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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Linda Blair entitled "Comparison of Traditional and Reentry Students and the Attribution of Learned Helplessness". I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

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COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND REENTRY STUDENTS AND THE ATTRIBUTION OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED FOR THE

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

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Linda Blair

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Abstract

This study addressed the issue of whether or not the attributional style of learned helplessness was more prominent in reentry college students than in traditional college students. Two other questions were also addressed: (a) Is gender a significant factor in the comparison of the attributional style of learned helplessness? and (b) Is there a relationship between gender and student status in terms of learned helplessness? Reentry students were defined as college students age 25 or over, who, since high school, had experienced a time lapse in academic participation of five or more years.

Attributional style was assessed with the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ), a self-report assessment of positive and negative attributions. Data were collected from 66 reentry and 111 traditional students who were enrolled in education, social work, or liberal arts in a southeastern, land grant university.

No significant differences in means on the combined negative ASQ subscores between traditional and reentry students were found using a one-way ANOVA, nor did a second one-way ANOVA indicate any significant difference between males and females in the ASQ combined negative means. A two-way ANOVA considered both student status and gender with negative means on the ASQ. Again, no significant differences were found. This last finding is in opposition to a pilot study.

ANOVAs were conducted again with only the undergraduate students in the sample; and then with only undergraduates who were age 24 and younger compared with students age 30 and older. No significant results occurred. A final exploration with the undergraduate students involved redefining "reentry" as any time away from academia between high school graduation and entrance into college, and this analysis did produce significant results, with those students who had a break in education expressing more learned helplessness than those who had gone to school directly from high school. Additionally, the independent variables of full or part time student status, employment

status, and education of the father were also analyzed in regard to learned helplessness, and found to be significant.

Recommendations for future studies were presented and included a suggestion for possible rewording of two items on the ASQ. Until additional studies are conducted, there is presently little basis for concluding that reentry students express more learned helplessness than traditional students.

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Chapter I

Introduction

In this study, the construct of learned helplessness was examined as a possible psychological variable in the delayed educational pursuits of reentry students. Reentry students were identified as students aged 25 or older who were returning to academia after an absence of five or more years (Weil, 1986). Learned helplessness was defined as an attributional construct in which the individual believed that personal responses would have little or no effect on event outcomes (Fincham & Cain, 1986). This chapter opens with descriptions of reentry students in terms of their numbers and their personal and social circumstances. This is followed by a brief interpretation of how the attribution of learned helplessness might be linked to reentry students. A theoretical basis for studying reentry students and the attribution of learned helplessness is then presented, along with additional information about the attribution of learned helplessness. The need for this study is established and stated in terms of the problem statement. The hypotheses of the study, definitions, and a consideration of appropriate limitations provide the remaining context for this study.

Reentry Students

Reentry students have recently become a noticeable and growing phenomenon on college campuses; one, in fact, that at first appeared unique. However, Kasworm and Blowers (1994) and others have traced other episodes of increased numbers of reentry students. One that could hardly go unnoticed occurred shortly after World War II, when the creation of the GI Bill enabled thousands of veterans to pursue belated education. Nevertheless, the present migration, which may have had tentative beginnings in the 1960's (Nance, 1991)--and was certainly in full swing by the 1970's (Kasworm & Blowers, 1994), has continued at an unceasing pace. In the fall of 1970, a total of 8,581,000 students were enrolled in institutions of higher

learning in America, and of that number, 2,384,000 were 25 years of age or older. By fall of 1995, 14,262,000 students were in higher education, and of those, 8,061,000 were 25 or older. In other words, in 1970, 27.8% of the fall enrollment of all higher education students were 25 or older; but by 1995, the percent had climbed to 42.5 (Barbett & Korb, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). These statistics are further supported by researchers such as Nance (1991), who noted that as early as 1977, as many as 38% of all students in higher education were over age 25. Henderson (1994) observed that women were a major factor in the perpetual enrollment increases of reentry students, and Padula (1994, citing US Department of Education, 1990) noted that women were earning more masters degrees than men, and that women were likely to "earn more doctoral degrees than men by the year 2001" (p. 10).

Many reentry students have reported that coming back to school was prompted by an important milestone (Garland, 1985), such as grown children (Mahrle, 1992/1993; Shields, 1993), a death in the family, or a divorce (Hildreth, Dilworth-Anderson, & Rabe, 1983; Mahrle, 1992/1993; Shields, 1993; Witherspoon & Nickell, 1991). Other reentry students were motivated by changes in their employment and/or career direction (Mahrle, 1992/1993; Shields, 1993, Witherspoon & Nickell, 1991), and still others by motives synonymous with personal growth (Hildreth, Dilworth-Anderson, & Rabe, 1983; Mahrle, 1992/1993; Witherspoon & Nickell, 1991). Other reasons that seem to have more to do with the social climate of the times include retirement at a later age and longer life expectancy (Mahrle, 1992/1993; St. Pierre, 1989).

Learned Helplessness

Learned helplessness is probably not a quality that would typically come to mind in considering reentry students. Persons expressing learned helplessness

typically believe that their efforts will have no association with outcomes (Fincham & Cain, 1986), and such persons often do not perform as well as classroom peers (Seligman, Kamen, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1988). Knowing the dedication of many college students, while also remembering that learned helplessness is typically expressed by such behavioral deficits (Peterson & Bossio, 1989) as not completing a task, "learned helplessness" and "reentry student" may seem like an incompatible pair of concepts. However, for some reentry students, it might be that it was the passivity of learned helplessness (Peterson & Bossio, 1989) that caused the delay in completing formal education in the first place. In addition, it is also possible that female reentry students may be expressing that attribution more often than their male counterparts. Although the studies of Dweck and Gilliard (1975) and Boggiano and Barrett (1991) involved children rather than adults, both sets of researchers reported findings that would seem to indicate that learned helplessness occurs more often in females than in males.

Problem Statement

Statistical data (Barbett & Korb, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997) has indicated that the absolute and relative number of reentry students has substantially increased; and several researchers (Mohney & Anderson, 1988; Garland,1985; Shields, 1993; and others) have shown that reentry students tended to have issues and difficulties that made their educational experience different than that of their more traditional peers. In addition, some of the behaviors associated with learned helplessness (Peterson & Bossio, 1989) may fit the circumstances of reentry students. However, there does not appear to be any research that considered the possibility of learned helplessness as a relevant aspect of delayed return to academia for reentry students. Therefore, the problem to be addressed in this study is whether or not the psychological construct of learned helplessness is

present to a greater degree in reentry students than in those who chose to pursue education by more traditional means.

Theoretical Basis for the Study

Sociological circumstances and personal relationships are obvious factors in educational delays, but it may be that the educational delays of reentry students are provoked by more than this. The archival resources of the Berkeley Guidance Study (a longitudinal study begun in 1928 with 200 children), were surveyed by Caspi and Elder (1988) for attributes and personality patterns manifested from childhood through the lifetime. They found that many qualities exhibited in childhood had an accumulative effect, so that by adulthood, such traits permeated all areas of that person's life. For instance, individuals, who were withdrawn as children, later became adults who delayed marriages, parenthood, and careers. Delayed career decisions not only led to career underachievement, particularly given stated aspirations and academic ability, but then contributed to less stable marriages as compared with "on-time" counterparts (Caspi & Elder, 1988). For some, delayed decision-making appeared to be a manifestation of a personality attribute, perhaps the attribution of learned helplessness. Miller, Rosellini, and Seligman (1977) concluded that a learned helplessness explanatory style interfered with normal, adult assertiveness, and that the consequences of a learned helplessness style would be evident in numerous, ordinary life areas. Caspi and Elder (1988) suggested that persons who made important life decisions later than their peers were less assertive, which might coincide with the passiveness (Peterson & Bossio, 1989) of a learned helplessness attributional style. A study such as that of Caspi and Elder (1988) lends impact to the statement by Peterson and Bossio (1989) that "the best way to demonstrate the applicability of learned helplessness is longitudinally, since

helplessness theory--in both its original and reformulated versions--is a theory of process" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 243).

Also significant to long-term research studies are beliefs about consistency. Peterson and Seligman are quoted as having said that "explanatory style, ... appears stable -- over months and even years" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 242, citing Peterson & Seligman, 1987). Seligman, et al., (1984), in testing the stability of explanatory style with 96 children, found that explanatory style remained stable in a six-month test-retest (up to .71), ($p < .001$); and was also stable in a similar test-retest situation with adults at five weeks (up to .70), ($p < .05$, $N = 100$). Using data from the Berkeley-Oakland Growth Study for an ongoing study of their own, Seligman, Kamen, and Nolen-Hoeksema (1988) demonstrated that explanatory style, especially for negative events, appeared relatively stable for as long as 27 years. Fincham, Diener, and Hokoda (1987) used the responsibility scale of the Intellectual Achievement Ratings to test for learned helplessness among 61 children. Retested after six months, attenuated correlations were $r = .85$ for negative events, and $r = .81$ for positive events. Fincham, Hokoda, and Sanders (1989) tested 82 children in the third grade and again in the fifth, and found that self-reports and teacher-reports of helplessness were stable over a two year period.

Questions, Predictions, and Hypotheses

Questions guiding this study included: (1) Are reentry students more likely than traditional students to have the attributional style of learned helplessness?; (2) Is gender a factor in student expressions of learned helplessness?, and (3), will the factors of gender and student status interact when learned helplessness is assessed? Based on the possibility that the delayed decision to return to school is the result of a passiveness that could be part of a learned helplessness attributional style, this researcher would predict that reentry students would be more inclined towards

learned helplessness than traditional students. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the literature review, researchers Boggiano and Barrett (1991) and Dweck and Gilliard (1975) have found gender differences in the expression of learned helplessness. Consequently, this researcher was inclined to predict that gender differences regarding the expression of learned helplessness would occur in this present research as well. These predictions were then posed as the following null hypotheses:

H_o1. It was predicted that there would be no significant difference in the expression of learned helplessness between reentry students and traditional students, as assessed by their scores on the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

H_o2. It was predicted that there would be no significant difference by gender regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

H_o3. It was also predicted that there would be no interaction between the factors of gender and student status (reentry versus traditional) regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

Definitions

The following definitions were used in this study.

Attribution: Attribution is about "how causes are attributed to different events" (Gilbert, 1992, p. 370); or said another way, about perceptions "regarding our own and others' behavior" (Shields, 1993, p. 1322). The significance of attribution is that perceived causes affect subsequent responses and activities (Kamen & Seligman, 1989). Attribution differs from self-efficacy, which is about personal perception of abilities rather than causes (Monte, 1980).

Attributional style: When attributions show consistency or tendencies across situations, researchers speak of an attributional style (Peterson, et al., 1982; Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & von Baeyer, 1984). In contrast to attributions for isolated events, attributional style has more lasting consequences.

Attributional Style Questionnaire: The Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) is a self-report assessment that seeks to verify patterns of attribution for positive and negative events (Peterson, et al., 1982; Tennen & Herzberger, 1985) by assessing internality, stability, and globality. Internality implies that the individual believed that the cause for a given event was within the self; stability suggests that the individual believes that the cause will happen again, and a cause that will reoccur in other areas of living has a global quality (Trotter, 1987). While the ASQ has occasionally been used for assessing more positive outcomes, primary use has been in the assessment of depression and learned helplessness.

Learned helplessness: The attributional style of learned helplessness consists of self-statements about causes that are primarily internal ("I am..."), stable ("always"), and global ("in every situation") (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Burns & Seligman, 1991; Fincham & Cain, 1986; Gilbert, 1992; Peterson & Bossio, 1989). Although poor personal performance may prompt poor self-efficacy (Monte, 1980), in learned helplessness, the individual learns that personal responses, skilled or otherwise, are noncontingent to outcomes, making outcomes beyond personal control (Fincham & Cain, 1986). In poor self-efficacy, the self-perception is that abilities are lacking; in learned helplessness, the belief is that responses are ineffective.

Reentry student: In this research, the definition of reentry student was the same as that used by Weil (1986): a student who is 25 years of age or older and who,

since high school, has had a break of formal participation in academia of five or more years.

Traditional student: In this study, a traditional student is one who entered college less than five years after graduating from high school, and for whom time lapses in academic enrollment, if existing at all, were less than five years at any one time. Cumulative lapses in enrollment were not calculated.

The Pilot Study

A pilot study comparing 32 reentry and 32 traditional students regarding the attribution of learned helplessness was conducted by this researcher in the spring of 1995. The attribution of learned helplessness was assessed using the ASQ. Mean values were derived separately for positive and for negative items on the ASQ. Learned helplessness was assessed according to the mean value of the combined negative items. All 64 participants were students in various classes in one department of a southeastern land grant university; all participants were voluntary. Gender and student status were assessed with a two-way ANOVA, with mean scores on the ASQ. With an alpha level of .05, the interaction of gender and student status was statistically significant for the combined positive outcome, $F(1, 60) = 6.978$, $p < .01$; and for the combined negative outcome, $F(1, 60) = 6.829$, $p < .01$. The mean score of reentry males was consistently higher than the mean score of reentry females–in contrast to the mean score of traditional females being consistently higher than the mean score of traditional males. Therefore, it is suggested from the findings that further exploration of those interactions was hampered by the small number of male participants in the pilot study sample. To continue and to improve this research, it was determined that a larger and more diverse sample would allow a full exploration of results and possibly yield more conclusive data.

Significance of the Study

Although learned helplessness has been investigated in numerous population groups, no indications were found that it had been investigated with reentry students. Thus, one significance to this study is the use of the Attributional Style Questionnaire with a previously unassessed population group.

The primary value in this research, however, is in the consideration that reentry students as a collective group may have tendencies towards a particular attributional style that is not helpful for them. If this is so, then the information this research provides could be used to increase the well-being of reentry students by indicating significant aspects of the reentry students themselves, and their reentry experience, that would be pertinent to academic guidance and related personal counseling.

Limitations

All of the research for this study was conducted primarily within three units/departments (education, social work, and liberal arts) of a land grant university in the southeast. Other departments, other schools, and even other locales, may have offered different results.

In addition, data for this research were collected at two different points in time. The bulk of the first data collection took place spring of 1996, while the second set of data was collected in the winter of 1998. The possibility exists that historical interference could have occurred. However, since learned helplessness appears to be a fairly stable, long-term attribution, it is highly unlikely that historical interference would have affected the responses of the participants.

There are a few limitations regarding the Attributional Style Questionnaire itself. For instance, situations used in the ASQ could not possibly have equal value for all participants. A scene describing a date quite likely did not have the same relevance

to married students as perhaps to single students (Tennen & Herzberger, 1985). Norman and Antaki (1988) alleviated that problem by asking their attribution study participants to cite events that had actually happened to them, while Gabbard, Howard, and Tageson (1986) successfully adapted their assessment for a specific population. While modifications in the ASQ would surely have proved interesting, the present research was conducted with the reformulated version of the ASQ, the version most commonly used.

There is an additional limitation and caution about generalizing any findings from this present study. This study was original research. Consequently, results from the study should not be generalized beyond the present study sample without additional replications.

In summary, the need for this study, the problem statement, the research question and hypothesis, and the limitations of the study provide an introduction for this study on learned helplessness and reentry students. The literature review in Chapter II will provide further context for the research which was conducted.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Because the dissertation research questions encompass two separate areas, namely reentry students and learned helplessness, this literature review consists of two separate sections. Literature regarding reentry students is considered in the first section; the learned helplessness attributional style is reviewed in the second.

Current literature about reentry students, aside from statistical data about their increase in numbers, is primarily qualitative in nature. Thus, the literature review about reentry students focuses mainly on reasons why reentry students chose to come back to school, and some of the problems they encountered once they took that step.

