STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS AT PARADISE VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

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ABSTRACT

A literature review revealed that the non-traditional student (age 25 and over) population in post-secondary institutions is increasing. There is also a need for programs to serve these students, and many non-traditional programs including support groups and learning assistance programs do already exist. In addition, many colleges and universities informally evaluate these programs, and there are some formal studies conducted regarding the effectiveness of these programs.

The purpose of this study was to assist Paradise Valley Community College in collecting information regarding the effectiveness of two of its programs for non-traditional students; the Adults Who Are Returning to Education (AWARE) support group and tutoring in the Learning Assistance Center. This researcher designed questionnaires for each of the two programs which were utilized to collect data on student perceptions of the effectiveness of each program. Seventeen non-traditional students who had participated in the AWARE program, and 68 non-traditional students who had participated in the tutoring program completed the appropriate questionnaire.

The results of the study of the AWARE support group suggest that non-traditional students who participate in a support group will increase their self-awareness, their awareness of others, their self-
confidence, and their self-esteem, feel that they have gained more control over their lives, learn a skill, strategy, or insight to apply in their lives, become more successful students, and become more aware of lifestyle options available to them such as health, relationships, and careers. Many also report that participating in a support group helped them to improve their grades and remain in school.

The results of the study of the tutoring program suggest that non-traditional students who receive tutoring will have improved grades, complete particular courses which they would have otherwise dropped, become more independent learners, learn skills or strategies and gain insights to apply in their lives, become more successful students, become more aware of study options available to them, and become more aware of their learning styles. The results of the study also suggest they will increase their self-confidence, improve their self-esteem and remain in school when they would have otherwise dropped out.
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CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM

Introduction to the Study

In this study, two researcher designed questionnaires were utilized to collect student perceptions of the effectiveness of two selected non-traditional student programs at Paradise Valley Community College (PVCC). Non-traditional students, age 25 and over, who participated in each of the selected programs completed the questionnaires. The selected programs were the non-traditional student support group and the Learning Assistance Center tutoring program.

The support group which is called Adults Who Are Returning to Education (AWARE) was created and is coordinated by the Counseling and Consultation Center at the college. This support group meets bi-monthly and has the following mission: "to provide a support system to encourage and assist, in as many ways as possible, the return of adults to their education" (Paradise Valley Community College, 1989).

The Learning Assistance Center at Paradise Valley Community College provides tutoring to non-traditional students each semester. These students receive free tutoring from peer tutors in virtually any course offered by the college. The mission of the center is to assist students to become independent, self-directed learners.
Background of the Study

Non-traditional students have been participating in post-secondary education in ever increasing numbers in recent years (Kerka, 1992; Papier, 1980; Thon, 1984). As of 1987, approximately 40% of undergraduate students were adult learners (Fact file: Fall 1987 Enrollment in U.S. Colleges and Universities, 1989). It was projected that by 1992, 50% of all college students would be over age 25 (Hartman et al., 1992). Many of these adult students are returning to college after interrupting their education for a variety of reasons. Reasons for interruption of the college education may include a change in marital status such as getting married, separated, or divorced, a change in job status such as being transferred or having hours increased, or service in the armed forces (Sheets, 1994).

Others are attending college for the first time after having been employed for a number of years after high school. The reasons non-traditional students choose to attend college are many whether they are returning or first-time college students; these reasons include intellectual stimulation, self-improvement, and job training (Papier, 1980). These adult students are often given a variety of labels including returning adult students, adult re-entry students, and non-traditional students. For the purposes of this study, this researcher refers to them as non-traditional students.

Although the numbers of non-traditional students in higher education are increasing, much of the past research on
undergraduate students has been concerned with traditional students, age 17-22.

Research on undergraduate higher education has been predominantly based in historical perspectives and beliefs of a traditional student profile—that of a person who was 17-22 years old—and of a traditional undergraduate higher education as defined by an institutional culture and curriculum focused on the 17-22 year-old undergraduate student. (Kasworm, 1990, p. 345)

There is, however, a fair amount of research dealing with non-traditional students. There are studies describing particular programs for non-traditional students at institutions of higher education (Burke, 1987; Maisey et al., 1986), and there has been some research, both descriptive and empirical, conducted on the effectiveness of selected non-traditional student programs (Crampton, 1993; Koehler, 1983).

A number of colleges and universities have decided that non-traditional students need help to be successful students because they face obstacles to academic success that traditional college students do not typically face. These obstacles may include coping with job and family responsibilities and adjusting to a college environment designed for traditional students (Sheets, 1994). Because of this concern for non-traditional students, these colleges and universities have developed a variety of programs to increase the academic success of these students. These programs may include workshops, seminars, courses, orientations, support groups, learning assistance, and personal counseling (Sheets, 1994).
At Paradise Valley Community College, non-traditional students were identified as being at-risk of academic failure or dropping out of school because of the obstacles to academic success mentioned above: job and family responsibilities and adjusting to a college environment designed for traditional students. Other factors placing non-traditional students at-risk may include low self-esteem and lack of support from family (Sheets, 1994). In response, PVCC has developed a series of workshops and a support group for these students. In addition, non-traditional students are encouraged to utilize learning assistance and personal counseling and to enroll in personal growth and academic skills courses.

PVCC refers to these students as both adult re-entry students and returning adult students. The college does not, however, define adult re-entry nor returning adult students as only those who have re-entered or returned to college after having previously attended. PVCC defines these students as those who are 25 years of age or older. Thus, their definitions of adult re-entry students and returning adult students are synonymous with this researcher's definition of non-traditional students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assist Paradise Valley Community College in collecting information regarding the effectiveness of two of their programs for non-traditional students so that decisions could be made regarding continuation or improvement of the programs. The
college was in the process of evaluating its effectiveness as an institution, and this study made a contribution towards that effort.

Research Question

The research question to be answered was as follows: What are the perceptions of non-traditional students who have participated in selected Paradise Valley Community College non-traditional student programs regarding the effectiveness of these programs? The programs selected for study were the AWARE support group and tutoring from the Learning Assistance Center. Although tutoring in the Learning Assistance Center is available to all students, non-traditional students are frequently referred to this service by faculty, counselors, academic advisors, other college staff, and other students, and they utilize it heavily.

