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The Factors Affecting the Retention of Adult Basic Education Teachers in Kentucky

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THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE RETENTION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
TEACHERS IN KENTUCKY

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By
Kay Combs
August 2015
THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE RETENTION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN KENTUCKY

Date Recommended 5-4-2015

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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents. My father, George Washington Combs, supported this endeavor financially because of his belief in education. His greatest desire was to see this milestone in my life, but he passed away before the completion. However, during his last week, I was able to share with him I was defending and finishing and his smile will always be with me. He was so proud of this accomplishment for our family and the help Western Kentucky University provided to our family. Also, to my mother, Phyllis Jean Combs, she has supported me emotionally through this journey and stood by me as I made the many trips to Bowling Green. Their unwavering support and love have allowed me to finish this part of my journey.
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I first want to share my faith in the Lord. He has picked me up when I have been down in this journey. He has strengthened me when I was weak and could no longer pursue this goal. He opened doors that only He could have opened for me to be able to complete this journey.

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I want to thank my Cohort IV family for your encouragement. To my cohort friends, Rhonda Simpson and Mary Lloyd Moore, you both were always ready to provide the support needed in all our collaborative work. I am proud of you and I am glad to call you my friends.

Last, to my son, Joshua Hall, who I hope I inspire to achieve even greater things than I. His struggle has always been harder than I can ever imagine, but God has shown His light and grace. He has always believed in me and knows the struggles I have had. You are my rock. I hope you will believe there is nothing too great to achieve. All things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28).
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THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE RETENTION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN KENTUCKY

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Directed by: Jim Berger, Aaron Hughey, and Jie Zhang

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program Western Kentucky University

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that affect retention of adult basic education teachers in Kentucky. This qualitative study utilized data from interviews conducted with former or retired adult basic education teachers in Kentucky. Vroom's expectancy theory was examined as the theoretical framework to review the outcomes and their relationship to this theory.

Results from this investigation determined several significant findings, with low salary being the main determining factor that affects retention of adult basic education teachers in Kentucky. There are additional factors that affect retention of adult basic education teachers in Kentucky such as: (1) adult basic education teachers feeling underappreciated; (2) a perceived lower status of the profession in the field of education; and (3) budgeting issues resulting in many part-time teachers in the field.

The results from Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory in regard to the factors reveal a relationship does exist to some aspects of the theory. In regard to valence in Vroom’s theory, considering that the participants chose adult education because they needed a job and an income, valence explained 62% of the work motivation of the participants. However, in Vroom’s theory, expectancy is that an adult educator would continue to work because of a particular outcome, specifically, a positive outcome that leads to Vroom’s idea of instrumentality, which is a value of the second outcome associated with
the first. As the participants continued to work as an adult educator, the valence was less than expected which would be a -1 in understanding Vroom’s theoretical framework. When individuals no longer value the rewards of working, the motivation ceases to exist. At that time, they will choose to leave the position. However, even though there were few to no salary increases and only benefits for full time teachers, adult education instructors still continued to teach in the field, which conflicts with Vroom’s theory of instrumentality and work motivation.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Teacher turnover is widely acknowledged by researchers and practitioners to be one of the most significant problems in education. Exploring the nature and causes can assist policymakers in implementing appropriate strategies to decrease teacher turnover, to support quality teaching, and to increase student outcomes (Macdonald, 1999). In a study conducted by Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005), teacher quality was identified as one of the most important school determinants of student achievement gains. Sufficient research has been conducted on this topic in P-12 education to assert that quality teaching has a direct impact on student learning. Yet, this issue has not been sufficiently studied in the adult basic education (ABE) field in order to make that same claim with confidence.

This study is guided by Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory, which was developed as the theoretical framework for work and motivation and consists of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy – known as the VIE theory. Vroom asserted that human choice is based on logical reasoning, whereby an individual chooses to behave in a particular manner and to make specific choices based upon personal feelings or beliefs. Many times these choices are a result of the values and morals that have been instilled in individuals, as well as their current lifestyle choice.

In regard to the selection of the VIE theory for this current research, the basic premise is that individuals choose a career based on their needs and desires for specific intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. These are considered motivational factors, as individuals work well in the specific career they have chosen. Therefore, Vroom’s expectancy theory
is used as the theoretical framework to determine whether a relationship exists between this theory of motivation and retention of teachers in the ABE field.

The importance of teaching in education would suggest that, generally, quality teaching in an ABE classroom has a direct impact on student learning. The premise is that low teacher turnover has a direct relationship to enhanced quality teaching that will lead to successful student achievements.

Evidence gained by The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) determined in 1996 that K-12 teacher retention had become a national crisis, raising the question regarding whether a teacher shortage existed or whether teacher retention was a problem (NCTAF, 1996). Research conducted by Boe, Cook, and Sunderland (2008) indicated that a shortage of teachers was due to an extremely high rate of turnover, rather than to a low supply of qualified teachers. However, the high turnover rate creates a continuous need for qualified teachers. In addition, various studies have concluded that high teacher quality is the key to success in achieving positive student outcomes. Ferguson (1991) conducted a study of 900 school districts in Texas and concluded that student achievement increased in the districts that spent more money on teachers with strong literacy skills. In addition, Ferguson also determined that advanced student achievement resulted when districts hire more teachers (lower student/teacher ratio), retain experienced teachers and hire those with advanced training, as well as increase salaries of teachers.

Understanding the barriers and rewards in teaching can assist in further obtainment of methods to retain teachers. This research also shares that stability and retention of ABE teachers are crucial in providing the results needed for increased
student outcomes. These studies emphasize that teacher turnover directly affects not only the quality of teaching in the classroom but also student achievement. Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the retention and turnover rate of teachers in the K-12 system. However, few have been conducted to determine the attrition rate and factors affecting retention of adult basic education (ABE) teachers.

Young, Fleischman, Fitzgerald, and Morgan (1995) discovered more frequent turnover of part-time ABE staff than full-time staff: 80% of full time, but only half of part-time instructors had taught in ABE for more than three years, indicating that half of all part-time instructors had taught in adult ABE for less than three years. In a study conducted by Smith, Hofer, Gillespie, Solomon, and Rowe (2003) of professional development of ABE teachers, a self-selected sample of ABE teachers were followed for 18 months. During the 18-month study, 13 teachers (12.5%) reported they had left ABE during that time. Also, 91 ABE teachers (87.5%) still worked in ABE, and 82 (79%) still taught in a program. However, the remaining nine (9%) were not teaching, but worked in an ABE-related organization. This represented a teacher turnover rate of 21% over approximately 18 months. Teacher turnover in K-12, according to Smith et al., was approximately 14.3% per year, but more than half of this amount (7%) transferred to another school, which was essentially a 7% teacher turnover average for K-12. In addition, research conducted by Ingersoll (2001) identified a 7% annual turnover (exit transition) of K-12 teachers who actually left teaching. Based on these data, the turnover rate of ABE teachers was approximately 14% greater than their K-12 counterparts. These data clearly illustrated that turnover rate of teachers in the ABE field was significantly higher than in K-12 education.
Problem Statement

Limited research can be found on the attrition rate of ABE teachers, despite clear evidence by Smith et al. (2003) and Ingersoll (2001) that these educators do not remain in the field for significant lengths of time. The evidence revealed a 14% increase in ABE teachers who left the field, when compared to K-12 teachers. In addition, limited studies have been conducted in the ABE field to determine factors that may affect the retention rate of ABE teachers. As the world of adult education changes and morphs into an even more complex world of academics, it becomes crucial for ABE teachers to be retained in the field of adult education. The retention of those teachers who are skilled and knowledgeable in their profession is of utmost importance due to changes in Kentucky’s legislation. The Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation (Senate Bill 1) in 2009 mandating more rigorous academic standards for schools. Included in this legislation were changes to adopt the Common Core Standards for adult educators in Kentucky. Kentucky Adult Education has since adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. This mandate for the increased level of adult education student achievement is paramount to the importance of the research in this current study.

The latest Kentucky research on adult literacy figures is the 2003 Kentucky State Assessment of Adult Literacy. This report stated that the percentage of adults ages 25-39 with below basic prose and document literacy was lower in Kentucky compared to the nation (United States Department of Education, 2003). These data are concerning, as this report indicated that adults in Kentucky are at a lower literacy level, and, due to the passing of Senate Bill 1, adult education programs are mandated to increase the literacy level to an even higher standard. This significantly affects adults in successfully
obtaining the jobs and skills needed in the workforce. It is also significant to have trained adult educators to assist students in meeting the new educational mandates.

Retaining qualified and trained ABE instructors in Kentucky has been critical over the past 15 years in order to enhance student success and program outcomes. Currently, ABE teachers in Kentucky can be hired with only a bachelor’s degree in any field, and little to no teaching experience or education background. Kentucky’s adult education program went through an aggressive change in 2011 due to the alignment of the adult education curriculum with the National Common Core Standards integrated into the new 2014 GED® test. These changes solidify the need to explore the factors of retention of ABE teachers in Kentucky.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to use Vroom’s expectancy theory to determine whether a relationship exists between factors that affect retention of ABE teachers in Kentucky and Vroom’s expectancy theory. The following research questions guide this study:

From the perspective of former ABE teachers in Kentucky:

1. What factors affect the retention of ABE teachers?
2. What are the perceived barriers to becoming an adult education instructor?
3. What are the perceived primary rewards of being an adult education instructor?
4. What are the differences between part-time and full-time teachers who leave the field of ABE?
Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is the discovery of the presence of a relationship between Vroom’s expectancy theory and teacher retention of ABE instructors in Kentucky. In addition, the results will be analyzed to determine the factors that lead to attrition of ABE instructors in Kentucky. Vroom (1995) shared the hedonistic doctrine that individuals are assumed to behave in ways that maximize certain types of positive outcomes (rewards, satisfiers, positive reinforcements, etc.) and minimize negative outcomes (punishments, dissatisfiers, negative reinforcements, etc.). This study allows for the exploration of Vroom’s motivational factors, such as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, in connection to work and retention of ABE instructors in Kentucky. The results can assist professionals in the field of adult education in maximizing the importance of quality teaching of ABE instructors to obtain successful student outcomes. Through the use of Vroom’s expectancy theory as the theoretical framework for understanding teacher retention, the factors that motivate individuals to work will be analyzed.

By understanding these data, those in the field of adult education in Kentucky can make decisions to assist the ABE instructors in enhancing their retention in the field, which ultimately will increase teacher quality and lead to increased student outcomes. Research in the K-12 educational system has shown that, with sustained teacher retention, student outcomes improve.
Operational Definitions

**ABE (Adult Basic Education)** - Education for adults whose inability to speak, read, or write the English language constitutes a substantial impairment of their ability to obtain or retain employment, with a view to making them less likely to become dependent on others, improving their ability to benefit from occupational training and otherwise increasing their opportunities for more profitable and productive employment, and making them better able to meet their adult responsibilities” (Eyre, 2013, p. 38).

**Expectancy** - “A momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome” (Vroom, 1995, p. 20).

**Valence** - “Affective orientation toward particular outcomes. An outcome is positively valent when the person prefers attaining it to not attaining it (that is, he/she prefers x to not x)” (Vroom, 1995, p. 18).

**Instrumentality** - “is an outcome-outcome association. It can take values ranging from -1, indicating a belief that attainment of the second outcome is certain without the first outcome and impossible with it, to +1, indicating that the first outcome is believed to be a necessary and sufficient condition for the attainment of the second outcome” (Vroom, 1995, p. 21).

**Phenomenological Perspective** - “is the process of searching for the essential, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image, and meaning” (Creswell, 1998, p. 52).
Teacher Turnover - “is major changes in a teacher's assignment from one school year to the next. Turnover includes three components: (1) leaving teaching employment (commonly referred to as attrition); (2) moving to a different school (commonly referred to as school transfer or as teacher migration); and (3) teaching area transfer, such as the transfer of a teacher from an assignment in special education to one in general education” (Boe et al., 2008, p. 2).

Conclusion

Chapter I included an overview of the lack of data on teacher retention in the ABE field. This chapter also described specific reasons for attrition of K-12 teachers, with implications that may attribute to similar reasons for attrition of ABE instructors. The significance of teacher quality and student achievement was described. Last, this chapter included specific reasons for implementing Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory as the theoretical framework for motivational factors for continuous employment in the field of adult education.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to use Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory to determine whether a relationship exists between factors that affect retention of ABE teachers in Kentucky and Vroom’s expectancy theory. To understand the research that has been conducted prior to this study and the way in which Vroom’s expectancy theory guides this research, this chapter examines the literature for previous research, as well as Vroom’s theory. This chapter outlines relevant literature and research of teacher retention. First, the history and past research will be reviewed on factors affecting teacher retention in education. Second, a comparison will be included on the research that has been conducted in the K-12 educational sector in relation to the ABE field in teacher retention to include rewards and barriers in the education field. Last, Vroom’s expectancy theory will be examined to provide direction of the theoretical framework that will be implemented during this study to determine the existence of a relationship between this theory and retention of teachers in the ABE field.

Historical Perspective of Teacher Retention in K-12 Education

Literature has been available for many years on the impact of factors affecting teacher retention in the K-12 educational system; however, factors affecting teacher retention of ABE teachers, specifically in Kentucky, are sparse. Shen (1997) reviewed extensive research on teacher attrition and concluded that teachers who leave the profession are either disheartened beginners with only two or three years in the classroom or those who are ready to retire. Research into reasons for teacher attrition assists
practitioners in sharing insight for policymakers and administrators to make effective
decisions for retaining teachers.

Tye and O’Brien (2002) conducted a study of California teachers that provided
evvidence that the increased attrition among experienced California teachers could be
attributed to the increased testing required in the state. A questionnaire was sent to 900
randomly selected individuals who had completed a teaching credential at Chapman
University in California during 1990-1995, and who would have been teaching from 6 to
10 years. An interesting aspect of this research was that Tye and O’Brien compared this
study to research in 1962 by Meryman, who conducted interviews with teachers on their
reasons for leaving the field of education. Several similarities and few differences were
found, even though a 40-year span had elapsed, and many changes had occurred
throughout the world during that time frame. However, many comments made by
teachers concerning teacher attrition in 1962 were strikingly similar to that which
teachers believed to be true about teacher attrition in 2002. The results of the survey
conducted by Tye and O’Bien, in rank order, are the reasons teachers had already left the
teaching profession, or would consider leaving, are presented in Table 1.
Table 1

Reasons Teachers Left Teaching or Would Consider Leaving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Already Left Teaching</th>
<th>Would Consider Leaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accountability</td>
<td>1. Salary considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increased paperwork</td>
<td>2. Increased paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student attitudes</td>
<td>3. Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No parent support</td>
<td>4. Low status of the profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Unresponsive administration</td>
<td>5. Unresponsive administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Low status of the profession</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Salary considerations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Tye & O’Brien, 2002, p. 3]

All factors listed in Table 1 are similar when comparing the interviews conducted by Meryman (1962) and those conducted in 2001 by Tye and O’Brien (2002). These data show that, historically, factors affecting retention of teachers have changed little over the years; many are the same, including some additional factors that affect the retention of teachers as a profession. Also that which is asked of policymakers today is the same as in 1962: a change to be made in public attitudes and recognition that teaching is one of the most important occupations in the country (Tye & O’Brien, 2002). While considerable research on this subject can be found in the K-12 arena, little exists specific to adult basic education.
Research Studies in Teacher Turnover

The factors affecting teacher retention in education have been examined in various research studies conducted in K-12 education programs, as well as various vocational and higher education systems. Student retention and attrition are of great concern in any school system. Macdonald (1999) posited that teacher turnover is widely accepted as a problem by researchers and practitioners internationally. Therefore, a multitude of studies have been conducted on understanding various reasons for the factors that might affect teacher retention in the public school systems.

K-12 Teacher Turnover

Current educational theory contends that one of the pivotal causes of low school performance is the inability of schools to effectively retain qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). In a survey conducted by Ingersoll (2001), more than 40% of all departing K-12 teachers indicated they left the profession due to job dissatisfaction (low salary, lack of support from administration, problems with student discipline, or lack of decision-making power). Ingersoll also identified lack of decision making as a factor in teacher attrition, noting that personal reasons (departures for pregnancy, child rearing, health problems, and family moves) more often were reported as reasons for turnover than retirement or staffing actions (33% of migration and 45% of attrition). Finally, Ingersoll’s study concluded that 42% of all departing teachers reported reasons for leaving to be either job dissatisfaction or the desire to pursue a better position, another career, or to improve career opportunities within or outside of education. Teachers who migrated to other schools listed low salaries, lack of support from the school administration, student discipline problems, and lack of teacher influence over decision-making as the primary
reasons underlying their move to other schools. Likewise, dissatisfaction most often was reported as due to low salaries, lack of support from the school administration, lack of student motivation, and student discipline problems (Ingersoll, 2001).

