

Guided by a theoretical framework depicting three overlapping circles that represent scholarship on alternative certification, adult and part-time learners, and graduate student services, the literature review has provided context for the elements of this study. A summary of the history of teacher education in America and the evolution of the regulatory process that governs teacher licensure and credentialing was presented followed by discussion of alternative routes to teaching. Career switcher programs were discussed as one type of alternative route, with a focus on several methods that have been used to examine this variety of teacher preparation. The subsequent section focused on literature around adult and part-time learners, followed by findings from a number of studies conducted on graduate and professional student populations.

Each section of this review has built a foundation for the next; but collectively these sections call attention to a gap in the literature. In reviewing each body of scholarship a theme for that section has emerged. The review of alternative certification presented a clear theme of the comparison of alternative versus traditional teacher preparation programs. The research in this area tends to center around determining the best approach to educating teachers. Missing, though, is literature that goes beyond comparing program types to investigating particular programs more critically from a student services perspective. Themes in the career switcher literature center around psychological stressors that might lead to attrition among this group as well as best approaches for mentoring support and program structure. Career switcher perceptions

were examined (Mayotte, 2001; 2003), however not from the perspective of their higher education teacher preparation experience. One study by Ryan and Spangler (1991) did examine the structure of a career switcher program, but from an evaluative program design perspective; moreover, the evaluation did not consider student services. The literature on adult and part-time learners as well as the literature on graduate student services reveal themes centered around supports for this type of student and ways the institution can best address needs that have been identified. Though the bodies of scholarship on career switchers, adult and part-time learners, and graduate student services have evolved independently of one another, there is a common thread throughout them; each area is concerned with student success.

Whereas alternative certification has been studied extensively and the body of work collected on career switchers has grown in recent years, at this point, there are no studies on these topics looking at student success from the perspective of student services. Given that learning and development takes place both within and outside of the classroom (Resnick, 1987), a study of career switchers from a student services perspective will contribute to the scholarship on this evolving alternative route model. In addition, the growing body of literature on graduate and professional students has revealed a number of important topics, however the groups studied have tended to be traditional Masters and doctoral-level graduate student populations. Missing from the graduate student services literature is a consideration of the part-time adult learner perspective, particularly through a discipline-specific approach. This study will pull from

disparate bodies of literature to examine the graduate student services experience of career switchers in an alternative route teacher licensure program.

3. Method

Introduction

This chapter details the methodological strategies that were employed in the current qualitative case study. The chapter begins with an overview of the study's design, re-introducing primary research goals and research questions. The next section offers details on participants and provides context for the Career Switcher Program as the research setting. Three distinct data sources are then presented, followed by a detailed chronological description of the study's procedure. Data analysis strategies are addressed, followed by a discussion of the limitations and importance of the inquiry.

Research Design

The design of this inquiry emerged from an overarching goal to explore needs and expectations of career switchers and the need for understanding how institutional efforts around student services relate to these needs and expectations. The design was established through a constructivist process, with the theoretical framework and literature guiding the development of goals, research questions, and methods. Schram (2006) asserts that research questions do not need to account for all perspectives reflected in the reviewed literature; for the current study research questions were developed out of a growing recognition of both overlapping and complimentary themes coupled with

significant research gaps. The research questions, as stated in Chapter 1 include the following:

1. What are Level I Career Switcher needs and expectations for student services in a university setting? What is needed and/or expected of the Career Switcher Program itself? What is needed and/or expected of the institution?
2. How have student services needs and expectations changed for Level II Career Switchers?

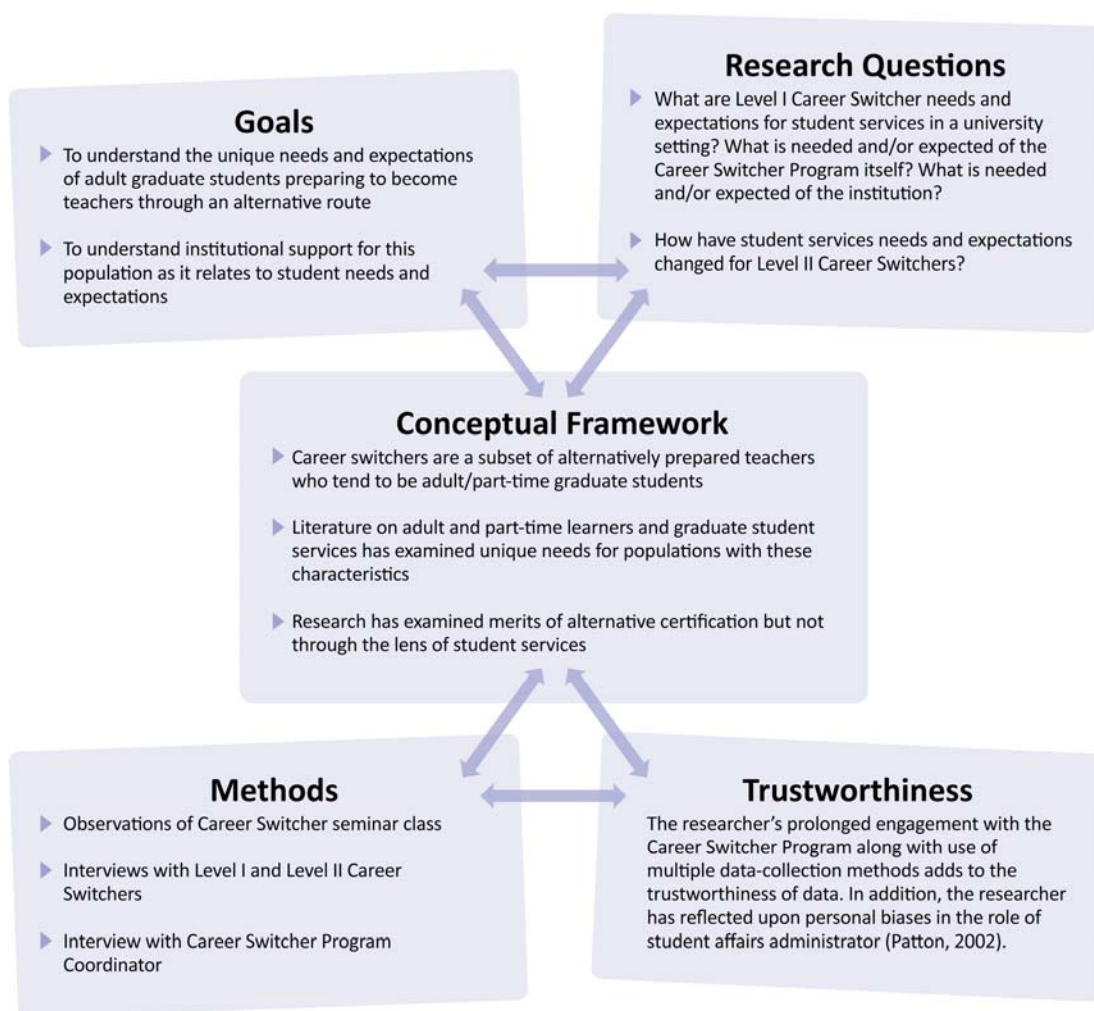


Figure 2.1 Concept map to serve as a visual representation of the research design (Maxwell, 2005).

Because one of the primary goals of the study was to understand needs of adult/part-time graduate students preparing to become teachers through an alternative route, the choice of setting was limited to an alternative route teacher licensure program within an institution of higher education. Given the large number of varying alternative

route teacher preparation programs that exist in the United States, it was not feasible to suggest a quantitative study to generalize results for the entire population. Instead, a qualitative case study based on the subjective experiences and perceptions of one group of career switchers informs the relevant bodies of literature on this topic. The research design involved interview and observation data from a pilot study conducted between January and May of 2009 as well as interview, observation, and document review data for the full study conducted in November and December of 2009.

Participants and Setting

The inquiry conducted was population-specific, which according to Schram (2006) “is somewhat less constrained in that it could conceivably be conducted in any number of places” (p. 168). The study involved graduate students enrolled in the Career Switcher Program (CSP) within the education school at a large, Mid-Atlantic, high research-intensive, public institution. This study was less constrained than a site-specific study, which Schram describes as research that “represents a fairly constrained choice in that the study is defined by and closely linked to a particular place” (p. 168). Although career switcher programs across the country vary in terms of particular programmatic characteristics, the CSP serves as an adequate representative sample; such is the case particularly given the CSP’s membership in the State’s Career Switcher Alternative Route to Licensure Program, which was modeled off of like programs nation-wide. In addition, the CSP was selected given logistical factors, such as availability and accessibility to the researcher (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993).

The CSP is a subset of the Secondary Education (Grades 6-12) program in the licensure areas of English, Mathematics, Social Studies, History and Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science and Physics). The program includes two cohorts, Level I and Level II. Students in the Level I cohort have begun their first year of study toward teacher licensure. These students are enrolled in foundation and methods coursework as well as a monthly seminar that provides an opportunity for sharing and systematic reflection on school-based experiences. Students in the Level II cohort have completed 12 credits of coursework, a 60 hour field placement experience, and the first-year seminar course. During the second year in the program students are in the field teaching and are concurrently enrolled in a second seminar course designed to provide an opportunity for sharing and reflection. After finishing Level II students are given the option of completing a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree in a secondary education concentration, however completion of the Masters degree is not a requirement. Students in the CSP are distinct from those pursuing the traditional M.Ed. track. For the purpose of this study, student participants will involve only those enrolled in Level I or Level II of the CSP cohort.

A pilot observation of participants conducted in Spring 2009 included 18 (13 female and five male) students enrolled in the 2008-09 Level I cohort. Observation for the full study in Fall 2009 included nine of the 18 students observed during the pilot (five female and four male), now enrolled in Level II, in addition to 18 new students (eight female and 10 male) enrolled in the 2009-10 Level I cohort. The voluntary participation of all active members of both cohorts provided an ideal-typical case selection situation (LeCompte, et

al, 1993); their inclusion in the observation was based on their attendance at the seminar courses being observed. Both observation groups were homogeneous in terms of race as all participants were Caucasian. Participant age was given consideration during a second level of analysis; ages of observation and interview participants in both groups fell within a range of 30 to 65 years. Participant gender was noted, however not considered central to the inquiry. Additionally, content areas were noted for each of the interview participants and were given consideration during the second level of analysis.

Eight of the 18 pilot observation participants (five female and three male) volunteered to participate in Spring 2009 pilot interviews. (The pilot recruitment email appears in Appendix A.) Of these eight, five were willing to participate in Fall 2009 follow-up interviews for the full study (two female and three male). (The level II recruitment email appears in Appendix D). Of the 18 Level I students observed in Fall 2009, six volunteered to participate in an interview (three female and three male). (The level I recruitment email appears in Appendix C). Willingness to participate was determined to be the key criteria for interview selection. Content area specialties for the eight pilot interview participants were broken down as follows: Social Studies – 4; English – 2; Science – 1; Math – 1. The five who chose to follow-up with the study fell into the following content areas: Social Studies – 3; Science – 1; Math – 1. All but one participant who followed up with an interview were currently employed as teachers. The three Level II participants who did not participate in follow-up interviews indicated that they were not currently teaching nor were they actively participating in the Career Switcher Program. One of these non-returning participants indicated that she had dropped the program and the

intent to pursue teaching entirely. The other two non-returning participants indicated that they were still in the process of searching for a teaching position and that they would return to Career Switcher Program activities upon securing appropriate work. Content areas for the six Fall 2009 Level I interview participants included: English – 2; Science – 3; Math – 1.