Rationale for the Study

Rawlins and Lenihan (1982) point out the importance of evaluating college programs for non-traditional students: "With declining budgets, enrollment pressures, and increasing competition for the potentially large market of adult learners, it is . . . important to experiment with program offerings with ongoing and built-in feedback and evaluation" (p. 536).

The Counseling and Consultation Center at Paradise Valley Community College created and coordinates the AWARE support group for non-traditional students. This program has never had a formal study conducted regarding its effectiveness. In addition, the
Learning Assistance Center at Paradise Valley Community College provides tutoring to non-traditional students each semester. This program also has never had a formal study conducted regarding its effectiveness.

Both the Counseling and Consultation Center and the Learning Assistance Center could benefit from learning how students perceived the effectiveness of their respective programs. Awareness of negative student perceptions could help them to discover possible problems, weaknesses or modifications that need to be made in the programs while awareness of positive student perceptions could assist them by validating current policies, procedures, and practices and by supporting a decision to continue the programs in their current forms.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it provided information to Paradise Valley Community College to assist the institution in evaluating the effectiveness of two of its programs for non-traditional students. This has been beneficial because the college is involved in an ongoing institutional effectiveness process. This process consists of evaluating every department and program in the institution in order to determine if it is effectively fulfilling its mission. The information gathered in this study has been provided to assist in the institutional effectiveness process.

In addition, other community colleges in the Maricopa Community College District, of which Paradise Valley Community College is a part,
may be interested in using the questionnaire from this study to evaluate their programs for non-traditional students or other counseling or learning assistance programs for student populations other than non-traditional students. They may also be able to benefit from the information resulting from this study since they have non-traditional student programs and student populations similar in many respects to Paradise Valley Community College.

Further, information from this study may assist other educators working with college students at a variety of post-secondary institutions who may find the information useful.

Operational Definition of Terms

Adult re-entry students.-This term often refers to college students who re-enter college after having previously attended Paradise Valley Community College, however, uses the term synonymously with this researcher's definition of non-traditional students: students 25 years of age or older (Wieck, 1995).

AWARE.-Adults Who Are Returning to Education. A support group for non-traditional students at Paradise Valley Community College whose mission is "to provide a support system to encourage and assist, in as many ways as possible, the return of adults to their education" (Constitution/By-Laws AWARE, 1992).

Counseling and Consultation Center.-the counseling department at Paradise Valley Community College which created and
coordinates the AWARE support group which was part of this study.

**Learning assistance**-services which help students to improve their learning efficiency and effectiveness. These services include tutoring, computer-aided learning, study groups, workshops, and learning resources such as videotapes, instructional software, and print materials (Sheets, 1994).

**Learning Assistance Center**-the center at Paradise Valley Community College which provides the tutoring program for non-traditional students which was a component of this study.

**Non-traditional students**-There are many factors contributing to the definition of the non-traditional student including part-time attendance, off-campus residence, and age: 25 or older (Bean and Metzner, 1985). For the purpose of this study, this researcher defines non-traditional students as college students who are 25 years of age or older.

**Returning adult students**-This term is often used synonymously with the common definition of Adult re-entry students: college students who re-enter college after having previously attended. Paradise Valley Community College, however, uses the term synonymously with this researcher's definition of non-traditional students: students 25 years of age or older (Wieck, 1995).
Tutoring—peer tutoring at Paradise Valley Community College's Learning Assistance Center. The tutors work with the students to help them to better understand the content of the coursework and assist them to improve their learning skills such as notetaking, test taking, and time management. In addition, the tutors encourage the students to become more independent and self-directed learners (Sheets, 1994).

Assumptions and Limitations

This researcher assumed that the respondents to the questionnaire answered the questions honestly so that their perceptions of the effectiveness of the programs under consideration were accurately measured.

A limitation of the study was the fact that this researcher was employed by the institution that was studied, Paradise Valley Community College, and worked in the Learning Assistance Center which coordinated one of the programs that was studied, the tutoring program. Therefore, the researcher may have been biased because he would have liked the study to have provided a positive evaluation of the program which he coordinated. He may also have been biased toward a positive evaluation of the support group as well since it is part of the college, and he may have wanted the college as a whole to receive a positive evaluation.

A further limitation of the study concerns the degree to which other institutions of higher learning are able to utilize the data from
this study since their programs for non-traditional students and their student populations may be very different than those of Paradise Valley Community College.

A final limitation of the study was that the sample size of seventeen for the AWARE group was too small to generalize the results to all students who have participated in AWARE. In addition, the AWARE questionnaires were administered by three different methods. Six questionnaires were returned from the mailing; eight were received in person, and three were administered over the telephone. The participants' responses to the questionnaire may have varied based on the method of administration.

**Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter 2 is the review of the literature pertinent to the study. It is arranged in the following four sections: 1) Non-traditional Student Characteristics, 2) The Need for Non-traditional Student Programs, 3) Non-traditional Student Programs, which describes a variety of programs in post-secondary institutions, and 4) Evaluations of Program Effectiveness.

Chapter 3 reviews the purpose of the study, identifies and describes the research methodology, describes the sample and population studied, provides information on the instrumentation utilized in the study, and discusses data collection and other procedures. In Chapter 4, the data collected in the study are presented and analyzed. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study,
conclusions drawn regarding the results of the study, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2
THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two contains a review of the pertinent literature on non-traditional students in post-secondary education. The chapter begins with a description of non-traditional student characteristics including their reasons for attending college, their needs, and the obstacles they experience. Next, the need for programs such as support groups and learning assistance to help non-traditional students with personal and academic development is discussed, and then, a variety of non-traditional student programs at colleges and universities is described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of evaluations of non-traditional student programs.

Non-traditional Student Characteristics

Non-traditional students, age 25 and over, comprise a rapidly growing segment of the student population in higher education (Thon, 1984; Prager, 1983). According to Bean and Metzner (1985), 40% of undergraduate college students are over 25 years old. In 1987, Nathan Griff reported that students older than age 25 account for greater than 33% of all students in higher education. Others have predicted that by 1992, 50% of all students in college would be over
25 years old (Hartman et al., 1986; Rose, 1988; Rountree-Wyly and Lambert, 1988).

