PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION FACULTY

REGARDING FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

IN ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Faculty professional development is an integral part of the overall mission of the Adult

Basic Education programs that are operated under the auspices of the Alabama Community

College System. Since their realignment within the ACCS in 2004, there has been a continual

process underway to increase professional development activities at both the local institutional

level and at the System level as well. In spite of decreasing budgets, economic challenges, and a

deteriorating educational level of the statewide workforce, faculty professional development has

never been more critical to the communities where these comprehensive community colleges are

located. Through the various levels and assorted types of activities that take place within the

Adult Basic Education program mission, faculty members participate under the conceptual

premise that participation leads to greater position satisfaction and higher levels of student

success.

Through this topical area of research and via the survey instrument involved, a primary

premise evolved: the premise that faculty members possess their own preferences for the

professional development activities in which they choose to participate. When faculty members

participate within the types of environments they prefer, under delivery formats where they are

most comfortable, and in topical areas where they perceive a real sense of need, true faculty

professional development can occur. This professional development can be continual and

effective at better enabling faculty members to institute change in their classrooms.

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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ABE   Adult Basic Education

α Probability of Type I error

n Sample size

p Probability value

PD   Professional Development

t Computed value of t test

™   Registered trademark

=   Equal to

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The adult basic education movement within the confines of higher education has been on a tumultuous journey that has involved multiple shifts in organization, funding, and scope. Its modern-day inception began in 1942 with the establishment of the U.S. Armed Forces Institute, implemented for active armed service members in World War II who continued their secondary level educational pursuits through correspondence courses and General Educational Development (GED) preparation, and progressed to the present day context where adult student enrollment gains are the norm (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Underprepared adult learners have pervaded community college campuses, with an estimated 46% of all community college students being over the age of 21 (American Association of Community Colleges, 2008). Many of these nontraditional students lack even the most basic literacy skills. According to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2008), it is estimated that more than 18 million adults in America today have no high school diploma. In Alabama alone, there are more than 479,000 working-age adults who lack a high school diploma or a GED (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2008).

Many aspects of the increases in the adult learner population recently experienced by community colleges can be attributed to enrollment shifts brought about by a more globalized economy and greater professional/career credentialing (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). However, no issues are more pressing at meeting the ever-changing needs of community college adult learners than those challenges faced by the adult basic education faculty who provide instruction

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to adults categorized as illiterate and underemployable (Hadfield, 2003). This process of educating, updating, and honing the skills of those who teach is known as faculty professional development. Although there are numerous definitions for this topic, one of the more descriptive definitions is "a change process in which instructors gradually acquire a body of knowledge and skills to improve the quality of teaching for learners, and, ultimately to enhance learner outcomes" (Kutner, Sherman, Tibbetts, & Condelli, 1997, p. 1).

Although there are many components involved in faculty professional development, it is the actual perceptions of the faculty members themselves regarding the concept of professional development that comprise the focus of this research. The perceptions of the adult education faculty member are critical when assessing his or her willingness to participate in professional development offerings and hopefully to benefit from such leaning opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

Due to its close ties with federal funding first allocated in the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act (P.L. 88-452; Title II, Part B; Adult Basic Education), the history of adult basic education training as a formal program is not a long one when compared to other facets of higher education. In fact, the first reference to federal funding specifically for teacher training within adult education was budgeted within the 1964 Act. A thorough literature review found numerous studies and a large amount of research available on the topic from an international, national, and regional perspective. However, there were no adult basic education faculty professional development research projects, studies, or dissertations found that focused entirely on this issue within the confines of the Alabama Community College System.

Significance of the Study

In 2003, the Alabama Community College System assumed fiscal and logistical oversight of the statewide Adult Basic Education program (also known as GED Preparation) through State Board of Education Policy 109.01 (enacted via P.L. 105-220; Act 2002-528; Act 1993-907 respectively). These massive responsibilities were previously administered by separate city and county school systems, assisted by various consortiums and organizations, who shared somewhat similar missions, purposes, and goals, albeit loosely defined and administered. The full-time and part-time faculty members assigned to teaching within the Adult Basic Education program were not unilaterally and collectively trained with a consistent, system-wide professional development plan. However, each administrative oversight unit was encouraged (although not required) to provide some level of professional development opportunities for their respective faculty members, as outlined in the initial 1966 legislation (House Resolution, 1966, 62 Statute 928).

As the Alabama Community College System began to assume its mandated role of providing leadership and administration to these programs, faculty professional development became an increasingly important component. Due to strictly enforced federal guidelines tied to continual funding, coupled with compliance enforcement at the state level, ensuring the accessibility of professional development opportunities for full-time and part-time adult basic education faculty is an important issue for sustained program viability and efficiency (Smith & Hofer, 2003). Through the deliberative engagement of well-trained faculty members, participating adult basic education students, who represent a wide demographic range encompassing practically every socioeconomic category, are better prepared to benefit from their participation and learning activities.

The exploratory descriptive study surveyed full-time and part-time adult basic education faculty members employed at their respective community and technical colleges within the Alabama Community College System's (ACCS) adult basic education sites. The modified proposed survey enlisted responses to questions posed regarding the accessibility, adequacy, and effectiveness of the various types of professional development opportunities from the local college level. For the purposes of this study, the terms *accessibility*, *adequacy*, and *effectiveness* connote at what level professional development opportunities, methods, and formats exist, as demonstrated in their usage and participation from the perceptions of the faculty members surveyed. The modified survey used for this study was based on an original survey developed by Wallin and Smith (2005), which was used for assessing the professional development needs of full-time faculty teaching at technical colleges in the Georgia 2-year system. Additional research based on the existing literature base, particularly research by Gusky (2001), Belzer, Drennon, and Smith (2001), Eades (2001), Kutner et al. (1997), National Institute for Literacy (2002), and the National Staff Development Council (2001), was also used. Data analysis revealed differences at the college-site level regarding professional development opportunities for full-time and part-time faculty members. Findings from this study revealed the importance of collectively offering accessible and effective professional development opportunities from a system-wide perspective, to better prepare full-time and part-time faculty members teaching at Adult Basic Education program sites operating within the ACCS. The major significance of this study was its sole focus on the surveyed perceptions of ACCS Adult Basic Education faculty members regarding the accessibility, adequacy, and effectiveness of professional development opportunities within the ACCS.

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose for conducting this study was to identify the perceptions of Alabama Community College System Adult Basic Education Program faculty as they relate to the accessibility, adequacy, and effectiveness of professional development opportunities at the local college level. The term *professional development* can be interpreted to mean many things within the academic community. A common usage of the term professional development may simply entail faculty participating in workshops, utilizing guest speakers at faculty meetings, and/or granting faculty members additional release time from their instructional responsibilities, all in the hope of increasing their effectiveness in the classroom (Smith, Hofer, Gillespie, Solomon, & Rowe, 2003). However, many of these typical professional development activities have been revisited and deemed less than effective as identified in *Pathways to Change: A Summary of Education Findings* from NCSALL's Staff Development Study (Smith & Hofer, 2002). The literature reviewed revealed a vast array of alternative professional development activities, which, when made accessible, can yield increased benefit to faculty, and in turn, to the students taught by the faculty as reported in *The Characteristics and Concerns of Adult Education Teachers* (Smith & Hofer, 2003).

The purposes of this study were achieved through a survey of Alabama Community College System Adult Basic Education Program faculty who are teaching at the various instructional sites within the state, and measuring their responses to questions regarding their perceptions on the availability, adequacy and effectiveness of faculty professional development at their respective institutions. An additional purpose of this research was to determine the level at which the faculty members perceived their institution as meeting their professional development needs. This information could be useful to the Alabama Community College

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System (ACCS) and the departments responsible for the oversight of the ACCS Adult Basic Education Program.

Research Questions

The intent of this research was to study the perceptions of adult Basic Education (ABE) Faculty members in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) regarding faculty professional development. The overarching research question was the following: What are the perceptions of the ACCS Adult Basic Education faculty regarding faculty professional development? This was answered by exploring a number of secondary questions. These secondary research questions of interest were as follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of ABE faculty in the ACCS?

2. What do ABE faculty members perceive as their most critical faculty professional development needs?

3. What do ABE faculty members perceive as the most significant barriers to quality faculty professional development?

4. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by gender?

5. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by age range?

6. What are the preferred delivery methods based on years of experience?

7. What are the preferred delivery methods based on full-time and part-time faculty status?

8. What are the preferred delivery methods based on highest degree held?

9. Are there differences in perceptions of ABE faculty regarding faculty professional development between those employed at suburban, rural, and urban-serving community colleges?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

Adult Basic Education. Instructional reference to the broad range of basic and literacy education, including literacy remediation, General Equivalency Diploma preparation (GED), and the practice of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) (Smith et al., 2003).

Adult Basic Education Faculty Member. A term for a full-time or part-time professional educator/instructor who has teaching responsibilities within the adult basic education component of a teaching authority (Shelton State Community College Homepage, 2008).

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). Legislative component of the Title II, 1998 Workforce Development Act that directly addresses adult basic education training, standards, and purposes. This act contains specific goals that mandate supporting adult basic education systems that will yield adults who are better prepared for family responsibilities, work opportunities, and citizenship and prepare the way for future learning activities and experiences . The act also contains goals that mandate that individual systems (colleges, institutions, organizations, consortiums, etc.) provide adult learner participants with opportunities to acquire and/or strengthen basic foundation skills, complete requisite secondary education, and successfully transition to further education and training leading to work (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Adult Basic Education Site. An instructional site with a mission of providing literacy-related learning opportunities specifically for adult learners and typically operated by a convening college authority (Alabama Community College System State Plan for Adult Basic Education Programs, 2008).

Adult Literacy. Preparing adult learners to gain, strengthen, and master basic education skills that will further enable literacy and provide the systematic core for the necessary skills acquisition that will allow them to successfully compete for work opportunities and benefit from the learning that will be demonstrated with success in such areas as employment, financial independence, social growth, and citizenship participation (Bingman & Stein, 2001).

Alabama Community College System (ACCS). The community college system in the state of Alabama that is responsible for the financial, administrative, instructional, and operational directives directed to the individual system colleges (Alabama Community College System, 2008).

Community College. Two-year postsecondary education institutions that offer associate degrees and transfer programs, worker training and retraining programs, occupational/technical programs, developmental programs, community services, literacy-related remediation and preparation, economic development activities, and support services (Coley, 2000).

Evaluation. The directed process of systematic investigation regarding merit and worth (Guskey, 2000).

Framework. A chosen parameter encompassing faculty professional development that contains selected strategies, learning aids, methods of presentation, and practices that will enhance professional development activities (Kutner et al., 1997).

Full-Time Adult Basic Education Faculty. Under the Alabama Community College System, individuals that an employing organization legally and contractually employ to work a minimum of 229 days a year. The work week includes a minimum of 40 hours per week. Full-time instructors are typically employed for a 12-month contractual year (Alabama Community College System, 2008).

National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development. Professional

development organization that developed standards for innovative and sustainable professional

development learning opportunities. Standards typically fall into one of three categories:

1. Context Standards. Organizational standards that must be present for learning and

    development to occur (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

2. Process Standards. The actual process and activities that take place within a

    professional development and learning opportunity and typically encompass the

    research, evaluation and data from the activity (National Staff Development Council,

    2001).

3. Content Standards. Addresses the actual topical components of what needs to be

    covered, taught, and mastered for a professional development activity to be deemed

    successful (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Part-Time Adult Basic Education Faculty. Under the Alabama Community College

System, individuals an employing organization legally and contractually employs to work less

than 229 days a year. The work week consists of instructional related duties of less than 40

hours per week and can include an instructional class load of less than 15-16 credit hours. Many

part-time adult basic education faculty members work on a non-tenure track option, which

relegates their work-week to less than 19 hours of instructional related duties per week (Alabama

Community College, 2008).

Professional Development. The actual processes and operations developed to enable

faculty and staff learning to occur, which will then yield an improved learning environment for

the affected students (Kutner et al., 1997).

Program Model. A descriptive model that provides the framework for what adult basic education faculty members should teach and the components and areas that adult basic education students should learn from the experience (Comings, 2003).

Prose (reading) Literacy. The reading level that indicates basic mastery of the ability to benefit and learn from written narratives, which can include news stories, directions, fiction, and so on (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993).

Quantitative (math) Literacy. The mathematical level that indicates basic mastery of skills required to perform rudimentary arithmetic computations that could range in difficulty from balancing a checkbook, figuring a construction project cost, and acquiring monthly payment plans on a routine bank loan (Kirsch et al., 1993).

Staff Development. For purposes of this study, the term is synonymous with faculty professional development. Routinely considered synonymous with traditional development activities such as workshops, guest speakers, conferences, and so on (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Standard. Refers to the degree of skills acquisition that denotes mastery of a required component of an instructional process or procedure (Tuijnman & Postlethwaite, 1994).

State Leadership Activities. A component of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) section 222(a) enacted in 1998, which stipulates that state and national agencies must make use of funds under this act for the promotion and promulgation of one or more of the following adult basic education and literacy activities (Guide for the Development of a State Plan Under Title II-Adult Education and Literacy of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) :

1. The development and administrative operation of adult basic education faculty and staff professional development activities to enhance faculty performance and student success.

2. The mandate to provide appropriate technical assistance to adult basic education providers (systemic).

3. The mandate to provide appropriate technical assistance to adult basic education faculty and staff members.

4. The mandate to provide constant support to state or regional literacy centers.

5. The mandate to provide continual monitoring and evaluation of adult basic education and literacy related activities.

6. The mandate to provide incentives for program coordination to include integration and performance awards.

7. The mandate to provide the development and dissemination of appropriate curricular materials that lead to enhanced literacy and skills mastery.

8. The mandate to provide other appropriate related activities that are designed to promote this component of the Act.

9. The mandate to assist in the coordination of existing support services such as childcare, transportation, and parenting skills to increase enrollment in adult basic education courses and to enable adult basic education students to be successful.

10. The mandate to provide integration between instructional components and the local workforce, which in turn assists in the promotion of students as potential employees.

11. The mandate to provide necessary linkages, agreements, and consortiums with postsecondary institutions.

Assumptions

The research conducted was based on the following assumptions:

1. It was assumed that all participants were currently employed Adult Basic Education faculty members as intended for the survey.

2. It was assumed that all participants were truthful in their responses to questions and items posed within the survey.

3. It was assumed that all participants had a basic understanding of what constitutes faculty professional development activities.

4. It was assumed that the Wallin Faculty Professional Development Survey, with noted additions, elicited and identified the perceptions of the faculty members surveyed.

Delimitations

The primary delimitation of the proposed research study was that the surveys were only administered to full-time and part-time Adult Basic Education faculty members currently employed within the identified 25 Alabama Community College System institutions. It is unknown at this time if the results reported are applicable or generalizable to institutions or organizations outside of the ACCS.

Limitations

The proposed research study solicited responses from full-time and part-time Adult Basic Education faculty members regarding their perceptions of the availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of faculty professional development activities at their respective ACCS institutions. Participants responded to survey questions posed that elicited personal perceptions on a wide variety of faculty professional development topical areas, and as such were subject to personal bias, attitudes, and beliefs.

An additional limitation of the research study was the online survey data collection method utilized, as opposed to other methods such as paper and pencil or computer-assisted data collection methods. Online and/or internet based surveys may pose skill-set challenges to the participants if they are unfamiliar with basic computer and internet usage. Adequate internet access was also a requirement for participation in the online survey. Participants who lacked adequate internet access at the local site had internet access at the main campuses from which their Adult Basic Education programs were based. Participants who were unable or unwilling to complete the online survey instrument could request a paper version of the survey to be mailed directly to their instructional site or institution.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 contains the overview of the study and the definitions of terms referenced throughout the dissertation, the research questions driving the research and associated assumptions, delimitations and limitations. Chapter 2 contains a review of the relevant literature on faculty professional development, with emphasis placed on available literature and studies that specifically involve the community college, as well as adult basic education faculty and related faculty professional development, to include legislation, standards-based organizations, and relevant national/regional staff and faculty professional development organizations. Chapter 3 is a detailed explanation of the research methodology employed in this study. Also contained in chapter 3 is a discussion of the techniques that were used in the analysis of data and information regarding the survey instrument. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the research findings. Chapter 5 contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Adult learners have become one of the fastest growing groups in higher education

nationwide, and particularly at community colleges where literacy and developmental education

courses are made available to the more than 18 million adults who lack a high school diploma

(Report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008). The literature indicates that their

strong presence in these literacy-related programs (Adult Basic Education/GED Preparation

included) can at times be attributed to several factors such as:

1. Students beginning or returning to educational coursework past the traditional school

   age.

2. Students overcoming personal and financial obstacles that hindered their completion

   of secondary education initially (Fairchild, 2003; Kasworm, 2003a; Pascarella &

   Terenzini, 1998).

The adult nontraditional learners require a strong commitment by their respective faculty

members if they are to be successful. The importance of the faculty member has been strongly

documented with the findings indicating that faculty members are potentially the single most

important component in the learning equation (Haycock, 1998).

A high level of faculty commitment is one of the core premises for accessible, adequate,

and effective faculty professional development. It has been reported by various prominent

authors and researchers that faculty professional development has long been commonplace

within community college systems across the nation (Clough, 1991; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Engleberg, 1991; Hoerner, Clowes, & Impara, 1991; Howey & Zimpher, 1994). In support of the importance of the role and training of faculty, numerous studies have been conducted on the professional development frameworks that can best serve the faculty through their training endeavors (Katz & Henry, 1988; O'Banion, 1981).

Bearing the tenet of these outcomes in mind, this research project further reviewed the relevant and related literature on the topic, to include the following sections:

1. Adult learner issues and related literacy challenges.

2. History of community college faculty professional development.

3. Adult basic education theories and practices.

4. Issues and challenges facing adult basic education programs.

Adult Learner Issues and Related Literacy Challenges

Although, in many research studies, the actual reference to "adult learners" is focused on the concept of nontraditional students beginning or returning to college with goals of pursuing a standardized diploma or degree (Kasworm, 2003a), it must be noted that adult learners returning to community college adult basic education programs are viewed the same way within the parameters of this study. The literature provides ample studies of adult learners, why they begin or choose to return to school, and the many challenges and obstacles that they must overcome.

Although multiple definitions exist, the literature indicates a strong portrait of the adult student, who could best be described as a student with one or more of the following characteristics (National Center for Education Statistics, Trends in Enrollment, 1996):

1. Delayed enrollment into postsecondary education

2. Part-time attendance

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3. Financially independent (although can still be considered poor)

4. Work full-time while enrolled

5. Dependents other than a spouse

6. Single parent

7. Did not obtain a standard high school diploma

Bearing these characteristics in mind, every adult learner who returns to a community college to pursue a GED or increase their literacy skills could be classified as such. In 1999-2000, fully 75% of all postsecondary students had at least one of these markers, with the majority having multiple markers. Those students considered as the most nontraditional adult learners, with four or more markers (64%), overwhelmingly attended community colleges (NCES, 2002).

Kasworm (2003b) identified the following three reasons or "participation motivators" concerning why adult learners return to pursue educational goals: (1) personal transition and change, (2) proactive life planning, and (3) mixed motivators. Adult learners also play numerous roles concurrently while being part-time students, full-time workers, active community members, and primary caregivers for children and aging parents. The multiplicity of these concurrent roles and extensive responsibilities can tremendously limit their participation in school and other related academic activities (Fairchild, 2003). One commonality found among successful adult learners is their strong relationship to their faculty members (Rice, 2003). Rice further noted that adult learners who succeed have had ample access to multiple support services such as the following:

1. Financial planning and budgeting direction

2. Child care and elder care support

3. Counseling for addiction and recovery

4. Study skills development including skills studying with children

5. Time management

6. Stress management

7. Parenting skills

8. Support groups

9. Domestic violence recovery

10. Homelessness

11. Employment options for both the student and other family members.

Community colleges and, particularly, adult basic education and literacy programs housed at these institutions must be flexible and proactive in the learning and support services offered to adult learners and take into consideration such obstacles as family commitments, employment issues, time constraints, learning styles, and role multiplicity (Flint, Zakos, & Frey, 2002). Teaching methodologies and instructional pedagogies must be placed in a framework that is conducive to the special needs of adult learners, as they are oftentimes not seeking a mere replacement for their lack of completing a formal high school education. An altogether different set of goals and expectations are typically present for adult learners (Flint et al., 2002). Adult education and literacy enhancement programs that seek to replace the high school experience will not meet the needs of their constituents if this is a primary goal.

McGivney (2004) cited eleven reasons that can contribute to failure when an adult learner returns to pursue an educational goal:

1. Personal factors,

2. Challenges with distance learning programs,

3. Gender differences,

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4. Lack of family or partner support,

5. Financial problems,

6. Course-related and institution-related factors,

7. Inadequate precourse information and guidance,

8. Unsuccessfully managing study and preparation time,

9. Difficulties in settling in and integrating into the life and expectations of the program,

10. Institutions that are not considered "adult friendly," and

11. Lack of institutional support.

Noted adult learning researcher Malcolm Knowles (1989) coined the term *androgogical learner* or *learner centered* approach to teaching adults in opposition to pedagogical learner or teacher centered, which are often used in the context of teaching K-12 students. Knowles felt that at the point when adult students reached the age of responsibility and could dictate for themselves the direction and quantification of their learning, a learning shift was necessary to better enable the students to succeed. The research also shows strong indications that a catch-all characterization of adult learners is less than ideal, as different regions, cultures, and social values sets make it difficult to determine when a student makes the transition from learner to adult learner (Wlodkowski, 1999).

Adults are also highly critical about their learning challenges and have a strong need to see that their instructional activities and accomplishments can be tied directly to their circumstances and goals (Wonacott, 2001). Lieb (1991) further propagated this rationale by identifying four prevalent principles of adult learning:

1. Adult learners tend to be independent and self-guided,

2. Adult learners tend to base much of their learning on previous life experiences,

3. Adult learners are more comfortable in relevant learning environments, and

4. Adult learners are more realistic and practical than their younger counterparts.

Research findings also indicate that adults are not only more intrinsically and internally motivated about their learning; but there is a strong tendency for them to relate their multiple roles of employee, parent, civic/social member, as well as coping strategies to their willingness and readiness to learn. These same adult learners are more successful in their learning pursuits when they perceive their learning opportunities as being valuable in reaching their goals (Cave & LaMaster, 1998).

Although, historically speaking, adult learning and teaching have been tied very closely to more traditional pedagogical processes, the research indicates that adult learners tend to be more successful in a learner-centered approach, which requires both a teaching shift on the part of the program and instructors and a learning shift on the part of the student (Wlodkowski, 1999). This transition can be the first step in helping the adult learner become more independent, less reliant on others, and ultimately become a more successful student with a greater chance of reaching his or her educational goals (Howell, 2001). Therefore, it should be accepted that the teaching of adults must take on a different path than the teaching of children (Imel, 1990).

Although the practice of teaching adult learners varies appreciably from that of teaching children, it should be noted that the research indicates a strong responsibility of the students in making contributions to their own learning and involvement both in material and context. Howell (2001) suggested that for adult learning opportunities to be maximized, a joint climate of responsibility must be shared between the student and the teacher in order for students to feel accepted, valued, and encouraged in a supportive environment. Several approaches and tactics can be utilized to support Knowles's (1989) precepts as identified by Lawler (1991):

1. Creating a physical and social climate of respect,

2. Encouraging more collaborative learning modes and models,

3. Including the student's past learning experiences within the teaching and learning framework,

4. Encouraging critical and reflective thinking patterns and practices,

5. Incorporating "real-world' scenarios into the learning opportunities presented to encourage better problem-solving skills,

6. Using actual learning combined with goals attainment in declaring successful outcomes,

7. Providing a learning environment that is participative in nature,

8. Providing student empowerment through their own learning, and

9. Encouraging self-directed learning challenges with adequate oversight and encouragement.

Early adult learner research tended to report that adult student learning was a direct response to extrinsic motivators (better job, higher salary, more job security, ability to promote, etc.), but more recent research has shown the strong tendency of adult learners to place high outcome values on more intrinsic motivators such as increased self-worth, heightened self-confidence, individual efficiency, and greater levels of job satisfaction (Knowles, 1989; Margueratt, 2007, p. 60). Additional research has shown that among the most important factors in successful adult student learning, the desire for greater self-esteem, competency, and the overall achievement of knowledge for knowledge's sake are the prime motivators (Demetrion, 1997). Cohen and Brawer (2003) also noted that, for many adult learners, attending a community college with its resources is the only option the student has for pursuing literacy-

related educational offerings. This is especially true in Alabama as the vast majority of Adult

Basic Education programs are offered through the Alabama Community College System with

few offerings elsewhere.

A secondary facet of adult learning issues relates to the literacy challenges that often

accompany these learners who begin or return to the classroom to pursue their GED or further

enhance their literacy skills. A recent finding in the Report of the National Commission on

Adult Literacy (2008) estimated that more than two thirds of the potential workforce in the

United States is unreachable by secondary school systems whose primary mission is to provide

literacy mastery skills.

As noted in the Report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy (2008), although

the need for outreach and services is far greater, U.S. adult education programs only reach an

average of 3 million students a year, whereas the nation faces a myriad of literacy-related

challenges and concerns, including the following:

1. The U. S. scores very poorly when compared with international literacy rates for free-market countries.

2. High school dropout rates continue to hover around the 33% range for secondary education students.

3. Literacy rates for those students who do graduate are undeniably lower than needed to compete in a global marketplace.

4. Children of parents with low educational and literacy attainment face even more grave circumstances than previous generations.

5. Prison populations are exploding with illiterate, nonliterate, and non-English speaking inmates who, in most cases, will be released from prison into a marketplace for which they are ill prepared to succeed.

6. More than 2 million immigrants come to the U.S. every year in pursuit of a better job, a better way of life, a better future for themselves and their families. More than 50% of these immigrants arrive with extremely low literacy rates and very poor English speaking skills.

7. As Baby Boomers leave the work-force, they are being replaced by employees who have lower literacy rates and fewer skills, creating a situation of a poorly educated and trained population of employees and potential employees.

Further research shows that in many instances, adult learners have already given up on the system and will not even attempt to reconnect with higher education to pursue literacy-related skills and/or a GED (Reder, 2007). Additionally, adult learners comprise a large group within the nationwide demographic shifts that are currently taking place. The U.S. Census Bureau (2006) reported that fully one third of all adults in the country can be classified as members of an ethnic minority group, with Hispanics and African American populations showing the greatest gains. Of particular importance to the adult education process is the issue of increasing minority populations with decreasing literacy skills and even lower levels of classroom participation (Ross, 1989). This disproportionate level of educational achievement and learning, especially among minorities, creates a major crisis among American working class groups at large, which results in a shortfall of eligible and able employees to fill the available jobs created by globalization (Freeman, 2006). Many developing nations are becoming more and more competitive with the United States as their respective literacy rates continue to rise and

they claim positions and functions that are out-sourced globally, leaving undereducated American adult learners unable to procure viable positions within their local areas (Friedman, 1999).

These major literacy challenges among adult learners create dire circumstances wherein the group contributes to its own problems via their lack of educational attainment and their inability to find work, thereby negatively impacting the economic conditions of their group, and in a larger context, the nation at large (Castleton, 2002). Adult learning challenges are not only limited to contextual basic literacy skills (prose, reading, mathematics, writing, etc.), but they are also tied closely to other learning deficit areas including interpersonal and communication skills, creative thinking and cognitive skills, and problem solving abilities (Reich, 2000). Continual shifts in the dynamics of the labor market of the United States will prove costly for adult learners who are undereducated and lack the rudimentary literacy skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000). As manufacturing advances change the economic landscape by creating more cognitive-based process positions, it is estimated that nearly half of the adult workforce will be undertrained within the next few years (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

These troubling trends and issues are of particular importance to the undereducated adult learners within the State of Alabama. The Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (2008) identified the following critical findings:

1. Alabama has an inherently higher rate of poorly educated adults, both in comparison to the nation as a whole and to other Southeastern states. Of vital importance is the fact that Alabama resides in a region of the United States that is considerably

undereducated in comparison to the rest of the nation, creating a double concern for illiterate Alabamians.

2. There are more than 500,000 working-age adults in Alabama who are eligible and in need of adult basic education services, as the 2000 Census identified more than 572,000 adults between the ages of 18 and 64 who lacked a high school diploma. This crisis equally impacts both smaller, rural counties and larger, more urban ones without preferential treatment.

3. Federal funding received by the Alabama Community College System specifically for adult basic education programs and related literacy services has been stable at approximately $9 million annually since 2000, but this allotment has not kept pace with the yearly increase in the potential number of adults needing the services.

4. Although Alabamians place in the upper tier of Southeastern states with undereducated adults, their participation and enrollment in adult basic education services (literacy, GED preparation, and ESL) ranks last among all other southern states.