In addition to interviews with members of the Level I and II cohorts, one interview was conducted with the CSP coordinator who also serves as the instructor for the seminar course. The CSP coordinator was selected as an interview participant to gain an institutional and program-level perspective on Career Switcher needs and expectations. The interview with the CSP Coordinator also served as a confirmatory source to add validity to the findings.

In addition to the observations explained above, observations of the 2008-09 Level I and II cohorts were conducted prior to approval of the Spring 2009 pilot study. This data was not analyzed for the current study; nevertheless, the observations provided background information to aid in understanding the goals and purpose of the CSP seminar course at both levels, as well as to gain early insights on student perceptions. Prior to these preliminary observations I had no relationship with any of the student participants. Through initial meetings and ongoing interaction with the CSP Coordinator, I did come into my observations and interview with her having a prior collegial relationship. It is also important to note the relationship of the CSP Coordinator to the members of my dissertation committee. The CSP Coordinator serves as a faculty member in the same college as two of my committee members, all with offices located in close proximity to one

another. The professional relationship between the CSP Coordinator and my committee members as well as the fact that the coordinator's identity can be easily identified by the local readership of this dissertation presents a clear and unavoidable limitation to the study. The CSP Coordinator came into the study with a general understanding of its scope. Although research questions and interview questions were never revealed to the Coordinator during the course of the study, it should be noted that she was undoubtedly influenced to some degree by her knowledge of the inquiry and her relationships with interested parties.

Data Sources

Data sources for the study included observation field notes, interview transcriptions, and document data. Data from observations and interviews were analyzed from the pilot study as well as the current study. Documents were reviewed for the current study.

Observations

Observation field notes collected for this study provided data in the form of talk, which according to Glesne (2006) is "what people say to each other" (p. 69). Observation data included field notes from three pilot observations as well as two observations during the current study. The term *observation* is defined here as the researcher's informal participation in the seminar classes as a non-contributing outsider. Glesne describes traditional observation data to include attention to acts, events, or processes, however these elements were not considered here; for the current study student-to-student, student-to-instructor, and student-to-administrator conversations were most pertinent to the research questions. As well, observation data in this form allowed

for drawing inferences about participant perspectives were not apparent in the interview data (Maxwell, 2005). The process of analysis was initiated during observations, as the researcher recorded memos illuminating recurrent conversation topics and potential themes.

Interviews

The use of interview transcription as a data source was guided by the research questions as well as Weiss' (2006) work on the art and method of qualitative interview studies. Weiss suggests the use of interviewing to allow for the development of detailed descriptions and the integration of multiple perspectives (p. 9). The decision to incorporate interview data was based on my belief that I needed to gain an in-depth understanding of how participants experienced student services upon entry to their program through the duration of their program, and how these experiences have aligned with their own needs and expectations. Even though certain nuances related to student services could certainly have been extracted from observations alone, interviewing provided a much more targeted opportunity to ask participants about student services perceptions and expectations. Whereas observations provided data to begin to generate themes for the current study, interviews were effective in adding texture and depth to these findings. Data analysis revealed that the coupling of observation and interviewing added a level of trustworthiness to the study; the addition of document review further enriched the data.

Interviews with Level I Career Switchers were primarily guided by the first research question, which sought to understand expressed student needs and expectations (both at the program-level and the institutional-level) upon entry to the program. Follow-

up interviews with the current Level II cohort assessed shifts or consistencies in expressed needs and expectations after their completion of three quarters of the program (including one semester of secondary school teaching experience for four of five participants). Follow-up interviews also sought to gain participants' perspectives on how the institution has met expressed needs and expectations throughout the program as well as to solicit participant recommendations for program improvement.

Documents

Document review consisted of analyzing a summary of a past course assignment provided by the CSP coordinator to the 2008-09 Level II cohort. The purpose of document review was to consider Career Switcher reflections that were presented in a unique format from interviews or observations. In this case, the CSP coordinator compiled anonymous summaries of student responses to the following assignment: "If you could lead the Level II seminar." The review of summarized responses to this question served as an alternative method for understanding the experience of Level II Career Switchers. Rather than relying only a review of interview responses for Level II Career Switchers, the document review allowed for analysis of written reflections. The document review was incorporated into the study as a means to add depth and texture to the findings, subsequently raising the level of trustworthiness for the study. It should be noted that Level II Career Switchers for the current study had not completed this assignment at the time of the inquiry, thus document review represented perspectives Level II Career Switchers from the previous year. Review of the assignment was considered as complimentary data to the fall 2009 Level II interviews.

Procedure

This section describes data collection techniques used for the pilot study and the current study. Over the course of two academic semesters I completed a total of five seminar observations and 20 interviews. I conducted 14 interviews with Level I Career Switchers and followed up with five of these participants during their Level II experience. I also conducted one interview with the CSP Coordinator. Data collection and analysis for the pilot and current study closely resembled a grounded theory approach, which as Patton (2002) described “emphasizes steps and procedures for connecting induction and deduction through the constant comparison method, comparing research sites, doing theoretical sampling, and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork” (p. 125). Thus, the method employed for the current study was strongly linked to the theory generated.

To initiate both the Spring 2009 pilot study and the Fall 2009 full study, all observation participants were notified of intended research activities during their first seminar session. I provided participants with general information about my background and research goals and invited their questions at any point during the observation period.

The pilot study occurred over a 3-month period in Spring 2009; it involved a total of six hours of observation of the 2008-09 Level I cohort in addition to face-to-face in-depth interviews with eight members of this cohort. The full study occurred over a 2-month period in Fall 2009; it involved a total of two hours of observation of the 2009-10 Level I cohort and 1 hour of observation of the 2009-10 Level II cohort (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

Table 3.1

Pilot Observation Schedule Detail

Participant(s)	Date	Time	Duration	Setting
Level I cohort	2/13/09	4:30 pm	2:00:00	Classroom
Level I cohort	3/13/09	4:30 pm	2:07:00	Classroom
Level I cohort	4/17/09	4:30 pm	2:02:00	Classroom

Table 3.2

Observation Schedule Detail

Participant(s)	Date	Time	Duration	Setting
Level I cohort	11/06/09	4:30 pm	2:00:00	Classroom
Level II cohort	12/04/09	4:30 pm	1:05:00	Classroom

I incorporated observation in my design as a way to enter the world of my subjects; through observation I learned about participants' experiences, observed their interactions, and gained acceptance in their natural environment (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Because my initial intent during the pilot was to later conduct a more extensive case study with the 2008-09 Level I participants it was important for me to establish rapport with the group early on. As Bogden and Biklen noted, "Even with less extensive interviewing, the emphasis is on equality, closeness, and informality in the relationship rather than on authority and control by the researcher and formality in the encounter" (p.

83). Thus, establishing myself as a regular fixture in the seminar courses during the 2008-09 academic year was an effective way of building trust with participants.

The 2008-09 Level I cohort consisted of 10 members who began the Career Switcher program in Fall 2008 and eight members who began the program in Spring 2009. The groups merged in January 2009 to form one cohort of 18 members. Those who began in Spring 2009 completed coursework during the Summer 2009 session to catch up to those who began in Fall 2008.

As a qualitative observer, I was careful to manage my role as an outsider in the environment. The emphasis of my observation notes was to capture my participants' natural conversations and statements that were most pertinent to my research questions. Adler and Adler (1998) stated, "qualitative observation is fundamentally naturalistic in essence; it occurs in the natural context of occurrence, among actors who would naturally be participating in the interaction, and follows the natural stream of every day life" (p. 81). Maintaining comfort and naturalness was an important goal of mine as I listened to, watched, and felt the reactions of participants. My aim was to keep participants at ease through establishing a natural rapport, yet I was also careful not to manipulate or stimulate my participants in any way (Adler & Adler, 1998). During each of the seminar sessions for both the pilot and the full study, I sat at the table, or in the circle, along with the instructor/CSP coordinator, the CSP administrator, and the participants. During these sessions, I took extensive observation notes using my laptop. This activity in itself set me apart from my participants, as it was clear I was different; I was not a part of class discussions but rather an outsider typing away on my computer. Though, after the pilot

study, I considered alternative more “unobtrusive measures” (Patton, 2002, p. 292), such as using an audio-video recording device to capture the seminar sessions, I decided to continue taking notes on my laptop for the full study. Although the use of an audio-video recording device may have minimized the obvious differences between myself and participants, I do not believe the impact would have been substantial; the laptop allowed me to process immediate thoughts and observations while immersed in the research setting, such that analysis to some degree was an ongoing process. Comments from pilot observation participants supported my decision to continue this technique for observation data collection; for example, during the final pilot observation session, one participant, Betty, commented “I don’t even notice Lori anymore. I used to think ‘what is she typing about us over there?’ But now she just blends in with the rest of the group” (Betty, April 17, 2009).

Much of the seminar discussion provided rich contextual knowledge but was not always relevant to the student services focus of the proposed research questions. I recognized, though, the importance of careful listening, as certain student services-related themes did emerge, either embedded in the classroom discussions, or just before or after the seminar. I acknowledge that the seminars may not have been the only appropriate setting for observational data collection, however I contend that there is no single setting where I could have possibly been exposed to all relevant data. For future study on this topic, observation of other courses or even informal participant interactions outside of the classroom could potentially provide valuable data related to the research questions.

During the course of pilot observations I conducted pilot interviews with eight

members of the 2008-09 Level I Cohort, four members who began the program in Fall 2008 and four who began in Spring 2009. The equal number of Fall and Spring initiators interviewed occurred by chance, however was important to note for data analysis, as experiences upon entry to the program were different for those who started in the Fall versus those who started in the Spring. During the course of observations for the full study I conducted interviews with six members of the 2009-10 Level I Cohort and five returning members of the 2009-10 Level II cohort.

I gained participation for all interviews through an HSRB-approved email message to members of both cohorts (See Appendix A). Each face-to-face pilot interview took place in convenient, available, and appropriate locations (Glesne, 2006), employing a semi-structured format that involved questions that were prepared in advance coupled with the flexibility to add or adjust questions based on participant responses. At the start of each session I asked participants to review and sign the informed consent form; I obtained permission to audio-tape the interviews and informed participants that the recordings would be transcribed for further analysis. I asked pilot participants a total of ten prepared questions as well as several follow-ups and prompts that emerged from responses. For the full study I asked Level I participants 13 prepared questions with follow-ups and prompts, and the Level II participants 13 different prepared questions with follow-ups and prompts. The interview protocol for the 2009-10 Level I participants was modified from the original one used during the pilot. Interview questions for Level I participants in both the pilot and full study centered on higher education experiences, decisions to enter the teaching profession, and participants' knowledge about and experience with the Career Switcher

program. I also inquired about participants' identity as graduate students, the services and resources they were aware of on campus and their expectations of both program-level and university-level student services. The protocol for the full study also involved questions that sought to understand Career Switchers' stressors, challenges and barriers. The Level II protocol included follow-up questions aimed at assessing shifts in needs and expectations, current knowledge of program and campus services, levels of involvement with the program and university, and other areas of reflection (see Appendix F). In addition to student interviews, the research design also included one interview with the CSP Coordinator. The protocol for this interview included questions that sought to understand the structure of the CSP, goals and strategies for provision of student services, as well as to understand challenges and needs for the program (see Appendix G). For all interviews participants had as much time as needed to respond to questions; I occasionally inserted comments to assist in their elaboration of responses.

