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Community College Academic Advisor Experiences with the Appreciative Advising Model

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC ADVISOR EXPERIENCES WITH THE

APPRECIATIVE ADVISING MODEL

by

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ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC ADVISOR EXPERIENCES
WITH THE APPRECIATIVE ADVISING MODEL

Christine Damrose-Mahlmann
Old Dominion University, 2016
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The completion agenda has driven many community colleges to focus on alternative advising approaches in place of traditional advising practices. Appreciative Advising is a paradigm shift in academic advising that centers more on individual students by helping identify and build on their strengths. Advisors apply positive psychology and reality therapy with positive, open-ended questions to help students identify their strengths and plan for the future. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which community college academic advisors experience their self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition from traditional advising practices to Appreciative Advising practices.

This qualitative study interviewed a purposeful sample of 10 academic advisors from a multi-campus community college in the southeastern United States. Particular aspects of the experiences examined included how community college academic advisors experience their *efficacy* in the practice of Appreciative Advising and how community college academic advisors experience their *relatedness* to students in the practice of Appreciative Advising. This study could contribute to student retention initiatives by enhancing the quality of academic advising and consequently, have a positive impact on both persistence and academic achievement at community colleges. Furthermore,

providing insight on the experiences of community college academic advisors who transition from a traditional advising practice to the Appreciative Advising Model may assist community college administrators in their understanding of how academic advising supports student success and supporting effective professional development for academic advisors to promote positive, student-centered advising.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my life partner of 44 years and best friend, Jim

Mahlmann.You knew my dream even when I refused to acknowledge it, you listened

with your heart when I wanted to give up the first week, and you gently nudged me back

to the "hole" to write, write, and write some more. Your never ending support and love

guided me to this point. To my children Tara, Mark, Michael, and Nancy for always

celebrating my accomplishments along this journey. You understood when I had to miss

important events in your lives and never wanted me to feel guilty. To my grandchildren,

Kat and Jonny, I hope I am an inspiration to you and that you understand learning is a

life-long journey. Believe in your dreams. To my big brother Ed Damrose for being there

for me since I was a little girl. You always loved, supported, and thought of me through

the challenging times we have had to endure. Finally, to my dad John Damrose, who was

always so proud of the woman I became and told me so.

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Bertha von Suttner said "After the verb 'To Love', 'To Help' is the most beautiful verb in the world." I have been blessed by the people who have helped me along this journey. Dr. Edna Baehre-Kolovani, whom I consider an advocate and a mentor and who epitomizes how women help women. Through our conversations she inspired me and reminded me that at the end of the day if we knew we did the best we could for the greater cause that was what mattered. Dr. Chris Glass, my advisor, committee chair, and now I feel a colleague, who listened to me and let me decide it was okay to change my dissertation topic and supported my journey. His gentle prodding and patience made me see what I could not see and made me a better writer. He practiced Appreciative Advising each and every time we met! Dr. Dana Burnett made me feel like a colleague from the moment I met him. His positive and encouraging outlook as well as his advice always kept me moving forward. Dr. Wendy Scott, from the first time I spoke with her I felt we were kindred spirits. Our outlook on first generation college students, Appreciative Inquiry, and the benefits of community colleges were so similar I felt like we had known each other forever. Dr. Jeanne Natali, who shared her personal experiences as a confidant and provided encouragement and support through the toughest part of this journey.

Donna McCauley (my BFF), Matt McGraw, Jim Maccariella, Stacy Waters-Bailey, Tom Hughes, and Jason Barr were the glue that kept me going. Comiserating with this group of wonderful and talented humans made the experience unforgettable. Cohort 11 cares about and looks out after one another. We know we are the best! We celebrate our successes, cry over our disappointments, and unfailingly support one another (except maybe the time they did not try to find me in a "burning" building which is another

story).

I have been supported and cared for by so many friends, colleagues, mentors, and family and have been truly inspired by them all. I am most grateful to have you all in my life and I look forward to sharing with you the next chapter of my professional career.

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INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The completion agenda has driven many community colleges to look for alternative

approaches to advising while shifting away from traditional advising practices (Appleby, 2008;

Obama, 2008). Appreciative Advising is a new paradigm in academic advising that focuses on a

student-centered approach (Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012). Academic advising is vital to

promote student success and student development (Kuh, 2008). Therefore, enhancing the

traditional academic advising practices that guide students to select a program of study that

meets their career and life goals will have a positive effect on students and retention (Cohen,

Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Habley et al., 2012; Kuhn, 2008). Kuh (2008) notes that "low retention

rates may be related to institutional conditions that impede academic progress, including, course

availability, scheduling, and problems with advising" (p. 68). Without a competent academic

advising model in place, persistence and graduation rates could be impacted negatively (Habley

et al., 2012; Kuh, 2008; O'Banion, 2013). Appreciative Advising, through its focus on a student-

centered approach, builds on the student's strengths and applies both positive psychology and

reality therapy by focusing on promising results (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008; Glasser, 1975;

Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) extends beyond the traditional advising practices

of prescriptive and developmental advising (Bloom et al., 2008). *Prescriptive advising*, which is

a traditional academic advising practice, is not student-centered (Crookston, 1972; Habley, 1983;

O'Banion, 1972). The prescriptive approach puts the onus on the student, expecting the student

to go off and follow the advice the academic advisor provided (Hagen & Jordan, 2008).

Developmental advising views the relationship between academic advisor and student as an

essential element in the growth of the student (Crookston, 1994). However, developmental advising does not go beyond what is comfortable for the academic advisor (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). For example, the academic advisor will help the student plan course schedules based on the curriculum the student is pursuing, yet does not help students articulate their concerns, issues, or angst (Habley et al., 2012). In contrast to these two approaches, AAM advising focuses more on fostering positive relationships and helping students identify their strengths. Additionally, academic advisors connect students with the college community, plan ways for them to overcome challenges, and help them discover positive methods used in successful outcomes (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008; Habley & Bloom, 2007). Since AAM represents a paradigm shift in basic assumptions about the academic advising relationship, unpacking the experiences of academic advisors who undergo the conceptual transition from traditional advising practices to AAM could enhance the quality of advising and, consequently, have a positive impact on both persistence and academic achievement at community colleges (Saunders & Hutson, 2012).

Academic Advising and the Appreciative Advising Model

This section will provide a brief history of the conceptual foundations of traditional advising practices, then situate Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) that represents a paradigm shift, not merely an extension, of existing advising practices. Traditional advising practices such as prescriptive and developmental advising have a long history (Frost, 2000). Since the inception of Joliet Community College in 1901, academic advisors have been providing guidance and insight to students in the forms of academic, personal, and social counseling contributing to students' success in college (Cohen et al., 2014; Kuhn, 2008). Academic advising is an essential service to students frequently mentioned in the student services literature (Habley & Bloom, 2007; Hossler

& Bean, 1990; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kramer, 2007). Specifically, a well thought out academic advising approach can positively contribute to student persistence and academic achievement by successfully engaging students in the college community (Kramer, 2007). Students who have meaningful relationships with academic advisors, who have meaningful relationships with faculty, and who feel involved with the college are more likely to persist and complete a credential (Kramer, 2007; Kuh, 2008; O'Banion, 2013; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2012).

The fundamental assumption of traditional advising practices is that students see academic advisors when there is a need for information (Cohen et al., 2014; Habley & Bloom, 2007; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kramer, 2007). Traditional advising practices involve teaching students how to navigate through the college experience, assisting students seeking guidance, scheduling classes and establishing degree plans (Appleby, 2008; Cohen et al., 2014). There is little time spent on building rapport or relationships between the student and the advisor (Habley & Bloom, 2007). The fundamental assumption of AAM is different from traditional advising practices in that it helps students look at life as a series of opportunities (Truschel, 2007). AAM builds rapport between advisors and students through positive, open-ended questions, helps students identify their strengths and works closely with students to help plan their futures (Bloom, Cuevas, Evans, & Hall, 2007).

Adapting the organizational development theory of Appreciative Inquiry, which Cooperrider (1987) pioneered in the 1970s, Bloom and Martin (2004) introduced the Appreciative Advising Model. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) focuses on " developing direct, positive questions and listening carefully to answers" (Habley & Bloom, 2007, p. 172). AI

helps individuals target their untapped potential using four phases called discovery, dream, design, and destiny (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), which is described in more detail in the next chapter. AAM adapts the phases that are in AI and adds two other phases. The phases in AAM are Disarm, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver and Don't Settle which helps students engage by focusing on their strengths (Bloom et al., 2007; Bloom et al., 2008). The adaptation of the AI phases enables academic advisors to help students focus on their accomplishments, encouraging students to think big (Habley & Bloom, 2007). AAM helps students look at their lives as a series of opportunities instead of a series of problems, and it encourages students to be leaders (Bloom et al., 2008). AAM also asks academic advisors to go beyond their traditional advising practices and be creative instead of being prescriptive. For example, advisors challenge students toward loftier goals and ask probing questions that may cause the student some dissonance. By knowing how much to challenge the student and creating a tolerable level of cognitive dissonance, the advisor is building rapport while contributing to the student's development. The real difference between AAM and traditional advising practices is that academic advisors are asked "to raise expectations of themselves and their students" (Bloom et al., 2008, p. 4).

Problem Statement

Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) is a strategy that promises to improve persistence and degree completion rates by engaging students in trusting relationships with academic advisors (Palmer, 2009). AAM is different from traditional advising practices in its fundamental assumption that life is a series of opportunities instead of problems to be corrected. Since AAM represents a paradigm shift, not simply a different method, and academic advisor's transition

from problem-solving to a fundamental cause of success analysis challenges long-standing

assumptions about the relationship between academic advisors and their advisees. The transition

involves deep conceptual changes that will require a shift in assumptions about reality.

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) point out that humans do not shift their assumptions of reality

easily without some significant learning. The challenge will be for academic advisors to see

their students as individuals who have a tremendous potential instead of individuals with sets of

problems to be corrected (Bloom & Martin, 2004). Therefore, understanding that transition is

necessary to explore in a qualitative study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which community college

academic advisors experience their self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition

from traditional advising practices to Appreciative Advising practices. Particular aspects of

the experiences examined included the ways in which academic advisors experience their

efficacy in the practice of Appreciative Advising and how academic advisors experience their

relatedness to students in the practice of Appreciative Advising.

Significance of the Study

While there are a few studies on student experiences of Appreciative Advising (e.g.,

Geleskie, 2008; Wilds & Ebbers, 2002), there are no studies on community college academic

advisors' experiences transitioning from traditional advising practices to AAM (Bloom et al.,

2012; Truschel, 2008). This study is significant in that it contributes to student retention

initiatives by providing insight into the experiences of community college academic advisors

who transition from traditional advising practices to AAM. Further contributions of this study

may assist community college administrators to improve advising practices and support academic advisor professional development to promote student-centered advising.

Overview of Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which community college academic advisors experience their self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition from traditional advising practices to Appreciative Advising practices. To answer the research questions, I used qualitative semi-structured interviews with 10 participants at a multi-campus community college in southeastern Virginia. This research design allowed me to explore experiences of academic advisors after they had transitioned from one advising approach to a newer advising approach and understand the essence of their experiences.

The purpose of qualitative research is the study of a research phenomenon that tends to be exploratory in nature (Hays & Singh, 2012). The phenomenon in this study was the experience of self-efficacy and relatedness to the student in the transition to an Appreciative Advising approach.

Qualitative data used in phenomenology are participant observation, direct observation, or interviews (Hays & Singh, 2012: Moustakas, 1994). Ten interviews were used to collect the data for this study. Through the transcendental phenomenological research method of horizonalization, textural description, structural description and textural-structural synthesis I used the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 2 to identify the nature of the academic advisors' experiences of efficacy and relatedness (Hays & Singh, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

Research Questions

Two questions guided this qualitative research study:

1. How do academic advisors experience their self-efficacy as a result of the transition from traditional advising practices to the practice of Appreciative Advising?

2. How do academic advisors experience their relatedness to students as a result of the transition from traditional advising practices to the practice of Appreciative Advising?

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study were (a) l looked only at non-faculty ranked academic advisors' experiences that transitioned from a traditional approach of advising to the Appreciative Advising approach, and (b) I looked only at community college academic advisors and not advisors at four-year schools. This approach could provide valuable information for community colleges that do not have faculty advisors. Moreover, looking at community colleges' academic advisor experiences of transitioning from the traditional approach to the Appreciative Advising approach may provide more significance for the value of using the Appreciative Advising approach.

Defining Key Terms

The following listing serves as a reference of key terms used in this study:

1. *Academic Advisor*: An academic advisor helps students identify their vocational aspirations, assists students with class scheduling, and assists students with

registration (Kuhn,2008).

2. *Appreciative Advising*: Appreciative Advising is a "social-constructivist advising philosophy that provides a framework for optimizing advisor interactions with students in both individual and group settings" (Bloom et al., 2008, p. 11).

3. *Self-Efficacy*: Self-efficacy is the "capability to produce valued outcomes and to prevent undesired ones, therefore, provides powerful incentives for the development and exercise of personal control," (Bandura, 1995, p.1).

4. *Relatedness*: Relatedness is "feeling connected to others, to caring for and being cared for by those others, to have a sense of belongingness both with other individuals and with one's community" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p.7).

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter provided background and purpose of the research study. The second chapter will provide a literature review on academic advising within the community college system as well as the birth of Appreciative Advising. It will also provide insight on theoretical frameworks for efficacy and relatedness.

The third chapter will describe the qualitative transcendental phenomenological methodology used to identify themes from advisor experiences. The remaining chapters will describe the data collection and analysis, results of the study, conclusions, and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Focusing on literature that supports the need for a paradigm shift in community college advising, this chapter will explore key ideas related to the experiences of academic advisors transitioning from a traditional advisor practice to an Appreciative Advising Model.

Background

The guiding framework for this research study is that of Jennifer L. Bloom, Bryant L. Hudson, Ye He and Nancy A. Martin (2002) (2008). Their work in this area was influenced by David L. Cooperrider (1990) and his conception of Appreciative Inquiry, Abraham Maslow's (1954) position positive psychology and William Glasser's theory on reality therapy (1975). Specifically, it was Cooperrider's (1990) view of positive change management that caught the attention of Bloom and Martin (2002). Positive change management was the impetus behind Bloom, Hudson, and He's (2008) desire to revolutionize academic advising.

When students receive more than just guidance from academic advisors, it can make a significant impact on student success and retention (Habley & Bloom, 2007). An effective academic advising program helps students identify their strengths, enabling them to overcome the challenges they face (Cohen et al., 2013; Bloom et al., 2008). The Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) has shown positive results in helping students with diverse backgrounds, such as first-generation college students, students of color, students with low socioeconomic status, and students who are not academically prepared (Truschel, 2007).

Research on students' perceptions of their advising experiences at community colleges are abundant (Hester, 2008; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010; Light, 2001; Maringe,

2011). Research on faculty advisor effectiveness and relatedness in higher education is limited (Finch, 2013; Kramer, 2003). What are missing from the research examined is community college academic advisors experiences that transition from a traditional advising practice to AAM. The examination of academic advisors' experience about their self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition to AAM has the potential to offer insight into how these advisors experienced the change in practices and student persistence.

O'Banion (2013) suggests that the purpose of academic advising is to assist students in choosing a program of study that will meet their vocational aspirations. Chickering (1994) would argue that premise by suggesting, "the fundamental purpose of academic advising is to help students become effective agents for their lifelong learning and personal development" (p.50). Successful academic advising encourages academic advisors to raise questions, share their perspectives, assist with short and long term decisions, and help students think through their plans (Goetz, 1988; Habley & Bloom, 2007; Kramer, 2007). The aim of AAM is to have students develop competence to take charge of their existence (Bloom et al., 2008).

Student Success and the Completion Agenda

Legislators place significant emphasis on community colleges to ensure students persist and succeed while upholding the colleges'mission of accessible and affordable education (Arum & Roska, 2011; Kotamraju & Blackman, 2011; Lee, Edwards, Menson, & Rawls, 2011). Student success that equates to the Obama completion agenda is the primary objective of the community college today (Obama, 2008). The goal of the completion agenda is to double the number of students in higher education who will complete a degree or certificate by 2020 (Obama, 2008).

Students enroll in community colleges with all levels of readiness (AACC, 2012; Howell, Kurleander, & Grodsky, 2010; Kuh et al., 2007). Many students are in need of developmental or remedial education before they can move on to a higher standard of learning (Cohen et al., 2014). Kuh et al., (2007) indicate three-fifths of students entering community colleges will need remediation for the first year and students enrolling in developmental courses are more likely to drop out of college (Kuh, 2008). It may also take students longer to complete a degree or certificate (Cohen et al., 2014; Crisp & Delgado, 2014). Many of these students are deficient in academic skills and possess little awareness of how to succeed in college (Tinto, 2012).

Truschel (2007) asserts that students needing remediation believe they have no influence over their destiny and have an external locus of control. Students who believe they have no control over their outcomes lack confidence and have a reduced sense of autonomy (Truschel, 2007). Students do not see their contributions leading to their successes (Bloom et al., 2008; Truschel, 2007).

Community colleges are testing high impact initiatives to improve upon student success and the pathway to degree completion (O'Banion, 2013). According to O'Banion (2013), one practice, academic advising is "emerging as one of the most important programs in a student's experience" (p. xvi).

Academic advising, at its core, combines curriculum, career planning, and resources to expand the experiences and aspirations of students (NACADA, 2014). Academic advisors provide assistance to students needing resources and services to promote student success (Kuhn, 2008). Over the years, two advising methods emerged as leading the academic advising movement: prescriptive and developmental (Crookston, 1994; Kuh, 2008). When the

academic advisor provides advice to the student and puts the onus on the student to take that advice, he is using the prescriptive approach (Crookston, 1994; Habley et al., 2012). Conversely, developmental advising characterizes a student-centered framework, developing beyond the immediate needs of the student and works in concert with the student to combine limitations and aspirations (Crookston, 1994; O'Banion, 2013). An initiative that enhances and moves beyond the student-centered approach, AAM is shifting the paradigm of academic advising. AAM addresses the deeper, relational issues, which is what makes it more effective (Habley et al., 2012).

Appreciative Advising Model

Using a social-constructivist philosophy, the Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) enriches the interactions between the student and advisor (Bloom et al., 2008). AAM shifts the advisor from seeing the student as an underperformer to seeing what the student has positively accomplished or can accomplish (Trueschel, 2007). The basic concept of AAM was adapted from Appreciative Inquiry (AI), a model for organizational management. AI is based on the premise that organizations are more likely to be successful if they do not rely heavily on correcting weaknesses within the organization, but instead build upon its strengths (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). According to Cooperrider & Whitney (2005), "AI involves the art and practice of asking unconditionally positive questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential" (p.8). AI's process flows through a 4-D cycle. The 4-D cycle consists of (a) discovery, engaging all participants to talk about their strengths and what worked best; (b) dream, inviting all participants to create a vision for the future; (c) design, creating the ideal possibility of what the organization is to

become; and (d) destiny, deciding on how to make the dream come true (Cooperrider &

Whitney, 2005).

In the same way, AAM focuses on students' strengths instead of their weaknesses,

encouraging academic advisors to ask poignant positive questions about the students' successes

instead of their failures. AAM adapted AI's 4-D cycle to a 6-D cycle to sufficiently emphasize

the importance of advisors building rapport with students. AAM's 6-D cycle consists of (a)

disarm, providing an environment that is warm and welcoming; (b) discover, asking open-ended

questions, being attentive, and practicing active listening; (c) dream, asking the student to think

big and what they would want to be recognized for in 20 years; (d) design, help students

understand how to make decisions and create a plan; (e) deliver, encourage students to carry out

their plan; and (f) don't settle, helping students to care to do better than what is just sufficient.

Positive psychology. Another difference between AAM and the traditional academic

advising practices of prescriptive and developmental methods is that AAM focuses on positive

psychology (Seligman, 2000). Positive psychology triggers the change of repairing what is

wrong in an individual's life, focusing on what is working positively (Seligman, 2000). Positive

psychology builds on talents, character strengths, and values of the individual (Peterson, 2006).

Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) suggest that we do not deny the problems but that we also

look at what is good about life. Academic advisors using AAM support students by suggesting

and pointing out the good things they accomplished while in college.