5. Adult basic education performance measures developed by the U.S. Department of Education are applicable to all states but lack any measurement focused on enrollment increases comparative to an individual state's population and service needs.

6. Continual federal funding received annually by the Alabama Community College System specifically for adult basic education courses and literacy training should be contingent upon meeting all federally mandated performance measures.

Bearing these issues in mind, the Alabama Community College System faces an arduous and complex task of reaching more undereducated adults with its limited supply of federal funds and progressively increasing number of adult learners in need of adult basic education services, amidst an ever-changing globally based economy.

<div align="center">History of Community College Faculty Professional Development</div>

Cohen and Brawer (2003) espoused the idea that community colleges have theoretically always had faculty professional development. Research on the history of community colleges, their inception, mission, and ever-evolving responsibilities would tend to support this assumption. However, throughout the early years of American higher education, the line of demarcation between faculty professional development for community colleges and that of 4-year institutions was a blurred one. W. S. Miller and Wilson (1963) commented that formal research on the topic was extremely scarce and limited in scope as well.

One of the earliest faculty professional development studies noted in the literature review was a study conducted by W. S. Miller and Wilson (1963) based on 228 4-year colleges and universities that had fewer than 2,000 students enrolled, with primary campuses in the contiguous Southern states. Their primary findings were three fold in that (1) the surveyed institutions did have in place a mechanism to help orient new teaching faculty members to the greater university community, (2) this process was seen by the faculty members as an enticement or incentive to assimilate, and (3) the orientation process contributed to the greater good of the faculty through job security and workplace morale. Of equal importance in the 1963 Miller and Wilson study were the concluding recommendations that faculty professional development be viewed as a vital and life-sustaining component of the institution. The authors further postulated the following:

- There were ample models and methods for faculty professional development and these processes should be directed to faculty from the onset of their entry into the system, progress through their formative teaching years, and continually made available as they reach retirement age to exit the system.

- Faculty members tended to place more importance and relevance on their professional development than did their supervisors.

- The processes and models used for faculty professional development tended to mimic the desires and wishes of their respective administrators, and not those of the faculty as a whole.

- The professional development could be seen as a way of manipulating the faculty into compliance with the goals and mission of the institution.

- Professional development tended to be ranked higher by the administrative hierarchy if those same administrators were either new to the field or leaving the field.

- The success of any method of faculty professional development could be directly attributed to the dedication put forth by the respective administration in place at the time.

- Through adequate and directed faculty professional development, variations of faculty dedication and motivation could be identified and strengthened.

- Faculty tended to have more satisfying teaching experiences and greater student success if they were under the assumption that their respective administration was in support of their efforts, whether in the classroom or elsewhere.

In conclusion, the Miller and Wilson study was groundbreaking, as the broad scoped study was one of the first of its kind in the academic arena. The authors did not mention community

colleges directly in their study, but their assumptions and conclusions might possibly be applicable.

Soon after the Miller and Wilson study was published, Soffen (1967), in conjunction with the Council on Social Work Education, conducted a similar study with findings supportive of the earlier research conducted:

- For professional development to be effective, colleges must be clear at the onset on the types of faculty they are seeking to hire, train, and retain, as well as what will be their primary focus and function.

- For faculty professional development to be effective, institutions must have clear and distinguishable criteria and learning goals.

- Institutions must make appropriate use of both short-term and long-term faculty professional development goals and strategies, with the most urgent needs being addressed first and foremost.

- If effective professional development is to occur, faculty must be adequately proctored throughout at least three phases of their functions: socialization to the college, clarification of roles, and teaching functions.

- Many institutions do an adequate job of preparation for classroom work and responsibilities but fail at helping the faculty member achieve greater socialization within the academic community at large.

- Effective faculty professional development will include the intentional integration of both the current faculty and new members, creating a sense of unity at the institution.

- Effective faculty professional development must be viewed as a process and not a destination reached by a faculty member.

- Both the faculty member and the administrator must share in the responsibility for

   adequate professional faculty development.

Subsequent literature review found that one of the first community college centered faculty

development research projects was conducted by Singer (1967), in conjunction with the

American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC), regarding the adequacy of professional

development opportunities for both faculty and administrators. As part of this study, 2-year

college presidents were surveyed to gather responses regarding their institutional needs for

continued faculty and staff professional development. An institutional response rate of 38%

from Sincer's study yielded the following findings:

- Nearly 25% of the presidents felt that faculty needed additional training in the areas

   of general education, curriculum development, and learning methodologies.

- Additional faculty training was needed in occupational and academic fields in order

   to be current with industry practices and professional standards.

- Additional faculty training was also needed in order to enhance faculty members'

   understanding of administration and supervision.

- Faculty needed to be updated regarding counseling, guidance, and advising

   responsibilities at the institution.

- Presidents had a strong desire to see their faculty be more responsive to the local

   learning communities in which they served.

- Faculty needed to be made aware of the community college function, purpose, and

   philosophy of learning.

Presidential responses in the Singer (1967) study concluded that college administrators and

faculty do not routinely agree on the purposes, processes, timeframes, parties responsible for

funding, locations for training, and incentives attached to effective faculty professional

development, which at times can negate the benefits of adequate faculty professional

development opportunities.

Chronister (1970) conducted additional follow-up research based partially on Singer's

earlier study on community college faculty professional development. Chronister surveyed 288

2-year college administrators concerning their perceptions of the adequacy and availability of

faculty professional development opportunities, primarily through faculty in-service activities. It

was Chronister's supposition that 4-year institutions could provide adequate faculty professional

development through their respective graduate school components. His findings were consistent

with Singer's (1967) earlier ones, with added emphasis placed on the actual funding of the

professional development activities. More than half of Chronister's respondents, as well as those

of Singer's study, indicated that the 2-year college should be responsible for paying at least half

of the cost of the activities. Chronister's desire for graduate schools to provide the faculty with

professional development opportunities was important for several reasons. First and foremost,

this recommendation marked one of the first attempts at identifying 4-year colleges and

universities as participating entities within the function of the 2-year colleges and schools.

Secondly, Chronister recommended that by participating in faculty professional development,

graduate students (and 4-year schools at large) could be encouraged to familiarize themselves

with teaching various population segments that typically may enroll in 2-year colleges such as

developmental, adult learners, and other nontraditional students.

O'Banion's (1972) study was coordinated under the auspices of the National

Advisory Council on Education Professions Development, implemented by the federal

government to write a comprehensive report on the status of faculty and staff development at

community colleges. The O'Banion report had the function of describing the general

characteristics and demographics of the community colleges in the nation, but it was also

commissioned to provide vital information on the characteristics of community college (and

junior college) faculty members and their professional development processes, plans, and

desires. It was O'Banion's perception that "teaching" was the central common tenet among all

community college learning environments, and that the professional development activities that

took place at the time were undervalued, underutilized, and without much merit to the faculty

they were intended to reach. O'Banion found that most community colleges did provide some

form of faculty professional development, but that in many cases its purpose was to merely

introduce and orient the faculty to the college environment. The researcher was also quick to

place the blame for this grave inadequacy with the respective administrators responsible for

ensuring that such activities took place. Additionally, he called for added local and federal

funding to be used as incentives to encourage faculty members to participate in professional

development activities and functions. One of the most critical findings in the O'Banion study

was the necessity for faculty professional development to fall under the responsibility of a

particular administrator in hopes of ensuring that the professional development would be viewed

as a central component of the mission of the community college.

One of the more comprehensive and original faculty professional development studies

conducted during the 1970s was performed by Freedman (1979) with assistance from Brown,

Ralph, Shukraft, Bloom, and Sanford. Freedman's study was closely connected to the social

movements of the day and addressed the pertinence of personalities within the adult learning

process. Freedman's research on faculty included the key component of identifying personality

traits as potential indicators of success in the classroom and of a willingness to benefit from

professional development opportunities. He postulated that colleges (including community colleges) spent too much time allowing faculty members to self-educate and self-promote through their development activities, increasing their sense of value to the classroom, but not necessarily focusing on their value to the college and the community. It was Freedman's desire to see mature faculty members more involved in assisting other junior faculty members, as well as assisting in the development needs of poor school systems within their respective communities. He felt that the very term *faculty professional development* could be construed by many faculty members as an insult to their level of preparation, dedication, and success. Freedman was one of the first researchers to identify pedagogical challenges faced by faculty members at community colleges. It was his perception that faculty can never reach the apex of their profession if they are only focusing on the expected and assumed single outcome of student learning in the classroom. For Freedman, to be a faculty member connoted more than simply teaching.

Through their research and findings, Freedman (1979) and his associates described five distinct faculty professional development stages that are worthy of inclusion:

Stage One: Faculty members have the self-imposed and simplistic view of their profession and their duties within it.

Stage Two: Faculty members have transitioned to the point where they can appreciate and incorporate the values, opinions, and perceptions of others within their teaching pedagogy.

Stage Three: Faculty members have an increased sense of individuality and identity that is not only derived from their respective contact group, but from others outside as well.

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Stage Four**:** Faculty members have developed a sense of personal decision-making skills

and are at liberty to display their autonomy to others.

Stage Five**:** Faculty members are not only concerned with imparting knowledge to their

students but also are focusing their efforts on the larger processes of the

character development and maturity of their students as well.

Freedman's approach to faculty professional development through the mechanism of personality

development was very innovative for its time, as most professional development models during

the 1970s focused more deliberately on the pedagogical/mechanical teaching processes.

A study by Heelan (1980) provided a new approach to faculty professional development

through her focus on continuing education courses (noncredit) that are taught routinely within

the nationwide community college setting. Her study at North Hennepin Community College in

Minnesota was one of the first studies of its kind to consider the actual individual components

that would collaboratively produce a successful professional development model for faculty who

teach predominantly in adult learning courses taken for noncredit. Although her study focused

on noncredit teaching faculty, Heelan did recognize that there were some viable commonalities

between credit and noncredit teaching faculty members. These crossover areas included

accountability directed toward the learner, the necessity to be course content based, the lack of

adequate teacher preparation, and the ability to work with adult learners. Heelan felt strongly

that, for faculty professional development to be effective, it must not be forced onto the faculty

but, rather, a sense of directed involvement should be the driving force behind their participation.

Additionally, Heelan concluded that the ideal faculty professional development model would

include a continual source of feedback with ideas, challenges, concerns, and possible solutions

generated from the faculty ranks themselves. The Heelan Model included six individual

components for a successful faculty professional development process:

1. Prehiring interview, wherein potential faculty are identified for possible suitability at the onset of the employment process.

2. Contract development that allows for greater participation by the potential faculty member in determining the parameters of the course to be taught.

3. Orientation that will allow the faculty member to feel a common bond with the department and the college as a whole, creating a sense of belongingness.

4. Evaluation that will be continual throughout the entire employment/instructional timeframe with ample opportunities for faculty member response and feedback.

5. Ongoing in-service activities that will be the continual process of updating and enhancing the skill sets possessed by the faculty member. This component encompasses the pedagogical and the behavioral components of teaching adult learners.

6. A recognition system that allows the faculty member to be recognized for his or her contributions to the course, program, department, and the college as a whole.

The major contribution of Heelan's faculty professional development design was the continual

involvement and participation of the actual faculty members who taught within the confines of

the noncredit programs, permitting greater levels of ownership in the process, and the ability to

make changes and adjustments firsthand as the needs developed.

O'Banion (1981) returned to the fundamental findings of his earlier research (1972) and

developed a systematic approach to faculty professional development that was grounded in the

benchmarking of successful programs at community colleges of the day. His follow-up research

posited that community colleges were not aware of their current professional development offerings and were even less certain of their successes and failures. O'Banion's study offered three universal professional development model perspectives for community college systems and organizations to consider: (1) a national focus, which recognized the community college for its uniqueness among higher education; (2) a local focus, which recognized that faculty in their respective disciplines needed updating and to remain current with the marketplace; and (3) the community college's need for staff development as a mechanism of institutional change. Of the three rationales, the most critical for community colleges pertained to faculty professional development as a mechanism for change. O'Banion had long felt that community colleges held an exclusive niche among higher education counterparts, and that their unique missions and structures created an inherent gap wherein faculty were not aware of the countless opportunities that could exist for professional growth.

O'Banion (1981) further identified a concrete set of staff development options that could directly address faculty professional development needs intrinsic to the community college. These core components consisted of the following:

− Assessments, to include administrative support, describing current levels of support, apparent and obvious institutional needs, and internal and external assistance options available to the institution.

− The development of a college-wide professional development mission statement that is derived through the efforts and cooperation of the institution at large and approved by the college population.

- The development of a programmatic assessment of professional development needs, options, and resources that encompass the college's needs in conjunction with its mission.

- The development of an incentives and rewards system for professional development participants.

- The necessary level of financial commitment on behalf of the institution.

- An adequate evaluation system reflective of the institution's professional development activities and options.

O'Banion further concluded that the lack of these core components in the professional development activities at community colleges could be a major contributor to their lack of standardized activities and continual success.

McCright's (1983) dissertation focused on the professional development needs of part-time faculty at a community college in Iowa. The unique facet of this study was the primary focus on the needs, perceptions, and opinions of part-time (adjunct) faculty, in contrast to the majority of previous research, which had been conducted from the full-time faculty members' perspectives. Two major conclusions from McCright's research revealed that part-time faculty at the respective institution were not satisfied with their current level of professional development activities for two main reasons: (1) The administration at the community college was not familiar with part-time (adjunct) faculty members' specific professional development needs, and (2) the interests of part-time faculty members did not mirror their full-time faculty member counterparts as they pertained to faculty professional development concepts, frameworks, incentives, and options.

Shawl (1984) conducted research that identified ways in which administrators could encourage and increase faculty professional development activities in spite of dire economic conditions. It was concluded by Shawl that faculty must be able to visually see the commitment to professional development held by the community college. Although college-wide layoffs had taken place within various departments at the college, Shawl convinced the president of his institution to create and fund a new dean's position that was directly responsible for the professional development activities of faculty. This new position was the visual embodiment of the college's commitment to providing faculty with the resources and opportunities to excel in their respective disciplines, in a timely and efficient manner. The primary premise behind the newly created position was that all teachers and learners do not respond and learn at the same rate. Therefore, individualized professional development must be available. Shawl concluded from his involvement in this research that college administrators were typically using guest lecturers, in-service opportunities, seminars, and conferences as the litmus test for successful faculty professional development. He encouraged the administrative hierarchy to further review their perception of true faculty professional development success to be more reflective of the individual needs and desires of the faculty members, to include paid incentives to increased sabbatical opportunities, and to reduce teaching load. Shawl concluded his research by asserting that faculty should not be required to participate in professional development for nothing in return.

Harnish (1986) conducted faculty professional development research at Niagara County Community College on the premise that faculty themselves can present the best ideas and options for successful professional development. She identified that the community college had long held a firm commitment to the intentional and causal process of faculty professional

development, coupled with adequate financial support. Her research divided faculty professional development activities into 12 separate categories:

1. College-endorsed professional development activities

2. Off-campus professional development resources

3. Professional development travel funds

4. Sabbaticals

5. State University of New York (SUNY) tuition waivers

6. Tuition free courses at the community college level

7. Paid memberships in professional organizations

8. Instructional resource development grants

9. Individual faculty recognition awards

10. Identifying faculty excellence in the classroom

11. Faculty development support services and assistance

12. Individual faculty member improvements noted.

Harnish's findings further propagated the mindset that successful faculty professional development activities encompass a comprehensive process that identifies the various end users of the activities and the mechanisms that are necessary to reach them.

D. J. Miller and Ratcliff (1986) surveyed nearly 200 faculty members at 15 different Iowa community colleges to determine the number of faculty professional development hours attended each year. Their results provided findings that indicated that the following dynamics were occurring within the Iowa community colleges surveyed:

1. Faculty with advanced terminal degrees (doctorates) typically attended the greatest number of professional development hours and activities.

2. The level of participation by faculty members was irrespective of their teaching discipline, faculty ranking, years of service, or activity funding source.

3. The average faculty member spent approximately 161 hours of professional development activities per year.

4. The professional development options and activities chosen did not necessarily lead to faculty advancement or salary increases.

5. Typical individual professional development activities lasted on average, less than 7 hours each.

6. Faculty tended to participate in professional development activities even if the college did not tangibly reward the participants.

The major findings of the Miller and Ratcliff study were that faculty will typically participate in professional development activities regardless of the funding source (institutional or personal) and that rewards for attending do not have to be tangible or financial to ensure participation.

Nickel (1986) conducted a study of faculty at Valencia Community College (FL) who were allowed to participate in the curriculum and instructional development activities at the college. The benefits from their involvement were quite apparent, and the instructional programs at the community college were greatly strengthened. Of primary importance in Nickel's findings was the premise that faculty, when united within a faculty professional development unit or group, were more willing to learn new teaching dynamics, would more readily attempt to use unfamiliar technologies, and had higher levels of instructional satisfaction than their single unit counterparts at the community college.

Research conducted by Valek (1986) identified several factors during the 1980s that could have potentially discouraged community college faculty members from pursuing

professional development opportunities: a decreasing climate of professional growth

opportunities for faculty members; reduced budgets that funded both instruction and professional

development activities; an exponential influx of adult learners, which potentially changed the

dynamics of the classroom; and an increase in the credit hour/contact hour teaching loads for

faculty members while simultaneously decreasing support services.

Valek's (1986) research proposed the creation of a comprehensive faculty professional

development program that would be created to enhance faculty growth and involvement,

increase student learning outcomes, and create a more favorable environment where teaching and

learning can occur simultaneously. She further reported that there were three succinct yet

separate approaches to developing a successful professional growth program: (1) development

of the individual faculty member, (2) curriculum and instructional areas of development, and (3)

an organizational approach to professional development. Valek felt that although these three

functions can be identified independently of one another, they are also mutually dependent on

each other as each area represents a function of a faculty member's overall responsibilities to the

institution. She recommended several options for possible activities that an institution could

propose to a faculty member to encourage greater professional development and growth: (1)

grants participation programs; (2) guest lecturer series; (3) a viable program for faculty

exchange; (4) opportunities for shared learning activities to include workshops, presentations,

sessions, and conferences; and (5) an adequate funding provision to provide a strong sense of

college commitment. Valek concluded by addressing the critical issue of a teaching and learning

environment that promotes growth opportunities and is supported by the overall organizational

mission at the community college.

In 1987, the Florida State Board of Community Colleges (FSBCC) directed each community college in its system to develop, implement, and evaluate a plan for faculty professional development to occur on an annual basis. The overall concern posed by the FSBCC was that faculty members must continually be engrossed and involved in learning activities themselves if they are to continue to capture the attention of their students. The best vehicle for maintaining this needed environment was determined by the Board to be through adequate professional development opportunities. The research conducted by the FSBCC made it one of the first systems to actively differentiate between the concepts of faculty professional development and in-service activities. For the purposes of their research, faculty professional development was understood to be individual based, whereas in-service activities were aimed at group and unit participation. Another important aspect of the FSBCC research was the borrowed approach to faculty professional development incentives that had long been practiced at the 4-year institution level, including paid sabbaticals, reduced faculty teaching loads, summer grants, budgeted travel funds for faculty members, and increased technology options. Their overarching research premise was that each and every faculty member in its system should have ample access to adequate professional growth activities and opportunities.

R. Richardson and Moore (1987) followed a similar path to gathering faculty professional development information by surveying 62 Texas community colleges to determine the extent of their professional development activities, their respective purposes, and any evaluative data collected from their faculty members. The responses confirmed that although the majority of the surveyed community colleges did have professional development activities, they had attained varying levels of success. The most commonly reported professional development activities were faculty orientation sessions, which were arranged into categories of new full-time faculty,

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returning full-time faculty, new part-time faculty (adjunct), and returning part-time (adjunct) faculty members. The surveyed respondents further reported that the second most prevalent activity was single or stand-alone workshops, and the third most reported activity was paid travel to discipline-related organizational meetings. Sabbaticals and visits to sister institutions were also identified as activities by the respondents.

The R. Richardson and Moore (1982) study further identified professional development activities deemed most beneficial by faculty as mentoring activities where a master teacher/mentor teacher model of development was utilized. The activities deemed least beneficial were identified as the teacher exchange program. The most common evaluative tool for all facets or activities was the use of verbal feedback. Written questionnaires, surveys, and open-ended reporting were also used as feedback techniques, with the fewest numbers of respondents identifying pretest and posttest data based on student outcomes. The study concluded with the finding that of all the required components of a successful faculty professional development program, the most critical aspect may be that of providing and accurately documenting evaluations that take place.

One of the more radical approaches to professional development research was the format used by Katz and Henry (1988), who developed a long-term faculty professional development model, as opposed to the majority of models, which are more short-term and episodic in nature. Katz and Henry designed a program that paired two faculty members working collaboratively, with one member of the pair teaching and the other member observing the instruction taking place. Students were interviewed at identified intervals and provided feedback on the instructional activity that took place. At the end of the term, the paired faculty members would reflect on their roles as instructor/observer and compare and contrast their findings.

Katz and Henry's (1988) findings represented a paradigm shift in how faculty members interact with one another and what classroom dynamics best constitute a true learning environment. The study also identified the importance of teaching faculty members how to incorporate critical thinking skills and adequate student feedback opportunities into their classrooms.

In 1990, the St. Petersburg Junior College commissioned the Focus on Access, Community and Excellence in Teaching (FACET; 1990) program to determine the professional development needs of the college's faculty and staff. Each component of the FACET program had professional development as its base and also required that all faculty and staff within the college be adequately trained and professionally developed. The premise of committing to continual improvement via professional development was a core component of this initiative. The FACET initiative recommended that a comprehensive orientation development program be designed that would meet the training needs of every faculty and staff member at the institution. In a departure from the norm for community colleges, the FACET plan encouraged faculty members to enroll in additional graduate study hours as part of their annual professional development activities.

In 1991, a dissertation by Clough was aimed at addressing overriding concerns about the lack of professional development within the California Community College System. The belief was held by ranking political officials that the individual community colleges would not have access to budgeted professional development funds without first determining exactly what those needs were, and how the system could best meet those needs. In order to best ascertain the professional development needs of the system, Clough developed an eight-page assessment

questionnaire and administered it to faculty and staff. Several prevailing conclusions were reported from the results of the questionnaire:

- All groups who participated in the survey reported that continual learning throughout their careers was considered important.

- Most respondents preferred to participate in professional development opportunities that correlated with their respective disciplines and responsibilities.

- Leadership, interpersonal communications skills, long-range goals and planning, and decision-making processes were all considered important components by the majority of the respondents.

- The concept of human resource management was identified as being inclusive of professional development opportunities.

- The issue of having designated times and days for professional development activities was considered very important by the majority of the respondents.

- Most respondents had never taken a formal course that dealt with the community college mission and its purposes.

- The majority of respondents reported that they would enroll in classes that would positively impact their positions at the college.

- Improved communication skills had to become a prevailing practice at the institution.

Clough's (1991) study also made recommendations for a new model of human resource development (formerly known as professional development). Primary tenets of the recommendations identified were as follows:

- Improved collegiality among faculty and staff, which required mandatory preservice training for new employees.

- Offering enhanced part-time faculty professional development opportunities.

- The development of a mentor program for faculty and staff.

- On-campus professional development workshops to be offered throughout the year.

- Workshops that offer insight into collegiality and faculty-staff collaboration.

- Visits to sister institutions.

- Providing adequate opportunities for faculty and staff to take part in customized and personalized professional development activities.

- Developing stronger relationships with 4-year institutions.

- Developing, funding, and staffing of a staff resource center.

- Providing opportunities for salary increases as a direct result of professional development participation.

- Placing staff professional development in a parallel position to faculty professional development within the organizational structure of the college.

One of the more striking notes of the Clough study is the fact that its actual inception was a direct result of a government mandate to garner information on a state system, and not that of a national system or perceived trend.

In the same year, Engleberg (1991) conducted a study that was aimed at determining what components were of the utmost importance in the design of a functional faculty and staff professional development program for community colleges. Her needs assessment departed somewhat from the norm, as she felt that the survey results were of lesser importance than the actual act of gathering information through the decision-making processes at the college. Engleberg recommended that community colleges use a multifaceted model when determining the direction and outcome of a quality-based professional development program, similar to the

model used by St. George's Community College in Maryland. SGCC's model was predicated on a four-tiered approach that included survey instruments, group interaction and dynamics, statistical research based in part on social indicators, and position performance assessments. Engleberg felt that each of the four components had a comparable professional development activity with which to correlate.

Engleberg (1991) believed that the survey component provided clarity for the faculty, as it was demonstrated that more were interested in scholarly activities than in instructional pedagogy. Surveys also had major relevance for part-time faculty, as the results indicated a clear desire for improved communication between faculty chairpersons and the adjunct faculty members, similar to a mentor relationship/arrangement. Additionally, part-time faculty, who were often overlooked within the confines of professional development practices, desired topical workshops on subjects such as teacher/learner issues. Group process assessments provided findings that faculty retreats were needed for both full-time and part-time faculty and staff, in order to discuss, prioritize, and plan appropriate activities. The use of statistical measures allowed the participants to review data that clearly outlined the college's constituency, enrollment trends, special populations, and other data that allow for a more inclusive professional development plan. Finally, the position assessments allowed the faculty members to have a clearer picture of their roles and responsibilities as faculty members, and assisted in identifying where their greatest areas of professional need were located. Additional research conducted by Hunter-Boykin and Evans (1995) supported some of the earlier findings of Engleberg. These researchers found that faculty members who feel as though they are an integral part of the organization tend to be more satisfied in their positions. This higher level of faculty satisfaction can lead to higher morale, higher faculty retention, and better attendance.

However, the researchers also noted that faculty member satisfaction in their position does not always lead to greater levels of productivity in the classroom.

In 1991, Fideler conducted research that placed a greater professional development content focus on increased critical thinking and inquiry-based processes as opposed to the typical instruction-laden content models. Fideler postulated that the central goal of a successful development program was to identify areas that promoted faculty vitality and increased classroom production. Her research included four separate mechanisms for inclusion in the development model:

1. Standard classroom research that identified how learners respond to the instructional efforts of the faculty member.

2. Instructional case study reviews were used to further generate cross discipline inquiry and interest in the pedagogical models used.

3. Katz-Henry (1988) format wherein faculty are encouraged to learn from observing each other while engaged in teaching activities, with additional feedback provided from interviewed students.

4. Writing/journaling activities wherein faculty members are encouraged to write about the issues, concerns, and challenges that they face within the classroom and the greater world of academia in hopes of garnering personal insight and strengthening communication between faculty members.

Fideler's (1990) approach to faculty and staff professional development was also noted as a key component of each of her central themes: the importance of psychological and social support from both peers and supervisors.

Hoerner, Clowes, Lichtman, and Adkins (1991) conducted a follow-up study to Hoerner, Clowes, and Impara's (1991) earlier 2-year research project that focused on professional development programs aimed at technical and occupational faculty members working in community colleges. This follow-up study was designed to focus on six of the premier community college professional development programs earlier identified in Hoerner's research. Although no single institution could lay claim to having the best professional development program, the study identified several commonalities that ran concurrently throughout the identified community college programs:

1. Planning was a core component in all quality programs reviewed.

2. Adequate support services were present to assist faculty and staff in development activities.

3. Institutional financial commitment was a priority.

4. A willingness to be flexible and innovative in both activities and options for development.

5. The presence of a strong and committed leadership team on behalf of the colleges.

6. The full-time faculty perceived the commitment to professional development as a strong indicator of college support.

7. The part-time faculty saw themselves as contributing members of the overall mission of the colleges, and as such were dedicated in their commitment to professional development.

8. The apparent and tangible benefit of faculty professional development was a central theme of the institution at large.

9. The willingness on behalf of the colleges to provide diverse and challenging faculty professional development opportunities and activities.

10. The acknowledgment that there were inherent barriers to effective professional development and then systematically attempting to remove them.

In their conclusions, Hoerner, Clowes, Lichtman, et al. (1991) identified the concept of institutional culture as being a critical component in the professional development process. Earlier, Pascale and Athos (1981) had found that the institution's culture will typically dictate how and when problems and obstacles are identified, dealt with, and eventually resolved. Hoerner, Clowes, Lichtman, et al. (1991) also identified three distinct cultural issues that can have an impact on the professional development processes of the community college:

1. The level of commitment to professional development by the educational community (administrators, faculty, staff, and supporters) is critical.

2. The individualistic values of the faculty members, when combined and intertwined, can be a major factor is determining the culture of the college.

3. A strong sense of nurturing and encouragement can be the single most important factor in determining whether a community college will have a successful and viable professional development program, or merely one that meets the needs of the faculty at large.

According to Hoerner, Clowes, Lichtman, et al. (1991), the relevancy of institutional culture is so critical that successful professional development activities at the community college will permeate every area of the institution, including student services, instructional services, support and administrative operations, technological needs and challenges, as well as all facets of student and faculty interaction.