The second part of the literature review considers learned helplessness. Although this topic has been related to students in general, it has not been related specifically to reentry students. Consequently, much of this literature review, then, is historical and social in nature--from the experiments by Seligman and Maier in the mid-60's, to the recognition of learned helplessness as an attributional style.

Reentry Students

This section begins with definitions and numerical data about reentry students. This is followed by a review of the personal and sociological issues of reentry students, gender issues, and on-campus and off-campus problems of reentry students. The review concludes with additional comments linking the attributional style of learned helplessness with reentry students.

Definition of Reentry Students

Studies about reentry students (also known as nontraditional students) have used anywhere from a two to a ten year lapse in individual educational enrollment to

qualify and quantify who is a reentry student and who is not (St. Pierre, 1989). Weil (1986) defined nontraditional college students as being age 25 or older, with a break in formal education of at least five years. Kasworm and Blowers (1994), in their extensive study, chose to focus on students who were 30 years of age or older. Mahrle (1992/1993) classified as reentry students those who reentered formal education after a lapse of five or more years, with reentry at age 28 or older; her literature review revealed an age range in reentry students from 25 to 80 years of age. Counted inconsistently have been adults in "leisure learning" classes, especially those who simultaneously take "serious" classes towards a degree (Wilcoxon, Wilcoxon, & Tingle, 1989). Women have become an especially significant part of all college enrollment, particularly among returning adult female students who have been away from all schooling for several years (St. Pierre, 1989).

Increased Enrollment of Reentry Students

Adults past traditional college age have been descending on higher education in periodic waves "since the colonial days" (Kasworm, 1993, p 164) or at least pre-Civil War (Allmendinger, 1975; Burke, 1982; cited by Kasworm & Blowers, 1994). Additional wave-like activity occurred in the late-18/early 1900's with the establishment of Land-Grant schools, with many of those new schools potentially reaching adults of all ages (Dyer, 1956, Eckelberry, 1932, Portman, 1978, Reber 1915, Shannon & Schoenfeld, 1965, cited by Kasworm & Blowers, 1994). "Between World War I and II, ... key additions targeted adult undergraduates through women's programs, teachers' institutes, summer schools, labor education courses, and industrial/vocational training for adults" (Kasworm & Blowers 1994, p. 4). And, what past impact can possibly surpass that of the "GI Bill", which, following World War II and the Korean War, enabled thousands of older adults to return to the classroom (Kasworm & Blowers, 1994).

Still, none can likely match the endurance of the current reentry phenomenon which began snowballing in the 1960's and has continued doing so into the present. By 1977, 38% of all students in higher education were over age 25, and by 1987, 45% (Nance, 1991). In 1980, approximately 2.7 million higher education students were 30 or older; by 1990, 4 million (Ruggles, 1991). "In 1991, one in six bachelor's degree recipients was 30 years old or older" (p. 1), and of those, 60 percent were women (Henderson, 1994). These trends are validated in other, smaller reports, such as the number of over-age-35 students in Louisiana public colleges doubling in a decade (Dyer, 1991), or a Connecticut report stating that, between 1987 and 1993, the number of over-age-25 students had increased by almost 12 percent, making up "26 percent of the state's college undergraduates in 1992" (Margolis, p. 119:A11, 1993). Killackey, (1993) reported on the increases of the average age of higher education students in Oklahoma, and Smith (1993) stated that 16 percent of the students at the University of Maryland in College Park, and nearly 50 percent of the students in a nearby community college, were age 25 or older. Benshoff and Lewis (1992, p. 1 citing Brazziel, 1989, p. 116) concluded that older students were "the fastest-growing segment of all the population groups in higher education" and that perhaps as many as "50% of all graduate students (were) over 30 years of age" (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992, p. 1, citing Aslunian & Brickell, 1980).

In 1970, total college fall enrollment in all universities, four-year, and two-year colleges in America, was 8,581,000. About 68% of all enrollees were full-time, and about 7% of all students were full-time and age 25 and older; 32% of the total were part-time students, about 20% of all students were part-time and age 25 and older. Women comprised only 41% of the total enrollment of all college students in 1970, and women 25 years of age and older comprised only 10% of all college

enrollment at that time (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

In 1987, total higher education fall enrollment was 12,767,000. Statistics showed a reversal from the male majority of the 70's, in that, of the total 1987 enrollment, 54% were women, with 23% of all enrollment belonging to women 25 years of age and older. Men comprised about 46% of total college enrollment, and men age 25 and older, 17% of all college enrollment (Center for Education Statistics, 1991).

College enrollment has continued to grow. By 1995, total college fall enrollment was about 14,262,000. Of that number, 44% were men, almost 18% were men age 25 and older. Women comprised 55% of the 1995 total fall enrollment, and of that, nearly 25% were women age 25 and older. In other words, over 42% of all college fall enrollment in 1995 consisted of persons who were 25 years of age and older. Approximately 12,232,000 undergraduates were enrolled in the fall in 1995, 44% were men and 56% were women, and 36% were age 25 or older. Approximately 2,030,000 students were in graduate programs in 1995, 46% were men and 54% were women, and nearly 79% were age 25 or older (Barbett & Korb, 1997).

Some researchers have suggested that the presence of students who are beyond the age of most traditional students is only a phenomena of two-year institutions, but the statistics indicate that 54% of the students in the age 25 and older category attended a four-year college in 1987, and 56% in 1995 (Barbett & Korb, 1997).

Individual Reasons for Reentry Status

What accounts for the reentry student phenomenon, and what reasons are reentry students themselves offering about their educational pursuits? Despite their openly high value of "learning for its own sake" (Shields, 1993, p. 1326), in studies where reentry students were questioned privately, many attributed some aspect of

their personal life as having directed their academic decisions (Mohney & Anderson, 1988). Delayed postsecondary education often coincided with important life transitions (Garland, 1985), such as grown children (Mahrle, 1992/1993; Shields, 1993), new head of household (Mahrle, 1992/1993), and/or family crises (i.e., separation, divorce, death) (Hildreth, Dilworth-Anderson, & Rabe, 1983; Mahrle, 1992/1993; Shields, 1993; Witherspoon & Nickell, 1991). Changes in career or career goals (Dobie, 1992; Mahrle, 1992/1993; Richter-Antion, 1986; Shields, 1993, Witherspoon & Nickell, 1991), unemployment (Shields, 1993), improved financial standing (Witherspoon & Nickell, 1991), and prior lack of opportunity (Shields, 1993) were also frequent answers. Independence, and personal identity (Hildreth, et al., 1983), personal growth (Dobie, 1992; Mahrle, 1992/1993), subject interest (Dobie, 1992), and a desire to achieve were additional reasons, as was a strong belief in a "brighter future" (Witherspoon & Nickell, 1991, p. 9). Other reentry students indicated that they were renewing previously abandoned educational goals (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992), and many others, perhaps most, mentioned "multiple motives" (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992, p. 1, citing Clayton & Smith, 1987) for renewing their academic efforts. For the most part, reasons offered by reentry students have been intimate and of a relatively serious nature (Dobie, 1992).

Sociological Reasons for Increased Numbers of Reentry Students

Sociological reasons for increased enrollment include rising retirement age, and increased life expectancy (Mahrle, 1992/1993; St. Pierre, 1989), as well as an increase in the number of young people who are unable or unwilling to enter college directly after high school (Murphy & Achtziger, 1982). Many families now want and need two or more employed members--a condition that has particularly lured women to seek training towards better jobs (Witherspoon, 1991), and accounts in part for

the significant role female reentry students have played (Murphy & Achtziger, 1982; St. Pierre, 1989). Delayed marriages, along with fewer or no children (St. Pierre, 1989) have created the freedom some persons needed to return to school at a more convenient time, but even among couples who do want families, a current trend to establish the family first before the woman considers a serious career goal (Padula, 1994, citing Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987), may create yet another new wave of less traditional female students on many campuses sometime in the future.

Gender Comparison of Reentry Students

The stated academic interests of both men and women reentry students tended to be similar (Witherspoon, 1991), with "management, accounting, and finance" (Jenkins & Witherspoon, unpublished, cited by Witherspoon, 1991, p. 10) typically followed by science, liberal arts, education, and nursing. Although both sexes listed personal enrichment, advancement opportunity, career training, and dissatisfaction with current jobs as reasons for returning to school (St. Pierre, 1989), enrollment by male reentry students was more likely to be publicly viewed as a step towards quality care for their families (Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986) or an upward career move (Bauer & Mott, 1990), while female reentry students were typically seen as making role changes (Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986) or possibly making a lateral move within the same career (Bauer & Mott, 1990). However, it may be that both genders have been plagued with "fears and self-doubt" (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992, p. 2, citing Muench, 1987), with only slight variations between the genders. Benshoff and Lewis (1992, citing Muench, 1987; Terrell, 1990) noted that men were more troubled by low self-confidence, while women appeared to have more issues related to guilt. Nevertheless, Witherspoon (1991) found that when reentry males were asked about their major concerns, they typically spoke of such problems

as the transfer of previously earned credits, not of personal relationships or role conflicts.

Mohney and Anderson (1988) speculated that reentry women made decisions about careers and schooling on different values than men. Their video-taped study of reentry female students showed many of the women self-confidently describing potential degrees as personal validation (Mohney & Anderson, 1988); a similar result occurred in Hildreth, et al.'s 1983 study.

Students Age 55 and Older

As "persons with higher levels of education (tend) to continue learning throughout their lives" (Peterson, 1986, p. 39), "the most reliable and best predictor of an adult's likelihood of being a continuing learner is his or her prior level of educational attainment" (Richter-Antion, 1986, p. 59). It should not be too surprising, then, that a recently noticed group on many campuses have been students age 55 and older (Peterson, 1986). It might be assumed that the return to campus by older students has been motivated by relationship needs; however, a study by Kingston (1982, cited by Peterson, 1986) indicated that older students also had specific interests and intellectual needs they were satisfying with academic involvement. Additionally, many students in this age bracket were still in the labor force and reported that their return to academia was motivated strictly by career needs (Peterson, 1986).

Growing enrollment by older students has occurred virtually everywhere (Peterson, 1986). As reported by Kasworm (1993), 65% of Sweden's undergraduates are defined as older, followed percentagewise by China, then Finland, Norway, and the USA. Other countries with similar occurrences include Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and Israel.

On-campus Problems of Reentry Students

Reentry students have sometimes been differentiated from their more traditional peers by the nature of their complaints (Nance, 1991), with reentry students more likely to be troubled about campus policies (e.g., parking areas) (Witherspoon, 1991), the inner-workings of academic institutions, getting information later than their live-on-campus peers, and enrolling in the right courses (Cocklin, 1990, Terrell, 1990). Trager's (1989) study of 193 nontraditional students confirmed the perceived needs for financial assistance, and specifically for female reentry students, needs regarding parking and safety (also mentioned by Mohney & Anderson, 1988). Similarly, both Garland's (1985) and Hildreth, et al.'s (1982) studies also reported needs regarding support services and program flexibility, and the isolating aspects of the reentry experience have also been noted by Richter-Antion (1986) and Kasworm and Pike (1994).

Although many colleges and universities have created programs and services for reentry students, most reentry students find that they are still participating in programs geared more for their more traditional peers (Kasworm & Pike, 1994). Several students in Cocklin's (1990) study complained about being treated as a 'kid' by their university, citing examples of mandatory attendance at entry-student seminars that were not age or status appropriate for them. Kasworm and Blowers (1994) found that many institutions still offered educational experiences purposefully constructed for younger adults, without due consideration of a substantial presence of reentry, or older, students. McWhinney (1990) suggested that older students (those most likely to be reentry students) would be more "self-reflexive...ecological...(and) intuitive" (p. 17) in their thought processes, while traditional students were more likely to be "efficient...rational...(and) interactive" (p. 16) in their student roles, and that institutions wishing to better serve their

reentry students might keep those characteristics in mind. However, teachers surveyed by Swift and Heinrichs (1987) found that reentry students in classes specifically designed for them were "self-directed" and "ready contributors" (p. 36), and Confessore (1993) also found that reentry students were far more talkative and interactive in the classroom than the McWhinney (1990) description would suggest, although it might be added that Confessore's study focused only on small classes.

Faculty-student interaction has been an important part of academic satisfaction for many reentry students (Farrell & Mudrack, 1992; Kasworm & Pike, 1994), and many reentry students have been very pleased with this aspect of their academic experience. Richter-Antion (1986) and Swift and Heinrichs (1987), as well as others, have found that reentry students often bring a wealth of life experiences into the classroom with them, an aspect that sometimes serves them well and at other times seems not to. Richter-Antion (1986) described reentry students as students with a tremendous drive to succeed. In her words, they attend college "with a vengeance" (p. 59). She also found reentry students to be very purposeful about their reasons for being in college, and that they were very conscious of how much money (usually their own) they had spent to be there--and that they planned to get their money's worth.

According to Kasworm and Blowers (1994), "new entry students, reentry students with a significant break in enrollment, and some adult transfer students" (p. 30) were among the students most likely to depend on external sources, such as comments and grades on papers and self-comparison with other students, for assessing classroom achievement. In their study, reentry students with previous college experience were the ones most inclined to feel reasonably self-assured about potential achievement, but then were also the ones who would be most concerned about

acceptance by their younger student cohorts (Kasworm & Blowers, 1994). Dobie (1992) found that although most reentry students were degree oriented, they were not carrying maximum classloads, and she speculated that, over time, continuous financial strain and numerous personal responsibilities would erode the original enthusiasm for degree completion.

Dobie (1992) noted that the very beginning was often the hardest time for reentry students. With academic records typically less glamourous than those of their traditional peers (Kasworm & Pike, 1994), reentry students often felt inadequate. However, Kasworm and Pike (1994, citing DeCrow, 1959, Halfter, 1962, and Ryan, 1972) found that, once acclimated, academic competence thereafter was seldom a problem for reentry students. These citings add confirmation to journal articles such as the one by Dowling, Leptak, and Mennel (1989) which described the emotions and thoughts of one reentry student's quest to become a lawyer. Nance (1991) also speculated that an intense will to succeed in school was a sufficient force to motivate reentry students to goal completion.

Letizia and Hilbert (1991), in their study of integrating traditional and reentry students, found that teachers frequently rated their own classrooms more highly than the students did, and that reentry students generally found the classroom setting to be less supportive than their traditional peers found it to be. Dobie's (1992) survey of professors indicated that the professors' views of nontraditional students was somewhat less positive than the portrayal the students gave themselves, also suggesting that student-faculty relationships were not always glowing. In Mahrle's (1992/1993) qualitative study of five reentry students, each complained of a lack of appropriate emotional support from faculty. Not an inconsequential complaint, Trager (1989) found that students who believed that their campus-

support needs had been sufficiently and consistently met were more likely to graduate than those who did not perceive such support.

Some of the students in Cocklin's 1990 study also complained of relationship difficulties with teachers, difficulties they perceived as age-related, thus adding impact to Mahrle's (1992/1993) study in which all of the participants said that age discrimination, however subtle, was a common problem. Kasworm (1993) noted that the term "nontraditional" typically referred to "outsiders" (p. 162), or to "those who do not fit ... expectations" (p. 162), perhaps implying lesser value to the academic community. Many reentry students have felt stereotyped as not serious, not goal-oriented, and as too old to make appropriate use of expensive education. Kasworm and Blowers (1994) found that many reentry students had already bought into the notion that going to college was supposed to occur in young adulthood, and were thus especially self-conscious about sharing a classroom with younger cohorts. Fiske (1993) reported that stereotyped people usually found it is easier to stay within expected boundaries, which may explain why some older reentry students continue to sacrifice important academic involvement, perhaps as a way to remain anonymous within a larger, unnoticed, but growing, minority. Richter-Antion (1986) also reported that the vast age range of reentry students--"23 to 75 or more years" (p. 61) and suggested that with such an age range, it was unlikely that reentry students would form a supportive age cohort in the same way that more traditional students would. Citing the work of Neugarten (1968), Richter-Antion (1986) said that even when reentry students have good experiences on campus, their own inner, social clocks will tell them that they do not belong on a college campus at this point of their life cycle, and that this factor alone will be very stressful for most reentry students. And, despite their desire to fit in, reentry students prioritized campuswide activities

as less important than did traditional students (Kasworm & Pike, 1994, citing Bean & Metzner, 1985 and Metzner 1986).