Tinto (2012) posits that students who put forth little effort during their first year lack the

relationships needed for personal motivation. Students are successful when they feel they can

connect with peers, faculty, and staff (Habley et al., 2012; Tinto, 2012). The strength and trust of

the relationship between academic advisor and student make the difference in a student's motivation to succeed. Relationships must be built first so academic advisors can help students understand that their choices are designed by themselves (Glasser, 1986). Reality therapy is an important counseling technique that contributes to AAM for this purpose.

Reality therapy. Just as AAM focuses on strengths, reality therapy focuses on the strength of the relationship between counselor and client. Reality therapists build trusting relationships that engage the clients through multiple strategies to meet what the client needs (Glasser, 1986). Like reality therapy, AAM is built upon the strong, trusting rapport that is needed between an academic advisor and a student. The purpose of this relationship during the AAM process is to keep students connected and to encourage them to explore all of their options for meeting their needs (Bloom et al., 2008).

Academic advisors who devote their time to seeing and believing that each student who walks through their door is a good student can make a difference in whether or not the student will remain with the institution. By asking open-ended questions to discover what the student enjoys, can help the student formulate a vision of their future goals. Once students can determine those goals, they can clarify what actions to take to make their dreams come true. Academic advisors will need to help them when there are momentary lapses in judgment or inappropriate choices. However, having an academic advisor who positively supports the student will encourage the student to continue with that trusting relationship.

Academic Advising at the Community College

Research supports the notion that academic advising positively affects student retention (Chickering,1994; Cohen et al., 2014; Frost, 2000; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 1991). In the early

years of community colleges, academic advisors would dispense information about class schedules and course descriptions and then prescribe remedies for issues the students were encountering (Crookston, 1994). Academic advisors would help students "find and effectively use the information, skills, insight, and understanding they need to be successful, first and primarily in the college and secondarily, later in life" (Helfgot & Culp, 2005, p. 49). Goetz (1988) suggests the purpose of academic advising is linked to the college's mission and helping students develop educational plans. This link creates complex academic advising models since the college administration defines how the service is offered. Additionally, college administrators will decide what type of training, if training is adopted, academic advisors will receive (Brown, 2008; Campbell, 2008; Frost, 2000; Habley et al., 2012).

The mission of community colleges has been evolving over the last several decades as the needs of the communities in which they serve change (Bailey & Morest, 2006). Today, community colleges are now training displaced workers, helping to establish new industries, and assisting high schools in better preparing students for college (AACC, 2012). As community colleges evolve in their mission, the types of students who attend community colleges and the needs they present are evolving, too (Cohen et al., 2014).

Many students who come to community colleges lack clear goals for college and careers. They have poor study habits, a diversity of learning styles, lack time-management skills, present with physical and mental handicaps, and are lacking the academic skills needed to be successful in college (Gordon, 2008; Habley et al., 2012; Otto, Rosenthal, & Kindle, 2013; Tinto, 2012). Supporting student development, providing early intervention, and engaging new students are helpful to first-time students (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Tinto, 2012). Community college student

services professionals provide nonacademic support services and interventions to assist students in overcoming the challenges they face, such as finding child care, decisions about whether to work full or part-time, support for disabilities, transportation, poor study habits, a diversity of learning styles, a lack of time-management skills, and being first-generation college students (Crisp & Taggart, 2013; Habley et al., 2012; Tinto, 2012).

Academic advising is one such initiative to promote student persistence when consistent; high-quality advising is provided (Habley et al., 2012). Enhancing the delivery of advising programs that will guide the student to select a program of study to meet their career and life goals will have a positive effect on students and retention (Cohen et al., 2014; Habley et al., 2012; Kuhn, 2008). McGillin (2010) suggests, "The field of academic advising has long been searching for an intellectual voice" (p. 3). While there is research to substantiate the impact that academic advising has on persistence and retention, there is adequate opportunity for scholarly examination of academic advisors' effectiveness and outcomes relative to advisor and student relationships and student success (Habley et al., 2012).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that will be used to analyze data for this study will draw on empirical research on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). One of the most important elements of academic advising is helping students transition to college life. Chickering (1994) posits, "Every transition means coping with new roles, new routines, new relationships, and new assumptions—assumptions about self, about others, and about the culture being entered" (p. 50). This statement not only applies to students but also applies to academic

advisors who transition from old practices to new approaches, specifically, the new practice of AAM.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as "a generative capability in which cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral sub-skills must be organized and effectively orchestrated to serve innumerable purposes" (Bandura, 2000, p. 36). Perceived self-efficacy is not about the skills and abilities an individual possesses, but more of a belief to perform adequately using the skills and abilities one has under certain circumstances (Bandura, 1995).

When academic advisors experience a high level of confidence in their abilities and credibility, they perceive themselves as being more prepared to cultivate the success of the student (Hughey, 2011); they have a high level of self-efficacy.

A social learning theory, self-efficacy refers to a person's belief about their capabilities for a specific task (Bandura, 1977). Consequently, as a result, of the context-specific nature of self-efficacy viewpoints when advising in a familiar advising situation, an academic advisor may feel uncertain about their skills and abilities to advise well in an unfamiliar advising position (Bandura, 2000). Using AAM, to counteract a negative belief system, academic advisors need to be, "steeped in the Appreciative Advising mindset" (Bloom et al., 2008, p. 30). Meaning that advisors strive to see the exceptional qualities in all students. AAM also creates an attitude of gratitude for both the advisor and the advisee (Bloom et al., 2008). Realizing that an academic advisor is in the position of having the ability to, "positively impact other peoples' lives and the future of the country" (Bloom et al., 2008, p. 30) enhances the academic advisors' belief system

that the academic advisor is adequately using the skills and abilities they have (Bandura, 2000;

Bloom et al., 2008).

Academic advisors using AAM look to find ways to improve their advising techniques

continually. Bloom et al., (2008) suggest that no matter how much positive feedback an

academic advisor receives from students, ways to improve professional skills should always be

sought. According to Bandura (2000), continuously finding ways to improve behaviors increases

the belief system that individuals are performing adequately and are motivated to hone their

skills further. Elliot, McGregor, & Thrash (2002) state, "Effective engagement with the

environment is said to produce an intrinsically pleasurable affective experience" (p. 363). Robert

White (1959) called this experience "a feeling of efficacy" (p. 299).

Relatedness

Relatedness "reflects the homonomous aspect of the integrative tendency of life, the

tendency to connect with and be integral to and accepted by others" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 7).

Through a mutual feeling of respect and being able to rely on others, individuals experience

relatedness. By sharing a common goal, individuals feel connected to one another (Baard, 2002).

Proven student success factors are positive relationships academic advisors have with students

(Habley & McClanahan, 2004). The advisors' connectedness with students and with their peers

contribute to feelings of competence and satisfaction.

Perceived relatedness is not about being a formal member of a group, but more of a

psychological sense of being, and existing with empathy (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Humans have an

innate need to experience competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Satisfaction is experienced when individuals engage in interesting activities and this satisfaction

is exemplified when a connection takes place with others. Hughey (2011) suggests that "Relationship and communication factors directly relate to the role and interpersonal skills of the academic advisor" (p. 23).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) (2008) provides a comprehensive description of categories and competencies. One of the CAS (2008) standards conveys that, "interpersonal competence and meaningful relationships, interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership" contribute to an academic advisors' relatedness to self-satisfaction (p. 3). Academic advisors seek ways to build meaningful and trusting relationships with students. The feeling of having a connection with their students contributes to their satisfaction within their world (Hughey, 2011). How an academic advisor relates to what and how they are doing within the world of their work has a significant impact on success for both the advisor and the student (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Conclusion

The review of the literature indicated that when students receive more than just guidance from academic advisors, it can make a significant impact on student success and retention (Habley & Bloom, 2007). Traditional advising practices have focused on giving advice to students on what classes to schedule with little to no follow-up. Academic advisors may also provide a list of resources and services promoting student success without making a personal connection with the student. The call for high impact initiatives to improve upon student success and degree completion is generating the need for improvements in traditional advising practices. Successful academic advising encourages academic advisors to raise questions, share their

perspectives, assist with short and long term decisions, and help students think through their plans (Goetz, 1988; Habley & Bloom, 2007; Kramer, 2007).

With a focus on student strengths instead of weaknesses, Appreciative Advising Model could enable academic advisors to experience the meaning of transition as they evolve in new roles, new relationships, and new assumptions—assumptions about self-efficacy, about others, and about their relatedness with a new culture. The next chapter will provide an overview of the methodology of the research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology and procedures that were used in this study: (a) an overview of the research paradigm; (b) site and participation selection; (c) data collection and data analysis methods; and (d) confidentiality and privacy protection for the participants.

Overview of Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which community college academic advisors experience their self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition from traditional advising practices to Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) practices. The rationale was to discover and describe the meaning of academic advisors' lived experiences within the context of applying AAM. The research paradigm is a social-constructivist study appreciating situations from the viewpoint of the participants. A transcendental phenomenological approach was taken because it focuses on rich, textural descriptions, structural descriptions and the essence of the participants who shared a common experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). The center of the study was the participants' lived experiences and not my interpretation of the experiences. Qualitative interviews using open-ended questions encouraged participants to explain their individual perspectives (Hays & Singh, 2012). The site and participation selection segment provide information on where the study took place and with whom. The section on data collection and data analysis methods describes the interview process and how the participants were protected.

Research Paradigm

The paradigm of the proposed dissertation research study is a social-constructivist study. The researcher appreciated situations and events from the viewpoint of the participants, who were directly involved in the research process itself (Moustakas, 1994). Qualitative interviews create an occurrence in which, through the use of open-ended questions, encourages participants to explain their individual perspectives on an issue (Hays & Singh, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The researcher then listens for clues and language that reveals meaning. While the researcher may enter the interview with specific open-ended questions, the researcher may generate other questions in response to participants' responses as rapport is being established (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). This type of design is emergent, meaning the process evolves over time (Creswell, 2014). Obtaining rich and robust information from this kind of interview helped me to examine community college academic advisors' experiences as they transitioned from traditional advising practices to a new model. Therefore, understanding that transition is important to explore in a qualitative study.

Merriam (2009) points out that "rather than determining cause and effect, predicting, or describing the distribution of some attribute among a population, we might be interested in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved" (p. 5). Qualitative research is the study of a research topic or a phenomenon that tends to be exploratory in nature (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). The qualitative researcher becomes immersed in engaging actively, listening intently and is empathic toward the individuals they are studying (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). The research that takes place through qualitative methods occurs in a natural setting and presents results in a narrative manner

using interviews, documents, observations, diaries, autobiographies and/or other sources

(Merriam, 2009).

A qualitative transcendental phenomenological approach allowed me to understand the

participants' lived experiences as well as to discover and describe the essence of their

experiences. Using this approach, I was able to focus on the academic advisors' sense of the

meaning that they gave to their advising process using Appreciative Advising Model (AAM)

(Creswell, 2014; Smith, 2005). This information can help determine if AAM can enhance the

relationships between advisors and students.

Because the aim of this study was to understand the experiences of community college

academic advisors who engage in the use of AAM, it was necessary to "discover and describe

the meaning or essence of participants' lived experiences" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 50). I sought

to understand how community college academic advisors made meaning when using a new

academic advising model. Transcendental phenomenology was appropriate for understanding

this type of study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012; Merriam,

2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Transcendental Phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology takes a stance that validates individual's experiences and

"refers to the perspective that everything is relative" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 191). Merriam

(2009) posits, "To get to the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of an

experience, the phenomenological interview is the primary method of data collection" (p. 25).

Evidence from phenomenology describes the meaning of lived experiences by several

individuals and looks to understand those experiences through their story telling (Moustakas,

1994). Moustakas (1994) sees transcendental phenomenology as focusing on the actual experiences of participants and less on the researcher's interpretations. By using the transcendental phenomenological method, I approached the phenomenon with a "fresh perspective, as if viewing it for the first time (Hays & Singh, p.50). Transcendental Phenomenological research questions must look for meaning in the participants experiences through their rich textural and structural descriptions taken from a thematic analysis through horizonalization (Moustakas, 1994). Significant statements identified during this step are then clustered into themes or meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). Once themes are clustered, textural descriptions, which provides a description of "*what*" was experienced, are provided. Structural descriptions provide *"how"* it was experienced. The need for descriptive information on the perceptions of academic advisors using Appreciative Advising supports the use of transcendental phenomenology in that it looks to understand the experiences and meanings academic advisors have socially constructed. Van Manen (1990) states "phenomenologists are interested in our lived experience" (p. 9).

Research Questions

Two questions will guide this qualitative research study:

1. How do academic advisors experience their self-efficacy as a result of transitioning from traditional advising practices to the practice of Appreciative Advising?

2. How do academic advisors experience their relatedness to students as a result of transitioning from traditional advising practices to the practice of Appreciative Advising?

Research Design

This qualitative transcendental phenomenological study interviewed a purposeful sample of 10 academic advisors from a multi-campus community college in the southeastern United States. Particular aspects of the experiences examined included how academic advisors experience their *efficacy* in the practice of Appreciative Advising and how academic advisors experience their *relatedness* to students in the practice of Appreciative Advising. This research design allowed me to explore experiences of academic advisors after they had transitioned from one advising practice to a newer advising approach and to understand the essence of their experiences through their story telling.

Participants

Site Selection

This study occurred at a multi-campus community college located in the southeastern section of the United States during the fall of 2015. I chose this institution for the following reasons: (a) three years ago, this institution embraced the Appreciative Advising Model as part of the institution's strategic plan to enhance student success; (b) as community colleges look towards ways to implement student-centered services, the strength-based approach of appreciative advising is becoming a popular option (Habley et al., 2008; Truschel, 2007) and, (c) this is the second largest community college in the state where it is located, providing a large number of academic advisors with various experience in their field.

Participant selection

This study applied a purposeful sampling strategy where the criteria for the individuals selected was specific to the study's research questions and whose perspectives are relevant to this

study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) states that "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which you can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling" (p. 230).

Hays & Singh (2012) agree that the "sample size should be consistent with the minimum number of participants needed to represent adequately the phenomenon of inquiry—a number that is guided by the study's purpose (p. 173). Charmaz (2014) posits "The number of interviews depends on the analytic level to which the researcher aspires as well as these purposes" (p. 106). One example of the analytic level is the determination when the data suggests saturation. Saturation is when no new data emerges from the transcripts of the interviews (Creswell, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hays & Singh, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I anticipated a sample size of 10 reaching saturation, which is what occurred. However, if I had not reached saturation I could have increased the number of participants until saturation was obtained.

Essential attributes that determined who was selected to participate in this study was a direct reflection of the purpose of this study. The attributes selected to reflect this study were that the participant must: (a) have completed the Appreciative Advising course through the Appreciative Advising Institute; (b) have employed the Appreciative Advising Model for at least one year, and; (c) had employed a different advising model prior to using the Appreciative Advising Model. This group is considered a homogenous sample since I was studying one particular subgroup of academic advisors who have transitioned from a traditional academic advising approach to the Appreciative Advising approach (Hays &

Singh, 2012).

Names of possible participants were obtained from records of paid invoices for the

course maintained by the college. There were 43names identified. After identifying advisors

who were still employed by the college, I contacted each person by phone, provided a short

description of the study and asked if they were interested in participating. Advisors who

indicated interest in participating in the study were sent a follow-up email with a description

of the study and a short biography of myself. All academic advisors who agreed to participate

in the study were provided with an informed consent document at the time of the interview

(Appendix C) A pseudonym was assigned to each participant in the study.

Participant Descriptions

Most of the participants were full-time academic advisors with no other responsibilities.

There were two participants who had transitioned to administrator roles since completing the

course and using AAM. There were two participants who had dual roles in administration and

as academic advisors. Compared to males ($n = 1$), the participants were overwhelmingly

female (n - 9).

The following provides an abbreviated description of the 10 participants in the study.

John was a Caucasian male aged 40-45. He was a full-time academic advisor and

developmental education manager. He had been using AAM for two years. Before the course,

he did not have any formal advising training and his advising model was more prescriptive.

Carol was a Caucasian female aged 26-28. She was a full-time academic advisor. She

had been using AAM for two years. Before the course, her training was through her Master's

degree in counseling and her advising model was more developmental.

Anita was an African-American female aged 52-54. She was a full-time academic advisor and director of a grant for first-generation college students. She had been using AAM for three years. Before the course, her training was through her experience in a student support services program, and her advising model was more developmental.

Jane was an African-American female aged 40-42. She was a full-time academic advisor and lead counselor for her counseling department. Before the course, her training was through her experiences as an admissions advisor and her advising model was more prescriptive.

Kathy was a Caucasian female aged 26-28. She was a full-time academic advisor. Before the course, her training was through her experiences within her Master's degree in higher education and her advising model was more prescriptive.

Ashley was a Phillapino female aged 32-34. She was a full-time academic advisor and first-year success manager. Before the course, her training was through experiences in modeling other advisors, and her advising model was prescriptive.

Callie was an African-American female aged 42-45. She was a full-time academic advisor. Before the course, her training was through experiences by modeling other advisors, and her advising model was developmental.

Roberta was an African-American female aged 37-39. She was a full-time academic advisor. Before the course, her training was through experiences within her Master's degree in counseling and her advising model was developmental.

Mary was an African-American female aged 42-44. She was a full-time student services administrator and an academic advisor. Before the course, her training was through

experiences by modeling other advisors in various student support services, and her advising

model was developmental.

Joanne was a Caucasian female aged 38-40. She was a full-time student services

administrator and an academic advisor. Before the course, her training was through

experiences by modeling other advisors in various student support services, and her advising

model was prescriptive. Table 1 provides a description of the participants.

Table 1

Description of Participant

Name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Position	Years Using AAM	Prior Advising Model
John	40-45	Male	Caucasian	Developmental Ed Manager	2	Prescriptive
Carol	26-28	Female	Caucasian	Academic Advisor	2	Developmental
Anita	52-54	Female	African-American	Director of Grant & Academic Advisor	3	Developmental
Jane	40-42	Female	African-American	Academic Advisor	3	Prescriptive
Kathy	26-28	Female	Caucasian	Academic Advisor	3	Prescriptive
Ashley	32-34	Female	Filipino	Academic Advisor	2	Prescriptive
Callie	43-45	Female	African-American	Academic Advisor	2	Developmental
Roberta	37-39	Female	African-American	Academic Advisor	3	Developmental
Mary	42-44	Female	African-American	Administrator	3	Developmental
Joanne	38-40	Female	Caucasian	Administrator	2	Prescriptive

Research Instrument

The interview protocol is a method to ensure consistency during the interview process (Hays & Singh, 2012). The interview protocol contains information about the research study and space to record time, date, place, interviewer, interviewee name, and questions (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012, see Appendix D). An introductory paragraph of the interview protocol assisted me in explaining the purpose of the study. At the time of the actual interview, an informed consent form was provided to the participant (see Appendix C). I developed a blueprint, or table of specifications, to ensure information needed was covered in the interview questions and to ensure content validity. (see Appendix B). For example, the themes included information about academic advisors' profession, academic advisors' perceptions of their effectiveness, advisors' perceptions of their relatedness with students, and advisors' perceptions on how they made meaning of the Appreciative Advising approach (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The questions on the questionnaire I used were typed so that they were spread out far enough apart on paper for me to add any additional notes if needed. Since the interviews were digitally recorded, the written notations explained any nonverbal responses such as hand and eye movements, facial characteristics, or general attitude. I familiarized myself with the questions ahead of time to eliminate an over-dependency on reading the questions word for word. Familiarity enables the researcher to maintain eye contact during the interview (Hays & Singh, 2012). The interview protocol ended by thanking the participant and noting that the interview had concluded and that I would send them a copy of their transcript.

Data Collection Procedures

The following section describes the procedure for the data collection of this interview study.

Before conducting the research, IRB approval was obtained (Appendix A). Data was collected through the use of open-ended questions in in-depth interviews (Hays & Singh, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). deMarrais (2004) defines an interview as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (p.55). The use of interviews within phenomenology theory is not to generate theory, but to focus on the depth and the meaning of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). A preliminary email was sent to 15 academic advisors identified as using the criteria outlined, inviting them to participate in the study (Appendix E). The email contained the purpose of the study, a biography of the researcher, a statement regarding confidentiality of their participation in the study, and the information about the extent of their participation. Not all academic advisors who were asked to participate in the study agreed. Four advisors declined, and one advisor who agreed to be interviewed dropped out before the interview took place. The in-depth interviews were conducted with each academic advisor who met the selection criteria and who agreed to participate. The remaining 10 participants were provided with an informed consent document before the interview began and was asked to read and sign the informed consent document (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). I had made two copies for each participant keeping one for the study and giving the other copy to the participant. All participants were asked ten open-ended questions along with probing questions when needed. Interviews lasted between 25-70 minutes, depending on the responses of the participants. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by an online transcription service. The researcher also made observation notes during the interview process when needed.