Gappa and Leslie (1993) conducted research on the inclusion of part-time faculty in faculty professional development at 18 4-year and 2-year institutions selected. Their findings were noteworthy, as they indicated that faculty professional development, although considered somewhat commonplace among full-time faculty members, was not regarded with the same vigor by part-time faculty members at both levels of institutions. Additionally, Gappa and Leslie revealed that part-time faculty members received far less institutional support than their full-time counterparts. In essence, this alienated them at times from the college community at large. Their recommendations of providing additional professional development opportunities aimed specifically at part-time faculty members in the hopes of achieving a greater sense of oneness with the institution, was both innovative and needed.

Although the majority of research conducted on faculty and staff professional development has been centered on full-time practitioners, the relevance of part-time faculty members is vital to the mission of most institutions, as traditionally part-time faculty are responsible for a heavy portion of the overall instructional load at many 2-year and 4-year institutions (Foote, 1996). However, as was reported by Martis (1996), part-time faculty involvement in professional development activities at times can be practically nonexistent. Many part-timers are well qualified to teach the intricacies of their disciplines, especially as it pertains to technical and occupations faculty, but it is their lack of pedagogical training that can create the greatest gap between professional development activities and success in the classroom or lab (D. K. Kelly, 1991). However, Leslie (1998) addressed the greatest challenge facing part-time faculty in the academic realm today as how they are perceived by some of their full-time faculty counterparts and colleagues, who may view them as less credentialed, less professional, and a threat to the learning activities charged. Although viewed as "less than" at times in academic

circles, some research indicates that the use of part-time faculty can actually strengthen the professional development activities of the institution, as these part-time faculty members are typically tied closer to the world of business and industry (the global marketplace) than their full-time counterparts (Watters & Weeks, 1999).

A study by Angelo (1994) on the impacts of faculty professional development at community colleges yielded results very similar to those of Gappa and Leslie (1993). Angelo noted that although faculty professional development opportunities were on the increase, there was a vast chasm between the proposed intentions of improving faculty development and actually evaluating the changes that occurred as a result of the activities. He further noted that, by and large, only a fraction of the faculty who actually need the development take advantage of it, and that the ones who do partake are the very faculty who traditionally need it the least. Finally, Angelo noted that stringent and dedicated faculty professional development initiatives that are undertaken without adequate evaluation will yield little long-term benefit for the faculty member or the institution.

Howey and Zimpher (1994) conducted studies regarding the need for the continual process of faculty professional development, especially for those faculty members who actually teach and train other faculty members. The researchers felt that the lack of a long-term commitment to professional development had created educator preparatory programs that were no longer effective with the students they were intended to reach. Identifying administrators who were directly responsible for the development and continuation of faculty professional development programs was paramount, as it was through a designated responsibility that true accountability could take place. Additionally, Howey and Zimpher were adamant that effective faculty professional development would include multiple areas of enrichment such as social and

critical thinking skills and the inclusion of technology, and not just focus solely on pedagogical advances. An important finding in this study was the directive from the researchers that effective faculty professional development can best occur within learning communities consisting of colleagues, and not as an independent activity by one faculty member.

Research conducted by Felton, Hilegann, and Whitton (1996) at Chemekta Community College (OR) provided findings that specifically referenced work-force development skills training as an added faculty professional development component. Additionally, the concept of applied academics was included, which created a crossover opportunity for faculty from different disciplines to collaborate and develop professional development activities and plans concurrently. Their research, although limited in scope, was an important part of the evolution of professional development inclusion for both academic and technical/occupational faculty members.

Kisner et al. (1998) conducted research that indicated that faculty professional development activities and operations have undergone a shift in focus and purpose during the past 35 years. Originally, faculty professional development had the charge of assisting faculty members in becoming subject matter/discipline specific experts. However, current trends and research indicates that faculty professional development now takes on a different charge, that of helping faculty members learn to use effective pedagogical methods of instruction. This shift has not been an easy one, as many institutions are still clinging to the age old adage of "teaching first and learning second" (Kelly, 1991).

Research conducted by Ouston (1997) also revealed that professional development activities had made a transition from teaching faculty members how to teach about a topic, to learning the process of teaching the student how to perform the topic being taught, so that

students can apply what they learn in the real-world setting. Kydd (1997) further noted the

relevance of offering challenging faculty professional development activities, as these activities

not only benefit the faculty member, but also the student and the community college at large

through effective organizational operations. Organizations can only see systematic change

through organized faculty professional development if and when the individuals are being

developed, as well as the overall organization (Kisner et al., 1998).

Karabenick and Collins-Eaglin (1995) contributed research findings that indicated that

many teaching colleges and universities hold true to the premise that their students learn best

when they are actively participating in continual and reinforcing instructional activities.

However, this practice does not typically carry over into the professional development arena for

the very same faculty members who are often less engaged in passive activities such as

newsletters, speakers, and one-time seminars for professional development. The assumption that

single-session and one-time professional development activities for faculty members often yield

lackluster results was also supported by research conducted by Licklider, Schneiker, and Fulton,

(1997), who found that greater topic retention and practice was more easily attained through

activities that are ongoing over a greater length of time.

Rafkin (2000) conducted research that indicated that community college faculty are often

unprepared by traditional education graduate programs of study and, furthermore, require

community colleges to promptly invest time and resources into equipping the new faculty

member for the pedagogical challenges facing open-door public institutions. Studies conducted

by Amey (1999) were predecessors to Rafkin's and yielded similar results, finding that the

changing demographics of higher education, especially within community colleges, were

ineffective at producing faculty members who possessed valid teaching and learning skills sufficient for their environments.

Lawler and King (2001) found that for faculty professional development initiatives and activities to be successful and sustaining, they must contain the following components: (1) develop a climate of mutual respect between colleagues, presenters, and the department; (2) develop and initiate learning opportunities that create a high level of active participant participation; (3) be inclusive of any and all prior learning activities when developing follow-up sessions; (4) utilize high levels of faculty collaboration (5) cover topics with relevancy and practicality; (6) strengthen the role of the faculty members attending; and (7) allow adequate opportunities for postactivity reflection, evaluation, and comment. These components are consistent with the findings of Kisner et al. (1998) and Kelly (1991). An overarching commonality across the research findings was the importance of faculty inclusion in the planning process.

Faculty participation in professional development program design and improvement is an important component for programs and professional developers to subscribe and consider when developing activities. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) reported in a national study of K-12 professional developers that their perception of benefit from development activities was enhanced if the program and activity was coherent and applicable to their respective areas of teaching. The component of "inclusiveness," whereby faculty members are actively involved in decision-making and program design, is an important indicator of faculty persistence and retention in the field. The researchers also reported that collective participation among adult basic education faculty members was a strong indicator of change and the continual progression of the professional development agenda.

Belzer (2003), provided research findings that indicated that professional practitioners in the field cited numerous benefits to adequate faculty professional development, to include the following: learner outcomes, evolving practices in the classroom, and the identification of organizational and structural issues. The study further reiterated that the success or failure of a professional development activity could often be determined by the vision or desired outcome of the activity, with different types and levels of activities yielding wide ranging results.

In conclusion, faculty professional development must be considered an essential component in the overall comprehensive instructional process, wherein the process of developing and educating faculty members, regardless of discipline and employment status, must be viewed as an investment in the future of the faculty member, the students they will teach, and the community college at large (Bassi, Cheney, & Van Buren, 1997). According to Johnson (2006), faculty professional development has long been defined pragmatically as a planned faculty learning opportunity or experience that is administered by an organization for its members, with the intent of advancing professional competencies and skills. However, after further review and research, Moore revised this conceptual definition of faculty professional development to include the premise that true professional development must include planning and input by the same individuals who will benefit from the training.

Adult Basic Education Theories and Practices

The literature review confirmed the debate over the effectiveness of different types of adult basic education faculty professional development theories and practices, and their pedagogical approach to learning, whether based on "traditional" models or on the more recent pragmatic "reform" model (J. T. E. Richardson & King, 1998). Traditionally classified professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, faculty in-service activities,

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and guest lecturers have been used by adult education systems, consortiums, and hosting organizations for decades with mixed results (Smith & Hofer, 2002). Several rationales exist for their continual usage over time:

- – Short-term in duration

- – Typically less inexpensive for tight budgets

- – Framework allows for greater participation by part-time faculty members

- – Easily adaptable format to most hosting sites, regardless of the size of the organization, and the number of participants

- – Promotes the concept of using in-house educators to further promote their skills and abilities

- – Approach continues to garner support from administration at the local and state levels

In contrast, the more contemporary "reform" model has experienced considerable growth in its widespread usage among more diverse and liberal adult basic education programs. This model tends to focus more heavily on learner-centered approaches to adult basic education that include teacher/student mentor relationships, student/student mentor relationships, group work dynamics, study and learning circles, practitioner inquiry, technology-based curriculum usage, and self-paced learners. Although the research that exists reports that different types of adult basic education programs may utilize one method or the other, and at times will combine the two into a hybrid model that contains the strengths of each, there is no clear evidence at this time that either method is clearly more preferred nor more effective at reaching adult learners (Garet et al., 2001).

Research that specifically addresses the success of various faculty professional development models and practices within adult basic education was not readily found. However,

several studies and research findings from adult basic education faculty professional

development organizations were identified and reviewed. The first such study reviewed was

conducted to determine what type of adult basic education professional development model

would be the most accepted and the most productive if used by practitioners in the field. The

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (1996) commissioned this study

with an emphasis on identifying the necessary and critical key components of a dynamic and

accessible model of faculty professional development. Four main questions were posed by the

researchers:

1. What impact can practitioners in the adult basic education field expect from
   professional development?

2. How can this impact be measured?

3. Which approaches to adult basic educational faculty professional development are
   most effective in achieving this impact?

4. Which professional development systems can best support and enhance effective
   faculty professional development for the adult basic education practitioner?

The responses that were elicited from the surveyed professional practitioners confirmed

the need to compare and contrast various models of (or approaches to) professional development.

The researchers felt limited by the fact that there was no viable method in the study to attempt to

measure student achievement and success based on the models used. However, there was

sufficient interest and data to help direct the important research question posed concerning the

design of an effective professional development program and the factors that can have an impact

on its success or failure (NCSALL, 1996).

The NCSALL (1996) research tested three adult basic education models of faculty professional development to measure effectiveness:

1. Multisession workshops: a practice normally associated with traditional faculty professional development, but designed in a manner that made use of multiple sessions that included experiential learning and active learning activities.

2. Mentor teacher groups: a practice more commonly associated with the reform model of faculty professional development, which utilized blended teaching concepts such as study circles, peer coaching, and faculty mentoring.

3. Practitioner research group: typically associated with the traditional faculty professional development, wherein practitioners conduct research and investigations within their own learning environments and classrooms, with the end result of collecting data from areas of interest to them or their students.

The NCSALL (1996) study was conducted in the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maine, as the researchers involved in the study were in the proximity of the New England area. A sample consisting of 100 practitioners was surveyed for the study, and these adult basic education professionals represented systems and practices that spanned the entire spectrum of adult basic education services: literacy skills acquisition courses, adult basic education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and GED Preparation.

The sample group of practitioners from the states involved participated in professional development activities with durations between 2.5 hours and up to 18 hours within the parameters of either the multisession workshops, mentor teacher groups, or the practitioner-related research groups. Each state participating contained survey groups that reflected all three types of professional development models identified at the onset of the study. All sessions had

the same content: learner motivation, retention, and persistence (sometimes referred to as LMRP) with terminology definitions as follows:

- – *Learner motivation*: learners who are engaged while they are attending class.

- – *Retention*: learners who attend class regularly and who also remain in their program until their learning goals have been reached.

- – *Persistence*: learners who see and define themselves as successful even if their circumstances cause them to "drop-out" or "stop-out."

The findings from the NCSALL (1996) study were useful, as they indicated the amount and type of change in faculty/practitioner thinking as it pertains to the learning motivation/ retention/persistence (LMRP) matrix. The results from the study showed that the type of faculty professional development activity chosen and utilized (from the three options) could have an impact on how practitioners in the field teach and perceive their roles as learning facilitators. The results from the study were as follows:

1. Most practitioners in the study, even those who did not finish the program, reported at least minimal change in their knowledge gains and actions in their classrooms, with relatively few experiencing no change.

2. Nearly 90% gained some knowledge of the professional development topics, even if the gain was limited to only one or two conceptual areas.

3. The vast majority of those surveyed (78%) took action after their participation, which changed how they taught in the classroom.

4. Faculty/practitioners who had paid access to prep time were more likely to make teaching and pedagogical changes based on their professional development model.

5. Faculty/practitioners who were employed in systems that did not already address learner persistence were more likely to make this pedagogical change than their counterparts.

6. Faculty/practitioners who were employed in systems that provided fringe benefits as a condition of employment (retirement, insurance, vacation/sick leave, etc.) were more likely to make pedagogical changes as a result of their professional development model.

7. Faculty/practitioners who had a strong desire to participate in faculty professional development showed greater levels of change than did their counterparts who only reported directed participation.

8. Faculty/practitioners who taught in areas and systems with poor retention rates showed a greater willingness to make the necessary changes that would incorporate topics covered in their professional development model.

9. Faculty/practitioner pedagogical changes can occur due to internal or external motivating factors that have no correlation to the professional development model used in the study.

Concluding faculty professional development recommendations from the NCSALL (1996) study were comprehensive and expansive in nature and are identified as follows:

− Improving faculty members working conditions can have a very positive impact on their willingness to participate in and benefit from faculty professional development activities.

- Incorporating faculty members in the decision-making processes that impact their adult basic education program and students can positively impact their approach to and perception of faculty professional development.

- Providing the necessary institutional/organizational commitment to funding to pay faculty members to attend professional development activities can have a positive impact on their approach to and perception of faculty professional development activities and opportunities.

- Increasing opportunities for greater interaction between program directors and faculty members before, during, and after faculty professional development can have a positive impact on their levels of participation.

- Set expectations high for continual faculty professional development and make its availability a high priority within the program.

- Be innovative and collaborative in designing faculty professional development topics by soliciting requests for needed topical areas from the faculty members themselves.

- Ensure that all faculty professional development is of the highest quality available.

- Provide a multitude of professional development models and activities for faculty members to attend, helping to ensure that the multiplicity of faculty preferences are addressed.

- Continually help teachers learn new teaching skills and build innovative teaching theories that will have a positive impact on their classroom performance and possibly improve student learning outcomes.

A concluding comment made by the NCSALL (1996) researchers was based on the premise that faculty professional development is always important, but that it is critically so for

adult basic education faculty members, as many enter the profession lacking the strong pedagogical skills that are necessary to teach adult learners with low literacy rates. These same practitioners are adults and as such, they tend to share similar traits with their adult learners. Specifically, both groups tend to learn best via different methods, in different settings, under different timeframes, and at varying intervals.

The California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO) (2002) reported that not only does quality faculty professional development require adequate planning and goals identification, it must also include adequate evaluation measures designed to determine its efficacy and relevance. A previous study developed by Kutner et al. (1997) noted that effective faculty professional development must be evaluated if it is to be effective. Four components were identified in this 1997 study: (1) sufficient time must elapse between the professional development activity and the evaluation of that activity for accurate evaluation; (2) all three components of the learning triad must be evaluated (faculty member, support services, and learner outcomes; (3) evaluation data must be representative of the teaching activities that took place; and (4) faculty members must receive adequate direction and encouragement regarding the importance of the evaluation process.

Smith and Hofer (2003) reported that most adult basic education faculty members do not have formal pedagogical training in teaching adults with low literacy rates. Based on their findings, they recommended that all new adult basic education faculty members receive initial training in the pedagogies involved with teaching adults, as well as an overall orientation to the system providing their employment. This practice provides the needed groundwork for ensuring a high rate of faculty participation in the classroom. Failure to implement adequate training and orientation can often result in faculty member failure or their exiting the system.

Smith and Hofer (2003) found that adult basic education faculty members who had greater levels of professional experience and who spent more time in the classroom responded less favorably to faculty professional development than did their newer, less experienced counterparts. Their further reported that faculty with minimal educational credentials typically showed a tendency to incorporate more faculty professional development concepts into their teaching pedagogies than those who were more credentialed. The researchers felt that due to this inverted matrix, adult basic education faculty members must be instructed at the onset of their employment that continual and progressive faculty professional development will be required of them.

Smith and Hofer (2003) also reported that many systems and organizations require that adult basic education faculty members have an annual professional development plan, regardless of their employment status (full-time or part-time) and educational credentials possessed. This professional development plan should be adjusted annually by the faculty member and then reviewed by the appropriate administrator or professional development director. They further presented research findings that indicate that adult basic education faculty members who received paid professional development opportunities attended more hours of professional development and showed the greatest level of change. This practice of paid faculty professional development is vital to the adult basic education arena, as many of the faculty members only teach part-time and have other paid positions held for their primary source of income. The researchers also indicated that if adult basic education faculty members participated in faculty professional development activities with other colleagues from similar disciplines, their propensity to benefit from the activity increased.

Additionally, Smith and Hofer (2003) discovered that adult basic education practitioners showed preferences toward specific types of professional development activities based on their pedagogical approach, time in the teaching field, and class assignment type. For example, adult basic education faculty members with very little teaching experience tended to choose workshops and seminars as their preferred activities. However, faculty members with more experience tended to prefer more intensive and in-depth activities such as mentor teacher groups or practitioner research. Adult basic education faculty also have strong tendencies to pursue professional development activities with similar "subgroups," such as ESL faculty members or those who work with incarcerated students.

It was also reported by the National Literacy Summit (2000) that one central component was missing from the majority of adult basic education faculty professional development programs and activities. This missing component was the involvement of the "student learner" in the design, implementation, and evaluation of professional development activities. The absence of the student in this process creates a tangible gap between the practitioner issues and concerns and those identified by the end user of their services.

Belzer et al. (2001) reported that many states face insurmountable obstacles when designing and planning adult basic education faculty professional development, as the needs identified by faculty members and activities planned by the state organizations are not synchronized. This disparity between those at the state/system levels designing the professional development activities and those participating in them at the local level is convoluted even more as federal accountability mandates increase. The increased control affected by the U.S. Department of Education requires greater levels of data collection from the local level adult basic

education programs as well, which in turn places greater levels of responsibility on faculty members who are not academically credentialed to collect and quantify data.

Additionally, professional development success is limited by technological challenges, as indicated by Lim (2000) who reported that faculty members who are successful at meeting the technological challenges of the classroom are better able to do so by a continual and progressive training regimen that incorporates both pedagogical methodologies and technological advances in the field. Nasseh (2000) wrote that faculty professional development must address two different types of skill sets: subject matter mastery and a mastery of instructional technology. His research further pointed out the importance of computer-based technology and instructional design paradigms that allow both faculty members and students to make the best use of their limited time for participation and learning, especially as these faculty members teach in classrooms with demographically varied populations, including older adult students and other nontraditional groups.

Boylan (2002) conducted extensive research that indicates that adult education and developmental education faculty members can achieve greater levels of success if there is a sense of shared governance between the programs. Findings also showed that greater levels of successful student transition from adult basic education to developmental education were more evident when faculty members shared teaching responsibilities within both programs. This shared instructional support allowed for students to view the transition more confidently, with less anxiety, and a greater sense of security. Boylan also noted that faculty were more successful when both adult basic education and developmental education courses and programs were physically housed in the same building or vicinity. The close proximity of the programs helped to serve as an incentive to both faculty and students alike.

Beaulieu (2007) conducted a study during the fall and spring terms of 2006-2007 by interviewing 19 state-level adult basic education program directors regarding their respective state usage of faculty professional development. The study identified the history of the adult basic education movement, its strong ties to federal funding, and the usage and involvement of faculty professional development, with personal/professional perceptions and opinions from the responding directors. Beaulieu's study could provide the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and its respective colleges with a greater understanding of the importance of available, adequate, and accessible faculty professional development for adult basic education faculty members.

Issues and Challenges Facing Adult Basic Education Programs

The literature reviewed provides valuable insight into the myriad, complex issues faced on a national level by adult basic education programs and the students who participate at varying levels in such course offerings. Tyler (2001) provided research that showed that the majority of adult learners who participate in adult basic education courses and then later take and pass the GED examination do so with the intention of entering some facet of postsecondary education. However, the majority of these students in transition are not successful in the attempt, with a relatively small percentage of GED earners completing even one year of postsecondary education at any level. Although the challenges faced by adult learners are oftentimes insurmountable, even for those who possess a high school diploma or GED, there is an obvious absence of research conducted on the transitioning of adult learners from adult basic education programs into postsecondary education systems (Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2004). Choy (2002) also noted that the success rate of traditional freshmen who possess a high school diploma and attempt to earn a bachelor's degree is still only approximately 54%.

Students who hope to pursue a GED and then enter postsecondary education in anticipation of securing better employment do so with the support of noteworthy employment research. Fronczek (2005) noted that there were great disparities in earnings potential between individuals who possess at least a high school diploma or a GED and those who do not have either credential. Additionally, as educational attainment increases beyond the entry level high school diploma or GED, students see a significant increase in job possibilities at the entry level, promotional opportunities for seasoned employees, and greater levels of job security as well (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005).

P. J. Kelly (2005) noted that the workforce in the United States is becoming more diverse with each passing year, with the racial and ethnic groups that are the least educated showing the greatest percentage of growth. Kelly postulated that if the current trend in population increases continues with undereducated minority groups leading the way, the workforce and earning potential for Americans as a whole will decline considerably over the next two decades.

Additionally, student participation in adult basic education programs is vital due to the ripple effect felt by family members, friends, and coworkers. As students earn their GEDs and enter the job market and/or postsecondary education for additional training, they improve their earning potential through better jobs that provide better benefits that directly impact their families. Educational attainment can, at times, breed second generation educational attainment, as the children of students who earn a GED are more likely to continue their educational pursuits as well (Carnevale & Descrochers, 2004). One of the greatest disparities between those without a high school diploma or GED and those with a high school diploma or a GED regards children living in poverty. The poverty rate for children under 6 years of age decreases significantly

when a parent earns a high school diploma or returns to school to earn a GED (Alabama Community College System, 2008).

Literacy issues and their negative impact on minorities and immigrants is another major concern for adult basic education programs and the workforce at large. Policy makers typically are quick to address future workforce needs based on projections of an ever-changing workforce dynamic. However, it is the older workers, especially minorities and immigrants who have not mastered their use of English as a second language, who fall through the cracks and are in dire need of adult basic education services (Carnevale & Descrochers, 2001). An excellent example of this scenario is the current high school graduate population disparities that exist between Texas and New Hampshire. Texas has a high percentage of citizens, including minorities and immigrants, who do not possess a high school diploma or a GED (estimated at 23%). In contrast, New Hampshire has a stable population with a smaller percentage of immigrants who do not possess a high school diploma or a GED (8%), which, in context, indicates that Texas populations will have a harder time finding and keeping gainful employment (Stoops, 2004).

In keeping with the major issue of undereducated immigrants and their impact on adult basic education, Hamm (2004) noted that a significant percentage of overall population growth experienced by the United States since 1990 (more than 50%) has come in the form of undereducated immigrants, as nearly 33% of these immigrants lack a high school diploma or a GED when they arrive in the United States. Statistics such as these are of major importance to adult basic education programs, which at times are tethered to workforce development initiatives as well, with a central theme of increasing students' educational and literacy skills as well as their workplace readiness skills needed for gainful employment.

Self-perceptions of adult basic education students can be of concern to adult basic education programs too, due to the inherent differences in how traditional and nontraditional students see and define themselves. Choy (2002) reported that nontraditional students, who comprise the majority of adult basic education students, are much more likely to see themselves as "workers who are students" as opposed to "students who are also workers." The perception of the individual student can be a valuable indicator of how academically successful the adult basic education student will become in the future.

Remediation challenges faced by students are oftentimes common denominators within most adult basic education programs, and GED preparation can be considered as developmental in nature at its core as well. Research indicates that adult basic education students have a strong tendency to be either successful or unsuccessful based almost entirely on their particular area of academic weakness. Adelman (1998) conducted research on nontraditional students who have developmental needs in specific academic areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics. In this study, it was revealed that nontraditional students who have a reading deficit are more likely to have remediation/developmental needs in other academic areas as well and, additionally, are less likely to complete their educational pursuits. Bearing this challenge in mind, the efficiency of meeting student outcome goals rises to the point of being paramount, as failure at the adult basic education level will almost assuredly lead to failure at the next level of educational attainment.

Adult basic education programs also face many traditional student issues such as financial need and lack of economic stability while enrolled in coursework. Of particular interest are the challenges of missed work for class participation, transportation costs, and childcare issues (ACE, 2004; Bosworth & Choitz, 2002; Cook, King, Carnevale, & Desrochers, 2004).

Allen and Seaman (2006) also contributed to these findings by a thorough review of the dramatic increase in the number of on-line class offerings at all types of colleges and universities. This research indicated that the number of purely on-line classes and those offered with mixed pedagogies continually increases every year, which forces many faculty members to face the virtual classroom for the first time with underprepared instructional and technological professional development backgrounds.

Technology-related research conducted by Grant (2004) strongly asserted that successful faculty professional development must have an adequate balance of topical discipline pedagogies as well as a strong influx of instructional-based technologies. These technologies should include a firm base of technologies that may support course- and topic-specific learning, veering away from the generic practices that might address a broad range of disciplines. The research further reveals that technological-based faculty professional development should provide adequate opportunities for initial involvement by the faculty members themselves, with various forms of compensation being utilized whether it be financial reward, budgetary increases to include travel opportunities, or reduced teaching loads.

In addition to financial constraints and challenges, adult basic education students also face the myriad of problems associated with multiple competing roles while enrolled as a student: working and work schedules, responsibilities of being a spouse and/or parent, and being accepted into the student culture of an adult basic education program (Matus-Grossman & Gooden, , 2002). These same students also must learn to navigate the treacherous educational/institutional environment and survive its rules and rigors (Brickman & Braun, 1999). Hill (2004) also noted that adult learners face their own personal and psychological challenges of returning to an educational environment, especially if they are returning after a lengthy absence.

In conclusion, the literature review indicates that Adult Basic Education faculty members, and to a similar extent their corresponding students, face similar issues as those faced by their traditional academic and technical faculty members. Budget shortfalls, planning, instructional issues, technology challenges, a myriad of student-related challenges, and the need for accessible, adequate, and effective professional development are all present for the typical Adult Basic Education faculty member. In particular, faculty professional development can be an important factor is learning to deal successfully with these needs and challenges.

Through the preceding sections of this chapter, adult learners and their specific issues and challenges when returning to school have been reviewed, as this group constitutes a large portion of the adult basic education population. A historical review of faculty professional development and the adult basic education movement were reviewed, with consideration given to the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act, which created directives for mandatory funding of teacher education and professional development. Finally, specific issues facing adult basic education programs were identified to include the enrollment of students who possess particular characteristics that lend themselves to attrition and poor performance, as well as decreasing funding and increasing levels of accountability. It is recognized that improved faculty professional development cannot negate budgeting shortfalls. However, improving this component can positively impact faculty and subsequently the students they seek to serve. This study could possibly improve the faculty professional development processes currently utilized in the Alabama Community College System and its respective institutions.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The data for this study were collected through the adaptation and use of a survey

instrument first developed in 2005. The original study was part of a research grant from the

Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education conducted by Wallin and Smith (2005).

The survey was modified by this researcher for the needs of this study, and additional questions

were added regarding respondent demographics.

The purpose of the original 2005 survey was to ascertain vital information from technical

college faculty regarding their professional development needs and preferential delivery methods

and formats, and to determine any potential obstacles that could possibly hinder faculty

professional development activities (Wallin & Smith, 2005). According to Wallin and Smith's

findings, both new and returning faculty members face tremendous demands on their time,

expertise, and instructional abilities. These challenges can encompass practically every facet of

the instructional gambit and include teaching nontraditional students and oversized classes,

mainstreaming students with particular needs and skill sets, using available technology for

classroom support, as well as classroom management issues.

Integrating effective professional development into the initial and continual preparation

segments for faculty can be a tremendous asset in helping to ensure their professional successes

both in the classroom/lab and beyond. However, poor planning and inadequate utilization of

both professional development opportunities and the corresponding budgets that accompany

them can yield negative results if the two are not incorporated in a systematic and logistical manner (Townsend & Twombly, 2001).

Although there has been a wide variety of research conducted in the last 30 years on the efficacy and availability of professional development within community college systems across the nation (Centra, 1976; Cryer, 198; Hammons, 1979), it has been concluded by more recent researchers that faculty professional development should be premised on the concepts of being continual, inclusive, and individually based, with relevance to the organization as a whole, as well as significant and relevant to the faculty members' areas of responsibilities (Guskey, 1995; Sparks, 1997). Murray (2002) affirmed the importance of this practice when he reported that adequate and effective professional development can be of immense importance in both faculty retention and efficacy in the classroom, which in turn can lead to greater student success.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The intent of this exploratory descriptive research study was to study the perceptions of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Faculty in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) regarding the availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of faculty professional development. The overarching research question is this: What are the perceptions of the ACCS Adult Basic Education faculty regarding the availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of faculty professional development? This information was provided by exploring a number of secondary questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of ABE faculty in the ACCS?