In developing the interview protocol for the 2009-10 Level I cohort members I took into account what I learned through the pilot interview process and through the review of the literature. For example, a pilot interview question asked about the "services and resources" participants expected from the institution or from the CSP. I learned through pilot interviews that this question may have been too vague, evidenced by the fairly uninformed responses I gained from interviewees. As outlined in Chapter 2, there have been several key areas that have been identified as important to the graduate and/or adult/part-time student experience. The revised interview protocol for Level I was shaped by knowledge gained through the pilot study as well as the scholarship, and was designed

to allow participants to confirm, deny, or reexamine specific findings from the literature (See Appendix E). Similarly, the interview protocols for Level II and for the CSP Coordinator were designed based on the literature as well as from data collected during pilot interviews. The protocols for the Level II and Coordinator interviews particularly drew from those bodies of scholarship focused on how institutions are addressing needs of graduate and/or adult/part-time students (See Appendix F and G).

Data Analysis

The process of analysis began during data collection as I recorded observation notes. Corbin and Strauss (1990) spoke to the idea of data collection and analysis as interrelated processes and note that “the analysis begins as soon as the first bit of data is collected” (p. 6). During observations I accounted for patterns and variations and noted my own insights as they occurred. This process of analysis in the form of memo-writing continued throughout the duration of the study. Maxwell (2005) noted that “memos not only capture your analytic thinking about your data, but also *facilitate* such thinking, stimulating analytic insights” (p. 96). Upon the completion of data collection I engaged in early analysis involving a thorough review of all data sources noting ideas about potential categories and relationships; this process served as a preparation stage for coding.

Formal analysis incorporated two levels; the first level entailed the use of primary, secondary, and tertiary coding techniques to generate labels, categories and themes. The second level of analysis involved suggesting theme assignments for each of the unique participants, and considering these assignments through various filters.

Coding strategies (to be detailed in the next section) were used for interview and document data as a means for developing and verifying hypotheses about relationships and potential categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Given that observation data was recorded in the form of analytic memos, this data did not require further coding; it was however considered for further analysis when considering categories and themes.

Prior to analyzing interview data a professional transcriptionist transcribed all but two recorded interviews; I transcribed the two remaining interviews. The actual process of transcribing all interviews myself may have served as a valuable form of analysis (Maxwell, 2005), however, time constraints prevented me from doing so. Therefore, I relied on my own thorough reading of transcribed data to inform coding techniques. Analysis involved a systematic process of conceptual categorization; categories and themes generated from the first level of analysis were later considered for a form of axial coding. First-level analysis included a first cycle involving label assignments, a second cycle for data chunking, and a final round of combing through the data to identify emerging themes. Line-by-line analysis involved an ongoing process of comparing and contrasting to extract meaning from the text, both within and across participant responses. Analysis was guided by the research questions as well as interview questions, but also considered unplanned emergent participant data.

Organizational Categories

Maxwell's (2005) organizational categories served as baskets for sifting data as I conducted the analysis. "Organizational categories are broad areas or issues that you can establish prior to your interviews or observations, or that could usually have been

anticipated” (p. 97). Guided by the research questions I selected the following pre-determined organizational categories: Needs/ Expectations (with subcategories: Program and Institution) and Developmental Shifts. Initial in vivo and descriptive codes (to be described in the next section) facilitated the assignment of data to one or more of these categories. Data sifted into the category Developmental Shifts was developed based on a comparison of coded transcripts from the five participants interviewed during both their Level I and Level II experiences. Those data chunks with labels that did not apply to the organizing categories were considered for additional categories generated during second cycle coding.

First Level Analysis

Three formal coding cycles were implemented for the first level of interview and document analysis. In addition to coding strategies, memos aided initial understanding of participant responses and observation notes. Initial labels were pulled from the data during a first review of transcripts; formal line-by-line label assignments were then made to ensure a thorough consideration of all data. The assignment of descriptive labels was intended to capture the full range of unique meaning chunks that could be extracted from interviews with Level I and Level II Career Switchers, as well as document review for the previous year’s Level II cohort.

Coding of interview transcriptions and documents involved a process of laying out raw data passages in a document with space for code assignments in the right-hand margin. In vivo and descriptive coding were used simultaneously for the first cycle. In vivo coding allowed me to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (Saldaña, 2009,

p. 74). Descriptive coding, which I relied on as the primary first cycle labeling source, included the assignment of words or short phrases to capture topics that emerged throughout the data (Saldaña, 2009). The purpose of including both forms of initial codes was to couple participant descriptions with researcher interpretations, creating an inventory of relevant topics. Saldaña (2009) suggested that this coupling of in vivo and researcher-generated coding leads to richer category development. A listing of descriptive labels generated from both descriptive and in vivo coding appears in Appendix H.

Second cycle coding involved Focused coding, which allowed for the development of “the most salient categories” (Charmaz as cited in Saldaña, 2009, p. 155). Focused coding, a “streamlined adaptation of classic grounded theory’s Axial Coding,” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 155) places more attention on category development with less attention to category properties and dimensions. Tallies were used to examine the frequency of first-cycle labels within participant responses as well as across participant responses. The frequency of labels did not serve as the only determining factor in creating salient categories, however the tallying process aided the development of initial categories. Focused coding was useful in comparing codes assigned from one participant to the next; it served as an appropriate choice for this study as the intent was to establish an initial understanding of student services needs and expectations for Career Switchers and to understand program and institutional support related to these needs and expectations. This coding cycle also brought in labels generated from the CSP

Coordinator interview as confirmatory evidence, as well as analytic memos recorded during observations.

A third cycle, pattern coding, was implemented as a means to pull first-cycle codes and second cycle categories into more meaningful units of analysis (Saldaña, 2009). Pattern codes are “explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation” (Miles and Huberman as cited in Saldaña, 2009, p. 152). Pattern coding allowed for the identification of commonalities in both first-cycle codes as well as second-cycle categories that were developed through focused coding. As Saldaña suggested, pattern coding also revealed thematic language within the data itself. For example, in responding to a question about expectations of the Career Switcher Program in terms of the job search process, one participant stated “It’s up to me to make it happen,” suggesting a theme later identified as *Self-Reliance versus Dependence*. Themes that emerged from pattern coding will be detailed in chapter four.

Second Level Analysis

Subsequent to the development of categories and themes I engaged in a further level of analysis involving a form of axial coding. Corbin and Strauss (1990) explain axial coding as a process where “categories are related to their subcategories, and the relationships tested against data (p. 13). The current axial process entailed listening to all recorded interviews again and reviewing codes on each transcript to consider participant leanings on three continuums identified as themes during Pattern coding. I assigned each participant one of two competing theme assignments representing each side of the continuum (e.g., Self-reliance or Dependence). Although my subjective determinations

were not intended as absolutes (as will be evidenced by the explanation of the continuums), this process of categorization assisted in identifying trends across several filters. I considered the three themes for each Level I participant by age, content area, and highest degree attained (Bachelors, Masters or Professional/Terminal).

Limitations

The current study might be perceived as limited in terms of the amount of relevant data that could be accessed. Undoubtedly, participants presented data related to the research goals outside of planned interview and observation times; for example, conversations about student services needs and expectations and perspectives on institutional support were likely to take place during participants' informal interactions, rather than during seminar courses or interviews. Given researcher time constraints there were missed opportunities to gather data during core program courses as well as during fieldwork and teaching experiences. Due to limited opportunities for observation and interviewing, findings are only representative of the data that could be collected. However, rather than viewing time constraints as a limitation to the study, I assert that the case study was instead bounded by its design.

The population-specific nature of the study also presented a limitation. Although the design allowed for gaining an in-depth understanding of one group of Career Switchers, it did not allow for results that can be generalized to the greater population of students enrolled in alternative route career switcher programs. However, as Stake (1995) noted "the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization" (p. 8). Thus, the current study illuminated the expressed needs and expectations of Career

Switchers at one institution, and demonstrated how that institution is supporting these students in relation to their expressed needs and expectations. The design of the study suggests that case under examination, the Career Switcher Program, was what Stake termed a “bounded system” (p. 2).

Because of my professional background and current position as a student affairs administrator at the institution under examination, the question of subjectivity versus bias may be raised as a limitation. Data collection and analysis was invariably impacted by the researcher’s expertise. Maxwell (2005) noted that “the fact that the researcher is part of the world he or she studies – is a powerful and inescapable influence; what the informant says is *always* influenced by the interview and the interview situation” (p. 109), and he goes on to suggest “what is important is to understand *how* you are influencing what the informant says and how this affects the validity of the inferences you can draw from the interview” (p. 109). Thus, professional expertise here is positioned as strength that adds to the trustworthiness of the data. Self-monitoring for leading questions was incorporated in the interview techniques to prevent bias during data collection; however the researcher’s intimate knowledge of the phenomena under examination adds credibility to the analysis.

It should also be noted that efforts to protect the identity of participants limited the reporting of findings. Since the number of interviewees was small, participants were not uniquely identified by content area, age, prior profession, or prior education. Although the axial coding used during second level analysis considers age, content area, and highest degree attained, specific ages and degrees were not noted; rather, these factors were

described with broad inclusive categories. Furthermore, because those participants enrolled in Level I of the program during the time of the study will still be part of the CSP upon my completion of this dissertation, the reporting of some findings were modified slightly or restricted to provide the cohort with an added layer of protection.

Importance

Although the applicability of the current study is limited to the given institution, findings reveal insights and strategies that could enhance the delivery of student services within other career switcher models. The literature on addressing the needs of adult and part-time learners and graduate students has generally either been discipline-neutral or it has arbitrarily pulled from specific disciplines, yet has suggested universal findings. The current study made a targeted attempt to examine perceptions of student services within teacher education. Findings will inform the teacher education community on perceptions of one group of career switchers and may have implications for practice in other career switcher models. In addition to contributing to teacher education, the study opens the door for further discipline-specific student services research.

4. Findings

Introduction

This chapter reports findings resulting from the qualitative analysis of data collected for the current case study (which includes prior pilot study data). Findings reported stem from both etic and emic perspectives. Maxwell (2005) differentiates etic and emic categories as those that “usually represent the researcher’s concepts” from those “taken from participants’ own words and concepts” (p. 97-98). Patton (2002) noted the recognized value of each approach, but emphasized the importance of effectively communicating their implementation. For the purpose of this inquiry, findings reported from an etic perspective involved those that stemmed directly from the research questions. Emic findings emerged from the data, taking into account participant responses that went beyond pre-determined research questions and interview protocols.

Etic findings were guided by the following research questions, which were introduced in Chapter 1.

1. What are Level I Career Switcher needs and expectations for student services in a university setting? What is needed and/or expected of the Career Switcher Program itself? What is needed and/or expected of the institution?
2. How have student services needs and expectations changed for Level II Career Switchers?

Overview of Career Switchers

The Career Switcher interview participants shared with me their educational and professional backgrounds and helped me to understand what led them to this transitional point. Some participants came into the CSP having always wanted to teach, others entered the program after spending many years in another field and later realizing it was time for a change. Several participants noted a strong passion for their content area; others shared an interest in giving back through teaching. Some of the Career Switchers entered the program having been exposed to instructional or training experience in their previous professions. Some attributed family circumstances as a motivating factor behind their career shift. Their reasons for entering teaching varied, but it was evident that the 14 CSP interview participants entered the program with a genuine enthusiasm for becoming teachers.

In speaking with interview participants I attempted to ascertain their reasons for choosing the CSP at the given institution. Responses tended to center around convenience, proximity, affordability, and reputation (with convenience and proximity surfacing as the most immediate and frequent explanations). Some participants also made note of the level and quality of pre-admission advising they received in comparison to other institutions. Some reflected on their preference for in-person learning versus the online options that were available elsewhere. This preliminary information aided my understanding of the Career Switchers' priorities upon program initiation. Findings from further data analysis supported the concept of convenience as being paramount to the students' level of satisfaction with their program experience.