In a survey of 1700 K-12 teachers, Bacharach, Bauer, and Shedd (1986) found that teachers felt they lacked critical resources (specifically, time and space); had minimal involvement in school decision making; and had minimal communication with administrators. Rosenholtz (1986) conducted a study on the degree of collaboration in school contexts and found that those schools with higher collaboration had teachers with a higher level of commitment to working in education. Gonzalez (1995) reported that, overall, the research on teacher turnover presented the following criteria of an individual more likely to leave the teaching profession: young (under 30) female, mid-upper-SES, minimal teaching experience but high scores on teaching exam, low commitment to teaching, and poor coping strategies. These factors are especially relevant when the following other factors are present: teaching in high school or special education with a large class size or heavy workload, an unsupportive administrator, considerable paperwork, an ambiguous role, few job rewards, and lack of decision-making opportunities. In addition, low salary may be a key reason for high turnover. Median annual earnings of K-12 teachers with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree were $51,960 to $53,230 in 2012-2013 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). The same source, by contrast, listed median annual earnings for adult literacy teachers with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree (including GED instructors) to be $46,530. However, of interest would be the comparison of this figure with the current salaries of ABE/GED instructors in Kentucky, who often work for very low wages, are part time and have few to no benefits.
Boe et al. (2008) investigated teacher turnover using data sources of teacher self-reports to three versions of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Schools and Staffing Surveys (1990-1991, 1993-1994, and 1991-2000) and their year-long longitudinal components, the Teacher Follow-up Survey (1991-1992, 1994-1995, and 2000-2001). The results revealed that the annual attrition percentages of both public school special education teachers (SETs) and general education teachers (GETs) increased from 5% to 8% during the 1990s. However, the overall difference in attrition between SETs and GETs was not statistically significant. The main differences consisted of the fact that more than twice the annual percentage of SETs (than GETs) with 13 to 24 years of experience left the profession, whereas more GETs (than SETs) left after 24 years of experience. In addition, these data were examined to determine whether teachers left at a higher rate than in other vocations. No evidence was found that public school teachers left employment at a higher rate than individuals from nonbusiness employers nationally. Boe et al. also studied the status of former teachers one year after leaving the field. Based on the annual averages for all teachers (i.e., SETs and GETs combined) during the 1990s, approximately 58,000 (34%) of 173,000 leaving the profession assumed nonteaching positions in education, whereas only 13,000 found employment in non-education occupations. Many who left public education did not secure better job opportunities in vocations outside of education. Of those remaining, 41,000 were engaged primarily in homemaking and child care, whereas an additional 18,000 were retired.

**Attrition of K-12 Teachers**

Inman and Marlow (2004) examined the reported attitudes of beginning teachers in public school settings to identify perceived positive aspects of teaching as factors that
may lead to teacher retention. The sample was composed of individuals from five schools per county randomly selected in Georgia. The participants completed the Professional Attitude Survey, a 10-item instrument designed to gather information regarding 21 characteristics related to teacher career stability. Forty percent (200) of the 500 returned surveys were classified as originating from beginning teachers with fewer than 10 years of experience. For purpose of comparison, data related to support systems within the professional environment were analyzed by category according to a range of teaching years. Phase 1 teachers were classified as having 0-3 years of experience, and Phase 2 teachers were classified as having 4-9 years of experience. The results indicated that salary was the only external factor identified by Phase 1 teachers as a reason for remaining in the profession. The majority of Phase 2 teachers indicated that employment factors played a significant role in determining whether they would continue teaching. Perceived job security was the highest ranking employment factor indicated by both Phase 1 and Phase 2 teachers. Differences between the two groups indicated that, earlier in the profession, fewer teachers perceived that the profession carried less prestige than they originally expected. Phase 2 teachers indicated perceived professional prestige as much worse than expected. Professionalism and prestige in any field are attributed to self-efficacy, and motivational factors exist when individuals feel valued because of what they do and how their work is valued. However, other variables in teaching can play an important factor as well.

A study was conducted by Ingle (2009) to determine whether subject matter influenced teachers’ decisions to leave the field of education, focusing on attrition of K-12 teachers. The researcher examined those teachers who provided math and reading
instruction matched to students enrolled in the relevant subject area in grades 3-10 in a medium sized, urban school district, the Oakwood County School District in Florida. The researcher attempted to determine whether teachers with high value-added scores (as a measure of teacher quality) remained or left a tested subject grade. This study encompassed teachers who provided math and reading instruction linked to students in grades 3-10 from 2000 to 2005. This study outlined factors related to reasons for teacher attrition in a tested subject and grade. Some of the factors considered were race, age, and gender of the teachers, as well as teachers’ educational backgrounds and those who taught in challenging areas such as English for Speakers of Other Languages or special education. The results of Ingle’s study concluded a negative relationship between reading teachers’ value-added scores and attrition ($p < 0.05$). However, a ratio of 0.999 indicated a decrease in teachers who left the subject area of math. In addition, Ingle concluded that no significant relationship was found between value-added scores and teachers who transferred to other schools. This result is significant for school administrators and policymakers, as evidence that schools retain more teachers in the grade levels that are tested.

This specific study maintained that a higher level of professionalism and prestige may be based on subject matter taught. Due to the achievement of self-efficacy, the likelihood exists that this factor would be inherent to teachers who remain in the field. Therefore, alternative factors may contribute to the reasons teachers leave the field of education. Compensation was the main factor specified in the research of historical perspectives in retention of K-12 educators.
Eberts, Hollenbeck, and Stone (2002) studied merit pay systems in school districts and their influence on student achievement. The researchers compared two high schools in the same county. One of the high schools implemented a merit pay system in 1996 for its teachers as a reward for student retention. The other continued the traditional compensation system. The researchers provided a difference-in-differences analysis that merit pay increased retention of teachers. The research question that was posed considered the reason that incentive-based reforms, such as merit pay, have not produced better results in student learning. The researchers obtained data for a five-year period (1994-99) that encompassed two years prior to, and two years after, the implementation of the performance incentive system. A difference-in-differences analysis was conducted of several student outcomes including course completion, class attendance, grade point average, and passing rates conditional on course completion. This study showed that, although compensation had a positive effect on teacher retention, it did not necessarily have a positive effect on student outcomes, such as GPA, attendance, and course completion, and did not have any effect on teacher behavior, even when teachers were retained. Therefore, other factors should be considered, such as quality of teaching, which would impact positive student outcomes or additional teacher support.

Martinez, Frick, Kim, and Fried (2010) studied a creative solution to teacher retention. The researchers hypothesized the potential impact for improving teacher retention by evaluating senior citizens who volunteered in a school setting through Experience Corps. Interviews were conducted with six principals, 20 teachers, and six retired educators participating in the Experience Corps Baltimore program. Such factors included teacher satisfaction and effort level and precursors of attrition, including
absenteeism. The researchers also hypothesized that retired educators who volunteered in the Experience Corps program could bring added benefits. Results of this study led one to believe that added teacher support would increase teacher retention and student outcomes. In addition, support from veteran educators could make a difference for teachers currently experiencing issues previously encountered by others and could provide needed assistance and advice.

Overall, the previously discussed studies have alluded to various factors that may have led teachers to decide to leave the field of education. The following study was conducted to determine whether one specific factor might have led teachers to leave the profession.

**Long-term Study of Teacher Retention in K-12**

Certo and Fox (2002) investigated teacher attrition and retention in seven Virginia school divisions representing urban, suburban, and rural localities. Focus groups were conducted with teachers who primarily had worked in their school divisions less than eight years. This study was unique in that national data have reported most teachers leave at the five-year mark (NCES, 1998). Therefore, data were solicited from long-term teachers (more than five years). Teachers reported that their colleagues left primarily due to the inadequacy of the complete package of pay, benefits, and other incentives. Teachers referred to salary 69 times. One third (23) of the comments were general statements that teachers receive inadequate pay. In a NCES study (1997c), teachers also identified salary as the second most common reason for leaving. Additionally, the study concluded that two thirds of the comments were specific and related to the following: external employment opportunities; and building-level administration issues such as: (a)
spending time in classrooms/visibility, (b) listening to teachers' needs and positions, (c) professional development, (d) resources and supplies, (e) understanding special needs children, and (f) teacher placement practices (Certo & Fox, 2002).

The aforementioned empirical studies were conducted in order to seek answers and provide data associated with various aspects of teacher retention affecting student achievement. The purposes are inter-related to teacher retention and its effect on the quality of student learning. All were unique in their own design, with a common focus. Inman and Marlow (2004) examined the reported attitudes of beginning teachers to identify perceived positive aspects of teaching as factors that may lead to teacher retention. In contrast, Ingle (2009) researched attrition of teachers through a value-added study to measure teacher quality and its relationship to attrition. Eberts et al. (2002) studied merit pay systems in school districts and their influence on student achievement. Martinez et al. (2010) reflected on a creative solution to teacher retention. The researchers hypothesized the potential impact for improving teacher retention by evaluating senior citizens who volunteered in a school setting. Last, Certo and Fox (2002) provided an impressive study of long-term teachers and the various factors they believed led to teachers leaving the field of education.

Teacher attrition has been studied heavily in the K-12 educational system as to the percentages of teachers who leave the field. Various reasons have been examined relative to their leaving the K-12 education system in an attempt to provide insight into reasons ABE teachers may leave the field of adult education. Understanding the profession of adult basic education may allow insight into the possible factors leading to teacher attrition.
History of ABE Teacher Qualifications

Many students do not earn their high school diploma through the traditional route. Many obstacles in children’s lives make it difficult to remain in school. However, students who drop out have the opportunity for a second chance to receive their high school diploma. Through an adult education program, adult learners, 16 and older can study and prepare for college, as well as study to receive a high school equivalency diploma, otherwise known as their General Educational Development (GED®) diploma. The experience of adult learners in an adult education center may be the first positive experience in which they feel they can become a successful, confident learner. These learners need an environment that can promote trust and self-esteem in order to create student success. “Therefore, ABE teachers need better support in order to provide high-quality instruction and services to students” (Smith & Hofer, 2003, p. xii).

A demand currently exists for ABE teachers to instruct students who return to an academic program to work toward achieving their college goals or their GED® diploma, or who need to learn to read, write, and speak English as their second language. A study conducted by Smith and Hofer (2003) revealed that few ABE teachers enter the field of adult education with a teaching certificate and teaching experience in an educational setting. Also, adult basic education teachers often are not required to possess a teaching certificate and, therefore, do not follow clear career paths into the field. Optimally, an adult education program strives to hire qualified teachers, but this frequently is not the case. Tolbert (2001), in a survey of state certification requirements, found that only 18 states required any type of certification of teachers in an ABE classroom. In their study, Smith and Hofer found that, not only are many ABE instructors not certified teachers, but
often they work under conditions that are not equipped for student learning and lack many of the supports, such as adequate curriculum and supportive administrators, that would assist them in performing at their highest level. Although many ABE instructors do not possess a teaching credential, they also do not receive the continuous professional development needed to prepare them as the quality teacher needed for successful student outcomes. “Programs’ beliefs about the purpose of ABE instruction, its curriculum development and assessment practices, and its policies on enrollment shape how teachers perform in their programs” (Smith & Hofer, 2003, p. xii). The greatest concern is the impact of low quality instruction and its concomitant effect on students. An essential component for the success of these students is to have experienced teachers. However, due to various factors, many ABE teachers leave the profession.

**Retention of ABE Teachers and Quality Teaching**

An additional study conducted by Smith and Hofer (2003) revealed the primary reasons ABE teachers leave the field of adult education. After interviewing 83 ABE teachers, their study revealed a very significant outcome for understanding student gains and student achievement in adult education. One of the significant responses by ABE teachers in the study was to share the primary reasons they would leave the field of adult basic education. Those reasons are illustrated on Table 2. Low wages was the primary reason ABE teachers said they would leave the field of ABE.
Table 2

*Primary Reason Teachers Say They Would Leave Adult Basic Education in the Future*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(n = 83) Primary Reason to Leave</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for more pay</td>
<td>16% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for some (or more) benefits</td>
<td>13% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retire; age</td>
<td>13% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for full-time work</td>
<td>12% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire work in another type of social Service</td>
<td>12% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for some (or more) job security</td>
<td>10% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to try a nonteaching or non-social-service career</td>
<td>7% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., lack of time, move, laid-off, return to school, etc.)</td>
<td>9% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for some (or more) opportunities for professional development growth</td>
<td>6% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to work in K-12</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Smith & Hofer, 2003, p. 156)

It is relevant to note that these data are almost in direct association with studies in regard to teacher retention of K-12 educators and the reasons they would leave the field of education. As student outcomes are significant in education, receiving fair compensation would reflect a primary reason educators would stay in the field of education, whether in K-12 or adult basic education, based on these studies. Recognizing
the barriers and rewards in teaching will further enhance the understanding of the motivational desires of an individual who would explore the field of teaching.

**Barriers to Teaching**

Much research has been conducted on the aspect of an individual’s motivation to teach. Based on this research, many reasons exist relative to an individual deciding to choose teaching as a career. But an exploration to determine any initial barriers to teaching is more difficult. Barriers to any profession are based initially on the ability to obtain the postsecondary education needed both intellectually and monetarily to pursue any career.

Pankratius and Young (1995) examined the pre-service teacher education program at the University of Nevada and noted that individuals bring preconceived ideas and beliefs about teaching and learning to the college classrooms. These necessarily do not accurately reflect the role of teaching and also the responsibility to learning. These prior beliefs are found to influence effective teaching to prepare learners and are found to be a barrier to teaching. Pankratius and Young developed an introductory course based on the constructivist principles of learning in order to unravel and address potential teachers’ prior knowledge, experience, and beliefs about teaching. This course assisted potential teachers in evaluating their attitudes about teaching and explored in depth the barriers to successful teaching and the active approach to learning. Through a questionnaire process, teachers were asked the reason they want to teach and had to internally evaluate their ideas and belief system. The premise of the course was for perspective teachers to understand the way in which teaching and learning are connected but different. Teachers
begin to evaluate their internal ideas of teaching and affectively reflect on any barrier they may have that may keep them from becoming an effective teacher.

Although little was found as to “barriers” to teaching prior to an individual choosing the profession, the Pankratius and Young (1995) research provided insight as to the initial step in understanding the barriers to becoming effective teachers. In addition, at the earliest point in the prospective teachers’ education journey, it allows for the individuals to actively reflect whether this is the chosen career for them based on the exposure to this introductory course. If this process was “required” for ABE teachers, it may also assist individuals in understanding that the field of adult education may not be their career of choice, and the turnover rate may not be as significant. Understanding the barriers to adult education is one of the next natural steps in this current study.

**Barriers to Teaching in ABE**

Unlike teachers who enter the field of education in the P-12 profession, adult educators often enter adult education sideways. P-12 educators have a formalized process of obtaining education for their field at most colleges and universities. However, very few opportunities are available for adult educators to obtain formalized education for the profession. ABE teachers often do not follow a direct career path into adult education, and many choose not to stay in the field for long due to various reasons such as working conditions, lack of professional development, support, and low wages (Smith & Hofer, 2003).

Few studies have been conducted in the ABE field in regard to barriers to adult education. Smith et al. (2003) conducted a study between 1998 and 2003 of 106 ABE teachers in order to gain knowledge of ABE professional development by collecting
information about background, programs, and work experiences of ABE teachers. Although the research was focused primarily on the understanding of the way in which ABE teachers change as a result of participating in professional development and the correlation of student outcomes, much knowledge was uncovered as to the barriers of adult educators. For example, many of the teachers were part time and worked in satellite sites in which they do not have the opportunity to talk with, or see, other teachers for weeks. This is contrary to teachers in the K-12 schools, who have opportunities to see other teachers, principals and teacher leaders that can assist in feedback for improvement or concerns. ABE teachers feel isolated and often receive minimal support and feedback from administrators, which is a significant barrier to individuals choosing to teach in adult education. Without the support from colleagues and administrators, it is difficult for teachers to believe they can achieve student success. Smith et al. believed that such situations have a detrimental effect on attracting adult educators into the ABE field. The overriding findings of their study, is that ABE teachers require better preparation, as well as support provided by administrators, in order to provide quality instruction to students. Based on these findings, one would be interested in understanding the reason that ABE teachers would want to, not only enter the field, but also stay in the field of adult education. Teachers have shared with researchers the many rewards for working in the field of education. Understanding these benefits furthers the knowledge of the reasons that teachers would select the ABE field as their career choice.