Off-campus Problems of Reentry Students

Both male and female reentry students ranked financial concerns as a major problem, although male reentry students tended to be more concerned about lost income (Bauer & Mott, 1990), while female reentry students were simply overwhelmed with the extent of their financial issues (Bauer & Mott, 1990; Mohney & Anderson, 1988; Trager, 1989; Witherspoon, 1991). Cocklin (1990) found that the high prevalence of financial difficulties for reentry students virtually mandated that most also work full-time--which then added to their burdens of time constraints and relationship problems.

In an unpublished study by Jenkins and Witherspoon (cited by Witherspoon, 1991), women listed financial matters as their number one concern, but "family matters" were close behind (Witherspoon, 1991, p. 10). Benshoff and Lewis (1992) also found that "financial and family concerns (were) two of the biggest considerations" (p. 1) for reentry students, with "both (sexes experiencing) ...difficulties juggling the roles of student, worker, and family member" (Muench, 1987, p. 10, cited by Benshoff & Lewis, 1992, p. 1). Reentry students are far more likely than traditional students to be married (Kasworm & Pike, 1994), a status that sometimes helps and sometimes creates conflicts (Richter-Antion, 1986). Men, in general, complained of insufficient time for competing demands; for women, childcare and the overwhelming number of responsibilities were primary areas of frustration (Bauer & Mott, 1990; Terrell, 1990) along with an absolute lack of any personal time (Terrell, 1990).

Terrell (1990, citing Astin & Kent, 1983) found that women reentry students frequently expressed guilt for not fulfilling their ideals as mothers and/or other

family roles, and having to make unwanted compromises. When Mohney and Anderson (1988) asked 38 female, reentry, evening school students why they either had not completed college before, or not attended previously, the answer of conflicting role demands surfaced repeatedly. Multiple roles off-campus consumed precious time as the activities of parent, spouse, and worker became more complicated upon reentry into academia (Hildreth, et al., 1983; Richter-Antion, 1986; Wilcoxon, et al., 1989). The reentry students in Cocklin's study (1990) repeatedly complained about not having enough time to care for children, difficulties completing ordinary tasks, and always feeling tired.

Intimate relationships were problematic for reentry students when neither family, off-campus friends, nor student peers, were empathic about the reentry experience (Hildreth, et al., 1983; Richter-Antion, 1986; Terrell, 1990; Trager, 1989). This occasional lack of support suggests that role difficulties would be even worse if formerly, personally supportive people and support systems abruptly withdrew. This, of course, sometimes happened. While some reentry students have been able to report emotionally supportive spouses and families, almost as many have reported the opposite (Wilcoxon, et al., 1989). Subjects in Mahrle's (1992/1993) study also reported relationship difficulties due to conflicts about academic obligations.

Terrell (1990, citing Astin & Kent, 1983) found that college leadership experiences were very helpful in the improvement of self-esteem for women. However, Hooper (1979, cited by Benshoff & Lewis, 1992) found that, among married reentry women, although increased self-esteem was positively correlated with increased success and length of time in school, these positive effects were offset by the negative effect of spousal anxiety which also increased with length of time. Hooper (1979, cited by Benshoff & Lewis, 1992) also noted that nontraditional

women students with traditional family roles were more likely to experience guilt about their return to academia.

Summary: Reentry Students

Definitions and numerical data about reentry students were provided in this section. In addition, the more personal aspects of the reentry experience were also explored. It was noted that there were a variety of reasons why a nontraditional student might reenter academia, with the implication that such a move was purposeful. It was also noted that reentry into academia often complicated the already busy lives of many reentry students. Some of the shared experiences of reentry students, both on campus and off, were also discussed.

The literature review continues with an overview of learned helplessness.

Learned Helplessness Attributional Style

Learned helplessness thoughts and behaviors reflect a private belief that personal efforts have little or nothing to do with outcomes. When cause and effect lack meaning, emotional and behavioral deficits typically result (Fincham & Cain, 1986). The following section relates a brief history of how learned helplessness was "discovered" in animal experiments, how it evolved into an attributional construct, and how it has been observed and researched in various settings and populations. A brief section on learned helplessness in children is included because children have been primary candidates for research of this attribution, and because, once acquired, the attribution would conceivably last into adulthood. Another brief section deals with learned helplessness in various populations and is included to help justify the consideration of the attribution in the present study population.

Relevant History of Learned Helplessness

The recorded history of learned helplessness began with a Pavlovian learning experiment conducted by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania (Overmier &

Seligman, 1967). This experiment involved the placing of a dog in a shuttle box in which intermittent shocks were delivered. Generally when this experiment was performed on a dog for the first time, the dog jumped about until it accidentally crossed a barrier, and thus escaped any further shocks. With repeated experiments, most experimental dogs learned to escape promptly, with many so quick as to never experience any shock at all (Overmier & Seligman, 1967; Trotter, 1987).

Seligman and Maier (1967) expanded the experiment by first placing the experimental dog in a harness that completely prevented jumping--and escape. Typically, the experimental dog whimpered during the shocks, but otherwise, passively endured (Miller, et al., 1977). Sometime within the next twenty-four hours, when the experiment was repeated with the same dog, but without the harness--and with escape readily available, the previously shocked dog did not automatically learn the available escape trick (Miller, et al., 1977; Peterson & Bossio, 1989). In fact, the experimental dog "rarely initiated any escape attempts at all" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 236). Even when the dog was given several opportunities to learn the trick without the harness, it did not. If somehow during the experiment, the dog accidentally jumped the barrier, it would not necessarily jump the barrier at the next trial. It appeared that the dog had learned to be helpless (Miller, et al., 1977; Peterson & Bossio, 1989).

Seligman and Maier then repeated their experiments of escapable and inescapable shock with 150 dogs. Of the animals that received inescapable shock first, approximately 33% did eventually learn the escape trick, but nearly 66% never learned to escape. Of the dogs that received escapable, *but never inescapable*, shock, 94% very quickly learned to jump the barrier (Miller, et al., 1977).

Other researchers also became interested in animal research about learned helplessness research. Some of the findings included observations that learned

helplessness in laboratory rats affected passiveness, learning ability, and the overall health of the animals (e.g., Miller, et al., 1977; Peterson & Bossio, 1989).

Linking Learned Helplessness to Depression

Seligman at first characterized the whimpering and crouched-in-corners behaviors of the dogs that received inescapable shock, as depression, and proposed that the "learned helplessness" behaviors exhibited by experimental animals was comparable to human depression (Trotter, 1987). Klein and Seligman (1976) then induced helplessness in people by using an uncontrollable noise experiment, in which a nondepressed group, after being bombarded with noise, then tested as having the same deficits as a comparable depressed group. Fincham, et al., (1987) confirmed a positive correlation between the learned helplessness scores and depression scores of 73 fifth graders; and Ward, Friedlander, and Silverman (1987) demonstrated that depressed students performed noticeably worse on a solvable task.

However, despite these and other studies, learned helplessness and depression did not prove to be one in the same. For example, in the study by Eaves and Rush (1984), the internal, stable, and global attributional styles of depressed women remained the same, even after depressed moods had been alleviated. Considerable overlap between learned helplessness and depression seemed obvious, as depressives routinely reported causal beliefs differently than nondepressives (Peterson, et al., 1982), and a pessimistic explanatory style apparently contributed to depression (Burns & Seligman, 1991). Still, learned helplessness could not be said to be precisely the same as being depressed, or not depressed (Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & von Baeyer, 1979).

The Reformulated Model of Learned Helplessness

At first, the generalizations and associations that people made regarding learned helplessness appeared to be completely external; that is, about events outside

the self, and they seemed to be primarily about negative expectations (Gilbert, 1992). But, what researchers soon found was that, for people, a poor performance brought "some sort of cognitive interference" (Miller & Seligman, 1975, p. 236), which had not been observed in the experimental animals (Fincham & Cain, 1986).

This observation led to a reformulation of the learned helplessness model by Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale (1978) to include personal, causal explanations about positive and negative events (Burns & Seligman, 1991). "Where the original helplessness theory assumed that the route from uncontrollable events to an expectation of helplessness was simple and automatic, the reformulated theory proposed that other factors intervened..." (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 237).

Researchers believed that learned helplessness probably came about through experiences in which personal responses were truly ineffective and occurred with sufficient frequency and/or potency to produce emotional and behavioral deficits (Fincham & Cain, 1986; Seligman, et al., 1984). Peterson and Bossio (1989) stated three major criteria for learned helplessness: "history of bad events, cognition, and passivity" (p. 247).

The helplessness brought about by the expectation of noncontingency between cause and effect created the "deficits in motivation, learning, and emotion that comprise the helplessness phenomenon" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 236). However, according to Peterson and Bossio (1989), people do not adopt learned helplessness "because they are reinforced for dependency, inactivity, and so on. This is not what learned helplessness means. It is not that the person learns a particular behavior but rather an expectation; the person learns that responses and outcomes will be independent in the future. It is the expectation that produces helplessness" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 240).

Explanation of Attributional Style

Researchers found that people tended to offer themselves explanations (consciously or unconsciously) about the causes of their personal situations (Tennen & Herzberger, 1985). Their explanatory answers then affected "subsequent reaction" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 237).

In the reformulated theory, researchers Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale "stressed three dimensions of attributions: internal-external, stable-unstable, and global-specific" (Gilbert, 1992, p. 371). If the causal question was: Is the cause of this event something that will happen again? (Trotter, 1987), then the question was about stability. Stable causes tended to produce "deficits (that were) long lasting" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 237). If the causal question was: Is this cause a result of some sort of personal characteristic that will surface in other areas? (Trotter, 1987), then the question was about globality. "...An explanation in terms of global factors ("it's the human condition"), (produced) helplessness (that was) pervasive" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 237). If the causal question was: Is the cause for this event inside the self, or outside the self? (Trotter, 1987), then the question was about internality. The internalization of a negative quality led to lowered self-esteem (Fincham & Cain, 1986; Peterson & Bossio, 1989; Seligman, et al., 1984). Beck's theory of depression emphasized responsibility, and Rotter's theory of locus of control emphasized beliefs about self (internal) and other (external) (Gilbert, 1992). Rather than personal responsibility, learned helplessness emphasizes noncontingency of cause and effect. And, while internality is a very important aspect of learned helplessness, Gilbert (1992) stressed that it was the "the stable-unstable dimension" (p. 370) that produced beliefs and actions. The reformulated model of learned helplessness suggested that if personal responsibility for a negative event was an ongoing, stable explanation (as in "always"), chronic depression and prolonged

learned helplessness were likely (Hurley & Meminger, 1987). When an event occurred then, whether positive or negative, the three factors of globality, stability, and internality personalized the meaning of that event for that individual (Seligman, et al., 1979).

Following the reformulation of the learned helplessness model, researchers Semmel, Abramson, Seligman, and von Baeyer (1978, cited in Seligman, et al., 1984) made it their goal to find a way to measure the components of the new model, and they especially wanted to avoid the assessment of one situation/one attribute, as they felt that would lead to an inaccurate portrayal of the model. The final result, The Attributional Style Questionnaire, was created by Peterson, Semmel, von Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky, and Seligman (1982). This paper and pencil assessment allowed individuals to respond to a variety of hypothetical events with Likert-type flexibility. Key components of the theory, globality, stability, and internality, were each assessed equally in positive and in negative situations (McCormick, Taber & Kruedelbach, 1989; Peterson, et al., 1982).

One early study of learned helplessness was Seligman, et al's. (1979) study of 143 undergraduate students at the University of Pennsylvania. Researchers found that "depressed students attributed bad outcomes to internal, stable, and global factors... (and) good outcomes to unstable, external factors" (p. 246). The stable causes were described as those that reoccurred, while unstable causes only occurred by chance. The global causes within the theory were those that generalized across multiple situations, as opposed to a specific cause that applied to only a limited number of events (Peterson & Bossio, 1989). The internal causes implicated a personally perceived quality or attribute (Fincham & Cain, 1986; Peterson & Bossio, 1989; Seligman, et al., 1984), as opposed to an outside force.

Acquisition of Learned Helplessness

In the inescapable shock experiments with dogs, Overmier and Seligman (1967) found that experimental dogs could recover within 24 hours if they had received only one shock. But after repeated inescapable shocks, the dogs became consistently helpless and did not recover (Miller, et al., 1977). But people seemed even more likely to generalize their repeated 'failed responses' to multiple areas. One acquisition theorist suggested that the type of feedback individuals received over time, as in negative feedback that was internal (just like you), global (everything you do), and non-specific (you always do this) (Trotter, 1987), produced learned helplessness. Or, perhaps a learned helplessness attributional style was acquired much like other facets of living; namely, by watching others, and modeling. Another theory suggested that what a specific, significant other said was incorporated as truth, whether such statements were actually true or not (Fincham & Cain, 1986; Trotter, 1987); and still another hypothesis, obtained from Seligman and his students, Joan Girgus and Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, during an interview with Trotter (1987), speculated that the timing of a particularly serious, negative event might be very influential towards learned helplessness.

Peterson and Bossio (1989) suggested that the three criteria of learned helplessness would be manifested if the individual was first exposed to a helpless experience, then had opportunity and/or reason to suggest particular helpless thoughts to himself or herself which were then generalized to other situations. These researchers went on to suggest that learned helplessness would then create a passivity that could be easily recognized when a time came in which mental or physical activity would produce a solution, but the person failed to act.

Learned Helplessness as an Attributional Style in Children

Learned helplessness is rare in children younger than eight years of age. Seligman, et al., (1988) proposed that children younger than that age lacked global concepts; Fincham and Cain (1986) suggested that very young children do not comprehend stability in causes. But once acquired, learned helplessness can be unfortunately pervasive. In a study of third, fourth, and fifth graders, Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, and Seligman (1986) found that the children with the most maladaptive explanatory style were also typically low in achievement test scores. Miller, et al., (1977) suggested that academic concepts that required an understanding of cause and effect would be particularly difficult for learned helplessness victims to comprehend, because such individuals do not associate response with reinforcement. Fincham and Cain (1986) found that, once children believed they would not ever succeed, overall performances continued in a downward spiral, with many such children believing that, despite their efforts, results would be bad and beyond personal control (Fincham, et al., 1987). Learned helplessness has not been shown to be a function of ability, nor of IQ (Fincham & Cain, 1986, citing Licht & Dweck, 1984), as individuals with comparable abilities and/or comparable IQ's have varied considerably in personal performance. One of the ways learned helplessness may affect otherwise highly functioning individuals, is through a sense of being overwhelmed, thus making it very unlikely that the individual will perform at an optimum level (Seligman, et al., 1988).

Gender Differences in Learned Helplessness

Noting that learned helplessness seemed to occur more frequently in girls than in boys, Dweck and Gilliard (1975) observed that negative feedback to boys was often about behavior, whereas negative feedback to girls was typically about the lack of a specific, internal quality. These researchers concluded that feedback about behaviors

enabled boys to explain success and failure in terms of effort, but feedback about personal qualities did not permit girls to do the same (Dweck & Gilliard, 1975).

Boggiano and Barrett (1991) found that teachers were more likely to respond supportively to a child when the teachers saw what they expected to see. But the teachers also appeared to harbor many conscious and unconscious gender stereotypes, and responded with controlling measures when they saw the unexpected. They appeared to expect a mastery-orientation style from males and learned helplessness from females, and responded in ways that encouraged those gender-conforming behaviors (Boggiano & Barrett, 1991).