First Level Analysis

Descriptive Labels

First cycle in vivo and descriptive coding techniques generated 56 unique descriptive labels, which are presented below in Table 4.1. Labels represented phenomena presented by participants within and across interviews. A comparison of descriptive labels generated from Level II interviews and this Level II assignment document suggested consistency in coding from one group to the next, thereby adding a level of trustworthiness to the findings.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Labels

A-Age	FL-Flexibility	P-Proximity
AC-Accountability	FP-Fast pace	PI-Prompt information
AD-Admission confusion	FR-Friendly	PR-Preparation
AS-Administrator support	FS-Faculty support	PS-Peer support
AV-Availability	GS-Guest speakers	PS-Program structure
BC-Blackboard confusion	H-Helpful	REC-Recommendations
BP-Big picture	HH-Hand-holding	REQ-Requirements
CE-Classroom experience	JP-Job placement	S-Simplicity
CED-Continuing Ed.	JSA-Job search anxiety	SR-Self-reliance
CF-Confidence	L-Library	SS-Seminar support

COM-Communication	LC-Late classes	T-Time
CON-Consolidation	LS-Licensure support	TD-Threaded discussions
CP-Connection	M-Money	TS-Technology support
CR-Credentialing	MC-Masters confusion	UN-Unaware of services
CS-Career support	MEN-Mentoring	US-University structure
CV-Convenient	NA-Networking/Alumni	V-Verification
EF-Efficiency	NN-No need for services	WC-Website confusion
EM-Email	O-Organization	WL-Workload
FC-Family circumstances	P-Parking	

Categories

Descriptive labels identified during the first coding cycle were sorted into the pre-determined organizational categories, *Needs/Expectations* and *Developmental Shifts*, and remaining labels were grouped together to create two additional categories: *Sources of Support* and *Challenges/Barriers*. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the four categories generated during the first level of analysis, two of which were pre-determined based on the research and interview questions, and two of which arose from the data. Per the research questions, *Needs/Expectations* was an appropriate category for Level I participants and *Developmental Shifts* was appropriate for Level II. Emergent data from both levels confirmed that *Sources of Support* and *Challenges/Barriers* were appropriate categories for Level I and Level II transcripts.

Table 4.2

Categories and Subcategories

	Pre-determined Categories	Emergent Categories	
Level I Categories	Needs/Expectations	Sources of Support	Challenges/Barriers
Level I Sub-categories	Program-level: Administrator availability Administrator flexibility Program structure Career Services Networks/Connections Technology Support Institutional-level: University structure Technology Support	Instructors Technology Lab Peers CSP Administrators	Technology Late class hours Family circumstances Job search anxiety Financial anxiety Workload Limited time
Level II Categories	Developmental Shifts	Sources of Support	Challenges/Barriers
Level II Sub-categories	1. Appreciation of fast program pace shifts to anxiety about lack of classroom experience 2. Increased need for peer support but decreased time for making connections 3. Decreased sense of connection with Career Switcher Program	Peers CSP Administrators Colleagues	Technology Family circumstances Financial anxiety Workload Limited time

Needs/expectations. Findings suggested that generally needs and expectations of the group were being met. Participants consistently noted that they were not aware of student services beyond what was offered by the program. Further, this lack of awareness

was generally coupled with the fact that participants perceived no need for such services. For example, Greta said “I can’t imagine what services are available to me and what I would need. I just need my classes and my grades and to be able to pay my tuition.” When asked to discuss services she was aware of Debbie noted “I’d have to say nothing comes to mind. And I probably wouldn’t take advantage of it anyway.” Debbie continued with “I park, I walk to my class, I go back. I would expect that there would be the services, I would not personally expect to need them or use them.”

Several participants made reference to on-campus services that they were aware of, such as the library, parking, computer labs or writing support; a few participants also noted opportunities for on-campus involvement, such as sporting or cultural events. All participants who listed these examples of services or opportunities for engagement were clear to note that although they were familiar with available resources, that they personally would not be inclined to make use of them. Jacob elaborated on his feelings about campus engagement by saying: “The only thing I’m aware of – we get these things for sort of cultural events on campus – I’m too old to go to those – and the other thing is there is like a cocktail party for people who are enrolling in a graduate program and I thought about going to that at the beginning of the semester, but I wasn’t sure I would get anything out of it, so I didn’t go.” The second part of Jacob’s statement referred to a networking event sponsored by the institution’s student affairs unit. Also related to student engagement, Betty explained “because I’m a career switcher I’m just very directed on my one very personal goal and I’m just not part of that larger community.”

Traditional student services often noted in the literature, such as counseling or health services, did not come up as needs or expectations for this group of students, however Level I Career Switchers did express other needs and expectations. For the purpose of this study, needs/expectations is considered an all-encompassing category; delineating between what is a need and what is an expectation was not necessary to achieve the goals of this study. Table 4 demonstrates needs and expectations, both at the institutional level and the program level. Program-level needs and expectations were around administrator availability, administrator flexibility, program structure (e.g., clarity on program requirements), career services (e.g., interview tips, job placement, resume assistance), networks/connections (e.g., guest speakers, peers, alumni), and technology support (e.g., blackboard, assistance with course assignments). Needs and expectations at the institutional level were less common, but had to do with university structure (e.g., clarity and consolidation of website resources) and technology support (e.g., blackboard).

When asked about services and resources available to graduate students, Frank spoke about the availability of the CSP Coordinator. He stated, “when I couldn’t get into any of my classes I went crawling to her and she just took care of me.” Helen expressed her expectation for administrator availability, commenting, “really all I expect is that if I have a question, I have someone I can go to for it.”

Career Switchers also noted their appreciation for the flexibility demonstrated by program administrators. Affirming this need, Mary commented,

They were like ‘hey if you want to apply for this spring instead or if you want to start in the fall or... whatever works best for you.’ And I think that’s so important

because at my age... you don't need somebody else saying, well you really should do this. They never did that and that was very comforting. 'Look we'll work with you. Just do what you think is the right thing to do.'

Participants indicated a range of expectations around the structure of the program; comments were related the admission process, getting oriented to the program, the order of courses, and requirements for pursuing a Master's degree after licensure completion. Elliot noted, "it is kind of confusing, the application process and all the stuff you have to do. There were a couple of checklists and it always seemed to me like there should be one thing to go through the whole thing." Elliot went on to state, "I was kind of expecting that [an orientation] the first seminar that I went to." Greta, relaying her confusion around Master's degree requirements commented, "It wasn't clear to me exactly what the difference between Career Switchers and the regular program was if you wanted to pursue a Master's degree." Jacob discussed his expectation for more organization within the program structure and clearer guidelines on what was needed to meet requirements. He noted,

It would have been helpful if there was some sort of checklist. I remember there was a checklist somewhere on the website, but a pamphlet with a checklist, or on the front part of the website would have been helpful.

Comments related to job search assistance and career services such as mock interviewing and resume support surfaced frequently during Level I interviews. Needs and expectations in this area varied, with some participants expecting very little assistance and others counting on substantial support. Most comments related to career

services expectations were referencing program-level support rather than institutional support. Based on the lack of discussion about institutional career services it appeared that participants were unaware of this central source of support. Many students expressed satisfaction with the career support they were receiving. Isabelle noted, “What I expect, I think I’m getting. Which is, I need help with my resume. I need help with job hunting. And they are doing that for us.” Others suggested that they were not receiving quite as much job search support as they had expected. Mary commented, “but we could have talked about resumes at the beginning of the year or job interviews... we still haven’t done mock interviews and that could be done at the last seminar... I think just focus on career switcher mentality of making that transition, getting the job.”

Another prevalent expectation among the Level I Career Switchers was to be connected with alumni or other mentors who could provide guidance on navigating the program, the job search, and the teacher induction process. Betty noted, “I was expecting at these seminars that we would have maybe guest speakers and that would be very beneficial to me.” Ken also relayed his desire to be more connected with alumni who have already been through the job search process and have begun teaching. Reflecting on the value of required Blackboard threaded discussions he stated,

Instead of the [threaded discussions we’ve been having], why wouldn’t the administration as a service, say ‘okay, we’ve gone and got 15 folks [alumni] that have agreed for two months, they are going to take time out of their day and they are going to jump on board with all of you.’ I’d be on that board in a nanosecond.

The topic of technology was raised by nearly all of the participants. Comments particularly centered around the Blackboard, the university's web-based learning management system, however other areas of technology were covered. Technology support surfaced in the needs/expectations subcategory at both the program level and the institutional level. Jacob spoke about Blackboard confusion pertaining to specific courses within the program, stating, "That whole relationship is really confusing. Maybe one Blackboard site for all your courses instead of having to divide it between the methods courses and the seminar." Jacob later discussed the need for additional and enhanced technology support for the university as a whole. He noted,

I mean, if there was just one site where you could type one ID number and one password, then just go everywhere from one site instead of having to go to each discrete one or do a different password and enrollment thing.

Mary also spoke about concerns with Blackboard questioning its ability to fully meet the needs of students at the university. She commented, "I don't think the Blackboard... and I've heard this comment from many Career Switchers in the classroom... it's just not as intuitive as other university Blackboards." Mary also commented about a need for additional technology support for CSP students who were working on a class assignment. She explained that although she was aware of a technology resource center on campus, others in the program were not. Mary noted, "They didn't have that support and they could have probably used this resource center or whatever if they'd known."

Another emergent subcategory focused on needs/expectations related to the structure of the university. Greta discussed the complexity of the university and the

challenge for part-time adult students in becoming aware of services and resources. She commented,

It would be nice to know upfront if there were just a little piece of paper in the packet, these are the things, these are the services that are provided for you if you need any of them. If you don't understand the structure of the university, what an office does, it's almost impossible to find out what would be helpful.

Greta went on to state “Knowing that those things exist and knowing how to contact them, if you need to, would be helpful.” Abe drew attention to the relationship between technology and university structure; he noted, “I'm still finding the online services to be rather confusing in the way things are laid out. Everything is linked to something else and there is nothing linear about it – just a giant web.” Several participants validated this need/expectation for more clarity on how the university is structured.

Developmental shifts. Analyzing developmental shifts from an etic perspective with the second research question as a guide did not result in meaningful findings; generally there were no major shifts in needs and expectations around student services, particularly since Career Switchers had expressed very few needs and expectations to begin with. Emergent data falling into the pre-determined developmental shifts category did surface, however. These emic findings emerged in three areas: 1) Appreciation of fast program pace shifts to anxiety about lack of classroom experience; 2) Increased need for peer support, but decreased time for making connections; and 3) Decreased sense of connection with Career Switcher Program.

Challenges/barriers and sources of support. The use of tallies and focused coding illuminated these two additional categories, each with unique subcategories for Level I and Level II Career Switchers. Table 4 lays out the subcategories, demonstrating areas where challenges/barriers and sources of support remained the same for both levels, as well as those areas that were unique to each level.

Peers and CSP Administrators both emerged as consistent sources of support for students throughout the duration of their program. The term support used here refers to that which instilled in participants a sense of encouragement, confidence or comfort. Abe stated during the pilot interview:

I also spoke to ‘Olivia’ who has been in the program [in my content area] and she’s been extremely helpful. I sent out a number of panic emails to her expressing my concerns and trying to figure out what’s going on and she agreed.

So I took a little more comfort in that, know I wasn’t the only one.

In his follow-up interview as a Level II Career Switcher, Abe reiterated the value of peer support; he said “I’ve had contact with the other people in the program. They’re all going through the same process of facing the same uncertainties and challenges.”

Participants demonstrated a similar consistency in crediting CSP administrators as being a great source of support. One Level I participant, Helen, talked about the CSP administrators during a pilot interview, stating “They are always coming up with ideas or kind of guiding you... they are always there for you eventually and that’s really what I needed.” During her Level II experience Helen stated “[The administrators] have been amazing. They kind of turned around my idea of an advisor.”