Since the numbers of non-traditional students in higher education are increasing and there are many programs designed to assist them, it is important to understand the characteristics of these students including why they participate in higher education, what their needs are, and what they perceive as obstacles to their success in college. An understanding of their characteristics can enable educators to design appropriate programs to support them and to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs.

Griff (1987) and Mardoyan, Alleman, and Cochran (1983) define these students as those who may be enrolling in college for the first time or returning to post-secondary education after an interruption in the college career. Whether they are enrolling for the first time or returning to college, non-traditional students attend college for a variety of reasons.

Brodzinski and Shriberg (1984) offer many reasons for non-traditional student college attendance including personal reasons, vocational or professional training, developing skills to procure a job, finding out more about a specific area of interest, and learning how to think critically. Papier (1980) lists intellectual stimulation, self-improvement, and job training as reasons for non-traditional student attendance.

Much of the literature regarding non-traditional students describes them in terms of their needs and what they perceive as obstacles to a successful college experience. Non-traditional student
needs include the combination of family, household, and employment responsibilities, dealing with problems stemming from an interruption in education, and the development of social relationships within a limited time frame (Rawlins, 1979). Non-traditional students at Eastern Illinois University were described as students who were working at improving career skills, adjusting to college, likely to be employed, desiring to "fit in" with university staff and traditional students, and limited in time for on-campus socializing (Rawlins and Lenihan, 1982).

Perceived obstacles to college success for non-traditional students may include: being older than traditional students and not feeling accepted by them or by instructors, the location and time of classes, tuition, previous academic record, and career, educational, and family responsibilities (Galloway and Hunter, 1978; Kimmel and Murphy, 1976; and Rawlins, 1979). Brodzinski and Shriberg (1984) report that non-traditional students' obstacles may include perceiving the classroom as a threat, having limited time due to the constraints of job and family, and dealing with anxiety.

Other obstacles to a successful college experience for non-traditional students may be low self-esteem and self-confidence. Astin (1976) describes the typical reentry woman as middle-aged with low self-confidence and self-esteem. Bauer (1981) reports that self-confidence and a support system of family and friends are important to non-traditional students. The college environment itself may shake the self-esteem and self-confidence of non-traditional students:
Adults set high standards for themselves. There is a gnawing, anxiety producing, and psychologically disturbing feeling that comes over the adult learner when entering a classroom full of young students who look very bright (though perhaps mildly bored), relaxed and 'in place,' and extremely clever in their khakis and blue jeans. The youthful environment can be terrifying, and also challenging to the adult student. Unable to shed twenty pounds or take off ten years, the adult responds by striving for good grades—to prove to the other students in the class (as well as to the spouse and children at home) that 'I have not lost my capacity.' (Brodzinski and Shriberg, 1984, p. 5)

The Need for Non-traditional Student Programs

Many colleges and universities are responding to the needs of and attempting to minimize the obstacles confronting non-traditional students by providing a variety of programs and services for them. Griff (1987) recommends that services for non-traditional students deal with career and self-awareness, interests, values, goals, decisions, risk taking, learning skills, résumé writing, and interviewing. The need for non-traditional student programs is evidenced by Rogers (1981) who suggests that students who utilize these programs can overcome most of the problems and barriers facing them and enjoy a positive college experience.

One of the programs that can be beneficial to non-traditional students is the support group. Papier (1980) suggests that support groups can be very helpful for re-entry women in particular because they provide a place where they will be understood. Bauer (1981) reports that support groups help non-traditional students to feel less isolated and provide both comradery and visibility.
Convincing arguments for the need for non-traditional student support groups are provided by Karelius-Schumacher (1977) and Brandenburg (1974) who suggest that one of the strongest needs of non-traditional students is to identify and gain support from other non-traditional students. While non-traditional students have already formed intimate relationships with family and friends, when they attend college, these relationships may be disrupted (Douvan, 1981). This, again, underscores the need for non-traditional student support groups.

Non-traditional students also need learning assistance which includes help with both the subject matter of college courses and the skills needed to study effectively which may include notetaking, test taking, time management, memory techniques, and study reading. In a study on which counseling topics were important to students, 67% of non-traditional students responded that grades and study skills were of concern (Mardoyan, Alleman, and Cochran, 1983). These needs can be addressed by college learning assistance programs which may include tutoring programs.

In addition to specifically academic concerns, learning assistance or tutoring programs may help non-traditional students with meeting self-esteem needs. In a study conducted by Prager (1983), a significant correlation between self-esteem and how often they utilized particular skills was found for non-traditional students. This led to the conclusion that, "Programs which allow students to perceive themselves as having valuable skills and competencies may well be enhancing to self-esteem and may encourage students to set
aspirations that better reflect their abilities and maximize their motivation to remain in college" (Prager, 1983, p. 147). Learning assistance or tutoring programs can help students to recognize and improve existing as well as develop new study skills which may improve their self-esteem.

Non-traditional Student Programs

Colleges and universities are providing a number of different programs designed to address the needs of non-traditional students. The Second Chance Program at the University of Lowell in Massachusetts includes individual interviews with the coordinator of the program for each non-traditional student, a special orientation program, an Adult Learner Drop-in Center with peer counselors available, special preregistration procedures, and access to all university counseling support services (Burke, 1987).

The student orientation program at St. Mary's University in Texas includes a general orientation and seminar series for transfer and non-traditional students. Students are introduced to university staff members at the orientation. The seminar series includes topics such as time management, assertiveness training, study skills, stress management, and university life (Maisey et al., 1986).

Support groups. The support group is one specific program which many post-secondary institutions provide for the benefit of non-traditional students. For example, Queensborough Community College's counseling center has established a support group for non-
traditional women nursing students in which the participants find it helpful to discuss common problems (Papier, 1980).

The University of Washington's Department of Psychology has developed a program called Transfer and Returning Student Interest Group (TRIG). This program is designed for non-traditional students which they define as students who have recently transferred from another college or university or who are returning to the university after an absence of two years or more. An integral component of this program is a weekly group meeting which, in many ways, functions as a support group. The group meetings provide the students with the opportunity to form a social community and to discuss problems they may be having adjusting to the college experience (Crampton, 1993).