Once the interviews were transcribed, I emailed the transcriptions to the participants to

ensure authentication of the participants' answers. It was this type of member checking that allowed participants to verify or correct the transcript. There was only one participant who made changes to the transcript. The other nine participants verified the transcripts as correct.

The interviews took place in a natural setting during a 3-week time frame in December of 2015. Each interview took place in a secluded room with a small table and two chairs. The room was comfortable but distraction free.

Transcription and Summary Review

Immediately following the interview, I made descriptive and reflective notes so as not to lose important details of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Within 24 hours of the interview, I had the interview from the digital recording transcribed verbatim using a transcription company to ensure accuracy. I also combined any field notes with the transcription, into a summary of significance. After the transcription company had returned the transcripts to my phone, I saved all digital recordings and transcriptions to my personal computer and deleted recordings and transcriptions from my phone. After having printed out the transcriptions I deleted the digital recordings from my personal computer. Once I had all of the interviews transcribed and returned to me, a copy of the transcribed interview and a thank you note was emailed to each participant (Appendix F). All participants were asked to review, correct, or clarify their transcript interview by adding comments to the document and returning to me via email. One participant returned her transcript with corrections. The remaining participants sent me an email indicating no corrections were needed all within one week of receiving the transcript.

Data Analysis

Based upon Moustakas (1994) technique of phenomenological reduction, I developed the data analysis. My objective was to understand how community college academic advisors who apply AAM, perceive their self-efficacy and the level of relatedness they feel when advising students using AAM. Phenomenology's purpose is to focus on and understand the meaning and depth of the participants' experiences (Hays & Singh, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2014) states that "phenomenological research uses the analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, essence description" (p. 196). Moustakas (1994) suggests a focus on the essence of the participant responses.

Using Moustakas' (1994) Modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Phenomenological Data Analysis, transcripts were analyzed for themes and specific procedures. I performed a systematic process of analyzing the data using phenomenological reduction by following Moustakas (1994) steps of (a) bracketing, (b) horizonalization, (c) themes, (d) textural descriptions, (e) structural descriptions, and (f) textural-structural synthesis. Transcendental phenomenology was the appropriate methodology since I was searching for an understanding of the meaning of advisors' experiences.

My approach to data analysis was; (a) within 24 hours of each interview transcribe the interview; (b) review field notes; (c) write a summary of significant statements; and within one week; (d) develop a list of significant statements that represents the meaning and depth of the experiences recorded. Immediately following the interviews, my goal was to make descriptive and reflective notes so as not to lose important details of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Within 24 hours of the interview, I transcribed the interview from the digital recording to ensure

the accuracy and combined with this transcription my field notes into a summary of significance.

Figure 1 presents a flowchart of data analysis used in this study.