2. What do ABE faculty members perceive as their most critical faculty professional development needs?

3. What do ABE faculty members perceive as the most significant barriers to quality faculty professional development?

4. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by gender?

5. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by age range?

6. What are the preferred delivery methods based on years of experience?

7. What are the preferred delivery methods based on full-time and part-time faculty status?

8. What are the preferred delivery methods based on highest degree held?

9. Are there differences in perceptions of ABE faculty regarding faculty professional development between those employed at suburban, rural, and urban-serving community colleges?

Materials and Data Collection

According to Cresswell (2005), there are two primary types of research survey designs: cross-sectional and longitudinal. Cross-sectional designs may be used by researchers when attempting to gather findings related to attitudes and perceptions on a particular topical area at an established point in time. Data findings from the proposed study were derived using standard descriptive educational statistical methods and practices that are commonly accepted under cross-sectional survey based formats. The revised survey used for this research consists of the original survey, with the inclusion of additional questions and demographics requests that are germane to the professional development needs of ABE faculty members who teach in the ACCS. The data from this survey are descriptive in nature. According to M. D. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), descriptive research is "research involving nothing more than reporting the characteristics of one sample at one point in time" (p. 526). It provides data about the universe being studied. Nonetheless, it is limited in scope and therefore can only portray the "who, what, when, where and how" of a situation, not what created it. J. P. Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999)

defined survey research as "a form of descriptive investigation that involves collecting information about research participants' beliefs, attitudes, interests, or behavior through questionnaires, interviews, or paper and pencil tests" (p. 533). Survey research, as defined by Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) is the attempt to attain data from a population or sample in order to discover information about the population in regard to one or more variables.

ABE Governance Changes

Adult Basic Education in the state of Alabama has seen significant governance changes during the last several years. In the spring of 2002, the Alabama Legislature passed legislation transferring the adult education program from the K-12 State Department of Education to the ACCS. The primary rationale for this change in governance was to enable the state of Alabama to better meet the requirements of the *Workforce Investment Act* passed by Congress in 1998. The primary goal of adult education authorized under the *Workforce Investment Act* is to assist adults in obtaining knowledge and skills for employment and self-sufficiency.

By 2004, all local Adult Basic Education programs operated in the state of Alabama were offered under the direction of the ACCS. The majority of the programs were administered by the state's 2-year colleges, respective to each college's traditional recruiting and instructional service area. Uniform accountability measures such as monitoring of attendance, contact hours, and functioning level gains were implemented. During this transitional period, the ACCS assigned administrative responsibilities for the operation of the college's ABE Programs to the Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development and Adult Education (a position no longer in existence). This position was assisted by state Basic Adult Education staff members that transferred to the ACCS from their former K-12 employing school systems governed under the Department of Education. In 2007, This position was removed from the ACCS administrative hierarchy, and

the ABE Program oversight duties were transferred to the Vice Chancellor for Instructional and Student Services.

Under leadership from this office, the local Adult Basic Education program directors formed an association recognized by the Alabama Community College System. The directors elected an advisory council from their newly formed association members. Directors now have a participatory role in designing and implementing program mission, goals, and objectives. The association also has subcommittees assigned to areas such as retention, recruitment, professional development, and so on. In conjunction with the Vice Chancellor's Office, these directors and the association membership are actively involved in all facets of the program delivery systems.

<div align="center">Site Selection and Participants</div>

Participants were surveyed from approximately 300 full- and part-time community college faculty members who teach in Adult Basic Education programs at 25 comprehensive ACCS institutions as identified in the following tables. For purposes of continuity within the community college mission for adult basic education programs being offered within ACCS, technical colleges and incarcerated offender program faculty members were excluded from this study. This dissertation study was conducted as descriptive research. Fraenkel and Wallen's (2003) text entitled "How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education" stated that a sample size of 100 is a sufficient minimum number for descriptive research. Sample size was based on $\alpha = .05$, which gives a t value of 1.96 for any sample above 120 with a 5% margin of acceptable error (Cochran, 1977). Israel (1992) stated that for a sample size of 300 with a precision level of $\pm 7\%$, 121 participants were required. Faculty members surveyed have teaching responsibilities at a wide variety of individual instructional sites within their service areas but fell under the authority of their respective community college and were identified as such. Attempts were

<div align="center">75</div>

made to survey both full-time and part-time faculty members who were teaching in the Summer

Term 2009. Unlike traditional academic and technical community college faculty members,

Adult Basic Education faculty members typically operate under 12-month contracts, as the

standard academic year is based on a 12-month contractual cycle, contrary to the 9-month

contractual cycle commonly used in college credit programs of study. ACCS institutions were

identified based on the location, highest award offered, Carnegie Classification, and population

size served. Revised Carnegie Classifications made by Hardy (2005) for 2-year institutions were

referenced to make descriptive statistical analysis based on student enrollment size descriptors as

follows:

Table 1

Carnegie Classifications by Type

Rural	Suburban	Urban
Small	Single Campus	Single Campus
Medium	Multi-campus	Multi-campus
Large		

Note. From U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics Integrated
Postsecondary Educational System (IPEDS).

Table 2

Institutions Surveyed

Institution	Carnegie Classification
Alabama Southern Community College	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Small
Bevill State Community College	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Medium
Bishop State Community College	Associate's--Public Urban-serving Multi-campus
Central Alabama Community College	Associate's—Public Rural-serving Medium
Chattahoochee Valley Community College	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Medium
Enterprise-Ozark Community College	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Medium
Gadsden State Community College	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Large
George C Wallace Community College-Dothan	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Large
George C Wallace State Community College-Hanceville	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Large
George C Wallace State Community College-Selma	Associate's--Public Rural-serving Large
James H Faulkner State Community College	Assoc/Pub-S-MC: Associate's--Public Suburban-serving Multicampus
Jefferson Davis Community College	Assoc/Pub-R-S: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Small
Jefferson State Community College	Assoc/Pub-U-MC: Associate's--Public Urban-serving Multicampus
John C Calhoun State Community College	Assoc/Pub-R-L: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Large
Lawson State Community College-Bessemer	Assoc/Pub-U-MC: Associate's--Public Urban-serving Multicampus
Lawson State Community College-Birmingham	Assoc/Pub-U-MC: Associate's--Public Urban-serving Multicampus
Lurleen B Wallace Community College	Assoc/Pub-R-S: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Small
Northeast Alabama Community College	
Northwest Shoals Community College-Muscle Shoals	Assoc/Pub-R-M: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Medium
	Assoc/Pub-R-M: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Medium
Shelton State Community College	Assoc/Pub-R-L: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Large
Shelton State Community College-Fredd Campus	Assoc/Pub-R-L: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Large
Snead State Community College	Assoc/Pub-R-S: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Small
Southern Union State Community College	Assoc/Pub-R-M: Associate's--Public Rural-serving Medium

Note. From U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Educational System (IPEDS).

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was administered via Survey Monkey™. Preliminary email

requests were sent to all ACCS Adult Basic Education Program Directors in order to gather

email addresses for all full-time and part-time faculty members from which to send out the initial

survey instrument. Administrative support was offered from the ACCS Central Office in

Montgomery to assist in ensuring adequate participation by System colleges and sites. After the

email addresses were received and confirmed, email invitations were sent to all potential

respondents with a link attached that took the respondent directly to the survey site. The

participants had approximately 2 weeks to complete the survey in the first attempt at data

Table 3

Alabama Adult Education Programs 2007-2008

Program	Full-time	Part-time	Total
AL Southern Community College	13	8	21
Bevill State Community College	3	24	27
Bishop State Community College	6	15	21
Calhoun State Community College	10	42	52
Central AL Community College	5	34	39
Chattahoochee Valley Community College	2	6	8
Enterprise-Ozark Community College	6	28	34
Faulkner State Community College	4	9	13
Gadsden State Community College	5	57	62
Jefferson Davis Community College	5	7	12
Jefferson State Community College	7	35	42
Lawson State Community College	8	13	21
Northeast AL Community College	7	53	60
Northwest-Shoals Community College	12	18	30
Shelton State Community College	9	27	36
Southern Union State Community College	2	13	15
Wallace State Community College, Dothan	7	31	38
Wallace Community College, Hanceville	4	21	25
Wallace Community College, Selma	4	10	14
L. B. Wallace Community College	4	5	9
Total	123	456	*579

collection. A first email reminder was sent to participants who failed to respond within the initial 2-week timeframe, as well as an email reminder to those who had started the survey but had failed to complete it, based on the original survey email date. A second email reminder was sent to participants 2 weeks after the first reminder was emailed. Follow-up phone calls to participants, program directors, and individual faculty members were used as necessary.

Research conducted by Wortsman and Upcraft (2001) endorsed internet usage for surveys and found them to be a valuable method for collecting data from large numbers of participants in shorter periods of time; they can be less confusing and intimidating than standard paper-and-pencil versions of the same survey. Wortsman and Upcraft also found that there can be technological challenges coupled with user proficiency issues associated with using internet-based surveys, as some respondents may not have access to the internet or have inadequate connections to successfully participate. This issue was negligible for the purposes of this study, as all Adult Education Sites operated under ACCS had internet access. The skill sets necessary to complete the online survey could have been an issue for participants, and this topical concern/activity was addressed directly by the survey instrument itself.

As with the original survey instrument developed in 2005, the amended survey instrument utilized a Likert-type scale system to gather responses to the survey instrument question areas. The instrument contained 50 professional development related activities that were incorporated into seven clusters:

1. Technology (hardware and software issues and abilities)

2. Student Support and Guidance (advising and retention related)

3. Instructional (directly pertaining to classroom activities and abilities)

4. Promotional (recruitment and public relations related)

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5. Administration and Management (budgeting, supervision, and oversight related)

6. Curriculum (planning, creativity, and revision of curriculum materials)

7. Professional Environment (professional development and skills acquisition)

The respondent needed to make two assessments to successfully complete the entire survey. The first assessment required the respondent to rate the importance of a particular professional development activity (example: "provide individual and group instruction") as they perceived it to relate to successful instruction in the classroom (*low, moderate, high,* and *very high*). The second assessment required the respondent to rate their individual level of competence in the particular area as perceived using an identical four point Likert scale to the first assessment (*low, moderate, high,* and v*ery high*). Addendums to the original instrument were added in the form of additional demographic and professional/career topics related questions and required the respondent to provide an open-ended response or to indicate preferences by checking particular categories. The instrument was sent out to the preselected and identified respondents to participate, based on the email confirmation and additional contact information provided by program directors and program staff, who were given an appropriate timeline for completion and return.

Results from the 2005 survey were provided by 714 respondents who were full-time faculty at Georgia's technical colleges. The population of the study was limited to faculty members who had full-time teaching loads while the research was being conducted. There was a 37.7% return rate on the survey, with responses received from 29 of the Georgia system's 33 technical colleges. For the purposes of the research, the technical colleges that failed to provide responses were reduced from the total number of possible respondents, yielding a higher

response rate of 45.2%. Any faculty survey instruments that were not answered completely were coded as missing data.

As might be expected from the survey group of faculty members, the Instructional Cluster provided the largest number of activities that were perceived by faculty to be of the most vital importance to achieving instructional success in the classroom. Based on the 4.0 Likert scale system used in the original instrument, items that held a response rate point value of greater than 3.0 were considered to be very important by faculty in their instructional accomplishments. Other clusters provided items considered by faculty members as being very important as well. There were 11 activities that ranked at the 3.41 level or higher, in order from highest to lowest: (1) prepare effective current instructional materials, (2) utilize hands-on learning strategies, (3) provide individual and group instruction, (4) create and modify curriculum, (5) provide academic advising, (6) utilize instructional techniques that develop higher order thinking skills, (7) use email, (8) work with advisor committee and employers to modify curriculum to meet changing needs of the program and industry, (9.5 tie) modify instructional materials based on student and industry assessment and feedback, (9.5 tie) identify and implement current industry standards and trends into the curriculum, and (11) participate in professional development activities that result in professional growth.

Informed Consent

A cover letter was provided with the necessary introductory information and instructions. Respondents were asked to answer as thoroughly and honestly as possible, with the guarantee of anonymity. There was no risk to the participants, and participation was voluntary. Contact information was provided to facilitate any questions or concerns. Approval of the survey was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Alabama.

Data Analyses

At the conclusion of the specified response period, the survey instruments were reviewed, tabulated electronically by the Survey Monkey® program, and exported to separate files for analysis. Data from the survey were placed into tabular form for comparison. Standard calculation methods were performed to gather basic descriptive statistics such as percentages, case counts, and means. Responses from open-ended questions were read and analyzed by this researcher for any obvious emerging themes. These data are presented, along with the tabular outputs, in chapter 4 of this dissertation. This information was used to support findings and draw the conclusions presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The purpose for conducting this study was to identify the perceptions of Alabama Community College System Adult Basic Education Program faculty as they relate to the accessibility, adequacy, and effectiveness of professional development opportunities at the local college level. The literature reviewed revealed a vast array of alternative professional development activities that, when made accessible, can yield increased benefit to faculty, and in turn, to the students taught by the faculty as reported in *The Characteristics and Concerns of Adult Education Teachers* (Smith & Hofer, 2003). The literature review also indicates that Adult Basic Education faculty members, and to a similar extent, their corresponding students, face very similar issues to those faced by their traditional academic and technical faculty members. Budget issues and shortfalls, planning practices and implementations, instructional- and curriculum-related issues, updated technology challenges, and the multifaceted web of student-related challenges. Each of these faculty-related issues and challenges share the need for accessible, adequate, and effective professional development practices for the typical Adult Basic Education faculty member.

The desired outcomes of this study were achieved through a survey of approximately 300 Adult Basic Education program faculty members who were teaching in the 2009 summer term at various instructional sites in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). There were 123 usable surveys returned, with 108 completed, for a 41% response rate. This survey measured their responses to questions regarding their perceptions on the availability, adequacy, and

effectiveness of faculty professional development at their respective institutions. An additional

purpose of this research was to determine the level at which the faculty members perceived their

institution as meeting their professional development needs. This information will be useful to

the ACCS and the departments responsible for the oversight of the ACCS Adult Basic Education

Program.

The original 2005 survey was developed and administered to ascertain vital information

from technical college faculty regarding their professional development needs, preferential

delivery methods and formats, and to determine any potential obstacles that could possibly

hinder faculty professional development activities (Smith & Wallin, 2005). According to Smith

and Wallin's findings, both new and returning faculty members face tremendous demands on

their time, expertise, and instructional abilities (Smith & Wallin, 2005). Challenges faced by

faculty members can include many facets of the instructional areas and may include teaching

nontraditional students, oversized classes, mainstreaming students with particular need and skill

sets, using available technology for classroom support, as well as classroom management issues.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The intent of this exploratory descriptive research study was to study the perceptions of

the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Faculty in the ACCS regarding the availability, adequacy, and

effectiveness of faculty professional development. The overarching research question was the

following: What are the perceptions of the ACCS Adult Basic Education faculty regarding the

availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of faculty professional development? The primary

research question was supported by exploring a number of secondary questions. These secondary

research questions of interest are as follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of ABE faculty in the ACCS?

2. What do ABE faculty members perceive as their most critical faculty professional development needs?

3. What do ABE faculty members perceive as the most significant barriers to quality faculty professional development?

4. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by gender?

5. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by age range?

6. What are the preferred delivery methods based on years of experience?

7. What are the preferred delivery methods based on full-time and part-time faculty status?

8. What are the preferred delivery methods based on highest degree held?

9. Are there differences in perceptions of ABE faculty regarding faculty professional development between those employed at suburban, rural, and urban-serving community colleges?

Specific Research Question Results

Research Question 1

What are the demographic characteristics of ABE faculty in the ACCS?

All ACCS eligible comprehensive community colleges were invited to participate in the survey, which allowed for inclusion by at least one comprehensive community college for each category from the Revised Carnegie Classifications system. Each Carnegie Classifications was represented by faculty participants, with the single exception of the Urban-Single-Campus category. The majority of the faculty participants (88.6%; $n = 109$) were employed at three types

of institutions; Rural-Medium Campus (39.8%; $n = 49$), Rural-Large Campus (30.9%; $n = 38$), and Urban-Multicampus (17.9%; $n = 22$).

The gender question item had 122 responses that identified 94 female respondents (77%) participating in the survey cohort group. There were 28 male respondents (23%) identified, which represented 23% of the cohort group. There were 5 participants electing not to respond to the question. Caucasians comprised the largest category of participants with 97 responses (79.5%). The second largest participant group was Black/African Americans, who had 22 respondents (18.0%), with the smallest participant group being Hispanic/Latino with 2 respondents (1.6%).

Age ranges of respondents indicated that the largest group comprised the 56 years and above category with 64 respondents (52.9%), followed by the 46-55 years range with 35 respondents (28.9%). These figures showed that 99 faculty respondents (93.4%) were 36 years old or older. Only 7 respondents (6.6%) were identified within the 26 -35 years of age group. There was 1 participant who was identified as being in the under 25 years of age category.

The majority of the faculty members (74%) reported working part-time with less than 40 total hours worked per week. There were 32 respondents (26.2%) who reported being employed full-time as Adult Basic Education faculty members. The majority of respondents (74%) also indicated that they routinely taught part-time with 19 hours per week or less of actual time in the classroom. There were 46 part-time faculty members (39%) with total work weeks of 19 hours or less (see Table 4).

Table 4

Demographics

	Under 25 (%)	26-35 (%)	36-45 (%)	46-55 (%)	56 + (%)	total %
	N = 1	*N = 7*	*N = 14*	*N = 35*	*N = 64*	*N = 121*
Gender (*N* = 120)						
Male	0	29	50	37	9	23
Female	1	71	50	63	91	77
Race/Ethnicity (*N* = 121)						
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	2	1
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black/African American	0	14	21	20	16	18
Hispanic/Latino	0	0	0	3	2	2
Native American/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0
White/Caucasian	1	86	79	77	81	80
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highest Degree (*N* = 119)						
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Educational Specialist	0	0	0	6	11	8
Master's	1	29	46	60	52	53
Bachelor's	0	57	46	26	27	31
Associate's	0	0	0	3	6	4
High School Diploma	0	14	8	6	3	5
Status (N=119)						
Full-time	1	57	43	29	17	26
Part-time	0	43	57	71	83	74
Carnegie Classification (*N* = 122)						
Rural-Small	0	0	0	3	14	8
Rural-Medium	0	57	71	43	30	40
Rural-Large	1	14	14	34	34	31
Suburban-Single-Campus	0	0	0	0	3	2
Suburban-Multi-Campus	0	0	0	3	2	2
Urban-Single-Campus	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urban-Multi-Campus	0	29	14	17	17	18
Teaching Hours (*N* = 119)						
0-10 hours	0	57	43	37	36	38
11-19 hours	0	0	29	26	47	36
20-29 hours	0	43	14	11	7	11
30-40 hours	1	0	14	26	11	16
Working Hours (*N* = 119)						
0-10 hours	0	0	7	6	16	11
11-19 hours	0	0	14	29	32	28
20-29 hours	0	0	7	12	25	18
30-40 hours	1	100	71	53	27	44

The instrument also questioned faculty participants regarding total years of teaching experience in general, total years of teaching experience specifically in ABE, and total years of teaching specifically within the ACCS. There were large differences between the average faculty member's years of teaching experience (20.78 years) in comparison to the average faculty member's years of ABE teaching experience (9.14 years). The majority of faculty members' responses for the total number of years in the ACCS were low in comparison to the other years of experience questions (see Table 5).

Table 5

Years of Experience

Type of Experience	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-19 years	20 + years
ABE	43%	22%	16%	5%	14%
Total Teaching	18%	9%	12%	9%	53%
ACCS	50%	36%	5%	3%	6%

An additional demographic data set that was collected was the inquiry into each participant's ABE Program placement within each respective college's organizational structure. Over half of the participants (51%) indicated that they were unsure where their respective ABE program was administratively aligned. Of the remaining options, an equal percentage of participants (15%) identified their administrative alignment within either student support services or in a completely separate ABE division. Instructional divisions comprised 12% of the participants' organizational alignment , whereas 8% were assigned within a workforce development or related division (see Table 6).

Table 6

Organizational Structure

In your college's organizational structure, what division does your ABE Director report to?

Division	Response
Instruction	12%
Workforce Development or Related	8%
Separate ABE Division	15%
Unsure	51%

n = 120.

Research Question 2

What do ABE faculty members perceive as their most critical faculty professional

development needs?

The primary objective of this research question was to allow ABE faculty members to

identify specifically what they felt were their most critical faculty development needs. By

allowing the faculty members to respond with three items of concern, it was hoped that themes

of topical areas might emerge that would be of value to the study. Of the 108 surveys submitted

for this study, there were a total of 88 ABE faculty member responses to this open-ended

research question, yielding a response rate of 81%.

As with the original survey instrument developed in 2005, the amended survey

instrument utilized a Likert-type rating scale to gather responses to the survey instrument

question areas. The instrument contained 50 professional development related activities that

were incorporated into seven clusters:

1. Technology (hardware and software issues and abilities)

2. Student Support and Guidance (advising and retention related)

3. Instructional (directly pertaining to classroom activities and abilities)

4. Promotional (recruitment and public relations related)

5. Administration and Management (budgeting, supervision, and oversight related)

6. Curriculum (planning, creativity, and revision of curriculum materials)

7. Professional Environment (professional development and skills acquisition)

The respondents were asked to make three assessments to successfully complete the entire survey. The first assessment required the respondent to rate the importance of a particular professional development activity (e.g., "provide individual and group instruction") as they perceived it to relate to successful instruction in the classroom (low, moderate, high, and very high). The second assessment required the respondent to rate their individual level of competence held in the particular area as perceived using an identical scale to the first assessment (low, moderate, high, and very high). A third question was added that was not part of the original Wallen (2005) survey. This question required the respondents to rate their respective institution's ability to address this faculty professional development activity within each cluster area. An identical scale was used to rate the respondent's perception of the institutional level of success at meeting this need (low, moderate, high, and very high).

Addendums to the original instrument were added in the form of additional demographic and professional/career topics related questions and required the respondent to provide an open-ended response or to indicate preferences by checking particular categories. As was similarly performed with the original Wallen survey from 2005, the respondent cluster/activity rating categories of high and very high were combined to report the greatest level of response, as identified by the faculty members responding to each survey cluster question area. Table 7 provides the percentage of respondents who identified the need for professional development training in each cluster/topical area as either high or very high.

Instructional Cluster. The instructional cluster provided two questions that prompted responses. As reported in Table 7, these responses indicated that 55% and 57% of the respondents, respectively, felt that additional faculty professional development training was needed in the topical areas of providing individual and group instruction, as well as in preparing effective current instructional materials. Instructional issues and challenges are critical to the success of the overall ABE mission within the ACCS, and as such, these items were rated accordingly. When considering the large percentage of part-time ABE faculty members, these instructional cluster areas can appear to be even more critical, as part-time faculty members, by nature of their employment status, have less time to participate in faculty professional development activities, even when these are offered.

A secondary component of this cluster activity review was to survey the level at which respondents felt that their respective institutions were meeting this perceived need. As was the case with the original study, ratings were combined at the high and very high levels for measurement and reporting purposes. Faculty members responding to the first cluster activity of providing individual and group instruction reported that 56% of their institutions were meeting this perceived need at the high or very high level. Respondents also reported that 54% of their respective institutions were meeting the need of preparing effective and current instructional materials at the high or very high level.

Table 7

Instructional Cluster Activities

Activity	Perception of Importance	Perception of PD Need	Perception of Institutional Provision
Providing individual and group instruction	96%	55%	56%
Preparing effective current instructional materials	87%	57%	54%

Professional Environment. The second cluster area from the survey was categorized as professional environment. These five questions focused on the need for professional development activities that involved duties external to the classroom, but directly related to the overall success of the instructional function of being an ABE faculty member. As might be expected within a survey regarding faculty professional development needs, the topical area of actually participating in faculty professional development activities was rated as the area with the greatest level of need. A high percentage of participants (69%) rated this topical area of professional development need as either high or very high. The second-highest rated professional development area of need from the professional environment cluster was the need for additional training on collaboration and networking with community college faculty and staff, with 46% of the respondents rating this area as either high or very high. As identified within the survey instrument itself, ABE faculty members were questioned as to their perceptions of positional importance within their respective colleges. Table 8 reports that 92% of the ABE faculty members who responded to the survey question felt that their roles were viewed as being important to their respective colleges. A third topical area identified as "Other" was also rated highly, with 44% of the respondents identifying unspecified areas of professional development need within the professional development cluster. However, this question was not posed as an open-ended question, and there was no way for the faculty member respondents to actually identify what their additional concerns and/or needs were for this topical cluster.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity from the professional environment cluster was reported for participating in professional development activities, with

57% of the respondents reporting that their institution was meeting this need at the high to very high level. The lowest rated item was the activity pertaining to managing a program advisory committee, with 23% of the respondents reporting that their respective institution was meeting this perceived need at the high and very high level. Table 9 provides the complete review of the Professional Development cluster activities.

Table 8

Perception of Belonging

Statement	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
I feel that my position as an ABE faculty member is an important part of my college.	92%	8%
I feel as though faculty from other areas at the college treat me like a peer.	72%	28%
I feel as though my college respects me as a professional member of the college community.	82%	18%

Curriculum. The third topical cluster area from the survey instrument was identified as the curriculum cluster. The eight topical area questions within this cluster can be directly attributed to actual classroom activities and practices that relate to faculty professional development needs within curriculum development, improvement, relevancy, and currency. The highest rated faculty professional development need within this cluster (60%) was for creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques. This can possibly be

Table 9

Professional Environment Cluster Activities

Activity	Perception of Importance	Perception of PD Need	Perception of Institutional Provision
Collaborating and/or networking with Community College faculty and staff.	68%	46%	33%
Managing a program advisory committee.	35%	28%	23%
Participating in departmental and college committees for improvement of the programs and the college.	50%	34%	32%
Participating in professional development activities that result in professional growth.	84%	69%	57%
Other	61%	44%	36%

attributed to the ever-increasing need for additional student assessments within ABE Programs, as required by both state and federal mandates. This topical area of need was followed closely by the perceived need to incorporate current industry trends and practices into the ABE curriculum, with 58% of the respondents identifying this need as either high or very high. The third highest rated area of need from this cluster was reported as the need to have additional professional development training on creating and modifying ABE curriculum, with 53% of the respondents identifying this area as either high or very high in importance. Table 10 identifies the total list of questions with applicable percentages reported.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity (45%) for faculty member

perceptions of institutional success at meeting the activity need was creating and using a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques. Faculty members responded that 41% of their respective institutions were meeting the perceived need of professional development at the high or very high level, for creating and modifying curriculum. The lowest percentage (27%) reported by faculty members for their respective institution's ability at meeting the perceived need was from the activity of developing a curriculum that addresses issues of gender bias and cultural sensitivity. This data could be important in evaluating curriculum materials that are presented to a culturally diverse student population with both male and female participants.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity in this cluster for the institutional provision category was reported for the activity of creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques. Respondents for this activity reported that 45% of their respective institutions were meeting the perceived need at either the high or very high levels. Creating and modifying curricula was reported by 41% of the respondents as having colleges where this activity need was perceived as being met at the high or very high levels. The lowest rated activity (27%) with identifiable activity components was developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity. Table 10 includes the complete list of findings for the cluster activities and perception responses.

Table 10

Curriculum Cluster Activities

Activity	Perception of Importance	Perception of PD Need	Perception of Institutional Provision
Creating and modifying curriculum (i.e., course syllabus, course objectives, lesson plans).	70%	53%	41%
Creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques.	79%	60%	45%
Integrating curriculum with other faculty and other instructional areas.	60%	51%	33%
Identifying and implementing current industry standards and trends into the curriculum.	74%	58%	37%
Working with advisory committee and employers to meet changing needs of the program and industry to modify curriculum.	64%	47%	34%
Developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity.	48%	42%	27%
Participating in "back-to-industry" experiences to increase technical competence.	60%	47%	36%
Other	64%	38%	30%

Technology. Table 11 shows the reported findings for the next topical area presented in the survey, identified in the survey instrument as the technology cluster. The nine questions presented from this cluster area can best be categorized as technological instructional support needs within the identified topical areas presented. It must be noted that the highest reported

area of need (70%) from this cluster was within the closed-ended question from the "other" category. Participants were not allowed to identify what these other concerns were, due to the survey instrument formatting used. The second highest rated area of need within the technology cluster (69%) was the need for additional faculty development training that would use instructional techniques used to strengthen higher order skills in ABE students, such as critical thinking abilities. A third topical area of need for integrating writing skills across the ABE curriculum was rated as either high or very high by 55% of the participants. The fourth highest reported areas of need—two topical areas of need identified for additional training in modifying instructional materials based on student and industry feedback, and recognizing diverse learning styles—were equally rated as high or very high by 51% of the respondents.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity from the technology cluster (52%) was for the activity that focused on recognizing diverse learning styles. Modifying instructional materials based on student and industry feedback was also rated high by faculty members, with 46% of the faculty members responding that their respective institutions were providing professional development activities toward meeting this perceived need. Utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills in students was also an activity that was rated high, with 45% of the faculty members reporting that their institutions met this perceived need at the high or very high levels. The activity with the lowest response rate for the cluster with identifiable components was using hands-on learning in the curriculum, with 38% of the faculty members responding that the perceived faculty development need was being met by their

respective institution. Table 11 includes the complete list of findings for the cluster activities

and perception responses.