A program entitled Women Involved in New Goals (WING) was created at Queens College of the City University of New York. This program for returning adult women students had, as an important component, weekly meetings at which women were provided the opportunity to become friends, support each other, discuss problems, and obtain information specific to their individual needs (Brandenburg, 1974). These weekly meetings served as a support group for the returning adult women students.

Learning assistance programs. Another type of program which is quite commonly provided for non-traditional students by institutions of higher education is the learning assistance program which often includes tutoring. Another important facet of learning assistance is
helping students to improve study skills such as notetaking, time management, test taking—including coping with test anxiety, study reading, and memory.

Two departments at Eastern Illinois University, Educational Psychology and Guidance and the Counseling Center, collaborated to produce a series of luncheon workshops to respond to requests for assistance from non-traditional students. Several of these workshops presented topics commonly addressed by learning assistance programs such as time management, how to read textbooks more effectively, and test anxiety (Rawlins and Lenihan, 1982).

Duke University designed specific courses as tutorial groups for non-traditional women students which were led by qualified undergraduate students. The content of these courses included both study skills and returning adult student concerns. It was reported that the courses were beneficial to both the non-traditional women students and the undergraduate tutors (Buckey, Freeark, and O'Barr, 1976).

Another example of a learning assistance program for non-traditional students is the Tutorial and Referral Services which is a division of Student Affairs at the University of Cincinnati. This program provides assistance with study skills, course-specific tutoring, both academic and personal counseling, and individual help with improving self-esteem. This program is available to all students but is heavily utilized by non-traditional students (Koehler, 1983).
Evaluations of Program Effectiveness

Many post-secondary institutions conduct evaluations, both informal and formal, of their support group, learning assistance and tutoring programs. Some of these programs target non-traditional students while others do not target a specific student population.

The University of Washington's TRIG program for transfer and returning students, whose weekly meetings function as a support group, asked students and faculty who participated in the program to evaluate it. Both student and faculty participants positively evaluated the program. One instructor said of the program, "I think the TRIG program gave most of these students a positive entry into university life" (Crampton, 1993, p. 139).

The luncheon workshop series for non-traditional students at Eastern Illinois University has benefited from informal feedback and evaluation of the program. "Feedback from the participants has been quite positive and appreciative, and they report having developed skills and ideas immediately usable in their lives" (Rawlins and Lenihan, 1982, p. 536).

Koehler (1983) conducted a formal study of the Tutorial and Referral Services at the University of Cincinnati. The study provided data on the effects of tutoring on the retention of students. Among the results reported was the fact that "tutoring made a substantial difference in the retention of students over 30 years of age" (Koehler, 1983, p. 12). In addition, according to quarterly evaluations, the students themselves believed that tutoring was responsible for their remaining in school (Koehler, 1983).
Brandwein and DiVittis (1985) postulate that their formal, quantitative study of the peer tutoring course at Baruch College of the City University of New York measured the effectiveness of the peer tutoring program by measuring the effectiveness of the peer tutors who had received training. They concluded that the tutors who completed the training course, the experimental group, chose more appropriate responses than tutors who had not completed the training course, the control group, on a multiple choice instrument which simulated tutoring situations.

A study conducted by Irwin (1980) at California State College, San Bernardino, measured differences in Grade Point Average (GPA) and affective adjustment in students who received peer tutoring in a statistics course. The students were divided into three groups according to their GPA at the time the study commenced: low, medium, and high GPA. Half of the students in each of these three groups were randomly assigned to the experimental group which received tutoring with the other half comprising the control group.

The students who received tutoring in all three GPA groups, low, medium, and high, significantly improved their GPA's. The students who received tutoring in all three groups also showed a significant decrease in scores on an instrument designed to measure affective adjustment which demonstrated that these students improved their affective adjustment as well.

Hawkins (1978) reports that the peer tutoring program at the Student Learning Center at the University of California has conducted student user surveys in which the students who have received
tutoring evaluate the tutors and the program. In these surveys, the students consistently rate the tutors and the program good to excellent. Hawkins also utilized tutors in a remedial writing class and reported that the students' grades in the class were better than the grades of students in previous remedial writing classes in which the students were not tutored.

Summary

The non-traditional student population in post-secondary institutions is increasing, and there is a need for programs to serve these students. Many non-traditional programs do already exist including support groups and learning assistance programs, which often include tutoring components. A number of colleges and universities evaluate these programs, both informally and formally. Many of these evaluations suggest that the programs benefit students in a number of ways including improved academic performance and affective adjustment and increased motivation to remain in school.
CHAPTER 3
METODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assist Paradise Valley Community College in collecting information regarding the effectiveness of two of their programs for non-traditional students: the support group which is called Adults Who Are Returning to Education (AWARE), and the Learning Assistance Center's tutoring program. The information collected was made available to college personnel to assist them to make decisions regarding continuation or improvement of these programs. The college was in the process of evaluating its effectiveness as an institution, and this study made a contribution towards that effort.

Identification of Research Methodology

A descriptive research methodology was utilized in this study. Participants in two non-traditional student programs, the AWARE support group for non-traditional students and the Learning Assistance Center's tutoring program, were surveyed to collect their perceptions of the effectiveness of these programs.

The descriptive design itself provided many advantages to this researcher. Accurate descriptive data were collected without the intensity and quantity of work that would have been involved in an
experimental design. In addition, the study was conducted in a real life situation, not an artificial, experimental situation. This allowed this researcher to collect and analyze non-traditional students' perceptions of existing programs in which they freely participated. Unexpected insights and discoveries were also made which is another advantage of the descriptive method (Merriam and Simpson, 1984).

Description of Research Methodology

The descriptive research method chosen was the survey. The survey took the form of two questionnaires; the participants responded to written lists of statements, one for each program. The purpose of the questionnaires was to elicit program participant perceptions of the effectiveness of each program.

The data collected from the questionnaires were categorized according to which program was surveyed, the tutoring program or the AWARE support group. Then, the data were categorized by statement. The responses from each statement were statistically analyzed to determine the frequency and percentages and the central tendencies of the responses of the group of participants from each of the two programs. Conclusions were then drawn regarding the participants' perceptions of the programs from the analysis of the data.