**Rewards Associated with Teaching**

Based on the research previously reviewed in this study, it has been noted that various rewards are associated with teaching in the K-12 system. These rewards have
been associated with the retention of teachers. Morales (1994) concluded that the various rewards are the ability of teachers to help others, to continue in the education environment, monetary rewards, and the flexibility of time commitments for personal growth and family stability.

Alastuey, Justice, Weeks, and Hardy (2005) conducted qualitative research to identify individuals’ decisions to enter teacher education programs based on their ideas of the rewards of teaching. Of the 32 credentialed teacher education graduates who participated in this study, data were gathered from themes that occurred relative to the incidents reported. Nine incident categories were identified; the top three were: (1) they loved children and teaching; (2) the benefits of the profession that included time off, flexible hours, and the coordination of their children’s school schedule with their work schedule; and (3) the career opportunity available with teaching, such as a steady income and job availability. Based on this and other research shared in this study, the rewards of teaching are believed to be initially intrinsic, with an essentially inherent passion for the profession.

Understanding the rewards of teaching in the K-12 profession may lead to an understanding of the parallel to the rewards of teaching in the adult education profession. Although the audience of learners may be of different ages, the individual reward of teaching may not be the same.

**Rewards Associated with the Profession of Adult Education**

Little research exists in regard to the rewards of teaching in adult education; yet, many individuals have remained in the field for several years. Smith et al. (2003) found that one of the main reasons ABE teachers remain in the field is the intrinsic reward of
believing they make a difference in someone’s life. This is by far one of the main factors that came to light during the study on the way in which professional development made a difference in adult educators. Ultimately, implementation of professional development, as well as continuous professional development to improve teaching strategies, had a positive impact with ABE teachers in student achievement.

Although few studies have been conducted in adult education relative to teacher rewards, many have been conducted in the various educational fields. The outcomes in these studies would lead to the conclusion that the same factors that contribute to the rewards of teachers in other educational fields would be comparable to those that affect the rewards for ABE instructors in Kentucky.

**Theoretical Foundations of Work and Motivation**

Various research studies have explored the different aspects of an individual’s decision to choose to work in specific professions. However, limited studies have focused on teacher retention using Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory as the framework to determine the factors affecting retention. This particular theoretical framework using Vroom’s VIE model will assist in understanding the reasons ABE teachers leave the field of adult education. Vroom first published his theory in 1964, in an attempt to develop a theoretical structure that could guide and be guided by empirical research in industrial and organizational psychology. Subsequent to that time, he has updated his theory over the past three decades and shared these insights in his 1995 edition. Vroom noted that disciplines have changed and have become more reflective and personal, with the overlying theme of implementing the theory to reside in the concepts of valence,
expectancy, and instrumentality, and the demonstration of their potential for organizing and guiding empirical research on the relationship between individuals and their work.

One of the main features that expectancy theory asserts is that human behavior is based on individuals’ personal opinions or beliefs (Vroom, 1995). Therefore, one would be led to believe that the decision of an individual to enter the adult education field was made as a result of the desire and reflection upon selecting this career, and was a rational choice among other possible careers.

One of the questions that Vroom (1995) explored in developing the framework was, “Is all behavior motivated?” (p. 9). Vroom’s theory considered motivation and the voluntary responses from individuals based on their behaviors. Vroom believed that, in the majority of responses, behavior was directed toward pleasure and away from pain. Vroom’s basis for his theory was the assertion that individuals seek pleasure and happiness as a way of life, which is a reflection of their choices. Therefore, people behave in ways that maximize certain types of outcomes (rewards, satisfiers, positive reinforcements, etc.) and minimize other outcomes (punishments, dissatisfiers, negative reinforcements, etc.). Vroom’s overall belief was that, when individuals experience positive outcomes to a response, they are considered satisfiers; when individuals’ outcomes have negative results, they are considered dissatisfiers. Responses to a stimulus that is positive, and has been rewarded in the past, will be repeated in the present. Whereas, a response to stimulus that has not been rewarded, or has been punished in the past, will not be repeated in the future. Many intrinsic rewards are found in adult education, one of which is the satisfaction of helping someone overcome an educational
challenge. Understanding Vroom’s theory would lead one to believe that the valence aspect of his theory relates to the reward of self-efficacy.

Vroom (1995) also cited considerable evidence that individuals, under many conditions, seek not to avoid stimulation, but to attain it. At the time of Vroom’s original research, many unsolved problems existed in explaining behavior in terms of reinforcement principles. Subsequently, empirical validity has emerged through a wealth of research that the probability of occurrence of a wide range of behaviors can be altered by the outcomes of those behaviors. Adult educators face many challenges when they choose to work with at-risk youth and adults. This current study attempts to identify factors that may lead to the retention of ABE instructors using the aspect of expectancy in Vroom’s theory relative to the continuation of teaching in adult education.

Vroom’s (1995) theory is predicated on three concepts: valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Valence has been defined by Vroom as, “affective orientation toward particular outcomes” (p. 18). Vroom explained further: “For any pair of outcomes, x and y, a person prefers x to y, y to x, or is indifferent to whether x or y is received. Preference, then, refers to a relationship between the strength of a person’s desire for, or attraction toward, two outcomes.” (p. 17). An ABE instructor’s desire to teach students to become successful in their goals would be an example of a state of valence. Valence also can be transferred from teacher to student, e.g., a student who weighs the importance of study in order to achieve a goal. In essence, valence must have some type of worth to the individual. Many factors may provide valence to motivate job performance for an ABE instructor. These can range from intrinsic rewards of self-satisfaction from helping a student achieve a goal, to an extrinsic reward of seeking a higher salary due to success.
as an instructor. However, when an ABE instructor no longer cares about the outcome, it ceases to motivate behavior in a positive direction.

Second, Vroom defined expectancy as: “A momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome” (p. 20). When individuals choose between alternatives that involve uncertain outcomes, it appears to be clear that their behavior is affected, not only by preferences among these outcomes, but also by the degree to which they believe these outcomes to be probable. Therefore, this is the link between effort and performance. However, expectancy alone is inadequate in causing a change in behavior. An ABE instructor may invest significant effort and time into teaching, to include professional development in order to perform at 100%. However, the motivation to do so would be an expectation of a particular outcome. Therefore, expectancy is one aspect of Vroom’s theory and allows for the positive behavior to occur in order to achieve an outcome worthy of the effort.

Last, Vroom (1995) explained instrumentality as: “An outcome-outcome association. It can take values ranging from -1, indicating a belief that attainment of the second outcome is certain without the first outcome and impossible with it, to +1, indicating that the first outcome is believed to be a necessary and sufficient condition for the attainment of the second outcome” (p. 21). Through action taken in one direction, the goal would be to obtain a positive reward or outcome by choosing a specific behavior, thereby linking performance and outcome. However, expectancy should be present first, e.g., an ABE instructor who desires that students achieve their goals. The instructor would then provide the best instruction (i.e., expectancy – performance) possible to ensure that students achieve successful outcomes (i.e., instrumentality).
Comprehension of these three elements-valence, expectancy, and instrumentality—is required to understand Vroom’s (1995) concept of motivation/force. Vroom stated that the “behavior on the part of an individual is assumed to be the result of a field of forces, each having direction and magnitude” (p. 21). Individuals can choose multiple combinations of valence and expectancies; however, these exact various combinations provide the strength of the force. A high or low valence may occur; however, unless expectancy is obtained no degree of force can be yielded – or the probability that the outcome will be positive. Vroom provided a model to test his theory (see Figure 1). ABE instructors need to establish clear linkages between their effort and performance, as well as performance and outcomes. If they believe that no benefits result in the outcomes, and any one of the three aspects of Vroom’s theory is missing, the motivation to perform is eliminated. The only concept in Vroom’s model that has been directly associated with potentially observable events is the concept of force and motivation.

Vroom (1995) stated, “The central problem of a theory of motivation is asserted to be the explanation of choice or direction in behavior” (p. 31). This leads one to explore the idea of choice behavior. Vroom contended that both choice and behavior are major factors in explaining the idea of individuals work as well as that which motivates them.

Vroom developed a conceptual model, whereby choices made by individuals are dependent upon the forces around them. As explained earlier, the force through valence and expectancy is central in understanding the motivation of individuals’ selections in their career choice. Vroom’s theory of motivation is explored in this study in an attempt to determine whether the factors that retain adult educators are based on any motivational values ascertained by Vroom’s theory. Adult educators may have a specific expectation
Figure 1.
Model of VIE Theory, Vroom (1995)
and choose to work in adult education, but they essentially learn that they could not leave with their valence (rewards) and may choose to leave based on the outcome. This would be a motivational factor to be explored in this current research.

The second part of Vroom’s (1995) exploration of the theory of expectancy was to ask, “Under what conditions do people work?” (p. 34). Vroom indicated that two types of conditions affect the likelihood that individuals will work. One is economic in nature, and the second is motivational. These two types of conditions - economic and motivation - may vary from one another. For example, “A larger number of job vacancies may exist than individuals seeking work, or a larger number of people may be available to work than there are job vacancies” (p. 35).

Vroom (1995) emphasized social interaction as the leading factor of motivation. In most instances, work is a place in which much social activity exists. Many individuals work due to the intrinsic satisfaction of developing social relationships that may be a major factor in their decision to work. Vroom contended that developing positive social relationships has long been a human attribute. When an individual experiences negative social relationships at work, this often affects performance and the individual will seek employment elsewhere.

The second most frequently mentioned motivational factor was the individual’s relationship with the immediate supervisor. Vroom (1995) also included social status as a motivational factor. He posited that an individual may desire to work due to the expectation that doing so will affect social status, the belief that others may be more likely to be accepting if the individual is employed.
Finally, the review of research on K-12 teacher retention and ABE teacher retention revealed that compensation was a major consideration, leading to the last motivational factor of the economic nature that is employed. One indisputable source of the desire to work is salary. In explaining the motivational basis for work, Vroom (1995) agreed that most people work due to the anticipated economic consequences that also may affect their selection of employment. However, working also serves as an indicator of social status and includes a wide range of fringe benefits including retirement programs and life and health insurance plans. These economic factors provide motivation for individuals who desire to work, versus a lack of desire. To further understand Vroom’s theory, exploration is needed on the use of this framework in various research studies geared toward understanding factors that motivate individuals to work.

Studies Utilizing Vroom’s Expectancy Theory

Motivation of Salesmen using Vroom’s Theoretical Framework

Oliver (1974) reviewed research regarding the motivational factors of salesmen, all leading to the belief in a lack of evidence in both monetary and nonmonetary areas and other possible rewards. Compensation was considered the overlying factor in the motivation and success of salesmen. Based on this information, Oliver chose to validate expectancy theory on a sample of salesmen through distribution of a questionnaire on motivational perceptions to 99 full-time agents; 80 (79%) agents were selected. Performance data was collected on each over a six-month time frame. First, the results revealed that expectancy theory may be useful in identifying the many possible outcomes in a sales situation that are effective motivators and those that are unrelated to performance. Second, incentive outcomes were recognized as having motivational
implications with the salesmen. Finally, the contention was not supported that all job-related outcomes are based on an individual’s motivation. While individuals may believe their performance has an effect on a large amount of outcomes, they may be motivated enough to choose to perform a minimum number of job-related tasks, even though the outcome may be greater if they would perform more job-related tasks. Based on the research conducted by Oliver, Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory explained only 25% of the performance variance of the salesmen.

**Increased Outcomes of Strategic Initiatives using Vroom’s Theoretical Framework**

Smith (2009) incorporated Vroom’s (1995) theory in an exploration of the management problem of strategy implementation by considering the value of connecting the domains of motivation theory and organizational commitment. Strategic implementation encompasses various aspects of successful companies, such as communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans. Smith attempted to improve upon the way in which strategic implementation functions in an organization by understanding the motivational factors behind successful implementation. Smith considered expectancy theory to be the overarching theory of workplace motivation, as it had been utilized in many other fields with positive results when aligned with strategy implementation. Vroom’s theory entailed the concepts of valence, expectancy, and instrumentality, with the overall idea of creating a force or motivation depending upon each factor. Therefore, the constructs of expectancy theory work well when applied to strategy implementation, as the compulsion of an individual implements a strategic decision as an example of force. The implementer’s desire for the
premise is an example of valence; that individual’s evaluation of the likelihood of strategy success is an example of expectancy; instrumentality describes the belief of the implementer that success will indeed be rewarded as promised. Thus, the use of Vroom’s theory suggests a possible explanation of variance in the implementation of different strategic decisions. Smith believed it was overwhelmingly clear that motivation and commitment to a strategy are not a given, unless a clear understanding is present relative to the motivation and commitment behind the decision of a successful strategy implementation. This also can be correlated with Vroom’s expectancy theory to explain the manner by which managers may lead their company through successful strategic processes.

**Criticisms of Vroom’s Theory**

Criticisms of Vroom’s (1995) theory fall into two primary categories: (a) the theory cannot predict a worker’s motivation due to an individual’s value on the valence of the predictor; and (b) the theory alone could not predict an individual’s motivation of occupational choice, as other motivational theories allow for the understanding of an individual’s selection of occupation. The following studies more closely explore each of these criticisms.

Geiger et al. (1998) explored Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory in an attempt to assess accounting student motivation across 10 countries. Using a within-persons modeling approach, 637 students completed instruments that captured both the valence and force model components of expectancy theory. The second-level outcomes (i.e., potential motivators) of improving course performance used in the study were (1) increasing one’s overall academic evaluation/grade point average, (2) superior level in an
initial post-college job, and (3) personal satisfaction. The results indicated that the expectancy theory models and second-level outcomes accurately predicted students’ academic valence and effort-level decisions across all countries, thus supporting the use of Vroom’s expectancy theory in a multinational setting. However, students from different countries placed significantly different emphases on the attractiveness of the three potential motivators, as well as the emphasis on the probability of success in the force model. Geiger et al. found that Vroom’s expectancy theory is more properly applied at the individual level of analysis as in this study and that statements regarding groups of individuals should be used with caution.

In addition, the findings from Geiger et al.’s (1998) study have supported the applicability of the within-persons modeling approach to the examination of expectancy theory across the international student context. While both component models (i.e., valence and force) were significant in advancing the students’ performance in their coursework, the three possible motivators, as well as the effect of valence and expectancy, varied across countries and individuals within each country. Additionally, students from 8 of the 10 countries were found to consider their individual character of attractiveness more than the likelihood of a higher grade in choosing their academic effort-level decisions. Only half of the countries reflected nominal decreases in effort as expectancy increased, which did not sustain the idea of various cultures that maintain larger increases in effort with decreased levels of expectancy, as compared to higher levels of expectancy.

In comparison, Herriot and Ecob (1979) applied several variations of Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory to data obtained from two groups of engineering students in
order to validate the expectancy theory as a decision-making theory. A questionnaire was administered to two groups of subjects. The first consisted of 66 mechanical and electrical engineering students; the second consisted of 58 final-year mechanical and electrical engineering students. Herriot and Ecob found no evidence to support only one theory, such as Vroom’s decision-making theory, in choosing a specific occupational choice. They suggested the selection of a hierarchy of models, rather than a single model, when employing research on occupational choice. The researchers posited that Vroom’s theory, which is a decision-making theory, should not be used in occupational choice, as various factors, such as an individual’s gender, parents’ occupation, or state of the job market, influence the choice. Vroom’s theory is based on an individual choice and the rational maximizing of outcomes, and these “internal” choices have little variance left upon analysis of the outside predictors are analyzed in occupational selection. Herriot and Ecob specifically believed that theories, in general, should take into account the range of job opportunities available in one’s society. The three specific reasons they believed Vroom’s theory was not the only reliable factor in occupational choice were:

1. Entry into a certain jobs often is obtainable based on the job market.
2. Belief-value systems affect an individual’s choice of work. If individuals believe specific jobs are not obtainable based on their belief system, they will not strive to obtain that specific work.
3. Basic assumptions are incorrect. Vroom’s assumption was that each belief-value product carries the same weight; however, calculating multiple regression weights for each product separately improves predictive power, which may be true in the case of occupational choice.
Based on their finding, Herriot and Ecob (1979) believed that it would be best to modify Vroom’s (1995) theory to better predict vocational intentions.

**Summary**

This literature review provided a background of supporting research on material to be analyzed in this study. Past studies on retention of K-12 teachers were reviewed to show the need for additional research on ABE teacher retention. Limited data from studies of adult basic education teacher retention also were reviewed to illustrate that limited studies have been conducted. Understanding the barriers to entering the field may provide insight into that which motivates ABE teachers to enter the field. In addition, a reflection of apparent rewards ABE teachers receive in their occupation provides a keen awareness of the various reasons that some individuals continue to value the field of adult education.

Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory was analyzed in order to provide the theoretical relevance for using this particular theory of motivation in correlation with teacher retention of ABE instructors. Finally, studies using Vroom’s theory were reviewed to explore its use in research on human motivation.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to use Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory to determine whether a relationship exists between factors that affect retention of ABE teachers in Kentucky and Vroom’s expectancy theory. Using Vroom’s theory and a qualitative method, the overall central research question that guides the study was, “What factors affect the retention of adult education teachers in Kentucky?”

Research Questions

From the perspective of former ABE teachers in Kentucky:

1. What factors affect the retention of ABE teachers?
2. What are the perceived barriers to becoming an adult education instructor?
3. What are the perceived primary rewards of being an adult education instructor?
4. What are the differences between part-time and full-time teachers who leave the field of ABE?

Patton (2002) agreed that a true qualitative evaluation should be a combined approach using an emic and etic research perspective. This study utilized an etic approach to evaluation through an open-ended interview questionnaire. This chapter provides a description of the research method used, including the type of study (basic qualitative interpretive investigation), research design, description of the sample and procedures for study, and data collection.
Research Design

The design and focus of this research reflects a phenomenological perspective. Creswell (1998) stated:

By using the phenomenological perspective, researchers search for the essential, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image, and meaning. Phenomenological data analysis proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings. The researcher also sets aside all prejudgments, bracketing his or her experiences (a return to “natural science”) and relying on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience. (p. 52)

In addition, the focus of the research reflects an interpretive perspective. Glesne (2011) believed that researchers should be aware of their value in the research process and should observe their actions in acquiring the data specific to the study. Therefore, the researcher should be prepared and be introspective in all aspects of the methodology and design in order to provide validity to the study.

In designing qualitative research, Creswell (1998) stated that a solid approach needs to exist comprised of six criteria: (1) based on the framing of the research questions using how or what; (2) undertaken to explore the topic, as these theories are not easily identified; (3) to pursue a detailed view of the topic; (4) to observe the natural setting of the individual or individuals participating in the study; (5) due to the researcher’s interest
in writing in a literacy style; (6) extensive time and resources available to spend on data collection; (7) the audience is receptive to the flow of qualitative studies; and, most importantly, (8) to allow the researcher to be an active learner who can tell the story of the participants in the study.

This study utilized a qualitative research design to collect data from interviews with eight former ABE instructors in Kentucky regarding their perspectives and to reflect on their honest thoughts, opinions, and ideas as to the reasons ABE teachers leave the field of adult education. The dialogue for the interview process was created to allow for the collection of data and information to obtain a true understanding and richness of the data from the participants. Few studies have explored the reasons adult educators leave the field of adult education. It was crucial to provide an environment of safe and reliable dialogue to develop a comfortable interviewing process for reliability of this study. Understanding these data will allow the reader to recognize the opportunities for change in the field of adult education.

**Background Questionnaire**

The Background Questionnaire for Former Adult Education Instructors (Appendix F) was designed to collect specific demographic data that will be helpful for data analysis. The questionnaire was designed by reviewing questionnaires from previous research studies, as well as the researcher’s experience in data collected to provide additional insights into the demographics of adult educators and their relationship to the central research question. A pilot study using the questionnaire was conducted to provide feedback on the appropriateness of the background questionnaire, as well as guidance in the research being conducted.
Because the interview was semi-structured, all participants, at some time in the interview process, shared the location of the program they had formerly worked in Kentucky. Even though the background questionnaire did not include this information, the participants came from the following regions of Kentucky: Western, Central and Northeastern Kentucky areas. None of the participants were from the Southeast region of Kentucky. However, this was unintentional as potential participants in all regions of Kentucky were asked to participate when the initial Request for Participant Contact Information from Director (Appendix E) was originally sent to all regions of Kentucky. The decision to select the specific participants was based on the positive responses of the contacts made and the participants who agreed to be interviewed.

**Interview Schedule**

The research questions guided the structure of the Adult Education Interview Schedule (Appendix D). The crucial element to the outcome of this study is reliability of the design of the interview schedule, was implemented by conducting semi-structured interviews with eight former ABE instructors in Kentucky. This allowed for the collection of data on specific perceptions and reflections of former ABE instructors as to the reasons ABE instructors leave the field of adult education. Researchers should address specific protocols on conducting interviews. Creswell (1998) provided insight into interview protocols as follows:

1. Whether conducting one-on-one or focus group interviews, the use of adequate recording procedures should be used.
2. Design the interview protocol, with approximately five open-ended questions.
3. Determine the location for conducting the interview.
4. After arriving at the interview site, obtain consent from the interviewee to participate in the study.

5. During the interview, stick to the questions, complete within the time specified (if possible), be respectful and courteous, and offer few questions and advice. (pp. 124-125)

Patton (2002) contended that three general methods should be utilized in qualitative interviewing: (a) informal conversational, (b) general interview guide, and (c) standardized open-ended interview. A combination of these approaches was used in this study, as a face-to-face semi-structured interview was employed. Crucial to the design of a survey instrument (in this instance, the interview schedule) is the understanding that the researcher is designing a measure not specific to basic conversation questions (Fowler, 2009). The questionnaire should directly reflect and be guided by the research questions. The value of the answers should be comparable to probability of the outcomes of the study and should significantly rely on solid research questions with a conceived outcome (Fowler, 2009).

The Interview Schedule was developed under the guidance of the researcher’s dissertation committee chair. Criteria in the development of the interview schedule was gleaned from a review of instruments utilized by other researchers in related studies, as well as the researcher’s 17 years of experience in adult education and understanding of the issues that are faced in adult education. The questions were mapped to the general research questions (Appendix C). A pilot study was conducted to assess the relevance of the questions being reviewed in the interview schedule. Additional questions were asked, if warranted, based on the interviewee’s response. The interview schedule and
background questionnaire were reviewed by the dissertation committee. A Participant Informed Consent Form (Appendix G) was given to all participants in the pilot study, as well as to the participants in the current study.

The semi-structured interviews were no more than 45 minutes in length. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher, who additionally maintained a journal in which to write reflections, thoughts, ideas, experience, times/days, and other useful notations in understanding the information provided by the participants. By obtaining insightful descriptions of the interviewees’ responses, the factors that affect retention of ABE instructors in Kentucky were detailed with keen awareness of understanding and their contribution to the research.

**Sampling and Data Collection**

A sampling, that “focuses on selecting information-rich cases that will illuminate the questions in the study” (Patton, 2002, p. 40) was identified of former ABE teachers who had left the field of ABE in Kentucky. The participants were purposefully selected to provide their insights and reflections of their experiences as former ABE instructors and their reasons for leaving the profession, and other insights into factors affecting retention of ABE instructors. To access the data, a contact was made with adult education centers in Kentucky as follows:

1. A list of all Kentucky adult education centers, rural and urban, was generated by accessing the Kentucky Adult Education website and linking to the 120 adult education programs in the state.

2. Initially, contact was made to program directors of 40 adult education programs in Kentucky in regard to the research. The director of the adult
education program received a Request for Participant Contact Information from Director (Appendix E) by phone/email/postal delivery explaining the purpose for the study and requesting one or two names/contact information of former ABE instructors for which they had the appropriate information.

3. Of the 40 centers contacted, 19 (48%) responded positively to participate. A follow up was made by email/phone to the 19 directors who responded positively for participant information. Of the original 40 who were contacted, 8 (20%) positively responded and provided the name and either email or phone contact information of two potential participants.

4. Of the 16 participants contacted, 8 (50%) responded positively and participated in the study.

Of the 120 ABE centers across the state of Kentucky, 40 counties were randomly selected based on location and positive contact information from the program director. The director was contacted once by phone using the Phone Script to Request Contact Information (Appendix A). An additional follow up was made by email using Request for Participant Contact Information from Director (Appendix E) to provide an explanation of the research project. At that time, a request was made to solicit the names and contact information of two former ABE instructors by asking for either an email or phone contact. Program directors followed up by email and provided the names and email/phone contact information for participants they believed had left the field of adult education or retired. The majority of the program directors contacted asked the participants, prior to providing their name/information, if they would participate, as well
as provide consent to release their name/contact information to the researcher for follow up.

The former ABE instructors were contacted using the Phone Script to Request Participation in Research (Appendix B). After consent was granted, the participant was provided with two copies of the Participant Informed Consent Form (Appendix G), as well as the Background Questionnaire (Appendix F), with information about the research. The researcher reviewed the informed consent, and both the researcher and participant signed a copy. The background questionnaire was completed and returned prior to the interview.

The sample population for this study consisted of four full-time and four part-time ABE teachers in Kentucky who had left the field for various reasons from 2009 to 2014. Participants had various educational backgrounds, from a bachelor’s degree in a given field, to actual teacher certification. The participants were previously employed in small adult education programs serving fewer than 100 students per year, to large programs serving over 500 students per year. The participants had formerly worked in adult education programs operating in community centers, school settings, or college settings. Some participants received a large amount of community support and volunteer assistance in the classroom, while others were in small centers with students encountering only two ABE staff. The demographic data included participants over the age of 25.

Table 3 lists the participants’ gender; age; marital status; years of adult education experience; part-time or full-time status and years in either capacity; and weekly hours worked in adult education participants listed on their background questionnaire.
Table 3

*Personal Demographic and Employment Data of Participants.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Years of AE Experience</th>
<th>Employment Status &amp; Years in AE</th>
<th>Hours worked weekly in AE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the participants were female with two participants being male.

The average age of the participants was 57. Most of the participants had worked in another full time job or career over 20 years retired prior to entering adult education as a second career choice. Many of the participants worked in a part-time capacity especially when it was chosen as a second career choice. All participants that were working part-time were retired and working part-time for additional income and something to do to occupy their time during the school year. The participants were 50/50 married and single. The most significant information listed on the background questionnaire that assisted with RQ1 was the length of time the participant worked in adult education. One
participant had worked part-time in adult education as soon as they graduated from college and truly enjoyed the profession. The participant continued working part-time until a full-time position became available and spent their professional teaching career in adult education before retiring. The majority of participants worked over five years in adult education with the lowest amount of years worked in adult education being 3 and the longest time working in adult education as a chosen career path being 23. The participants were split 50/50 as far as working part-time or full-time in adult education. Individuals that worked part-time worked an average of 10 or more hours per week. Full time participants worked at least 35 to 37.5 hours per week.

In addition, Table 4 lists the educational attainments of the participants in this study. This information was obtained as part of the participant demographic information to determine if education was a factor or not in regard to individuals who enter the field of adult education and those who chose to leave the field of adult education. It is significant to note that until 2002 in the State of Kentucky, the mandated requirement for individuals to actually teach in adult education was only a GED or high school diploma. Professionalism and standardization of teaching as an adult educator in Kentucky has intensely progressed over the past fifteen or more years.
### Table 4

*Educational Attainments of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree</th>
<th>Master’s Degree</th>
<th>Doctoral Degree</th>
<th>Teaching Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X +46 hr. beyond</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though the mandated requirement was changed in 2002 for all adult education instructors in Kentucky to have a Bachelor’s degree, the majority 88% (7) participants held at least a Master’s degree with one individual holding a doctorate degree. The participant who acquired a doctorate degree also chose adult education as her chosen career path to work in education for 23 years and also held a teaching certification. The majority of the participants 75% (6) participants held a teaching certification was well. The value of this information is to note that the quality of the
teaching instruction by the participants interviewed, was provided by highly skilled and educated individuals working in adult education.

**Researcher Perspective**

Validity and trustworthiness are crucial in qualitative research. Researchers must provide valid data for others to consider as credible for the study. The trustworthiness of methodology and design is of utmost importance in providing validity to the results of the data. Glesne (2011) stated that the “concept of trustworthiness can create a criteria to demonstrate ways in which researchers can claim their work to be plausible and credible” (p. 49). Therefore, a clarification of researcher bias is included in this perspective, as well as a reflection of the researcher’s subjectivity. Slavin (2007) agreed that qualitative researchers value the backgrounds and viewpoints of the individuals they interview. However, a bias also can be present by the researcher and limitations based on the researchers’ personal perspectives.

It is believed that ABE instructors leave the field of adult education due to various factors, from the lack of professionalism in the field, to adequate compensation. One reason appears to be the inadequate preparation of teaching/working with the at-risk, low-skilled population of adult learners. These factors may be specific only to Kentucky; therefore, the opinions of ABE educators who have left the field are of interest in this study.

Due to the extensive experience of this researcher in the adult education field, a bias can be present as to the reasons ABE instructors leave the field or remain in the profession. It is the researchers’ experience that when speaking with veteran ABE instructors it has been found that often they will share their reasons for remaining in the
profession, most often based on the intrinsic rewards they received from students who succeeded and the changes in the adult learners’ lives. The ABE professional often shares the rewards related to observing individuals’ life changes of those who previously had low self-esteem but had become confident learners. This life-changing event is of no monetary value; however, it motivates the ABE professional to have the passion and encouragement needed to continue in the profession. This study should lend insight into many of these factors of the ABE profession in Kentucky.

Data Analysis

Data from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and entered into the NVivo qualitative software program. Using the constant comparative approach, an attempt was made to “saturate” the categories in order to search for instances representing the category and to continue searching (interviewing) until the new information obtained provided no further insights into the category (Creswell, 1998). The constant comparative method involves breaking down the data into discrete units (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) and coding them to categories, which generally take two forms: those derived from the participants’ customs and language, and those that the researcher identifies as significant to the project’s focus of inquiry. The goal of the former “is to reconstruct the categories used by subjects to conceptualize their own experiences and world view” (pp. 334-341); the goal of the latter is to assist in developing theoretical insights into the social processes operative in the site under study. Thus, “the process of constant comparison stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories”, (pp 334-341). Categories morph as incidents are analyzed and categorized over the period of the investigative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). By implementing
this approach, several categories or themes were identified that occurred during the interview process.

An inductive method of analysis was utilized by continuing to collect data until no new categories were added in order to gain insight into the data from the interview process. This method was useful in this qualitative research to generate rich, detailed data exclusively from the participant’s perspectives. From these interviews, the inductive method allowed the researcher to construct generalizations, relationships and even theories based on collecting all data. Interviews were conducted until all data gained were exhausted to benefit the validity and reliability of the data collected.

Qualitative inquiry is particularly slanted toward exploration, discovery, and inductive logic. In discussing inductive analysis, Patton (2002) states, “It begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerge from open-ended observations as the inquirer comes to understand patterns that exist in the phenomenon being investigated” (pp. 55-56). At that time, the saturation level is met to determine the factors in this study. A saturation level was noted after the fifth interview; however, in order to find evidence of validity, the interviewing process continued to ensure the reliability of the codes and themes that were developing.

Upon determination of the saturation level, themes and codes in NVivo were explored to analyze the interviews relative to the factors that affect the retention of adult basic education instructors in Kentucky. As coding progressed, ways in which data/codes were grouped or clustered and behaviors and incidences that appeared concomitantly or in some patterned sequence were determined (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A single category was identified as the central occurrence, which instigated the examination of the
interrelationships of the categories. Creswell (1998) discussed the development of a coding paradigm, or a theoretical model, that occurs with sharing the interrelationship of the axial coding categories.

The codes that were found were then developed into a final sampling of the report for those specific nodes or codes. These data were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet in order to calculate the numerical value of the themes and the occurrence for each specific theme in the data. The codes and information forthcoming were utilized to determine the factors that affect the retention of adult basic education instructors in Kentucky.

The interview process allowed the former ABE instructors to share their emic perspectives of leaving the field, which were their personal views or perspectives of their experiences (Patton, 2002). As the interviewer, the researcher reflected on the etic perspective, or the outsider’s view, and reported personal experiences on the data collection. In addition, a correlation was made with Vroom’s (1995) expectancy theory in an attempt to explore an association between work motivation and retention of ABE instructors.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were: (1) researcher bias, (2) locating participants, and (3) sample size. First, as a current adult educator in the field, the researcher was very aware of many challenges faced by adult education instructors, adult education programs, and administrators on a daily basis. The researcher also understood the specific program outcomes to be achieved yearly, which is a major influence on program issues. When reviewing transcripts during the interview process, a few additional leading questions emerge other than those asked of the participants. These additional questions helped them
to share and express their feelings about adult education. Although this was not a part of the interviewing schedule, it allowed for a more conversational approach to the process and also helped to instill trust in the relationship, which elicited insightful information from the participants to provide for a richer study.

Second, prior to implementing the process of contacting the participants, this process was believed to be achievable based on the researcher’s personal contacts with administrators across the state of Kentucky, as well as the many years of experience in the field. However, an unexpected issue occurred upon contacting the former adult education directors. They first were inclined to share with the former employee the focus of the research and ask for agreement that the director could provide personal contact information. Although this appeared to be a practical consideration, it was not addressed as part of the original methodology in contacting former adult educators in Kentucky. Therefore, the time frame for soliciting for participants was longer than expected.