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┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│ Bracketing the│ ──▶ │ Horizonalization│ ──▶ │  Discovering │ ──▶ │Auditor Review│
│    Focus      │     │ with Interviews│     │    Themes    │     │              │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        ▼
┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│   Textural    │ ──▶ │  Structural  │ ──▶ │Textural-Structural│
│ Descriptions  │     │ Descriptions │     │    Synthesis     │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────────┘
```
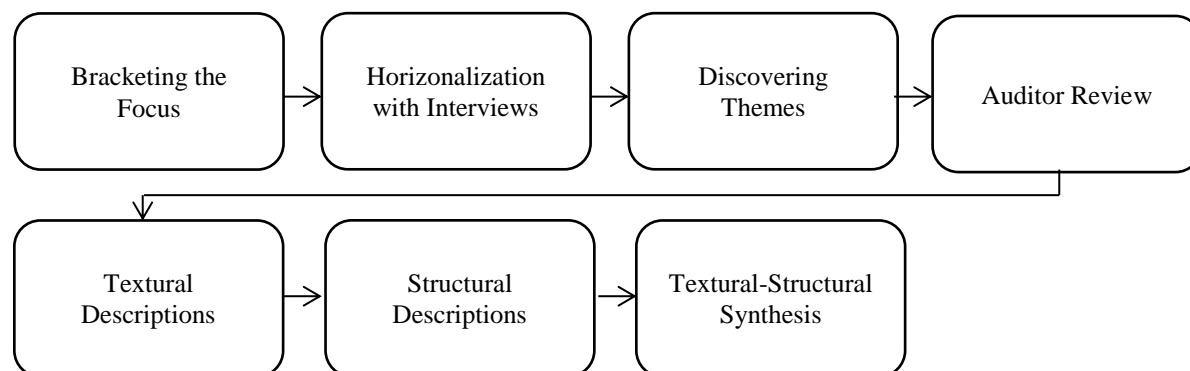
Figure 1. Flowchart of data analysis

Bracketing

The first step in managing the data was to apply the epoche process. Epoche is a Greek word that signifies that "Nothing is determined in advance" (Moustakas, 1994 p.84). Applying the epoche process, I first acknowledged and cleared my assumptions, judgments, and values by recalling my experiences with the Appreciative Advising Model. This process of bracketing enabled me to bring about a sense of closure so that I could fully listen to the participants' feelings without interjecting my feelings while engaging in the analysis. By bracketing and the epoche process, I was able to keep the focus of the research process on the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). While it is impossible to remove all judgments and biases, whether they be conscious or unconscious, I examined the phenomenon using Moustakas' (1994) method of repeatedly practicing and reflecting on removing the judgments and biases. It was these reflections that enabled me to examine the phenomenon with an unsullied perspective.

Horizonalization

The next step in managing the data assists with analysis and efficiency in handling large amounts of data that are significant statements within the transcripts (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994, p.95) describes the horizon as the "grounding or condition phenomenon that gives it distinct character." Hays & Singh (2012) suggest that the researcher should "think of your phenomenological data analysis via horizonalization and textural and structural description as a metaphorical sieve through which to filter all the participant descriptions. What is left in your sieve is the essence of participants' lived experiences—your data analysis is continually aiming to get closer and closer to that essence" (p. 355). Once transcription took place, I employed Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological process by identifying significant statements from the transcripts (Moustakas, 1994). Reading through all the transcriptions and field notes, I was given a sense of the whole before focusing on the underlying meanings.

I used MAXQDA, qualitative data analysis software, to analyze the 10 transcribed interviews. While looking for and listing text, that was nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping meaning units of the experience I identified 77 significant individual statements shared by the participants. In this phase of the analysis, I simply wanted to determine how individuals viewed AAM. To discover the meaning units or themes, I deleted the statements that were irrelevant to the topic and also those that were repeated and overlapping. Once I identified significant statements from the data presented by the participants, I grouped the significant statements into meaning units and themes. This grouping is called textural and structural descriptions.

Textural Description

The textural descriptions are striving to understand the data through the depth and meaning of the essence of the experience by asking *what* was experienced (Moustakas, 1994). Using verbatim transcripts, I was able to hear the participants' feelings through a rich description of their storytelling (Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Using specific quotes from the participants, I was more fully able to understand and describe the phenomenon and describe the *"what"* of the phenomenon. I then used structural descriptions for data analysis that identified multiple meanings within the textural descriptions that are associated with phenomenological theory.

Structural Description

The structural description identifies multiple meanings within the textural description by asking "*how*" the phenomenon was experienced (Moustakas, 1994). It is here that I looked for variations in the meanings in addition to tensions and opposites between variant themes to fully examine and understand the essence of their meaning (Moustaskas, 1994). This is where I included information about the past academic advising experiences of the participants. This step helped me to see how the participants collectively experienced the phenomenon as a group and became academic advisors. After the textural and structural descriptions of the experiences had been synthesized into a composite description, it was here that the description became the essence that portrayed the meaning of the experience, and a true understanding of the academic advisors' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Textural-Structural Synthesis

The textural-structural synthesis was the final step in the data analysis. As Moustakas (1994) points out, this step is what provides the foundation for explaining the *"what"* and *"how"*

of the experience. I used the data from the interviews as well as my constant reflection to synthesize the textural and structural descriptions. Reflection used throughout this study is what helps create the foundation and the structure for the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Researcher Bias & Concerns

Creswell (2014) points out that in qualitative research, interpretation of the data and personal views are never kept separate. As a community college advisor for 12 years and who completed the Appreciative Advising Model training, I have been influenced by these past experiences.

Because of my background and that I completed the in-depth interviews with the participants, I was the ideal individual to reflect on and extract meaning from the collected data. I recognize the following biases and possible concerns:

- I am an administrator at the institution where the participants I interviewed are employed. Some of the participants could interpret that because of my title and position I have some ubiquitous power that could have an effect on them if they do not provide the "right" answer to my questions.
- I was a community college academic advisor for 13 years at the same institution. I believe that an academic advising model is needed to improve the moral of the advisors.
- I believe that an effective academic advising model will enhance the relationships between advisors and students.
- I have strong feelings about the need for community college advisors to adopt a

new advising model that is supported by the administration at the college.

- I have participated in the Appreciative Advising Model training and believe in its framework of concentrating on the positive.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Triangulation of data sources is another key strategy for research (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). Triangulation is used to ensure trustworthiness that strengthens the evidence when looking for a particular theme (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Internal Validity

An expert trained in AAM from the Appreciative Advising Institute$^{©}$ was asked to review the interview protocol for her thoughts and suggestions about wording and information accuracy. The questions were provided to the expert I identified for feedback. Since I felt it was beneficial to ask the same individual to act as an auditor for the process during the analysis of the study, I sent her copies of the transcripts, my coding, and the interview protocol. I also provided an audit trail by keeping a notebook complete with field research notes, interview information, copies of transcripts, data obtained from MAXQDA and all emails sent to and received from participants.

External Validity

Hays & Singh (2012) refer to external validity as "the degree to which a study's sample, research design, and findings may be generalizable to an outside population or setting" (p.192). The results of this study are not generalizable to other populations. However, the unique experiences described in this study provide rich detail for those who want to understand the lived experiences of community college academic advisors who adopted AAM.

This study has credibility through confirmability since the researcher maintains a neutral position that is also called bracketing during the data collection and analysis. It is important to ensure bracketing during the study, which requires putting aside one's own belief about the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012). Coherence is present since all interviews are conducted in the same way, in the same place, by the same researcher, using the same questions. Transferability is present since this phenomenon is present in most community colleges allowing for the research protocol to be transferred to another institution (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Hays & Singh, 2012).

Finally, an essential strategy for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research is through the use of member checking (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Hays & Singh, 2012; Merriam, 2009) During the interviews the participants were asked to clarify responses to the questions through additional probing questions. Additionally, participants were sent a copy of their transcript and asked to review their transcript for any inconsistencies in their responses to the questions and the probing questions and to clarify any responses ensuring authentic representations. These procedures ensure member checking (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Reliability

A detailed protocol for data collection and analysis was established for reliability. The information was consistent which can provide a framework for other researchers to use as a comparison if they are interested in conducting similar studies (Creswell, 2014).

Consideration of Human Subjects Rights

An application requesting permission for this study to be "Exempt," which among other things will assess any physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal harm to the participants

was submitted to the Human Subjects Committee of the Darden College of Education through

IRBNet. Additionally, I have participated in the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

(CITI), providing modules on training for human subjects research offered by Old Dominion

University. Documentation for this participation accompanies the request for human subjects

approval. I was notified the approval had been granted at the end of November 2015. The email

noting the approval is Appendix A.

I ensured that each participant understood my sincerity as to how I would protect their

privacy and confidentiality. I accomplished this in the following ways: (a) demonstrated privacy

and confidentiality during the interview process; (b) demonstrated privacy and confidentiality

after the interview process and; (c) demonstrated privacy and confidentiality during the writing

phase of my dissertation.

Before and during the interview process, I informed each participant of any risks involved in

participating in this study. I also indicated my attempt to minimize any risks. I was sensitive to

any noticeable anxiety or discomfort experienced by the participant and was ready to initiate a

break in the interview if it was needed. I went over the interview protocol and indicated what this

study is about as well as my background. I explained how the participant would receive a copy of

the transcript from the interview to determine if what was said by the participant was accurate in

my transcription.

I demonstrated privacy and confidentiality after the interview process by ensuring that any

paper documents are locked in a secure room in a secure file cabinet. Any virtual information is

housed on a secure, password protected server in my office. The data is only accessible to my

dissertation committee or any other higher education administrator who has a legitimate interest in my research. All documents will be destroyed after three years.

Finally, I demonstrated privacy and confidentiality during the writing of my dissertation phase by disguising any identifying data about the participants. Through the use of pseudonyms, I protected the identity of the participants. I have ensured that any biographical data is also disguised so that anyone reading the dissertation will not be able to identify any of the participants in the study.

Summary

Using the transcendental approach to phenomenological research provided me an opportunity to interpret the experiences of the research participants as they told their story about their effectiveness and relatedness to students using AAM. This chapter outlined the methods used in conducting this research. The study design, research setting, instrumentation, data collection and analysis indicated the specific process I used to conduct the research and analyze the phenomenon. The next chapter will describe the data collection and analysis, and results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter describes the data collection and analysis of this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which community college academic advisors experience self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition from traditional advising practices to Appreciative Advising practices. Through interviews with ten community college academic advisors for approximately 60 minutes, a description of this phenomenon was illuminated by their stories and provided an overall understanding of the essence of their experiences.

Themes

Five themes emerged to be common in meaningful academic advising experiences from this study. Addressing the first research question of how academic advisors experienced their self-efficacy as a result of the transition from traditional advising practices to AAM, two themes were identified: (a) I feel like I moved from being uncertain about how I was advising students to being more confident and more effective, and (b) I feel like I learned improved techniques that contributed to my effectiveness.

Addressing the second research question of how academic advisors experience their relatedness to students as a result of transitioning from traditional advising practices to AAM, three themes were identified: (a) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with students to one that is now deeply connected; (b) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with my peers to one that is now deeply connected; and (c) I feel more motivated as an advisor using AAM than when I used my previous model of advising.

Quotes from the participants are used to provide an answer to the research questions and strengthen the themes. Examples of how the themes played out in the participants' experiences are illustrated.

Self-Efficacy and AAM

The first research question examined the experience of academic advisors' self-efficacy after transitioning to AAM. Themes that emerged were; (a) I feel like I moved from being uncertain about how I was advising students to being more confident and more effective, and (b) I feel like I learned improved techniques that contributed to my effectiveness.

I Feel Like I Moved From Being Uncertain About How I Was Advising Students To Being More Confident And More Effective. Confidence is feeling capable and believing that we are desirable to others. It is the feeling that enables academic advisors to reach goals and try new things because they are not afraid to believe in themselves. The repetitiveness of practices or skills also contributes to their confidence levels, enabling them to feel more effective by knowing and being fully engaged in what they are practicing. All of the participants in the study I interviewed reported feeling excited and more effective after transitioning from their previous academic advising practices to AAM. The participants spoke of moving from uncertainty with their previous advising practice to learning to understand their value in the advising process with students and with their profession. For them, feeling confident and effective was more than just learning theory, it was also understanding what they did not know, how to learn what they did not know, and feeling validated for what they already knew. Going through the process of making the leap to AAM gave the participants' confidence through the insight they acquired. For example, Carol, who admits to having "stumbled" into academic advising as a career, decided to

learn more about AAM for no other reason than "it was offered." She was working in the counseling office as a part-time academic advisor and had just completed her graduate degree in a counseling program. Carol felt that she learned much theory in her graduate course work; however, she was looking for more skills-based methods that would help her as she worked directly with students. Carol had been using AAM for two years when I interviewed her. She felt that the transition for her to AAM was relatively easy because she experienced a sense of familiarity with the model. Carol described her experience this way:

> I felt like there were a lot of similarities between AAM and the advising methods I was used to. It felt good to me, because it didn't feel like I was putting on anything too new, but it did bring up a lot of really interesting things and different ways to do things.

Carol expressed her experiences of feeling more confident overall because she had certain tools she was already using, and she was able to build upon them as well. While it was a familiar concept and gave her a sense of self-confidence that increased her self-efficacy, she did note that it was a bit of a perception shift. When I probed Carol about what she meant by a "perception shift" she indicated that although AAM felt familiar, nevertheless, there was still a conversion process she had to go through. The conversion for her was to learn how to move from academic advising as being an event to viewing it more as a process. Even though she had to make this leap, she still felt a sense of confidence when using the model. Carol seemed to adapt to converting from an event stage to a process immediately with little effort. This adaption suggests that if the transition can occur rapidly with little effort then adapting to AAM is simpler than if the conversion takes longer over time. Furthermore, if the process is gradual, the progression of transitioning will be challenging.

Roberta, who had also just completed a Master's in counseling degree, but had more years

of experience working in a community college setting, also felt that AAM was familiar to her.

Roberta first heard about AAM when she attended a workshop presented at her institution by Dr.

Jennifer Bloom, one of the creators of AAM. Roberta was excited about AAM from the

workshop she attended:

 I attended a workshop where my Vice President had brought in this person named Jenny

 Bloom, Dr. Bloom. Her workshop was just so, (pause) it was like the most fun workshop

 I've ever been to. I don't really like workshops and I don't like a lot of things that do a

 whole lot of mixing with people all at one time. But I went and she just, I don't want to use

 the words, but, she sold it. She made it sound so fun, so invigorating, just exciting.

However, when Roberta began learning about AAM she expressed feeling a little

disconcerted since she was hearing strategies she had just learned in graduate school. She even

expressed she was sorry she had decided to commit to the opportunity. She was tired and not in a

good place to "have to go back to school again." Roberta had a number of responsibilities and

felt stressed because she was teaching six classes, working full-time, and had family

responsibilities, all of which contributed to her negative attitude about becoming involved. Yet,

as the interview went on Roberta became more reflective on what it meant to transition to a new,

but familiar model. She said she experienced a higher level of self-efficacy because she felt

confident that she was using all the right elements. This experience left her confident in her

ability to advise students:

 When you've come from a counseling background, you've heard it before, but to get that

reminder is really refreshing. It just reminds you of the things you should be doing to really help people. I found it to be extremely meaningful.

Appreciative Advising is a framework to embrace positive mindsets for both students and academic advisors. With all of Roberta's time constraints, she saw the benefits of learning and converting to AAM. Even in a situation as Roberta's, AAM was doing what it was intended to do, shift the focus away from a habitual problem-focused vision, to a positively inspired action of change.

John also viewed AAM as a model that provided him with more confidence and a feeling that he strengthened his level of self-efficacy. Contrary to the experience and education that Carol and Roberta had John had no formal training with academic advising before enrolling in the Appreciative Advising course. John had taught special education, taught developmental English at a different community college, coached athletes, and taught in the K-12 arena for a number of years. Ultimately, John was hired by his institution as a developmental education manager. This position was to help students at risk in their developmental course work by referring them to resources such as tutoring and developing their academic plan. John described what he thought his position was going to be like:

> The position seemed like a good match for me just with developmental education, with my special education background. It was a combination on paper of working with students, but also working with administrators and faculty setting up programs; however, it was an undefined role in that all the campuses were working their offices quite differently, and I had no model.

John found himself increasingly advising more students. Not really having a particular

academic advising model to follow and after John had converted to AAM, he reported: "I feel I'm much more effective, and I've given them (students) pieces of information that they are going to be able to use themselves and develop their skills that they're going to need." John saw himself moving from the prescriptive advising approach of just giving a student a schedule, to a more connected and interactive approach with the student. Once again, this is moving from an event to a process. John goes on to explain, "By the end of the course I thought that everything that was in the course was very easy to implement. I definitely have gotten more comfortable and in the routine of listening and then trying to have them (students) help develop their plans together a little bit more." John's transition of moving into a model that he felt comfortable with enabled him to experience confidence and a transformation that reflected his personality. While most advisors did not want to be assigned to particular students, John disagreed with not assigning students to advisors. John felt he could do an even better job helping students if they had assigned advisors. When I probed John why he thought assigning advisors to students would be a good idea, he spoke about the ability to really get to know his students and that they would continue to come back to him if they knew he was their assigned advisor. John felt that there would be consistency in advising. I probed some more by asking him what he would get out of this concept. John said he felt it would increase his effectiveness and confidence since he would have a higher level of familiarity with his students. The most significant aspect of the transition for John was that he was learning how to engage in a process with a student rather than making it a one-time event with his students.

Academic advisors have a plethora of workshops and conferences that they can attend which promote professional development. These opportunities are usually froth with hypothetical

scenarios and theoretical constructs. While academic advisors know how to have conversations with their students, the point is that these opportunities do not really provide the impact their practices have on students and retention. As Carol, Roberta, and John's stories revealed, experiencing a model such as AAM, that provides concentrated instruction for academic advisors, demonstrates a need to provide them with professional development opportunities that are more impactful than workshops and conferences. The impact begins by helping academic advisors build confidence and heightening their self-efficacy. Ashley's interview is a good example of what it means to provide impactful opportunities.

When I began my interview with Ashley, she described herself as a "self-made" advisor. She had no formal training or graduate degree. Her training was modeling other advisors in the office and pulling together different techniques she thought worked well with students from conferences and workshops she had attended. Ashley was very prescriptive in her advising techniques. Understanding that self-efficacy is more of a belief to perform adequately using the skills and abilities one has under certain circumstances, Ashley put it best when she said, "After being a part of something that had meaning, I now feel more confident and that I'm actually a more effective and a more productive advisor, rather than kind of just being there to do what I'm supposed to be doing." Ashley even went on to explain that she embraced the transition from being a prescriptive advisor to a true participant in her students' academic lives so much so that she began using what she learned in her personal life. The shift to AAM was profoundly meaningful in and of itself for Ashley because it gave her confidence and a feeling of being more effective.

Evidence of participants' feelings of validation related to what they were already doing as they transitioned to the AAM tenets. In other words, learning about AAM confirmed some of their current practices. This was especially meaningful for those advisors who had come to academic advising serendipitously. Anita, who was just like John in that she began her academic journey on a path not related to academic advising, has an organizational psychology degree and had no intention of working in higher education. Anita found herself in a position related to a student support services initiative called Upward Bound and with no deliberate academic advising experience. It was through her position with Upward Bound that Anita learned about academic advising by conducting success skills workshops. The Appreciative Advising program validated Anita's best skills used advising students and she expressed a confirmation of her level of self-efficacy. When I asked what supported her experiences of confidence and effectiveness she said:

> Appreciative Advising has been a God send in that it backs up what we do and allows us to put it in terms that again, we can relate to. It is a win-win for both sides. We sit down, we form relationships, we talk to students, get to know them. Their jobs, their families, and when they come in the office we can chit chat about families, jobs, and what is going on in their lives.

While Anita experienced being more effective and confident in her ability to advise, she did note that her office only advised 200 students compared to the higher rate of students visiting other offices. Anita felt that it would be highly unlikely that the other advisors within the institution, with many more students, would not be able to use AAM because the time intensity of it. Her personalized experience augmented her fears that the advisors within the counseling

offices would not be able to use AAM with the students they were seeing because the ratio of

students to advisor was quadruple the ratio her office experienced. Such feelings seem to

challenge the demands of AAM suggesting the model might not be for all areas within the

institution. While the ratio of students to academic advisors could be an issue, it did not seem to

deter the participants from wanting to engage in AAM. For the participants, AAM awakened

new possibilities for their profession while providing a revitalized sense of confidence,

effectiveness, and meaning to how they were advising students.

Mary, who has been an academic advisor the longest out of all the participants described her

experience with AAM in this way, "After doing something for 20 some years, you forget why

you are there, so I begin to share with them the things that are important….but that was my a-ha

moment, is like, okay, this gives me validation as to what I've been trying to get them to do all

along."

Mary's description is rich in that her story tells how she was searching for something to

support the reason she was still advising after all this time. She was feeling like she had lost

something in her experiences with her students and yet did not know what "it" was. After

learning about AAM, Mary was able to make the transition to AAM because she found the "it"

she was looking for. Mary had been feeling as if she was lost and had become stale in her

profession. Students had changed from what they were like when she first became an advisor.

They were more demanding, less responsible, and in her mind, she felt they were in college more

for the money than for an education. The transition Mary experienced was to see that the

theoretical underpinnings of what she learned over 20 years ago did not necessarily prove to be

useful with today's students. The leap Mary made after completing the AAM program gave her

a feeling of confidence and strengthened her self-efficacy. Mary could see that AAM was working for the students as well as for her, and she experienced fulfillment and a sense of renewal even after advising for more than 20 years. Mary's evolution suggests that more than theory, academic advisors need to understand the diverse needs of their students. It further suggests that academic advisors now must look at how they overgeneralize the needs of students and that the transition to AAM is to understand how to get to the heart of the diverse needs of students.

Summary. This first theme portrays the varying experiences and meanings of confidence and self-efficacy as described by academic advisors who made the transition from a previous advising practice to AAM. Participants varied in their level of training as academic advisors in that some participants had graduate degrees in advising like Carol, Roberta, and Mary. John, Anita, and Ashley, on the other hand, did not have degrees or formal training in how to advise students. Regardless of their educational backgrounds, all participants expressed moving from a feeling of uncertainty in their confidence to advise students and described a heightened sense of self-efficacy, confidence, and validation of their current competencies applying AAM to their practice. For some participants, even though AAM felt like a familiar concept, transitioning to AAM required a shift in perception of now looking at advising as a process instead of a one-time event. Participants' gratification came from their feeling confident while being in the moment with their students, thus deriving immense satisfaction. Such revealed experiences suggest that as the participants moved from one advising practice to another they found similarities, and yet, they found the nuances that made the new model more useful and attractive to use.

I Feel Like I Learned Improved Techniques That Contributed To My Effectiveness.

Community college students include students from several generations. Finding techniques that advisors can use to reach adequately their diverse advisees can be challenging. AAM techniques used to enhance academic advisors' skills involve trusting in the goodness of each student while helping them to formulate a vision and while being there for them if they falter. Most participants reported that using the techniques they learned by transitioning to AAM contributed to their self-efficacy on some level. Most participants found that using the techniques from the six phases in Appreciative Advising; disarm, discover, dream, design, deliver, and don't settle were all important phases to use. All participants felt that the phase that increased their self-efficacy the most was the disarm phase. The disarm phase recognizes the importance of first impressions and provides for the student a welcoming and safe environment. When participants were asked if they had an "ah-hah" moment from learning about AAM, all participants said it was what they learned during the disarm phase. For example, Joanne, who wore a number of hats during her career at the institution and who went from a veterans benefits advisor, then to an academic advisor, and who is currently an administrator explained that before learning about AAM, she would "Holler their name and walk away and assume they are going to follow me." Joanne describes her need to learn new techniques, "I was really at a loss on where are the tools, what are some of the tools, that we can use. This was beside college-wide counselor meetings, which was the only academic training, advising training that I have received." Joanne was retired from the military and took the approach that "you did your job with no fluff." In transitioning from her prescriptive model of advising to AAM, Joanne lived the benefit in changing the way she greets a student. She now waits and walks with the student while making small talk on the

way back to her office. This technique provided Joanne with a sense of engagement that was
meaningful and caring. As a result, Joanne developed a feeling of being more effective with her