Table 11

Technology Cluster Activities

Activity	Perception of Importance	Perception of PD Need	Perception of Institutional Provision
Utilizing classroom arrangements for instructional effectiveness.	79%	60%	39%
Modifying instructional materials based on student and industry assessment and feedback.	88%	61%	46%
Managing student conflicts in the classroom.	80%	50%	44%
Providing accommodations for students with special needs.	83%	43%	41%
Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans.	82%	61%	52%
Utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills in students (i.e., critical thinking skills).	86%	69%	45%
Implementing writing skills across the curriculum.	74%	55%	41%
Utilizing "hands-on" (contextual teaching and learning strategies) in the curriculum.	76%	60%	38%
Other	78%	70%	35%

Student Support. The student support cluster findings are identified in Table 12. These

seven topical areas are centered on student support services and practices that typically occur

outside of the direct classroom environment. Areas covered within this cluster are practices such

as advising, such as providing information and/or student referrals, assistance with job placement, academic and career advising, student organization development and involvement, and student retention practices. The cluster item regarding student information and making appropriate referrals received the highest number responses, with 53% of the participants reporting that this professional development activity need rated as high or very high. The implementation of student retention programs was ranked as the second highest response category, with 48% of the respondents reporting it as a high or very high need for professional development topics. Three topical areas received 42% of the respondents reporting as a high or very high need: assisting students with job placement, providing academic advising, and providing career advising.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity for the institutional provision category was reported for the activity pertaining to providing information and referrals for meeting student needs, with 59% of the faculty members reporting that their institution was perceived as meeting this activity at the high or very high levels. Faculty members also reported that their institution was perceived as being successful at providing academic advising, with 56% of the respondents ranking their college at the high or very high level. Faculty members reported that the lowest rated activity (22%) for their institution from this cluster was serving as a student organization advisor. Table 12 includes the complete list of findings for the cluster activities and perception responses.

Table 12

Student Support Cluster Activities

Activity	Perception of Importance	Perception of PD Need	Perception of Institutional Provision
Providing information or referrals to meet individual student needs.	85%	53%	59%
Assisting students with job placements.	55%	42%	43%
Providing academic advising.	74%	42%	56%
Providing career advising.	64%	42%	47%
Serving as a student organization advisor.	38%	25%	22%
Implementing student retention programs.	63%	48%	53%
Other	49%	29%	35%

Promotional. The promotional activities cluster provided four topical areas that centered on external practices that pertain to specific ABE Program practices for recruitment activities, linkages with other educational entities to increase enrollment and/or student success, and promotion and marketing plans. The two topical areas of student recruitment activities and program linkage practices had nearly identical respondents, with 38% and 39%, respectively, reporting the item need at the high or very high level. Marketing and promotion activities were rated the lowest among the identified topical areas, with 30% of the respondents identifying this area need at the high or very high rating.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity for the institutional provision

category was reported for the activity of conducting student recruitment activities, with 30% of the faculty member respondents reporting that their institution was perceived as meeting this activity at the high or very high levels. Linkage activities with other education entities were ranked closely, with 29% of the respondents reporting that their institution was perceived as meeting this need. The lowest rated activity among the activities with identified components was the activity of assisting in developing a promotion and marketing plan, with 28% reporting that their institution was perceived as meeting the need at the high or very high levels. Table 13 includes the complete list of findings for the cluster activities and perception responses.

Table 13

Promotional Cluster Activities

Activity	Perception of Importance	Perception of PD Need	Perception of Institutional Provision
Conducting student recruitment activities	55%	38%	30%
Linking with secondary career and technical education programs through advisory committees, Tech Prep consortia, and/or other activities.	50%	39%	29%
Assisting in developing a promotion/marketing plan for a specific program.	34%	30%	28%
Other	34%	20%	22%

Administration and Management. The administration and management cluster identified 10 topical areas for respondents to rate according to their perceived level of need for additional professional development. These topics primarily focused on tasks that take place outside of the traditional classroom learning environment and consisted of topical areas such as budget

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development, grants and other fiscal issues, program development, grading practices and policies, linkage and articulation practices, legal topics, and issues that related to student safety, health, and welfare. The highest level of need reported was with the innovative program development topical area, with 43% of the respondents reporting the faculty professional development need at the high and very high levels. Institutional and student safety topical area needs were reported as a high to very high need for 41% of the respondents. The third highest rated area for respondents was the perceived need for maintaining strong relationships with business and industry counterparts, with 40% of the respondents reporting this perceived need at the high to very high level.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity for the institutional provision category was reported for the activity of addressing institution and student safety issues, with 35% of the respondents reporting that their institution was perceived as meeting this activity need at the high or very high levels. Documenting and communicating student grading policies and addressing legal issues were both reported by 33% of the faculty members, who perceived that their institution was meeting this activity need. The lowest rated activity for institutional provision was participating in budget development, with only 17% of the faculty members reporting that their institution was perceived to be meeting this need.

Table 14

Administration and Management

Activity	Perception of Importance	Perception of PD Need	Perception of Institutional Provision
Participating in budget development.	29%	23%	17%
Assisting with writing and implementing grants and targeting financial resources.	24%	33%	20%
Participating in innovative program development.	47%	43%	29%
Documenting and communicating student grading policies.	47%	24%	33%
Providing input into secondary/postsecondary articulation agreements for instructional programs.	30%	27%	26%
Developing and maintaining relationships with business and industry.	43%	40%	32%
Addressing institution and student safety issues (i.e., violence, terrorism, severe weather).	51%	41%	35%
Addressing legal issues (i.e., student privacy act, sexual harassment).	50%	39%	33%
Addressing health and medical related issues (i.e., CPR, stress management, wellness).	40%	35%	28%
Other	38%	20%	30%

Research Question 3

List what you believe are the three most significant barriers to quality faculty

professional development.

Of the 108 surveys submitted to this open-ended question, 87 respondents answered this

survey question, yielding a response rate of 81%. The primary goal for this research question

was to identify barriers to professional development as perceived by ABE faculty members. The

question allowed for three barriers to be listed. It was hoped that through these responses, which

covered a wide range of topical areas, identifiable themes or patterns would emerge. A thorough

review of the responses showed that the barriers could be categorized into three distinct themes

(see Table 15). The first theme was categorized as funding issues and concerns. Many faculty

members responded that there was not sufficient funding for adequate travel for professional

development opportunities. Funding was also an issue when trying to allocate funds to pay for

professional development programs, seminars, and workshops. A second theme that emerged

was a lack of time to seek, participate, and benefit from professional development activities.

This issue was of even greater concern for part-time faculty members, who are involved in direct

instructional activities for the vast majority of their work week. The final theme that emerged

from the responses involved the lack of quality presenters and presentations for faculty

professional development. It was apparent that some participants felt that those who presented

material were not qualified nor motivated to provide the needed level of commitment and

expertise. This lack of qualified trainers and acceptable presentations could lead faculty

members to perceive that professional development was not seen as an important concept by

their respective institutions.

Table 15

Perceived Barriers to Quality Professional Development

Perceived Barrier	Response Percent	Response Count
Funding Issues	100 %	87
Time Constraints	81%	70
Quality of Presenters and		
Presentations	63%	55
Answered Question	81%	87
Skipped Question	19%	20

Research Question 4

What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by gender?

The primary purpose of this research question was to attempt to gather data that would identify preferred delivery methods and important topical areas for ABE faculty professional development by gender. As stated previously in the data reported for Research Question 1, the majority of ABE faculty members in the ACCS are part-time (77%) and female (74%), making this a relevant question from which to solicit responses. It was not known at the onset of the study if there would be such a disparity between full-time and part-time faculty members employed in the ABE programs statewide, nor was the assumption made that the employees who responded would be overwhelmingly females.

However, a thorough review of the responses provided data that showed that male and female faculty members had similar preferences in some delivery methods for professional development activities. The four most prevalent delivery methods for both male and female faculty members were conference attendance, with males at 82% and females at 81%, 1-3 hour

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workshops with males at 67% and females at 54%, daylong workshops, with males at 44% and

females at 45%, and half-day workshops, with males at 44% and females at 55% (see Table 16).

Table 16

Preferred Delivery Methods in Topical Arenas by Gender

Topical Arena	Gender	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Conference attendance	82	81
1-3 hour workshops	67	54
Daylong workshops	44	45
Half-day workshops	44	55
Self-paced on-line tutorials	33	37
Summer institutes	30	10
Brownbag lunch seminars	26	18
Instructor-led on-line courses	26	30
Formal courses	22	8
Instructor training institute	22	24
New faculty orientation	19	5
Weeklong seminars	7	1
Other	0	4

Additional data were gathered from the respondents regarding professional development

participation in various delivery formats during the last 2 years. The data reflect similar results

in rankings reported by male and female ABE faculty members. As was the case with preferred

delivery methods for faculty professional development, the conference attendance category held

the highest place for both genders, with 85% of the respondents indicating that they had attended

a conference for professional development within the last 2 years. The next three positions of

attendance were identical to the current preferred delivery methods section, with 1-3 hour

workshops (70% males and 70% females), daylong workshops (67% males and 79% females),

and half-day workshops (52% males and 51% females) categories. Table 17 reports all delivery

options in which respondents identified that they had participated during the last 2 years.

Table 17

Actual Delivery Method in Topical Arenas Experienced by Gender

Delivery Method	Gender	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Conference attendance	85	85
1-3 hour workshops	70	70
Daylong workshops	67	79
Half-day workshops	52	51
Self-paced on-line tutorials	30	43
Summer institutes	4	19
Brownbag lunch seminars	19	13
Instructor-led on-line courses	15	36
Formal courses	4	0
Instructor training institute	4	6
New faculty orientation	19	8
Weeklong seminars	0	0

The preferred level of interaction by gender during faculty professional development

activities was also obtained in the survey instrument (see Table 18). As would possibly be the

case within any faculty discipline-specific group or cohort, there were preferences identified for

ABE faculty members by gender. Reported preferred levels of interaction percentages were

close for each category for males and females. The largest percentage groups of both males

(42%) and females (40%) preferred to learn in discipline-specific cohort groups, wherein the

ABE faculty members would participate in professional development activities attended by other

similar discipline faculty members. By attending professional development activities with other

similar faculty members, the cohort would be able to share common concerns, issues, and

challenges that may be unique to the overall group.

Table 18

Preferred Level of Interaction for Delivery Methods by Gender

Preferred level of interaction	Gender	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
I like to learn by myself	25	30
I like to learn in discipline-specific cohort	42	40
I like to learn in interdisciplinary cohort	33	31

Faculty member data were also compiled that identified the preferred specific

presentation formats (traditional and electronic) by gender for faculty professional development

activities. The traditional delivery method of hands-on activities and labs option received the

highest level of preference by gender among all traditional categories, with 63% of males

ranking this category highest, and 44% of females ranking this option highest. Guided

discussion was ranked higher by females (35%) than males (22%). The lecture option was the

lowest ranked preferred option for all traditional delivery methods, with only 15% of males and

22% of females preferring this delivery method. Among all categories of electronic delivery

methods, both male (44%) and female (47%) ABE faculty members ranked web-based on-line

courses the highest. Video conferences were ranked second in preferred electronic delivery

methods by both males (37%) and females (34%). Chatroom formats and satellite formats were

the least preferred delivery methods among all electronic delivery method options by gender.

Table 19 reports the percentage breakdown by gender for all preferred delivery method options.

Table 19

Preferred Specific Delivery Method by Gender

Specific Delivery Method	Male (%)	Female (%)
Traditional Delivery Method		
Lecture	15	22
Hands-on activities and labs	63	44
Guided discussion	22	35
Other	0	0
Electronic Delivery Method		
Video conference	37	34
Web-based on-line course	44	47
Videotape	19	15
Chatroom	0	3
Satellite	0	3

As was the case with the data reported for preferred delivery format by gender, the

original seven clusters developed by Wallin in the original 2005 survey were used in the

reporting of important topical areas of professional development by gender, as perceived and

reported by ABE faculty members participating. As was similarly performed with the original survey from 2005, the respondent cluster/activity rating categories of high and very high were combined to report the greatest level of response by percentage, as identified by the faculty members responding to each survey cluster question area. The instrument contained 50 professional development related activities that were incorporated into seven clusters as described below:

1. Technology (hardware and software issues and abilities)

2. Student Support and Guidance (advising and retention related)

3. Instructional (directly pertaining to classroom activities and abilities)

4. Promotional (recruitment and public relations related)

5. Administration and Management (budgeting, supervision, and oversight related)

6. Curriculum (planning, creativity, and revision of curriculum materials)

7. Professional Environment (professional development and skills acquisition)

Within the instructional cluster, two professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed by gender. Females rated providing individual and group instruction (96%) slightly higher than their male counter parts (92%). There was a larger variation in the response to the second cluster activity of preparing effective current instructional materials, with females rating the importance of this activity at 91%, while 74% of males rated its importance as a topical activity. Table 20 reports the complete findings for the cluster by activity and according to perception responses by faculty members participating in the survey.

Table 20

Instructional

Activity	Perception of Importance		Perception of PD Need		Perception of Institutional Provision	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Providing individual and group instruction	92%	96%	51%	57%	52%	58%
Preparing effective current instructional materials	74%	91%	48%	61%	44%	57%

Within the professional environment cluster, five professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed according to gender. Participating in professional development opportunities that result in professional growth was rated the highest activity by gender, with 82% of males and 85% of females rating the activity as an important topical area at the high to very high levels. The activity of collaborating and/or networking with community college faculty and staff was the second highest ranked activity by gender, with 74% of males and 66% of females rating the activity as being an important topical area. The activity with the greatest level of disparity was the activity of participating in departmental and college committees for the improvement of programs and the college, with 59% of the males and 46% of the females reporting the activity as important. Table 21 reports the complete findings for the cluster by activity and according to perception responses by faculty members participating in the survey.

Table 21

Professional Environment

Activity	Perception of Importance		Perception of PD Need		Perception of Institutional Provision	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Collaborating and/or networking with community college faculty and staff.	74%	66%	48%	47%	30%	35%
Managing a program advisory committee.	38%	35%	31%	27%	20%	23%
Participating in departmental and college committees for improvement of the programs and the college.	59%	46%	37%	33%	27%	33%
Participating in professional development activities that result in professional growth.	82%	85%	66%	70%	48%	60%
Other	54%	64%	38%	46%	38%	34%

Within the curriculum cluster, eight professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed according to gender. Identifying and implementing current industry standards into the curriculum was rated the highest activity of importance by males, with 70% of the participants ranking the activity at the high to very high levels. The highest ranked activity by female participants (83%) was for creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques. This activity also reported the greatest percentage of disparity between male and female faculty members responding, with 67% of males rating the activity as an important topical area. Developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity was ranked the lowest activity by both males (46%) and females

(48%). Table 22 reports the complete findings for the cluster by activity and according to

perception responses by faculty members participating in the survey.

Table 22

Curriculum

Activity	Perception of Importance		Perception of PD Need		Perception of Institutional Provision	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Creating and modifying curriculum (i.e., course syllabus, course objectives, lesson plans).	59%	74%	52%	54%	31%	45%
Creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques.	67%	83%	54%	62%	36%	47%
Integrating curriculum with other faculty and other instructional areas.	63%	59%	48%	50%	35%	33%
Identifying and implementing current industry standards and trends into the curriculum.	70%	76%	54%	59%	33%	39%
Working with advisory committee and employers to meet changing needs of the program and industry to modify curriculum.	55%	68%	37%	50%	31%	35%
Developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity.	46%	48%	54%	38%	28%	27%
Participating in "back-to-industry" experiences to increase technical competence.	64%	58%	51%	45%	35%	37%
Other	66%	61%	42%	35%	25%	33%

Within the technology cluster, nine professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed according to gender. Providing accommodations for students with special needs and utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills were both the highest rated activities for males (78% respectively) in this cluster. Female participants ranked highest the activity of modifying instructional materials based on student and industry assessment and feedback by 94% of the female participants. This activity also reported the greatest percentage of disparity between male and female faculty members responding, with 74% of males rating the activity as an important topical area in comparison to 94% of the female participants. The cluster activity of implementing writing skills across the curriculum was rated identically by both males and females, with 74% of the total cohort identifying the activity as an important topical area. Table 23 reports the complete findings for the cluster by activity and according to perception responses by faculty members participating in the survey.

Within the student support cluster, seven professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed according to gender. Providing information or referrals to meet individual student needs was the highest rated activity by both males (81%) and females (86%), identifying the activity as an important topical area of focus. This activity also reported the greatest percentage of disparity between perception of importance and perception of institutional provision, with males rating the activity as an important topical area by 81% in comparison to 54% who said that their institution did a good job of providing it. Similarly, 86% of the females rated it as important, with only 61% reporting that their institutions provided it. The activity of providing academic advising was rated second highest among cluster activities by both males and females, with 70% of males and 76% of females rating the activity as an important topical area. This activity also reported the greatest percentage of disparity between male and female

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Table 23

Technology

Activity	Perception of Importance		Perception of PD Need		Perception of Institutional Provision	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Utilizing classroom arrangements for instructional effectiveness.	75%	80%	56%	61%	42%	47%
Modifying instructional materials based on student and industry assessment and feedback.	74%	94%	54%	62%	32%	50%
Managing student conflicts in the classroom.	77%	82%	46%	51%	42%	44%
Providing accommodations for students with special needs.	78%	85%	58%	64%	32%	44%
Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans.	70%	85%	55%	63%	47%	53%
Utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills in students (i.e., critical thinking skills).	78%	88%	69%	69%	40%	47%
Implementing writing skills across the curriculum.	74%	74%	48%	58%	36%	42%
Utilizing "hands-on" (contextual teaching and learning strategies) in the curriculum.	67%	80%	54%	63%	32%	40%
Other	78%	77%	70%	70%	24%	39%

faculty members responding, with 74% of males rating the activity as an important topical area

in comparison to 94% of the female participants. The cluster activity of implementing student

retention programs reported the greatest level of disparity between genders, with 56% of males

and 66% of females identifying the topical area an important activity. Table 24 reports the

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complete findings for the cluster by activity and according to perception responses by faculty

members participating in the survey.

Table 24

Student Support

Activity	Perception of Importance		Perception of PD Need		Perception of Institutional Provision	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Providing information or referrals to meet individual student needs.	81%	86%	48%	55%	54%	61%
Assisting students with job placements.	56%	55%	27%	47%	40%	44%
Providing academic advising.	70%	76%	37%	43%	54%	67%
Providing career advising.	59%	66%	38%	43%	48%	57%
Serving as a student organization advisor.	41%	37%	23%	26%	31%	18%
Implementing student retention programs.	56%	66%	50%	47%	50%	53%
Other	50%	63%	25%	31%	33%	35%

Within the promotional activities cluster, four professional development activities were

identified and responses reviewed according to gender. Conducting student recruitment

activities was the highest rated activity for both genders, with 59% of males and 54% of females

identifying the activity as an important topical area. Linking with secondary career and technical

education programs was the second highest rated activity by both genders, with 48% of males

and 40% of females identifying the activity as an important topical area. Table 25 reports the

complete findings for the cluster by activity according to perception responses by faculty

members participating in the survey.

Table 25

Promotional Activities Cluster

Activity	Perception of Importance		Perception of PD Need		Perception of Institutional Provision	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Conducting student recruitment activities	59%	54%	33%	40%	25%	31%
Linking with secondary career and technical education programs through advisory committees, Tech Prep consortia, and/or other activities.	48%	40%	34%	41%	28%	30%
Assisting in developing a promotion/marketing plan for a specific program.	27%	36%	23%	33%	27%	28%
Other	50%	28%	18%	22%	22%	23%

Within the administration and management cluster, 10 professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed according to gender. Addressing health and student medical issues was the highest ranked activity of importance for males, with 53% of the male participants identifying the activity as an important topical area. Addressing institution and student safety issues was ranked as the second highest activity within this cluster for males (52%) and the highest ranked activity for females with 50%, identifying the activity as an important topical area. The cluster activity of assisting with writing and implementing grants and targeting financial resources was the lowest rated activity of importance by both males (30%) and females (23%). The cluster activity for providing input into secondary and

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postsecondary articulation agreements reported the greatest level of disparity between the genders, with 41% of males and 27% of females identifying the activity as an important topical area. Table 26 reports the complete findings for the cluster by activity and according to perception responses by faculty members participating in the survey.

Table 26

Administration and Management by Gender

Activity	Perception of Importance		Perception of PD Need		Perception of Institutional Provision	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Participating in budget development.	33%	28%	23%	23%	20%	15%
Assisting with writing and implementing grants and targeting financial resources.	30%	23%	28%	35%	20%	19%
Participating in innovative program development.	48%	47%	23%	50%	31%	29%
Documenting and communicating student grading policies.	42%	48%	24%	26%	28%	34%
Providing input into secondary/postsecondary articulation agreements for instructional programs.	41%	27%	26%	28%	24%	27%
Developing and maintaining relationships with business and industry.	44%	42%	31%	43%	28%	33%
Addressing institution and student safety issues (i.e., violence, terrorism, severe weather).	52%	50%	33%	42%	31%	36%
Addressing legal issues (i.e., student privacy act, sexual harassment).	52%	48%	39%	39%	28%	35%
Addressing health and medical related issues (i.e., CPR, stress management, wellness).	53%	44%	37%	33%	22%	29%
Other	50%	36%	18%	20%	25%	33%

Research Question 5

What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by age range?

The purpose of this research question was to determine which delivery methods and topical areas were preferred by ABE faculty members based on age ranges of respondents. Age ranges were developed for participant groupings that comprised the following: 25 years of age and under, 26-35 years of age, 36-45 years of age, 46-55 years of age, and 56 years of age and above. As was the case with the data reported for preferred delivery format by gender, the original seven clusters developed by Wallen in the original 2005 survey were used in the reporting of important topical areas of professional development activities and reported by pre-established age ranges. As was similarly performed with the original survey from 2005, the respondent activity rating categories of high and very high were combined to report the greatest level of response by percentage. The instrument contained 50 professional development related activities that were incorporated into seven clusters as described below:

1. Technology (hardware and software issues and abilities)

2. Student Support and Guidance (advising and retention related)

3. Instructional (directly pertaining to classroom activities and abilities)

4. Promotional (recruitment and public relations related)

5. Administration and Management (budgeting, supervision, and oversight related)

6. Curriculum (planning, creativity, and revision of curriculum materials)

7. Professional Environment (professional development and skills acquisition)

Instructional. Within the instructional cluster, two professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed by gender. Females rated the activity of providing individual and group instruction (96%) slightly higher than their male counter parts (92%). There

was a larger variation in the response to the second cluster activity of preparing effective current instructional materials, with females rating the importance of this activity at 91%, whereas 74% of males rated its importance as a topical activity. Table 27 reports the complete findings for the cluster by activity and according to perception responses by faculty members participating in the survey.

The 25 and under age range had a 100% response rate to the first five categories, but only had one respondent. Otherwise, the two highest age range categories (46-55 years and 56 years and above) received the largest percentage of responses to the question. Excluding the 25 and under age range group with a single respondent, the conference attendance format categories for the 26-35 years of age and the 46-55 years of age groups received the highest overall percentage of all with 83% preferring this delivery format and topical arena. Conference attendance for the 56 years of age and above range followed closely with 80% of the respondents preferring this delivery method. The 1-3 hour workshop was rated the highest by the 26-35 year old range with 67% of the 7 respondents preferring this delivery format and topical arena, excluding the single respondent from the 25 and under age group. The daylong workshops category was rated the highest by the 56 years and above category, with 50% of the 64 respondents ranking the category higher than the other age groups, excluding the single 25 years and under respondent. A similar response was reported by the 56 years and above category for the half-day workshops, with 57% of the 64 respondents rating the delivery method and topical arena the highest of all age ranges, excluding the 25 and under age range single respondent. Conference attendance, variable hour workshop formats, and self-paced online tutorials were fairly consistently rated the highest by all age group respondents. Table 27 reflects the entire list of delivery methods preferences and topical arena for each age range.

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Table 27

Preferred Delivery Methods and Topical Arenas by Age Range

Delivery Method and Topical Arena	Age Range				
	≤ 25(%) $n = 1$	26-35(%) $n = 7$	36-45(%) $n = 14$	46-55(%) $n = 35$	56 + (%) $n = 64$
Conference attendance	100	83	77	83	80
1-3 hour workshops	100	67	54	57	57
Daylong workshops	100	33	39	37	50
Half-day workshops	100	33	39	53	57
Self-paced on-line tutorials	100	50	39	40	32
Summer institutes	0	17	15	13	17
Brownbag lunch seminars	0	33	31	23	15
Instructor-led on-line courses	0	17	15	33	32
Formal courses	0	17	23	13	7
Instructor training institute	0	17	39	23	22
New faculty orientation	0	0	15	17	4
Weeklong seminars	0	0	0	3	4
Other	0	0	7	0	4

Additional data were gathered by age range from the respondents regarding actual professional development participation in various delivery formats and topical areas during the last 2 years. The data reflected similar results in rankings reported between male and female ABE faculty members. As was the case with preferred delivery methods and topical areas for faculty professional development, the conference attendance category held the highest place for all age ranges, with the highest percentage being 100% ($n = 1$) for the 25 and under range, and the lowest percentage (82%) reported from the 56 years and above age range. Excluding the single respondent in the under 25 age range, the highest percentage of respondents for the 1-3

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hour workshops (76%) daylong workshops (80%) and half-day workshops (58%) was reported

by the 56 years and above age group. The 26-35 age group reported the highest level of prior

participation (50%) in the self-paced on-line tutorials delivery method and topical arena. Table

28 reports all delivery options identified by respondents as having participated in during the last

2 years.

Table 28

Actual Delivery Methods in Topical Arenas Experienced by Age Range

Delivery Methods and Topical Arena	Age Range				
	≤ 25(%) *n* = 1	26-35(%) *n* = 7	36-45(%) *n* = 14	46-55(%) *n* = 35	56 + (%) *n* = 64
Conference attendance	100	83	93	90	82
1-3 hour workshops	100	33	50	57	76
Daylong workshops	100	67	79	67	80
Half-day workshops	100	50	29	53	58
Self-paced on-line tutorials	100	50	14	37	46
Summer institutes	0	0	14	10	20
Brownbag lunch seminars	0	17	0	17	16
Instructor-led on-line courses	0	17	7	27	42
Formal courses	0	0	7	0	0
Instructor training institute	0	0	7	3	7
New faculty orientation	0	0	14	13	9
Weeklong seminars	0	0	0	0	0

As was the case with the data reported for preferred delivery format by gender, the

original Wallen survey clusters were also used in the reporting of important topical areas by pre-

established age ranges. The respondent activity rating categories of high and very high were

combined to report the greatest level of response by percentage. The instrument contained 50

professional development related activities that were incorporated into seven clusters as described below:

1. Technology (hardware and software issues and abilities)

2. Student Support and Guidance (advising and retention related)

3. Instructional (directly pertaining to classroom activities and abilities)

4. Promotional (recruitment and public relations related)

5. Administration and Management (budgeting, supervision, and oversight related)

6. Curriculum (planning, creativity, and revision of curriculum materials)

7. Professional Environment (professional development and skills acquisition)

Instructional Activity. Within the instructional cluster, two professional development activities were identified and responses reviewed by age ranges. The first activity from this cluster was providing individual and group instruction. This activity was perceived as having the highest level of importance by all age range groups of 36 years or older, with the exception of the under 25 age group with only 1 respondent (100%). The second activity of preparing effective current instructional materials was rated the highest level of importance (100%) by the 26-35 years age range group, along with the single respondent in the under 25 age range group. The 56 years and above age range group also rated the activity with a high level of importance, with 94% of the respondents identifying the activity as being rated at the high to very high levels.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. The highest rated activity for the institutional provision category was reported for the activity of conducting student recruitment activities, with 30% of the faculty member respondents reporting that their institution was perceived as meeting this

activity at the high or very high levels. The first activity in the cluster had considerably lower

perceptions of institutional provision in comparison to the perceptions of importance for the

activity. With the single exception of the under 25 age range group with 1 respondent (100%),

all four older age range groups reported that their respective institutions were not perceived as

meeting this need. In particular, the 46-55 age range group and the 56 and above age groups

reported that the perception of institutional provision was only 57% and 56%, respectively, for

the first activity in the cluster. Perception of institutional provision for the second cluster activity

of preparing effective current instructional materials also showed a similar decrease when

compared to perceived levels of importance. Table 29 includes the complete list of findings for

the cluster activities and perception responses.