Challenges or barriers throughout the program included technology, family circumstances, financial anxiety, workload, and limited time. Unique to Level I participants were the additional stressors of late classes and job search anxiety.

Several participants indicated that technology was a significant stressor. References to technology as a stressor related to Blackboard, the navigation of online resources, the development of course assignments, and the use of email and threaded discussions. Having not had to concern himself with email and online discussion boards in his previous career, the adjustment to technology at the university proved to be stressful for Frank. He noted, "Email is just a hassle. Technology has been a hassle."

Other participants attributed their major stressors to family circumstances. These circumstances ranged from child care needs to health concerns to spouse career shifts. Helen commented, "I have classes, full time job, kids, and a husband, so it's hard to fit in more."

A few participants spoke about their financial concerns. Although some of the Career Switchers chose to move into teaching as an opportunity for financial advancement and stability, others spoke about sacrificing a higher paycheck for the reward of being in the classroom. Isabelle confirmed this notion, stating, "Money is my biggest stressor. I'm taking about a two-thirds salary cut in order to teach. Just thinking about it, I get tight."

Workload during both Level I and Level II surfaced as another major stressor. Level I students dealt with course assignments, readings, and requirements to keep up with online threaded discussions. Isabelle commented,

And I have quite a lot of work on my plate. When you work full time, weekends are your bread and butter. And I still do homework during the week. In fact, Thursday nights are my declared nights off. That's it, out of the whole week. So it's tough. It does get tough. And I do get worn out sometimes.

Level II participants struggled with their new teaching responsibilities and challenges of being first-year teachers. These participants expressed a lack of connection with the CSP and the seminar course given their heavy workload on the job. Elliot, a Level II participant spoke about a seminar assignment noting, "I don't even remember what the first assignment was, but it felt like busy work. Something that's just... maybe it's supposed to help me, but it really feels like it's just satisfying the program itself."

Finding time to balance all of their priorities was a recurrent stressor mentioned by Level I and Level II participants. Carol spoke about the delivery of services and resources to students in the CSP. In describing the program administrators' attitudes toward services at the university, Carol stated, "They are definitely very peppy about it, I just don't have time to do anything." Jacob relayed the pressure he was feeling to give his best effort to the CSP program experience; he commented, "I think the only stressor is knowing there's more I could be doing, and just how am I going to go ahead and find the energy and time to do it?" Helen, also concerned about limited time, noted,

I'm kind of struggling to find enough time. I don't really have time to sit there and see what's available. I really can't... because when I... even when I had a 7:20 class I was working on papers and work on homework so I didn't really take the time to see what was available.

Elliot, concurring that finding time was a challenge stated about Level II of the program, “I just don’t feel like I have time to feel connected to that right now.”

The challenge of finding enough time to balance responsibilities for Level I students was further impacted by the late class requirements. Certain courses began at 7:20pm, ending at 10:00pm. Frank commented on the time he would arrive home after class, “It’s so hard to go to school. It’s late, very late, between 10:30 and 11:00 for me and that’s tough.”

For some Career Switchers, anxiety about the job search surfaced as a major stressor. Given the down turning economy and budget cuts in local school districts, students felt a sense of uncertainty about their ability to find work. Elliot talked about his concerns of pursuing licensure through an alternative route. He commented, “I’m just worried about people viewing my credentials skeptically.” Frank expressed his general anxiety about securing a position; he stated, “What if nobody wants me? Where will I be? Everybody is thinking that.”

Themes

In addition to the categories and subcategories that resulted from the first and second-cycle coding process, three distinct themes, which were emic in nature, emerged during a third coding cycle. These themes include Met needs/expectations vs. Unmet needs/expectations, Self-reliance vs. Dependence (in navigating the program), and Job search confidence vs. Job search anxiety. In reviewing the transcripts it became clear that participants were falling on a continuum for each of these three themes. Given the subjective and constructive nature of human experience the scales are not dichotomous;

however, the themes represented by continuums serve as overarching conceptual frameworks upon which the various categories interplay. Themes are discussed further when presenting the study's overarching theoretical findings.

Second Level Analysis

Axial Coding

Subsequent to the development of the themes discussed in the previous section, each participant I made determination to assign each participant to one end of each of the continuums. As an example, one participant was assigned the following theme assignment: Met needs/expectations, Self-reliance, and Job search confidence. Decision-making for the theme assignment was guided by a consideration of labels generated during the first coding cycle as well as a second review of all audio recordings. The second review of audio recordings allowed me to become reacquainted with each participant, taking into account my own mental model (Greene, 2007) to extract meaning from what I heard. Labels noted on this participant's transcripts included FR-Friendly, CV-Convenient, PI-Prompt information, and NN-No need for services, suggesting that the participant's needs and expectations for the program were generally met. The participant also used phrases such as "I really like the way it's run" and "I can't remember anything lacking." Labels also included SR-Self-reliance, AC-Accountability, and CF-Confidence, suggesting that on the Self-reliance vs. Dependence continuum the participant tended toward Self-reliance, and that on the Job search confidence vs. Job search anxiety continuum the participant tended toward confidence. This is not to say that contradictory codes did not appear as the themes are not suggesting dichotomous

assignments; for example, this same participant's transcript also included the labels BC-Blackboard confusion, CON-Consolidation, and MC-Masters confusion, suggesting areas where more information or support might be useful. Counter to this participant's theme assignment was another participant assigned the following codes: Unmet needs/expectations, Dependence, and Job search anxiety. Labels suggestive of these assignments included: AC-Admission confusion, WC-Website confusion, HH-Hand-holding, CS-Career support, JP-Job placement, and JSA-Job search anxiety. Some of this participant's phrases included "I don't think they took into consideration," "I don't think people should have to be expected," and "I was kind of expecting it would be a little more." Again, this participant expressed sentiments leaning toward the other end of each continuum, however the theme assignment was applied based on a subjective determination of which direction the participant leaned. In addition to examining labels and phrases throughout the text, theme assignments were also based on listening to intonations in participants' voices; often it was easy to detect a sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, independence or dependence, and confidence or anxiety. I applied my own subjective lenses as I considered making theme assignments for each participant.

Overall findings for theme assignments suggested needs/expectations were being met for most participants, and that most participants exhibited a sense of self-reliance in navigating the program. Findings on the Job search confidence vs. Job search anxiety continuum were more varied, however. Rather than report a distinct theme assignment for each participant, the following findings focus on trends illuminated by applying various filters to the axial codes. Using an Excel spreadsheet that contained all relevant

data, I filtered participants by age, content area and highest degree attained (Bachelors, Masters or Professional/Terminal).

Age. The age of Career Switchers fell into a range between 30 and 65 years. Because participants often made reference to their age when considering interview responses, this seemed to be an important variable to consider. Filtering participants by age uncovered a trend for both the Self-reliance vs. Dependence theme as well as the Job search confidence vs. Job search anxiety theme. Most participants were categorized by self-reliance, however those participants who leaned toward dependence fell within the younger portion of the total age range (Under 45). Job search anxiety also surfaced as a prevalent theme for those under 45, however this theme did surface in the 45 and over age range as well. Demonstrating the influence of age in relation to self-reliance and job search confidence, one of the over 45 participants suggested “In our age group and experience it’s keep your shirt on... you can work this stuff out. I would imagine someone less experienced might be a little antsy.” Another participant over 45 stated,

As far as mentoring us or giving us tips about jobs or even helping us look for jobs, I wouldn’t expect any of that. It’s pretty clear, I mean, we are doing that ourselves, but I think that’s how it should be too.

Yet another stated “I want to be wanted for who I am, not for who I know or who is trying to help me.” One participant under 45, suggested a competing view point that the CSP should be more involved in the job search process; this participant stated,

I was hoping when I got in that there would be lots of career support afforded me. There seems to be a little... I think when I got into it, it sounded a little bit more like they were going to actively work to try to get you a placement.

Content Area. Filters were applied to sort participants by content area to determine whether content was suggestive of trends in thematic descriptions. Given the small N of 14, and the low number of occurrences of unmet needs/expectations and dependence for all participants, content was not to be determined a predictive factor for these themes. On the continuum of Job search confidence vs. Job search anxiety findings were mixed across all content areas. Thus, for this study, there is no suggested influence of content area on the student services experience of Career Switchers.

Highest Degree Attained. When filtering by highest degree attained (which included assignments of bachelor's, masters, and professional/terminal) the Self-reliance vs. Dependence continuum was the only theme suggestive of a potential trend. Findings suggested that a leaning toward dependence was more likely for those participants at the bachelor's degree level. This trend may be explained by the fact that those participants at the Master's level or higher have already had experiences negotiating higher education at the graduate level and thus require less hand-holding than the others. No trends could be extracted when filtering by highest degree attained for the remaining two themes.

Facilitators and Blockers

The exercise of applying theme assignments to each of the participants was useful in further considering the data. It can be assumed that the ideal conditions for fostering student success within the Career Switcher Program are most likely to exist for

participants exhibiting the theme assignment of Met needs/expectations, Self-reliance, and Job search confidence. Sorting of labels assigned to participants with this leaning led to the identification of those factors most helpful or supportive to the students' experience (Facilitators); those were: program administrators, technology resources, instructors, and peers. Similarly, sorting of labels assigned to participants with theme assignments that included Unmet needs/expectations, Dependence, and/or Job search anxiety led to the identification of those factors that created challenges or barriers for students (Blockers); those were: technology, late classes, limited time, financial anxiety, family circumstances, job search anxiety, and workload. Upon further review of all participant transcripts, facilitators tended to be consistent even for those with theme assignments of Unmet needs/expectations, Dependence, and/or Job search anxiety; similarly blockers tended to be consistent even for those with Met needs/expectations, Self-reliance, and/or Job search confidence. Given these trends, the overarching theoretical categories of facilitators and blockers seemed most salient for the study. The theoretical framework presented in Figure 3 organizes the findings:

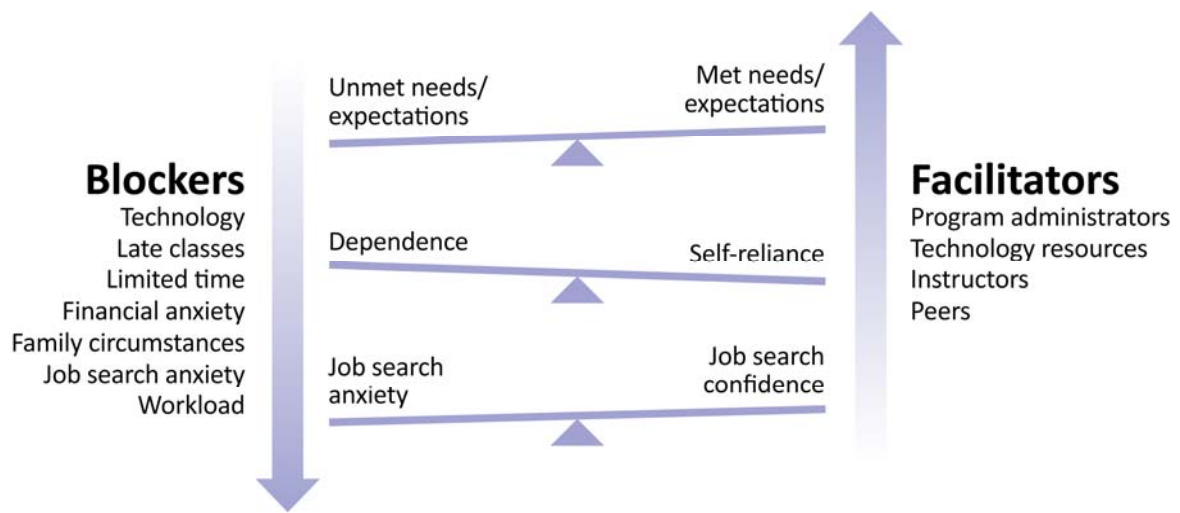


Figure 4.1 Model depicting the Facilitator-Blocker Theory for Career Switchers. Copyright pending by L.D. Cohen.