The third limitation was the small sample size. Due to time constraints in soliciting for ABE educators willing to participate in the study, the sample size was smaller than anticipated. However, the outcomes of the study were believed to be the same. The research provided detailed and thorough interviews with the use of the interview schedule, allowing participants to provide rich detail of their responses. Upon completion of the first three interviews, continued interviewing was determined to provide very similar data as the interview process continued. Overall, this was found to be true; however, each individual experienced the job and life in adult education different, based upon work environment, program requirements, and budgeting factors.
These three areas of individuals’ positions affect the way in which individuals view their job as well as the value they receive and the value they provide to their positions.

**Summary**

This chapter provided a description of the research method utilized in the study, including type of study (basic qualitative interpretive investigation), sampling and data collection, and analysis methods. Data were gathered through interviews of eight participants and were analyzed using the NVivo software program. The data were analyzed using the coding matrix in the software package and printing of individual reports of data coded to the nodes developed in NVivo. In addition, the nodes were analyzed and transferred to Excel in order to provide a numerical value of the interpretation of various aspects of the questions that were asked during the interview schedule. The results from the analysis are discussed in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

Four research questions guided this study:

From the perspective of Former ABE teachers in Kentucky,

1. What factors affect the retention of ABE teachers?
2. What are the perceived barriers to becoming an adult education instructor?
3. What are the perceived primary rewards to being an adult education instructor?
4. What are the differences between part-time and full-time teachers who leave the field of ABE?

The first question required a review of previous research and possible factors in regard to reasons teachers left the field of education in an attempt to determine development of appropriate questions and review of potential patterns or themes among ABE instructors who left the field of adult education. The second and third questions were open-ended in order to allow for interviewees to share all information, from their perspective, to saturate the categories of barriers and rewards in adult education. The fourth question was developed to determine whether a difference exists in part-time versus full-time instructors who might leave the field of adult education, based on the personal perspectives of the interviewees and their experience in the field of adult education, as well as the possibility that this also may be a factor in retention of adult education teachers.
Findings Related to Research Question 1

The first research question states: From the perspective of former ABE teachers in Kentucky, what factors affect the retention of ABE teachers?

Interviewees were asked four questions during the interview process to saturate the categories and identify the factors to answer Research Question 1. Interview question (IQ) 1 mapped to Research Question (RQ) 1 asked: From the perspective of a former ABE instructor, what influenced your decision to become an adult education teacher? The responses \((n = 8)\) are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Number of Participants ((n = 8))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needed a job</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to work in adult education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to the reasons participants entered adult education for IQ1, the majority responded that they needed either a full- or part-time job, which was the main reason they accepted a position in adult education. A few participants responded that they had an education background but could not secure employment in the K-12 education system; thus, they took a position in adult education. However, some participants accepted a position in adult education because they wanted to help students. These participants continued to respond that they had the educational qualifications and specialty areas, such as math or reading, and wanted to use these talents to help adult learners. The detailed
responses of participants who chose adult education because they needed a job are listed in Table 5. Table 6 reflects the detailed responses from those who taught in adult education because they wanted to work with adult learners.

Table 6

*Responses to IQ1 – Needed a Job*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entered Adult Education Because Needed a Job</td>
<td>“Uh, I was asked by my supervisor to take the position in adult education because I had worked in other training programs for adults and he had the confidence and felt like I could do the job. So, I needed a job and accepted it with very little background and knowledge, at the time, in adult education.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It was part time and I had my background in Math and that is what they needed was someone in Math.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A friend of mine called and said I was the first of this group of friends that retired and they said you are too young to be retired and we need help in adult education because we are having so much trouble getting the people (students) to pass the math and it was part time. . .so I started. . .and I loved it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I had retired from the public education and was looking for something part time and I found out about the job and it sounded like something I really wanted to do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Well, in order to become an educator, I needed a job”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In regard to the responses to IQ1, a few respondents indicated that they knew someone who was in the field, and that individual encouraged them to take the position. They also responded that they possessed a degree in education, could not find a job in K-12, and needed to work; therefore, they accepted a position to teach in adult education. A few responded that they were seeking part-time positions, and the position in adult education allowed them to work part time and to use their specialty area of reading or math in adult education with adult learners.

Table 7

*Response to IQ 1 – Wanted a Job in Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entered Adult Education Because Wanted to Work in Adult Education</td>
<td>“...the person I was talking to got me interested and then as we were talking and I was learning about what adult education was, I mean, I was more and more interested in it, and even in the interview. . .I had always been a believer in formal education. . .so I liked the idea of once again helping people who wanted to be helped.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“... so, there was these two students. . . one told me she would never succeed. . . one went on to get a job and support her children. So I chose it because it was the most rewarding thing I’ve ever been in. It makes me cry.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Ah, I started out part time (in adult education) because I was looking for a position in teaching. . . but went to work in middle school for a year. . . a position opened up full time (in adult education). . . but my husband and I felt like it was the best for me because I had loved working in adult education. And I never regretted it. I really do think that God was answering prayers when that happened. . .”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants who responded to IQ1 and stated that they wanted to work in adult education did so after learning about the profession. One respondent accepted the position after learning about adult education and knowing he/she could help adult learners. Another accepted the position due to experiencing the difference it made in adult learners’ lives. As an educator, that individual enjoyed helping adult learners who were unable to receive the help needed when employed in the public educational system prior to adult education. Last, one participant accepted the position after working part time in adult education. The respondent realized the benefit of adult education and the demographic population it served and chose to devote a career to adult education; thus accepting a full-time position when it became available.

IQ2 asked: From the perspective of a former ABE instructor, was there a key person/situation that supported your decision to teach? In what way? The results \((n = 8)\) are listed in Table 8. None of the individuals responded that they were aware of the field of adult education prior to becoming an educator. Therefore, that was not a field chosen as they were exploring college/career options. In addition, a few mentioned that the field of adult education was not discussed during their college experience as they were pursuing their education credential for teaching. They expressed they would have been interested in exploring those options had they been available in their college experience.
Table 8

Was there a Key Person/Situation that Supported the Decision to Teach?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Participants (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a “Calling”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the participants (5, or 62%) stated yes to IQ2. Those responses are listed in Table 9. The two participants who answered “no” believed it was a natural order of life to become an educator. One indicated that, as few jobs were available for women where she lived, other than secretarial or teaching, she chose teaching. Also, her mother, who worked in the local school cafeteria, thought education would be a career that she could actually be able to also create a family life and be there for her children when needed. One participant believed she had always wanted to be an educator, and it was natural to choose education as a career choice when entering college. The field of adult education was not available at the time she entered the education field, but she expressed, had it been, that would have been her chosen field. The participant who responded neither “yes” nor “no” believed it was a “calling” to become an educator. It was based on spiritual beliefs that lead her to teach in adult education in order to help adult learners.
Table 9

Responses to IQ2 – Key Person/Situation who Supported the Decision to Teach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response “Yes” Key Person or Situation</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (Key Person or Situation Supported Decision to Teach)</td>
<td>“Yes, it was a student, she said she would never succeed, but she did.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes. A family member of a friend used to be in charge of (the program). . . she got me interested and then as we were talking. . . I was more interested.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes. It was a friend. . . she was in adult education at that time and told me about the part-time position.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I was asked by my supervisor to take the position in adult education.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I was looking for a job to go back to and because my first degree was home economics, that was when it was going out in that field and there weren’t any positions open, so I took a part-time position in adult education.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the participants responded there was a key person or situation which supported their decision to teach. The participants shared that they had a close friend that encouraged them to teach. In addition, some of the participants shared that a family member encouraged their choice of teaching because they could also be more involved with their children as they grew up because their schedules would be similar, which is easier for parenting.
IQ3 asked: From the perspective of a former ABE instructor, what do you believe are the reasons ABE teachers leave the field of adult education? Do you believe they leave due to emotional issues? Financial issues? Personality characteristics? Do you believe they leave due to lack of motivation and interest in the field? If so, why?

The first part of the question was general, inquiring from the perspective of a former ABE instructor as to the reason ABE teachers leave the field of adult education (see Table 10). Questions were asked of each participant \((n = 8)\) who either agreed or disagreed to the reason being stated and provided information why they believed it might be that particular reason for the ABE teacher to leave the field.

Table 10

Participants who Agreed with Reasons in IQ3 about ABE Teachers Leaving the Field of Adult Education \((n = 8)\)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Total Participants Who Agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial issues</td>
<td>7 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional issues</td>
<td>5 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality characteristics</td>
<td>5 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation or interest in the field</td>
<td>5 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6 (75%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Each person may have multiple codes

All participants’ but one agreed that financial issues were the reason that ABE teachers leave the field of adult education. In regard to emotional issues, personality characteristics and motivation or interest in the field as to reasons why individual’s may
leave the field of adult education, 62% believed this might be the case. Interesting is that 75% of the individuals provided other information as to why they believed individuals might leave the field of adult education.

Participants responded to each of the subcategories in this question as shown in Tables 11-15. Participants were very quick to respond to all the categories and seemed to hesitate on the personality characteristics question. All but one participant shared that they believed it took a special person with a desire to help others to continue in the field.

Table 11

Responses to IQ3 – Financial Reasons ABE Teachers Leave the Field of Adult Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left Due to Finances</td>
<td>“Yes. I think the primary one is pay, money. The educators have put a lot into their education. They’ve been out a lot of expense over the years and they are not compensated for it in adult education.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes, basically financial issues. It’s hard on a single income working two jobs.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It could possibly be. . . there is no doubt I made much more money when I taught in the public school system and taught high school than I did when I was teaching adult education.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They (adult education programs) are not willing to pay. I think it is basically financial that we cannot keep very good people.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think one or two (instructors) might have left because they could have got a better paying job somewhere else.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 (continued)

*Responses to IQ3 – Financial Reasons ABE Teachers Leave the Field of Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left Due to Finances</td>
<td>“Yes. The funding issues. . . the money is not there to pay the instructors.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes. There were no raises, but that was happening everywhere around this area.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the responses indicated that ABE teachers left the field due to the low salary compensation, as well as no raises. A few mentioned the lack of funding or budget cuts, which is the reason for leaving.

Table 12

*Responses to IQ3 – Emotional Reasons ABE Teachers Leave the Field of Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left Due to Emotional Issues</td>
<td>“My emotions were anger that people that weren’t down here (in the program) in the trenches with us were making the rules that were unreasonable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You could really become frustrated with your students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The answer to that would be yes. . . ah. . . just because emotions are very personal. Responding to a need and feeling like they (teachers) need to be there for that need.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12 (continued)

**Responses to IQ3 – Emotional Reasons ABE Teachers Leave the Field of Adult Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think that is part of that...burn out. And...that is bound to be an emotional drain on anybody that you are standing there day after day working with students that really don’t want to be there.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Yeah, I mean some people, especially single income women who are working...it’s hard raising a family...they want to work, but can’t afford to work in adult education...but they love their job so it is a struggle emotionally to stay, so they leave.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses regarding emotional reasons were:

- Individuals at the higher level of administration do not understand what happens in the individual programs.
- Teachers can get frustrated with the adult learners because they work a lot with lower level learners who need one-on-one instruction and may not learn as fast.
- Some of the adult learners who attend the programs really do not want to be there; thus, they have an attitude and are difficult to teach.
- ABE teachers, who are single women, consider it an emotional issue, as they support their family by working in adult education. Although they like their job and want to stay, their salaries are inadequate to support their family.
**Table 13**

*Responses to IQ3 – Reasons due to Personality Characteristics for ABE Teachers to Leave the Field of Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left Due to Personality Characteristics</td>
<td>“Well, I think. . . ah, yes, I think some do. I think people leave because of personality characteristics from any position. So, yes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Well, that is always a possibility. . . well. . . I knew it would be an uphill struggle to be able to reteach them (students) and I would have to move at a very, very, slow pace. So I was mentally prepared for that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes. I think you have some instructors that just want to, say, hey, it shows that you need practice in this and this from when you do the profile sheet and they hand students work and say here. There are very few students. . .that are not going to be able to handle that and in most cases they have dropped out because of that. You have to be willing to do one-on-one instruction. It takes a creative person.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think, yes. . .as an adult educator step back and say sometimes when you run into problem with students, that this is just the characteristic (of the student). . . it’s something the student is dealing with.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think so. . .ABE teachers. . .have to have a servant heart and willing to go above and beyond. There are so few people like that, they just want to teach and get acknowledged. . .but I think the ones that truly stick with it have a heart for it. They are a people person if they decide to stay in adult education.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants who responded to the category of personality issues stated that an individual needs specific personality characteristics in any job. Therefore, this would be similar to positions in adult education due to the demographics of the adult learners.

Table 14

*Responses to IQ3 – Reasons due to Motivation or Interest in the Field for ABE Teachers to Leave the Field of Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasons Left Due to Motivation or Interest in the Field</td>
<td>“Ah. . .at work. . .motivation to stay in the field or to get out of the field. I think the outside factors probably have more influence. . .if you are self-motivated, that is one thing, but if it is coming from someone else to motivate you. . .that’s another.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Uh, yes, I think when the state started cutting funding, it is always a lack of motivation.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I would say they got more burned out. They would say they weren’t coming back – I can do something else that’s not as stressful.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am sure there may be some people that lack motivation. I will say this, you have to be highly motivated to be able to work with the people that we work with and if you don’t have that motivation, you’re better off not staying in the profession.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes, from the teacher, yes, that is for sure. A lot of them they are expected to teach things they are not prepared to teach and I think that is the problem.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the category of motivation, participants believed that individuals who worked in adult education need to be highly motivated due to the demographic population of the adult learners. Participants mentioned the difficulty of staying motivated during budget and funding cuts. This caused morale issues; many ABE teachers left for this reason and were not motivated to remain in the field. Lastly, participants reported that ABE teachers lacked motivation when required to teach a subject for which they were not qualified.

Table 15

**Responses to IQ3 – “Other” Reasons ABE Teachers Leave the Field of Adult Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Response</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Other” Reasons ABE Teachers Left the Field</td>
<td>“. . .the teachers move and, unlike K-12 teachers, there is no transferability to another ABE, so they leave the field.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .the testing, the computers, and it, ah the (students) they weren’t ready for it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The ability to raise a family was hampered based on work hours, which are predominately in the evening.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Lack of training. . .a lot of people they hire are not certified teachers. . .they lack the training to teach what they are expected to teach and it wasn’t enough money for the time you were putting into it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .adult educators feel underappreciated. They (administration) didn’t value us.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .the professional development standards for the job, it’s just way, way out of line, in my opinion, to ask of other people who have come in working another job.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the category of “other,” participants shared various reasons as follows:

- ABE teachers move and cannot find a job in the same field.
- Adult educators were uncomfortable with the change in the field of adult education with more computer-based requirements for learning and testing.
- The ability to raise a family was difficult with the small amount of hours or inconsistent hours as far as working days and evenings.
- The lack of training of the adult educator in the subject area.
- Professional development standards were difficult to achieve. ABE teachers often have to complete professional development during non-working hours.
- Some ABE teachers felt the professional development was inappropriate for what was needed to know at the time and, often, not provided on a timely basis when instructors could have used the information earlier.
- ABE teachers feel underappreciated or not valued as an adult educator.

IQ4 continued the search for accuracy of the information by asking: From the perspective of a former ABE teacher, tell me when and why you decided to leave the field of adult education? Participants (n = 8) shared their experiences in adult education and the choice to leave the field, as listed in Table 16. Many of these reasons mirrored the reasons why the participants believed people leave the field of adult education. However, all participants shared their true caring for working in the ABE field and they said they would all choose to work in adult education if they had to do it all over again.
Table 16

Reasons Participants Left the Field of Adult Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons Participants Left ABE Field</th>
<th>Number of Times Mentioned (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Reasons</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED® Test Changed to Computer-Based</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three of the participants left adult education due to their need for full-time employment or a higher salary. Three left, as they were retiring. Two indicated they left due to the changes in the 2014 GED® test to computer-based testing. The responses to IQ4 are listed in Table 17.