Table 29

Instructional Cluster

Activity	Perception of Importance					Perception of PD Need					Perception of Institutional Provision				
	≤ 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	≤ 25	36-35	36-45	46-55	56+	≤ 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Providing individual and group instruction	*100%	84%	93%	97%	96%	*100%	40%	62%	33%	55%	*100%	67%	33%	57%	56%
Preparing effective current instructional materials	*100%	100%	86%	84%	94%	*100%	40%	50%	51%	59%	*100%	50%	46%	56%	54%

*$n = 1$.

Professional Environment. The second cluster area from the survey was categorized as

professional environment. Five questions focused on the need for professional development

activities that involved duties external to the classroom, but directly related to the overall success

of the instructional function of being an ABE faculty member. As might be expected within a

survey regarding faculty professional development needs, the topical area of actually

participating in faculty professional development activities was rated as the area with the greatest

level of importance across all age range groups for the cluster. The second highest rated

professional development perceived topical area of importance from the professional

environment cluster was the need for additional training on collaboration and networking with

community college faculty and staff. Age range groups reported perceived levels of topical area

importance from 100% for the 25 and under age range, to 68% for the 56 and above age range.

Of particular interest with this activity was the decrease in perceived levels of importance across

the age ranges. As identified within the survey instrument itself, ABE faculty members were

questioned as to their perceptions of positional importance within their respective colleges.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their

respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs

at either the high or very high level. There were decreases between perceptions of importance as

compared with perceptions of institutional provision across all activity areas and corresponding

age range groups. The cluster activity of participating in professional development activities that

result in professional growth reported the highest levels of successful comparison. The cluster

activity of managing a program advisory committee showed the lowest levels of comparison

between perceptions of importance and perceptions of institutional provision. Table 30 provides

the complete review of the professional development cluster activities across all age ranges and

perception categories.

Table 30

Professional Environment Cluster

Activity	Perception of Importance					Perception of Pd Need					Perception of Institutional Provision				
	≤ 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	≤ 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	≤ 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Collaborating and/or networking with Community College faculty and staff.	*100%	86%	74%	71%	68%	*0%	67%	29%	47%	49%	*100%	33%	14%	20%	44%
Managing a program advisory committee.	*100%	43%	36%	50%	61%	*0%	33%	21%	33%	25%	*100%	17%	7%	10%	31%
Participating in departmental and college committees for improvement of the programs and the college.	*100%	43%	50%	57%	46%	*100%	17%	29%	40%	32%	*100%	33%	7%	17%	44%
Participating in professional development activities that result in professional growth.	*100%	100%	93%	97%	96%	*100%	67%	50%	77%	69%	*100%	67%	21%	56%	64%
Other	*0%	33%	83%	67%	50%	*100%	33%	40%	46%	41%	*100%	0%	17%	30%	48%

*$n = 1$.

Curriculum. The third topical cluster area from the survey instrument was identified as the curriculum cluster. The eight topical area questions within this cluster can be directly attributed to actual classroom activities and practices that relate to faculty professional development needs within curriculum development, improvement, relevancy, and currency. The activity with the highest rated perceived levels of importance across age ranges was for creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques. The 26-35 age range group reported an 88% importance level for this particular activity. This topical area of need was followed closely by the perceived need to incorporate current industry trends and practices into the ABE curriculum, with 84% of the 26-35 year old age range group reporting the activity as an important topical area. The same age range group also rated the need to have

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additional professional development training on creating and modifying ABE curriculum, with 84% of the respondents identifying this area as either high or very high in importance. The lowest rated activity from this cluster across all age ranges was for developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity. Percentages for all age range groups for this activity ranged from 100% (under 25 age range) to 33% for the 26-35 age range group.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. There were decreases between perceptions of importance as compared with perceptions of institutional provision across all activity areas and corresponding age range groups. Table 31 includes the complete list of findings for the cluster activities and perception responses.

Technology. The technology cluster with corresponding activities is reported next. The nine questions presented from this cluster area can best be categorized as technological instructional support needs within the identified topical areas presented. The highest rated activities of perceived importance across all age ranges in this cluster were for providing accommodations for students with special needs, and instructional techniques used to strengthen higher order skills in ABE students, such as critical thinking abilities.

Table 31

Curriculum Cluster by Age Range

Activity	Perception of Importance					Perception of PD Need					Perception of Institutional Provision				
	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Creating and modifying curriculum (i.e., course syllabus, course objectives, lesson plans).	*100%	84%	71%	65%	70%	*100%	17%	29%	40%	32%	*100%	34%	36%	27%	48%
Creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques.	*100%	88%	79%	81%	78%	*100%	67%	43%	60%	62%	*100%	17%	36%	37%	50%
Integrating curriculum with other faculty and other instructional areas.	*100%	67%	64%	55%	60%	*100%	50%	36%	47%	47%	*100%	17%	29%	14%	43%
Identifying and implementing current industry standards and trends into the curriculum.	*100%	84%	67%	78%	70%	*100%	67%	29%	53%	59%	*100%	33%	28%	25%	44%
Working with advisory committee and employers to meet changing needs of the program and industry to modify curriculum.	*100%	84%	50%	72%	61%	*100%	67%	7%	57%	47%	*100%	34%	21%	18%	44%
Developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity.	*100%	33%	50%	51%	45%	*100%	50%	14%	45%	33%	*100%	17%	21%	24%	32%
Participating in "back-to-industry" experiences to increase technical competence.	*100%	33%	38%	68%	61%	*100%	25%	14%	63%	46%	*100%	33%	21%	31%	42%
Other	* 0%	50%	80%	70%	54%	*0%	0%	29%	40%	32%	*0%	0%	33%	22%	33%

*n = 1.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. There were decreases between perceptions of importance as compared with perceptions of institutional provision across all activity areas and corresponding age range groups. Table 32 includes the complete list of findings for the cluster activities and perception responses.

Table 32

Technology Cluster by Age Range

Activity	Perception of Importance					Perception of PD Need					Perception of Institutional Provision				
	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Utilizing classroom arrangements for instructional effectiveness.	*100%	83%	57%	76%	85%	*100%	50%	43%	45%	38%	*100%	17%	36%	32%	44%
Modifying instructional materials based on student and industry assessment and feedback.	*100%	83%	64%	91%	43%	*100%	67%	57%	67%	56%	*100%	50%	36%	37%	50%
Managing student conflicts in the classroom.	*100%	100%	57%	83%	83%	*100%	50%	50%	48%	49%	*100%	33%	29%	39%	50%
Providing accommodations for students with special needs.	*100%	100%	74%	87%	82%	*100%	66%	43%	67%	54%	*100%	33%	29%	31%	48%
Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans.	*100%	67%	57%	87%	85%	*100%	83%	50%	70%	55%	*100%	50%	35%	48%	57%
Utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills in students (i.e., critical thinking skills).	*100%	83%	57%	88%	91%	*100%	85%	57%	77%	65%	*100%	50%	14%	36%	56%
Implementing writing skills across the curriculum.	*100%	50%	50%	75%	80%	*100%	67%	36%	62%	53%	*100%	33%	21%	35%	48%
Utilizing "hands-on" (contextual teaching and learning strategies) in the curriculum.	*100%	50%	62%	80%	83%	*100%	83%	57%	57%	59%	*100%	33%	21%	34%	42%
Other	*0%	50%	71%	87%	73%	*0%	50%	75%	80%	62%	*0%	33%	33%	36%	28%

Student Support. The student support cluster consists of seven topical areas focused on student support services and practices that typically occur outside of the direct classroom environment. Areas covered within this cluster are practices such as advising, such as providing information and/or student referrals, assistance with job placement, academic and career advising, student organization development and involvement, and student retention practices. The activity regarding student information and making appropriate referrals received the highest overall percentages, indicating importance across all age ranges. A second activity that received higher percentages indicating importance across all age ranges was for providing academic advising.

Data were also reviewed for faculty member respondents who perceived that their respective institutions were successfully meeting these professional development activity needs at either the high or very high level. There were decreases between perceptions of importance as compared with perceptions of institutional provision across all activity areas and corresponding age range groups. Table 33 includes the completed list of findings for the cluster activities and perception responses.

Research Question 6

What are the preferred delivery methods based on years of ABE experience?

The purpose of this research question was to collect responses that might allow data to be reviewed that could be used to determine preferences for delivery methods based on years of ABE experience. Categories were established that grouped participants in years of ABE experience as follows: 5 years and below, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 20 plus years. As was similarly performed with the original survey from 2005, the respondent activity rating categories of high and very high were combined to report the greatest level of response by percentage.

Table 33

Student Support Cluster by Age Range

Activity	Perception of Importance					Perception of PD Need					Perception of Institutional Provision				
	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	< 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Providing information or referrals to meet individual student needs.	*100%	100%	71%	87%	52%	*100%	50%	50%	53%	54%	*100%	0%	21%	58%	70%
Assisting students with job placements.	*100%	43%	57%	59%	53%	*100%	67%	29%	30%	46%	*100%	33%	21%	48%	44%
Providing academic advising.	*100%	84%	64%	77%	74%	*100%	50%	43%	33%	43%	*100%	50%	28%	59%	62%
Providing career advising.	*100%	58%	57%	65%	55%	*100%	50%	29%	37%	46%	*100%	50%	21%	56%	48%
Serving as a student organization advisor.	*100%	29%	29%	38%	41%	*100%	17%	14%	30%	23%	*100%	17%	14%	21%	21%
Implementing student retention programs.	*100%	50%	46%	54%	74%	*100%	17%	43%	41%	50%	*100%	50%	31%	50%	58%
Other	*100%	33%	67%	44%	67%	*0%	0%	33%	18%	33%	*0%	33%	34%	20%	40%

*$n = 1$.

Delivery Methods. As has been the case with other instructional cluster data review for this study, the highest percentages across all years of experience groups was reported for the conference attendance activity. Each of the 6 respondents in the 16-20 years of experience range rated conference attendance as their most preferred delivery method, resulting in a 100% response rate. The lowest percentage rate given to this category was reported by the 20 years and above range, which reported a 71% response rate of preferred delivery methods. The continuing trend of rating the variable hour workshops highly was evident in the years of ABE experience category as well. The data reported that 1-3 hour workshops received the highest overall preferred percentage across the years of experience ranges, with the 16-20 years of experience range group rating the delivery format at 67%. This was slightly higher than the 66% rating reported by the 5 years and under experience range group. Formal courses and new

faculty orientation received low ratings of preferred delivery methods by all years of experience range groups. Weeklong seminars was the overall lowest rated delivery format rated by the years of experience range groups. Table 34 reports the complete findings from the survey data compiled.

Table 34

Preferred Delivery Method by Years of ABE Experience

Delivery Method	Years of ABE Experience				
	0-5(%) $n = 53$	6-10(%) $n = 27$	11-15(%) $n = 19$	16-19(%) $n = 6$	20+ (%) $n = 17$
Conference attendance	80	80	88	100	71
1-3 hour workshops	66	48	50	67	50
Daylong workshops	41	56	44	33	43
Half-day workshops	52	60	38	33	64
Self-paced on-line tutorials	39	24	38	50	43
Summer institutes	21	16	6	0	14
Brownbag lunch seminars	18	24	19	33	14
Instructor-led on-line courses	25	32	31	17	36
Formal courses	14	16	0	0	14
Instructor training institute	27	24	13	17	29
New faculty orientation	16	0	6	0	7
Weeklong seminars	2	8	0	0	0
Other	5	0	6	0	0

Additional data were gathered by ABE years of experience ranges from the respondents regarding actual professional development participation in various delivery formats and topical areas during the last 2 years. The data reflect similar results in rankings as those reported between male and female data and for age range groupings. As was the case with preferred

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delivery methods and topical areas for faculty professional development, the conference

attendance category held the highest place for the majority of years of experience ranges, with

the highest percentage being 100% for the 16-20 years of ABE experience range. The lowest

percentage from this delivery was the 76% reported from the 6-10 years of ABE experience

range. Every respondent (100%) from the 16-20 years of ABE experience range also rated

highly the 1-3 hour workshop delivery format. The lowest rated workshop delivery format was

reported by the 11-15 years of ABE experience range and the 20 and above years of ABE

experience range, with each reporting their preference for this workshop format at 47%,

respectively. Formal courses, instructor training institutes, new faculty orientation, and

weeklong seminars were all rated consistently low. As could be expected, the exception to these

low scoring formats was the new faculty orientation format being rated at 21% by the ABE

faculty members with 5 years of ABE experience and under. Table 35 reports all delivery

options identified by respondents as having participated in during the last 2 years.

Preferred Levels of Interaction. The preferred level of interaction by faculty based on

ABE years of experience during professional development activities was also obtained in the

survey instrument. As would possibly be the case within any faculty discipline-specific group or

cohort, there were preferences identified for ABE faculty members based on years of experience.

Responses reported by ABE faculty members with 5 years of experience and under were more

consistent for all three types of interaction. Both interaction levels of learning alone and learning

in a discipline-specific cohort were rated at 36% by this group. The highest percentage response

for all interaction levels was reported by the group with 20 years of experience and above, who

rated their preference for learning alone at 53%. The lowest rated percentage was reported by

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the 16-20 years of experience group, with none of the respondents (0%) preferring to learn alone.

Table 36 reports the complete findings for this area of the research.

Table 35

Actual Delivery Method by Years of ABE Experience

Delivery Method	Years Of ABE Experience				
	0-5(%) *n* = 53	6-10(%) *n* = 27	11-15(%) *n* = 19	16-19(%) *n* = 6	20+ (%) *n* = 17
Conference attendance	84	76	94	100	87
1-3 hour workshops	66	80	59	100	67
Daylong workshops	66	84	88	67	80
Half-day workshops	48	60	47	67	47
Self-paced on-line tutorials	36	48	35	67	27
Summer institutes	5	20	18	17	33
Brownbag lunch seminars	14	16	6	17	20
Instructor-led on-line courses	21	36	35	33	47
Formal courses	0	0	6	0	0
Instructor training institute	11	0	0	0	7
New faculty orientation	21	0	12	0	0
Weeklong seminars	0	0	0	0	0

Table 36

Preferred Level of Interaction by Years of ABE Experience

	Years of ABE Experience				
	0-5(%) *n* = 53	6-10(%) *n* = 27	11-15(%) *n* = 19	16-19(%) *n* = 6	20+ (%) *n* = 17
I like to learn by myself	36	17	18	0	53
I like to learn in discipline specific cohort	36	42	59	67	20
I like to learn in interdisciplinary cohort	29	42	24	33	27

Specific Delivery Format Preferences. Faculty member data were also compiled that identified the preferred specific presentation formats (traditional and electronic) by years of ABE experience for faculty professional development activities. The traditional delivery method of hands-on activities and labs option received the highest level of preference by ABE years of experience for almost all groups among the identified traditional categories. The 5 years of ABE experience and under group rated this specific traditional delivery format the highest, with 61% of the respondents ranking this category highest. This specific delivery format was also rated the highest by the 11-15 years of ABE experience group, with 47% of the respondents ranking this category as their preferred specific delivery format preference. Guided discussion was ranked the highest (40%) by the 6-10 years of ABE experience group. The lecture option was the lowest ranked preferred option for three of the groups based on years of ABE experience, with only the 5 years and under of ABE experience group (14%) ranking it the lowest among all groups.

Among all categories of electronic delivery methods, almost all groups based on ABE years of experience ranked web-based on-line courses the highest. The single exception was the 11-15 years of ABE experience group who rated this specific electronic delivery second to that of video conferences. The web-based on-line format was rated the highest (67%) by the 16-20 years of ABE experience group. Video conferences were ranked second in preferred electronic delivery methods by most groups, with the exception noted previously for the 11-15 years of ABE experience group who rated it highest. Chatroom formats and satellite formats were the least preferred delivery methods among all electronic delivery method options by all years of ABE experience groups. Table 37 reports the percentage breakdown by ABE years of experience for all preferred delivery method options.

Table 37

Preferred Delivery Method by Years of ABE Experience

Delivery Method	Years of ABE Experience				
	0-5(%) $n = 53$	6-10(%) $n = 27$	11-15(%) $n = 19$	16-19(%) $n = 6$	20+ (%) $n = 17$
Traditional Delivery:					
Lecture	14	20	18	33	36
Hands-on activities and labs	61	40	47	33	36
Guided discussion	25	40	35	33	29
Other					
Electronic Delivery:					
Video conference	34	33	41	17	33
Web-based on-line course	43	54	35	67	47
Videotape	16	8	24	17	20
Chatroom	2	4	0	0	0
Satellite	5	0	0	0	0

Research Question 7

What are the preferred delivery methods based on full-time and part-time faculty status?

The purpose of this research question was to solicit responses from all surveyed ABE faculty members and to review participant preferences for professional development based on their full-time or part-time employment status. As stated earlier in this chapter, the breakdown of full-time and part-time faculty members who responded to the survey showed a considerably larger number of part-time faculty members. The number of part-time respondents was almost three times the number of full-time respondents, with 90 part-time faculty members and 32 full-time faculty members responding. Data reviewed for preferred delivery methods based on the employment status were very similar to earlier reviews. Conference attendance was the highest rated delivery method for both categories of faculty members. The next three highest rated delivery methods were 1-3 hour workshops, daylong workshops, and half-day workshops for both full-time and part-time faculty members who responded to the survey question. Table 38

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reports the complete findings reported for preferred delivery methods based on full-time and

part-time status.

Table 38

Preferred Delivery Methods by Status

Delivery method	Status	
	Full-time (%) *n* = 32	Part-time (%) *n* = 90
Conference attendance	86	79
1-3 hour workshops	59	57
Daylong workshops	59	40
Half-day workshops	52	53
Self-paced on-line tutorials	41	34
Summer institutes	7	18
Brownbag lunch seminars	28	17
Instructor-led on-line courses	35	26
Formal courses	10	12
Instructor training institute	17	26
New faculty orientation	10	8
Weeklong seminars	0	4
Other	0	4

Similar results were reviewed for full-time and part-time faculty members who had

participated in professional development activities during the last 2 years. Conference

attendance was rated highest for recent professional development opportunities with both full-

time and part-time faculty members who responded to the survey question. Additionally, the

next three highest delivery format experience categories were 1-3 hour workshops, daylong

workshops, and half-day workshops. Table 39 below provides the data received by employment

status and delivery method preference and recent participation in the last 2 years.

Table 39

Actual Delivery Methods by Status

Delivery method	Status	
	Full-time (%) $n = 32$	Part-time (%) $n = 90$
Conference attendance	97	81
1-3 hour workshops	76	68
Daylong workshops	86	72
Half-day workshops	45	54
Self-paced on-line tutorials	52	35
Summer institutes	10	17
Brownbag lunch seminars	10	15
Instructor-led on-line courses	31	31
Formal courses	3	0
Instructor training institute	0	8
New faculty orientation	7	12
Weeklong seminars	0	0

Research Question 8

What are the preferred delivery methods based on highest degree held?

The purpose of this research question was to determine what ABE faculty members

preferred delivery methods were for professional development according to their highest

academic credential held. With the exception of the earned doctorate degree, faculty members

from each of the remaining categories responded to the question. There were only 6 faculty

members who were credentialed at the high school diploma level, and the majority of the

respondents (63) held a masters degree. Credentialing requirements recently implemented in

2004 require ABE faculty members to possess a bachelors degree or higher. However, some

faculty members with less than a bachelors degree, were grandfathered into the ABE System

from their respective former employing systems under the ACCS merger in 2004. All new

faculty members hired since the merger must meet the new credentialing standard.

The preferred delivery methods for faculty members based on the highest credential held,

remained consistent with the responses from other similar research questions in the survey.

Conference attendance was consistently ranked the highest among all categories within the

survey. The remaining three most preferred delivery methods also remained consistent with

prior questions, with 1-3 hour workshops, daylong workshops, and half-day workshops being the

most preferred methods. These preferences are in part consistent as they are the most often used

methods for the ABE faculty member professional development at in-service activities by

college and at the statewide ABE Conferences. Table 40 shows the complete breakdown of

preferred delivery methods by highest credential held.

Research Question 9

Are there differences in perceptions of ABE faculty regarding faculty professional

development between those employed at suburban, rural, and urban-serving community

colleges?

The purpose of this research question was to determine if there were differences in

preferred delivery methods for ABE faculty members as based on their respective college

Carnegie Classification. Prior to the survey, there was no literature located that directly

answered the question of institutional size and its impact on faculty member perceptions of

professional development, within the confines of the ACCS. The data received from the

respondents provided very similar results in preferred delivery methods to that of the other similar research questions on the survey.

Table 40

Preferred Delivery Methods by Degree Type

Delivery Method	Degree Type (%)					
	HS Diploma *n* = 6	Associates *n* = 5	Bachelors *n* = 14	Masters *n* = 63	Educational Specialist *n* = 9	Doctorate *n* = 0
Conference attendance	67	100	79	86	100	0
1-3 hour workshops	67	67	65	73	78	0
Daylong workshops	100	100	85	68	67	0
Half-day workshops	67	33	41	55	78	0
Self-paced on-line tutorials	33	33	27	46	56	0
Summer institutes	0	0	6	18	44	0
Brownbag lunch seminars	0	33	12	18	22	0
Instructor-led on-line courses	33	0	35	29	44	0
Formal courses	0	0	0	2	0	0
Instructor training institute	0	0	3	9	0	0
New faculty orientation	0	0	6	13	22	0
Weeklong seminars	0	0	0	0	0	0

Each Carnegie Classification unit was represented by the individual respondents, with the single exception of the Urban-Single Campus unit. All remaining classification units—Urban-Multicampus, Rural-Small Campus, Rural-Medium Campus, Rural-Large Campus, and Suburban-Single Campus and Suburban-Multicampus—were all represented by participants in the survey. The majority of the classification units all selected conference attendance as their highest rated delivery method of faculty professional development. The single exception to this

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trend was the selection of 1-3 hour workshops and half-day workshops as rated the highest by the two Suburban-Single Campus participants. Conference attendance and instructor training institutes were rated equally by the two participants as well, and these two methods were rated identically, with 50% of the respondents selecting them as third and fourth choices for preferred delivery methods.

The data were also reviewed that described the actual methods of faculty delivery formats that were attended by the participants during the last 2 years, as per their Carnegie Classification. In a return to the trend for preferences expressed in the majority of the other research questions, faculty members responded across the board that their primary professional development experiences had been conference attendance, 1-3 hour workshops, daylong workshops, and half-day workshops. As was the case with the prior preferred delivery methods question, the Urban-Single Campus classification did not have any respondents.

Additionally, a review was conducted of data that identified the specific types of learning environments that ABE faculty members preferred (both traditional and electronic) for their professional development activities, based on their respective Carnegie Classifications. Once again, there were no respondents for the Urban-Single Campus classification. However, Urban-Multicampus respondents ($n = 21$) preferred hands-on activities and labs (52%) as their highest rated specific traditional format. The lecture format was the least favorite method of the traditional formats. These participants also preferred video conferences as their highest rated specific electronic format (62%), and satellite delivery was the least favorite method indicated from the specific electronic options.

The highest rated specific traditional method of faculty professional development for the Rural-Small Campus (57%), Rural-Medium Campus (47%), and Rural-Large Campus (55%)

classifications was the hands-on activities and labs option. The least favorite specific delivery

method from the traditional category was the guided discussion option. The lecture option was

the second highest rated traditional choice for a specific delivery method. These same

respondents preferred web-based, on-line courses as their highest rated specific electronic

format, with the chat-room and satellite options rated as the least preferred options.

The preferred specific traditional methods of faculty professional development for the

Suburban-Single Campus classification ($n = 2$) were equally divided at 50% between hands-on

activities and labs and the guided discussion options. The preferred specific traditional methods

of faculty professional development for the Suburban-Multicampus classification ($n = 22$) were

the lecture and guided discussion options. The preferred specific electronic format for this

classification was the web-based, on-line option, with 100% of the respondents indicating this

option.

The preferred level of participant interaction during professional development activities

by Carnegie Classification was also reviewed (see Table 41). Urban-Multicampus classification

participants ($n = 21$) indicated a preference for learning in an interdiscipline cohort, followed

closely by the preference for learning in a discipline-specific cohort, with 45% of the

respondents choosing the same. This classification chose learning alone as the least preferred

option. Participants from the Rural-Small Campus classification ($n = 7$) preferred learning in an

interdiscipline cohort, with the least preferred option being to learn in a discipline-specific

cohort. Respondents from the Rural-Medium Campus classification ($n = 43$) chose the learning

alone option (42%) followed closely by the learning in a discipline specific cohort (40%). Rural-

Large Campus participants ($n = 30$) chose learning in a discipline-specific cohort (50%) as their

highest rated level of interaction. Learning alone (23%) was this classification's least chosen

preferred option for interaction. Suburban-Single Campus and Multicampus classification

respondents (*n* = 4) chose equally the learning alone and learning in an interdiscipline cohort

options, with 50% of the respondents for each category. There were no participants who

identified learning in a discipline-specific cohort option as a preferred level of interaction for

faculty professional development.

Table 41

Preferred Delivery Method by Carnegie Classification

Delivery method	Carnegie Classification						
	Urban			Rural		*Suburban*	
	Single (%) *n* = 0	Multi (%) *n* = 21	Small (%) *n* = 7	Med (%) *n* = 43	Lg (%) *n* = 30	Single (%) *n* = 2	Multi (%) *n* = 2
Conference attendance	Na	91	71	70	93	50	100
1-3 hour workshops	Na	43	57	61	60	100	50
Daylong workshops	Na	52	43	30	67	0	0
Half-day workshops	Na	67	29	42	63	100	0
Self-paced on-line tutorials	Na	38	14	47	30	0	0
Summer institutes	Na	19	0	14	17	0	50
Brownbag lunch seminars	Na	33	14	9	30	0	0
Instructor-led on-line courses	Na	14	29	23	43	0	100
Formal courses	Na	5	0	16	13	0	0
Instructor training institute	Na	19	14	28	20	50	50
New faculty orientation	Na	5	14	9	10	0	0
Weeklong seminars	Na	5	0	0	7	0	0
Other	Na	5	14	2	0	0	0

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Underprepared adult learners have enrolled in community colleges in record numbers, with an estimated 46% of all community college students being over the age of 21 (American Association of Community Colleges, 2008). Many of these nontraditional students lack even the most basic of literacy skills. According to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (2008), it is estimated that more than 30 million adults in America have considerable deficiencies in basic adult literacy skills, with an additional 15 million more adults who possess only limited literacy skills mastery. Of noteworthy importance as well is the fact that more than 18 million adults have no high school diploma, or its equivalency, the General Equivalency Diploma.

The lack of literacy skills and credentials can significantly limit individuals from the ability to continue their educational pursuits, participate in vocational/job skills initiatives, find or maintain employment, provide for themselves and their families financially, as well as prevent individuals from other countries succeeding economically and adjusting socially. In Alabama alone, there are more than 479,000 working-age adults who lack a high school diploma or a GED (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2008). Training adult basic education faculty members to better meet the needs of this ever growing population is a monumental task for community college systems charged with improving the literacy skills of those students served. How important are adult basic education and literacy efforts to the United States? The National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, Inc. (2005) estimated the following:

- Business owners, companies and corporations in the United States experience more than $60 billion per year in lost productivity, due in part to employee literacy skill deficiencies.

- Literacy deficiencies in the workforce create a tremendous cost burden to employers who feel compelled to offer literacy training in order to remain competitive and viable.

- Current public school graduates only produce about 2% of the total workforce annually, forcing the current undereducated labor pool to absorb the remaining 98% in meeting workforce requirements.

- There are an estimated 12 million immigrants residing in the United States who lack basic literacy skills; however, only one million of these immigrants have ready access to adult basic education classes, yet can comprise 46% of the ABE class space in certain geographical areas.

- Children of parents who didn't graduate from high school or earn a GED are 5 times as likely not to finish their own secondary education as well.

- Levels of literacy for children are closely tied to the literacy skills mastery possessed by their parents, especially to those of mothers in single-parent households.

- 46% of American adults lack the necessary literacy skills needed to follow medical directions on a prescription bottle.

- Lacking health literacy skills is tied closely to reading mastery, which costs the health care industry billions of dollars each year in unnecessary medical visits.