The Facilitator-Blocker model is intended to be dynamic, suggesting three fluid continuums on which Career Switchers lie. An image that resembles a seesaw represents each continuum; at any time the seesaw can be pulled up by the facilitators on the right or pushed down by the blockers on the left. Facilitators and blockers are represented by up and down arrows and are suggestive of competing forces that can impact students' equilibrium on each of the three continuums. An ideal situation would involve each of the seesaws tilting up toward the right, suggesting a theme assignment of Met needs/expectations, Self-reliance, and Job search confidence. Conversely, the least desired situation would entail all three seesaws tilting down toward the left, suggesting a theme assignment of Unmet needs/expectations, Dependence, and Job search anxiety. In reality, because themes are not dichotomous, each seesaw will tilt in one direction or another at any given point in time depending on how the current level of support from

facilitators balances with the current level of deterrence from blockers. Career Switchers who are navigating the challenges of their graduate program, job transition, and personal lives will inevitably face blockers while simultaneously having access to facilitators; thus, the minimum goal is to strive for equilibrium on each continuum.

5. Discussion

Introduction

The current study has illuminated sources of support as well as challenge areas for students enrolled in the Career Switcher Program. Themes identified through data analysis led to the development of a theory involving facilitators and blockers specific for Career Switchers; the Facilitator-Blocker Theory for Career Switchers suggests that as adult part-time graduate students, Career Switchers continually face convergent forces in their attempt to achieve balance in their personal, professional, and academic lives. The themes of Met Needs/Expectations vs. Unmet Needs/Expectations, Self-Reliance vs. Dependence, and Job Search Confidence vs. Job Search Anxiety represented continuums on which Career Switchers lie when attempting to achieve this sense of balance. Various factors influence where along each of the themed continuums the Career Switchers may fall, and fluctuations can occur throughout their program experience. This study highlighted that generally the expressed needs and expectations for Career Switchers were met and that Career Switchers exhibited a strong degree of self-reliance in navigating their program. This finding of a strong theme toward self-reliance confirmed Knowles' (1990) concept that adults are self-directed in their learning. The Career Switchers in this study exhibited ranging degrees of confidence or anxiety as they approached their job search, which is consistent with Lehker and Furlong's (2006)

findings on graduate students; the end goal of obtaining teaching work upon program completion was more pressing to the Career Switchers than specific student services or programmatic needs.

Seven blockers surfaced as having a negative impact on students: technology, late classes, limited time, financial anxiety, job search anxiety, and workload. These blockers can be likened to the challenges and barriers identified by Stone (2008), particularly limited time, financial anxiety, and the idea of having to balance workload with other personal and professional commitments. The blockers also apply to two of Kuwan and Larsson's (2008) obstacle categories, including Personal life situation and Institutional framework. Concurrent with blockers, findings illuminated four key facilitators that positively impacted students along each of the themed continuums, including: program administrators, technology support, instructors, and peers. Facilitators exist as a competing force to blockers, providing students necessary support to combat deterrents. The onus, then, for administrators and faculty involved with the Career Switcher program is to find ways to increase facilitators and decrease blockers such that these adult part-time graduate students can maintain a comfortable level of balance in negotiating their personal, professional, and academic lives.

Blockers

Technology

Technology proved to be a major hurdle for Career Switchers. Some referenced their age in explaining why technology was such a barrier. Others expressed concerns with the structure of the university's Blackboard system and how it integrated with the

CSP structure. Other students drew attention to the challenges they faced in effectively using technology to complete required course assignments. In addition to campus technologies, Level II Career Switchers employed as teachers were further challenged by the technologies they were required to learn in their new school environments. Common to most Career Switchers was that technology in some form or another proved to be a major stressor, blocking progress in other areas.

In this age of rapidly advancing technologies it is difficult to suggest that students in higher education should not have to keep up. With that said, this study illuminated that often technology gets in the way of the more important aspects of the educational experience; Career Switchers expressed a sense of exasperation around spending unanticipated time navigating threaded discussions or ensuring that they received critical email messages. Level II Career Switchers noted an added level of frustration about requirements to use technology as a measure of accountability on the job. Important to consider is whether adult part-time students such as Career Switchers are being short-changed due to the demands created by having to keep up with technology. Findings from this study suggest that programs and universities will need to consider new strategies in order to better support students in balancing technology demands with others.

Late Classes

Among the sources of stress for Career Switchers, particularly those in Level I, is the timing of classes. The schedule for university courses calls for some to begin after 7:00pm and end by 10:00pm or later. For those pursuing coursework while working full-

time, these late classes can be a major drain on energy. For many adult part-time students who live far from campus, matriculation in late classes means returning home by 11:00pm or later and missing out on much needed sleep.

Unfortunately, from an institutional perspective, the scheduling of late classes is necessary to accommodate part-time students. Early evening classes alone generally do not satisfy scheduling requirements to ensure that students enroll in all the coursework they need; scheduling only daytime courses would limit access to part-time students who carry 9-5 work obligations. Thus, late classes are an unwanted necessity for Career Switchers. One consideration might be for the CSP to offer classes on the weekends, although that model might present different challenges for the Career Switchers.

Understanding the challenges that late classes present to Career Switchers, program administrators may seek ways to lessen the burden for students. This may entail pre-admission marketing about the schedule of courses so candidates will know in advance what demands to expect on their evening hours, and can perhaps adjust morning work hours accordingly. Short from providing this advanced notice, there is little a program or institution can do to keep students from required late classes. Sensitivity, coupled with the provision of supportive campus resources, may be the best solution for this unavoidable blocker.

Limited Time

Aside from the challenges of enrollment in late evening classes, Career Switchers indicated a sense of constantly having to scramble for time. Between personal, professional, and academic obligations, these adult part-time graduate students must try

to balance a heavy load. Often this balance is difficult to maintain, which leads to increased anxiety.

Limited time, like late classes, is an unavoidable blocker. Though the university can provide supports to students such as a time-management workshops or personal counseling, a frequent reaction among the participants in this study was that use of these services would only exhaust more of their time. There is a sense among the Career Switchers that they are doing all they can to stay afloat throughout a fast-paced and demanding experience. Accessing on-campus resources would limit time that already feels so precious.

Financial Anxiety

Another blocker noted by some Career Switchers was anxiety over finances. This blocker may be relevant for many returning graduate students who sacrifice an income for the sake of returning to the academy; some graduate students may give up working altogether; others may maintain full-time work while enrolling in classes part-time; still others find part-time work on or off-campus to support their studies. In addition to managing work needs, a return to graduate school presents the extra financial burden of tuition payments. The finding of financial anxiety as a blocker confirms Stone's (2008) findings that financial struggles surfaced as a common struggle among adult learners returning to the academy.

Specific to Career Switchers, financial anxiety results due to the likelihood that a career shift to teaching will mean a long-term downgrade of income. For those Career Switchers who shifted from high paying professional roles in order to experience the

reward of the classroom setting, funds they had been accustomed to may no longer be available. Several Career Switchers in the observation groups gave up work in medicine, law, computer science, or high-ranking government positions. Thus, financial anxiety surfaced due to a major shift in pay scales between these types of professions and teaching.

To some degree the university can ease financial anxiety through the availability of financial aid. Career Switchers may benefit from information and resources on scholarships and loans; however, not all Career Switchers will qualify for or take advantage of these sources of support. Financial anxiety is a reality for students across levels and academic disciplines.

Family Circumstances

Various circumstances related to family surfaced as stressors or barriers for Career Switchers in maintaining the balance they were seeking. Child care, health concerns, and spouse employment were the three most common family circumstances referenced by participants. Those Career Switchers who were also parents emphasized the degree to which the needs and concerns of their own children took priority over the demands of the program. The family circumstances blocker is consistent with challenges or barriers that surfaced in the adult learner literature. Stone referenced “dealing with changes in relationships with partners and children,” and “balancing the needs of study with the needs of family, home, partners and children” as two major barriers faced by returning students.

From a program perspective support to adult part-time graduate around family circumstances can take the shape of enhanced sensitivity by instructors and administrators; from an institutional perspective support is demonstrated through the provision of appropriate support services, such as counseling, child care, and health services. Although the institution in the given inquiry makes such resources available, members of the CSP did not report a need for using them.

Job Search Anxiety

Anxiety faced during the job search presented as a tremendous blocker for Career Switchers. It should be noted that the job search anxiety discussed here is distinct from the level of job search anxiety referenced on the Job Search Anxiety versus Job Search Confidence continuum. As a blocker, job search anxiety presents as one phenomenon that prevents students from achieving equilibrium. As with other blockers, anxiety around the job search has the potential to elevate the experience of needs not being met, increase dependence in navigating the program, and conspicuously, magnify the level of job search anxiety in relation to confidence.

References to or indications of job search anxiety surfaced when exploring participants' needs/expectations around career services. Though students generally expressed some degree of satisfaction with the level of job search support provided to them by the CSP, some suggested a desire for more. Beyond being notified of a university-wide education job fair, (which several noted not having time to attend) Career Switchers did not indicate an awareness of centralized career services. This gap in coordination between unit-level career services and institutional career services is

suggestive of a student/academic affairs partnership that could potentially decrease job search anxiety among Career Switchers.

Workload

As could be expected in any graduate-level program, Career Switchers expressed that they were overwhelmed by the workload. For the Level I participants, workload involved substantial coursework in addition to seminar requirements. For Level II participants, workload involved responsibilities that came with the first year of teaching; this not only included the transition to a new work culture and environment, but also learning and applying a new skill set. Common to Career Switchers at both levels was the experience of constantly trying to keep up with the demands of their situation.

With regard to workload, Level II Career Switchers in particular noted a feeling of disconnectedness with the program. In some cases the Career Switchers and the CSP Coordinator had differing perceptions of the utility of certain pedagogical strategies. With the seminar as their only program requirement, participants tended to put the CSP on the backburner. Some participants expressed value in continued interaction with the CSP (particularly for peer support), however most perceived seminar requirements (threaded discussions in particular) as busy work. Contrary to this sentiment, the CSP Coordinator/seminar instructor intended threaded discussions as an opportunity for necessary reflection on first-year practice; in addition, the Coordinator viewed threaded discussions as a feedback mechanism in order to gauge and be responsive to student needs. This disparity in perceptions about workload could be explained by the fact that

the Level II Career Switchers were new teachers with perspectives that differed from those of an experienced educator.

Facilitators

Peer Support

Career switchers at both levels gained great support from their peers. Given the social nature of teacher education, students in the pre-service training portion of their programs are surrounded by peers. Opportunities abound for Level I Career Switchers to connect on assignments, field experiences, and the challenges and barriers they face during their professional transition. The move to the classroom, however, proves to be more difficult as first year teachers tend to feel isolated in the classroom (Boreen & Niday, 2000). For Level II Career Switchers, peer support shifted from the program to the school, where colleagues and mentors became key resources.

Discussion with the CSP Coordinator illuminated program-level efforts to increase peer and alumni connections for students so that both Level I and Level II Career Switchers could benefit from this facilitator. The Coordinator spoke about her interest in developing the notion of community for Career Switchers, where peer and alumni connections would lead to an enhanced degree of program loyalty. This goal is consistent with the recommendations of the participants, who suggested the development of alumni connections both online and in-person. Level II Career Switchers also raised the issue of finding time to reconnect with their fellow Career Switchers, whom they no longer see on a regular basis. For Level II participants the most valuable aspect of the seminar course was the time afforded for sharing experiences and interacting with peers.