students. The reason this is so important is that because she experienced an intensified sense of
development in her growth as an advisor, she felt a higher level of self-efficacy. Even though she
is an administrator, she is in a position that students come to her for help or because they are in
trouble of some sort. The techniques she learned transported her out of her comfort zone of a few
words when meeting with students to being a better advisor, and a better administrator. Other
participants such as Jane, agreed with Joanne and said they have changed the way they greet
students so that the students feel more welcomed. When talking with Jane this is how she
described her greeting students during the disarm phase:

> In the beginning, when the student comes in I always start with a joke. One of the things I
> do now is ask them, "So, what do you want to be when you grow up?" Then the student
> usually laughs about it a little bit, and the student seems to let his/her hair down some.

> The disarm phase speaks to providing a warm, friendly, and safe environment for students to
help them feel more comfortable, just as the greeting does. When moving towards AAM, the
participants also began looking at their offices through students' eyes to improve their
environments and make them more student-friendly. In other words, by making their offices
clean, neat, warm, inviting, and overall, comfortable, the participants felt they were using a
technique that would enable them to be more effective. John spoke proudly of his office
environment:

> I felt very good when they talked about offices. My office has always been very different
> from anyone else's. I have all sorts of stuff, stuff they can touch and look at to try to calm

them down. I think that goes back to my Special Ed years about trying to calm down people that are upset or stressed. It helps to get them to engage in conversation.

One would have to wonder if a neater space would really make a difference in the connection with a student, thus making the advisor feel more effective. This suggests there could be another reason other than the students for the advisor to feel more effective. It could be that the advisor feels more confident and effective from having a clean, uncluttered space, having nothing to do with the students. I would argue that the reason this is important is that it suggests that the transition to AAM helps the advisor to be more introspective with their inner being and their personal space. Ashley shared with me that she decided to take a look at her office from a student's point of view, and she said:

> I sat in the student's point of view and I was like, "Wow, my office is cluttered." I have boxes all over my office. It looks like I'm moving. But in reality, I had been there for a while.

Remembering that Ashley was the advisor who had no graduate degrees in advising or formal training and had picked up techniques from other advisors, she was amazed at how this one technique could make such a big difference for both her and the students. It was as if her office became her identity in some ways. Trying to understand this experience, when I asked her to explain how she made meaning of the disarm phase she described her experience as finally "moving" somewhere. She said, "Before, I wasn't moving anywhere or doing anything and transitioning from what I was doing to AAM helped me to continue to try different things."

Likewise, Callie, an older advisor who, like Ashley, found her techniques by watching other advisors and modeling their techniques agreed:

I did like too, that they made a point of talking about the environment. The type of

environment that you're walking in... that a student's walking into, and taking the time to

understand their perspective.

 Callie was hired to work with military students who were experiencing issues putting their

academic success in jeopardy. Callie pointed out:

They are the ones that are already on probation or looking at suspension in addition to

homelessness and not being able to pay their bills and maybe even not having food to eat,

that kind of thing. It's challenging to get them to say they need accommodations because in

order to say "I need accommodations" they have to say "I have some sort of impairment or

limitation."

Even though Callie had little formal training in advising techniques, her approach to

advising students was the developmental approach. While this worked for her she felt that she

was somehow missing the spark that would move her to another level of advising. How Callie

made meaning of the techniques, she learned from AAM was by realizing that the students she

advised were always in chaos. Providing a less chaotic space for them to come and talk to

someone helped the students to relax and be able to open up to her. Callie's experiences from

what she could "give" the students was not just a clean environment, but if there were no

distractions in her space, a lack of over stimulation from clutter, she felt she could concentrate

more fully on her students, and the students could concentrate on what she was saying. This

transition gave her a sense of peace that contributed to her skill set and self-efficacy.

Out of all the phases, the disarm phase was the one phase most discussed throughout the

interviews. There appeared to be a personal attachment to this phase with all the participants. It suggests that recognizing the importance of first impressions and the need for creating a safe, warm, environment, reflects the participants' professional identity. Their professional identity is characterized by their ability to be effective in their roles as advisors.

Techniques revealed through the discover phase, which uses open-ended questions, attending behavior, and active listening skills were the second most meaningful techniques addressed by the participants. The discover phase is the phase that uses positive open-ended questions to draw out students' passions, strengths, and interests. Some participants who used a more prescriptive approach to advising described a feeling of ambiguity trying to see advising as a process instead of a prescription. For example, Jane, who began her career as an admissions advisor had a passion for helping students achieve their goals. Jane experienced the ambiguity in that she embodied AAM and was connected to the techniques, yet, before transitioning to AAM was very dogmatic in her advising technique. How Jane remedied this ambiguity was explained in Jane's example of how she felt she improved her self-efficacy using the discover phase. She illustrated this through her "ah-ha" moment:

> What made me have an "ah-hah" moment was I get caught up with deadlines on how much I have to get done and how I don't have the hours in a day. I could be talking to students and on my computer. I catch myself every now and then saying, "Wait a minute, stop. Just listen. Get off the computer, it doesn't matter that you're being emailed a hundred times, just stop." That was an "ah-hah" moment to me because I know I hate when I talk to someone, and they don't give you the eye contact. I was like, well you know what, let me put myself in their shoes.

By letting go of her prescriptive advising approach which was just giving the student what they needed, such as a schedule or a list of classes to take, Jane recognized the impact on her students if she took the time with them and really engaged them in a conversation. This technique helped Jane envision her strengths which contributed to her self-efficacy. Her feelings of effectiveness made her leap out of her comfort zone and into a whole new dimension of herself.

Most of the participants felt that when they were more directly attentive with the student, the student was more responsive to them. When the student left the advisors' offices, the participants experienced more of a personal commitment as effective academic advisors.

Kathy's experiences were an anomaly. While Kathy indicated that she wanted to learn about AAM to achieve extra "tools" for her tool belt, she shared she really just participated for the sake of participating without any expectations. This was the only participant who revealed this experience. In my probing, I asked if any transition came about for her during or after she learned about AAM or if she felt different. She revealed she was looking for a lock-step approach. Kathy wanted a way to say, "first I do this, then I do that, and then I do this next." She also revealed she had forgotten a lot of the "steps" and read through the book before she came to the interview. I asked Kathy if she felt she had made a transition from her older model of advising to AAM. This is how she answered:

> When I was working with students not meeting satisfactory academic progress, that's where I was really able to kind of get into some underlying issues that were going on and helping them discover what their dreams were. It helped me be more effective with coming up with questions to ask them and to help guide them along.

Kathy's experiences suggest that even though Kathy was still able to make a transition to AAM and utilize the phases that contributed to her self-efficacy, she is still very conflicted about using her earlier prescriptive model. This also suggests that a transition can occur, but maybe not with the depth that is expected. Relating back to an earlier idea, for some, if the process of transition is gradual, the progression of transitioning will be challenging.

Taking techniques from the dream phase, which is helping the student to discover their wildest dreams, several participants found that the techniques used in this phase helped them build a relationship with their students. The relationship came when the advisors were able to have the student recreate their image of themselves. The participants felt immersed in the students' journey which contributed to how the participants felt as academic advisors. The participants indicated they felt a higher sense of self-efficacy because they were able to tap into their strengths when helping students. Callie, who began her academic career with a TRIO program, which is a student support services program, provided an example:

This is a good illustration of how this has helped to be able to go back and have the student reflect on well, what is it when you're a kid that you wanted to do? Let's rewrite how you're talking about yourself. Let's focus in on those positive things that you're wanting to do as opposed to what your limitations are, and then there's the whole other side of kind of describing the person in the race. One person has their legs tied together, the other person doesn't and you're expected to finish at the same time and that's not fair so let's do something to untie your legs or you can run the race with your own ability.

Callie's ability to recognize how to relate to students using techniques from the dream

phase suggests her evolution profoundly influenced her ability to experience being more effective in her practice. Callie was going through her own dream phase at the time of the interview which could have helped her discover her strengths. Her spouse was retiring from the military after 20 years, and she had two children beginning their college career. It was Callie's time to dream, and she was using her techniques learned from AAM to help facilitate her own life's journey. According to her, Callie's transition to AAM helped her to live her life more fully.

Joanne, the military academic advisor, turned administrator, reiterated what the other participants revealed by saying she felt more qualified to call herself an academic advisor just from some of the tools and techniques learned. It felt empowering to her to understand the student's whole journey and raised her level of self-efficacy as well as her relatedness to students. The transition that took place for Joanne identified the need to soften up her style when working with students. Just as Kathy, Joanne was still somewhat conflicted in letting go of her prescriptive style and shared with me this statement, " As simple or as complex as those guidelines are, they still were a beginning, well, and even at an end if you could take it all the way through in that realm of academic advising." Joanne indicated that helping students come from a place of strength rather than a place of weakness was an important technique that they all seemed to learn and contributed to a higher sense of self-efficacy as an academic advisor and building a relationship with the students.

While all participants found useful techniques from the other phases, that helped contribute to elevating their self-efficacy and their relatedness to students, a few of the participants found limitations with some of the techniques presented. Joanne shared, "While I think AAM is a good model, I knew that the entire model wasn't going to work for the

community college population. They're here for a variety of reasons. They may not want to pursue their lifelong goals, dreams, desire, interests…" Callie agreed and noted, "The only thing is that I noticed we can't go through all of the different phases. It is really difficult at the height of registration." The main issue for these participants in using AAM was that it was difficult to go through all the phases with each student in one meeting. These participants felt that considering the high ratio of students per academic advisor and the little time provided when seeing students, they did not see how they could go through all phases in one visit.

The participants were struggling at times with implementing the model. It was not that they were experiencing anxiety necessarily, but they were experiencing uncertainty. What this suggests is that when advisors go through a transition, even though they related to the model and they find the model useful, when they begin to implement it, the transition process does not include understanding the elements of the model.

Furthermore, what is also suggested is that in the early stages an advisor often views AAM not as a philosophy, but as a sequence of steps. What they have to grasp over time is that they cannot use every step and that AAM reflects a deeper view of the relationship between the advisor and the students.

Summary. The second theme portrays how techniques learned from AAM moved the participants to reflect on their personal identities. For the participants, the three most significant phases that triggered their introspection were the phases of disarm, discover, and dream. The techniques learned from these phases as described by all the participants were providing a warm, inviting environment, being more personable when greeting the students, and asking positive open-ended questions. Participants' experiences varied from feeling ambiguity, to being

conflicted moving from their previous model to AAM, to an elevated sense of understanding, and to a higher level of personal development. A few participants such as Callie and Joanne expressed limitations to AAM. There seemed to be a lack of understanding of the elements of AAM when it came to implementing the model. Instead of seeing AAM as a philosophy, it was seen as more a series of steps.

The first research question examined the experience of academic advisors' self-efficacy using AAM. Themes that emerged were; (a) I feel like I moved from being uncertain about how I was advising students to being more confident, and actually so much more effective, and (b) I feel like I learned improved techniques that contributed to my effectiveness. Despite that some academic advisors found some limitations with the AAM, all of the academic advisors felt they experienced a higher level of self-efficacy after converting to AAM.

Relatedness and AAM

The second research question examined the experiences of academic advisors' relatedness to students using AAM. Emerging themes were; (a) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with students to one that is now deeply connected, (b) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with my peers to one that is now deeply connected, and (c) I feel more motivated as an advisor using AAM than when I used my previous model of advising.

I Feel Like I Moved From A Disconnected Relationship With Students To One That is Now Deeply Connected. Relating to students, making that connection with students provides a positive foundation for academic advisors and students to build on. Academic advisors look for ways to improve their relationships with the students they advise. Each participant I interviewed for this study talked about the "connectedness" they felt they were making with students when

they used AAM. The participants felt that for them, connectedness meant there was a sense of

both parties coming together, interacting in a positive manner, and describing a sense of

relatedness with their students. This attitude toward wanting to use AAM because of the positive

outcome it had on building student-advisor relationships was pervasive throughout the

interviews. For example, even though Roberta regretted taking the course because of being

involved in so many other tasks at her institution during that time, she spoke about how

improved her relationships with students became after she had transitioned from her advising

practices to AAM. Roberta strongly felt that using AAM was the method that built rapport with

her students. She derived a great deal of satisfaction when she was building rapport with students

because it was very important to her. Rapport was what made the relationship intensify. When I

asked her to describe her feelings about building rapport with the students, she shared:

> Making that first connection with a student is the most challenging, and if things did not go
>
> well within the first few minutes, then it could be a done deal in this kind of office. If you
>
> are not putting out the right vibe to the student, then they are done. You could lose the
>
> student.

Kathy agreed and took it one step further by saying, "AAM helped me to go a little deeper

in the relationship by being able to ask students questions that were not intimidating." Kathy

added that she felt like she was empowering the students more to make their own decisions. This

feeling helped her to build better relationships with students and enabled her to relate better to

her students. Both Roberta and Kathy conveyed something about themselves in that their

attitudes toward building rapport with students seemed to be a novel idea and one that they had

not really been using all along. Remembering that Roberta had more extensive academic

advising experience than Kathy, and Kathy had to follow steps and struggled to use improvisation methods, this suggests that both academic advisors, entering into AAM from different backgrounds and different models, found AAM useful in their relatedness to students. It also suggests that they were able to transition to the model, albeit in various stages.

All participants felt empowered to take the time to build their relationships with the students applying AAM. Understanding that during peak registration times it was more difficult to go through all the AAM phases, using certain skills such as the disarm phase, the academic advisors could begin to understand what the student was all about. They were moving in the direction of being change agents for the process instead of an event. Jane communicated what was important to her during that first encounter with the students:

> It's about the student coming in and feeling comfortable enough to open up to me. To tell, not just about the academics, but to feel and say, "You know my mom may have cancer. How can I deal with this?" Feeling comfortable that they can explain that.

Through using the techniques during the disarm phase, the academic advisors could begin to understand who the student was and what their needs were. Understanding whom the student was has enabled the participants to experience a sense of relatedness or connectedness that they did not feel during their past advising experiences. Later on in the semester, when the participants had the chance, they would take the time to build on the relationship with their students and use the other techniques provided by AAM. John shared his excitement about the connections he was making:

> The satisfaction that not only am I more effective, but I think that I'm also getting them ready to go forward. They feel very comfortable coming to me when they need help and

they stay. We've retained the students and a lot of those students I don't think we would've retained otherwise.

Another big leap for participants was the implementation of asking students positive open-ended questions. All participants agreed that their students responded better to the positive and self-empowering questions asked by the academic advisors. Those techniques helped develop more solid relationships between the students and the academic advisors. The following is an example of this:

Joanne and Callie both had military backgrounds in common. They both agreed that "getting to the point" was important to them when advising students. Their discovery was looking inward and realizing that if you're questioning depicts the attitude of focusing on the negative, "What do you mean you don't know?" Or "Why don't you know?" that will drive the students away. These kinds of experiences create a frankness and self-examination in how they experience relationships with students in the future. Anita described this in the context of a new reality:

We call it creating a new reality. We talk to them about negativism. We talk to them about being positive and what they say that comes out of their mouths. We talk about what their friends say in their neighborhoods or what their families may be saying, For example, those close to them may ask, "Why are you in school? You shouldn't be there." The whole point is we start developing those relationships, we try to get them on that positive thinking path.

Kathy's epiphany is demonstrated by her response:

I know it helped me to build relationships with students because we are able to go deeper. It also helped me to feel like I was empowering the students too, as they were making more of their own decisions, but I was just guiding them through it.

Mary, who had read a lot about and believed in AAM wanted all of her academic advisors and support staff to go through training for AAM after she transitioned to the model. Mary spoke about it this way:

My welcome desk person has gone through the training and I am trying to get my financial aid people to go through it as well because they really, really need it. Their thing is the time, but you know (pause) and in my position this is something I have written into their development plan which is to participate in training, and I will provide training and this is a good way, a good start.

Mary connected those statements to the relationships with students by adding:

You have to establish a bond, establish that relationship, make them feel valued, whatever low goal they have set for themselves, make…applaud it, give them validation. Help them to believe in themselves to keep on moving along the way.

Mary allowed herself to adapt to AAM and in doing so saw the value in how her staff could adapt to the model even with their work demands. Ultimately, Mary's transition from a developmental model to a deep person-centered model like AAM enabled her to see not only professional growth for herself but also for her staff.

Keeping the questioning positive and focusing on positive grades, dreams, and plans yet still empowering the students, helps them to be more open with the academic advisors. Anita describes it this way:

It's even more because of the relationships that we develop. We take the time to get to know the students. That first thing is to get to know the students and kind of get a general

idea of where they're coming from. Then kind of discover what do they want to do? What

is it that they're interested in?

The transition all participants went through after understanding AAM provided a

connectedness and understanding of their lived experiences with students and their relatedness to

students through building relationships. This transition suggests that understanding the

importance of garnering trust through new possibilities and strategies emphasized the meaning

making of that mindfulness and encouraging the transition.

Summary. The first theme revealed that all participants felt it important for both the

advisors and their students to "connect" or come together in a positive way. This feeling of

engagement with one another was what contributed to advisors feeling a relatedness to their

students. Building rapport and making that first connection was most important to Roberta and

Kathy as described by Kathy, "AAM helped me to delve a little deeper in the relationship by

being able to ask questions that were not intimidating." Asking positive open-ended questions

and keeping the conversations positive was another way to build a stronger relationship with

students. Anita called this the "new reality" meaning keeping students on the path to positive

thinking. Building trust was an instrumental factor in participants' feelings of improved

relatedness to students. It was learning the nuances of building trusted relationships over a period

of time that connected the new practices to previous practices which lead to a higher level of

relatedness to students.

I Feel Like I Moved From A Disconnected Relationship With My Peers To One That Is

Now Deeply Connected. A sense of community and positive connections with peers was

suggested through the participants' responses. This sense of community and positive connections

with peers speaks to the influence on the participants' relatedness to students. Understanding this conceptualization, academic advisors experiencing positive feelings about their relationships with their peers who were learning about AAM expressed a sense of unity amongst those who progressed towards AAM. This sense of unity contributed to the relatedness with their students because of the bond the participants felt with one another. A common language amongst the participants helped to build a stronger relationship between those academic advisors who were learning about AAM. All participants associated with the phases when they talked about AAM. The common language transcended to improve communication amongst the academic advisors who converted to AAM. For example, Kathy, who felt different than the other academic advisors because her personality was more of a follower than a leader, explained how important peer relationships contributed to advisors' motivations:

> There were a lot of people on campus taking it together. It kind of provided that foundation that we could all build on and work together and share ideas and then also be able to help remind each other of that. Remember, this is how we did it with appreciative advising? It was just kind of reminding each other of that kind of thing.

The foundation that Kathy talked about was the common foundation among her and her peers. Kathy felt more included with her fellow academic advisors than she had before transitioning to AAM. The bonds she made seemed to satisfy her innate psychological need for competence. What this suggests is that the shared experience with peers fostered a deeper meaning in the participants' competence. By feeling competent with themselves and their peers, the participants' experiences stretched beyond the sense of community with one another and

transcended to a deeper level of connectedness with students. It is through the participants'

competence that they felt a high level of connectedness or relatedness to their students.

As communication improved between the participants, the relatedness they felt toward one

another carried over to others within the advising offices who interacted directly with students.

This communication was especially meaningful for Ashley because she did not have a related

degree and wanted very much to fit in with the other advisors in her office. Ashley indicated:

> There was much better communication amongst the advisers. I really did believe that not
>
> only would it make me more effective, but a better advisor when it comes to assisting the
>
> students and my colleagues, too. It wasn't just for the students. It was better communication
>
> with the advisors and reminding them once in a while that we need to be doing a better job.

John too, wanted fit in with the other advisors since he was not originally hired to perform

academic advising. John expressed how important it was to share a common language that all

advisors could relate to. John spoke about commonalities amongst peers by saying:

> I think it is really important when you're trying to implement something that you can have
>
> that common terminology to talk back and forth where people can understand each other
>
> instead of saying, "what?" It was nice to hear that a lot of other people had the same
>
> thoughts or struggles or that type of thing, and also the same mindset that they wanted to do
>
> something, but be more effective at it.

The social aspect was important to the participants in that it spoke to their relationships as

being collegial. There was this transition that they were going through together, and it felt mutual

and interconnected.

Joanne agreed with John and further explained, "When we came together as a group to talk about the Appreciative Advising Model, all of us mentioned, and maybe it was one of the questions they asked, "How could this pertain to your real life?" The essence of this experience for these participants was that when the advisors could unify and have a commonality among their advising, they felt competent individually and with one another. At first glance, the meaning of the participants' experiences appears to be the bonding experience with one another resulting in a feeling of competence. However, on a deeper level, it is the competence that enables the participants to experience their relatedness to students.

As the participants focus on innate needs for competence and relatedness, they develop from engaging in interesting activities. Getting to know different people from other colleges throughout the United States, who were also learning about AAM with the participants, helped to move the participants to another dimension. The participants found it interesting to hear other academic advisors' experiences and how advising takes place at different institutions. The participants felt they had a relationship with peers outside of their institution which provided more depth to their relationships. One of the participants felt that interacting with academic advisors from other states was a bonus because hearing from advisors outside of their institution about their techniques used and the types of students they encountered made the experience that more enriching. Carol described what it meant to her being a part-time academic advisor with no funding available for her to attend conferences outside of the institution:

I really liked the experience of getting to know different people, because they were from all other colleges throughout the U.S. It was really interesting to get their experiences and see

how things are done at different institutions, because it seems like we are all very different. I
thought that was a bonus.

Some of the academic advisors who were learning about, and had identified with, AAM by
making the transition from their previous model to AAM had moved on to other positions within
and outside the institution. Some offices had only one participant remaining who had converted
to AAM. Carol described her campus office in this way, "If I am not discussing it with people,
because at this point I don't have a lot of people who have gone through it with me, I am
concerned I will transition back to my original strategies." Kathy agreed, "Because not everyone
went through the courses no one was encouraging those of us who had made the transition to use
it on my campus."

While participants were motivated to use AAM and felt a higher level of relatedness to their
peers, the model, and their students, Kathy expressed somewhat different feelings by indicating
that the administrators should "enforce" all academic advisors to use the model. This response
was different from that of the other participants who experienced interacting with their peers
when using the model, to be intrinsically motivating. Although Kathy's thoughts are well outside
the realm of the way the other participants felt, this train of thought is important because it
illuminates the idea that not all academic advisors experience their relatedness to students
through the same means others do using AAM. While they can all experience the same model,
personalities will come in to play when there is a transition. Identifying the differences in how
one connects with a change and a new model will be an important consideration to take into
effect when introducing the model.

Summary. This second theme portrayed how important it was for the participants to develop a deep sense of community and positive connections with their peers. Participants transitioning from a previous advising model to AAM expressed a sense of unity with one another. This sense of unity transcended to and contributed to a strengthening of relatedness with students. By discovering this common foundation, participants like Kathy felt more included and competent around her peers. Additionally, there was a sense of improved communication, a common language spoken, and understanding from other advisors outside the institution of what they experienced. Joanne and John, speaking for the other participants, experienced an outcome of the bonding experience was that of competence. On a deeper level, competence enabled participants to experience improved relatedness with their students.

