7-2-2011

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE OF OLDER ADULT LEARNERS AS THEY DISCUSS BEGINNING A BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAM

Pamela Verstynen

Pamela Verstynen
Candidate

Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology
Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Patricia Boverie, Chairperson

William J. Bramble

Burt Hall

Kyle Farris Wilson

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE OF OLDER ADULT LEARNERS AS THEY DISCUSS BEGINNING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM

BY

PAMELA VERSTYNEN

B.A., Political Science, Nason College, Maine, 1965
M.A., Secondary Education, The University of New Mexico, 1976

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May, 2011

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my mother (now deceased), Alveta Therrien Doiron and to my husband, Dennis Verstynen, who "is the very model of a PhD supporter/spouse." Two greater cheerleaders could never be found. And to my sons, Timothy and Thomas, whose own academic careers served as inspiration to me.

Acknowledgements

This should be the easiest section to write, but immediately words begin to fail me. There are so many people to whom I owe so much for their help in getting me here. After many years away, Dr. Rose Mitchell and her Pedagogy class rekindled the sense of fun and excitement of being in a classroom again. Dr. Patricia Boverie whose Adult Learner class propelled me into the Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology program and meeting some of the most interesting people, students and faculty, and the OLIT faculty whose classes introduced me to so many other areas of study. Every semester I wanted to change the focus of my studies. Thank you, Dr. Patricia Farrell, Dr. Mark Salsbury, Dr. Lani Gunawardena, and Dr. Deborah LaPointe, now deceased. Each instructor opened my eyes to whole new worlds of interest, and I will be grateful to them forever. And thank you, Dr. Ann Nihlen, who introduced me to qualitative analysis, my favorite kind of research.

Thank you to those who helped me through my investigation of linguistics. Dr. Holbrook Mahn who introduced me to Vygotsky and convinced me that I wanted to know more about language. Dr. Vera John-Steiner who opened so many doors to language, thought and language, and creativity. Dr. Jill Morford and Dr. Melissa Axelrod who each encouraged and helped me develop foundational knowledge of linguistics.

And then there are the four faculty members who sat on my committee. Dr. Patricia Boverie who has served as my mentor, friend and chair. I began my first OLIT class in her class and I finished my program with her. And in-between she was there when I needed her. Dr. Bruce Noll whose Science Technology and Society class brought together the emerging sciences that appear to be blending man to his technology. Being allowed to explore those areas was such a gift. Dr. Bill Bramble whose Simulations class nearly had me changing my

area of focus once again. And his seminar classes that, once again, allowed us to explore our own areas of interest in evaluation. And Dr. Phyllis P. Wilcox who helped me understand cognitively structured metaphors and has been encouraging me ever since. These committee members made themselves available to me whenever I needed their advice or just someone to talk with. I am so proud to be able to call each of them friends at this time.

Another person who cannot go without being mentioned is Dr. Breda Bova. I first met Dr. Bova when she first arrived at the University of New Mexico. She began her doctorate as I began a master's program. She has acted as a role model for me all these many years. I wanted to feel the sense of achievement I knew she felt when she graduated.

And my many classmates and friends in the OLIT program --- a better source of friendship, support, and inspiration is not to be found, anywhere.

And then there is my family. When, in my mid-fifties, I announced that I really wanted to work on a doctorate, my husband, Dennis, my sons, Timothy and Thomas, my mother and my brothers and sister, everyone said, "Do it." In other words, CONTROL OVER ACTION IS CONTROL OVER MOTION --- that's a cognitively structured metaphor.

Thank you, all.

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE OF OLDER ADULT LEARNERS AS THEY DISCUSS BEGINNING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM

BY

PAMELA VERSTYNEN

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May, 2011

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE OF OLDER ADULT LEARNERS AS THEY DISCUSS BEGINNING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM

BY

Pamela Verstynen

B.A., Political Science, Nason College, Maine, 1965
M.A., Secondary Education, The University of New Mexico, 1976
Ph.D., Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology,
The University of New Mexico, 2011

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the metaphors and cognitively structured metaphors older adult students of the Baby Boomer generation use when discussing their experiences of beginning a bachelor's program. Research regarding the cognitive abilities of older adult students was explored. A phenomenological approach was used employing open-ended questions during a single interview designed to elicit information about four areas of interest: support systems, motivation, expectations and a comparison of this experience to another life experience. The analysis of students' responses identified figurative metaphors and metonymy. Qualitative analysis was applied to the data, followed by identifying cognitive metaphors and synecdoche. Themes and patterns to the responses to the four areas of interest were identified. Five major themes also emerged: challenges, transformation, self-efficacy, resilience and desire. The study demonstrates the power added to a qualitative study when including the analysis of cognitively structured metaphors. The findings have

implication to colleges and universities that are committed to helping older adult students be successful.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter I: Introduction

Background of the Problem

This chapter serves as an introduction to an exploratory study of what older (50+ in age) adults have to say regarding their experiences as they began taking classes in higher education. A cognitive linguistics qualitative approach was used in addition to the coding and pattern identification associated with qualitative research to investigate how students' use of metaphors, as both figurative language and cognitive metaphors, can inform faculty and administration of the needs of what is popularly known as the Baby Boomer cohort.