The Opposite of Learned Helplessness: Mastery-Oriented

Although uncontrollable events were part of learned helplessness, they have not been reliable, predictable precursors. Not only was it true that some people never developed learned helplessness, but some almost thrived on temporary failure (Diener & Dweck, 1980), and worked harder when the task at hand looked impossible (Fincham & Cain, 1986). Diener and Dweck (1980) used the term "mastery-oriented", and demonstrated that such children were more able than their "learned helplessness" counterparts to own successful outcomes and to use those successes to predict future successes. Seligman, et al., (1988) found that personal explanations about outcome were the best indicators of predictor responses, following failure, to future tasks. Children who exhibited learned helplessness sought ways to end or 'give up on' future tasks, but mastery-oriented children, even after failing a task, did not give up on the next task--even if the next task was impossibly difficult. Elliot and Dweck (1988) found that, in a task that had previously brought success but later brought only failure, "helpless" children performed worse in succeeding trials, but "mastery-oriented" children were consistently "solution-oriented", and performed as well as before their 'failures', and sometimes even better. These researchers

suggested that "helpless" and "mastery-oriented" children "pursu(ed) different goals in achievement situations" (p. 5). Children driven by performance goals were striving for positive evaluations while avoiding negative evaluations. Individuals seeking to improve rather than prove were not overly concerned with current ability and were nondefensive (Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

Attributional Style in Specific Populations

The learned helplessness attributional style has been explored in a variety of studies. Seligman suggested that stresses in disease involved personal interpretation, and that events provoking hopelessness and helplessness were most stressful (Seligman, et al., 1988); with self-produced stressors more stressful than those externally produced (Epstein & Katz, 1992). Peterson and Seligman (1987) found that a hopelessness attitude derived from stable and global attributions was a significant predictor of illness having occurred when assessed four weeks later ($N = 170$, $r. = .22$, $p < .05$). Subjects ($N = 146$) were assessed again after one year, and stable and global attributions combined remained a significant predictor of physician visits ($r. = .23$, $p < .05$). In another study, Seligman, Kamen, and Rodin compared blood samples with attributional style, and found that the healthiest subjects had the most positive attributional style (Trotter, 1987). Greer, Morris, and Pettingale's (1979) study of 69 women who had cancer surgery revealed that 75% of the women who had positive explanatory styles were alive and well at a five-year follow-up assessment, while only 35% of the women with a helpless attributional style had lived beyond their cancer experience. Another attributional study is that of German, Habenicht, and Futcher (1990) in which they correlated specific characteristics with attributional style among 40 adolescent incest victims. McCormick, Taber and Kruedelbach (1989) assessed 99 Vietnam War veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder who were also receiving inpatient treatment for either

alcohol dependence or pathological gambling. Having previously determined that several aspects of learned helplessness and post-traumatic stress disorder were held in common, these researchers found significant correlations between the ASQ scores of the patients and their scores on specific scales of the MMPI.

Dissenting Studies Regarding Learned Helplessness

In the study by Ward, et al., (1987), children who successfully completed a task attributed success to *both* internal and external factors. Most noteworthy regarding learned helplessness, however, was that children who failed in the task attributed failures only to *external* factors--in contrast with the internal criterion that is part of learned helplessness (e.g., Fincham & Cain, 1986; Gilbert, 1992; Peterson & Bossio, 1989; Trotter, 1987). Stoltz and Galassi (1989) commented that internal attributions that were characteriological, were different from those that were behavioral, which they believed made the measurement of internality versus externality on the ASQ too simplistic, and possibly invalid.

Hurley and Meminger (1987) compared the attributional styles of adolescents with their grade point averages and negative attribution scores. Contrary to expectations about low achievement (i.e., previously mentioned study by Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, & Seligman, 1986), these researchers found that, by adolescence, many of the young people with negative attributions had put tremendous efforts into higher academic achievement. These researchers speculated that the students had used high levels of early self-criticism as motivation for later academic competence.

Summary: Learned Helplessness Attributional Style

This section traced learned helplessness from a disguised beginning within depression into an attributional style. Learned helplessness was discussed regarding acquisition, meaning, gender differences; and as seen in children and in specific populations. The strongest relevance of learned helplessness in reference to reentry

students is that learned helplessness involves the personal denial of a goal that would be in one's own best interest. In addition, the effects of learned helplessness can be long-term, may go unrecognized either by the individual or outsider or both, and can affect almost any area of personal living. Because learned helplessness may be part of the delayed decision of reentry into academia, it is an important factor to explore and is the subject of this study. The methods, procedures, and study population are described in Chapter III.

Chapter III

Method

The statistical and data gathering procedures used for this study are presented in this chapter, along with the overall research design. Descriptions of the research instruments that were used in this study are also presented.

Participants

The study sample consisted of traditional (N = 111) and reentry (N = 66) students who were enrolled in either the colleges of liberal arts, education, or social work, at a southeastern, land grant university. The researcher approached, and received permission from, teachers who were interested in the project and willing to allow their entire classes to participate. Consequently, most of the study sample was derived by assessing entire classes in the categories mentioned, without prior identification of traditional or reentry status of the students in each class. Exceptions to this method of obtaining participants were those portions of the sample obtained by departmental mail and by public mail, although those students also met the college department criterion, and again, there was no prior knowledge on the part of the researcher of reentry or traditional student status. Additional details about the obtaining of participants may be found in the Procedures section.

The average composite traditional student in the study sample was a single Caucasian female, fulltime student working towards a masters degree while maintaining part time employment. The average composite reentry student in the study sample was a married Caucasian female, fulltime student working towards a bachelors degree while maintaining fulltime employment. The study sample is further described in the remarks section pertaining to the Demographic Questionnaire. Complete descriptive tables of the study sample may be found in Appendix A.

Research Design

A survey research design was used to gather data to test the following three hypotheses:

Hypotheses

H_o1. It was predicted that there would be no significant difference in the expression of learned helplessness between reentry students and traditional students, as assessed by their scores on the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

H_o2. It was predicted that there would be no significant difference by gender regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

H_o3. It was also predicted that there would be no interaction between the factors of gender and student status (reentry versus traditional) regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

Student status and gender were the independent or predictor variables. Learned helplessness, as assessed by the ASQ, served as the dependent, or criterion, variable.

Procedures

The instrument selected to measure the dependent variable, learned helplessness, was the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ). As indicated in the review of the literature, the ASQ was constructed as a measurement of this attribute. A copy of the ASQ is located in Appendix B. Pertinent details of the ASQ are discussed later in this chapter. Correspondence from Christopher Peterson, Ph.D., one of the authors of the ASQ, indicated that no further permission was needed in order to use the ASQ for research purposes. See Appendix C.

Prior to officially launching the study, the researcher also requested and received permission from the Committee on Research Participation to conduct the study. A copy of the original "Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects" may be found in Appendix D.

A Demographic Questionnaire was personally developed by the researcher and tested in a pilot study. The purpose of the Demographic Questionnaire was to acquire information that would describe the specific characteristics of study participants. Following the pilot study, the Demographic Questionnaire remained unchanged and was then used in the present study as well. A copy of the Demographic Questionnaire may be found in Appendix E.

The researcher also developed an informed consent document. See Appendix F. The informed consent, the Demographic Questionnaire, and the ASQ, were administered in a consistent order to study participants.

Obtaining Participants

All participants for the study were current students in the same, southeastern, land grant university. Participants in the study were obtained in four different ways. The methods that involved direct contact with classes took place with prior permission of the teacher in each class.

In the first method, the researcher distributed the two instruments and the consent forms to students in six classes during their class time (N = 98). Students in three of the classes were given class time to complete the questionnaires. In two of the classes, the questionnaires were returned the following day as requested by the professor. In one class, the students were told that the questionnaires would be administered directly after class, that class would dismiss early to accommodate participants, and that the researcher would remain in the room to accept the completed forms. About half of the students then chose to remain in the room to

complete the survey forms. When students had class time or could return the questionnaires the following day, response rate appeared to be 100%. Response rate dropped to 41% when students were told they could complete the questionnaires directly after class.

In the second method, two professors, on behalf of the researcher, distributed the instruments and the consent forms in one class each. Response rate was 100% (N = 16).

In the third method, the investigator, with oral permission, distributed the instruments and the consent forms to the mailbox of each graduate student (N = 29) in one department. This method yielded a relatively low response rate of 17.2% (N = 5).

In the fourth method, the investigator mailed the instruments and the consent forms to 263 undergraduate students, who were 25 years of age or older. The mailed packets also included an explanatory letter, a copy of which is found in Appendix G. The response rate was 30% (N = 79), but only 58, or 22%, of the total mailed surveys were usable, due to omissions in answers provided by the participants.

Students were told by the researcher that they would remain anonymous, voluntary participants, that the assessments would take about 20 minutes to complete, that they could decline without penalty, and that there were no remunerations from the researcher for participation. Other than the allotted time information, all of this information was also in the consent form.

Analysis of Data

Data were collected over a 25 month time frame from January 1996 to February 1998. Any omission on the ASQ was considered a nonusable form. The two questions most often omitted were about not helping a friend in need (questions 16 through 20), and a date gone bad (questions 51 through 55). The greatest number of

unusable forms occurred within the mailed responses, where a total of 21 responses had to be discarded due to omitted answers. The entire data collection resulted in 177 completed, usable assessments--111 traditional students and 66 reentry students.

Once all the data were collected, hypotheses one and two were tested with one-way ANOVAs. The third hypothesis was tested with a two-way ANOVA.

Following the testing of the original hypotheses, the investigator became curious about three subsets within the study sample: (a) undergraduates only, (b) those undergraduates whose education since high school had been continuous versus those who had experienced any lapse in education prior to their initial enrollment into college (rather than the predetermined five-year span necessary for a "reentry" definition), and (c) those participants who were 30 years and older versus those who were age 24 and younger. Throughout these additional analyses, the combined negative mean scores on the ASQ remained the dependent variable of comparison.

Items on the demographic questionnaire were analyzed by chi square analysis. Some of the items were then analyzed along with other items as independent variables and compared in three-way ANOVAs with the combined negative means of the ASQ as the dependent variable. The additional items were father's education, full and part time student status, and employment (full, part time, or none).

Statistical Procedures

As indicated in the previous section on general procedures, one way ANOVAs were used to test H_o1, regarding differences in the expression of learned helplessness between traditional and reentry students, and H_o2, regarding learned helplessness differences by gender. A two-way ANOVA was used to test H_o3 to see if there was an interaction between student status, gender, and learned helplessness as assessed by the ASQ.

In addition, the researcher became interested in knowing if any significant differences occurred if only the undergraduate students in the study were considered, and consequently used the same three hypotheses with only the undergraduate subset of students (N = 72). Following that analysis, the exploration was carried one step further by then considering only those undergraduate student participants who were age 30 and older as compared with those students age 24 and younger. Again, the same previously described hypotheses and ANOVAs were applied. A final assessment of only the undergraduates involved a two-way ANOVA to test for an interaction between gender and time lapse versus no time lapse between high school and entrance into the university (rather than mandating a five year delay as reentry status).

Additional items that had been gleaned from the Demographic Questionnaire were analyzed last. Combined with the negative means of the ASQ, these items were analyzed with three-way ANOVAs.

Scoring the Attributional Style Questionnaire

To simplify the analysis, the ASQ statements were lettered from A to L, with each statement containing five responses. Statements A, C, F, I, J, and L concerned positive outcomes; statements B, D, E, G, H, K concerned negative. This procedure is in keeping with the procedures recommended by Peterson, et al., (1982), and permitted the ASQ to be subdivided into two categories with mean values for combined positive outcomes and combined negative outcomes The formulas (Peterson, et al., 1982) for calculating outcome means were as follows:

Combined positive outcome = (A, C, F, I, J, L) /6

Combined negative outcome = (B, D, E, G, H, K)/6

Although the ASQ asks for responses to both positive and negative situations, it has been the responses to negative events that have traditionally been the indicators of learned helplessness (Tennen & Herzberger, 1985).

Answers for the ASQ were on a Likert-type scale. Statisticians such as Popham and Sirotnik (1992) have suggested that parametric procedures for ordinal data, such as that obtained from the ASQ, can offer trustworthy results if the data can be treated as interval. Because all of the ASQ scores in this study were converted to means with interval qualities, parametric procedures were appropriate.

Analysis of The Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic data were collected for the primary purpose of describing the study sample. Variables assessed included gender, age, ethnicity, employment, degree working towards, marital status, education of parents, financial status of the family during student's childhood, and educational preferences during childhood and adolescence. The researcher then became curious about any possible relationship between the variables within the chi square analyses and the impact of those variables towards the attribution of learned helplessness. Consequently, variables on which significant differences had been found were then used as independent variables to be compared in three-way ANOVAs with the dependent variable of combined negative scores of the ASQ. The first analysis involved full or part time student status with employment status, and gender; and the second three-way ANOVA involved full or part time student status, gender, and father's education.

Instruments

The Attributional Style Questionnaire

The ASQ is a self-report assessment designed to measure personal, attributional style by providing scores related to personal internal/external, stable/unstable, and global/specific thought processes. Items in the ASQ briefly describe, in one sentence each, twelve situations--six positive and six negative. Within the situations category, there is also an even split of six achievement and six affiliation situations; however, achievement versus affiliation was not a question in

this study, and thus was not tabulated. Each situation also had a value rating item which was part of the scoring for achievement and affiliation but not for learned helplessness. All items were left in the Questionnaire so that administration could be done with the original form. Subjects responded by suggesting a cause for each situation, and then rated their answers on a seven-point, Likert-type scale (Seligman, et al., 1984). Each answer belonged to one of three subscales: internality versus externality, stability versus instability, and globality versus specificity.

The researchers who created the items in the subscales evenly divided the items as being either positive or negative. Current researchers commonly use the collective positive and collective negative subscale scores. Peterson, et al., (1982) reported coefficients for combined subsets at .75 for good events collectively and .72 for bad events collectively. Many researchers, such as Betz (1990), have concluded that reliability of .70 is acceptable for general information and research purposes. In the present study, then, mean values were calculated for the total positive scores in the subscales, and the total negative scores.

Tennen and Herzberger (1985) referenced several studies that offered either criterion or construct validity for the ASQ. In a criterion study by Peterson, Bettes, and Seligman (1982, cited in Tennen & Herzberger, 1985), students wrote essays about worst events, which were then correlated with their ASQ scores, with the highest correlation being .41 ($p < .001$). Other studies that successfully evaluated the ASQ with external criterions included Eaves and Rush's (1984) study of female psychiatric patients, and Seligman, et al.,'s (1979) study of depressed college students.

Other studies have assessed the construct validity of the ASQ. In an unpublished study by Kamen and Seligman (1987), explanatory style as determined by scores from the ASQ predicted college grade point averages more accurately than

traditional measures such as Standardized Achievement Tests, or rank in graduating high school class. In a second unpublished 1987 study by Kamen and Seligman of 175 students at the University of Pennsylvania, the ASQ was again a better predictor of final class grade than other typical predictors (Seligman, et al., 1988).

The Demographic Questionnaire

The Demographic Questionnaire was designed by this researcher to gain background information relating to the traditional and reentry students in this sample. The researcher was interested in gender, racial and ethnic identity, marital status, full or part time student status, the degree working toward, employment (fulltime, part time, or none), the highest completed academic degree of the student's mother and father, and the student's impression of family income during childhood.

The traditional group consisted of 35 males and 76 females. Within that group, 88% were Caucasian, 73% were single, 77% were fulltime students, and 49% were employed part time. The reentry students consisted of 22 males and 44 females, 89% of whom were Caucasian, 54% were married (only 7% were single), 60% were fulltime students, and 40% were employed fulltime.