I Feel More Motivated As An Advisor Using AAM Than When I Used My Previous Model Of Advising. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated to accept and apply new methods do so because they are deeply interested and need to satisfy the desire to be competent and autonomous. All ten participants who were provided the opportunity to learn about AAM made the choice to do so. All participants made the decision because they had a desire to experience a heightened sense of competency and authenticity. Additionally, the participants were satisfied to learn new techniques. What the participants did not expect was that they would find themselves experiencing a more heightened sense of motivation to use AAM, which in turn gave them a feeling of relatedness to their practice as well as their students. Callie explained:

Before I went through the course, I thought I would learn new techniques. What I actually learned to do was to immerse myself in the student's experience and try to understand some of the student's motivations behind the decisions they were making. The excitement in the

relationship with the students was helping them rewrite their personal script and give them

hope using positive scenarios and focusing on their strengths.

Experiences such as Callie's bring to light noteworthy factors that are important to

academic advisors and that impact their sense of motivation for doing what they are doing.

Roberta, who was the newest academic advisor and who felt she did not think she needed

many of the techniques others learned, agreed with Callie. Roberta described it this way:

Just some of the things that I do in working with the students, making sure I'm drawing that

connection, making sure that the environment's proper, making sure that I am not focusing

on negative aspects of things that they have done or not completed. Those types of things

are things that I do every single day. I don't actively seek out to do them. It just kind of

happens.

Roberta and Callie use the strategies of AAM because they are intrinsically motivated to do

so. Besides connecting with their students and their peers, they believe they have a passion for

doing the right thing, most especially when working with students. This suggests a sense of

purpose in how the participants advise students. It further suggests that the purpose is to share

with students what it means to be competent and autonomous when making their decisions.

Anita paints a good example by expressing it in this way:

My motivation to use the model is to really help the students. We are really affecting the

lives of students. We're making a difference. What we do, I mean I see it every day, and

they let us know that.

Participants felt their relatedness to the students motivated the use of AAM because they did

not want students leaving their offices confused and not sure what they were supposed to do. The

same participants were motivated to ensure that their students were getting "it" right. When asked what "it" was, the participants explained that students understood what they needed to do, that they were not self-advising and taking courses they did not need, and that they were encouraged to continue returning to the participants for assistance if needed. Jane expressed her thoughts this way:

It is just something about seeing that student when the light bulb goes off, and they realize, "I can do this." When you start with them at the beginning and you get to graduation and they realize, "You know what? When I walked in here eight months ago or a year ago, I didn't think I could do this. Here I am, I'm graduating." I began to feel like I meant something to someone.

The participants felt that while it was important for students to feel welcomed and to return to see them, it was just as important to empower their students to make their decisions. Having students work out a solution to their issues on their own provides a sense of gratification and pleasure. Mary summed it up by saying, "I'm more motivated to use it, intrinsically to use it, because I see that it works." Roberta not only agreed she was motivated to use AAM, but she also added, "I would have never signed up for the class if I didn't feel that I didn't relate to it in any way. I won't do anything I don't believe in." When speaking about learning of AAM itself, Roberta indicated that she did not think the "class really did anything to make me feel better about the model or any worse about the model." She felt she was already motivated to use the techniques, "because of the foundation I kind of had already." Roberta added, "To me, I just saw it as something that was already being done with a new name."

It is important to point out that one participant, Kathy, was not intrinsically motivated to

apply AAM, although she was motivated to use the model. Remembering that Kathy was the advisor who needed to have the lock-step approach or a template that provided "steps" for her to follow, she was more about the reward of being respected by her students and administrators. This is an important point in that not all academic advisors who learn about AAM will be intrinsically motivated to use the model. Furthermore, the implications are that the reasons for using the model may not blend with the vision of the staff, administrators, and the overall office functions.

Summary. This third theme portrayed what it meant to the participants who were motivated to make the leap to AAM. This theme illuminated what it meant to those participants who were intrinsically motivated to advise students as opposed to those participants who might be extrinsically motivated to advise students. With the exception of Kathy, all participants demonstrated intrinsic motivation in that their outcomes focused on how deeply interested they were in "doing the right thing" and not only fulfilling their need to satisfy the desire to be competent and autonomous but to instill a sense of competence and autonomy in their students.

Limitations were discovered when participants reported on their experiences with their peers. Participants felt their motivation was heightened when they had one another to communicate with concerning AAM. The fact that some of their peers were no longer with them to discuss AAM left a gaping hole for some participants and feared it would impact their motivation negatively. This concern suggests that the influence of unity and bonding is important. The reason this is important is when administrators are looking to provide professional development to academic advisors the opportunity should be open to all academic advisors and even other support staff.

The second research question examined the experience of academic advisors' relatedness to students using AAM. Emerging themes were; (a) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with students to one that is now deeply connected; (b) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with my peers to one that is now deeply connected; and (c) I feel more motivated as an advisor using AAM than when I used my previous model of advising.

Whole Person Findings: Case Examples of Ashley's and Joanne's Transition to AAM

The kinds of transitional experiences that were most meaningful for academic advisors in this study are best described through two participants' stories. Their stories show how the themes are interwoven in their transition from a traditional practice of advising to AAM and how they make their meaning from the beginning to end. In the early part of their transition, these participants chose to learn about AAM in order to gain tools and learn skills to help them in their profession. The stories of Ashley and Callie demonstrate how their transition heightened their self-efficacy and their relatedness to their students.

Ashley. Ashley was a Filipino female between the ages of 32-34. Ashley had been working for the institution for approximately 11 years in various academic advising areas. She was a full-time academic advisor and a First Year Success Coordinator. Ashley's professional goals were to be an accountant. After taking accounting and economic courses at a local college, she decided that majoring in business was not for her. She began her career as a work-study student in the counseling office at her institution and felt she was good at what she was doing and decided to major in higher education. Although Ashley wanted to return to school, it was difficult for her while raising two small children. Ashley does not have a graduate degree in counseling or academic advising, and most of her training have been by modeling other academic advisors and

participating in institutional academic advising professional development opportunities at her institution. Ashley's advising model was prescriptive in nature meaning that she provided a "prescription" to her students. Her sessions with students were about what classes to take when to take them, and referrals to support services in a rushed atmosphere. Those sessions with students were event driven. When her institution offered to pay for her to learn about AAM she chose to be a participant. Ashley shared:

My motivation for it was wanting to learn something new. Because what I had been doing sometimes made me feel like motivation had been lacking in the work environment. It was so repetitive. I wanted to kind of spread my wings and find something that was different that I could add to bring my motivation back.

What was different about Ashley's experience from the other participants while transitioning to AAM was that she was not only experiencing a new level of confidence in her professional life, but AAM also transcended over into her personal life:

It was like a refresher because personally it hit a lot of points at home because I was going through a divorce at the time I was taking the class. It motivated me to move forward. I recently just looked at my dream sheet that we had completed from the class and I was looking at the things I wrote. It said, "Buy a house, take time for me, doing baby steps just like making appointments and time for myself." Wow, I actually did all the stuff I wrote. If it wasn't for the class that had motivated me, I don't think I would have actually taken the steps to purchase my first home after the divorce.

Ashley's decisions to move forward in both her personal and professional lives were based on AAM's framework to embrace positive mindsets which leverage's the individual's

assets and strengths. Through the techniques, Ashley learned and the confidence she found,

Ashley was able to find meaning in her effectiveness both personally and professionally. Her

sense of self-efficacy had strengthened, and she felt empowered to move beyond the place she

was in at that time.

Ashley's transitioning to AAM enriched her experience in how she made meaning

in her relatedness to students. She coordinated orientation for first-year students and before

transitioning to AAM, Ashley always felt rushed and not connecting with students.

Connectedness between academic advisors and students influences both parties through their

perspectives of one another's worlds. A lack of relatedness impacts negatively on the advisors'

being able to understand what the student is going through and diminishes their self-efficacy.

Academic advisors' most meaningful experiences in their profession are when they know they

have connected with students, creating a bond between the two. Ashley described those feelings

in this way:

> Just the way I was providing information to them made me definitely feel like it was the
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> right thing to do and I was doing exactly what I should be doing rather than the old style
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> of kind of rushing through and skipping some of those other phases I didn't do in the
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> past. It makes me feel better as an advisor in the way they leave, and they tell me that,
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> You're great," and lately they have been taking my card and getting back in touch with
>
> me.

Ashley's experiences of relatedness to her students was very important to her. Through

AAM, Ashley discovered she was not giving her whole self to the students when they were with

her. She began making the transition from being exclusive to inclusive with her students. As a

result, she began treating her students as if it was her on the other side of the room so that she could understand the student's perspective. By using a person-centered approach, Ashley said she literally felt the relatedness to her students.

Ashley's belief in AAM and positively transitioning to the model was further intensified by the working relationship she had with her peers who were also learning about AAM and who were making the conversion from their older practices to AAM. Ashley described it this way, "For the first time in a long time, there was agreement, connections, and support with one another. The support for one another made the transition more than palpable. It brought a certain confidence and camaraderie to the group." The unity experienced within the group enhanced their self-efficacy and relatedness to their students through confidence and support. Ashley desires to become a certified trainer for AAM which demonstrates her strong belief in the model.

Joanne. Joanne was a Caucasian female between the ages of 38-40. Joanne had worked in the community college system for 20 years under a number of different hats. Primarily, Joanne was a Veteran's benefits advisor, and the most advising experiences she had were helping process the students' paperwork to receive benefits. Joanne described her transition into academic advising in this way:

> I originally came into this as a Veteran's benefits advisor. It kind of bled over in that we had to understand advisement transcripts to process Veteran's benefits. Once you kind of start dibbling into looking at advisement transcripts and talking to students, the conversation seemed to grow from there and kind of morphed into an academic advisor. When Joanne was asked why she wanted to take the course she responded:

I have a Master's in Business Administration. I don't have what I think a lot of

counselors and advisors have, a counseling background, an ability to understand some

underlying issues and really deal well with people.

Joanne did not have much of a developed philosophy for advising and felt she was

lacking the tools and skills needed to do a good job. Transitioning from what Joanne knew about

advising to what she learned about AAM was difficult because it was not intuitive to her as it had

been with the other participants. While she learned some of the techniques she saw herself

transitioning in this way:

It was meaningful to hear it all from an advising point, even if you couldn't get there.

Perhaps there would be one of those, or two of those students that you could have the

pleasure of getting to know and really go through the whole model like that. I feel that I

wouldn't be quite as stuck with my business background and say, "Okay, well, what

happens after she tells me what she wants me to do?" It kind of gave me a little bit of a

direction to head…. in a positive direction.

Even though Joanne was learning skills and techniques from AAM that were helpful to

her and built confidence when she was working with students, she was still finding the transition

difficult and awkward to go through. This struggle encumbered her self-efficacy regarding not

having reached a sense of confidence in the way she would have liked.

Joanne had to transition from her prescriptive approach of telling students what they

needed to do to the AAM philosophy of being more person-centered and help empower the

students to make decisions. The transition regarding her sense of relatedness to students was

"tricky" for her. Joanne struggled to make meaning of why the students were there. She shared,

"They're here for a variety of reasons. They may or may not want to pursue their lifelong goals, dreams, desires, interests." While she was moving a bit closer to connecting with her students, she was not quite feeling it yet.

Joanne's learning of AAM contributed positively to her transition to feeling more connected to her peers. The meaningfulness of the experience came from the positive interactions woven into the peer connections she was making. Her relatedness to fellow academic advisors provided her with a sense of authenticity. She also felt she could now ask her peers about a technique or idea that they learned to make the transition a little less daunting.

Although Joanne felt she could implement AAM and felt she gained a sense of effectiveness as well as being able to connect to her students on some level, she was still struggling to understand how to use it in an advising session. Joanne had difficulty transitioning to a deeper relationship between her and her students. While feeling motivated to engage with the techniques of AAM, Joanne had to move gradually through the transition to AAM.

Conclusion

Five themes emerged from this study to be common in meaningful academic advising experiences. The themes identified were supported by an auditor who was an expert in AAM having been trained by the Appreciative Advising Institute© and who understood my research questions. Addressing the first research question of how academic advisors experienced their self-efficacy using AAM, two themes were identified: (a) I feel like I moved from being uncertain about how I was advising students to being more confident and more effective; and (b) I feel like I learned improved techniques that contributed to my effectiveness.

The themes concerning confidence and improved techniques emerged from the experiences of learning about Appreciative Advising. Participants shared stories of what it meant to them to feel validated in how they were currently advising students and the confidence they experienced. Also, participants felt more confident and comfortable using the techniques they learned. The story telling of the participants emphasized the heightened sense of self-efficacy the participants experienced.

Addressing the second research question of how academic advisors experience their relatedness to students using AAM, three themes were identified: (a) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with students to one that is now deeply connected; (b) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with my peers to one that is now deeply connected; and (c) I feel more motivated as an advisor using AAM than when I used my previous model of advising.

The theme of relationships with students developed from participants experiencing a positive relatedness to their students as their students returned to see them more often and they formed a bond with one another. The theme of relationships with peers developed from the information shared with those who participated in learning about AAM, and the relatedness that they felt with students through the unity the participants found with one another. Advising, using a model they all had in common, benefited participants and the students through common communication. Finally, the third theme developed from the participants' expressing the essence of feelings that they believed in AAM. Their motivation in using the model was based on the rapport they were establishing with the students. This rapport led the participants to feel a higher sense of relatedness to the students they were seeing. Some participants felt they were able to

retain their students longer. The participants reported feeling intrinsically motivated to use what they learned because in essence, they felt the techniques were the "right thing to do" and it meshed with their goal of retaining students until the students completed a credential at the institution. Using citations from the participants in this chapter illustrated the themes discovered.

In the next chapter, I will present a discussion of the results of the study as well as implications and conclusions. The area of future research will also be discussed.

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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which community college academic advisors experience their self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition from traditional advising practices to Appreciative Advising practices. Using the qualitative methodology of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), ten participants were interviewed to understand their lived experiences of converting to a new model of advising. The research questions were grounded in the conceptual framework of Bandura (1997) and Deci and Ryan (2002). Addressing the first research question of how academic advisors experienced their self-efficacy as a result of transitioning from traditional advising practices to the practice of Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) two themes were identified: (a) I feel like I moved from being uncertain about how I was advising students to being more confident more effective, and (b) I feel like I learned improved techniques that contributed to my effectiveness.

Addressing the second research question of how academic advisors experience their relatedness to students as a result of transitioning from traditional advising practices to the practice of AAM, three themes were identified: (a) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with students to one that is now deeply connected, (b) I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with my peers to one that is now deeply connected, and (c) I feel more motivated as an advisor using AAM than when I used my previous model of advising.

In the following sections, I will emphasize findings and discuss how they contribute to the growing body of research on transitioning to AAM (Habley & Bloom, 2007; Truschel, 2007) in addition to conceptualizing the transition to AAM from a community college advisor

perspective. I will identify implications for practice, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

In recent years, the completion agenda has driven many community colleges to reexamine student service practices while improving and refocusing their delivery of services towards retention and degree completion (Appleby, 2008; Obama, 2008). As described in Chapter One, one such service, academic advising, is vital in promoting student success and student development (Kuh, 2008). Appreciative Advising Model (AAM) is a model of advising that moves the advisor away from theory to a more practical framework. AAM shifts the advising from a prescriptive practice of providing the student with advice and expecting the student to take the advice, to a more person-centered advising practice. AAM is the first academic advising model introduced since Crookston (1972) and O'Banion (1972) demonstrated developmental advising that supports the notion that advisor/student relationships are essential for the growth of the student. AAM goes beyond the developmental approach in that it provides a framework that enables a stronger academic advisor/student relationship by engaging in positive open-ended questions with the student, believing in the goodness of each student, and helping the student to construct their vision and then their goals (Habley et al., 2008). This type of advising becomes a process oriented relationship over time rather than a one-time event between the advisor and the student. Process oriented relationships have been shown to have a positive effect on students and retention, thus meeting the goal of degree completion (Cohen et al., 2014; Habley et al., 2012; Kuhn, 2008). The importance of community college academic advisors' experiences in this study allow administrators to understand the needs of advisors and the student retention benefits

obtained when advisors, who are invested in AAM, engage students in a long term relationship. My hope is that this study will enlighten student services personnel and senior administrators to recognize that there is so much more to the relationship of community college advisors and students than just providing students with a schedule and telling them to "go register." I also hope through this study; senior administrators see the contribution that academic advisors make toward student retention when strong relationships are built between academic advisors and students.

Because no research exists on community college academic advisors' experiences transitioning from traditional advising practices to AAM, this study contributes to the advisors' professional role in two important ways. First, this study contributes to the professional role by examining community college academic advisors' stories that tell of their learning experiences and professional growth representing a paradigm shift, not merely an extension of existing advising practices. Second, this study contributes to a growing body of literature about AAM on advisors' professional role by recommending how organizational administrators may encourage and support professional development for student services personnel.

How community college academic advisors' explore the extent to which they experience their self-efficacy and relatedness to students as they transition from traditional advising practices to AAM is significant for two reasons. The first reason is that because of struggling economies and limited state budgets; legislators now have a greater interest in how colleges spend taxpayers' money (Cassner-Loto, & Barrington, 2006). Federal and state legislators want to ensure that students are successful and attain a credential that is purposeful in today's world (AACC, 2012). Current funding models, such as a performance-based model, are allocating

funds for success rates rather than enrollment rates (Dougherty & Reddy, 2011). A performance-based model allocates funds to a college based on certain performance measures such as credential completion (D'Amico, Friedel, Kastinas, & Thornton, 2014; Dougherty & Reddy, 2011). This type of funding formula will place more emphasis and accountability on student success and student retention. Performance-based funding will require community college leadership to reevaluate the need to ensure quality retention strategies instead of focusing only on enrollment and recruitment processes (Lee, Edwards, Menson, & Rawls, 2011). Community colleges are trying out high impact initiatives to improve upon student success. Academic advising is one such practice that is "emerging as one of the most important programs in a student's experience" (O'Banion, 2013, p.xvi). Habley and McClanahan (2004) found mounting evidence that academic advising was among strategies used by colleges with high retention and graduation rates. Quality advising has a significant impact on the development of students and the college community. Predominately, it is academic advisors who assist with student development and interact with students, and it is important for administrators to understand this concept. However, community college advising research has largely been focused on students' perceptions of their experiences and faculty advisor experiences (Finch, 2013; Hester, 2008; Komaraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010; Kramer, 2003; Light, 2001; Maringe, 2011). This study contributes to administrators' understanding of the significance of the role that academic advisors play and the impact it may have on student success initiatives.

The second significant reason for this research is about community college advisors' professional growth. Bandura (2000) suggests that continuously finding ways to improve behaviors increases the belief system that individuals are performing adequately and are

motivated to hone their skills further. Environments that support the psychological need of satisfying competence, relatedness and autonomy reinforce healthy functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2002). When an advisor feels effectively engaged with their environment an intrinsically good feeling is experienced (Elliot, McGregor, & Thrash, 2002). Community college academic advisors love to engage and have meaningful relationships with their students. When they have the opportunities for professional growth, they experience not only professional development but also self-satisfaction. As mentioned earlier, while there is a significant body of research on faculty advisors and their perceptions of their skills, abilities, and practices as well as student perceptions of advisors and being advised, there is no information that exists about community college advisor perceptions. If academic advising is to be an important part of student success initiatives within community colleges, community college academic advisors should be included in the conversations. The voices of community college advisors that reveal how they evolve and grow as advisors is a significant contribution to the growing literature on student success.

Summary of Findings

Five emergent themes were discovered for the two research questions. The voices of the participants found in Chapter 4 described the following themes:

The theme *I feel like I moved from being uncertain about how I was advising students to being more confident and more effective* provided an understanding of how advisors move from uncertainty to their previous advising practice to learning to understand their value in the advising process with students and with their profession. By understanding what they did not know, how to learn what they did not know, and feeling validated for what they already knew, academic advisors experienced gratification when feeling confident while being in the moment

with their students. Making the transition to a higher level of self-efficacy as they underwent a paradigm shift in advising was more than just learning theory, academic advisors provided an understanding that using AAM was a process instead of a one-time event. Academic advisors' gratification came from their feeling confident while being in the moment with their students, thus deriving immense satisfaction.

The theme *I feel like I learned improved techniques that contributed to my effectiveness* provided an understanding of how important the environment is for advisors when they are engaging students, particularly how they are encountering students, the importance of focusing on positive outcomes, and the importance of being personable. This theme revealed how significant it was for academic advisors to experience professional development opportunities to enhance their self-efficacy and be supported by their administrators. It was through AAM that the advisors learned of the importance of providing a safe, warm environment for students and how to build better rapport. It was through this learning that the advisors felt they gained a greater understanding of what it was like to be "on the other side of the room," in other words, to be like the student. This evolution for the advisors heightened their sense of self-efficacy and enabled a deeper feeling of empathy. This theme also revealed the ambiguity some academic advisors experience when transitioning to a newer model. The ambiguity is important for administrators to be aware of so that administrators will seek to discover the diversity of learning their advisors experience when presenting new techniques for advisors to learn and embrace.

The theme *I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with students to one that is now deeply connected* provided an understanding of academic advisors' need to connect with students and build a relationship with them. The connections made with students by building

trust between the advisor, and the student revealed the impact of trust on experiencing

relatedness to students. Advisors grew in their understanding of what it meant to students who

felt their advisors focused positively on their tasks, skills, and abilities. Advisors gained the

students' confidence and trust which enhanced the strength of the relationship and enriched the

advisors' feelings of relatedness.

The theme *I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with my peers to one that is*

now deeply connected provided an understanding of the importance for the advisors to develop

positive connections and a deep sense of community with their peers. This sense of connection

with their peers impacted positively on their relatedness to their students. As academic advisors

can experience a unique sense of feeling isolated and "out there on their own," unity among the

advisors was an important outcome of their transition to AAM. This outcome was important

because it illuminated how relative it was to their professional role, to one another, and to

students. The feeling of being united heightened their sense of relatedness with their peers and

students by being "in this together."

The theme *I feel more motivated as an advisor using AAM than when I used my previous*

model of advising provided an understanding that demonstrated intrinsic motivation in academic

advisors' outcomes focused on how deeply interested they were in "doing the right thing."

Besides fulfilling their need to satisfy the desire to be competent and autonomous, advisors felt it

was important to instill a sense of competence and autonomy in their students.

The long-accepted practice of workshops was the means used to develop academic advisors

professionally. The findings from this study suggests community college advisors are open to

understanding their students from where students are coming from by changing their current

method of advising. The methods of heartening first impressions, focusing on the positive, and understanding students' issues, could impact the way advisors develop both professionally and personally.

This study allowed for an exploration of how academic advisors transitioning to AAM affected their self-efficacy and relatedness to students through their story-telling. Their voices gave personal meaning to their role as community college academic advisors in the following ways: (a) they believe they play a significant role in retaining students to degree completion; (b) they believe that it is the relationships they form with students, most especially in the first year that helps students persist; (c) they believe that being student-centered and developing the "whole" student is their role, and (d) they believe themselves to be professionals in their field contributing to the critical function of student success.