Older adults' increasing engagement in higher education has been noted for nearly two decades. Researchers (Imel, 1997; Hamil-Luker and Uhlenberg, 2002; Randstad, 2008; University of Continuing Education Association, 2002) noted that in the 1990s the trend took a steep upswing as Baby Boomers, roughly 32 million born between 1946 and 1960, began to turn fifty. "War Babies" or "Matures," born before 1945, began flooding higher education with approximately 3.5 million students in 1960 (Master Planner, 1960). Though they have been returning to higher education for many years, their numbers, compared to Boomers, are far fewer as the War Babies constitute a smaller segment of the population. A search of the literature found little comprehensive data available regarding either group's participation in higher education (American Council of Education, 2007). The U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Statistics 2007, reports roughly 2% of those enrolled in degree-granting programs were 55 to 65+ years of age. Kim, Collins-Hagedorn, Williamson and Chapman (2004) typify reports regarding adult education and the reporting of participants' ages by lumping those over the age of 30 in one demographic and labeling them "non-traditional students." Data are difficult to gather for the 55-65 demographic, as

typically, even the U.S. Department of Education's data tends to top off age limits at 29+ or 35+. However, Creighton and Hudson (2002) noted during the 1990s those over the age of 45 increased their participation in adult education, but at rates lower than other age groups. They also noted that of those over the age of 45, both genders continued to increase participation, with women at a greater rate than men. They also noted an increase in the numbers of those students participating in adult education no matter their prior educational achievement. Those with more prior education increased participation in adult education to a greater degree than those with less prior education.

At the University of New Mexico, those students between the ages of 50 and 64, the Baby Boomers, have constituted 3% of the total enrollment from the fall of 2005 to fall 2009 (UNM Fact Book, p. 25). Hagedorn (2005) determined the retention rate of the oldest of the "non-traditional" students was more than 10% greater for the younger of that cohort, and 2% higher than those between the two age groups. The University of New Mexico's Office of Institutional Research (Freshman Cohort Tracking Report, December 2010) does not track the retention rates of non-traditional students.

Statement of the Problem

Students, aged 50 to 64, began sitting shoulder to shoulder with the greatest influx of traditional students ever seen in this country (Framing New Terrain, 2007) starting in 2010. In 1960, enrollment in U.S. colleges was 3.6 million; in 2003 (the most currently available data) it was 16.9 million. Those following the Y Generation, born after 1981 (Randstad, 2008), represent the largest population bubble in the history of the nation. Student enrollment is expected to increase by one million every three years from 2008 to 2015, with a projected enrollment of 20 million by 2015 (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2005, Table 3).

An increase is projected in the number of women enrolling, in full-time enrollment, and an increase in enrollment in private institutions (Planty, Hussar, Snyder, Kena, KewalRamani, Kemp & Bianco, 2009). The enrollment projections of these younger students, the concern over where they will be housed, where the classrooms will be found, and the other requirements to fund such a surge, would seem to suggest that Boomers, all students over the age of 50, are going to be seen as older, wiser, more able to find their own way, and will not require the same type of support needed by younger students. Hagedorn (2005) goes further, suggesting the older adult student is often viewed as "out of sequence" (p. 22) for having delayed their entry into higher education, therefore a bit of an extra bother for being in school again. Others (Life long learning, 2004) have referred to the Boomers as a "demographic time bomb." However they are labeled, the peak of these older students is yet to come, no matter how they are viewed by faculty, staff or college administrators, and their needs and concerns are far different from the needs of students younger than fifty.

Research already suggests a number of factors may keep the 50+ student from attempting to enter higher education or, once started, dropping out. Factors include limited previous experience with higher education; lack of time due to greater responsibilities to family than traditional younger students have; and their minority status, which may have impacted educational attainment. Older adults tend to live away from urban settings where most higher education institutions are located, and ageism, both internal ("I'm one of those old folks") and external ("I don't feel welcomed by the younger people in the classroom") also affect whether older students decide to continue with higher education. Additionally, a lack of confidence in various skills ("I only use the computer for email and to read the New York Times!") and not being aware of support services that already exist also affect an older

person's decision-making about beginning a program in higher education (Framing New Terrain, 2007; Hagedorn, 2005). Certainly, this group of students should expect the same degree of support as their younger classmates receive. They have the cognitive skills to succeed providing that their health remains good, and researchers report that they delve more deeply into assigned topics than younger students (Salthouse, 1991; Salthouse & Craik, 2000; Park & Schwarz, 1999; Sutherland, 1997; and Schaie, 2005). Learners over the age of 50 who are continuing with higher education also tend to be intrinsically motivated to a greater degree than younger students (Kasworm, 1990). The 50+ student is, in many ways, exactly the type of self-motivated students most instructors want to see coming into their classes.