- Correctional programs that offer adult basic education classes to its inmates reduce recidivism and save local communities billions of dollars in corrections-related costs.

– The percentage of young adults who fail to finish high school or earn a GED continues to increase, especially among low socioeconomic groups and minorities.

– It is estimated that up to 50% of high school dropouts have documentable learning disabilities.

Bearing the previously referenced items in mind, when compared with the anticipated federal and state funding levels for ABE for 2010 nearing the $2 billion mark, the cost of not providing these services far exceeds the direct costs involved. Practically every component of society is impacted by the growing population of uneducated and undereducated adults. These areas can include, but are not limited to, globalized economics with reduced buying/spending power, workforce readiness, social services to include welfare and subsidized housing, educational services at all levels, short-term and long-term healthcare, criminal justice/law enforcement, and family functionality issues (marriage, divorce, childbearing, communication, and parenting styles). When the topic of adult illiteracy is broached from an overarching perspective, its impact is not underestimated, and the value of instruction that takes place in community college ABE programs across Alabama clearly becomes an issue of paramount importance.

No issue within the ABE spectrum is more critical for community college adult learners than those challenges faced by the adult basic education faculty members who provide their instruction. This process of educating, updating, and honing the skills of those who teach is known as faculty professional development. Although there are numerous definitions for this topic, one of the more descriptive definitions is "a change process in which instructors gradually acquire a body of knowledge and skills to improve the quality of teaching for learners, and, ultimately to enhance learner outcomes" (Kutner et al., 1997, p. 1).

As was reported by a thorough review of the literature, there are many components involved in addressing faculty professional development to include funding, credentialing, topical relevancy, quality of presenter, opportunities for participation, and participation incentives. However, it is the actual perceptions of the faculty members themselves regarding the concept of professional development that comprised the focus of this research. The perceptions of the adult education faculty member are critical when assessing his or her willingness to both participate in professional development offerings and to hopefully benefit from such learning opportunities.

Summary of Study

With this premise in mind, the purpose for conducting this study was to identify the perceptions of Alabama Community College System Adult Basic Education Program faculty as they relate to the accessibility, adequacy, and effectiveness of professional development opportunities at the local college level.

The desired outcomes of this study were achieved through a survey of Alabama Community College System Adult Basic Education Program faculty members who were teaching at the various instructional sites within the state during the summer term 2009. This survey had over 300 participants and measured their responses to questions regarding their perceptions on the availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of faculty professional development at their respective institutions. There were 123 usable surveys returned, with 108 completed, for a 41% response rate. Faculty members identified for the study were monitored for their initial attempt at responding to the survey, if they completed the survey, and at what location or area applicants failed to progress further with the survey. Only 4 participants requested a paper version of the survey instrument, with over 98% successfully attempting to navigate the

instrument in its originally intended Internet format. Faculty members who did not respond after the initial email were contacted with a follow-up email approximately 2 weeks after the first email was sent. Those faculty members who started the survey and failed to complete it were contacted by email and by phone as necessary, to encourage completion of the survey. All surveys used for the purposes of this study were collected within approximately one month from the original date of the survey being emailed.

As was similarly performed with the original Wallin survey from 2005, respondent activity ratings ranged between low, moderate, high, and very high. For purposes of comparison, cluster activity items with responses of high and very high were combined to report the greatest level of response by percentage. The instrument contained 50 professional development related activities that were incorporated into seven clusters:

1. Technology (hardware and software issues and abilities)

2. Student Support and Guidance (advising and retention related)

3. Instructional (directly pertaining to classroom activities and abilities)

4. Promotional (recruitment and public relations related)

5. Administration and Management (budgeting, supervision, and oversight related)

6. Curriculum (planning, creativity, and revision of curriculum materials)

7. Professional Environment (professional development and skills acquisition)

An additional purpose of this research was to determine the level at which the faculty members perceived their institution as meeting their professional development activity needs (referred to in the study as perception of institutional provision). The survey also contained important demographic sections that allowed for a thorough review of the participating faculty

members employed within the ACCS. This information will be useful to the ACCS and the departments responsible for the oversight of the ACCS Adult Basic Education Program.

The original 2005 survey was developed and administered to ascertain vital information from technical college faculty regarding their professional development needs and preferential delivery methods and formats and to determine any potential obstacles that could possibly hinder faculty professional development activities (Wallin & Smith, 2005). According to Wallin and Smith's findings, both new and returning faculty members face tremendous demands on their time, expertise, and instructional abilities. Challenges can include practically every component of the instructional area and include teaching nontraditional students, oversized classes, mainstreaming students with particular need and skill sets, using available technology for classroom support, as well as classroom management issues.

Research Questions

The intent of this exploratory descriptive research study was to study the perceptions of the Adult Basic Education faculty in the Alabama Community College System regarding the availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of faculty professional development. The overarching research question was this: What are the perceptions of the ACCS Adult Basic Education faculty regarding the availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of faculty professional development? The primary research question was supported by exploring a number of secondary research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of ABE faculty in the ACCS?

2. What do ABE faculty members perceive as their most critical faculty professional development needs?

3. What do ABE faculty members perceive as the most significant barriers to quality faculty professional development?

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4. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by gender?

5. What are the preferred delivery methods and important topical areas by age range?

6. What are the preferred delivery methods based on years of experience?

7. What are the preferred delivery methods based on full-time and part-time faculty status?

8. What are the preferred delivery methods based on highest degree held?

9. Are there differences in perceptions of ABE faculty regarding faculty professional development between those employed at suburban, rural, and urban-serving community colleges?

Survey participants and their corresponding responses were categorized according to identified research questions and grouped appropriately together for clarity and ease of comparison. Through the review of demographic data received from the participants, a descriptive image of faculty member respondents was developed. Table 42 reports the demographic data t for the largest single respondent categories reported by the participants, in an effort to report a composite caption of an ABE faculty member teaching in the summer term 2009 within the ACCS.

A study by Young, Fitzgerald, and Morgan (1994) found similar results in their own respective study. Their findings reported that the majority of Adult Basic Education faculty members worked part-time, with a ratio of part-time faculty members to full-time faculty members at 4:1. Masters degrees were held by only 33% of the part-time faculty members and by 40% of the full-time faculty members. In an additional similar study conducted by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (2003), 92% of the faculty members were White, and 83% were female. The 51-60 years of age group comprised 34% of

the study participants. Nearly 50% of the respondents held master's degrees or a more advanced

credential. When compared with these studies, the demographics reported for ABE faculty

members participating in this survey were fairly consistent with earlier findings.

Table 42

Overall Demographics

Demographic Category	Response %
Gender	77% Female
Employment Status	74% Part-time
Hours Worked Per Week	39% work 19 hours or less per week
Race/Ethnicity	80% White/Caucasian
Age Range	53% are 56 years or older
Years of ABE Experience	43% have 5 years or less
Highest Academic Credential	53% hold Masters Degree
Carnegie Classification	40% work at Rural-Medium Campus

Findings

Finding 1: The faculty member demographics reported by participants revealed that the

majority of ABE faculty members have similar demographic characteristics in comparison to

other similarly surveyed ABE faculty populations. These ABE faculty members employed in the

ACCS are quite often White females, 56 years of age or older, work part-time, with a typical

work week of 19 hours or less, hold a master's degree, and work at a rural medium sized

campus. The demographic snapshot presented from this study could be of concern to the

students served by ABE Programs, who are often much younger in age, more heavily comprised

of minorities (both African-American and Hispanic), male and female, consist of a diverse

socioeconomic class, work part-time, and have low to moderate levels of attendance. The

literature reviewed for the study showed that students who attend ABE programs benefit from having close faculty-student mentoring relationships where a sense of trust and affinity develops. Part-time faculty members will oftentimes have to alternate their work weeks to meet the changing needs of the ABE program, which will cause students to attend classes with unfamiliar cohorts and unfamiliar faculty members. Full-time faculty members can provide more continuity and stability, especially with the diverse student populations who are served by ABE programs.

Similar studies of the demographics of ABE faculty members reported findings consistent with the demographic data reported from this study. In 1998, the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) commissioned a professional development study that was comprised of 106 ABE faculty members being surveyed three times (waves) over a period of 23 months. The study consisted of surveys being administered to faculty members in a three-wave approach. The first wave was initiated before a NCSALL sanctioned professional development activity took place. Wave 2 was administered immediately after the training occurred, and Wave 3 was administered one year after the completion of the professional development activity. The findings from this survey confirmed that ABE faculty members within the study cohort were predominantly female, worked part-time, had few if any full-time colleagues employed by their institution or system, and that well over half of these part-time faculty members had to teach more than one instructional component within their limited workweek.

These findings could also be noteworthy to the Alabama Community College System, which intentionally seeks to hire a diverse workforce, including the recruitment of minority faculty members for ABE and traditional disciplines. Federal, state, and private funding initiatives and grants can be tied directly to a system's ability to recruit, hire, develop, and retain

quality faculty members who represent a diverse cultural base. A system represented largely by a single gender and race may not be viewed as favorably when compared to other systems and entities with a more diverse faculty base.

Finding 2: Gender preferences for specific professional development delivery formats and cluster activities were identified. The survey utilized for this study specifically identified a variety of instructional-related preferences and activities that required participants to rate the activity or topic according to their perceived levels of importance. Learning styles by gender have been researched extensively, and it has been reported that males and females have different learning styles and preferences. Research has shown that males have been reported to be more tactually and visually driven to learn than females, who are often reported as being more auditory, possess greater levels of conformity, and prefer quieter levels while learning (Cavanaugh, 2002; Ebel, 1999).

Preferred specific delivery methods were identified that indicated that males and females rated their preferences differently for various types of delivery methods. Traditional delivery methods were identified as classroom lecture without the aid of additional technology, hands-on activities and labs, and guided discussions. It was noted that a large difference existed between males and females on the traditional delivery format of hands-on activities and labs. This traditional delivery method was preferred by 63% of males but by only 44% of females. To a lesser degree of difference, guided discussion was preferred by 35% of females, whereas only 22% of males had the same delivery method preference. Females also preferred lecture formats (22%) when compared to only 15% of males preferring this traditional delivery method. Electronic delivery methods were identified as video teleconferences, web-based on-line courses, videotapes, chat rooms, and satellite sessions. Preferences by gender for electronic delivery

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methods of professional development were also reviewed but failed to indicate the substantial

disparity that was evident in the traditional delivery methods. The largest difference reported

between genders for the electronic delivery methods was in the videotape professional

development option, which reported that 19% of males preferred the electronic delivery format

compared to 15% of females.

It must be noted that electronic delivery formats such as satellite sessions and videotapes

may appear too outdated by today's high tech standards for classroom use to include for faculty

professional development. However, the original Wallin survey from 2005 was used as closely

to its original format as possible, as per the author's granted permission specified. Also, many of

these older instructional delivery formats are still used routinely by ACCS Adult Basic

Education programs around the state, as funding for technology upgrades is routinely minimal

within the respective budgets.

There were also noted differences between gender perceptions of importance for

activities presented within each cluster area of professional development activities. The

instructional cluster activity of preparing effective current instructional materials was perceived

as being an important topical area by 91% of females, whereas males rated the importance of this

respective activity at only 74%. The curriculum cluster also showed marked differences by

gender in several activities. The greatest disparity was evident in the activity of creating and

utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques. Females ranked this topical

activity high or very high with 83% of the respondents, whereas only 67% of males rated the

activity as high or very high in perception of importance. The activity of creating and modifying

the curriculum was rated as high or very high in importance by 74% of the female participants,

whereas only 59% of the male participants rated the activity likewise. Working with advisory

committee and employers to meet the changing needs of the program and to modify the curriculum also showed a substantial difference in the perceptions of importance by gender. Females reported the activity to be important at the high or very high level 68% of the time, whereas only 55% of the male respondents indicated as such.

The professional environment cluster was of particular importance to the researcher, as the overarching premise for the study involved professional development activities at its core. Two areas of noticeable differences in importance were found in this cluster. The first activity was collaborating and/or networking with community college faculty and staff. Male ABE faculty members perceived this activity to be of importance in 74% of the respondents, whereas 66% of the females perceived the same activity to be important. This activity was considered to be an important indicator, as ABE faculty members, at times, can feel as though they are outsiders at their institutions. Wilson and Corbett (2001) concluded that ABE faculty members, by the overwhelming part-time nature of the discipline, coupled with teaching responsibilities that are often at sites away from the mainstream campuses, are isolated from many parts of the traditional academic community. The need for ABE faculty members to collaborate with the greater college community is possibly best addressed through a supporting demographic question posed in the survey. This question asked ABE faculty members if they could identify their ABE director's divisional placement within the college's overall administrative structure. Surprisingly, more than half of the respondents (51%) reported that they weren't sure where their area was aligned.

The curriculum cluster presented a variety of activities that reported wide variations in responses by gender. The largest disparity was reported in the activity of creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques. Within this activity, 83% of female

faculty members rated the practice highly, whereas only 67% of the males indicated the same. Creating and modifying the curriculum was also identified as having a substantial difference in levels of perceived importance by gender, with only 59% of males rating the activity highly, whereas 74% of females perceived the activity as important. The technology cluster results also showed considerable differences in perceived levels of importance for various professional development activities by gender. Modifying instructional materials based on student and industry assessment and feedback was favored much higher by females (94%) than males (74%). Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans was also rated more highly by 85% of females but favored by only 70% of males.

There were three activities with substantial differences of perceived importance by gender identified in the technology cluster. The largest variation between genders was reported in the activity of modifying instructional materials based on student and industry assessment and feedback, with females reporting the perceived level of importance at 94% compared to only 74% reported by males. Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans also showed considerable differences between genders. Seventy percent of male faculty members reported this activity as being important, compared to 85% of females. A final activity identified within this cluster was utilizing hands-on contextual teaching and learning strategies in the curriculum. A perceived level of importance was indicated by 67% of male participants, whereas 80% of female participants rated the activity as important.

Finding 3: Survey responses by age ranges reveal considerable differences between ABE faculty members' perceived levels of importance for particular activities when compared to perceptions of their institution's provision at meeting these activity needs. Professional development clusters as identified in the survey instrument revealed that within each topical

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cluster, there were specific activities that showed large differences between the two question areas of perception of importance and perception of institutional provision (success at meeting the perceived activity need). Although there were differences in all clusters, three particular clusters with the greatest levels of disparity were identified for the findings section of the study.

Within the instructional cluster, the activity of providing individual and group instruction showed that the faculty members by age-range groups rated their perceptions of activity importance highly across all age ranges (25 years of age and under, 26-35 years of age, 36-45 years of age, 46-55 years of age, and 56 years of age and above). Excluding the 25 years and under age range with only one respondent, the highest rated level of importance for this activity was reported for the 46-55 years of age range. This group reported the perceived level of importance at 97%. Perceptions of institutional provision were reported by identical age ranges and showed disparity between the two categories. Again, excluding the under 25 years and under age range with one respondent, the perceptions of institutional success were much lower, especially in certain age ranges. The 46-55 years of age range reported a perceived level of institutional provision at only 57%, in comparison to their respective 97% rating for the activity's importance. An additional age range showed even greater levels of disparity between the two categories. The 36-45 years of age range reported their perceived level of importance for this activity at 93%. However, their perceptions of the institutional success in meeting this need were reported at only 33%. There were similar disparities in percentages reported within the cluster activity of preparing effective current instructional materials with the greatest level of decrease reported in the 26-35 years of age range.

The professional environment cluster also demonstrated large disparities between the faculty members' perceived levels of need for particular activities when compared to their

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perceptions of their respective institution's abilities to provide for these needs. Large variations were reported for the activity of collaborating and/or networking with community college faculty and staff. The largest disparity within this activity was reported from the 36-45 years of age range who reported a 74% rate of perceived importance in comparison to a rate of 14% for perceived institutional provision for the activity. A large difference was also found in the cluster activity of participating in professional development activities that result in professional growth. Once again, the largest variation between the two categories of perceived need versus perceived institutional provision was for the 36-45 years of age range, who reported a perceived need level at 93% for the activity, yet, only reported a perceived provision level at 21%.

There were also marked disparities within the curriculum cluster and the technology cluster. Of particular interest was the continual trend of disparity between perceptions of individual faculty member need and that of institutional provision for the 36-45 years of age range. In particular, the curriculum cluster activity of creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques showed a 43% decrease between the perceived need level of 79% and the perceived provision level of only 36%. Additionally, there was a large disparity within the 46-55 years of age range for the technology cluster activity of providing accommodations for students with special needs. This age group reported the individual faculty member perception of need for the activity was at 87%, whereas the perception of institutional provision was reported at only 31%.

Finding 4: Survey data suggest that faculty members have preferences for professional development levels of interaction based on their years of experience within Adult Basic Education. Categories were established for groupings based on years of ABE experience according to the following breakdown: 5 years and below, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years,

and 20 years and above. Delivery methods used for faculty development activities were reviewed by years of ABE experience. No clear trend was discernable, and variations in rankings within groupings appeared without any pattern or predictability.

However, there was evidence of a trend based on years of ABE experience groupings for the preferred levels of interaction. Three specific levels of interaction were identified within the survey. The first level identified for interaction was a preference by the faculty member to learn alone. It was not defined within the original Wallin survey (2005) as to whether learning alone was addressing independent study type courses or whether the actual learning activity took place within a group setting, but external and absent of any group activity. The second level of interaction was identified as the preference to learn in a discipline-specific cohort wherein all members of the learning cohort were from identical or similar disciplines. The final level of preferred interaction was to learn in an interdisciplinary cohort, where cohort members could be involved in professional development with other faculty members from outside of their own disciplines. Respondents reported their preferred levels of interaction for all categories and ABE years of experience groups.

Data revealed that each level of interaction was favored by a different group of faculty based on years of ABE experience. The faculty preference to participate in professional development activities alone was favored the highest by the group comprised of faculty members with 20 years or more of ABE experience, with 53% of this group indicating this preference. This finding could be representative of faculty members who seek greater levels of isolation as a result of their age and their respective point in time of their careers, according to Rifkin (2000). On the opposite end of the preference spectrum, there were no respondents from the 16-19 years of experience range who selected this level of interaction. It was interesting to note that those

with 5 years of ABE experience or less also rated this level favorably, with 36% of the respondents preferring this level of interaction for faculty professional development activities.

The preference to learn in a discipline-specific cohort was rated the highest (67%) by ABE faculty members who fell within the 16-19 years of ABE experience range. This level of interaction was also rated favorable by all other age ranges. The unique exceptions were those faculty members in the 20 years of ABE experience or more grouping, possibly further supporting the concept reported by Rifkin (2000) that those in the latter years of academic service may choose less interaction than those with fewer years of experience. The last level of interaction was identified as those faculty members who prefer to learn in an interdisciplinary cohort. As reported earlier, this level of interaction was also rated the highest by a different group: those faculty members with 6-10 years of ABE experience, with 42% of the respondents in this group indicating a preference for this level of interaction.

Finding 5: Survey data suggest that Adult Basic Education faculty members have different preferences for professional development delivery formats based on their full-time and part-time status. As reported previously in Finding 1, the demographic review of data for the participating ABE faculty members revealed that 74% of all respondents were identified as teaching part-time, with the remaining 26% reporting full-time employment status. However, faculty members who were identified as teaching full-time ranked the traditionally used delivery formats higher in both preference and in previous participation than did their part-time counterparts. Full-time faculty members reported an 86% preference for conference attendance compared to 79% of responding part-time faculty members. This delivery format preference revealed an even higher disparity for the actual delivery formats attended during the previous 2

years, with full-time faculty members rating their previous participation at 97%, whereas only 81% of part-time faculty indicated their participation in this format during the previous 2 years.

Daylong workshops were also rated considerably higher by full-time faculty members who preferred this delivery format by 59% of the respondents. In comparison, only 40% of the part-time faculty members indicated a preference for this delivery format. Actual delivery formats attended during the previous 2 years also showed a continuation of this preference trend. This delivery format had been attended by 86% of full-time faculty while pursuing professional development activities. In comparison, only 72% of part-time faculty members indicated that they had participated in professional development via this delivery format.

Self-paced online tutorials were rated highly by 41% of full-time ABE faculty members participating in the survey. In contrast, only 34% of part-time faculty members responded that this delivery format was preferred over other formats. Delivery methods and formats attended during the previous 2 years also indicated a difference in actual participation. A greater percentage of full-time faculty (52%) responded that they had participated in self-paced online tutorials in comparison to only 35% of part-time faculty.

There are possible rationales that may contribute to a portion of the differences in delivery format preferences between full-time and part-time faculty members. First and foremost, part-time faculty members, by nature of their employment status, will have fewer opportunities to participate in professional development activities. Data identified in Finding 1 showed that part-time faculty participants outnumbered full-time participants by nearly a 3:1 margin ($n = 90$ vs $n = 32$, respectively). This ratio could possibly further support why many part-time faculty members did not rate traditional delivery formats highly: They did not have

equal opportunities to participate in the activities at the same levels as their full-time counterparts.

Finding 6: The majority of ABE faculty members surveyed reported intentions to remain employed within the Adult Basic Education field. Research conducted by Hunter-Boykin and Evans (1995) found that faculty members who feel as though they are an integral part of the organization tend to be more satisfied in their positions. The higher levels of perceived faculty importance to their institution may have an impact on their levels of satisfaction within the program. The survey data indicate that the majority of ABE faculty members (92%) reported that they perceived their roles to be important to their colleagues and to their respective colleges.

When asked in the survey to identify their preferred professional situation in 5 years, 63% of faculty members reported that they hoped to still be employed in their current position within the ABE program. There were 5% of the respondents who reported that they preferred to be working in a similar position, but in a different teaching field. It should be noted that this question did not allow for identifying which teaching field. It is possible that some of the faculty members were referring to their desire to remain teaching within the ABE program, but teaching in other disciplines within the program. Some of these disciplines within the ABE programs in Alabama Community Colleges are English as a Second Language (ESL), GED Testing and Assessment, and English Learning thru Civics (EL Civics).

There were 14 faculty members (12%) who indicated that they would prefer to be employed in an administrative position. Due to funding issues and parameters, some ACCS administrative positions allow for instructional duties to comprise part of the overall positional responsibilities. There were 3% of the participants who indicated that they wanted to continue to

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teach but at a different institution. Only 2 participants (2%) indicated that they would prefer to be working outside of the ACCS in the next 5 years.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Adult Basic Education programs within the Alabama Community College System are overwhelmingly comprised of part-time female faculty members whose ethnicity, age, and gender are not necessarily representative of the wide array of populations that are targeted and served by the ACCS. These faculty members, whether part-time or full-time, are predominantly female and White/Caucasian in nearly 80% of the faculty positions. As was reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the 2000 Census, Alabama's outreach for citizens needing adult basic education and/or literacy programs paints a very different demographic picture than what is presented by the current landscape of the ABE faculty members employed in the ACCS. These targeted populations, totaling nearly 800,000 Alabamians, include citizens who are approximately

- 48% male

- 52% female

- 64% White/Caucasian

- 31% Black/African American

- 51% under the age of 44

- 13% need GED

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (2003) conducted research that identified adult basic education faculty members' perceptions of similarities between themselves and their served populations. Of the 97 participants in this survey,

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- 68% said they spoke the same language as the vast majority of their student populations served.

- 51% reported that they were of the same gender as their student populations being targeted and served.

- 50% reported that they were of the same race/ethnicity as their student populations being targeted and served.

- 18% reported that they lived in the same area of their service community as their student populations being targeted and served.

- 14% reported that they shared the same socioeconomic status as their student population being targeted and served.

- 12% reported that they shared the same work background as their student population being targeted and served.

- 8% reported that they shared the same or similar income level as their student population being targeted and served.

It was further reported by the NCSALL study that faculty members surveyed felt that their students could be better served if the faculty members shared at least some of the demographic characteristics as those of their target student population.

Conclusion 2: ABE faculty members participating in the study were able to identify professional development areas by perception of importance, perception of need, as well as perception of institutional provision. The professional development activities offered at the comprehensive community colleges in the ACCS are addressed adequately in many instances, particularly in the cluster areas of instruction, curriculum, and technology. However, faculty

members' level of perceived institutional provision at meeting these professional development needs was not reported as favorably by ABE faculty members.

There can be a variety of rationales behind this perceived lack of satisfaction toward their respective college's attempts at providing current and relevant professional development activities. In recent years, all 2-year colleges within the ACCS have seen considerable reductions within the state allocations for operation. Many colleges, if not all in the ACCS, expend nearly 100% of their state operations and maintenance (O&M) allocation on direct employee costs (payroll, benefits, leave, etc.). This lack of state provided funds creates financial hardships for the institutions wherein they are forced to either reduce costs or generate additional revenues to be used for funding areas such as travel, technology upgrades, and professional development initiatives. The lack of these additional forms of revenue often forces colleges to choose meticulously how and where they allocate constrained funds. Professional development can be seen as an activity that can be handled "internally" by current faculty or staff who are already performing other duties within their job descriptions, making the duty of professional development an added burden with limited success for both the presenter and faculty attendees.

An additional possible rationale behind ACCS faculty members' low ratings for institutional provision of their professional development needs may be found in research conducted outside of the System. One such study was conducted in 2003 by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NSCALL). Findings from this research indicated that faculty can become dissatisfied with their organizations' professional development practices because they are stagnant and unchallenging. Faculty members from this study indicated strong preferences for delivery formats very similar to those identified in both the original Wallin study

from 2005 and from this dissertational research. Participants from the NSCALL study indicated the following:

- 53% of the faculty surveyed stated the strong desire to attend formalized professional development training activities to include workshops, peer coaching, assisting in topical research, conferences, and study circles.

- 41% of the faculty identified the desire to participate in professional development with other faculty members outside of their own ABE discipline in order to share ideas and gain additional knowledge.

- 35% of the faculty identified the desire to participate in professional development with other faculty members from within their respective ABE programs.

- 30% of the faculty identified the preference to work on professional development activities and tasks as a member of a larger group of colleagues from within ABE.

- 21% of faculty members identified the preference to work on professional development activities and tasks under the direct mentorship of an experienced practitioner or professional developer who would be able to conduct training individually and to groups of other faculty members.

- 13% would prefer to work alone or as part of a faculty pairing exercise for professional development activities and tasks.

Conclusion 3: Faculty members consistently categorized their perceived barriers to successful professional development practices into three overarching and connecting themes. These interwoven themes consisted of funding issues, time constraints, and quality of presentations and presenters. Successful professional development activities are those that will take each of these three barriers into consideration and afford faculty members the maximum

level of opportunities in contrast to the minimum level of detractors and obstacles. In order to best address the barriers, it is critical that they be accurately identified at the forefront of the planning and funding cycles.

Additional research outside of the ACCS identified similar obstacles as those thematic categories resulting from this research. Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, and Jones (1991) reported a wide array of inhibiting factors that prevent successful ABE related professional development activities from occurring. These findings included limited funding to permit adequate conference attendance, travel costs, registrations fees, and so on. Additionally, Tibbetts et al. reported that the part-time nature of faculty coupled with the high turnover rate of these faculty members contribute to poor success within the professional development arena. Finally, the additional barrier of inadequate ABE faculty research specific to the field was reported.

Wilson and Corbett (2001) also conducted research that focused on ABE faculty that identified perceived barriers to successful professional development. These research findings reported the following barriers:

- Professional development opportunities are not offered adequately at the local college (site) level, but are typically offered at statewide/system-wide venues, which forces faculty members to travel and creates funding burdens for the systems where the faculty members are employed.
- The overwhelming majority of ABE faculty members are employed part-time. Their employment status alone can make it difficult for them to participate in professional development activities. A secondary finding from this barrier was that the part-time faculty members oftentimes are not paid to attend the activities.

- ABE faculty members are at times seen as teaching in a discipline outside of the mainstream curriculum. This view, whether experienced inwardly by the faculty member or outwardly by their colleagues, can lead to decreased avenues and opportunities of professional development.

- Unlike more traditional academic disciplines taught within community colleges, ABE faculty members can be assigned concurrently to teach in multiple areas (ABE, GED, Literacy, etc.) with different types and multiple levels of learners. This likelihood of diverse yet concurrent roles can create a disconnect between practitioners and practice.

Recommendations

The findings identified and reported from this research project have led to several recommendations aimed at improving the quality and quantity of the body of literature, as well as providing recommendations for both policy and practice, in the field of Adult Basic Education faculty professional development.

Recommendations for Policy

Recommendation 1: ABE faculty professional development should be viewed as a vital component of the overall institutional mission by the Alabama Community College System. This level of vitality creates a need that must be addressed as comprehensively and diligently as other mainstream disciplines within the areas of instruction, curriculum development, operations, and technology-related relevancy. ABE faculty members need to perceive this level of commitment by their organizational directors, by the administration and faculty of their respective institution, and by the System. A major factor that may contribute to the lack of institutional commitment to continual and progressive adult basic education faculty professional

development could be directly tied to federal funding constraints attached to the draw-down of program funds. Typically, federal funding requirements for professional development within adult education programs mandate that no less than 15% of the total draw-down be used for professional development and research. The critical concern may lie within the vagueness of the federal mandate itself. Many community colleges, although certainly not all inclusively, do not actively conduct research of any type, let alone within the confines of noncredit programs such as adult basic education. Additionally, this funding percentage tied directly to professional development is directed at both instructional faculty members and noninstructional staff, creating a somewhat watered-down approach to the topic. At times, it is those who need the professional development the most who are the least likely to receive it, such as part-time faculty.