Table 17

Responses to IQ4 – Reasons Participants Left the Field of Adult Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Category</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Reasons</td>
<td>“. . .funding cuts. . .but, I became a trainer, ah, for adult educators.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .ah, it was only because the funding was cut. That was my only reason or I would still be teaching if I had that opportunity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .I was doing four part-time things and I wanted to do one full time job. . .it did not pay me time wise. . .there were no raises.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17 (continued)

*Responses to IQ4 – Reasons Participants Left the Field of Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Category</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>“I got old (laughter) . . . I am retired and have been for two years.” “I was retiring. The program’s budget was being cut and I felt comfortable leaving the program in the hands of the staff that was there. I didn’t want them to lose their jobs.” “. . . my back was hurting so bad (laughter). . . but, I was ready to retire, after 40 years. . . I needed to step aside and let someone younger with more innovative ideas teach. I wanted to get out while, I guess, students still loved me and I loved them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing changed to computer-based</td>
<td>“ah . . . the main reason was the testing. . . the computers…” “ah . . . when I started . . . it was to a one-day a week thing. . . then it was a two-day a week thing. . . and then went to a three-day a week. . . but. . . I knew the inmates I was working with. . . the computer-based testing. . . they were not going to have access to the computers so I wouldn’t see the student succeed.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to the responses listed in Table 17, some participants left due to funding cuts, in which positions may have been eliminated or the funds were inadequate to continue to work with no raises. Three of the participants left, as it was time to retire. Two of the three had already retired from their first job, but decided it was time to fully retire due to the changes in the new testing in 2014 and the increased skill ability. Two
left due to the change in technology requirements. One felt uncomfortable working within the new computer-based platform, and another felt the teaching position in corrections would not work well with a computer-based setting, as computers were not allowed in the detention center at that time.

**Findings Related to Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 states: From the perspective of a former ABE teacher, what are the perceived barriers to becoming an adult education instructor? Interviewees were asked IQ5, which stated: What do you consider may be the primary barrier or barriers to becoming an adult education instructor? Why? All participants (n = 8) agreed that barriers to adult education existed; the main categories are listed in Table 18. In each interview, participants mentioned one of the barriers at least one or more times.

Table 18

*Main Categories of Perceived Barriers to Becoming an Adult Education Instructor (n = 8)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Categories of Perceived Barriers</th>
<th>Number of Times Mentioned in Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary Consideration</td>
<td>8 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Teacher Certification/PD</td>
<td>5 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Recruitment in ABE field</td>
<td>5 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Not Teach in their Field of Expertise</td>
<td>3 (37%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this case, all participants (n = 8) noted salary as a perceived barrier to adult education. Participants shared, in detail, their experiences working in adult education and provided many examples of why individuals that worked in adult education left the field.
Participants shared many examples of good teachers who had high student outcomes and the frustration many of the teachers experienced, which are listed in these barriers. Five (62%) of the participants remarked at least once that the lack of teacher certification, or the issues with professional development, were barriers. In addition, five (62%) of the participants also believed that minimal recruitment occurred in the ABE field. Three (37%) believed that the barrier to adult education, or the reason individuals may have left the field was because they did not teach in their field of expertise. Participant responses to these barriers are listed in Table 19.

Table 19

*Responses to RQ2 – Main Responses of Perceived Barriers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary Considerations</td>
<td>“. . .there were no raises. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The salary was low.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .if you were part-time. . .could not continue graduate studies because there is no way to pay for that. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .that the fact that it is on a totally different pay scale than most places. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .if you are doing it for the pay, heaven forbid (laughter), you are going to be miserable and you are going to make the students miserable. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .biggest barrier, is what it is going to pay.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .I think one barrier would be that jobs are not full time. . .so the salary is low.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Like I said, the barrier, a lot of the time, is the salary they get.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Responses to RQ2 – Main Responses of Perceived Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Lack of Teacher Certification/PD/Training        | “. . .spend a lot of time with professional development that wasn’t fitting my needs. That was the biggest barrier I had.”  \  
“. . .required a lot of professional development all the time. . .”  \  
“. . .there is no certification. . .so perception is that there is no value in what ABE teacher does. . .”  \  
“I think if they had a certification for adult education teachers and they were certified as teachers, they would have to be valued as teachers. . .that may be a low thing. . .a title. . .but it goes a long way in the education world. Teacher certification is everything.”  \  
“Ah. . .some type of training on how to teach adult educators. . .they (administration) want them to do all this PD. . .then you are already thrown into the swamps before you get the PD.” |
| Minimal Recruitment in ABE Field                 | “. . .so it comes down to recruitment. . .and wanting to recruit talent. . .but you have to have money to put there”  \  
“. . .there are not that many adult educators out there. . .we are a select field. . .we are small. . .but we are isolated. . .”  \  
“. . .cannot transfer from one county to another. . .there’s not a position you can go to if you move. . .”  \  
“. . .barrier. . .could be. . .that for people coming into it, education, that people just don’t know about the jobs in adult education. . .”  \  
“. . .knowing there are adult education jobs out there.” |
## Responses to RQ2 – Main Responses of Perceived Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Do Not Teach in their Field of Expertise | “...when you are an adult education teacher, you don’t get to usually specifically teach in your field of expertise. you have to teach in other areas you may not have experience. ...not be able to teach full time in their field of expertise. ...in their degree field.”
| | “...whatever you are teaching. ...if you don’t have a reading or math background and you are expected to teach these adults. ...you are not going to be able to do it. ...expected to go in and teach where they don’t even have an education background.”
| | “...there is no student teaching. ...in K-12, they have student teaching and one year of prep before they teach.”

As to the reason that ABE instructors believed the category was a barrier, all participants indicated the low salary scale. Many felt adult education jobs are typically filled by part-time individuals or retirees who were looking for a part-time job for extra compensation, or something to occupy their time, and were not looking for a full-time position. They believed ABE positions are not considered professional positions for individuals looking for full-time work.

The majority of respondents agreed that not requiring teaching certification was a barrier. Without teaching certification, a perception existed that the job is not a professional education position when teaching certification is not required. However, participants also responded that an additional barrier was that individuals often struggle
to perform a job required of them, as they did not have the educational experience or were asked to teach in a field in which they had no experience.

Another barrier was the required professional development mandated by the state of Kentucky. Although the majority of the participants agreed that specific adult education training or certification is needed prior to entering the field as an instructor, they shared the following in regard to the issues of professional development:

- The professional development that was provided was not appropriate for the position.
- The professional development was not provided on a timely basis.
- Part-time individuals often did not get paid when attending professional development sessions.
- Part-time individuals lack the time to complete professional development requirements, as they are limited only to teaching time.
- Whether full or part time, many ABE teachers often are not compensated for the hours required to attend or complete professional development.

Several participants felt that little recruitment occurred in the field of adult education for skilled ABE instructors. Some shared the belief in a perception of lower status in adult education, as well as a lack of understanding the requirements of adult education instructors. A few mentioned that experienced individuals may not be aware of the ABE positions and where they can apply for those positions.

Another identified category for perceived barriers is listed under “Other” in Table 20. This is important because there were barriers mentioned by the participants during the interview process in addition to the main barriers listed that they felt affect adult
educators either entering the field or leaving the field of adult education and are worthy
to note in this study.

Table 20

*Responses to RQ3 – “Other” Responses of Perceived Barriers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Status of the Profession</td>
<td>“. . .(ABE teachers) are not as valuable because you don’t make as much money as other teachers. . .like K-12 teachers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .perception of others. . .they are just an adult education instructor, they are not even called teachers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>“. . .the expectations from Frankfort. . .and saying you got to have so many people get their GED. . .they are trying to make us into a high school, basically, and so many people, if they had a good experience in high school, we wouldn’t have them here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Hours</td>
<td>“The fact that if they are full time, they have to work nights and daytime hours. . .that is hard for people. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>“. . .they think everything is on the internet. . .but the students can’t learn everything on the internet if they are not self-directed. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of Teaching</td>
<td>“. . .if you don’t have a love of teaching. . .that’s the primary thing, in my opinion.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .if you don’t have a serving heart and you want to teach people, that’s the biggest barrier right there. . .”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A few participants commented on the low status of the profession and its effect on the overall perception in adult education of those within and outside of the field. Participants also mentioned the following as barriers to adult education:

- accountability by the state of Kentucky to meet performance goals and outcomes
- working hours of full-time instructors was not manageable by some individuals such as working mothers, etc.
- technology needed to complete the 2014 GED® test may be difficult for students, as well as some instructors’ comfort level in using the format
- when individuals do not like to teach, they should not enter the field, despite having the required education background, as they will be unmotivated to perform well.

Although not reported as a barrier, one participant stated, “Many students just want a job and the GED® requirements are so high, it is hard for instructors to retain students so the instructor is discouraged and leaves the field.”

**Findings Related to Research Question 3**

Research Question 3 states: From the perspective of a former ABE teacher, what are the perceived rewards of being an adult education instructor? Interviewees were asked IQ6, which stated: What do you consider are the primary rewards in becoming an adult education instructor? Why? All participants (n = 8) reported various rewards to being an adult education instructor; categories for responses are listed in Table 21. In each interview, participants mentioned at least one of the rewards.
Table 21

*Main Categories of Perceived Rewards of Being an Adult Education Teacher (n = 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Categories of Perceived Rewards</th>
<th>Number of Times Mentioned in Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy Teaching/Making a Difference</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Adult Attitudes About Learning</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not add up; each participant could have multiple selections

All participants (n = 8; 100%) responded that one of the primary rewards was observing students succeed and learning a new academic skill or obtaining their GED. All participants (n = 8; 100%) also responded that they could see the difference they made in the adult learners’ lives, which is a reward. This is the joy of teaching and what motivated them to come to work. Last, seven of the participants (87%) responded that they enjoyed teaching, and it was a profession in which they felt they could succeed and observe a change in the adult learners’ attitudes about education and learning. Responses to the categories are listed in Table 22.

Table 22

*Responses to RQ3: Primary Rewards in Becoming an Adult Education Instructor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>“...you could really see the impact you were in making in someone’s life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s that immediate reward of seeing the student succeed…that you just don’t see in a lot of places…”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22 (continued)

Responses to RQ3: Primary Rewards in Becoming an Adult Education Instructor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Success (continued)</td>
<td>“. . .like I said, the reward is seeing people succeed and getting on with their life and get that job that they wanted and go to college.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .being able to help them achieve their GED.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .it’s your reward when you see their (student) face when they have success.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .so the reward is coming from them (student). . .when they come back and grab you and hug you and thank you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The biggest reward, like with any teaching position, is seeing the people achieve. . .which is way harder in adult education than it is in any other type of education.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .seeing people walk across the stage. . .rejoicing with the families. . .knowing people pass that GED test. . .that’s a reward in itself. . .it legitimizes what you do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .students succeed. . .and they were thankful for what you did. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy Teaching/Making a Difference</td>
<td>“Probably the most fulfilling position I ever held in my whole life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .why I value ABE teachers so much. . .you put your own style on the students. . .best thing. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .it’s your heart. . .it’s a heart thing. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It was excellent being able to walk around my community and say, yeah, I helped build that, feeling pride in helping the community.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22 (continued)

Responses to RQ3: Primary Rewards in Becoming an Adult Education Instructor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy Teaching/Making a Difference (continued)</td>
<td>“. . .I think I always enjoyed helping people and that’s what it allowed me to do. I got paid to do something I loved.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .It was the best time in my teaching career. . .most enjoyable and most rewarding.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I enjoyed it and I enjoyed getting to know the students personally.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .the idea of charity and this idea of giving because you are definitely not doing it for the money. . .the idea of serving your community. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Adult Attitudes About Learning</td>
<td>“. . .to see women and guys who struggled so hard through school and it seems like when they commit . . .they get it. . .the more one-on-one time. . .everything works. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Ah...seeing someone who has not typically done well in school that did not survive in a high school setting who had to quit either because of discipline problems, because of academic problems, or maybe because of financial problems. I think one of the greatest rewards for an adult education teacher is to be able to take someone like that. . .they felt they had been a failure in life. . .the greatest reward is taking those people. . .bringing them up to a level to show them they can succeed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .they (student) would tell me “I’m not smart, I just can’t do it, I’ve never done well in school.” I’ve been able to take those people and show them they could be successful and many of them did get their GED. . .and changed...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22 (continued)

*Responses to RQ3: Primary Rewards in Becoming an Adult Education Instructor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changing Adult Attitudes About Learning (continued)</td>
<td>“...so, they come in with an attitude and when the attitude turns around, it is a major breakthrough. . .very rewarding.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...these (students) are people who have tried it one way and it didn’t work, they were back to try again. . .some of them three or four or ten times. . .they are determined. . .they learn and it really means something to them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It helped them with their self-worth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“...I think I learned more from my students than they did from me, as all teachers do. . .changing attitudes.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the participants believed student success, the enjoyment of teaching, and changing adults attitudes about learning were the primary rewards in being an adult education instructor.

**Findings Related to Research Question 4**

Research Question 4 states: From the perspective of a former ABE teacher, what are the differences between part-time and full-time teachers in the field of ABE?

Interviewees were asked two questions during the interview process in order to saturate the categories and identify the factors to answer the question. IQ7 mapped to RQ4 asked: What are the perceptions of the differences in part-time teachers and full-time teachers in adult education? Participants either agreed or disagreed that they believed differences existed between part-time and full-time ABE teachers in the field of adult education. Of
the participants \((n = 8)\), 6 (75\%) believed differences existed in part-time instructors in
the field versus full-time teachers, as shown in Table 23.

Table 23

*Differences in Part-time Teachers and Full-Time Teachers in Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Participants ((n = 8))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses listed in Table 24 are comments from the participants as to the
differences they believed existed between part-time versus full-time adult education
instructors.

Table 24

*Categories of Differences in Part-time Versus Full-Time Teachers in Adult Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Differences in Part-time vs. Full-time Adult Education Instructors</th>
<th>Number of Times Mentioned in Interview ((n = 6))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time positions are a good fit for teachers/students</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in salary/benefits/planning time</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time adult educators are more invested in the program/committed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the six participants (75\%) who responded “Yes,” that differences existed in
part-time versus full-time teachers, they agreed that part-time positions were a good fit
for some teachers. In addition, they also responded that no difference was seen in salary for adult education instructors, whether teaching part time or full time. They also believed that the compensation for the position was the same. Last, all six believed that full-time instructors were more vested in the program. Responses from participants for IQ7 are listed in Table 25.

Table 25

Responses Regarding Perceptions of Differences in Part-Time Versus Full-Time ABE Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of the Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Salary/Benefits/Planning Time</td>
<td>“(Full time). . . they receive benefits that a part-time person doesn’t.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s part-time. . . I don’t have any benefits. . . the pay is not that great. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Part-time people are expected, for low pay, to do as much work as full-time teachers were doing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . . planning time. . . part-time we don’t have enough money to pay you for planning time. . . they ought to be paid for planning time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . . benefits. . . are for full-time. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Most of the part-time people have another job in addition to the part-time adult education job unless they are retired and drawing retirement.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Positions are a Good Fit for Teachers/Students</td>
<td>“Yeah. . . part-time really worked well for our situation because most of them were retired teachers. . . so maybe they had those skills they were wanting. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“So. . . retirees could be taking half-time because they could modify their budget with their social security income.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25 (continued)

*Responses Regarding Perceptions of Differences in Part-Time Versus Full-Time ABE Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of the Responses</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Salary/Benefits/Planning Time (continued)</td>
<td>“It’s much easier for a part-time person to walk away from a job than a full-time person.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .part-time. . .it was just enough to keep me involved and keep my mind sharp.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .there are students that do not fit into the norm of teaching in a regular classroom. . .I think that is where it is a good to have some part-time staff.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .I can tell you this from my standpoint and my perspective. . .I could see where full time in adult education. . .you would have to have a lot of patience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Adult Educators are More Invested in the Programs/Committed</td>
<td>“Full time folks. . .but I feel like they are more invested in the program. I feel like they feel they are more of a group. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes, the full time teachers, I believe, have a greater commitment, honestly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think part-time teachers really don’t get how important the statistics are. . .when you are full-time. . .you tend to watch the statistics more often.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .if you are full time instructor and you know that your program may not be funded, you pay more attention to capture those gains before the student leaves. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .full-time. . .they are there consistently so students feel more comfortable with their teaching. . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“. . .a full-time teacher has time to do all the PD.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The responses from participants to IQ7 in regard to specific differences in part-time versus full-time ABE teachers relative to salary/benefits/planning time were:

- Full-time ABE teachers receive benefits but part-time ABE teachers do not.
- Part-time ABE teachers are expected to do the same as a full-time ABE teacher, but receive less working hours and pay.
- Planning time for part-time teachers is minimal, or the part-time teachers do not get paid for planning time.
- Part-time teachers often have another job and may not be as committed as full-time teachers.

Several of the participants, however, responded that part-time teaching in ABE is a good fit for many people because:

- Many part-time ABE teachers are retired teachers and have the skills needed to work with adult learners in specific content areas.
- Part-time retired teachers could take these positions because they could supplement their income with social security or other retirement income.
- It is easier for part-time teachers to walk away from a job.
- Part-time was good for individuals who wanted to keep their mind sharp and have something extra to do with their time.
- Many adult learners work better with part-time teachers, as they don’t have to have one teacher all the time for a subject.
- Part-time teachers would be a better fit due to the demographics of the adult learners. It is difficult to work in the field full time.
Conversely, the responses to the possible differences if one was a full-time ABE teacher were:

- Full-time teachers are more vested in the program.
- Full-time teachers have a greater commitment.
- Full-time teachers have a much better understanding of the program data.
- Full-time teachers are aware of funding and the importance of student gains.
- Full-time teachers are more visible, and students become familiar with them to develop relationships.
- Full-time teachers have more time to complete professional development.