Sample and Population

The population of interest of the study was non-traditional students, age 25 and over, who were attending Paradise Valley
Community College and had participated and/or were participating in one or both of the two programs selected for study, the AWARE support group and the tutoring program. The sample of the population studied was seventeen non-traditional students who had participated and/or were participating in the AWARE support group and 68 non-traditional students who had participated and/or were participating in the tutoring program at the time the study was done. The first non-traditional students identified who had participated and/or were participating in each of the two selected programs constituted the sample.

**Instrumentation**

Two researcher designed questionnaires were utilized to collect non-traditional student perceptions of the effectiveness of the two selected programs. Each questionnaire consisted of ten statements concerning the students' perceptions of the program and three student demographic information items. The questionnaires did not ask for participant names as this researcher expected to receive more honest answers from anonymous questionnaires. One questionnaire was used to measure the students' perceptions of the AWARE support group, and one was utilized to assess student perceptions of the tutoring program. There are several statements common to both questionnaires as the goals of both programs are very similar; however, there are statements on each questionnaire which are unique to that questionnaire and apply only to that specific program.
The statements were formulated with information from the literature review and with input from the chairperson of Paradise Valley Community College's Counseling and Consultation Center which coordinates the AWARE support group, the counselor who facilitates the group, and the director of the college's Learning Assistance Center which operates the tutoring program. The input from these three experts gave the instrument a measure of face validity. All three experts gave input on both questionnaires. There was no formal measure of reliability conducted on the questionnaire; however, feedback from these three experts and from Ottawa University faculty provided an estimation of reliability.

Issues regarding validity and reliability considered by this researcher, the three experts, and the Ottawa University faculty, included: the presence of leading statements, the presence of psychologically threatening statements, researcher bias, item construction and organization, importance of the statements, relatedness of the statements to the goals of the programs being studied, and the ability to interpret data from different statements.

The questionnaires were constructed in a five point Likert Scale format with responses ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree so that a range of student perceptions could be collected and so that the data could be easily compiled and analyzed.

Data Collection and Other Procedures

The data was collected in January and February of 1995, the first part of the Spring semester, at Paradise Valley Community College.
The questionnaires were mailed with a cover letter (see appendixes A and B) and a return envelope to each identified participant in each of the two programs. The return envelopes were coded so that this researcher could determine which participants had not responded and follow up to attempt to achieve maximum participant response. The coding of the envelopes allowed the participants' responses to remain anonymous.

23 prospective participants for the study of the AWARE support group were identified by the coordinator of the group, one of the college counselors, and questionnaires were then mailed to each. Six questionnaires were returned from the mailing. This researcher attended an AWARE group meeting in January of 1995 and asked those present who had not already completed the survey to complete it at that time; eight questionnaires were distributed, five of which were completed at that time; three were returned to this researcher at a later date. Prospective participants who had not responded were contacted and asked to complete the questionnaire by telephone. Three participants completed the questionnaire by telephone which brought the total number of questionnaires completed for the study of the AWARE support group to seventeen.

170 prospective participants for the study of the tutoring program were identified from computer generated reports of tutoring usage provided by the Learning Assistance Center staff. Questionnaires were mailed to each. 68 of these tutoring program questionnaires were returned from the mailing, and this researcher deemed that to be an acceptable number of participants for the study.
CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study in both textual and tabular form. The following types of descriptive statistical data are used to present the findings: frequency of response, percentage of total responses for each frequency, and measures of central tendency--mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and the range. The first part of this chapter presents the results of the AWARE questionnaire while the second part presents the results of the tutoring questionnaire.

The research question to be answered was as follows: What are the perceptions of non-traditional students who have participated in selected Paradise Valley Community College non-traditional student programs regarding the effectiveness of these programs? The programs selected for study were the AWARE support group and tutoring from the Learning Assistance Center. Questionnaires were distributed to participants in both programs. Seventeen questionnaires were returned for the AWARE program, and 68 were returned for the tutoring program.
AWARE Questionnaire Results

The AWARE support group questionnaire consisted of ten statements and utilized a five-point Likert Scale with the following response choices: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree. Table 1 shows the frequency of response to each of these five choices and the percentage of the seventeen total responses for each frequency on each of the ten statements.

As can be seen in Table 1, Agree was the most frequent response for eight of the ten statements, with the exceptions of statement eight, "I have improved my grades" the most frequent response being U--Undecided, and statement ten, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise" which had a most frequent response of D--Disagree.

For the eight statements, statements one through seven and nine, for which the most frequent response was Agree, the majority of the responses fell in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree. For these eight statements, the percentage of responses falling in these two categories ranged from 58.83% for statement three, "I have gained more control over my life" to 88.23% for both statement four, "I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life" and statement nine, "I am more aware of lifestyle options available to me (e.g., health, relationships, education, training, careers)."
### TABLE 1
FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF AWARE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

As a result of participating in the AWARE support group . . .

1. I have increased my self-awareness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.64</td>
<td>64.70</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I have increased my awareness of others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I have gained more control over my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>41.18</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>64.70</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I have increased my self-confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 1, continued

6. I have improved my self-esteem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>70.59</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I have become a more successful student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>64.70</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I have improved my grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I am more aware of lifestyle options available to me (e.g., health, relationships, education, training, careers).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>52.94</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>17.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The comparison of central tendencies of the responses to the AWARE questionnaire in Table 2 both support and add further insight to the analysis of the results based on the response frequency and percentages in Table 1. The five possible responses to each of the ten statements on the questionnaire, SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, were given the following values by this researcher for the purpose of measuring central tendency: SA=5, A=4, U=3, D=2, and SD=1.

For statements one through seven and nine, for which the majority of the responses fell in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree, both the median and mode were 4. For statement eight, "I have improved my grades" the median and mode were both 3, and for statement ten, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise" the median and mode were both 2.

The mean for statements one through seven and nine ranged from 3.52 for statement seven, "I have become a more successful student" to 4.11 for statement nine, "I am more aware of lifestyle options available to me (e.g., health, relationships, education, training, careers)." The mean for statement eight, "I have improved my grades" was 3.29 while for statement ten, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise" the mean was 2.88.

The frequency and percentages illustrated in Table 1 and the central tendencies compared in Table 2 present similar pictures of the results of the study. For statements one through seven and nine: the most common response was Agree as shown by both the frequencies and the mode (4 for all eight statements), and the
TABLE 2
AWARE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE CENTRAL TENDENCIES COMPARISON

As a result of participating in the AWARE support group . . .