The parents of traditional students were more likely to have a college degree--50% of the mothers and 54 % of the fathers, while only 35% of the mothers and 35% of the fathers of reentry students had acquired college degrees. Further demographic data of the study participants can be found in Appendix G.

Following the collection of data, analyses were conducted as described. The results that were obtained when the hypotheses of this study were tested are reported in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

Results

In this chapter, the results from the analyses of the original hypotheses involving reentry and traditional student status, and gender, with the combined negative means of the ASQ are presented. Three subsets within the study population were also analyzed, and those results are included as well. Those subsets were: (a) undergraduates only, (b) undergraduates age 24 and under, compared with those age 30 and older, and (c) a comparison of undergraduates who began college directly after high school versus those undergraduates who began college later.

Analysis of The Hypotheses

Parametric procedures were used for all analyses involving ASQ scores. The homogeneity of the variance of the combined negative means for traditional and reentry students was compared with the Hartley $F_{max.}$ technique and fell within an acceptable range (F, .05, 65, 110 = 1.435). This finding permitted the use of the data from all 177 participants. See Table 1.

Table 1

Hartley Test for Homogeneity of Variance: Traditional and Reentry Student Scores on ASQ Combined Negative Subscales

	Variance		$F_{max.}$ Value
Subtest	Traditional (N = 111)	Reentry (N = 66)	
Combined means on negative subscales	.399	.397	($F_{max.\ (65,\ 110)} = 1.178$)

Analysis of First Hypothesis

A one-way ANOVA was used to answer the null hypothesis: It was predicted that there would be no significant difference in the expression of learned helplessness between reentry students and traditional students, as assessed by their scores on the Attributional Style Questionnaire. The mean values of the dependent variable (the ASQ negative combined means) were compared with the independent variable of student status (reentry versus traditional). At the .05 level, F values were not significant, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. See Table 2. The expression of learned helplessness--if any, by reentry and traditional students, was not sufficient to be differentiated.

Analysis of Second Hypothesis

A one-way ANOVA was next used to respond to the second null hypothesis: It was predicted that there would be no significant difference by gender regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire. Again, none of the F values were significant at the .05 level, indicating that, in this study, the expressions of learned helplessness could not be differentiated by gender. The second null was also not rejected. See Table 3.

Analysis of Third Hypothesis

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to test the third null hypothesis: It was also predicted that there would be no interaction between the two factors of gender and student status (reentry versus traditional) regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire. Again, there were no significant results at the .05 level, indicating that, in this study, there was little difference regarding learned helplessness between being a female reentry student, or a female traditional student, or a male traditional student, or a male reentry student. The third null was also not rejected. The results of this analysis differed from the

Table 2

ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Combined Negative Subscale Mean Scores for Traditional and Reentry Students

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Negative Composite Mean				
Between groups	1	.025	.025	.07
Within groups	175	62.88	.359	p =.7919
Total	176	62.905		

	ASQ Subscale Mean	
Source	Traditional	Reentry
combined negative outcome	4.041	4.066

Table 3

ANOVA Summary Table
A Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores by Gender

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Negative Composite Mean				
Between groups	1	.188	.188	.524
Within groups	175	62.718	.358	p =.4703
Total	176	62.905		

	ASQ Subscale Means	
Source	Males	Females
combined negative outcome	4.097	4.028

findings of a previously conducted pilot study. In the pilot study, the mean negative scores of reentry males were consistently higher than the mean scores of reentry females--in contrast to the mean score of traditional females being consistently higher than the means of traditional males, $F(1, 60) = 6.829$, $p < .01$. See Table 4.

Additional Analyses

To eliminate the possibility that advanced education was a confounding variable, ANOVAs were conducted using only the undergraduate participants. A Hartley's $F_{max.}$ was used to determine the feasibility of using the means of only undergraduates, and the variance was found to be acceptable, (F, .05, 43, 29 = 1.258). See Table 5.

A comparison of reentry versus traditional with the combined negative mean scores of the ASQ showed no significance, $F(1, 70) = .81$, $p < .3711$. Likewise, no

Table 4

Two-Way ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores by Student Status and Gender

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Gender (A)	1	.212	.212	.586
Student Status (B)	1	.041	.041	.114
AB	1	.032	.032	.089
Error	173	62.663	.362	

Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores by Student Status and Gender
Mean Values for Interaction Effects

	Traditional		Reentry	
Source	Male	Female	Male	Female
combined negative mean	4.073	4.026	4.136	4.097

Table 5

Hartley Test for Homogeneity of Variance: Undergraduate Traditional and Reentry Student Scores on ASQ Combined Negative Subscales

Subtest	Variance		$F_{max.}$ Value
	Traditional (N = 43)	Reentry (N = 29)	
Combined means on negative subscales	4.106	5.165	($F_{max.\ (65,\ 110)} = 1.258$)

significance was found between genders with the combined negative mean scores on the ASQ, $F(1, 70) = .021$, $p < .8851$. See Tables 6 and 7.

A two-way ANOVA was used to test for interaction between gender and student status with the combined negative means. In the pilot study, the ANOVA comparing gender and student status, with ASQ scores, did indicate significance, and although the generated means in the present ANOVA were all in the same direction as those in the pilot study, the results were not strong enough to indicate significance. Findings were $F(1, 68) = 1.375$, $p < .245$. See Table 8.

The bachelor's level students were then classified by whether or not they had gone to college immediately after high school (thus redefining reentry status as *any time* away from academia between high school and college). As before, ANOVAs were conducted to analyze the data for the three hypotheses. When the independent variable of gender was included along with the newly defined independent variable of "years between", and compared with the dependent variable of combined negative means of the ASQ, the results were significant $F(1, 167) = 6.02$, $p < .0167$. See Table 9. In the pilot study, male traditional students had higher combined means on the negative ASQ

Table 6

ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Combined Negative Subscale Mean Scores for Undergraduate Traditional and Reentry Students Only

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Negative Composite Mean				
Between groups	1	.351	.351	.81
Within groups	70	30.309	.433	p =.3711
Total	71	30.66		

ASQ Subscale Mean

Source	Traditional	Reentry
combined negative outcome	4.106	3.964

Table 7

ANOVA Summary Table
A Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores by Gender for Undergraduate Students Only

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Negative Composite Mean				
Between groups	1	.368	.368	.85
Within groups	70	30.292	.433	p =.3597
Total	71	30.66		

ASQ Subscale Mean

Source	Males	Females
combined negative outcome	4.124	3.981

Table 8

Two-Way ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores by Student Status and Gender for Undergraduate Students Only

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Gender (A)	1	.209	.209	.484
Student Status (B)	1	.409	.409	.949
AB	1	.593	.593	1.375
Error	68	29.335	.431	

Subscale Mean Values for Interaction Effects

	Traditional		Reentry	
Source	Male	Female	Male	Female
combined negative mean	4.264	3.969	3.925	4.

scores as compared with female traditional students, but female reentry students had higher combined means on the negative ASQ scores. This result was replicated in the present study among bachelor level students, but only when the definition of reentry student was substantially changed.

The analyses regarding gender, student status, and learned helplessness, were then repeated, this time by removing all participants between the ages of 25 through 29. Kasworm and Blowers (1994) found it more advantageous in their study to focus on reentry students at or over the age of 30, due to the comparable emotional growth stages of traditional and younger reentry students who might fall within the same age ranges. On the basis of the premises from Kasworm and Blowers (1994), ANOVAs were again conducted on the present data, but excluding the 25--29 year olds. No

differences regarding learned helplessness occurred between younger and older participants in that analysis. See Tables 10, 11, and 12.

Analysis of The Demographic Questionnaire

Chi square analyses were performed to glean as much background information as possible from the demographic questionnaires. Significant differences between reentry and traditional students were found regarding a variety of personal factors. Full or part time student status $\chi^2(1, \underline{N} = 177) = 5.744$, $\underline{p} < .0165$, father's schooling $\chi^2(3, \underline{N} = 177) = 12.09$, $\underline{p} < .007$, mother's schooling $\chi^2(3, \underline{N} = 177) = 8.27$, $\underline{p} < .04$, family financial status during childhood $\chi^2(4, \underline{N} = 177) = 12.11$, $\underline{p} = .016$, employment $\chi^2(2, \underline{N} = 177) = 10.19$, $\underline{p} = < .006$, and marital status $\chi^2(3, \underline{N} = 177) = 82.55$, $\underline{p} < .0001$ were significant. However, neither gender nor degree working towards were significant. This may have been due to efforts

Table 9

Two-Way ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores of Undergraduates Only by Gender and Reentry Student Status (redefined)

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Gender (A)	1	.013	.013	.033
Student Status (B)	1	.62	.62	1.514
AB	1	2.424	2.424	6.02*
Error	67	26.975	.403	

*p < .016

Mean Values for Interaction Effects

Source	Traditional		Reentry (redefined)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
combined negative mean	4.328	3.937	3.692	4.146.

Table 10

ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Combined Negative Subscale Mean Scores for Undergraduate Traditional and Reentry Students Age 24 and Under and Age 30 and Older

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Negative Composite Mean				
Between groups	1	.037	.037	.093
Within groups	55	21.963	.399	p =.762
Total	56	22.		

	ASQ Subscale Mean	
Source	Traditional	Reentry
combined negative outcome	4.096	4.045

Table 11

ANOVA Summary Table
A Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores by Gender for Undergraduate Students Only Age 24 and Under and Age 30 and Older

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Negative Composite Mean				
Between groups	1	.558	.558	1.432
Within groups	55	21.441	.39	p = .2365
Total	56	22		

	ASQ Subscale Mean	
Source	Males	Females
combined negative means	4.197	3.994

Table 12

Two-Way ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Subscale Mean Scores by Student Status and Gender for Undergraduate Students Only Age 24 and Under and Age 30 and Older

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Gender (A)	1	.599	.599	1.499
Student Status (B)	1	.131	.131	.327
AB	1	.162	.162	.405
Error	53	21.201	.4	

Subscale Mean Values for Interaction Effects

	Traditional		Reentry	
Source	Male	Female	Male	Female
combined negative mean	4.264	3.969	3.925	4.

towards having adequate numbers of both genders and to the inclusion of individuals working on various degree levels as participants in the study. Tables summarizing all of the chi square results are in Appendix A.

Out of curiosity, the researcher then experimented with various items from the demographic questionnaire as independent variables, with the dependent variable of the combined negative means of the ASQ. Most of the experimental variations produced insignificant results. However, two combinations of independent variables did produce significant results. The first was an ANOVA used to test the impact of full or part time student status, employment (full, part time, or none), and gender, regarding learned helplessness. No significance occurred with gender or with full or part time student status, but employment status was shown to be significant. There was also an interaction between full and part time student status, and gender, and the

combined negative ASQ means $F(1, 52) = 4.95$, $p < .0305$. No interaction occurred between all three variables. Results for this ANOVA are shown in Table 13.

Significant results also occurred when an ANOVA was used to investigate the relevance of the father's education. A three-way ANOVA combined the independent variables of reentry versus traditional student status, gender, and educational attainment of the father, with the dependent variable of combined negative mean scores on the ASQ. No factor was significant when isolated, and no interaction occurred between student status and father's education, $F(3, 161) = 1.604$, $p < .1904$. However, gender and father's education were significant, $F(3, 161) = 3.809$, $p < .0113$, and an interaction also occurred between student status, gender, and father's education, $F(3, 161) = 4.43$, $p < .0051$. See Table 14.

The demographic questionnaire also included an open-ended question about favorite and least favorite academic subjects in elementary school and in high school. The question was included to provide additional information about traditional and reentry students and whether or not learned helplessness would somehow be reflected in those elementary and high school likes and dislikes. As this question was open-ended, the diversity of answers was extreme. No significant differences were found between the preferences of traditional students and reentry students, even when answers were logically grouped as categories. A summary of the generated data is in Appendix D.

Summary of the Findings

To recapitulate the findings of this section, no significant differences regarding learned helplessness were found within the analyses of the original hypotheses. Nor was significance found when the analyses were repeated using only undergraduate participants, neither with all of the undergraduates in the sample, nor by excluding those between the ages of 25 to 30. Significance did occur, however, when

Table 13

Three-Way ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Combined Negative Subscale Means with Student Status, Employment Status, and Gender

Source		df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Full or part time student	(A)	1	1.102	1.102	3.157
Employment status	(B)	2	2.287	1.144	3.275*
AB		2	.332	.166	.475
Gender	(C)	1	.315	.315	.901
AC		1	2.008	2.008	5.751**
BC		2	.942	.471	1.35
ABC		2	.199	.1	.285
Error		162	56.566	.349	

* p. < .04, ** p. < .017

Mean Values for Interaction Effects

Source	Fulltime Student			Part time Student		
	Work Ft	Work Pt	No	Work Ft	Work Pt	No
combined neg mean	4.078	4.204	3.917	4.016	4.072	3.667

Male

Source	Fulltime Student			Part time Student		
	Work Ft	Work Pt	No	Work Ft	Work Pt	No
combined neg mean	4.222	4.412	3.914	3.937	3.917	3.056

Female

Source	Fulltime Student			Part time Student		
	Work Ft	Work Pt	No	Work Ft	Work Pt	No
combined neg mean	3.951	4.11	3.918	4.075	4.176	3.972

Table 14

Three-Way ANOVA Summary Table
Comparison of ASQ Combined Negative Subscale Mean Scores by Student Status, Gender and Father's Education

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F
Student Status (A)	1	.029	.028	.088
Gender (B)	1	.478	.478	1.427
AB	1	.061	.061	.183
Father's Education (C)	3	1.15	.383	1.144
AC	3	1.614	.538	1.604
BC	3	3.831	1.277	3.809*
ABC	3	4.456	1.485	4.43**
Error	161	54.66	.34	

* p. < .01, ** p. < .005

Mean Values for Interaction Effects

Source	Traditional Male	Traditional Female	Reentry Male	Reentry Female
combined neg mean	4.073	4.026	4.136	4.03

Father's Education
Traditional

Source	Male grade sch	Male hs	Male trd sch	Male col	Female grade sch	Female hs	Female trd sch	Female col
combined neg mean	3.222	4.042	4.528	4.104	4.37	4.011	3.903	4.032

Father's Education
Reentry

Source	Male grade sch	Male hs	Male trd sch	Male col	Female grade sch	Female hs	Female trd sch	Female col
combined neg mean	3.589	4.563	2.994	4.403	4.157	3.818	4.324	3.989

undergraduates were categorized by whether or not they had begun college directly after high school. Regarding sociological variables that might affect the outcome of learned helplessness with students, employment status was significant, and full and part time student status was significant with gender. Interaction also occurred between gender and father's education, and another occurred between reentry versus traditional student status, gender, and father's education. All of these results will be more fully explored in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Discussion

This study considered the possibility that the attribution of learned helplessness would be more prominent in reentry students than in traditional students. Justification for this possibility included how a learned helplessness attributional style (Peterson & Bossio, 1989) could be considered in light of long-term, personality patterns (Caspi & Elder, 1988), and the long-term consistency of learned helplessness, as demonstrated by Peterson and Seligman (Peterson & Bossio, 1989). Instruments for this study included the Attributional Style Questionnaire (see appendix B), and a Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix E). Responses from 111 traditional and 66 reentry students were used in a survey research design to test three hypotheses:

H_o1. It was predicted that there would be no significant difference in the expression of learned helplessness between reentry students and traditional students, as assessed by their scores on the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

H_o2. It was predicted that there would be no significant difference by gender regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

H_o3. It was also predicted that there would be no interaction between the factors of gender and student status (reentry versus traditional) regarding the attribution of learned helplessness, as assessed by the Attributional Style Questionnaire.

Results of the analyses that were reported in Chapter IV will now be explored with regard to possible meanings. Following that discussion, the chapter concludes with recommendations relevant to the process and outcomes of this study.