Interview question 8 mapped to RQ4 asked: From your perspective as a former adult education instructor, what is your sense of how these differences affect decisions to leave the field of adult education? Participants responded as to whether they believed the differences regarding full time versus part time impacted the decision to leave adult education. Participants \((n = 8)\) responses are noted in Table 26.

Table 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Participants ((n = 8))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants responded with specific reasons why they felt there were differences between full-time teachers or part-time teachers who left the field with
various reasons. Table 27 identifies the responses as to specific reasons they believed or did not believe being full time or part time impacted the decision to leave the field.

Table 27

*Responses as to Why or Why Not Participants Believed There were Differences Between Part-time Versus Full-time Adult Educators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of the Categories</th>
<th>Supporting Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“Yes...I could not afford to be in the field as a part-time employee, especially as to what I was getting paid.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes...I can see where any profession...where you are doing it full time, day in and day out...the chance of burnout increases a bit. You just get tired of it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes...a full-time teacher has to do all the PD...they are more committed to the program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yes...I mean if you would pay a person for benefits...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Well...mainly the full-time person has a consistent job and they know their pay check.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>“No...because the salary is the same whether it is part-time or full-time...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“No...I think it is probably equal...the reasons would be the same.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“No...I think the reason is the same.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings revealed that the majority of the participants perceived a difference in part-time versus full-time adult educators. Those who responded believed that part-time individuals do not work enough to complete the professional development. Also
part-time ABE teachers may not be as committed to the program, as they often have other jobs, do not receive benefits, and their salary/wages are lower than full-time adult educators. One participant responded that the issues affecting retention, such as low wages, would be the same whether an individual teaches part time or full time. Two participants responded that no differences existed between part-time and full-time teachers. They felt the choice to leave would be the same whether full time or part time.
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion

This chapter provides examples of participants’ insights regarding this study. Data analyses previously shared in Chapter IV provided the overall findings of this research.

This study determined the factors affecting the retention of adult basic education teachers in Kentucky. The following research questions guided the study:

From the perspective of former ABE teachers in Kentucky:

1. What factors affect the retention of ABE teachers?
2. What are the perceived barriers to becoming an adult education instructor?
3. What are the perceived primary rewards of being an adult education instructor?
4. What are the differences between part-time and full-time teachers who leave the field of ABE?

Summary of Findings

This study was undertaken to discover the factors that affect retention of adult education teachers in Kentucky. Former adult educators who participated in the study were asked eight interview questions mapped to the research questions in order to share their experiences relative to when and why they entered adult education, as well as the reason they thought teachers left the field of adult education. This included their experience as far as leaving the profession.

The first finding of importance was that teachers in adult education leave the field, or do not enter the field due to low salaries. This is reflective of research by the U.S. Department of Labor (2012) in the K-12 education indicating that salary
compensation is also the number one reason teachers leave the field of education. Another relevant finding was that of the participants entered the field after they were unable to secure a position in the K-12 education field. Adult education was not their primary choice, but it was chosen because the individuals needed a job and possessed a teaching background. These results confirm the findings of Smith et al. (2003) that adult education instructors often enter the field through different avenues or sideways. It most often is not a forward decision by most individuals.

The second important finding was that a teaching certificate is not required of adult education teachers in Kentucky, which may affect all factors that were noted in this study. This finding may be one reason that the compensation is low. A relationship also may exist between the first two findings relative to the factors that affect retention of ABE teachers. ABE teachers often are hired with a bachelor’s degree and no teaching experience in any subject matter, which can result in lower wages. More important, it can result in ABE teachers not having the necessary experience to work in the position.

The third significant finding was based on exploration of the factors that may affect retention of adult education teachers in Kentucky, such as emotional issues, personality characteristics, and motivation/interest in the field. These were found to be significant factors that affect the retention of ABE teachers in Kentucky. Additional factors, such as teachers moving in the field and the lack of appropriate professional development, were shared by the participants that may have led to ABE teachers leaving the field. One additional factor was feeling underappreciated and the perceived lower status of the profession in the field of education, which was similarly addressed by Tye and O’Brien (2002).
The fourth significant finding was that many individuals do not know the profession exists or how to enter the profession, which may be a barrier in recruiting and obtaining skilled adult education teachers. However, the findings in these categories are different from the findings in a similar study conducted by Smith and Hofer (2003).

The fifth significant finding related to the rewards in becoming an adult education teacher. The rewards identified in this study involved intrinsic rewards of observing students succeed, enjoyment of teaching, making a difference in an individual’s life, and the change in students’ attitudes about learning. These are intrinsic rewards; and, although intangible, they were identified reasons for ABE teachers remaining in the field of adult education.

The sixth significant finding was that low wages and budgeting issues resulted in many part-time teachers in the field. ABE teachers should be skilled professionals able to achieve successful student outcomes. Part-time teachers may not possess the necessary skills to achieve successful student outcomes. However, it was found that part-time ABE teachers who enter the field after retiring from K-12 education bring to the position skills such as math or reading.

The seventh significant finding was that part-time instructors often are not provided additional hourly compensation to attend or complete the required professional development to become a more highly skilled ABE instructor. In addition, some participants noted that some of the professional development was inappropriate for their needs in the classroom, or was not provided on a timely basis.

The last significant finding was the perceived differences in part-time versus full-time ABE teachers. Most significant was the fact that full-time teachers receive higher
compensation, as they work more hours, often receive benefits, and many times have better working hours. Most importantly, they are more vested in the program and are more aware of performance, as they understand this can affect budgeting decisions, ultimately affecting their full-time position.

**Discussion and Results of Findings**

This section discusses the findings relative to factors that affect the retention of ABE teachers in Kentucky, based on the perceptions of former adult education teachers. Teacher turnover is widely acknowledged by researchers and practitioners to be one of the most significant problems in education. In adult education, much time is spent on adult learners who have various needs, which is equally important in understanding factors that can affect retention of these teachers. With few studies available to guide policymakers, it is important to understand the factors that affect retention of ABE instructors in order to address these issues.

**Discussion and Results of Findings Related to Research Question 1**

This study found similarities between this study and a research conducted by Smith and Hofer (2003) concerning the factors that affect retention of adult basic education teachers. Financial issues or low wages were the main factors affecting retention, as noted by Smith and Hofer. In addition, these data were essentially in direct association with studies on teacher retention of K-12 educators, as shown in research conducted by Tye and O’Brien (2002), whose research was compared to that of Meryman (1962) relative to reasons teachers left the field of education.

The first significant finding was that, for over 50 years, the same reason has been noted regarding factors that affect retention of teachers - salary/wages. This factor has not
changed possibly due to the culture of the United States and the value given to public education, in addition to the idea that the thought is that K-12 teacher education positions primarily are held by females. Whatever the case, this was confirmed by the United States Department of Labor (2012) study indicating that the median annual earnings of K-12 teachers with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree was $51,960 to $53,230 in 2012-2013. By contrast, the same source listed median annual earnings for adult literacy teachers with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree (including GED instructors) to be $46,530. Of interest for future studies would be the current salaries of ABE/GED instructors in Kentucky, who often work for lower wages and are part time with few to no benefits.

The second significant finding is related to compensation. ABE teachers are required to have a four-year degree in any field, but it does not necessarily have to be in the field of education. The current compensation, in most instances, does not provide a sufficient return on the investment to seek additional education beyond a bachelor’s degree. It also should be noted that, in Kentucky, teaching certification is not required to teach in the field of adult education. This research indicated that adequate compensation has a significant effect on teacher retention. However, a study by Eberts et al. (2002) revealed that, although compensation had a positive effect on teacher retention, it did not necessarily have a positive effect on student outcomes, even when teachers were retained. Future studies should be considered might address compensation and student outcomes.

The third significant finding related emotional issues, personality characteristics, and motivation/interest that affect retention. Also significant were the “other” factors identified that are consistent with the findings by Smith and Hofer (2002) that teachers
move, as well as the lack of appropriate professional development. Other factors that were reported involved feeling underappreciated and the low status of the profession, also noted in the study by Tye and O’Brien (2002).

In using Vroom’s (1995) VIE theory as the theoretical framework for this study, it is significant to reflect on the relationship between the IQ1 interview responses and the VIE theory. Most participants provided anecdotal experiences working with adult learners and their effect on valuing their work and continuing in the field. Of particular interest were educators’ comments from an emotional standpoint relative to their experiences in education. The relationships that adults build with one another, even in an educational setting, appeared to be an additional finding.

Upon reflecting on IQ1, Vroom’s (1995) VIE theory was developed based on research indicating that work disciplines change over time and have become more reflective and personal. Therefore, Vroom’s theory was organized to guide research on the relationships between individuals and their work. Based on Vroom’s theory, shared in Chapter II, one of the main features of expectancy in the VIE theory asserted that human behavior is based on an individual’s personal opinions or beliefs. Therefore, based on this study, only 38% (3) of the participants entered the field of adult education due to their desire to select this career, which was a rational choice among other possible careers. This indicates that 62% of the participants (5) chose adult education because they needed a job, not as a career choice. Based on the responses to IQ1, Vroom’s theory is not valid in this study. However, when considering that the participants chose adult education because they needed a job and an income, Vroom’s theory in regard to understanding valence explained 62% of the work motivation of the participants.
In considering the motivation of an individual to choose to work, Vroom (1995) believed that behavior was directed toward pleasure and away from pain. Reflecting on Vroom’s theory and IQ2, individuals chose the field of ABE regardless of the participant’s situation or whether someone directed their decision to enter the field. Vroom’s theory stated that behavior is directed toward pleasure and away from pain. Individuals behave in ways that maximize certain types of outcomes (rewards, satisfiers, positive reinforcements, etc.) and minimize other outcomes (dissatisfiers, negative reinforcements, etc.) Therefore, 100% of the participants chose to work in adult education based on the common factor of the reward of compensation. Other reasons may be significant, but this factor was shared by all participants, asserting, in part, that Vroom’s theory had some validity relative to the factors that motivate individuals to work.

Vroom’s (1995) theoretical framework for work and motivation is predicated on three concepts: valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Valence, as explained by Vroom, “is an orientation toward a particular outcome” (p.18). An individual preferred x to y, y to x, or was indifferent to both. Therefore, the preference was for a desire or attraction to gain a positive outcome. An ABE teacher’s desire to teach students to become successful in their goals would be an example of a state of valence. However, in Vroom’s theory, expectancy is that an adult educator would continue to work because of a particular outcome, specifically, a positive outcome that leads to Vroom’s idea of instrumentality, which is a value of the second outcome associated with the first. By taking action in the first direction, the goal would be to obtain a positive reward, or a +1
in the second direction. When the second outcome is a -1, the likelihood of continuing the first will cease to exist.

In this instance, adult educators seek to work in the field, which provides the first outcome of salary compensation (+1 in reviewing Vroom’s 1995 theory). However, when the salary compensation is no longer a positive outcome, or a -1, an individual would choose to no longer perform a job in the field of adult education. This study has shown that a part of Vroom’s theory of VIE (see Figure 1) was asserted to be correct in this study, specifically when reviewing the answers to Research Question 1. As the first determinant to enter adult education was a +1, it was found individuals accepted the position to work in adult education. However, upon working in the position, the valence was less than expected, which became a -1 in understanding Vroom’s theoretical framework. When an individual no longer values the rewards of working, the motivation ceases to exist. At that time, they will choose to leave the position.

**Discussion and Results of Findings Related to Research Question 2**

The fourth significant finding was an understanding of the barriers that adult educators faced that may affect retention. The categories identified by the participants were:

- Salary considerations
- Lack of teacher certification/PD
- Minimal recruitment in ABE field
- Not teaching in the field of expertise/technology
- Low status of the profession
- Love of teaching
- Accountability
- Working hours

These barriers also related to the reasons that affect the retention of ABE teachers. These categories are listed in the study conducted by Tye and O'Brien (2002). Few studies have been conducted in the ABE field in regard to barriers to teaching in adult education. However, Smith et al. (2003) conducted a study relative to the way in which ABE teachers change as a result of professional development and gained considerable knowledge in regard to barriers to adult educators. The study noted that many part-time teachers were employed in adult education, versus full-time teachers, which was related to the minimal amount of working hours and low compensation. In addition, Smith et al. (2003) identified that ABE teachers require better preparation and professional development. This is significant, as one of the barriers that was identified was the difficulty experienced by part-time teachers in completing professional development, as well as obtaining appropriate professional development. An additional significant finding affecting retention of ABE teachers in Kentucky, was that these teachers are not required to have teaching certification.

Again, when reflecting on the use of Vroom’s (1995) VIE Theory of Motivation regarding the answers to RQ2 (based on Figure 1), the same holds true for determining the effectiveness of Vroom’s VIE Theory in this study. RQ2 shared that a main barrier to adult education was salary compensation. Individuals did not seek positions in adult education, or continue in adult education, due to the first outcome of the study, which was the barrier of salary. The salary ceases to be a positive and becomes a -1; therefore, the attractiveness of continuing in adult education, or entering the field, is an undesirable
outcome. Vroom’s VIE theory proposes that when the motivation to continue in a position ceases to provide the tangible reward sought by an employee, they are no longer interested in performing the work required.

Discussion and Results of Findings Related to Research Question 3

The fifth significant finding related to the rewards of becoming an adult education instructor, are similar in most teaching professions. Morales (1994) noted that in the K-12 profession, a main reward is the ability to help others, which also was identified in this study. The following categories were identified as perceived rewards:

- Student success
- Enjoyment of teaching/making a difference
- Changing adult attitudes about learning

Alastuey et al. (2005) identified the top three categories relative to perceived rewards by teachers; the most significant was that teachers loved children and teaching. This also was identified in this study as the second most significant reward of ABE teachers. This result would lead one to believe that overall, the rewards in teaching in any profession are intrinsic rewards and are the motivators to enter the profession, as well as continue in the profession. Smith et al. (2003) found that one of the main reasons ABE teachers remain in the field is the intrinsic reward of believing they make a difference in an individual’s life.

This finding is significant, in that these factors are intrinsic motivational rewards - intangible rewards that one cannot provide to an individual, such as a monetary reward of benefits. The rewards that are received by adult educators cannot be negotiated upon employment or change as factors that affect retention. Therefore, program administrators
may have difficulty in implementing actual program improvement plans based on rewards. The barriers to adult education that are more extrinsic, such as salary compensation, raises, and working hours were identified in this study as items that program administrators may have the ability to change. The significance of this finding is that individuals who stay in the adult education field for longer periods do so due to the intrinsic motivational factors that relate to human emotions and belief systems.

It is valid to state that Vroom’s (1995) VIE Theory has some validity in regard to RQ3. Individuals in adult education are motivated to continue in the field due to motivational outcomes, which is a +1. However, the motivational outcomes were considered to be intrinsic rewards, which led to Vroom’s theory related to choice behavior. The VIE theory is central to understanding the motivation of individuals’ selections in their career choice. Vroom contended that both choice and behavior are major factors in explaining the reason that idea of why individuals work, as well as that which motivates them to work in their chosen profession. In addition, the second part of Vroom’s theory deals with work conditions. Vroom noted two types of conditions in which individuals are likely to work - economic and motivational. Based on the data in this study in regard to RQ2, motivation based on the intrinsic reward was considered to be a value for adult educators and a reason they chose to work in adult education.

Although Vroom’s basis for the theory is that individuals work because of the anticipated economic consequences, but work also serves as an indicator of other aspects of individuals’ lives. This can range from tangible items, such as work benefits including retirement and health and life insurance, to intangible items such as social status and the intrinsic rewards of self-efficacy, giving back to society, and helping others. In this case,
Vroom’s theory was validated, in that adult educators in this study continued to work in adult education due to the motivational factor of intrinsic rewards of self-efficacy.

**Discussion and Results of Findings Related to Research Question 4**

The sixth significant finding was whether a perceived difference existed in part-time versus full-time teachers in adult education. A surprising result was that six of the participants believed it made a difference. However, after reviewing the responses, the specific reason that two participants responded “no” was because they believed the factors that affect retention are the same, whether part time or full time in the field.

The seventh significant finding was that the participants believed that part-time positions in the field were a good fit for teachers. It is significant to note that 50% of the participants were formerly employed part time in the field, and 50% were formerly employed full time. A study conducted by Young et al. (1995) discovered more frequent part-time ABE staff turnover than full-time staff. The study showed that only 50% of the part-time instructors had taught in adult basic education for less than three years. Smith et al. (2003) identified an ABE teacher turnover rate of 21% over approximately 18 months, which affected the hiring of part-time ABE instructors in the field. However, a study conducted by Ingersoll (2001) identified the annual turnover of K-12 teachers leaving the field as 7%. This finding may be significant, as most K-12 teachers are employed full time with benefits, compared to ABE teachers who are typically employed part-time.