Student affairs literature has much to say about building community for graduate students. However, given the part-time nature of Career Switchers, building community in the traditional sense is difficult. Brandes (2006) recommended the development of graduate student centers in order to enhance socialization and involvement among graduate students. But for part-time adult students whose main objective is to arrive on campus, park, attend class, and go home, graduate student centers then do not seem to be a viable solution. Given that Career Switchers indicate a stronger affiliation with their program than with the institution, coupled with heavy demands on their time, identifying opportunities for socialization and networking within the structure of program itself seems to be the best strategy to maximize peer support.

Administrators

The availability and flexibility of administrators surfaced as major supports for students throughout the program. Similar to peer support, administrator support showed up as a primarily program-level need. Students in the CSP were well-acquainted with key program administrators and generally depended on their regular direction and guidance in navigating the program. Observation data as well as the CSP Coordinator interview supported findings from Career Switcher interviews, providing further evidence that administrators served as a major facilitator for CSP students.

Institutionally, administrators were generally unknown to the Career Switchers. On a limited number of occasions Career Switchers mentioned contact they had with university offices beyond the program, including the main college office, the registrar, parking and transportation services, photo ID, and computer labs; however little

acknowledgment was given to the level of administrator support provided from each of these units. Further, participants generally expressed that having limited time prevented them from exploring sources of support beyond the Career Switcher program. This reality presents a challenge for student affairs administrators to seek creative ways to reach out to a population not directly seeking support.

Technology Resources

Given the challenges technology presented to Career Switchers, participants felt supported by those resources that helped them be successful in this domain. Though some Career Switchers reported some level of frustration regarding the institution's responsiveness to technology concerns, others noted the effectiveness of such services. Participant descriptions of technology support included one of a technology assistance and resource center and another of the institution's information technology unit. An interpretation of responses draws attention to a discrepancy in the participants' comprehension of the two services. Although some Career Switchers accessed the appropriate service, others may have experienced confusion in identifying the best resource to meet their needs. A statement on the website for the institution's IT unit indicates that it "provides library and information technology resources, systems, services, tools, and training to the university community;" the website for the institution's technology assistance and resource center describes this resource as

a state-of-the-art student technology learning facility...staffed with student mentor-consultants who have technical expertise in analog/digital video editing and production and multimedia computing technologies. Mentors provide

problem-driven advice and assistance to all students in the development and production of academic or co-curricular projects.

Further clarification of specific technology resources may have assisted students in their pursuits.

Major needs for technology support revolved around email, course assignments, and the web-based learning management system, Blackboard. For many Level I and II participants Blackboard surfaced as one of their most prominent institutional or programmatic barriers. Though the technology resources available to students served as facilitators, it was evident that additional support in this area would have been well-received. Particular confusion stemmed from the requirement that students access two different Blackboard systems, one maintained by the college and another maintained by the university. Further, students were frustrated with ongoing Blackboard maintenance issues.

Based on feedback related to technology it is reasonable to suggest an alternative to technology resources as a facilitator; instead of increasing the level of technology support, program administrators might consider the minimization of technology requirements. Although effective use of technology is critical for beginning teachers, the degree of burden that technology places on Career Switchers raises questions about the efficacy of the current approach. Perhaps there is a need to consider the impact of requiring too much technology usage from adult part-time learners.

Instructors

The CSP Coordinator indicated a desire to increase collaboration with program faculty in order to enhance faculty-student engagement. Career Switchers' responses around the value of instructor support validate the merit of the Coordinator's objective. Participants frequently spoke about the vast amount of learning that took place in their methods courses; Career Switchers also credited instructors for providing extensive guidance and support. There was some indication, though, that advising was either contradictory or varying from course to course or course to seminar. This feedback suggests the need for a more systematic approach to aligning faculty and administrator advising.

Program vs. Institutional Support

An examination of facilitators for Career Switchers reveals that all but technology resources stem fully from the program level. It is evident given the close-knit nature of this cohort program, that program-level support is essential. Though the need for program-level support is unarguable, the lack of findings around institutional support raises questions about how the greater university might better support Career Switchers. This consideration is particularly relevant given tight program budgets and limited staffing within the Career Switcher Program.

The CSP Coordinator expressed the challenge of maximizing the availability of institutional resources for her students. The Coordinator and one administrative assistant each designate 25 percent of their time to running the CSP. Both the Coordinator and administrative assistant maintain other duties unrelated to the CSP that comprise 75

percent of their time. This means that full-time staffing for the program is only a total of 50 percent of one full-time position. The CSP is also minimally supported by one part-time student position. Due to these time and staffing limitations, the ability to orchestrate support services for Career Switchers beyond the program-level is a challenge.

Career Switchers highlighted current institutional efforts around technology. Support from university labs and resource centers supplemented program-level technology support. The Career Switchers emphasized their interest in having online information pertaining to services consolidated into one website or one publication; this recommendation suggests the need for better coordination of disparate services across campus, and raises the question of student and academic affairs collaboration.

Role of Student Affairs

In examining the facilitators uncovered through data analysis and considering program-level limitations, the study raises an inherent question for student affairs. There seems to exist a gap between what student affairs offers and what Career Switchers are asking for. As was noted in the previous section, supports needed or expected by Career Switchers are largely program-based; students rely on their program administrators, instructors, and peers, as well as the technology support provided by either the program or the institution. Beyond these four areas, Career Switchers have few expectations. These adult part-time graduate students are not asking for what student affairs has the capacity can provide and CSP administrators are limited in their ability to reach out to student affairs for support. The question to be explored, then, is whether student affairs in the traditional sense is needed for this variety of graduate student. Clearly there is an

information deficit among Career Switchers pertaining to centralized student services, but does this mean that student affairs should not still play a role?

Given the large extent to which Career Switchers are unaware of services and resources on campus, it is likely that there exist facilitators beyond the findings of this inquiry. Based on the literature presented on graduate student services and student affairs for graduate and professional students, student affairs professionals have the capacity to serve as major facilitators for this adult part-time population. Key to this discussion is identifying the most appropriate areas for delivering student affairs services to Career Switchers. Since Career Switchers' were primarily focused on job searching, it seems most relevant to explore the role that the university's career services unit could play in helping students achieve success and satisfaction in that domain.

Career Services

Given that Job search confidence versus Job search anxiety surfaced as the most prevalent theme for Career Switchers, it is reasonable to suggest that the CSP focus attention on enhancing the provision of career services. Program administrators and faculty members might consider not only engaging in more efforts related to career services but also collaborating with the university's career services unit. Through interviews with Career switchers and the CSP Coordinator, as well as seminar observations, it was evident that the current level of career services is program-based. Although the Coordinator noted her awareness of institutional career resources, she acknowledged that there are services she has not yet woven into the program. During her

interview, the Coordinator referenced her knowledge of university career services by stating the following:

I would definitely want to build more systematically into the program the assistance they need with getting a job. I would say I've certainly taken a serious look at that and tried to provide things to them, but I know there could be more to that...typically career services at a university tend to be geared toward the undergraduate getting that entry level job and then that there are some differences in terms of how you present yourself to become a teacher and how you present yourself in an interview to become an analyst or a business type job or working for human resources or something... so I feel like there is a bit of an educational component to helping career services and I'm speaking as a person who really hasn't pursued this, so I'm speculating here, that it would take some time to help everybody know what the needs are for teachers getting a job.

The Coordinator did demonstrate some effort to educate Career Switchers on services provided by the university's career unit; this was observed during seminar courses as well as through an ongoing informal review of CSP listserv messages. In particular, the Coordinator encouraged students to participate in the institution's annual education recruitment day. This event was developed out of the central career services unit and intended for students enrolled in any of the college's various teacher education programs. The Coordinator also made efforts to keep Career Switcher's informed of external professional development opportunities; she alerted students about school district-based job fairs and encouraged their participation in volunteer roles, such as

science fair judging. Even though some attention was given to career support available beyond the confines of the CSP, the Coordinator's self-admitted speculation around university career services highlighted that there was limited coordination between program-level and institutional career services efforts; her statement did suggest the potential for collaboration in this area, however.

Various studies have examined the potential for student and academic affairs partnerships specifically for career services. Albert, Peper, and McVey (2002) highlighted a joint program between a central university career services office and a college of education. White and Kraning (2000) discussed a similar liaison model for integrating the career center and academic units. Lehker and Furlong (2006) wrote about the advantages and drawbacks to both centralized and academically-based career services units, suggesting that a sharing of ideas and resources between units would offer students the most comprehensive range of support. Future study on career switchers might involve conversations with administrators within centralized career services units in order to gain an institutional perspective on how job search needs for this adult part-time population are being addressed.

Impact of Economy on Career Switcher Needs/Expectations

Central to the intense focus on job search was the reality of the U.S. economy at the time of the study. Throughout the two semesters of interviews and observations during spring and fall 2009, the Federal government was attempting to recover from an unprecedented financial collapse. The recession led to increasing rates of unemployment and a shrinking availability of teaching positions. It is important to draw attention to the

reality of this economic downturn, particularly as it relates to the higher level of job search anxiety among the Career Switchers. Conducting the study during a period of financial growth might result in different outcomes in terms of major blockers and levels of job search confidence versus anxiety.

Implications for Future Study

Several factors have been noted as potential considerations for future study. Conducting the study during different economic times has the potential to shift findings. It was also suggested to involve career services professionals in a future study to gain an institutional perspective on how Career Switchers needs and expectations are being addressed. In addition to these suggestions, the current inquiry raised several other implications for future study.

Homogeneity of Participants

All of the participants were White and lived in same general vicinity. Future study could be expanded to include a more diverse sample, and could be considered at other institutions and other geographic regions. Specific to geographic region, it should be noted that the study was conducted in part of the country known for a fast pace, with a highly educated population who tend to exhibit a high level of intensity and competition around professional pursuits. The proclivity of students entering graduate studies with a primary focus on obtaining a necessary credential is not solely consistent for Career Switchers, but for graduate students as a whole within this region. Conducting this study under varied circumstances, perhaps in a slower-paced region where graduate students are more inclined to engage with the institution, may produce different outcomes.

Prior Experiences

The filtering of data on the factor of highest degree attained suggested a leaning toward Self-reliance for those who had already completed a Master's degree or above. Further analysis around prior experiences (e.g., previous career or previous institution) may enrich the knowledge base of characteristics that are predictive of self-reliance or job search confidence among career switchers.

Quantitative Data

The current study sought to gain an understanding of the needs and expectations of Career Switchers. The case study approach used for this inquiry served as a solid foundation for future study. The anecdotal evidence presented by Career Switchers identified key themes as well as trends for facilitators and blockers. In order to convince stakeholders to expand student services resources for career switchers, quantitative data collection may be necessary. Survey data that tracks needs, expectations, usage of services, program satisfaction, and job placement are potential areas to explore.

Age

Although age was considered as a unit of analysis when considering where participants fell along the three themed continuums, the small n did not allow for more deeply delving into the construct of age as it related to the study as a whole. Future study might address the experience of Career Switchers at differing age ranges, more closely examining the impact of age on how adult graduate students experience the institution.

Conclusion

Career switchers are one variety of graduate students whose needs resemble those of many other adult part-time graduate students. Programs for career switchers must be developed with intentional integration of adult learning theory principles. As well, for those career switcher programs at the graduate-level, attention to the appropriate delivery of student services is critical. In their attempt to maintain balance between their personal, professional, and academic lives, career switchers are faced with various converging forces. Some forces act as blockers, impeding career switchers' ability to maintain a sense of equilibrium; other forces act as facilitators, providing support and advocacy to these students as they navigate professional and academic transitions.