Discussion of Results

The implications of this study's findings are important for community college academic advisors, the institution, and students by illustrating how academic advising is more than giving a student a list of classes and scheduling classes. This study raises the question of what it means for community college academic advisors to have a student-centered relationship as well as what that means for them both personally and professionally.

Professional development and ongoing training are critical elements for any quality, comprehensive academic advisor setting (O'Banion, 2013). When academic advisors demonstrate effective interpersonal skills they feel more self-confident about their credibility, thus, they are better primed to nurture students and see them through to success (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Hughey, 2011). Existing research emphasizes the roles of academic advisors' and the

impact they have on students and yet, there is little research on the personal self and how that intersects with their personal and professional relationships (Chickering, 1994; Cohen et, al., Frost, 2000; Patel, 2014).

The findings of this study illuminate the implications for community college academic advisors who transition to an academic advising model that is new and different in the way it focuses on students. The model introduces academic advising as a process instead of an event. Advising spans over time that is gradual, yet leads to a result (Habley & Bloom, 2007). O'Banion (2013) suggests that advising should be rooted in three elements: informational, conceptual, and relational. When presented, professional development opportunities are skewed towards informational and the other elements are usually excluded. Professional opportunities should involve more than presenting information to be absorbed; they should involve a teaching/learning relationship for the advisor to experience personal growth.

The findings of this study illuminate how transitioning from a traditional model of advising to AAM, focuses on personal value, self-efficacy, and relationship building professionally and personally. There are two contributions this study makes on transitioning to AAM: (a) administrators' enlightenment of how time intensive, appropriate advising models for community college advisors support development within the advisor/student relationship; and (b) personal growth as told through the voices of the community college academic advisors.

Administrators' enlightenment of how time intensive, appropriate advising models for community college advisors support development within the advisor/student relationship. Institutions, because of increased pressure to improve student outcomes, are focusing in on how to improve academic advising (Patel, 2014). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggest students

who have a relationship with a caring agent of the institution is a key indicator of student retention. Community college administrators look to advisors to recognize and address the complex issues students are presenting and to help them (Gordon, 2008; Habley et al., 2012; Tinto, 2012). Administrators also expect advisors to assist the students in navigating through their college experience. Advisors expressed concerns about how much administrators understood of their profession and the impact their decisions make on academic advisors' relationships with students. For example, administrators consider their decisions concerning the improvement of academic advising based on budgets. Improvements are usually to hire more advisors. Funding is then used for the purpose of hiring part-time paraprofessionals who have had little to no training on how to advise community college students. The seasoned advisors felt administrators were not listening to their needs and that by "throwing more inexperienced people in our area administrators think that would make everything better." Some advisors felt that administrators did not understand or support their role when they were viewed as "clerks" rather than professionals. The advisors felt that the only time they seemed to be recognized was when a student or faculty had a complaint about the advisors which contributed to feelings of low self-efficacy. Additionally, students coming to community colleges today were presenting with multiple personal, academic, and mental health issues than those who attended years ago. The advisors felt their needs of learning how to work with students who presented with such issues were going unheard by administrators and they had no one to express their feelings with who would listen to their concerns.

Deci & Ryan (2002) posit that being able to connect with others and feeling accepted by others is integral to our being. Feeling unsupported was a huge morale issue for advisors. The

findings of this study highlight how AAM, through a cohort type of programming, instilled feelings of being supported through their unity with others who were transitioning to AAM and accomplishing the same goals.

   The personal growth as told through the voices of the community college academic advisors. Personal growth, as told through the voices of community college academic advisors, is instrumental in carrying forward the practices of building relationships with students. According to Habley & Bloom (2007, p.175), "Advising is not a passive activity." For students to be successful, they must take responsibility and enter into a relationship with the advisor, understanding that it is a dual relationship. How are students to understand they are just as responsible as their advisor? It is the advisor who understands this concept and helps the student to understand one another's role. If the advisor's development is the key factor in this relationship, it is imperative that the advisor has a keen sense of self. Bandura (1997) suggests a lack of self-assurance will impede success even if an individual has the knowledge and skills to be successful. In other words, advisors will self-evaluate themselves and assess their adequacy on their performance. The success of their performances will raise their self-efficacy, or their self-efficacy will be lowered if the opposite is true. What was most important to the advisors during their transition to AAM was that they cultivated their professional growth and that they better helped their students. Additionally, some advisors felt they nurtured their personal growth and were able to move out of a stagnant period in their lives which also heightened their sense of self-efficacy. The findings of this study suggest that AAM affected the advisors' experience of learning by assisting them in growing professionally and personally as change agents.

Through this study, the findings not only suggest that feeling supported and understood help advisors develop a sense of relatedness and self-efficacy, but the transition to AAM affected their advising experiences in their professional and personal lives. It also suggests that feeling supported in and of itself is not enough, that advisors' voices are important, and they need to be a part of the decision-making process that takes place when resources are being funded.

Implications for Practice

If quality academic advising has an impact on both students and the college community, then this impact cannot be taken for granted as administrators look for new initiatives to enhance student retention. Even though advising has been around for over 100 years and has been a viable practice 100, 50, 25, or even ten years ago, there is room for new advising models that promote student and advisor learning and teaching. AAM is such a model that supports academic advisors' development of students and themselves. It is in this section that I offer specific recommendations for community college senior administrators and academic advisors to work together to identify the contributions AAM is making for both the students and the academic advisors.

What appears to be important for this study is that community college academic advisors love working with students and helping them grow personally and academically. As advisors worked with students, they found themselves wanting to provide more than informational advice. Advisors began to see their interactions with students as teaching and learning opportunities for both student and advisor. Growing professionally and personally was the significant outcome for advisors which resulted in building relationships with their students which aligns with Ryan & Deci (2000, p. 57), that individuals have an inborn psychological need for "competence,

autonomy, and relatedness." Practicing AAM with their peers enabled the advisors to feel supported and heard which reinforced their feelings of competence and relatedness. Additionally, Habley and Bloom (2002) suggest that when appropriately supported and provided, advising is appreciated by students. AAM's value is in the belief of academic advisors who see that it works for both the student and the advisor. AAM's process orientation supports student success, which supports student retention, which supports completion. Not implementing AAM undermines the organizational goals and objectives for student success in three ways: (a) the organization is affected by not meeting the completion objective which results in decreased funding for the institution; (b) the quality of advising will be diminished because of feeling a loss in a heightened sense of self-efficacy; and (c) students will not be connected with advisors in a lasting way that encourages a teaching/learning relationship.

Henry Ford said, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got" (Peters & Waterman, 2006, p.69). If meaningful change is to be accomplished within the institution, then the college community from senior administrators down must change the institutional culture of viewing student success as a crisis to seeing it as an opportunity (Habley et al., 2012). It is important for senior administrators and academic advisors to understand how AAM contributes to the strategic plan of the institution and then work together to identify ways to contribute to the goals of the strategic plan. Based on the findings of this study, I offer two recommendations: (a) Establish a two-way communication between senior administrators and academic advisors, and (b) institutionalize AAM so that all employees are exposed to AAM.

Establish a two-way communication between senior administrators and academic advisors. Moving from an event style of advising to a trusting relationship with students over time was important to advisors because they saw that quality relationships could be developed. These relationships increased familiarity with the students which encouraged students to visit with advisors more often. All community college senior administrators advocate for being most interested in their students and support of their success. When policy-making and budgetary decisions are made, other constituents such as faculty, boards, and legislators seem to be ahead of students and their success (Kinzie & Kuh, 2007). Because of all the complexities that go into the development of the college culture, it can be challenging to unravel. Esteemed customs can be difficult to let go. However, if senior administrators are committed to ensuring students of today are successful within their communities, they must begin viewing their institutions through new lenses. Kinzie and Kuh (2007) point out that no one office is responsible for the entire college's student-centered culture. Developing a framework and an organizational structure that enhances collaboration among offices is important.

I propose that all offices are responsible for student success and must provide information about student needs to senior administrators to begin the challenge of changing the institutional culture. I also propose that senior administrators be open to hearing what the offices are saying.

The first step in the process of moving towards changing institutional culture is that administrators understand that academic advising is the one activity within the institution where students have the opportunity to connect with one person in an on-going collaboration throughout the students' academic career. Academic advisors need to be a significant voice in institutional change by becoming leaders and informing senior administrators what students need

to be successful and what tools advisors need to foster student success. It is only through

building trusting relationships that administrator/advisor communication can be established.

Examples of ways the communication can be established are by administrators ensuring

academic advisors are at the table for meetings, retreats, and committees where student success

initiatives are discussed. It is at this point that advisors must demonstrate their leadership skills

by providing the information needed to help bring about change. Another example is to ensure

that funds are allocated by administrators for advisors to participate in professional development

opportunities such as AAM that provide best practices for student success and which can be

brought back to administrators and the college community.

  Institutionalize AAM so that all employees are trained or exposed to AAM.

Communication and a common language are important to academic advisors when interacting

with peers and other staff members of their college community. A sense of unity amongst the

advisors was felt to be a contribution to student retention by engaging in what was right for the

student. Advisors who have participated in or have learned about AAM must speak to the good

work it fosters for students and advisors. By collecting and providing the research on AAM and

sharing that with their administrators, the dialog can begin between the two groups.

Administrators who see the value in AAM can begin to work with advisors on how best to

incorporate the model. I propose a two-pronged approach: (a) all student services personnel are

trained using the model; and (b) all faculty are trained using the model. By having a small

number of advisors/faculty participate in a train-the-trainer event for AAM, the college could

save money by having that group train all the other advisors/faculty. By having the student

services and academic sides of the house collaborating to initiate AAM for the institution is a

way of changing the institutional culture which encourages communication and unity amongst the divisions. Collaborating between divisions does not happen serendipitously. Having administrators support the training of AAM through both divisions will build a bridge between the two as well as help change the culture of the institution in how they build relationships.

Further Reflections

In this section, I will provide my thoughts on what issues were raised for me personally. The focus of my dissertation was to understand the experiences of how community college academic advisors transition from a traditional advising practice to AAM. I wanted to understand what it meant to embrace a paradigm shift as an advisor. At the onset of this study, I was concerned that my experiences as a professional counselor would bias or compromise the interview process. I concentrated on being objective despite my concerns. I wanted to hear the voices and "feel" the experiences in an ontological nature of what it means to be a community college academic advisor in today's world. Furthermore, I wanted to "feel" the experiences of how the advisors see themselves using AAM and what that means to them. Ultimately, since I could not find any other research on community college advisor experiences with AAM, I felt that my findings would ultimately contribute to the world of academic advising for the reason that this profession is currently being reviewed by senior administrators; student retention.

Other experts in the field are also looking at the impact academic advising will have on retention via the academic advisors' experiences with models of advising they use. Richard Arum and Josipa Roska (2014) communicates that students come to college with inadequate academic concerns or interests and "overly narrow ideas about college" (p. 1). Arum and Roska (2014) indicate that "Institutions rarely impress upon students that college is not about obtaining

a credential for a job, but also accepting adult responsibility and participating in democratic citizenship" (p.1). Supporting an "intensive and personalized approach" (p. 59) to advising is recommended by Thomas Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars, and Davis Jenkins (2015) in *Redesigning America's Community Colleges.* They also support an ongoing process of advising with one advisor over the student's academic career within the institution. Looking back at the theme *I feel like I moved from a disconnected relationship with my peers to one that is now deeply connected,* the advisors talked about communication and all speaking the same language. Many times students who are not connected to one advisor and who see a different person each time they go to the advising center say that they hear something different. AAM can provide the support of one another and consistency of communication and language.

Through the discovery of what it means to be a community college academic advisor transitioning from *prescriptive* and *developmental* advising models to AAM I was surprised to find that no data was collected from the advising offices to determine if the relationship between advisors and students were helping or hurting the student retention rate. All of the data was antidotal from students and faculty concerning academic advising. Another surprise was that advisors felt isolated and blamed for students not being successful. The final surprise for me was when I found that the language used among advisors was not consistent.

What did not come as a surprise was that the advisors came from different backgrounds and understood that for students to persist the advisors must build the relationship with students during their first semester.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were that (a) it was limited to one institution, (b) other than interviews, no other data was taken into account, and (c) only academic advisors who learned of AAM were interviewed.

Further Research

As a result of this study, I have several recommendations. The first suggestion is (a) the study be expanded to a larger group of community college advisors at other community colleges across the country, and (b) that a quantitative method is added to include for an analysis of responses across demographics of education level, age, and gender.

My hope is that this study is the beginning of something bigger in that community college senior administrators recognize their academic advisors in the critical role they play when they are associated with the academic success of a student. Additionally, my hope is that senior administrators are committed to providing positive opportunities and environments to their advisors as the advisors are to providing positive opportunities and environments to their students.

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APPENDIX A

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

<u>**Physical Address**</u>
4111 Monarch Way, Suite 203
Norfolk,Virginia 23508
<u>**Mailing   Address**</u>
Office of Research
1 Old Dominion
University Norfolk,
Virginia 23529
Phone(757) 683-3460
Fax(757) 683-5902

DATE: November 3, 2015
TO: Chris Glass, PHD
FROM: Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review
Committee

PROJECT TITLE: [805959-2] Community College Academic Advisors'
                    Experience of the Appreciative Advising Model
REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT
STATUS DECISION DATE: November 3, 2015

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # *[6.1]*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Old
Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee has determined
this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Petros Katsioloudis at (757) 683-5323 or
pkatsiol@odu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all
correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Old
Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee's records.

APPENDIX B

Blueprint

	Background	**Current**	**Efficacy**	**Relatedness**
Characteristics	Education & Training Previous model	How is position different now?	Is there a change in the way you advise?	Is there a change in the way you advise?
Interpretation	Experiences using traditional model	Current experiences	Current experiences	Current experiences
Feelings	How did you feel transitioning from one model to another?	How did it affect you?	How do you feel using this model?	How connected do you feel?

APPENDIX C

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Dear Participant:

The purposes of this form are to provide you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participate in this research, and to record the consent of those that say YES. You are being asked to participate in a research project. Researchers are required to a provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary and to explain risks and benefits of participation so that you can make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

Study Title: Community College Academic Advisor Experiences of the Appreciative Advising Model

Primary Investigator: Chris R. Glass, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, College of Education, Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership, Old Dominion University

Investigator: Christine Damrose-Mahlmann, MS. Ed., Doctoral Student, Community College Leadership Program, College of Education, Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership, Old Dominion University

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:

As an academic advisor who has completed the Appreciative Advising course and has been practicing this model for at least one year, you are being asked to participate in a research study exploring perceptions of academic advisors who use Appreciative Advising techniques. Your participation will contribute to the knowledge surrounding how advisors view the experience of transitioning from a traditional advising practice to the Appreciative Advising Model.

2. WHAT YOU WILL DO:

Each interview will last 60 minutes, depending on how long your responses are. The interview will be conducted in an informal, conversational manner with open-ended questions that allow you to talk about your experience candidly. You may agree to be digitally recorded, or you may choose not to be digitally recorded during our conversations. Your identity will be held in strict confidence, and during data collection, this researcher will arrange for private or semi-private areas for consent and interviews.

3. RISKS AND BENEFITS

Because information will be coded and kept confidential, this study poses little to no risk to participants. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. Participants will benefit from engaging in the process of self-reflection and developing a voice for their experiences while contributing to the literature that explores student retention initiatives, in general, and academic advisors perspectives, in particular.

4. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Any direct identification information, including your name, will be removed from data when responses are analyzed. All data will be secured in locked file cabinets and electronic data will be password protected. The data will be accessible only to the researcher associated with this study and the Institutional Review Board. During analysis, codes will be assigned to your information so that your name is not associated with the data files. During dissemination, findings will be reported by theme (aggregating the data) or by pseudonym (assigning a fake name). The results of this study will be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain confidential. Special care will be taken to ensure contextual details do not give away your identity. All data will be stored for at least five years after the project closes. Five years after the conclusion of the study, the data (digital recordings, transcripts, and my notes) will be destroyed.

5. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:

Your participation is completely voluntary. It is OK to say NO. Even if you say YES now, your are free to say NO later, and walk away or withdraw from the study-at any time. You may choose not to participate at all, or to answer some questions and not others. You may also change your mind at any time and withdraw as a participant from this study with no negative consequences.

6. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:

You will receive no compensation for participating in this study.

7. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

If you have any questions later on, then the researcher should be able to answer them; please contact the researcher Christine Damrose-Mahlmann, 121 College Place, Suite 623, Tidewater Community College, Norfolk, VA, cmahlmann@tcc.edu, 757 822-1298. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, Dr. Edwin Gomez, Chair of the Darden College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee at (757) 683-3309 or Dr. George Maihafer, the current IRB chair, at 757-683-4520, or the Old Dominion University Office of Research, at 757-683-3460.

By signing below, you are indicating your voluntary participation in this study and acknowledge that you may: 1) choose not to participate in this study; 2) refuse to answer certain questions; and 3) discontinue your participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you otherwise would be entitled. You are saying that you have read this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researcher should have answered any questions you may have had about the research. The researcher will give you a copy of this form for your records.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

Signature_____Date_____
Name (Printed)_____

In addition, your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to allow your responses to be digitally recorded
Signature _____
Date _____

8. INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I certify that I have explained to this subject the nature and purpose of this research, including benefits, risks, costs, and any experimental procedures. I have described the rights and protections afforded to human subjects and have done nothing to pressure, coerce, or falsely entice this subject into participating. I am aware of my obligations under state and federal laws, and promise compliance. I have answered the subject's questions and have encouraged him/her to ask additional questions at any time during the course of this study. I have witnessed the above signature(s) on this consent form.

Signature _____
Date _____
Name (Printed)_____

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

Participant: _____

Introduction

My name is Christine Damrose-Mahlmann. I am a graduate student at Old Dominion University and I am conducting research on community colleges academic advisors who have transitioned to the Appreciative Advising Model. I am interested in understanding how you feel about the transition you made from the previous academic advising model you used to the Appreciative Advising Model. I hope to better understand what it means to you personally to advise students using quite a different model than what you may have learned and used during your employment as an academic advisor in a community college. I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.

This interview will take approximately 60 minutes. I will be recording this conversation for accuracy. Before we begin I would like you to read and complete this form giving me consent to conduct this interview with you.

This interview is confidential, meaning that no identifying information about you will be revealed in my final report. I will not be using your real name however, if you would like me to use a pseudonym which is a name other than your given name I would be happy to do so.

Interview Questions:

Disarm Phase: Getting to know the individual

> 1. People who become academic advisors come into the role from so many different directions, how did you enter into this career path?

Discover Phase: This phase helps the individual reframe the conversation on themselves and their success as well a helping you get to know them better.

> 2. What was your personal motivation for doing the Appreciative Advising training? (Probe: During the training were there any aha moments?)
>
> 3. Tell me about your feelings after you completed the training?

(Probe: What is it meaningful? Were you motivated to continue using this model?)

4. Tell me the ways, if any, your feelings changed about your understanding of Appreciative Advising?
(Probe: more or less motivated; feeling more or less confident; intrinsically gratified?)

Dream Phase: Help formulate a vision of what they might become, and then assist in helping them develop their goals.

5. What were you hoping would happen by understanding Appreciative Advising?
(Probe: achievement; degree of internalization – deep sense of reward?)

Deliver Phase: Follow through on their plans.

6. How has your understanding of Appreciative Advising impacted your confidence or self-effectiveness and enjoyment of your work?

7. What are the conditions that motivate you to use this model?
(Probe: motivation; enjoyment; satisfaction?)

Design Phase: Help develop concrete, incremental, and achievable goals.

8. If you had to characterize what goals you would set for yourself, what would they be?

9. If you can imagine this organization at its best, how would it be helping you to achieve your goals?

10. Is there anything else you want to share?

Closing script

Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you today. I appreciate your valuable feedback. I would be happy to send you a copy of the final report if you would like to read it.

Here is my contact information if you think of something you may want to add at a later time or if you have any questions for me.

Things to remember in closing the interview:

- Turn off the recording device.
- Thank advisor for participating.
- Answer any questions the advisor has about the study.

- Give the advisor a business card and tell him/her to contact you with any questions or additional information they think of relevant to the conversation.
- Tell advisor you enjoyed meeting him/her.
- Explain you will be sending him/her a copy of the transcript to ensure the transcription of the interview is accurate.

APPENDIX E

Initial email

Dear (name)

This is a follow up from our recent phone conversation. I am a graduate student at Old Dominion University and I am conducting research on the lived experiences of community college academic advisors who transitioned to the Appreciative Advising Model. I am interested in understanding how you feel about the transition you made from the previous academic advising model you used to the Appreciative Advising Model. I hope to better understand what it means to you personally to advise students using quite a different model than what you may have learned and used during your employment as an academic advisor in a community college. Specifically, I am interested in how you feel about your effectiveness and intrinsic motivation.

If you agree to participate we will arrange a convenient location for an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. The the interview can take place in your office or at another location at your convenience. I will be recording this conversation for accuracy.

This interview is confidential, meaning that no identifying information about you will be revealed in my final report. I will not be using your real name however, if you would like me to use a pseudonym which is a name other than your given name I would be happy to do so.

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting our relationship or your relationship with Community Community College. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

There may be no direct benefit to you if you participate in this research however, you will be contributing to the improvement of student success models that may impact administrative support and student success.

Please provide me with dates and times during the next two weeks that will be convenient for you and I to meet.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Christine Damrose-Mahlmann

APPENDIX F

Thank you email

Dear (name),

I wanted to thank you for meeting with me to do the interview for my research study

recently. I also wanted to send you the transcript of the interview for you to review.

Please feel free to let me know if there is anything that needs to be corrected.

Additionally, if you want to add something you did not say, by all means, please add to

the document. Any corrections or additions need to be added to the document in another

color font so I can see your changes.

Thank you again and I wish you the best in the coming year.

Christine Damrose-Mahlmann

<p align="center">**VITA**</p>

<p align="center">**CHRISTINE DAMROSE-MAHLMANN, M.S.Ed., NCC, LPC**</p>

Office Address   Home Address
121 College Place   406 Glasgow St.
Norfolk, VA 23510   Portsmouth, VA 23704
757 822-1919   757 620-6322
cmahlmann@tcc.edu   cdamrose-mahlmann@cox.net

<p align="center">**Profile**</p>