1. I have increased my self-awareness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I have increased my awareness of others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I have gained more control over my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I have increased my self-confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I have improved my self-esteem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2, continued

7. I have become a more successful student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I have improved my grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I am more aware of lifestyle options available to me (e.g., health, relationships, education, training, careers).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the responses fell in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree with the highest percentage being 88.23% for both statement four, "I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life" and statement nine, "I am more aware of lifestyle options available to me (e.g., health, relationships, education, training, careers)." Statements four and nine also had the highest means, 4.00 and 4.11 respectively.

Five other statements also had high combined percentages of responses in the two categories Agree and Strongly Agree. For both
statement one, "I have increased my self-awareness," and statement two, "I have increased my awareness of others," the combined percentage was 82.35%. For both statement five, "I have increased my self-confidence," and statement six, "I have improved my self-esteem," the combined percentage was 76.47%. The combined percentage for statement seven, "I have become a more successful student" was 70.58%.

The lowest scores were found on statements eight and ten. For statement eight, "I have improved my grades" the most frequent response was Undecided, the median and mode were both 3, and the mean was 3.29. For statement ten, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise" the most frequent response was Disagree, the median and mode were both 2, and the mean was 2.88.

The characteristics of the sample of the AWARE group were as follows: 70.79% fell in the 41-53 age group; 11.76% were in the 31-40 age range, and 11.76% were in the 25-30 age group. In the 54-64 age range were 5.88%. 100% of the sample were female. 94.12% were White, Non-Hispanic, and 5.88% were Hispanic.

**Tutoring Questionnaire Results**

The tutoring questionnaire consisted of ten statements and utilized a five-point Likert Scale with the following response choices: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree. Table 3 shows the frequency of response to each of these five choices and the percentage of the 68 total responses for each frequency on each of the ten statements.
As illustrated by Table 3, the most frequently chosen response was A--Agree, chosen most frequently for six of the ten statements, followed closely by SA--Strongly Agree which was chosen most often for the remaining four statements. The percentages of participants who responded Strongly Agree to these four statements are, in descending order, 47.06% for statement six, "I have improved my grades," 42.65% for statement five, "I have become a more successful student," 36.76% for statement nine, "I completed a particular course(s) which I would have dropped otherwise," and 25% for statement eight, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise."

For nine of the ten statements, the majority of the responses fell in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree. For these nine statements, the percentage of responses falling in these two categories ranged from 57.34% for statement nine, "I completed a particular course(s) which I would have dropped otherwise" to 82.36% for statement five, "I have become a more successful student." Three other statements had very high percentages of responses falling in the Agree and Strongly Agree categories: statement two, "I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life," statement six, "I have improved my grades," and statement ten, "I am more aware of my own learning style," all had a combined percentage of Agree and Strongly Agree responses of 79.41%.
**TABLE 3**
**FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

As a result of the tutoring I received . . .

1. I have become a more independent learner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>22.06</td>
<td>57.35</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I have increased my self-confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>26.47</td>
<td>45.59</td>
<td>17.65</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I have improved my self-esteem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>47.06</td>
<td>16.18</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3, continued

5. I have become a more successful student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td>42.65</td>
<td>39.71</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I have improved my grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>aPercentage</strong></td>
<td>47.06</td>
<td>32.35</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I am more aware of study options available to me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>aPercentage</strong></td>
<td>19.12</td>
<td>47.06</td>
<td>22.06</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bPercentage</strong></td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>19.12</td>
<td>17.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I completed a particular course(s) which I would have dropped otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bPercentage</strong></td>
<td>36.76</td>
<td>20.58</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>20.58</td>
<td>10.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3, continued

10. I am more aware of my own learning style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bPercentage</td>
<td>20.59</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a1.47\%\) did not respond to statements 6 & 7. \(^b2.94\%\) did not respond to statements 8, 9, and 10.

Statement three, "I have increased my self-confidence" and statement four, "I have improved by self-esteem" also had high combined percentages of responses falling in the Agree and Strongly Agree categories and high mean scores as well. The only statement for which the majority of responses did not fall in the two categories Agree and Strongly Agree was statement eight, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise." For statement eight, 48.53\% of the responses fell in these two categories while 48.53\% of the responses fell in the other three categories, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. 2.94\% did not respond to statement eight.

To further analyze the results of the tutoring questionnaire, the central tendencies of the responses may be examined (see Table 4). The five possible responses to each of the ten statements on the questionnaire, SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, were given the following values by
TABLE 4
TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE CENTRAL TENDENCIES COMPARISON

As a result of the tutoring I received . . .

1. I have become a more independent learner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I have increased my self-confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I have improved my self-esteem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I have become a more successful student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. I have improved my grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4, continued

7. I am more aware of study options available to me (e.g., strategies for notetaking, test taking, time management, reading textbooks, improving memory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I completed a particular course(s) which I would have dropped otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. I am more aware of my own learning style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

this researcher so that central tendencies could be measured: SA=5, A=4, U=3, D=2, and SD=1.

The most common response was Agree as shown by the frequencies and the mode which was 4 for six of the ten statements. For nine of the ten statements on the questionnaire, the majority of the responses fell in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree. Three of the statements with the highest percentages of responses falling in the these two categories also had the three highest means: statement six, "I have improved my grades," with a mean of 4.13,
statement five, "I have become a more successful student," with a mean of 4.11, and statement ten, "I am more aware of my own learning style," with a mean of 3.87.

The only statement for which less than 50% of the responses fell in the two categories Agree and Strongly Agree, statement eight, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise," also had the lowest mean, 3.19, and median, 3. However, it had a mode of 5.