Major Findings

The overall hypothesis of this research, that learned helplessness, as ascertained by the ASQ, was more prominent in reentry students than in traditional students, was not confirmed. Likewise, the results of the ANOVA analyzing the hypothesis that students would differ by gender in terms of the attributional style of learned helplessness also showed no significant differences. These results were not surprising as they replicated the results of the pilot study (N = 64). However, there was also no significant interaction between the variables of student status and gender regarding the attributional style of learned helplessness, and these results were in contrast to those of the pilot study. In the pilot study, the combined negative mean scores of reentry male students were higher than their traditional counterparts, while the combined negative mean scores of traditional females were higher than those of their reentry counterparts.

It will be recalled that, following the analyses of the original hypotheses, the researcher chose to investigate additional configurations of independent variables available within the study. Some of those variables were suggested by aspects of the study sample that might have possibly confounded the results (i.e., advanced education), and others were suggested by prominence held in the chi square analyses of items in the Demographic Questionnaire (i.e, father's education). This discussion continues with an inclusion of those results.

To provide assurance that advanced education had not confounded the results, the researcher decided to perform all of the original analyses on only the undergraduate portion of the study sample. As reported earlier, there were no significant results in this analyses. One possible explanation is that advanced education is not a factor in these results because of the long-term consistency of learned helplessness. As reported in the introduction, without intervention, learned

helplessness appears to have stability over months or even years (Seligman, et al., 1984; Seligman, Kamen, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1988).

The second additional analysis of this study was an ANOVA using bachelor's level students that were reclassified by whether or not they had gone to college immediately after high school. This analysis did produce significant results. In this analysis, traditional males who entered college directly after high school had higher levels of learned helplessness than their (newly defined) reentry counterparts. A possible meaning to this finding might be that those males with immediate entry into college were complying to social norms, or to family rules, perhaps indicative of the students not making a response to take control of their own lives when such a response might have been available to them. It will be recalled that "passivity" (Peterson & Bossio, 1989, p. 247) is one of the criteria for identifying learned helplessness, and that this passivity is sometimes recognized when a response might have been made but was not, even when a response might have been available and in one's best interest. One of the consequences of learned helplessness is a seeming lack of normal, adult assertiveness (Miller, Rosellini, & Seligman, 1977).

However, since the results indicated that, in this undergraduate population, the traditional women had lower levels of learned helplessness than their (redefined) reentry female counterparts, it stands to reason that somehow the continuation into college directly after high school was perhaps believed by the traditional women, unlike the traditional men, to be within their own control--while waiting to enter college was somehow seen as not within the control of the reentry women and thus a factor towards the expression of learned helplessness (Fincham & Cain, 1986). Perhaps the women who waited to enter college had obligations, believed to be beyond their control, that created their delays--while the men perceived their obligations that created delay as positive. Other explanations for this finding undoubtedly exist,

but without more background information as to why these delays actually occurred and the meanings attached to them, the present remarks are only speculative. It will be recalled that while some researchers focused on the similarities in the reasons cited by both genders for their return to school (St. Pierre, 1989), other researchers, such as Bauer and Mott (1990), Huston-Hoburg and Strange (1986) and Mohney and Anderson (1988), focused more on gender-specific reentry differences. The result from this present analysis is also the first hint in this study that environmental, as well as emotional and cognitive factors, may be pertinent to the expression of learned helplessness for the present study sample.

The ANOVA analyses were then repeated, but this time by removing all participants between the ages of 25 through 29. As mentioned earlier, some researchers, such as Kasworm and Blowers (1994), found that reentry and traditional students in the same age group shared too many similar characteristics to make research that differentiated them viable. The ANOVAs used to analyze the variables that excluded the 25--29 year olds in this study produced no significant differences regarding learned helplessness.

Continued Analyses

Continued analyses were then prompted by items in the Demographic Questionnaire. Items that were statistically significant as independent variables with learned helplessness included employment status, full or part time student status, and the education of the father.

One observation regarding employment is that students who were not employed at all expressed less learned helplessness than those students who were employed. It might be supposed that being employed would produce a sense of self-sufficiency that might counteract any sense of learned helplessness, but that supposition did not hold here. Perhaps students who are not employed feel less scattered in their thoughts and

obligations, or they may also have the luxury of stable relationships and stable financial resources. Another possibility is that employment in and of itself might instead be part of a less than positive reason (i.e., threat of downsizing) for being in school at the present time and therefore a possible contributor to the expression of learned helplessness.

In another observation, males who were part time students appeared to experience less learned helplessness than males who were full time students. The opposite result was found for the female students, who exhibited less learned helplessness when they were fulltime students--particularly for those women who were fulltime students and working fulltime. Perhaps the men with part time student status were thriving on a variety of healthy interests of which school was only one. Or, since being a part time student was related to less learned helplessness, perhaps the implication is that males who can attend school part time while also attending to other activities feel that they are more in control of their own lives. Or, might it be that *each* gender feels a sense of control (recalling that a lack of personal control was noted as a factor in learned helplessness as described by Fincham and Cain, 1986, and others), by opposing and winning against current, gender social norms that do not fit for that individual. That is, it may be that the present social standards imply that males in college must be fulltime students in order to be finished and employed as quickly as possible, while women, as reported by Bauer and Mott (1990) and Terrell (1990), feel pressured to divide their time more equitably among many duties, and that, for each gender, being able to buck social pressures and live "one's own life" provides a sense of control, and thus less expression of learned helplessness. Or again, perhaps these individuals already experienced less learned helplessness, and with less learned helplessness were already less concerned about social norms.

Kasworm and Pike (1994, citing a study by Metzner, 1986) noted that reentry students tended to come "from families with lower levels of parent education" (p. 692), and this factor can be seen in the present study in the comparison of parents' level of academic achievement. Among the traditional students, 54%[1] of their mothers had college degrees, while only 35% of the mothers of reentry students had college degrees. And again, among traditional students, only 4% of the mothers had completed no more than grade school, while 11% of the mothers of the reentry students had completed grade school only. Despite these statistics, it was the education of the father that proved to be most significant in terms of evaluating differences in learned helplessness[2]. Among the fathers of traditional students, 54% had college degrees, 33% had high school diplomas, 3% completed grade school only, and 9% graduated from a trade school. Among the fathers of reentry students, about 35% (versus 54%) had college degrees, about 37% (versus 33%) had high school diplomas, 17% (versus 3%) had completed grade school only, and about 12% (versus 9%) had completed a trade school.

It will be recalled that gender held no significance in the original hypotheses. However, gender did interact with full or part time student status, and gender is now shown to be significant with the education of the father, regarding combined negative means on the ASQ. The present interaction of the gender factor with the education of the father may have been due to the percentage of women in the study with fathers with college degrees (50%), which was higher than the percentage of men in the study with fathers with college degrees (40%). Or, the interaction between gender and father's education may have come about because the males in this study had more fathers who had only completed grade school, as well as more fathers who had not gone on to

[1] Percentages throughout the Discussion chapter have been rounded off.

[2] Many experimental three-way ANOVAs that used the education of the mother as an independent variable had empty cells that prevented an accurate completion of the analysis.

education beyond high school. Ironically, males, whose fathers had only completed grade school, had *lower* mean scores on the ASQ--an indication of *less* learned helplessness. Additionally, among the reentry students only, the inclusion of the fathers who had completed trade school appeared to also contribute towards the lower mean values of the males. One speculative explanation for this result might be that, for male students whose fathers had very little educational achievement, the present achievement by the student of being in college at all is exceedingly special and has positively enhanced personal attributions.

On the other hand, the ASQ means for the female reentry students suggested that parental education may have different meaning for women than for men. Possibly the fathers with less educational attainment have more stereotypical family lives--especially in regard to their female children. If this was true, it would help to explain the differences found in this ANOVA. It will be recalled that Dweck and Gilliard (1975), and Boggiano and Barrett (1991), did find evidence suggesting that when children were treated in gender stereotyped fashion, the results for girls were more likely to be in the direction of learned helplessness while stereotyping treatment for boys led to other results.

In summary, significant differences in learned helplessness did not appear to be common from one academic group to another when students were recognized by the status designations that typically identify student cohorts (i.e., traditional versus reentry). On the other hand, differences did occur by less common academic and by nonacademic categories. For example, differences occurred in the undergraduate subset when reentry status was redefined as any time between high school and enrollment into college. It was also noted that students who were not employed had lower levels of learned helplessness than students who were employed, and males whose fathers had only completed grade school, had lower mean ASQ scores. Male part

time students appeared to experience less learned helplessness than male full time students, while female full time students experienced less learned helplessness than female part time students.

Perhaps the most accurate comment to make about all of the statistical explorations, including the original and the additional analyses, is that the results from the analyses of the original hypotheses are only applicable within well-defined boundaries, and may not be generalizable beyond the boundaries described. Additional results in this study can probably be explained by saying that differences in levels of learned helplessness do occur among students, including both reentry and traditional students, but that environmental factors may play the differentiating role.

Further Considerations Regarding Findings

An important consideration in this study was the loss of participants from the group that returned their questionnaires by mail. It will be recalled that 21 mailed responses were not usable due to omission of answers. An additional nine responses from previous collections of data were also unusable. The decision not to include the questionnaires with missing data by somehow averaging the totals, was based on the reasoning that each missing question contained five answers, which seemed a sizable number to average into the total score without knowing if that would compromise the negative means of the assessment. So, assessments with omitted questions were automatically discarded. As the mailing of questionnaires was specifically designed to acquire additional bachelor level, reentry students, it might be assumed that those 21 additional surveys could have influenced the results of the study. Furthermore, the question usually omitted from the returned mailed assessments (which made those particular questionnaires unusable) was "YOU GO OUT ON A DATE AND IT GOES BADLY" which then involved responses 51 through 55. (Participants who did not answer this question sometimes wrote a note across it such as, *does not pertain to me*). The

implications from these comments along with other comments from mostly older students were that many had been married for several years and no longer considered themselves as "dating". Answers to this question would have been counted towards the composite negative score, that is, towards the presence or lack of learned helplessness.

Likewise, the question most often omitted during the earlier collection of data in the classroom settings, was "A FRIEND COMES TO YOU WITH A PROBLEM AND YOU DON'T TRY TO HELP THEM" which included responses 16 through 20. (When participants who declined to answer this question left notes, the notes were usually something like *this simply would not happen*). This question would also have been counted towards the composite negative score. The fact that two of the negative questions were the ones that eliminated several of the surveys, adds to the caution against committing a Type II error. So, while the statistical conclusion of the present study is that learned helplessness is not a factor for either traditional or nontraditional students, the wisest response to the present data is that the results are not without due consideration, but do contain tentative elements.

Application

In working with reentry students, and with students exhibiting signs of learned helplessness, professionals may want to consider the relevancy of nonacademic factors. For example, in this study, family of origin issues surfaced through gender differences regarding the father's educational achievement and the presence or lack of learned helplessness. Learned helplessness scores declined for male reentry students with fathers who had limited education, and it was suggested that perhaps the student's own educational achievement was bringing accolades from home for being the first in the family for academic achievement. If this is so, then students in this frame of mind may respond well to the directional path of positive reinforcement from a cognitive behavioral approach. On the other hand, many female reentry students, who also had

fathers with low levels of educational attainment, found themselves with elevated means towards learned helplessness. For those women, a different therapeutic response may be in order. Assertiveness training to counteract the passiveness quality (Peterson & Bossio, 1989) of learned helplessness may be a more viable option. These women may also be responsive to opportunities for leadership roles in the academic community, which, in providing personal success stories, may also foster new internal concepts about influencing outcomes.

To help address both learned helplessness as well as some of the initial classroom difficulties in the reentry experience, teachers may also find that, early in the semester, short assignments that produce successful outcomes offer a desired external validation and sense of direction for new reentry students (Kasworm & Blowers, 1994), while also increasing the sense of contingency between effort and outcome (Fincham & Cain, 1986) necessary to alleviate learned helplessness.

Teachers may further elect to tackle learned helplessness by focusing on the "passiveness" factor (Peterson & Bossio, 1989). Instructing in an active manner may also help reentry students with issues of acceptance (Peterson & Bossio, 1989) and personal validation (Huston-Hoburg, & Strange, 1986), as classroom activities may encourage reentry students to share their life experiences in the classroom and help them form bonds with other reentry students in the class.

To those working towards alleviating learned helplessness, there are several factors to consider when planning interventions. One is that using a successful outcome alone, as an intervention, may improve self-efficacy (Monte, 1980), but not improve learned helplessness. Remembering that self-efficacy is about ability, while learned helplessness is about influencing outcome, may help teachers and other professionals to craft assignments accordingly.

Abramson, et al., (1978) suggested that prior controllable experiences with positive outcomes would strengthen persons with learned helplessness in a way to decrease learned helplessness responses in future events. However, the experiment by Ramircz, Maldonado, and Martos (1992) found that a proactive experience did little to counteract learned helplessness responses in a later experiment. It might be recalled here that in teaching learned helplessness dogs to escape (Seligman, Maier, & Geer, 1968), those researchers found conventional means of enticement (i.e., calling dog, offering food) did little towards improvement, and only by forcing the dog to escape would the dog eventually acquiesce. Not only that, but the dog had to be forced through the positive outcome several times before performing the feat alone.

Furthermore, teachers, and others, will also recall that, in contrast to persons with learned helplessness, mastery-oriented (Diener & Dweck, 1980) persons appear to have an attitude towards improve rather than prove (Elliot & Dweck, 1988). The attitude of "mastery-oriented" also suggests that success stories alone cannot be viewed as a "cure" for learned helplessness, unless the successes can challenge entrenched beliefs. In the dissenting studies in the literature review, Hurley and Meminger (1987) noted that persons who had shown learned helplessness early in childhood, were able to excel in school by adolescence. For those persons, it may be that they believed that academic success depended on intense personal efforts, well beyond those actually called for. Since intense efforts often do bring reward, this would be a difficult belief to counteract.

These cautionary notes are not meant to imply that professionals should give up on reentry students, or on learned helplessness, but rather to suggest that the issues regarding either (or both collectively) will not likely be solved with quick fixes.

This discussion section touched upon several issues pertinent to the present study, including the original hypotheses, social factors such as employment, the

influence of the father's educational attainment along with other issues pertinent to family of origin, gender differences in the study sample results, and the amount of unusable data. *It is important to note that the research of this present study is exploratory in nature and not intended to be generalized without further, validating research.*

The following section closes this study by offering several recommendations. Some are suggestions about research modifications in the ASQ should this study be replicated. Other recommendations refer to new study samples and new areas of possibly untapped research.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are the result of consideration of the results of the present study and factors presented in the literature review.

Changes in the ASQ

It will be recalled that several researchers have encouraged the matching of assessment tools with the participants being studied (Gabbard, Howard, & Tageson, 1986; Norman & Antaki, 1988; Tennen & Herzberger, 1985). To improve any replications of this study, researchers may wish to consider rewording the question that dealt with dating, as well as the question that dealt with failure to help a friend, as those questions were the ones most often not completed or entirely skipped by participants in the present study. Rewording of a few questions might also help to broaden the range of responses. In the present study, the range of combined negative means was 2.444 to 5.556 with 14 means in the "5"s" range, 89 in the "4's", 66 in the "3's", and 8 in the "2 's". Although these scores do indicate a somewhat bell-shaped curve, and it might not be unusual to lack scores that average into the extreme ends of either 1 or 7, there were also no scores averaging into the 6's. This leads to questions about the appropriate or inappropriate skewness towards the more positive

ranges. While it is common knowledge that people often view themselves more positively than negatively, the profiles provided by the ASQ in the present research may (or may not) be more skewed than would be expected. Revisions of the two questions mentioned earlier, may help to alleviate doubts about this issue.