The eighth significant finding was that five (63%) of the participants believed that the differences between part-time versus full-time ABE instructors affect retention. The three participants who responded that the factors of retention would not make a
difference if an instructor was part time was due to their belief that the circumstances were the same whether the instructor was part time or full time, benefits, etc.

The results of this study indicated that the factors affecting the retention of adult education instructors are similar to those affecting retention of K-12 teachers. However, some of the differences that were found related to the lack of teaching certification in adult education. Also, many individuals in adult education feel underappreciated in their field. In addition, although professional development was available, the findings showed that it may not be of value to individuals who are part-time individuals who are unable to participate due to a lack of time for sufficient professional development. Another finding was that there were more part-time teachers in adult education than in the K-12 system, which could affect retention. Many part-time teachers supplement their income until they obtain full-time employment. Therefore, they do not remain in the adult education field long enough to learn the necessary skills to effectively teach adult learners. Few studies are available that identify the factors that affect retention of adult education instructors in Kentucky. Therefore, the results of this study add to the body of research by identifying factors that affect retention.

**Implications for Practice**

The results of this study have four implications for practice. As noted in Chapter I, teacher quality has been identified as one of the most important school determinants of student achievement gains (Ferguson, 1991; Rivkin et al., 2005). Data reported in Chapters I and II reflect the significance of the factors that affect teacher retention in either in the P-12 field or the adult education field. The first implication of the study was that retention of ABE instructors impacts the achievement of excellent or proficient
student academic outcomes. Policymakers should assess retention of ABE instructors and should create policies that will positively affect decisions to continue in the field and to increase skills and knowledge in order to assist ABE students in meeting additional requirements of adult education and the GED® credential.

The second implication was that salary is a direct determinant in obtaining and retaining quality adult educators. Policymakers, practitioners, and directors should address this implication and consider increasing salaries in order to provide incentives for adult educators to continue in the field. Results of the review of the literature, as described in Chapter II, indicated that salary is a primary factor in retaining teachers, supported by the research of Tye and O’Brien (2002) and Smith et al. (2003). Anecdotal evidence through participant interviews provided identical support for this implication.

The third implication was for policymakers, practitioners, and directors to examine the establishment of a credential to improve the profession of adult basic education in Kentucky. Teacher certification and appropriate professional development impacts one’s teaching ability and student outcomes, which is the core difference between teachers in adult education compared to those in the K-12 field. This difference in educational requirements and professional development was significant to student outcomes and teacher retention.

Last, the fourth implication was for policymakers, practitioners, and directors to understand the impact of more part-time ABE instructors than full-time instructors leaving the field may reduce student outcomes. The turnover and retention of qualified part-time instructors has a direct effect on student outcomes and program outcomes in Kentucky. Practitioners and directors should implement strategies to increase full-time
employment of ABE instructors or should offer additional incentives to part-time instructors, which positively affect student outcomes.

**Future Research**

This study provided a similar relationship to studies conducted in the K-12 field relative to factors that affect retention of teachers. Based on results of this study, adult education teachers may not be as highly compensated, although retention of teachers in any field is very similar.

A small sample size was utilized in this study, based on the ability to contact former ABE teachers in Kentucky. Given more time and resources, the research could have been expanded to include more participants, although the results may have been the same with a larger sample size. From this study, the participants showed an overwhelming desire to help others. As this was one of the main reasons they remained in adult education, the tangible elements that are required from a human perspective based on Maslow’s Theory of Motivation (Maslow, 2012), which include (food, clothing, shelter) to the highest level of self-efficacy, often were affected by working in adult education. Continuing to work in a profession that experiences funding cuts, no growth, low compensation, and a demanding position is challenging. Adult educators appear to face many challenges on a daily basis that are similar and affect retention in the field of adult education.

Additional research could provide further data to adult educators and policymakers. Implementing research is important to explore and identify the reason for limited funding, resources, and salaries in adult education, and also to serve the lowest academic level of students with possible learning issues, using teachers with the least
amount of experience and skill, as well as limited resources. Research also could be undertaken to explore specifically the way in which intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards motivate teachers to go beyond what is required to achieve student success.

Additional research would be advantageous that encompasses all states that provide adult education services in regard to factors that affect retention of adult educators. An additional study could assist policymakers at the national level in understanding the issues at the program level faced by adult educators on a daily basis. The significance of such a study would be the way in which these factors affect student outcomes, which could assist national organizations in exploring teacher certification or training for adult educators across the nation.

A value-added research study is recommended relative to whether an increase in compensation or salary affects retention of adult education teachers. Also, included in a study of this significance would be whether additional compensation could also increase the effectiveness of an adult education teacher. Of equal importance would be a study on student outcomes based on ABE teacher experience, education, and certification to determine whether any of these factors change student outcomes in regard to higher student achievement.

Third, a study would be beneficial in regard to whether a significant difference exists in part-time adult education teachers versus full-time adult education teachers, to include whether these differences affect the teacher’s ability to be successful in the classroom. The data from a study of this nature can provide valuable information to policymakers in decisions regarding funding.
Last, a study is needed related to effective adult education practices in order to evaluate the impact of added professional development on adult education teachers to provide a more experienced and capable adult educator who can increase student outcomes.

**Conclusions**

Kentucky adult education has been known across the United States as a highly successful and effective program with positive student outcomes and professional development for adult educators. These educators in Kentucky are passionate and talented teachers who sincerely care about student success. In any profession, employees should be valued by their employer and be provided with the necessary skills to perform or possess these skills prior to beginning the job. Two reasonable conclusions can be derived from this study. Adult educators in Kentucky should be compensated at a reasonable wage for providing a service to help others obtain the skills needed to become college and career ready. In addition, adult educators should be considered valued and respected in their profession, as they provide a service to those who need a second chance to be successful. An average individual would much rather learn a trade and perform a job for a wage required to live comfortably. However, from this study, it appears adult educators may not know all that is needed about the profession when they enter the field. Although they gain much from the intrinsic rewards and the lives they change, a monetary value cannot be placed on this reward.
REFERENCES


## APPENDIX A: PHONE SCRIPT TO REQUEST CONTACT INFORMATION

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
| 1 | Me: Hello. My name is Kay Combs and I am calling from Western Kentucky University. May I please speak to (Director’s Name)?  

Them: Yes (Go to section 5) He/She is not in (Go to section 3)  
What is this regarding? (Go to section 2) |
| 2 | Me: I am calling to ask for his/her help in a research project I am conducting.  

Them: Hold on while I transfer you (Go to section 5) He/she does not want to be bothered (Go to section 4) |
| 3 | Me: When do you expect him/her in?  

Them: (Time/Date)  
Me: Thank you. I will call back then. (End of script) |
| 4 | Me: I can appreciate your position on this, but do you mind telling me why?  

Them: (Response)  
Me: Thank you and have a good day. (End of script) |
| 5 | Them: Hello?  

Me: Hello, my name is Kay Combs and I’m calling from Western Kentucky University to ask for your help in a research project I am conducting on the factors that affect retention of ABE instructors in Kentucky based on the perceptions of former ABE instructors. I would like for your participation in regard to this study. I need your help in identifying one or two former instructors in adult education to interview for this study.  

Them: Okay (Go to section 6) I’m not interested (Go to section 9) |
| 6 | Me: Do you have any questions about what I’m trying to do?  

Them: No (Go to section 8) Yes (Go to section 7) |
| 7 | Me: What would you like to know?  

Them: (Response) (Go to section 8) |
APPENDIX A: PHONE SCRIPT TO REQUEST CONTACT INFORMATION

(continued)

|   | Me: Would you mind giving me the name and contact information of two former instructors to contact?  
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8 | Them: No (Go to section 9) Yes (Go to section 10)  
|   | Me: I understand you don’t want to give me that information. Do you mind telling me why?  
| 9 | Them: (Response)  
|   | Me: Thank you and have a good day. (End of script)  
| 10 | Me: Thank you. How is it best for me to contact them?  
|    | Them: (Response)  
|    | Me: Thank you. You have been most helpful. Take care and have a good day. (End of script)  

APPENDIX B: PHONE SCRIPT TO REQUEST PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Conversation</th>
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| **1** | Me: Hello. My name is Kay Combs and I am calling from Western Kentucky University. May I please speak to (Participant’s Name)?

Them: Yes (Go to section 5) He/She is not in (Go to section 3) What is this regarding? (Go to section 2) |

| **2** | Me: I am calling to ask for his/her help in a research project I am conducting.

Them: Hold on while I get them (Go to section 5) He/she does not want to be bothered (Go to section 4) |

| **3** | Me: When do you expect him/her in?

Them: (Time/Date)

Me: Thank you. I will call back then. (End of script) |

| **4** | Me: I can appreciate your position on this, but do you mind telling me why?

Them: (Response)

Me: Thank you and have a good day. (End of script) |

| **5** | Them: Hello?

Me: Hello, my name is Kay Combs and I’m calling from Western Kentucky University. I was provided your contact information by (provide Director’s name) to ask for your help in a research project I am conducting on the factors that affect retention of ABE instructors in Kentucky. I would like for your participation in regard to this study. I would like you to participate in a 45 minute semi-structured interview.

Them: Okay (Go to section 6) I’m not interested (Go to section 9) |

| **6** | Me: Do you have any questions about what I’m trying to do?

Them: No (Go to section 8) Yes (Go to section 7) |

| **7** | Me: What would you like to know?

Them: (Response) (Go to section 8) |
**APPENDIX B: PHONE SCRIPT TO REQUEST PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

(continued)

| 8 | Me: There are a few things that you will need to provide prior to the beginning of the interview. I will provide two copies of an informed consent for participation from WKU. You and I will review this together and sign. You will keep a copy and I will keep a copy. I will also ask that you complete a background questionnaire for you to complete. The interview will need to be face-to-face and will be audiotaped. Where would you like to conduct the interview? I will be happy to travel and come to your location on the date and time you can participate.  
Them: No (Go to section 9) Yes (Go to section 10) |
|---|---|

| 9 | Me: I understand you don’t want to participate. Do you mind telling me why?  
Them: (Response)  
Me: Thank you and have a good day. (End of script) |
| 10 | Me: Thank you. Great. I am very excited you decided to participate in this research study. Tell me when and how we can meet? (Response) Also, I will need further contact information in case I need to reach you by phone. I will also provide to you my cell phone number so you may contact me in case you have any follow-up questions. I look forward to meeting you. I will contact you the day before we are to meet to make sure this still is a convenient time for you.  
Them: (Response)  
Me: Thank you. You have been most helpful. Take care and have a good day. (End of script) |

APPENDIX C: ADULT EDUCATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE MAPPED TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are written in bold. IS is short for Interview Schedule.

From the perspective of former ABE teachers in Kentucky:

Research Question 1

What are the factors that affect the retention of ABE teachers?

IS1 What influenced your decision to become an adult education teacher?

IS2 Was there a key person/situation that supported your decision to teach? In what way?

IS3 What do you believe are the reasons ABE teachers leave the field of adult education? Do you believe they leave due to emotional issues? Financial issues? Personality characteristics? Do you believe they leave due to lack of motivation and interest in the field? If so, why?

IS4 Tell me when and why you decided to leave the field of adult education?

Research Question 2

What are the differences between part-time and full-time teachers in the field of ABE?

IS5 What are the perceptions of the differences in part-time teachers and full time teachers in adult education?

IS6 What is your sense of how these differences affect decisions to leave the field of Adult education?

Research Question 3

What are the perceived barriers to becoming an adult education instructor?
APPENDIX C: ADULT EDUCATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE MAPPED TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS (continued)

IS7 What do you consider may be the primary barrier or barriers to becoming an adult education instructor? Why?

Research Question 4

What are the perceived rewards of being an adult education instructor?

IS8 What do you believe are the primary rewards in becoming an adult education instructor? Why?

APPENDIX D: ADULT EDUCATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Directions: I am going to ask you a number of open-ended questions. Please give me your honest opinion regarding your teaching experience.

From the perspective of a former ABE teacher in Kentucky:

Factors:

1. What influenced your decision to become an adult education teacher?

2. Was there a key person/situation that supported your decision to teach? In what way?

3. What do you believe are the reasons ABE teachers leave the field of adult education? Do you believe they leave due to emotional issues? Financial issues? Personality characteristics? Do you believe they leave due to lack of motivation and interest in the field? If so, why?

4. Tell me when and why you decided to leave the field of adult education?

Part Time versus Full Time Teachers

5. What are the perceptions of the differences in part-time teachers and full time teachers in adult education?

6. What is your sense of how these differences affect decisions to leave the field of adult education?

Barriers

7. What do you consider may be the primary barrier or barriers to becoming an adult education instructor? Why?
Rewards

8. What do you believe are the primary rewards in becoming an adult education instructor? Why?

Dear Director:

Now, and in the future, adult education funding and resources depend on high program performance measures. Embedded in this process is having quality instruction that leads to student success. While we have many qualified adult education instructors who are in the field of adult education in Kentucky, we also have many who leave the field for various reasons. Retention of qualified adult education staff is crucial to positive student outcomes.

I am a doctoral student and adult educator under the direction of Dr. Jim Berger, the adviser for this research study who is affiliated with the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in the Department of Educational Administration, Leadership and Research at Western Kentucky University. We are eager to get your assistance in obtaining information to understanding the factors of retention in adult basic education instructors in Kentucky. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the information you provide may benefit future program administrators in adult education and others in the field to develop methods to retain these instructors for student retention and growth.

To carry out this project, we need your help. As shared in my previous email, I am asking you to help provide me with the names and contact information (name, email and/or phone number) of two former or retired instructors whom you feel would be willing to assist in completing the attached survey. My goal is to interview them for about thirty minutes on their thoughts of why they left the field of adult education.

Thank you for your time in this project. If you have questions, feel free to email me at kay.combs304@topper.wku.edu or kcombs01@att.net. When the project is complete, I will distribute an executive summary to those who have participated.

Sincerely,

A. Kay Combs, M.A.Ed.

(Note: If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant of this study, feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Western Kentucky University.)
APPENDIX F: BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER ADULT EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS

To assist with the study, this is a short questionnaire to gather demographic data from former adult basic educators prior to the interview.

Please answer each question by placing an X in the box or filling in the appropriate information on the line.

1. Gender: □ Female    □ Male
2. Age: ____________
3. Marital Status: □ Married   □ Single
4. Years of adult education experience: ____________
5. Years employed in adult education: Full time____  Part time____
6. Hours of week you were employed?: ____________
7. Your educational attainment:
   □ Associate Degree; Field________________________
   □ Bachelor’s Degree; Field:________________________
   □ Hours beyond Bachelor’s; How many?____________
   □ Master’s Degree; Field________________________
   □ Hours beyond Master’s; How many?____________
   □ Doctoral Degree
8. Do you have a teaching certification: Yes_____ No_____ If so, what field:________________________________________
9. Is there any other information you would like to share?______________________________

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Factors Affecting the Retention of Adult Basic Education Teachers in Kentucky

Investigator: Kay Combs (859) 333-3306 or via e-mail at kcombs01@att.net
Dr. Jim Berger at jim.berger@wku.edu

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the last page of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** I am a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Jim Berger, the advisor for this research study who is affiliated with the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Educational Administration, Leadership and Research at Western Kentucky University. I am conducting a research study to explore the factors affecting retention of Adult Basic Education Instructors in Kentucky. This study is conducted as part of my dissertation project.

2. **Explanation of Procedures:** During this part of the study you are invited to participate in an interview which will last around 45 minutes. You have the right not to answer any question and leave the session at any time if you decide.

3. **Discomfort and Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks other than possible answering personal questions.

4. **Benefits:** Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the information you provide may benefit future program administrators in adult education and others in the field to determine the factors for retention of adult basic education instructors and develop methods to retain these instructors for student retention and growth.

5. **Confidentiality:** I would like to audiotape the interview session and for that your permission is required in writing. If you give permission to be audiotaped, you have the right to leave the study at any time. Tapes will be kept for further analysis and comparison with notes taken. Total privacy cannot be guaranteed. Your privacy will be protected to the extent permitted by law. The results may be published but your name will never be used as well as any information that can be an identifier.
APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT
(continued)

6. Refusal/Withdrawal:
Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

_________________________________________  ________________
Signature of Participant  Date

_________________________________________  ________________
Witness  Date

• I agree to the audio/video recording of the research. (Initial here) __________

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129

WKU IRB# 15-095
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