Student affairs has yet to emerge as an identified facilitator for career switchers. Although some of the Career Switchers in the current study presented varying degrees of job search anxiety and recognized the need for additional career services support, generally participants expressed minimal need for or awareness of institutional intervention in this area. Literature on student services for graduate and professionals does reference career services, both at the program and institutional level, to be critical in fostering student success. The principle Enhances career and professional development lies among Pontius and Harper's (2006) Seven Principles for Good Practice in Graduate Student Engagement. Pontius and Harper stated, "Good practice in career and professional development engages graduate and professional students in preparation for

future roles. Effective career development centers expand their foci to include more outreach, workshops, services, counseling, and career fairs for graduate and professional students” (p.54).

Literature on student and academic affairs collaborations has emerged in recent years, evidencing the need for cross-campus partnerships in order to enhance student support (Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Brown, 1989; Cleveland-Innes & Emes, 2005; Hirt, 2007; Kellogg, 1999). In the case of the Career Switchers in the current study, it appears that collaboration efforts around career services might prove to be most fruitful. Future study on the development of effective partnerships between education schools and student affairs units in the provision of services for adult part-time career switchers in transition will better inform this growing body of literature.

Appendix A

Pilot Recruitment Email

Subject:
Assistance with doctoral pilot study
From:
Lori Cohen <lcohen@gmu.edu>
Date:
Tue, 27 Jan 2009 13:49:38 -0500

Hello Level I Career Switchers!

As I mentioned during the seminar course, I would like to request your permission to participate in a face-to-face interview as part of a pilot test for my dissertation research. This research is being conducted to gather data on graduate student perceptions about student services. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute interview.

Your participation in an interview is completely optional. Should you agree to participate in an interview, I will work with you to schedule a time this semester that will be convenient for both of us. Prior to beginning the interview I will provide you with an informed consent letter that will detail my research procedures and provide you with resources should you have questions about my study.

If you are interested in assisting with my study please send me an email as soon as possible. I would greatly appreciate your participation in this pilot study as it will help inform my methodology for future dissertation research.

Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Lori

Appendix B

Pilot Interview Protocol

I. Thank participant for agreeing to interview. Provide overview of interview process, share general information about research goals, and ensure confidentiality.

II. Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about your higher education experiences – describe the institutions you have attended previously and the areas you have studied.
2. Tell me about your professional path and what led you to pursue teaching licensure
3. How did you learn about Mason’s Career Switcher program and why did you decide to enroll at Mason?
4. Tell me about your experience with the admission process to the Career Switcher program? [Probes if needed: Positive? Negative? Easy? Complicated?]
5. Did you attend an orientation for the program? If so, did that session provide you with useful information and resources? What are some examples that were most helpful? Was there anything you felt was missing from your orientation to the program?
6. Do you identify yourself as a graduate student? Do you feel like that identity fits with where you are and what you are doing in your life right now?
7. Are you aware of services and resources available to graduate students on this campus? What are they and how have you made use of any of the services thus far? Describe your level of satisfaction with services you have used.
8. As a graduate student, what services and resources do you expect from the University as a whole? From your specific program within the College of Education and Human Development?
9. What expectations do you have of the Career Switcher program upon completion of the program in terms of Career Services and your job search?
10. Do you have anything else to add about your experience as a graduate student at Mason within the Career Switcher program?

For HSRB: Description of characteristics and development

This instrument was developed based on the research questions and goals of the future dissertation study. A comprehensive literature review on alternative teacher certification, graduate student services and student and academic affairs collaborations served as a foundation for the creation of this instrument. The instrument aims to collect data on the educational and professional experiences of participants, as well as on their experiences and perceptions of student services while enrolled in the Career Switcher program. Pilot data collected using this instrument will inform future methodology.

Appendix C

Level I Recruitment Email

Subject:
Assistance with doctoral dissertation study
From:
Lori Cohen <lcohen@gmu.edu>
Date:
TBD

Hello Level I Career Switchers!

As I mentioned during the seminar course, I would like to request your permission to participate in a face-to-face interview as part of my dissertation research. This research is being conducted to gather data on graduate student perceptions about student services. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute interview.

Your participation in an interview is completely optional. Should you agree to participate in an interview, I will work with you to schedule a time that will be convenient for both of us. Prior to beginning the interview I will provide you with an informed consent letter that will detail my research procedures and provide you with resources should you have questions about my study.

If you are interested in assisting with my study please send me an email as soon as possible. I would greatly appreciate your participation.

Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Lori

Appendix D

Level II Recruitment Email

Subject:
Assistance with doctoral dissertation study
From:
Lori Cohen <lcohen@gmu.edu>
Date:
TBD

Hello Level II Career Switchers!

I hope you have been well and that your Level II experience is off to a great start!

As I mentioned during the seminar course, I would like to request your permission to participate in a follow-up face-to-face interview as part of my dissertation research. This research is being conducted to gather data on graduate student perceptions about student services. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute interview.

Your participation in an interview is completely optional. Should you agree to participate in an interview, I will work with you to schedule a time that will be convenient for both of us. Prior to beginning the interview I will provide you with an informed consent letter that will detail my research procedures and provide you with resources should you have questions about my study.

If you are interested in continuing to assist with my study please send me an email as soon as possible. I would greatly appreciate your participation.

Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Lori

Appendix E

Level I Interview Protocol

I. Thank participant for agreeing to interview. Provide overview of interview process, share general information about research goals, and ensure confidentiality.

II. Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about your higher education experiences – describe the institutions you have attended previously and the areas you have studied.
2. Tell me about your professional path and what led you to pursue teaching licensure
3. How did you learn about Mason’s Career Switcher program and why did you decide to enroll at Mason?
4. Tell me about your experience with the admission process to the Career Switcher program? [Probes if needed: Positive? Negative? Easy? Complicated?]
5. Did you attend the information session for the program prior to applying? If so, what are some examples of information or resources that were most helpful? What was missing?
6. What were you expecting in terms of an orientation to the program once you were admitted? What did you experience? Was anything missing?
7. Do you identify yourself as a graduate student? Do you feel like that identity fits with where you are and what you are doing in your life right now?
8. What expectations do you have of the university to provide you with opportunities to get involved on campus and within your professional community?
9. What have been your stressors in transitioning to the Career Switcher Program? What challenges and/or barriers have you faced?
10. Are you aware of services and resources available to graduate students on this campus that may offer support with some of the stressors/challenges/barriers? What are they and how have you made use of any of the services thus far? Describe your level of satisfaction with services you have used.
11. As a graduate student, what services and resources do you expect from the University during your program? From the Career Switcher Program?
12. What expectations do you have of the Career Switcher Program upon completion of Level I in terms of Career Services and your job search?
13. Do you have anything else to add about your experience as a graduate student at Mason within the Career Switcher program?

For HSRB: Description of characteristics and development

This instrument was developed based on the research questions and goals of the future dissertation study. A comprehensive literature review on alternative teacher certification, graduate student services and student and academic affairs collaborations served as a foundation for the creation of this instrument. The instrument aims to collect data on the educational and professional experiences of participants, as well as on their experiences and perceptions of student services while enrolled in the Career Switcher program. Pilot data collected using this instrument will inform future methodology.

Appendix F

Level II Interview Protocol

I. Thank participant for agreeing to interview. Provide overview of interview process, share general information about research goals, and ensure confidentiality.

II. Interview Questions:

1. Are you currently teaching? What grade? What subject?
2. How has your teaching experience been for you this year? [Probes: positive, negative, examples, anecdotes]
3. Do you still feel connected to the Career Switcher Program?
4. How has the program supported your needs since we spoke last spring? [Probes: in finding a job? In supporting you in your teaching?]
5. What have been your stressors throughout the Career Switcher Program? What challenges and/or barriers have you faced?
6. Are you aware of services and resources available to graduate students on this campus that may offer support with some of the stressors/challenges/barriers? What are they and how have you made use of any of the services thus far? Describe your level of satisfaction with services you have used.
7. Are there any services on campus that wish you would have used during your first year in the program?
8. How have you learned about services on campus? Do you feel that the Career Switcher Program provided you with the information you needed? Do you feel that the university provided you with the information you needed?
9. Upon beginning the program, what expectations did you have of the university to provide you with opportunities to get involved on campus and within your professional community?
10. How would you describe your involvement with George Mason community during your time on campus [Probes: with your program, with the greater university community, with other students; positive, negative?]
11. Is there anything the Career Switcher Program or the university could have done to enhance your engagement with the community?
12. At this point do you have any needs or expectations of the Career Switcher program to support you as a student? Of the university?
13. Do you have anything else to add about your experience as a graduate student at Mason within the Career Switcher program?

For HSRB: Description of characteristics and development

This instrument was developed based on the research questions and goals of the future dissertation study. A comprehensive literature review on alternative teacher certification, graduate student services and student and academic affairs collaborations served as a foundation for the creation of this instrument. The instrument aims to collect data on the educational and professional experiences of participants, as well as on their experiences and perceptions of student services while enrolled in the Career Switcher program. Pilot data collected using this instrument will inform future methodology.

Appendix G

Program Coordinator Interview Protocol

I. Thank participant for agreeing to interview. Provide overview of interview process, share general information about research goals, and ensure confidentiality.

II. Interview Questions:

1. How long have you been working with the Career Switcher Program and how would you describe your role?
2. How has the Career Switcher Program evolved since you began working with it?
3. Describe the administrative structure for the Career Switcher Program.
4. What are your goals for the program in terms of providing students with the co-curricular (non-academic) services you believe they need?
5. How do you assess the services students need? What services do you believe they need?
6. What strategies have you used to provide service to students within the Career Switcher Program?
7. What resources have you leveraged within the College or within the university to provide service to students?
8. Are there areas where you would like to add more service or support?
9. What have you perceived as challenges in meeting student services goals?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share related to the provision of student services for your students?

For HSRB: Description of characteristics and development

This instrument was developed based on the research questions and goals of the future dissertation study. A comprehensive literature review on alternative teacher certification, graduate student services and student and academic affairs collaborations served as a foundation for the creation of this instrument. The instrument aims to collect data on the educational and professional experiences of participants, as well as on their experiences and perceptions of student services while enrolled in the Career Switcher program. Pilot data collected using this instrument will inform future methodology.

Appendix H

Descriptive Labels

A-Age	FL-Flexibility	P-Proximity
AC-Accountability	FP-Fast pace	PI-Prompt information
AD-Admission confusion	FR-Friendly	PR-Preparation
AS-Administrator support	FS-Faculty support	PS-Peer support
AV-Availability	GS-Guest speakers	PS-Program structure
BC-Blackboard confusion	H-Helpful	REC-Recommendations
BP-Big picture	HH-Hand-holding	REQ-Requirements
CE-Classroom experience	JP-Job placement	S-Simplicity
CED-Continuing Ed.	JSA-Job search anxiety	SR-Self-reliance
CF-Confidence	L-Library	SS-Seminar support
COM-Communication	LC-Late classes	T-Time
CON-Consolidation	LS-Licensure support	TD-Threaded discussions
CP-Connection	M-Money	TS-Technology support
CR-Credentialing	MC-Masters confusion	UN-Unaware of services
CS-Career support	MEN-Mentoring	US-University structure
CV-Convenient	NA-Networking/Alumni	V-Verification
EF-Efficiency	NN-No need for services	WC-Website confusion
EM-Email	O-Organization	WL-Workload
FC-Family circumstances	P-Parking	

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