Prior to this research, in an e-mail communication (see Appendix C), Christopher Peterson, Ph.D., one of the authors of the ASQ, suggested that questions be included in the present research that would be particularly pertinent to reentry students. As the present research was essentially baseline in nature, there were no changes made in the ASQ for this study. However, future researchers may wish to incorporate Dr. Peterson's suggestion. As a substantial number of respondents omitted entire questions, future researchers may also wish to emphasize to participants the importance of answering all of the ASQ questions.

It was also noted that the overall reliability of the ASQ, although acceptable, was somewhat low. Learned helplessness is not a commonly measured attribute and instruments that do so directly are few. Peterson and Villanova (1988) created an expanded version of the ASQ by doubling the size of the original instrument, and, as might be expected, their expanded version had greater reliability for the subsets within. They also eliminated all of the positively oriented questions, so that the entire questionnaire assessed from only a negative direction. Despite the increased reliability, their version of the ASQ was not chosen for this present study because the expanded ASQ lacked the historical validation of the original version, and because the expanded version by Peterson and Villanova had been designed with the idea of assessing learned helplessness as a key component of depression. However, Peterson and Villanova's ideas for expanding the ASQ are well-taken, and future researchers may wish to try this.

Another possibility for future research is to replicate the study at a two-year community college. Although advanced education was not shown to be a factor in the present study, there may be differences regarding the attribution of learned helplessness among students who do not choose to attend a four-year university versus those who do. Under those circumstances, it may also be possible to separately assess those students who could not meet the entrance requirements for a four-year institution, with the thought that learned helplessness may have been a precursor to lack of achievement. In fact, as a limited number of departments were involved in the present study, increasing the variety of participants for any replication of this study--by including students enrolled in engineering, for example, might prove to be very interesting.

New Areas for Research

The literature review indicated that becoming a reentry student sometimes had different meanings for men than for women. Future researchers may wish to further explore gender issues among traditional and reentry students by using other assessment tools, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or the Holland Self-Directed Search. The ASQ could, of course, be used in conjunction with either of those assessment instruments.

Researchers may be interested in knowing how stages of life might be affecting each gender in the traditional versus reentry phenomenon. Assessments that focus on Erikson's stages, or a similar philosophy, might be useful for exploratory purposes. An exploration of how social norms affect the experience of being a reentry student might also be a worthwhile study.

It will also be recalled that, in the present study, among the reentry students, 11% of the mothers and 17% of the fathers completed no more than grade school. Future researchers may find an interesting study among those students who are not

only first-generation college students, but for whom that step is quite immense within their family of origin.

Initially in the present research, there was a speculation about whether or not reentry students (and presumably those with greater degrees of learned helplessness), had liked and disliked a different array of school subjects during elementary and high school than their more traditional peers. To this end, the demographic questionnaire included an open-ended question about favorite and least favorite elementary and high school subjects. Since participants could list anything they wished, the array of noted subjects was vast. The tabulations for the subjects are in Appendix G. As mentioned in the results section, there were no significant differences between reentry and traditional students about subject interests. However, the participants for the present study came from only three university departments, and posing this question again under other circumstances might prove interesting. For instance, a future study that does achieve a finer delineation of learned helplessness within the sample, might also find the question of school subject preferences revealing.

It will also be recalled that in the present study, significant results occurred around the issue of employment; but, specifics about the how's and why's of those results could not be ascertained with the present assessment instruments. Future researchers may want to know more about the relationship of employment and learned helplessness. Also, given the large percentage of all students in this study sample that were employed either fulltime or part time (N = 121, or over 69%), researchers may also want to know more about what sorts of employment both traditional and reentry students have, and what their employment means to them. For instance, is their present employment necessary to pay for school? Are they in entry-level positions? Did they choose their present employment in terms of future

careers, or was it perhaps because of factors like flexible hours or overtime pay. Also, it might be interesting to know if there is, in light of employment, corollary meanings for the delayed enrollment of reentry students.

Although the original purpose of the present study was to suggest possible factors regarding the delay of reentry students back to academia, the findings of this study instead appear to be more towards descriptive factors. Future researchers may still wish to further explore possible attributions and/or personality factors that might differentiate reentry and traditional students.

Summary Statement

Perhaps with further research, the findings of this study which indicated that learned helplessness in reentry students does not differ from traditional students will be fully confirmed. Or, perhaps, studies designed to investigate the length of delay of reentry and the relationship to learned helplessness will yield valuable information regarding specific segments of the reentry student population. Still other studies may find that the education of the parents is a key factor in academic experience, and one that might be closely related to the attribution of learned helplessness. Until studies like these are conducted, there is presently little basis for concluding that reentry students are more or less likely than traditional students to manifest learned helplessness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table A1

Description of Study Sample

Variable	Total (N = 177)	Traditional Sample Only (N = 111)	Reentry Sample Only (N = 66)
	number (%)	number (%)	number (%)
Gender			
Males	57 (32.2)	35 (31.5)	22 (33.3)
Females	120 (67.8)	76 (68.5)	44 (66.7)
Racial and Ethnic Identity			
African American	6 (3.4)	4 (3.7)	2 (3)
Asian American	1 (.6)	1 (.9)	
American Indian	1 (.6)	1 (.9)	
Hispanic	2 (1.1)	2 (1.8)	
Caucasian	155(88.6)	96 (88.1)	59 (89.4)
American Indian/Caucasian	10(5.7)	5 (4.6)	5 (7.6)
Marital Status			
Single	86(48.6)	81 (73)	5 (7.6)
Married	64(36.1)	28 (25.2)	35 (54.5)
Married but separated	3 (1.7)	1 (.9)	2 (3)
Divorced	24(13.6)	1 (.9)	23 (34.8)
Widowed	0 (0)		
Student status			
fulltime	126 (71.2)	86 (77.5)	40 (60.6)
part time	51 (28.8)	25 (22.5)	26 (39.4)
Degree working toward			
PhD/EdD	10(5.7)	6 (5.4)	4 (6.2)
MS/MA	69(39.4)	49 (44.1)	20 (31.2)
BS/BA	72(41.1)	43 (38.7)	29 (45.3)
As	2 (1.1)	1 (.9)	1 (1.6)
Non	9 (5.1)	4 (3.6)	5 (7.8)
Employment			
Fulltime	50(28.7)	24 (21.9)	26 (40.6)
Part time	71(40.8)	54 (49.1)	17 (26.6)
Not employed	53(30.5)	32 (29.1)	21 (32.8)

Table A1(cont.)

Description of Study Sample

Variable	Total (N = 177)	Traditional Sample Only (N = 111)	Reentry Sample Only (N = 66)
	number (%)	number (%)	number (%)
Mother's Schooling			
grade school	11 (6.2)	4 (3.6)	7 (10.6)
high school	74 (41.8)	41 (37)	33 (50)
trade school	9 (5.1)	6 (5.4)	3 (4.5)
college	83 (46.9)	60 (50)	23 (34.8)
Father's Schooling			
grade school	15 (8.5)	4 (3.6)	11 (16.7)
high school	61 (34.5)	37 (33.3)	24 (36.4)
trade school	18 (10.2)	10 (9)	8 (12.1)
college	83 (46.9)	60 (54)	23 (34.8)
Income during childhood			
poor	11 (6.2)	6 (5.4)	5 (7.6)
low average	40 (22.6)	17 (15.3)	23 (34.8)
average	73 (41.2)	48 (43.2)	25 (37.9)
above average	44 (24.9)	32 (28.8)	12 (18.2)
well above average	9 (5.1)	8 (7.2)	1 (1.5)

Age Range	Total # of participants (N = 177)	Total of Traditional Sample Only by % (N = 111)	Total of Reentry Sample Only by % (N = 66)
19 - 23	49	44.5%	0
24 - 28	49	40.9	6.1
29 - 33	15	6.4	12.1
34 - 38	22	3.6	27.2
38 - 43	15	4.5	15.1
44 - 48	20	0	30.3
49 - 53	5	0	7.6
54 - 55	1	0	1.5

Table A2

Chi Square Analysis with Traditional and Reentry Students

Variable	N Traditional	N Reentry	df	X^2	$p>X^2$
Gender			1	.062	.8041
Male	35	22			
Female	76	44			
Degree working toward			5	3.763	.5841
PhD/Ed	6	4			
MS/MA	49	20			
BS/BA	43	29			
As	1	1			
Other	8	5			
Non	4	5			
Student status			1	5.744	.0165*
Full	111	66			
Part time	25	26			
Father's schooling			3	12.09	.007**
Grade school	4	11			
High school	37	24			
Trade school	10	8			
College	60	23			
Mother's schooling			3	8.27	.04***
Grade school	4	7			
High school	41	33			
Trade school	6	3			
College	60	23			
Childhood Financial Status			4	12.11	.016*
Poor	6	5			
Low average	17	23			
Average	48	25			
Above average	32	12			
Well above average	8	1			
Employment			2	10.19	.006**
Fulltime	24	26			
Part time	54	17			
Not employed	32	21			
Marital status			3	82.55	.0001****
Single	81	5			
Married	28	36			
Married but separated	1	2			
Divorced	1	23			

*p < .02, **p < .01, ***p < .04, ****p < .0001

Appendix B

Attributional Style Questionnaire

Directions

Please try to vividly imagine yourself in the situations that follow. If such a situation happened to you, what would you feel would have cause it? While events may have many causes, we want you to pick only one -- the major cause if this event happened to you. Please write this cause in the blank provided after each event. Next we want you to answer some questions about the cause and a final question about the situation. To summarize, we want you to:

(1) Read each situation and vividly imagine it happening to you.
(2) Decide what you feel would be the major cause of the situation if it happened to you.
(3) Write one cause in the blank provided.
(4) Answer three questions about the cause
(5) Answer one question about the situation.
(6) Go on to the next situation.

YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO COMPLIMENTS YOU ON YOUR APPEARANCE

(1) Write down the one major cause _____

(2) Is the cause of your friend's compliment due to something about you or something about the other person or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(3) In the future when you are with your friends, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(4) Is the cause something that just affects interacting with friends or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(5) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A JOB UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR SOME TIME.

(6) Write down the one major cause _____

(7) Is the cause of your unsuccessful job search due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(8) In the future when looking for a job, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(9) Is the cause something that just influences looking for a job or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(10) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU BECOME VERY RICH

(11) Write down the one major cause _____

(12) Is the cause of your becoming rich due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me

(13) In your financial future, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present

(14) Is the cause something that just affects obtaining money or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all situations in my life

(15) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Extremely important

A FRIEND COMES TO YOU WITH A PROBLEM AND YOU DON'T TRY TO HELP THEM.

(16) Write down the one major cause _____

(17) Is the cause of your not helping your friend due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to other people or circumstances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Totally due to me

(18) In the future when a friend comes to you with a problem, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Will always be present

(19) Is the cause something that just affects what happens when a friend comes to you with a problem or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Influences all situations in my life

(20) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Extremely important

YOU GIVE AN IMPORTANT TALK IN FRONT OF A GROUP AND THE AUDIENCE REACTS NEGATIVELY.

(21) Write down the one major cause _____

(22) Is the cause of the audience reacting negatively due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(23) In the future when giving talks, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(24) Is the cause something that just influences giving talks or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(25) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU DO A PROJECT WHICH IS HIGHLY PRAISED.

(26) Write down the one major cause _____

(27) Is the cause of being praised due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(28) In the future when doing a project, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(29) Is the cause something that just affects doing projects or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(30) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO ACTS HOSTILELY TOWARD YOU.

(31) Write down the one major cause _____

(32) Is the cause of your friend acting hostile due to something about you or something about the other person or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(33) In the future when interacting with friends, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(34) Is the cause something that just influences interacting with friends or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(35) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU CAN'T GET ALL THE WORK DONE THAT OTHERS EXPECT OF YOU.

(36) Write down the one major cause _____

(37) Is the cause of your not getting the work done due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(38) In the future when doing the work that others expect, will this cause be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(39) Is the cause something that just affects doing work that others expect of you or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(40) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

A SPOUSE (BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND) HAS BEEN TREATING YOU MORE LOVINGLY.

(41) Write down the one major cause _____

(42) Is the cause of your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) treating you more lovingly due to something about you or something about the other person or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(43) In future interactions with your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend), will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(44) Is the cause something that just affects how your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) treats you or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(45) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU APPLY FOR A POSITION THAT YOU WANT VERY BADLY (e.g., IMPORTANT JOB, GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION, etc.) AND YOU GET IT.

(46) Write down the one major cause _____

(47) Is the cause of your getting the position due to something about you or something about another person or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(48) In the future when applying for a position, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(49) Is the cause something that just influences applying for a position or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(50) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU GO OUT ON A DATE AND IT GOES BADLY.

(51) Write down the one major cause _____

(52) Is the cause of the date going badly due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(53) In the future when dating, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(54) Is the cause something that just influences dating or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(55) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

YOU GET A RAISE.

(56) Write down the one major cause _____

(57) Is the cause of your getting a raise due to something about you or something about the other person or circumstances? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

(58) In the future when you get a raise, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

(59) Is the cause something that just affects getting a raise or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

(60) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely important

Appendix C

From: L Blair

Date: Thur. July 7, 1994 8:51 AM

Subject: Use of the ASQ

To: Prof. Christopher Peterson

Dear Dr. Peterson,
I plan to use the Attributional Style Questionnaire as part of a research project towards a PhD in counseling psychology from the University of Tennessee, and I have some questions. (1) I received the ASQ through your Michigan office. Do I need official permission for use? (2) I want to be certain about how the ASQ is scored before considering any statistical procedures. Could you send information? (3) The hypothesis of my research is that reentry college students can be differentiated from their more traditional peers by attributional style. I would be happy to receive suggestions and communicate further with you about this topic if it is of interest to you. Thank you

Linda Blair
9733 Tunbridge Lane
Knoxville, TN 37922

From: christopher peterson

Date: Fri., July 8, 1994 9:10 AM

Subject: Use of ASQ

To. Blair, L

File: Message Reader

You do not need permission to use the ASQ. You score it by averaging ratings across events (separately for good an bad events) for given dimensions. You can form composites by averaging across dimensions. See the 1992 article by Peterson, et al. in Cognitive Therapy and Research. In terms of your hypothesis, I would include some events in the ASQ that are pertinent to returning to school. I fear that the more generic events in the ASQ as is will not distinguish your samples.

Appendix D

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

I Identification of Project

Student Researcher:	Linda Blair 108 Claxton Education Bldg. Campus phone: 974-5131
Faculty Advisor:	Marla Peterson, Ph.D. 108 Claxton Education Bldg. Campus phone: 974-5131
Title of Project:	Attributional Style of Reentry College Students
Unit and College	Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Unit of the College of Education
Starting Date:	Upon CRP approval
Estimated Completion Date:	December, 1995

II Objectives of Project

In this research project, reentry students will be those college students who have experienced a lapse in formal education since high school of five or more years. Traditional students will be those students who are continuing their education following high school with no time lapses or lapses of less than five years.

Reentry students are returning in significant numbers to college campuses everywhere. Differences between and reentry or nontraditional students have been verified, but most of those studies have focused on sociological differences (i.e., employment, marital status) as opposed to any psychological differences that might be present between the two groups.

From prior longitudinal studies about attributional style, specifically about the attributional style known as "learned helplessness", it is known that persons who have adopted an attributional style comparable to learned helplessness, tend to make significant life decisions later than their peers. While delayed careers and belated

marriages have been linked to this attributional style, few, if any, studies have attempted to link a specific attributional style with reentry students.

The goal of this research is to explore the possible relationship, if any, between attributional style and the experiences of reentry students.

Specific questions to be addressed by this research include:

(1) Can reentry students be differentiated from their traditional peers by attributional style?
(2) Is gender a significant factor in the comparison of attributional styles of reentry and traditional students?
(3) Is there a relationship between gender and student status in terms of attributional style?