The characteristics of the sample of the tutoring program participants were as follows: 55.88% fell in the 31-40 age group; 17.65% were in the 25-30 age range, and 17.65% were in the 41-53 age group. In the 54-64 age range were 4.41% while 1.47% fell in the 65+ age group; 2.94% did not respond to age group question. 79.41% of the sample were female; 19.12% were male, and 1.47% did not respond to the gender question. 85.29% were White, Non-Hispanic; 5.88% were Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4.41% were Hispanic. American Indians or Alaskan Natives accounted for 1.47%, and 1.47% chose Other for ethnicity; 1.47% did not respond to the ethnicity question.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to assist Paradise Valley Community College in collecting information regarding the effectiveness of two of its programs for non-traditional students so that decisions could be made regarding continuation or improvement of the programs. The programs selected for study were the Adults Who Are Returning to Education (AWARE) support group and tutoring from the Learning Assistance Center.

A review of the literature revealed that non-traditional students, age 25 and over, encounter many obstacles to success in college and have need of a variety of programs and services. Two types of programs that are often provided are support groups and learning assistance programs which often include tutoring. There are many support groups and learning assistance programs in operation at colleges and universities which seek to meet the needs of non-traditional students.

A number of colleges and universities conduct both formal and informal evaluations of these programs. Many of these evaluations demonstrate that the programs benefit students in a variety of ways including improved academic performance and affective adjustment as well as increased motivation to remain in school.
A descriptive research methodology with a survey format was utilized in this study. The sample of the population studied was seventeen non-traditional students who had participated and/or were participating in the AWARE support group and 68 non-traditional students who had participated and/or were participating in the tutoring program at the time the study was done.

Two researcher designed questionnaires were used to collect the perceptions of the effectiveness of the two programs being studied. The questionnaires consisted of ten statements each with five response choices for each statement. The responses were: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

The results of the study of the AWARE program indicated that the most frequent response to eight of the ten statements on the questionnaire was Agree; in addition, for these eight statements, the majority of the responses fell in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree.

The eight statements were: "I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life," "I am more aware of lifestyle options available to me (e.g., health, relationships, education, training, careers)," "I have gained more control over my life," "I have increased my self-awareness," "I have increased my self-confidence," "I have increased my self-confidence," "I have improved my self-esteem," and "I have become a more successful student." The most frequent response to the statement, "I have improved my grades" was Undecided while the
most frequent response to the statement, "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise" was Disagree.

In the study of the tutoring program, the majority of the questionnaire responses fell in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree for nine of the ten statements. These nine statements were: "I completed a particular course(s) which I would have dropped otherwise," "I have become a more successful student," "I have become a more independent learner," "I am more aware of study options available to me (e.g., strategies for notetaking, test taking, time management, reading textbooks, improving memory)" "I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life," "I have improved my grades," "I am more aware of my own learning style," "I have increased my self-confidence" "I have improved my self-esteem." The only statement for which the majority of responses did not fall in the two categories of Agree and Strongly Agree was "I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise."

Conclusions

AWARE program. The results of the study of the AWARE support group suggest that non-traditional students who participate in a support group will perceive they have increased their self-awareness, their awareness of others, their self-confidence, and their self-esteem. They will also feel that they have gained more control over their lives, learned something such as a skill, strategy, or insight that has practical application for their lives, become more successful
students, and become more aware of lifestyle options available to them such as health, relationships, education, training, or careers.

Participating in a support group also seems to help many non-traditional students to improve their grades. 41.18% of the participants in the study of the AWARE support group reported that participation in the group helped them to improve their grades. 35.29% were undecided as to whether participation in the group helped them to improve their grades, and 23.53% reported that it did not help them to improve their grades.

41.18% of the participants in the study of the AWARE support group reported that participation in the group helped them to stay in school when they would have dropped out otherwise, and it may be that many students who reported that participation in the support group did not help them to stay in school did not even consider dropping out of school. Since Paradise Valley Community College considers retention of students a crucial issue, any of its programs that demonstrate that they are having an impact on retaining students, as the AWARE program has done, have made a good case for their continuance.

The review of the literature included two programs whose evaluation results were comparable to the results of the study of the AWARE program. One program similar to the AWARE program was evaluated in the following manner, "I think the . . . program gave most of these students a positive entry into university life" (Crampton, 1993, p. 139). Although the AWARE program is not strictly an entry program, many students participate in the program
their first semester in college, and based on the results of this study, the AWARE program is also a positive experience of college life for most of the students who participate in it.

In another similar non-traditional student program, the students reported "... having developed skills and ideas immediately usable in their lives" (Rawlins and Lenihan, 1982, p. 536). Similarly, in the study of the AWARE program, 88.23% of the participants reported having learned something such as a skill, strategy, or insight that they will use or already have used in their lives.

**Tutoring program.** The results of the study of the tutoring program suggest that non-traditional students who receive tutoring will perceive they will improve their grades, complete particular courses which they would have otherwise dropped, become more independent learners, learn skills or strategies and gain insights that have practical application for their lives, become more successful students, become more aware of study options available to them such as strategies for notetaking or test taking, and become more aware of their learning styles. In addition, they will also perceive they will increase their self-confidence and improve their self-esteem.

The results of the study also suggest that many non-traditional students who receive tutoring will remain in school when they would have dropped out otherwise. Half of the participants in the study who responded to the statement regarding remaining in school reported that they stayed in school as a result of the tutoring they
received when they would have dropped out otherwise while 1.76% were undecided, and 36.76% reported that tutoring did not help them to remain in school. 2.94% did not respond to the statement. In addition, it may be that many of those who reported that tutoring did not help them to remain in school were simply reporting the fact that they did not consider dropping out of school.

This demonstrates the positive impact on student retention of the tutoring program at Paradise Valley Community College, and it is important to this institution that its programs demonstrate their effectiveness in addressing critical concerns such as student retention.

The review of the literature included several studies of tutoring programs. The results of these studies suggested that tutoring resulted in improved academic performance and affective adjustment as well as increased motivation to remain in school (Hawkins, 1978; Irwin, 1980; Koehler, 1983). The results of this study of the tutoring program at Paradise Valley Community College's Learning Assistance Center confirm the results of the studies reviewed in the literature.

Participants in this study of Paradise Valley Community College's tutoring program reported improved academic performance; 79.41% reported their grades improved as a result of receiving tutoring. They also reported improved affective adjustment as 72.06% reported an increase in both self-esteem and self-confidence. In addition, they reported motivation to remain in school. Half of the participants in the study who responded to the statement regarding
remaining in school reported that they stayed in school as a result of the tutoring they received when they would have dropped out otherwise compared to 36.76% of the participants who reported that tutoring did not help them to remain in school.