Solid career in higher education with an emphasis of 20 + years in community colleges. Proven leader in the Commonwealth of Virginia's second largest, multi-campus institution and the second largest provider of higher education and workforce solutions in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Demonstrated competencies in student development theory, administration, supervision, fiscal management, faculty and staff development, and accreditation. Skilled professional leadership experiences in career counseling, academic advising, counseling, financial aid processes, recruitment, reverse transfer, and student activities.

<p align="center">**Education**</p>

Ph.D.   Expected date of graduation: May 2016
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia
Program: Community College Leadership
Dissertation: Community College Academic Advisor Experiences of the Appreciative Advising Model (Working Title)

MS. Ed.
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia   Graduation: Fall 1994
Major: Counseling, 1994
Specializations: Student Affairs in Higher Education and Clinical Counseling

B.A.   Graduation: Spring 1992
Christopher Newport University, Newport News, Virginia
Major: Psychology
Minor: Philosophy
PSI CHI
Departmental Honors

A.A.
Tidewater Community College   Graduation: Spring1990
Liberal Arts
PHI THETA KAPPA-Magna Cum Laude

Professional Work Experience

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS
Tidewater Community College – Administration, Norfolk, VA.   2015 to present

- Provide direct supervision and leadership for the Office of Student Success.
- Serves as a liaison to campus student services offices relative to student development, advising, early alert, orientation, and First Year Success initiatives.
- Develops, initiates, and supports the latest technology for staff and students in order to provide up-to-date services such as SAILS, CONNECT, and SIS.
- Provides consultation as the Privacy Officer for the institution.
- Oversees the student handbook.
- Provides leadership for Student Leadership and Engagement, Great Expectations program, Open Door Project, and Educational Accessibility.
- Works collaboratively with the Vice President of Student Affairs.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP
Internship – Office of the Provost   2014 to 2014
Tidewater Community College – Norfolk, VA.

- Researched stackable programs and certificates to ensure degree completion.
- Developed accelerated programs to ensure expeditious certificate completion.
- Researched academic schedules for businesses and companies interested in providing programs for employees.
- Participated in executive staff and board meetings.
- Reviewed the Virginia Community College System's strategic plan for 2014-2021.
- Participated in the Critical Incident Emergency Plan.
- Attended Provost's leadership meetings.
- Participated in webinars and online conferences related to academic program plans and certificates.

COLLEGE REGISTRAR
Tidewater Community College – Administration, Norfolk, VA   2013 to 2015

- Provide direct supervision and leadership for the operation of the Office of the College Registrar staff.
- Responsible for collecting, recording, maintaining, and reporting of student records

within FERPA guidelines.

- Provides college-wide information and guidelines on FERPA issues.
- Collaborates with academic and student services deans, provosts, faculty, staff, and students to ensure effective and consistent processes and communication.
- Provides direct supervision and leadership for the preparation of student transcripts both on intake and outgoing processes.
- Serves as the liaison with the Office of Information Systems staff for the Student Information System and the transcript processes.
- Works with state and federal agencies in matters related to student records in the retention and destruction of records.
- Develops, initiates, and supports the latest technology for staff and students in order to provide up-to-date services such as the Transfer Evaluation System (TES), and Parchment, a transfer request product.
- Maintains memberships in appropriate associations such as the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (SACRAO), and the Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (VACRAO).
- Develops and oversees the college academic calendar.
- Oversees the graduation and commencement process ensuring students are certified for graduation and diplomas are mailed in a timely manner.
- Serves on the College-Wide Commencement Committee and attends commencement to ensure process for students is seamless.
- Researches, analyzes, and resolves student disputes as they relate to records, transcripts, and graduation.
- Reviews college catalog and student handbook to ensure accuracy.
- Oversees the College-Wide domicile processes and leads the final administrative reviews for domicile appeals.
- Oversees the conversion of paper records to digital records.
- Convenes the Enrollment Management Team to address issues and ensure consistency in delivery of services on all campuses.
- Serves as a member of the President's Advisory and Planning Council (PAPC).
- Serves on committees for the college.
- Member of the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) initiative.
- Initiates reverse transfer program working collaboratively with the area universities.

INTERIM COLLEGE REGISTRAR
Tidewater Community College – Administration, Norfolk, VA   2012 to 2013

- Provided direct supervision and leadership for the operation of the Central Records Office staff.
- Responsible for collecting, recording, maintaining, and reporting of student records within FERPA guidelines.

- Provided college-wide information and guidelines on FERPA issues.
- Collaborated with academic and student services deans, provosts, faculty, staff, and students to ensure effective and consistent processes and communication.
- Provided direct supervision and leadership for the preparation of student transcripts both on intake and outgoing processes.
- Served as the liaison with the Office of Information Systems staff for the Student Information System and the transcript processes.
- Worked with state and federal agencies in matters related to student records in the retention and destruction of records.
- Developed, initiated, and supported the latest technology for staff and students in order to provide up-to-date services.
- Maintained memberships in appropriate associations such as the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).
- Served on Strategic Enrollment Management Task Force for the college.
- Developed and oversaw the college academic calendar.
- Oversaw the graduation and commencement process ensuring students are certified for graduation and diplomas are mailed in a timely manner. Attended commencement to ensure students received their commencement cards and honors awards.
- Researched, analyzed, and resolved student disputes as they related to records, transcripts, and graduation.
- Reviewed college catalog, student handbook, domicile processes, and policies and procedures relating to the Office of the Registrar.
- Ensured the latest technology was being utilized to ensure an accurate and expeditious product.
- Convened the Enrollment Management Team to address issues and ensure consistency in delivery of services on all campuses.

COORDINATOR – FINANCIAL AID (AND VETERANS SERVICES until fall 2011)
Tidewater Community College – Student Services, Norfolk, VA   2007 to 2012

- Provided administrative oversight and leadership for the financial aid and veterans services programs on the Norfolk Campus in cooperation/coordination with other campus financial aid, veteran's services offices, and Central Financial Aid.
- Supervised and supported the daily operations of the financial aid and veterans services offices; including recruiting, hiring, training, and evaluation of personnel.
- Interpreted and implemented federal, state, VCCS and college financial aid and veterans services regulations and procedures.
- Coordinated workshops and information sessions for faculty/staff and students regarding financial aid and veterans services regulations.
- Participated in planning and delivery of First Year Success initiatives.
- Participated in planning and delivery of Orientation sessions for students, family, and friends.

- Worked with the Testing Center on information needed for financial aid students.
- Maintained a system of record keeping supporting the administration of financial aid and veteran's services programs.
- Prepared and completed reports, audits, and program reviews.
- Monitored budgets for scholarships and the College Work Study Program.
- Became the Great Expectations lead for the campus and collaborated with the Culinary Program Chair to offer open houses for Great Expectations candidates.
- Worked collaboratively with the Great Expectations students and coordinator to ensure candidates for the program were meeting eligibility requirements.
- Served as a member of the Financial Aid Management Team to achieve college-wide consistency and coordination in the delivery of programs and services.
- Worked collaboratively with academic and student affairs.
- Served as a college administrator, attending staff meetings and serving on campus and college-wide committees as assigned.
- Participated in state, regional, and national professional development and organizations.

INTERIM CAMPUS DEAN OF STUDENT SERVICES
Tidewater Community College – Student Services, Norfolk, VA   2005-2007

- Provided leadership and support for campus and college-wide offices in determining, planning, operating, evaluating, and continually improving all aspects of Student Services, consistent with the College's Student Services mission statement and continuous quality initiatives.
- Managed all aspects of enrollment management, including recruitment and retention of current and prospective students.
- Established outcomes objectives, procedures, and designs while promoting student services for major functions within Student and Enrollment Services including: admissions, financial aid, registration, counseling, orientation, student activities, assessments/testing, tutoring, veterans affairs, career and transfer resource services, electronic student services, wellness and personal safety, student Photo ID services and the open computer lab; and assisted in coordinating these services college-wide.
- Supervised and supported staff assigned to student services division (approximately 50 people).
- Developed and maintained partnerships with other college services such as the Women's Center, Education Accessibility, Tech Prep, NSU PASSport program, and the Open Door Project/TRIO to continually improve and integrate services for students.
- Managed issues and appeals from students, parents, faculty, and staff and adjudicated disciplinary issues.
- Worked collaboratively with the provosts, academic deans, the Associate Vice-President for Enrollment Management and Student Services, and other campus-based and college-wide faculty and staff to:
  - Communicate accurate information to students while providing a high level of

> student service.
> - o Provide appropriate contributions regarding significant patterns and trends in enrollment.
> - o Recognize students who have demonstrated unusually meritorious academic or service-oriented accomplishment.
>
> - o Ensure student needs for accurate programmatic information, appropriate learning assistance, and other services that enhance the quality of the student experience.

- Cooperated with colleagues from academic and student affairs and other units to achieve college-wide consistency and coordination in the delivery of programs and services in areas such as dual- enrollment and middle college.
- Worked collaboratively with local area high schools to provide student development courses for a dual-enrollment program.
- Worked in collaboration with Workforce Development to provide identified support services needs to business, industry, military, and other workforce constituencies.
- Served as a member of campus and other college leadership teams as appointed and requested.
- Served as a member of the SIS Team work group, the Administrative Association, Student Success, SACS, Teaching and Learning Technology Roundtable, President's Advisory and Planning Council, and other governance related committees.
- Provided supervision for Master's level interns from all local universities and worked collaboratively with appropriate departments and faculty from respective institutions.
- Provided supervision for the student activities coordinator on the campus level and worked collaboratively to ensure appropriate and relevant programming was developed in alignment with VCCS mandates.
- Maximized the use of technology in delivering programs and services.
- Developed procedures affecting all areas of student services.
- Was a member of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) team contributing to the development and initiation of the First Year Success offerings.
- Planned and coordinated the First Year Success sessions and Family & Friends Orientation for the campus.
- Supervised the Testing Center in collaboration with the Workforce Development Office.
- Collaborated with the Director of Educational Accessibility to ensure yearly Federal Workforce Recruitment program was planned for the campus.
- Coordinated the division's annual budgets.
- Hired and evaluated staff, developed goals and objectives, managed quality initiatives; developed accountability programs; and promoted professional development.
- Accurately interpreted and responded to federal and state mandates.
- Reviewed student handbook, college catalogue, and other college publications that were appropriate to student services for accuracy.
- Ensured communication on all levels with students, faculty and staff.
- Promoted a "student first" environment within all units of student services.

STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES COUNSELOR
Tidewater Community College – Student Services, Norfolk, VA   2002-2005

- Provided leadership by coordinating the Student Success Module under the newly modeled College-Wide Student Services Reorganization.
- Developed strategies for student success through programs that enhanced a student's learning and integration while at Tidewater Community College.
- Upgraded, while supervising, the Early Alert Program to online making it easier for faculty to recommend students having academic and personal issues as one of the retention initiatives for the Norfolk Campus.
- Provided personal and professional counseling to students to promote the retention of students.
- Promoted "student first" environment throughout Enrollment and Student Services.
- Disseminated accurate and applicable information to students, faculty and staff.
- Provided conflict resolution opportunities pertaining to issues between faculty and students.
- Lead committee member on the STD/SDV 100 Task Force.
  - This task force worked as a team to bring about an enhanced College Success Course that would benefit the student and aid in retention college-wide.
  - Developed College Survival Skills curriculum for dual enrollment program with Norfolk Public Schools.
  - Coordinated College Success workshops for counselors and faculty bringing in authors of college success textbooks.
  - Promoted "train the trainer" series for instructors of SDV.

- Partnered with local college and universities to provide internship opportunities for counseling graduate students, thereby, supplementing the Counselor Center with needed assistance.
- Member of the TCC Transfer Counselor's Workgroup and the Career Counselor's Workgroup.
- Chair of the TCC Administrative Association.

INTERIM COORDINATOR OF STUDENT AND ENROLLMENT SERVICES (Dean of Students)
Tidewater Community College – Student Services, Norfolk, VA   2000-2002

- Provided leadership on campus and college-wide in determining, planning, operating, evaluating and continually improving all aspects of student services, consistent with the College's Student Services mission statement, and continuous quality initiatives.
- Managed all aspects of enrollment management, including recruitment and retention of current and prospective students.

- Established outcomes objectives, procedures, and designs and promoted student services for major functions within student and enrollment services including: admissions, financial aid, registration, counseling, orientation, student activities, assessments/testing, tutoring, veteran's affairs, career and transfer resource services, electronic student services, wellness and personal safety, and student Photo ID services and assisted in coordinating these services college-wide.
- Supervised and supported staff assigned to student services division (approximately 50 people).
- Developed and maintained partnerships with other college services such as the Women's Center, Disabilities, Tech Prep, Bridges to the Future, PASSport, and the Open Door (Trio) Project to continually improve and integrate services for students.
- Worked collaboratively with the chief campus administrator, division chair, the Associate Dean for Student Development and Enrollment Management, and other campus-based and college-wide faculty and staff to:
  - Communicate accurate information to students while providing a high level of student service.
  - Provide appropriate contributions regarding significant patterns and trends in enrollment.
  - Recognize students who have demonstrated unusually meritorious academic or service-oriented accomplishment.
  - Ensure student needs for accurate programmatic information, appropriate learning assistance, and other services that enhance the quality of the student experience.
- Cooperated with colleagues from academic and student affairs and other units to achieve college-wide consistency and coordination in the delivery of programs and services.
- Worked in collaboration with Workforce Development to provide identified support services needs to business, industry, military and other workforce constituencies.
- Served as member of campus and other college leadership teams as appointed and requested.
- Served as a co-chair for the Academic Advising PeopleSoft work group.
- Maximized the use of technology in delivering programs and services.
- Developed policies and procedures affecting all areas of student services.
- Adjudicated student disciplinary matters.
- Coordinated the division's annual budgets
- Hired and evaluated staff, developed goals and objectives, managed quality initiatives; developed accountability programs; promoted professional development.

LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR/ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
Tidewater Community College – Student Services, Norfolk, VA   1996-Present

- Advised potential, current, and returning students concerning their academic, occupational, and personal goals.
- Counseled current and returning students with personal issues. Suggested alternatives for

problem resolution, with the goal of improving student's mental attitude and refocusing attention on academic concerns, through the use of intervention techniques and the referral of community agencies when appropriate.

- Resolved conflicts between students and peers, as well as between students and faculty.
- Monitored and connected students with support services needed to ensure student success and retention.
- Researched, developed, and initiated the first Early Alert Program on campus. Demonstrated effectiveness of counseling skills illustrated through the large number of referrals made by students and faculty.
- Provided crisis intervention counseling when needed for students, faculty and staff.
- Served as a liaison for students with faculty.
- Worked collaboratively with faculty and division chair to increase retention and provide optimum student success strategies.
- Effectively assisted students in the development of an educational plan and the selection and sequencing of appropriate classes through the use of assessment tests, transcripts and other documentation, individually and in a group setting when appropriate.
- Reviewed student records for graduation and provided supporting documentation for student and Central Records.
- Facilitated recruitment opportunities with middle and high schools, community agencies and businesses.
- Coordinated the Career and Transfer Resource Center to ensure career exploration opportunities for students and provide transfer information in the interest of the college's objective on transfer to senior institutions.
- Provided online services to students using the latest technology available.
- Supported service learning objectives and acted as a bridge for referral services.
- Established program between TCC and Norfolk Social Services to provide students, receiving public assistance, the opportunity to attend school and fulfill a voluntary obligation at the same time.
- Provided workshops such as resume writing, career exploration, and support groups on anger management to enhance student retention and student success.
- Taught student development courses such as Teacher Preparation, Study Skills, Career Transition, and Personal Awareness.
- Initiated the Transfer Counselor's Work Group with counselors from other campuses to provide consistency across the college.
- Served on numerous committees by appointment and as requested.
- Collaborated with the first web master to ensure student services functions and services were available on the web.
- Developed program and trained faculty for SACS initiative to provide faculty academic advising to returning students.
- Counseled and advised students in Southeastern Virginia Job Training Program.
- Phi Theta Kappa Advisor.

COUNSELOR
Tidewater Community College – Student Services, Norfolk, VA   1994-1996

- Established and coordinated the Women's Center and the Career and Transfer Resource Center on the Norfolk Campus.
- Ensured resources such as space, computers, furniture and support service were available.
- Partnered with community agencies such as the City of Norfolk, Equal Opportunity Office, and Social Services.
- As a member of the Norfolk Campus Planning Team provided input and researched one stop programs for the development of the Norfolk Campus.
- Provided placement assessment evaluations to new students.
- Provided sound academic advisement, career planning and personal counseling to new and returning students.
- Provided group counseling opportunities for returning women.
- Taught student development courses such as Success Skills for Returning Women, Teacher Preparation, and Career Exploration.
- Developed and taught curriculum for Job Skills Training student body.
- Trained counselors and faculty in various areas within the Job Skills Training unit of Workforce Development.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
Tidewater Community College – Academic Services, Norfolk, VA   1994-Present

- Assistant Professor of Psychology, Health and Student Development classes. Specific courses of PSY 201, 202, 215, 216, 265, 295, HLT 116, 121, STD/SDV 100-195. Using latest technology, online, computer enhanced courses.
- First faculty member on Norfolk Campus to teach Student Development course (STD 100) using Compressed Video.
- First faculty to develop online health course "Personal Wellness" for TCC students.
- First faculty to use Blackboard to teach Student Development course online.

PSYCHOTHERAPIST
Allies in Healing - Norfolk, VA   1999-2001

- Provided personal counseling to clients with emotional, physical and mental issues.
- Provided crisis counseling, counseling related to behavior issues, depression, gender identity, anxiety, and referrals from Employee Assistance Programs.
- Worked with clients on conflict resolution issues, anger management, substance abuse and domestic violence issues.
- Areas of expertise are sexual assault, LGBT issues, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

COUNSELING INTERN
Tidewater Community College – Academic Services, Norfolk, VA   1992-1994

- Provided academic advising, counseling, placement testing and evaluation, financial aid information, and recruiting activities to new and prospective students at TCC's Norfolk Center.
- Shadowed student services personnel on the Portsmouth Campus, the Chesapeake Campus and the Virginia Beach Campus to obtain the necessary policies and procedures in order to provide accurate and consistent information to new and prospective students.
- Utilized information gathered to assist in setting up the student services functions at the center.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR
Tidewater Community College – Academic Services, Norfolk, VA   1992-1994

- Assisted the Acting Dean and Director of the Norfolk Center in the initiatives of setting up the Norfolk Campus while pursuing Master's degree.
- Accompanied the Acting Dean and Director of the Norfolk Center on recruitment, fund raising, and event planning functions for the Norfolk Center.
- Functioned as the first point of contact for new and prospective students and businesses.
- Marketed TCC's Norfolk Center through community contacts, visits, open houses, and television and radio interviews.
- Worked in concert with Continuing Education in an effort to reach into the community on behalf of TCC.

Program Development

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – Tidewater Community College – SDV Subcommittee in collaboration with subcommittee members.
Worked in concert with Student Services Dean and task force to ensure consistencies on instruction of course learning outcomes across campuses.

Early Alert Program – Tidewater Community College – Norfolk Campus
Researched, developed, and initiated the first Early Alert Program on campus. Demonstrated effectiveness of counseling skills illustrated through the significant number of referrals made by students and faculty.

Women's Center – Tidewater Community College – Norfolk Campus
Established and coordinated for community college campus. Provided program for Student Success.

Career and Transfer Resource Center – Tidewater Community College – Norfolk
Established and coordinated for community college campus.

Violence against Women Course – Tidewater Community College – Norfolk Campus
Created and presented a Violence against Women class and workshop which has been taught throughout the community and at local universities.

Counseling Notes – Tidewater Community College - Norfolk
Designed and monitored client/student note taking system to be placed in student files in order to follow up on individual goals and current situation.

Life Skills Course – Tidewater Community College - Norfolk
Developed and taught Life Skills Training course for Job Skills Training Program.

Committee Experience

President's Advisory and Planning Council, Chair   October 2014 – Present
AAWCC President Elect   August 2014 – Present
Commencement Team   September 2013- Present
President's Advisory and Planning Council, Secretary   August 2013 - October 2014
Reverse Transfer Committee   January 2014 - Present
Search Committee Chair for College Threat Assessment/Psych   September 2014 - Oct. 2014
Student Handbook Committee   January 2013 – July 2014
President' College-Wide Strategic Planning Committee   August 2012 – August 2013
Appreciative Inquiry Team   August 2012 – August 2013
Strategic Enrollment Management Team   August 2013 - Present
Human Resources Mapping Team   September 2013 – Present
Appreciative Advising Workgroup   September 2013 – Present
Enrollment Management Team   September 2012 – Present

Financial Aid Management Team	September 2007 – Sept. 2012
Search Committees for various positions	October 1994 – Present
Women's Center Advisory Group	October 1996 – Sept. 2012
Student Success Governance Committee	December 2013 – May 2013
Student Success Governance Committee	December 2001 – May 2002
Student Development Committee	September 2005 – May 2013
SACS – QEP Committee	June 2001 – June 2003
VCCS Admissions and Records Workgroup	September 2002 – Present
PeopleSoft Workgroup	June 2002 – June 2007
PeopleSoft Advising Workgroup, Chair	June 1998 – June 2002

Professional Development

- W.I.S.E. Presenter, Virginia Beach, VA 2015
- CSCC Conference, Washington, DC 2014
- W.I.S.E. Presenter, Norfolk, VA 2010-13
- SACSA Conference, Norfolk, VA 2013
- Appreciative Advising Training, Savannah, GA 2013
- AACRAO Technology Conference, Tuscan, AZ 2013 (Presenter) 2013
- Appreciative Advising Conference, Savannah, GA 2013
- First Year Experience Conference, San Antonio, TX 2012
- American Counseling Association Conference, New Orleans, LA 2011
- Myers-Briggs Type Interpretations – Student Services - Tidewater Community College (Presenter) 2011
- Myers-Briggs Type Interpretations – Creative Services - Tidewater Community College (Presenter) 2010
- Online Student Orientation – New Horizons Conference (Presenter) 2007
- Presentations on Student Success – Business Women's Conference (Presenter), 2005
- Career Transitions – Society of Design and Administration (Presenter), 2005
- Higher Education User Group Conference – Academic Advising Module (Presenter), 2004
- Myers-Briggs Type Workshops (Presenter)
- Campus Sexual Assault Conference (Presenter)
- Crisis Intervention Training (Presenter)
- Center for Application of Psychological Type Conference, Florida (Co-Presenter)
- First Year Seminar, Addison, Texas 2004
- College Success Summer Institute, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill 2003
- Student Learning Institute, James Madison University
- Learning Resources, Distance Learning & Information Technology Peer Conference, 2003
- New Horizons, Roanoke, Virginia 2003
- Licensed Professional Counselor, Virginia License # 0701002785
- National Certified Counselor

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Certification
- Student Developmental Theory and Practice with Garrett McAuliffe, Ph.D., LPC
- Covey Leadership Training through the VCCS
- Women's Leadership Training
- Strong Interest Inventory Training
- Cognitive Therapy of Depression
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D.
- DSM-IV Training
- Sexual Assault Counseling Training
- Suicidal Assessment and Prevention and Self -Mutilation with Pamela Marcus, R.N., M.S., C.S.
- What Every Therapist and Counselor Needs to Know About Working with Men with Dr. Sam Osherson
- Critical Incidence Training
- Facilitated support groups dealing with mental health issues, goal setting, stress management, time management, self-esteem, substance abuse, conflict resolution and women's issues.
- Conducted workshops on violence against women, peer listening, substance abuse and interpersonal skills.
- Train and supervise undergraduate and graduate interns from area universities in counseling program.
- Facilitated crisis intervention/suicide hotline training for new trainees.
- Planned and presented activities related to coping strategies during crisis and stress-induced situations.

Community Relations/Marketing

- Promoted various services of Tidewater Community College through community liaison activities, speaking engagements, television interviews and newspaper interviews.
- Provide Supervision for ODU, Regent University and NSU Intern and Practicum students in Counseling, Higher Education and Community College Graduate programs.
- Provide workshops on Myers-Briggs for graduate level Counseling courses at ODU
- Provided workshops and consultations on behalf of Tidewater Community College for various businesses and governmental agencies throughout the community.
- Provided admissions, advising and financial aid information to Norfolk Public Schools.
- Attended Norfolk Downtown Council Events as a representative of TCC
- Member, Portsmouth Emergency Incidence Group
- Volunteer, Red Cross Critical Incidence Stress Debriefing Counselor
- Volunteer, Peace by Piece, bereavement group for children (Portsmouth)
- Member of Virginia Stage Company
- Board Member of FRIENDS of the Portsmouth Public Library

Publications and Grants

- Damrose-Mahlmann, C., Ferguson, S., McDowell, K.A., Necessary, J. & Pribesh, S. (December 2013). *Reflections on interprofessional education and practice.* Norfolk, VA. Old Dominion University.
- TLTR Grant – Online Orientation for Online Students (2005 and 2007)
- Perkins Mini-Grant – Train the Trainer:New Approach to College Success (2005)
- Student Development Services: Essential for Learning – White Paper - Damrose-Mahlmann, C., Horen, C., Lewis. P. (2000)
- Carl Perkins Mini–Grant – Career Development/Occupational-Technical, (2000)
- Life Skills Training Manual – Boughton, L., Damrose-Mahlmann, C., Meddar, G. (1997)

Awards and Accomplishments

- Quality Matters Certification – 2014 - Present
- Elected President-Elect of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges - 2014
- Quality Matters Course Approved - 2013
- Virginia Network for Women in Higher Education - 2012
- Dean's Merit Award – Norfolk Campus –Tidewater Community College, 2011
- Provost Award – Norfolk Campus - Tidewater Community College, 2007
- Administrator of the Year Award – Tidewater Community College, 2006-07
- Grace Harris Leadership Institute – Virginia Commonwealth University, 2003
- Bronze Good Citizenship Award – Sons of the American Revolution; First educator/counselor to receive this award, 1998
- Who's Who in American Women
- Nominated for the Hampton Roads YWCA Women of the Year Award

Professional Affiliations

- Member, Southern Association for College Student Affairs
- Member, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- Member, American College Student Personnel Association
- Member, American Association of Community Colleges
- Member, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- Member, Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- Member, Southern Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers
- Member, American Counseling Association
- Member, Virginia Counselor's Association
- Member, Virginia Association of Clinical Counselors
- Member, American Mental Health Counselors Association
- Member, American Association of University Women

- Member, American Association of Women in Community Colleges
- Board Member, Network for Empowering Women Students (N.E.W.S.)
- Member, Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corp.