The total number of students required for conducting this research is expected to range between 75 and 100. Reentry students have become a growing and increasingly important factor on most college campuses; consequently, the collected data from this study will be used to gain a better understanding of these students.

Subjects will be informed in writing that numerical data from this study will remain available for future research purposes for the primary researcher, for faculty in the Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Unit of the College of Education at the University of Tennessee, and to their graduate students. This information is included in the required consent form.

III Description of Subjects

All subjects will be adult volunteers (over 18 years of age), who are students enrolled in classes at the University of Tennessee.

Subjects for this study population are expected to come from the following:
Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Unit of the College of Education
College of Social Work
College of Liberal Arts

IV Procedures

Upon approval of the Committee for Research Participation, initial contact will be made by the student researcher with instructors at the Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Unit of the College of Education at the University of Tennessee to

ask for permission and approval to approach their students about becoming research participants. The remaining colleges will be contacted shortly thereafter.

With the permission of the participating instructor, the student researcher will administer the assessments at the close of a mutually agreed-upon class time. Those instructors who wish to do so, may administer the assessments themselves.

All potential subjects will be told orally that there is no penalty for nonparticipation, nor for partially completed forms; nor are there any gratuities for full participation. This same information is available a second time for participants within the consent form.

Following an agreement to participate, each subject will be given: (1) a brief demographic questionnaire, and (2) the Attributional Style Questionnaire. Copies of the consent form, the demographic questionnaire, and the Attributional Style Questionnaire are attached. Total time required for a participant to fill out the assessment package is less than 20 minutes.

Data from the questionnaires and the inventories will be analyzed as group data with appropriate statistical tests.

V. Specific Risks and Protection Measures

There are no expected physical or emotional risks in this study. The Attributional Style Questionnaire is a professionally constructed, and widely used, assessment. Confidentiality and privacy rights are maintained for each subject by not requesting signatures on any of the questionnaires. Completed assessments will be stored in locked cabinets in 113 Claxton, University of Tennessee.

VI Benefits vs. Risks

Benefits are directed first to the population of reentry students as a whole, and second to the teachers and institutions that serve those students directly. Possible benefits include, but are not limited to:

new information that may increase the well-being of reentry students at a personal level
suggestions about specific and beneficial ways for teachers to interact with reentry students
new understandings that will help universities meet the needs of reentry students.

There are no apparent risks to any participants.

VII Method of Obtaining Informed Consent from Subjects

Subjects will be informed orally, either by their instructors or by the researcher, about this study prior to the actual day of participation. The information will be repeated on the day of participation. In addition, each subject must read and sign a written informed consent directly attached to the questionnaires before filling out any of the assessments.

VIII Qualifications of the Investigator

The investigator is a doctoral student in counseling psychology and is personally conducting the phases of the research under close supervision by the faculty advisor.

IX Adequacy of Facilities to Support Research

All questionnaires and assessments will be completed in university settings.

X Responsibility of the Project Director

By the compliance with the policies established by The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Committee on Research Participation, the project director subscribes to the principles stated in the "The Belmont Report" and standards of professional ethics in all research development, and related activities involving human subjects under the auspices of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

a. Approval will be obtained from the University Committee prior to instituting any change in the research project.
b. Development of any unexpected risks will be reported to the University Committee.
c. A status report (Form D) will be submitted at 12-month intervals or as requested attesting to the current status of the project.

Student
Investigator

_____
name

_____ _____
signature date

Faculty
Advisor

_____
name

_____ _____
signature date

XI Departmental Review

Comments/Recommendations:

The application described above has been subjected to departmental review and has been approved.

Department Head

_____
name

_____ _____
signature date

Chair, Departmental Review Committee

_____
name

_____ _____
signature date

Faculty Advisor

_____
name

_____ _____
signature date

Appendix E

Personal Information

This survey is confidential. No signature is required.

Please describe your current status as a student

1 Are you enrolled as:

❑a fulltime student, or, as ❑a part time student

2 List any degrees acquired since high school _____

3 Degree currently working toward:

❑PhD/EdD ❑MS/MA ❑BS/BA ❑Associate

❑ Other (please name)_____ ❑ None

4 Name of your current program and department (if not applicable, write NA)

_____

5 How many years **between** your high school attendance and your **first** entry into higher education (if 0, write 0) _____

6 Beginning with your first entry into college, has your college experience (counting fulltime and part time), been *continuous* (no break longer than one year)?

❑ Yes ❑ No

If No, in what year did your college attendance begin

_____,

in what year(s) did attendance stop _____,

and in what year(s) did attendance resume? _____.

Personal History

7 Please describe your racial/ethnic identity. If you are bi-racial or multi-ethnic, *check all boxes that apply.*

❑ Black ❑ Asian ❑ American Indian ❑ Hispanic ❑ White

8 Are you presently employed?

❑ Yes, fulltime ❑ Yes, part time ❑ No

9 Your age: ____

10 Gender ❑ Male ❑ Female

11 Current marital status:

❑ Single ❑ Married ❑ Married but separated
❑ Divorced ❑ Widowed

12 When you were in **elementary school**, what were your:

Favorite subjects: _____
_____

Least favorite subjects: _____
_____

13 When you were in **high school**:

Favorite subjects: _____
_____

Least favorite subjects: _____
_____

Family History

14 Parents'/Guardians' education *(check highest level completed)*

Mother or Female Guardian:

❑ grade school ❑ high school ❑ trade school ❑ college

Father or Male Guardian:

❑ grade school ❑ high school ❑ trade school ❑ college

15 How would you describe the income of your family during your childhood?

❑ poor ❑ low average ❑ average
❑ above average ❑ well-above average

Appendix F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You have been invited to participate in a study about college students. Your participation consists of filling out a demographic questionnaire and the Attributional Style Questionnaire. The only paper you need to sign is this consent form, which will be stored separately from the other forms. Do not sign your name on any of the questionnaires. No one other than you will be able to identify your specific answers, as all data collected in this research will be reported as group data. All completed forms for this research, including the consent forms, are kept in locked filing cabinets in the Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Unit of the College of Education of the University of Tennessee.

The data collected today will be used by the primary researcher towards the completion of a specific study currently in progress. However, it is also possible that stored data from this study will be used at a later date, either for an extended study by the primary researcher, or for future studies by the faculty of the Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Unit of the College of Education, or by their graduate students. Nevertheless, your identity as a participant will always be protected, as it will never be possible to identify your questionnaires after you have removed the consent form. Your contribution today is very much appreciated and may be important in the future experiences of other college students.

There is no penalty for nonparticipation or for partially completed forms; nor are there any gratuities for participation. The questionnaires are nonthreatening. However, if at any time, you do not wish to complete any of the questionnaires, you are free to STOP without any penalty or acknowledgement. Time required to finish the questionnaires will probably be 15-20 minutes.

If you are interested in the final results of the research, or have any further questions concerning this study or your participation, you may contact Linda Blair or Dr. Marla Peterson at 974-5131, 108 Claxton Education Building, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, 37916.

I have voluntarily agreed to participate in this research.

_____ _____

Signature Date

After you have signed this document, remove it from the questions and continue. Turn in the consent form separately from the other documents.

Appendix G

February 1, 1998

Dear Fellow Student,

Like yourself, I am a student at the University of Tennessee. I have returned to complete a personally important degree after an absence from school for several years. I am presently in the midst of a research project that will compare students who have been away from school for awhile, like myself, with more traditional students, and have received the necessary permission from the Committee for Research Participation to conduct this research.

For this research to be meaningful, I need a large number, and a wide variety, of participants. It would be very helpful to me if you would sign the enclosed consent form, fill out the demographic questionnaire and the Attributional Style Questionnaire, and return all to me in the enclosed, postage paid envelope. Once I receive your mailing, the consent form and the completed questionnaires will be stored separately in locked filing cabinets in Claxton Addition on campus. At that point, it will no longer be feasible for anyone to identify which questionnaires were yours. All collected data will be analyzed as group data. No data will be analyzed individually.

The findings of the study could be especially significant for reentry/returning students, perhaps pointing out academic needs that have previously been overlooked.

The collection of this data is one of my last hurdles. I am very grateful for your participation.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Linda Blair

Appendix H

Table H1

Favorite and Least Favorite High School Subjects of Traditional and Reentry Students

	Traditional		Reentry	
subject	favorite	least favorite	favorite	least favorite
accounting - ac			1	
agriculture - ag	1			
algebra -- al	8	8	2	2
Arabic - ab				
art -- ar	11	2	3	
band - bd	1			
biology -- bi	5	5	6	7
botany - bo			1	
business -- bu	2		1	
calculus -- ca		8		
chemistry - cm	2	7		5
child &family studies - cf			1	
choir - ch	1	1	1	
civics -- ci			1	2
computers -- cp	1			
dance - da			1	
drama -- dr	1		1	
ecology - eg	1			
economics -- ec	2	3		
electronics - el			1	
English -- en	43	32	23	18
French -- Fr	5		1	3
foreign lang -- fl	3	3	1	1
football - ft			1	
geography -- gg	1		1	
geology -- gl			1	
geometry -- gm	2	5		2

Table H1 (cont.)

Favorite and Least Favorite High School Subjects of Traditional and Reentry Students

	Traditional		Reentry	
	favorite	least favorite	favorite	least favorite
German - gr	1		1	
government - gv	2			1
grammar - ga	1			
gym -- pe	3	4	4	6
handwriting - hw				
health -- he				1
history -- hs	22	27	19	7
home ec - hc			1	1
Japanese - ja	1			
journalism -- jn	1		1	
language arts -lg	1			1
Latin -- la	2		1	1
literature - lt			1	
mechanical drawing - md	1			
math -- mh	25	36	16	29
music -- mu	8		5	
philosophy - pi	1			
photography - pt	1			
physics -- ph		7	1	
political science -- po	1			
psychology -- ps	4			
public speaking - pb				
radio broadcasting - rb				
reading -- rd				
recess - re				
religion - rl	1			
rotc - ro				
Russian - ru	1			
science -- sc	24	22	13	9
secretarial - sl				
speech -- se				
sports -- so				

Table H1 (cont.)

Favorite and Least Favorite High School Subjects of Traditional and Reentry Students

	Traditional		Reentry	
	favorite	least favorite	favorite	least favorite
spelling - sp				1
social studies -- ss	2	1	3	2
Spanish -- sa	5	3	1	1
statistics - st		1	1	
technical education - te	1			
theology -- th	1			
trigonometry - tr	1		2	
typing - ty				
writing, creative writing, composition - wr.	1			

Table H2

Favorite and Least Favorite Elementary School Subjects of Traditional and Reentry Students

	Traditional		Reentry	
	favorite	least favorite	favorite	least favorite
accounting - ac				
agriculture - ag				
algebra -- al				
Arabic - ab		1		
art -- ar	13		3	15
band - bd				
biology -- bi				1
botany - bo				
business -- bu				
calculus -- ca				
chemistry - cm				
child &family studies - cf				
choir - ch				
civics -- ci				
computers -- cp				
dance - da				
drama -- dr				
ecology - eg				
economics -- ec				
electronics - el				
English -- en	23	20	16	12
French -- Fr.				
foreign lang -- fl				1
football - ft				
geography -- gg	1	1	2	3
geology -- gl				
geometry -- gm				5
German - gr				
government - gv				
grammar - ga			1	1
gym -- pe	6	4	6	5

Table H2 (cont.)

Favorite and Least Favorite Elementary School Subjects of Traditional and Reentry Students

	Traditional		Reentry	
	favorite	least favorite	favorite	least favorite
handwriting - hw	2			1
health -- he	2	1		1
history -- hs	7	10		6
home ec - hc		1		
Japanese - ja				
journalism -- jn				
language arts - lg	5			1
Latin -- la		1		
literature - lt		1		
mechanical drawing - md				
math -- mh	45	45	17	35
music -- mu	3		6	2
philosophy - pi				1
photography - pt				
physics -- ph				
political science -- po				
psychology -- ps				1
public speaking - pb				
radio broadcasting - rb				
reading -- rd	22	3	17	2
recess - re	11	2	5	2
religion - rl		1		1
rotc - ro				
Russian - ru				
science -- sc	31	26	16	17
secretarial - sl				
speech -- se				
sports -- so				1
spelling - sp	15	10	4	3
social studies -- ss.	12	17	3	3
Spanish -- sa				
statistics - st				

Table H2 (cont.)

Favorite and Least Favorite Elementary School Subjects of Traditional and Reentry Students

	Traditional		Reentry	
	favorite	least favorite	favorite	least favorite
technical education - te				
theology -- th				
trigonometry - tr				
typing - ty				
writing, creative writing, composition - wr..	1	1	1	

High School Favorite Subject

	Total	Expected Scores		(A-E) squared/E	
		Trad	Reentry	Trad	Reentry
Math	55	35.3	19.7	0.01	0.02
Science	51	32.7	18.3	0.09	0.16
Art	14	9.0	5.0	0.45	0.81
English	70	44.9	25.1	0.03	0.05
Foreign Lang.	22	14.1	7.9	1.07	1.91
History	41	26.3	14.7	0.71	1.27
Social Studies	12	7.7	4.3	0.06	0.11
Music	17	10.9	6.1	0.08	0.14
	282				

$\chi^2 = 6.97006$; df = 7
Critical value .05 = 14.07

High School Least Favorite Subject

	Total	Expected Scores		(A-E) squared/E	
		Trad	Reentry	Trad	Reentry
Math	93	60.6	32.4	0.01	0.01
Science	62	40.4	21.6	0.01	0.02
English	51	33.2	17.8	0.05	0.08
Foreign Lang.	13	8.5	4.5	0.26	0.48
History	34	22.2	11.8	1.06	1.98
Social Studies	11	7.2	3.8	0.66	1.22
	264				

$\chi^2 = 5.82947$; df = 5
Critical value .05 = 11.07

Grade School Favorite Subject

	Total	Expected Scores		(A-E) squared/E	
		Trad	Reentry	Trad	Reentry
Art	28	17.9	10.1	1.35	2.40
English	39	25.0	14.0	0.15	0.27
Math	62	39.7	22.3	0.72	1.27
Reading	39	25.0	14.0	0.35	0.62
Science	47	30.1	16.9	0.03	0.05
Spelling	19	12.2	6.8	0.66	1.18
Social Studies	18	11.5	6.5	0.02	0.04
Music	9	5.8	3.2	0.01	0.02
	261				

$X^2 = 9.13837$; df = 7
Critical value .05 = 14.07

Grade School Lease Favorite subject

	Total	Expected Scores		(A-E) squared/E	
		Trad	Reentry	Trad	Reentry
English	32	20.1	11.9	0.00	0.00
History	16	10.0	6.0	0.00	0.00
Math	80	50.2	29.8	0.54	0.91
Science	43	27.0	16.0	0.04	0.06
Spelling	13	8.2	4.8	0.42	0.70
Social Studies	20	12.5	7.5	1.58	2.66
	204				

$X^2 = 6.89613$; df = 5
Critical value .05 = 11.07

VITA

After being a nonstudent for several years, Linda Blair returned to school for a masters in community agency counseling, which she received from the University of Tennessee in 1986. A few years after that, she returned to the University of Tennessee, this time to work towards a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology, which she expects to receive fall semester, 1998. It was during these times of her return to school that Linda became interested in reentry students and the nature of the reentry experience, especially as contrasted with the experiences of traditional students.

Linda's professional life has included mental health work with rural and impoverished people, clients affected by child abuse, and alternatives to prison programs. Linda is presently employed as a counselor in the Counseling Center of Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee.

Linda's much-beloved family includes a husband, grown children and stepchildren, and several pets. She also enjoys being active in numerous civic organizations, and in her spare time enjoys sewing and cooking.