Recommendations

**AWARE program.** The following four recommendations for future research are based on the results of the study of the AWARE support group. The first three recommendations all concern the sample. First, a future study could include a larger sample for more meaningful statistical analysis. Second, a study could include a more ethnically diverse sample as all but one of the participants in this study were White, and third, males could be included in a future study since all the participants in this study were female.

Another recommendation for future research is to include a questionnaire item(s) measuring students' perceptions of the effect of a support group on their decision to remain in school as was done in the questionnaire from this study. However, it is suggested that the item(s) be worded so that responses are received from only those students who are considering dropping out of school. For example, "If you have considered dropping out of school since you have been participating in the support group, did your participation in the group keep you from dropping out?" This would eliminate the ambiguity encountered in interpreting the results of this study when it became apparent that many of the students who reported that they did not stay in school as a result of participation in the support
group may, in fact, have stayed in school and never have considered dropping out.

**Tutoring program.** The following recommendations are based on the results of the study of the tutoring program and are designed to enable future researchers to exceed the scope of this study. First, a future study could include a sample of all students who receive tutoring instead of limiting the sample to non-traditional students, age 25 and over, as this study did. Second, the sample could be more ethnically diverse as the sample in this study was 85% White.

A third recommendation for future research is to analyze the demographic data gathered in this study to determine if there are any differences in questionnaire responses based on gender, ethnicity, or age group. In addition, future studies could collect and analyze other categories of demographic data including semester in college, whether or not the participants are first generation college students, and perceptions of previous academic success in college or high school.

Finally, as suggested previously for future research based on the study of the AWARE program, it is recommended that future researchers of tutoring programs include a questionnaire item(s) measuring students' perceptions of the effect of tutoring on their decision to remain in school as was done in the questionnaire from this study. However, it is suggested that the item(s) be worded so that only those students who are considering dropping out of school respond to the item(s).
REFERENCE LIST


APPENDIX A

AWARE SUPPORT GROUP COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE
December 22, 1994

David M. Gerkin
Learning Assistance Center
Paradise Valley Community College

Dear student or former student,

This questionnaire is designed to collect student perceptions of the Paradise Valley Community College AWARE support group from those who have participated in the group. The information will be used as part of a Master's research project and by college personnel to help them better serve students.

Please respond to the following brief, one-page questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope. The return envelopes have been coded to determine how many questionnaires have been returned; respondents will be anonymous.

If you have any questions or would like information regarding the results of the project, call me at 493-2671 after April 15, 1995; I will be on educational leave until then.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

David M. Gerkin
AWARE SUPPORT GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

From the scale below, please circle the letter that best represents how you feel about each of the statements below.
SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree U=Undecided D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

As a result of participating in the AWARE support group . . .

1. I have increased my self-awareness.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

2. I have increased my awareness of others.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

3. I have gained more control over my life.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

4. I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

5. I have increased my self-confidence.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

6. I have improved my self-esteem.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

(over)
7. I have become a more successful student.

SA A U D SD

8. I have improved my grades.

SA A U D SD

9. I am more aware of lifestyle options available to me (e.g., health, relationships, education, training, careers).

SA A U D SD

10. I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise.

SA A U D SD

Please check the appropriate box for each item below.

1. Age Group:  ☐ 25-30  ☐ 31-40  ☐ 41-53  ☐ 54-64  ☐ 65+

2. Gender:  ☐ Female  ☐ Male

3. Ethnicity:  ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native

☐ Asian or Pacific Islander

☐ Black, Non-Hispanic

☐ Hispanic

☐ White, Non-Hispanic

☐ Other
APPENDIX B

TUTORING COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE
December 22, 1994

David M. Gerkin
Learning Assistance Center
Paradise Valley Community College

Dear student or former student,

This questionnaire is designed to collect student perceptions of tutoring in the Learning Assistance Center at Paradise Valley Community College from those who have received tutoring. The information will be used as part of a Master's research project and by college personnel to help them better serve students.

Please respond to the following brief, one-page questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope. The return envelopes have been coded to determine how many questionnaires have been returned; respondents will be anonymous.

If you have any questions or would like information regarding the results of the project, call me at 493-2671 after April 15, 1995; I will be on educational leave until then.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

David M. Gerkin
TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

From the scale below, please circle the letter that best represents how you feel about each of the statements below.
SA=Strongly Agree  A=Agree  U=Undecided  D=Disagree  SD=Strongly Disagree

As a result of the tutoring I received . . .

1. I have become a more independent learner.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

2. I have learned something (a skill, strategy, insight, etc.) that I will use or already have used in my life.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

3. I have increased my self-confidence.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

4. I have improved my self-esteem.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

5. I have become a more successful student.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

6. I have improved my grades.

   SA  A  U  D  SD

(over)
7. I am more aware of study options available to me (e.g., strategies for notetaking, test taking, time management, reading textbooks, improving memory).

SA   A   U   D   SD

8. I have stayed in school when I would have dropped otherwise.

SA   A   U   D   SD

9. I completed a particular course(s) which I would have dropped otherwise.

SA   A   U   D   SD

10. I am more aware of my own learning style.

SA   A   U   D   SD

Please check the appropriate box for each item below.

1. Age Group: □ 25-30 □ 31-40 □ 41-53 □ 54-64 □ 65+

2. Gender: □ Female □ Male

3. Ethnicity: □ American Indian or Alaskan Native
□ Asian or Pacific Islander
□ Black, Non-Hispanic
□ Hispanic
□ White, Non-Hispanic
□ Other
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David M. Gerkin was born in Fitchburg Massachusetts on November 15, 1956 and has resided in Phoenix, Arizona since 1963. He received his elementary education in Fitchburg and Phoenix and graduated from Moon Valley High School in 1974. He received an Associate of Arts degree in 1990 from Scottsdale Community College and an Associate of General Studies degree with high honors from Paradise Valley Community College in 1991. He began attending Ottawa University in the fall of 1992 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Adult Education in 1994. Immediately upon graduation he began the Graduate Program at Ottawa. He received the Professional Staff Employee of the Year Award in 1993 from Paradise Valley Community College where he is employed as a Learning Technician in the Learning Assistance Center.