It was reported through this survey and other similar surveys reviewed within the body of literature that ABE faculty members are well aware of the needs, dynamics, and requirements of their chosen discipline. As was also reported, these same faculty members are cognizant of the levels of importance of a variety of topical areas within the adult education and literacy framework. However, the perception of their needs for professional development within these areas indicates that there is a potential disconnect at times between the needs and the actual institutional provisions made. Through the concerted effort of equating adult basic education and literacy-related instruction with that perceived as more mainstream, the implication exists that the ABE faulty will have equal access to adequate funding, instructional support, technology, and professional development.

Recommendation 2: The Alabama Community College System and individual institutions need to strategically intensify their efforts at recruiting and hiring a wider variety of faculty, with specific emphasis placed in the areas of hiring additional full-time faculty members

at large, including males and minorities, within the ABE programs operating in the state. This recommendation stems from the demographics reported from the survey respondents, which indicated that the majority of ABE faculty members share similar characteristics. They are overwhelmingly female White/Caucasians who teach part-time. No negative connotation is intended to be levied against part-time faculty members identified within this study. However, it was noteworthy that many of the part-time faculty members who responded worked total work weeks with less than 19 hours per week. This time included both direct instructional time as well as indirect noninstructional time. More targeted recruiting efforts need to be implemented that actively seek out a more diverse faculty body that better reflects the demographics of those students within the targeted populations to be served. These recruiting efforts should take into consideration college location, mission, local community resources, service area, and targeted student populations. ABE faculty members should be reflective of whom they are assigned to serve; not necessarily by race and gender, but more importantly by student demographics and by dedication to helping them achieve their educational goals. Their positions should not be automatically characterized as part-time, nor should ABE teaching assignments be relegated as additional duties to otherwise unmotivated and/or underutilized faculty members.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendation 3: Community colleges within the Alabama Community College System should encourage faculty to make progressive pedagogical shifts that focus more intently on active practice, as opposed to the more traditional format of learning for later practice. Adequate research has been reviewed that documents the lackluster results of traditional faculty professional development activities. Research suggests that this pedagogical shift from the traditional delivery formats such as workshops, wherein information is conveyed to participating

faculty members more so in quantity of attendance hours than in contextual relevancy of content, will not only enhance the collective professional identity of ABE faculty members, but in turn, will hopefully enhance the levels of success of the student populations targeted for service.

The needed pedagogical shift will require three main dynamics for maximum efficacy:

- A shift must take place that redirects the focus of professional development from providing answers to providing questions.

- A shift from the act of merely practicing professional development to one of pedagogical inquiry that challenges both faculty member and student alike.

- A shift from the practice of teaching concepts, practices, and skills to the practice of facilitating others to do as much, who then repeat the process.

Traditionally, adult basic education programs operating within Alabama consisted primarily of curriculum materials that might best be described as a comingling of literacy training and life skills preparations. Although there may be credibility attached to such instructional pedagogies, students who participate in adult basic education classes today must do so under the threat of a more competitive job applicant pool that exists within a greater globalized workforce than at any time in the past. As a result of increasing unemployment rates that were coupled with a steady decrease in literacy, work-place literacy skills were incorporated into the adult basic education curriculum over time.

Recommendation 4: Comprehensive community colleges within the ACCS who offer Adult Basic Education programs, should seek ways to facilitate and strengthen community involvement and to enhance business and industry support. Greater community involvement will allow faculty members to have more interaction with potential supporters and advocates of literacy-related initiatives within their respective teaching responsibilities, as opposed to apart

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from their teaching responsibilities. Enhanced interaction with business and industry could pay dividends for both ABE faculty members and their students alike. Faculty members could benefit through such partnerships by maintaining relationships that could strengthen the relevancy of the curriculum through real-world practices. Students could benefit through this increased level of interaction by being the beneficiaries of more course-relevant topics and through increased interaction with future potential employers.

The intentional and systematic building of relationships between adult basic education programs and the local workforce could benefit both the teaching and the learning components of the actual process. Local business leaders who could serve in advisory council positions would be in excellent positions to make note of program/curricular strengths and weaknesses, thereby having an active voice in the strategic planning for the programmatic success. There would also be tremendous benefit from a fiscal standpoint, as local industries could assist in the possible selection and actual purchasing of curricular materials and related components that actually may benefit the student in various roles, including that of learner and potential employee. Strengthened business and industry relationships could also provide a much needed catalyst to the program and the individual students via recruitment, retention, and completion rates, if possible employment opportunities are made evident at the onset of the learning process.

Recommendations for Future Study

Recommendation 5: There should be additional research conducted in the area of cross-discipline combination efforts that would combine the disciplines of developmental/transitional education faculty members with those recognized as traditional ABE faculty members. Through this innovative concept, the ABE faculty member body at large could transition into a more mainstream area of the instructional programs of an institution, allowing for an increase in the

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percentage of full-time faculty members, which can correlate with greater levels of student success. An additional benefit from this cross-pollination of educational disciplines could create classrooms where more experienced and higher credentialed faculty could be providing the instruction to the target student populations. Faculty members who are identified as being the most innovative within their discipline could be encouraged to devote a portion of their traditional teaching load to the efforts of either professionally developing the ABE faculty or, at a minimum, to actually providing adult basic education and literacy instruction. Students who transition from the levels of adult basic education coursework into the developmental coursework could see this as an easier transition that could lead to greater student success, lowered levels of attrition, and increased enrollment—traditionally used as a benchmark for federal, state, and local funding support.

Recommendation 6: Additional research is needed to identify comprehensive community colleges within the ACCS and across the nation that have a dedicated faculty professional development area. This PD Office would have assigned staffing who possess appropriate credentials and experience, be supported with an adequate budget, be represented administratively within the college's organizational structure, and possess discipline relevancy within the overall mission of the institutions where these areas are located. The function of this area would have faculty professional development responsibilities at its core and as its primary purpose of existence. This area and its professional development activities should be marketed to the faculty at large, to include more traditional and mainstream disciplines, which would also encompass the area of adult basic education. Faculty members who participate in the professional development activities of this area should be encouraged to do so within their assigned work week and be provided compensation appropriate and for their participation.

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This dedicated professional development area would utilize available research from federal, state, and local data sources to better design a program that meets the needs of multiple providers and multiple types of learners. Faculty members who are identified as being successful within their teaching communities and disciplines could potentially be an active component in the training of future successful faculty members. This training the trainer mode of professional development and faculty training is not native to adult basic education nor exclusive to programs of any type or level. By identifying the best, recruiting the best, and allowing them to make others better, a more successful model of faculty professional development can be achieved.

Closing Remarks

The survey results from the research conducted identified that Adult Basic Education faculty members are perceptive of their faculty development needs and have preferences for the activities, formats, and delivery methods utilized to meet those needs. The faculty members share some commonalities based on age, gender, years of experience, and institutional size, type, and location. The recruitment, retention, and professional development of these faculty members are all key components in the process of improving Adult Basic Education programs within the Alabama Community College System. It must also be stressed that professional development is a continual process with a true beginning, but no end to the transition that occurs. As such, comprehensive community colleges within the ACCS must provide divisional relevancy, appropriate funding, credentialed staffing, and adequate planning and evaluation if the desired end result is to be achieved: to provide faculty professional development that is available, adequate, and accessible. When all three components of the original premise behind this study

are achieved, adult basic education faculty members become their own most ardent advocates,

who actively participate in planning, strategy, instruction, review, and evaluation.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

To:	[Email]
From:	ttaylor@sheltonstate.edu

Subject:	ABE Survey
Body:	Dear Fellow Alabama Adult Basic Education Colleagues,

I am Tommy Taylor, the Dean of Students at Shelton State Community College. As part of my administrative responsibilities, I am fortunate to have oversight of the ABE Program at my college. I am firmly committed to the mission of Adult Basic Education and truly feel that through these efforts, countless lives are changed for the better every day. Bearing this in mind, some of you may have already heard from your co-workers or Program Directors that I am conducting dissertation research on the topic of ABE Faculty perceptions of professional development at Alabama Community Colleges. Your participation as either a full-time or part-time ABE faculty member is vital to the success of this study and could further benefit professional development activities at your respective colleges and to the ACCS as a whole.

Please find attached the survey link and take a few moments to complete the questionnaire. Your responses are anonymous in hopes of encouraging participation. Please feel free to discuss this survey with your departmental colleagues. I have compiled a listing of email addresses, but I am certain that the list in not all-inclusive. Please have any of your fellow program colleagues who did not receive the email to contact me directly at ttaylor@sheltonstate.edu and I will add their names and email addresses to my listing for their participation.

Thanks again for taking time to complete this survey and please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions.

Here is a link to the survey:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!
Tommy Taylor

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. Informed Consent

I am an Ed.D student in Higher Education Administration at The University of Alabama. My dissertation research is centered on the perceptions of Adult Basic Education (ABE) faculty members in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) regarding faculty professional development. My research will survey approximately 500 full-time and part-time faculty members teaching in the ABE programs at 25 community colleges and technical colleges within the ACCS.

The purpose of this study is to survey the perceptions of ABE faculty members regarding the availability, adequacy, and effectiveness of professional development at their individual colleges. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dissertation Chair, David Hardy, Ph.D. Dr. Hardy is currently an Associate Professor in the Higher Education Administration Program and the Director of Research at the Education Policy Center at the University of Alabama. Dr. Hardy has extensive expertise in the areas of Adult basic education, faculty professional development and related faculty issues, as they pertain to the mission and scope of the community college.

The survey is relatively brief and should take you about 20-30 minutes to complete. Please answer as thoroughly and honestly as possible. All information will be kept confidential and the survey responses will be coded anonymously. Participation in this study does not propose any foreseeable risks to you. There are no direct benefits to you for participating but you will be contributing to the researcher's knowledge on perceptions of Adult Basic Education faculty members regarding faculty professional development, as well as to the overall literature base on the topic. Answer only those questions with which you are comfortable, but try to answer the entire set for comparability purposes.

Your participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave this website.

Your participation, while voluntary and confidential, is very important to the success of this research project. The responses provided by you and your colleagues throughout the System will be made available to the respective colleges participating and to the System as a whole. A primary desired outcome will be to help the ACCS in planning, developing, and implementing professional development opportunities that are accessible, adequate, and effective for ABE faculty members. Please feel free to notify me by email if you would like a summary of the research findings when the study is completed. My email address is taylor@sheltonstate.edu.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or any implications from participating in this study. You can reach me at 205-454-8251.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Taylor, Jr.
Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D. Program
Higher Education Administration
The University of Alabama

1. Do you consent to continue?

◯ Yes

◯ No

2. Carnegie Classification

Alabama Southern Community College
Rural-Small

Bevill State Community College
Rural-Medium

Bishop State Community College
Urban-Multi-campus

Central Alabama Community College
Rural-Medium

Chattahoochee Valley Community College
Rural-Medium

Enterprise-Ozark Community College
Rural-Medium

Gadsden State Community College
Rural-Large

George C Wallace Community College
Rural-Large

James H Faulkner State
Suburban-Multi-campus

Jefferson Davis Community College
Rural-Small

Jefferson State Community College
Urban-Multi-campus

John C Calhoun State Community College
Rural-Large

Lawson State Community College
Urban-Multi-campus

Lurleen B Wallace Community College
Rural-Small

Northeast Alabama Community College
Rural-Medium

Northwest Shoals Community College
Rural-Medium

Shelton State Community College
Rural-Large

Snead State Community College
Rural-Small

Southern Union State Community College
Rural-Medium

1. Using the above chart as a guide, please select your college's Carnegie Classification:

◯ Rural-Small

◯ Rural-Medium

◯ Rural-Large

◯ Suburban-Single-Campus

◯ Suburban-Multi-Campus

◯ Urban-Single-Campus

◯ Urban-Multi-Campus

3. Demographic Data

This section is for collecting basic demographic data for statistical purposes.

1. Gender

◯ Male

◯ Female

2. Race/Ethnicity

◯ Hispanic/Latino

◯ Asian

◯ White/Caucasian

◯ Native American/Pacific Islander

◯ American Indian/Alaska Native

◯ Black/African American

◯ Other

3. Please select your age range:

◯ Under 25

◯ 26-35

◯ 36-45

◯ 46-55

◯ 56 and above

4. Are you currently:

◯ Full-time

◯ Part-time

5. How many total years of teaching experience (including this year) do you have?

6. How many years of teaching ABE (including this year) do you have?

7. How many total years of teaching experience (including this year) do you have in the Community College System of Alabama?

8. How many hours a week do you routinely teach?

◯ 0-10 hours

◯ 11-19 hours

◯ 20-29 hours

◯ 30-40 hours

9. Including teaching, how many total hours do you routinely spend each week working?

◯ 0-10 hours

◯ 11-19 hours

◯ 20-29 hours

◯ 30-40 hours

10. In your college's organizational structure, what division does your ABE Director report to?

◯ Instruction

◯ Student Services

◯ Workforce Development or related

◯ Separate ABE Division

◯ Unsure

11. What is your highest educational degree?

◯ High school diploma

◯ Associate's Degree

◯ Bachelor's Degree

◯ Master's Degree

◯ Education Specialist Degree

◯ Doctoral Degree

12. Which is your preferred professional situation five years from now?

( ) Current position

( ) Similar position, but in a different teaching field

( ) Administrative position

( ) Similar position, but at a different institution

( ) Position in business/industry or private sector

( ) Other

13. If other, please specify:

[   ]

14. How many years experience in teaching ABE?

[ ] Under 5

[ ] 6-10

[ ] 11-15

[ ] 16-20

[ ] 20+

4.

1. List your three most critical faculty development needs:

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]

2. List what you believe are the three most significant barriers to quality faculty professional development:

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]

3. What would be two ways that you would improve faculty professional development at your college?

1. [   ]
2. [   ]

5.

1. I feel that my position as an ABE faculty member is an important part of my college.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

2. I feel as though faculty from other areas at the college treat me like a peer.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

3. I feel as though my college respects me as a professional member of the college community.

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

6. Professional Activities for Community College ABE Faculty

1. How important do you believe each of the following work activities is in your job as an ABE faculty member?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Providing individual and group instruction	○	○	○	○
Preparing effective current instructional materials	○	○	○	○

2. How important do you believe each of the following work activities is in your job as an ABE faculty member?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Collaborating and/or networking with Community College faculty and staff	○	○	○	○
Managing a program advisory committee	○	○	○	○
Participating in departmental and college committees for improvement of the programs and the college	○	○	○	○
Participating in professional development activities that result in professional growth	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

3. How important do you believe each of the following work activities is in your job as an ABE faculty member?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Creating and modifying curriculum (i.e. course syllabus, course objectives, lesson plans)	○	○	○	○
Creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques	○	○	○	○
Integrating curriculum with other faculty and other instructional areas	○	○	○	○
Identifying and implementing current industry standards and trends into the curriculum	○	○	○	○
Working with advisory committee and employers to meet changing needs of the program and industry to modify curriculum	○	○	○	○
Developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity	○	○	○	○
Participating in "back-to-industry" experiences to increase technical competence	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

4. How important do you believe each of the following work activities is to your job as an ABE faculty member?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Utilizing classroom arrangements for instructional effectiveness	○	○	○	○
Modifying instructional materials based on student assessment and industry feedback	○	○	○	○
Managing student conflicts in the classroom	○	○	○	○
Providing accomodations for students with special needs	○	○	○	○
Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans	○	○	○	○
Utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills in students (i.e. critical thinking skills)	○	○	○	○
Implementing writing across the curriculum	○	○	○	○
Utilizing "hands-on" (contextual teaching and learning strategies in the curriculum)	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

5. How important do you believe each of the following work activities is in your job as an ABE faculty member?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Providing information or referrals to meet individual student needs	○	○	○	○
Assisting students with job placements	○	○	○	○
Providing academic advising	○	○	○	○
Providing career advising	○	○	○	○
Serving as a student organization advisor	○	○	○	○
Implementing student retention programs	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

7. Professional Activities for Community College ABE Faculty

1. How important do you believe each of the following work activities is in your job as an ABE faculty member?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Conducting student recruitment activities	○	○	○	○
Linking with secondary career and technical education programs through advisory committees, Tech Prep consortia, and/or other activities	○	○	○	○
Assisting in developing a promotion/marketing plan for a specific program	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

2. How important do you believe each of the following work activities is in your job as an ABE faculty member?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Participating in budget development	○	○	○	○
Assisting with writing and implementing grants and targeting financial resources	○	○	○	○
Participating in innovative program development	○	○	○	○
Documenting and communicating student grading policies	○	○	○	○
Providing input into secondary/post-secondary articulation agreements for instructional programs	○	○	○	○
Developing and maintaining relationships with business and industry	○	○	○	○
Addressing institution and student safety issues (i.e., violence, terrorism, severe weather)	○	○	○	○
Addressing legal issues (i.e., student privacy act, sexual harassment)	○	○	○	○
Addressing health and medical related issues (i.e., CPR, stress management, wellness)	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

8. Professional Activities for Community College ABE Faculty

1. How would you rate your personal need for professional development as an ABE faculty member in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Providing individual and group instruction	○	○	○	○
Preparing effective current instructional materials	○	○	○	○

2. How would you rate your personal need for professional development as an ABE faculty member in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Collaborating and/or networking with Community College faculty and staff	○	○	○	○
Managing a program advisory committee	○	○	○	○
Participating in departmental and college committees for improvement of the programs and the college	○	○	○	○
Participating in professional development activities that result in professional growth	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

3. How would you rate your personal need for professional development as an ABE faculty member in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Creating and modifying curriculum (i.e. course syllabus, course objectives, lesson plans)	○	○	○	○
Creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques	○	○	○	○
Integrating curriculum with other faculty and other instructional areas	○	○	○	○
Identifying and implementing current industry standards and trends into the curriculum	○	○	○	○
Working with advisory committee and employers to meet changing needs of the program and industry to modify curriculum	○	○	○	○
Developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity	○	○	○	○
Participating in "back-to-industry" experiences to increase technical competence	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

4. How would you rate your personal need for professional development as an ABE faculty member in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Utilizing classroom arrangements for instructional effectiveness	○	○	○	○
Modifying instructional materials based on student assessment and industry feedback	○	○	○	○
Managing student conflicts in the classroom	○	○	○	○
Providing accomodations for students with special needs	○	○	○	○
Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans	○	○	○	○
Utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills in students (i.e. critical thinking skills)	○	○	○	○
Implementing writing across the curriculum	○	○	○	○
Utilizing "hands-on" (contextual teaching and learning strategies in the curriculum)	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

5. How would you rate your personal need for professional development as an ABE faculty member in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Providing information or referrals to meet individual student needs	○	○	○	○
Assisting students with job placements	○	○	○	○
Providing academic advising	○	○	○	○
Providing career advising	○	○	○	○
Serving as a student organization advisor	○	○	○	○
Implementing student retention programs	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

6. How would you rate your personal need for professional development as an ABE faculty member in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Conducting student recruitment activities	○	○	○	○
Linking with secondary career and technical education programs through advisory committees, Tech Prep consortia, and/or other activities	○	○	○	○
Assisting in developing a promotion/marketing plan for a specific program	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

9. Professional Development Activities for Community College ABE faculty

1. How would you rate your personal need for professional development as an ABE faculty member in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Participating in budget development	○	○	○	○
Assisting with writing and implementing grants and targeting financial resources	○	○	○	○
Participating in innovative program development	○	○	○	○
Documenting and communicating student grading policies	○	○	○	○
Providing input into secondary/post-secondary articulation agreements for instructional programs	○	○	○	○
Developing and maintaining relationships with business and industry	○	○	○	○
Addressing institution and student safety issues (i.e., violence, terrorism, severe weather)	○	○	○	○
Addressing legal issues (i.e., student privacy act, sexual harassment)	○	○	○	○
Addressing health and medical related issues (i.e., CPR, stress management, wellness)	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

10. Professional Activities for Community College ABE Faculty

1. How well does your institution provide professional development for ABE faculty in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Providing individual and group instruction	○	○	○	○
Preparing effective current instructional materials	○	○	○	○

2. How well does your institution provide professional development for ABE faculty in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Collaborating and/or networking with Community College faculty and staff	○	○	○	○
Managing a program advisory committee	○	○	○	○
Participating in departmental and college committees for improvement of the programs and the college	○	○	○	○
Participating in professional development activities that result in professional growth	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

3. How well does your institution provide professional development for ABE faculty in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Creating and modifying curriculum (i.e. course syllabus, course objectives, lesson plans)	○	○	○	○
Creating and utilizing a variety of student assessment and evaluation techniques	○	○	○	○
Integrating curriculum with other faculty and other instructional areas	○	○	○	○
Identifying and implementing current industry standards and trends into the curriculum	○	○	○	○
Working with advisory committee and employers to meet changing needs of the program and industry to modify curriculum	○	○	○	○
Developing and evaluating curriculum materials with regard to gender bias and cultural sensitivity	○	○	○	○
Participating in "back-to-industry" experiences to increase technical competence	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

4. How well does your institution provide professional development for ABE faculty in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Utilizing classroom arrangements for instructional effectiveness	◯	◯	◯	◯
Modifying instructional materials based on student assessment and industry feedback	◯	◯	◯	◯
Managing student conflicts in the classroom	◯	◯	◯	◯
Providing accomodations for students with special needs	◯	◯	◯	◯
Recognizing diverse learning styles and developing appropriate plans	◯	◯	◯	◯
Utilizing instructional techniques that develop higher order skills in students (i.e. critical thinking skills)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Implementing writing across the curriculum	◯	◯	◯	◯
Utilizing "hands-on" (contextual teaching and learning strategies in the curriculum)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other	◯	◯	◯	◯

5. How well does your institution provide professional development for ABE faculty in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Providing information or referrals to meet individual student needs	◯	◯	◯	◯
Assisting students with job placements	◯	◯	◯	◯
Providing academic advising	◯	◯	◯	◯
Providing career advising	◯	◯	◯	◯
Serving as a student organization advisor	◯	◯	◯	◯
Implementing student retention programs	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. Professional Activities for Community College ABE Faculty

1. How well does your institution provide professional development for ABE faculty in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Conducting student recruitment activities	○	○	○	○
Linking with secondary career and technical education programs through advisory committees, Tech Prep consortia, and/or other activities	○	○	○	○
Assisting in developing a promotion/marketing plan for a specific program	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

2. How well does your institution provide professional development for ABE faculty in each of the following areas or topics?

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Participating in budget development	○	○	○	○
Assisting with writing and implementing grants and targeting financial resources	○	○	○	○
Participating in innovative program development	○	○	○	○
Documenting and communicating student grading policies	○	○	○	○
Providing input into secondary/post-secondary articulation agreements for instructional programs	○	○	○	○
Developing and maintaining relationships with business and industry	○	○	○	○
Addressing institution and student safety issues (i.e., violence, terrorism, severe weather)	○	○	○	○
Addressing legal issues (i.e., student privacy act, sexual harassment)	○	○	○	○
Addressing health and medical related issues (i.e., CPR, stress management, wellness)	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

1. During the past two years, in what types of faculty professional development have you participated? Choose all that apply.

☐ Daylong workshops	☐ Half-day workshops	☐ 1-3 hour workshops
☐ Conference Attendance	☐ Weeklong Seminars	☐ Summer Institutes
☐ Brownbag lunch seminars	☐ Self-paced on-line tutorials	☐ Formal Courses
☐ Instructor-led On-line courses	☐ New faculty orientation	☐ Instructor Training Institute

2. In what types of faculty professional development would you prefer to participate? (Choose all that apply)

☐ Daylong workshops	☐ Weeklong Seminars	☐ Formal Courses
☐ Conference Attendance	☐ Self-paced on-line tutorials	☐ Instructor Training Institute
☐ Brownbag lunch seminars	☐ New faculty orientation	☐ Other
☐ Instructor-led On-line courses	☐ 1-3 hour workshops	
☐ Half-day workshops	☐ Summer Institutes	

3. If other, please specify:

[text input field]

13.

1. As a learner, which of these face-to-face delivery methods do you prefer? Choose your most preferred.

◯ Lecture

◯ Hands-on activities and labs

◯ Guided discussion

◯ Other

2. If other, please specify:

[ ]

3. As a learner, which of these electronic delivery methods do you prefer? (Choose your most preferred)

◯ Videoconference

◯ Web-based online course

◯ Videotape

◯ Chat room

◯ Satellite

4. When you participate in professional development activities, what is your preferred level of interaction with other participants? (Choose your most preferred)

◯ I like to learn by myself

◯ I like to learn in a discipline-specific cohort

◯ I like to learn in an interdisciplinary cohort

5. Which of the following describes professional development at your community college? (Select one)

◯ Professional development is linked to my evaluations

◯ Professional development is not required

◯ Professional development is required

◯ Professional develoment is encouraged

6. What incentives does your community college offer for participating in professional development activities? Choose all that apply.

☐ Stipend ☐ Public Recognition ☐ None

☐ Tuition reimbursement ☐ Promotion ☐ Other

☐ Released Time ☐ Merit pay increase

7. If other, please specify:

☐

14. Conclusion

This concludes my survey. Thank you so much for your time! If you wish to receive a copy of the results of this survey when it is concluded you may reach me at ttaylor@sheltonstate.edu.

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL

June 25, 2009

Office for Research

Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects

Thomas J. Taylor, Jr.
ELPTS
Department of Education
The University of Alabama

THE UNIVERSITY OF

ALABAMA

R E S E A R C H

Re: IRB # 09-OR-194 "Perceptions of Community College Adult Basic
Education Faculty Regarding Professional Development in the Alabama
Community College System"

Dear Mr. Taylor:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted
approval for your proposed research

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR
part 46. You have also been granted the requested waiver of written
documentation of informed consent. Approval has been given under
expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

*(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior
(including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition,
motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or
practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview,
oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation,
or quality assurance methodologies.*

Your application will expire on June 25, 2010. If your research will
continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of Continuing
Review and Closure From. If you wish to modify the application,
complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. When the
study closes, complete the appropriate portions of FORM: Continuing
Review and Closure.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this
proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama

152 Rose Administration Building
Box 870117
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0117
(205) 348-5152
FAX (205) 348-8882

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09-OR-194

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

I. Identifying information

	Principal Investigator	Second Investigator	Third Investigator
Name:	Thomas J. Taylor, Jr.	David Hardy, Ph.D.	
Department:	HEA	Educational Policy Center/HEA	
College:	Education	Education	
University:	Alabama	Alabama	
Address:	310 Revere Road, Tuscaloosa Al. 35405	Carmichael Hall Box 870231 Tuscaloosa, Al 65487-0231	
Telephone:	205-454-8251	205-348-2470	
FAX:	205-391-2247	205-348-6873	
E-mail:	ttaylor@sheltonstate.edu	dhardy@bamaed.ua.edu	

Title of Research Project: Perceptions of Community College Adult Basic Education Faculty Regarding Faculty Professional Development in the Alabama Community College System.

Date Printed: 06/21/09   Funding Source: N/A

Type of Proposal: X New   ___Revision   ___Renewal   ___Completed   _X_Exempt

> Attach a renewal application
> Attach a continuing review of studies form
> Please enter the original IRB # at the top of the page

UA faculty or staff member signature: ___

II. NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION (to be completed by IRB):

Type of Review: _____ Full board   _____ Expedited

IRB Action:

___Rejected   Date:_____
___Tabled Pending Revisions   Date:_____
___Approved Pending Revisions   Date:_____
_X_Approved—this proposal complies with University and federal regulations for the protection of human subjects

Approval is effective until the following date:

Items approved: ___   Research protocol: dated
                       ___   Informed consent: dated
                       ___   Recruitment materials: dated
                       ___   Other: dated

Approval signature ___   Date 6-25-09

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APPENDIX D

WALLIN APPROVAL

From: Desna Wallin

To: Tommy Taylor
Sent: Jun 22, 2009 9:20 PM
Subject: RE: Dissertation Survey Instrument

Thanks for the reminder. Things have been a bit hectic since I got home.

It looks to me like an excellent adaptation of the instrument and you certainly have my permission to use it. Please let me know exactly what you need for a formal letter to your IRB and I'll be happy to write one. I'm honored that you are using the instrument and I'll be pleased to see what comes of your very important research.

Desna Wallin
College of Education
University of Georgia
dwallin@uga.edu
706-583-8098