Additionally, this age group has supported publicly funded higher education to a greater degree than any other generation to date. Giving them the support they need now when they make the effort to continue with their education is the socially just thing to do. Becoming aware of what the 50+ students are saying about their experiences as they begin a program in higher education will assist universities and colleges as they offer the support for this cohort that is offered to the traditional student.

One Solution to the Problem

There are a variety of ways universities and colleges can help the 50+ students reach their goals. The primary consideration should be to understand their needs by listening to and noting the particular metaphors they use as they discuss each of their unique experiences. To paraphrase Boaz (1947), if we want to understand what people are thinking, we must base our research on what they say, not what we say they say. This requires more than asking survey questions. It requires the kind of deep inquiry this research proposes. It is worth noting that most efforts to analyze the use of metaphors have fallen under the umbrella of

psychology, typically looking at the language of patients in clinical psychology/ psychotherapy (Moser, 2000).

Analyzing the cognitive metaphors used by the older student is an additional method or tool for identifying what students over the age of 50 have to say. Looking at the figurative and cognitive metaphors that these students use fleshes out deeper meaning because, as noted by Moser (2000), metaphors represent our shared understanding and knowledge of culture and social behaviors. An added benefit to using a cognitive linguistic approach to identifying metaphors, as suggested by Gibbs (1994), is that the findings should reflect less of the researcher bias commonly attributed to qualitative research. Because so many cognitively structured metaphors have already been mapped, using this method minimizes researcher bias. For the rest of this paper those students between the ages of 50 and 64 will be referred to as the 50+ student. However, this research does not include those students beyond the age of sixty-four.

Metaphors

What are metaphors? Two types of metaphors will be discussed in this paper, figurative and cognitive. The Oxford American Dictionary (2009) defines metaphor as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable." Figurative metaphors are what English teachers teach. They compare one thing to another dissimilar thing by saying one *is* the other. Poet Mary Oliver says, "The *metaphor* is an implicit rather than explicit comparison…. The two things often seem very different, and the linkage often surprises and delights…." (p.102). The comparison feels strong as a result. Each line of the following poem contains a metaphor.

To see the world in a grain of sand

And a heaven in a wild flower,

Hold infinity in the palm of your hand

And eternity in an hour. --- William Blake (1757-1827)

The poem works for young students as well as for adults, the student new to poetry, and the experienced reader of poetry because each of us has experienced at least one of the comparisons Blake makes. What child hasn't looked at a grain of sand and imagined it to be another world? From there, holding a handful of sand easily becomes the universe, infinity. Once the listener or reader makes the connections to those feelings he can easily make the transition to the beauty of a wildflower being compared to heaven and understanding eternity in an hour.

Kennedy (1986) points out that similes typically refer to only one characteristic that two otherwise dissimilar things have in common (p. 85). Poet Mary Oliver (1994) says a "simile is an explicit, stated comparison" (p. 101). Connections between one object or person and another are made using "like" or "as." Or the connection is made using "than" as in, "He is slipperier than a greased pig." Note that the two things are compared in just one way, slipperiness. Were it, "He is a greased pig" (a metaphor), a number of different comparisons come to mind, many more than just being slippery. Contemporary poets Frances Mayes, Ted Kooser and others note that metaphors "are intensified by . . . direct link" (Mayes, 2001), and similes are less intense and thrown around "as if they meant nothing." They are "more relaxed and easy going. . . (Kooser, 2005, p. 125)."

Cognitive Metaphors

Following the conventions established by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), cognitive metaphors are indentified by the use of small capital letters, as in TIME or JOURNEY. In their seminal work, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) stated, "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature … human thought processes are largely metaphorical" (p. 3). Metaphorical concepts based on our very earliest bodily experiences shaped the way we constructed our understanding of how we interact with the world and it with us. Having felt warmth and nourishment, we begin to associate those feelings with security or love, developing a cognitive metaphor for what SECURITY or LOVE are. These cognitive metaphors may have given rise to the image of one's home being a simple, country cottage. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) said we call on cognitive metaphors when trying to understand abstract ideas such as life, the self, the mind, love, time and other abstract ideas. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) went so far as to state that we cannot even conceptualize time without referencing a metaphorical concept. The authors' "metaphorical concepts" refer to what are now called cognitive metaphors.

Grady (2007) said cognitive metaphors "… are elements of conceptual structure and reflect the way we experience the world" (p. 192). A topic such as love may be based on the cognitive metaphor of FORCE, as in, "The reader was struck by the power of her love" or "She turned the full power of her love on her new-born baby." This statement also sees love as the cognitive metaphor ENTITY WITHIN A PERSON. In "He was overflowing with love," or "Her heart was full of love," both the body and the heart also recognize the cognitive metaphor CONTAINER. In these examples, one thing is not being compared to another.

Rather, the elements of a force or an entity or a container are used to "map" or overlap onto another concept, love. Regarding the formation of the cognitive metaphor, Wilcox stated:

> [It] is a cognitive process of human understanding…. Thus, we come to understand cultural and linguistic abstractions by way of preconceptual structures that are meaningful in a physical way. These conceptual patterns are not individual innate conceptions; they are culturally influenced by the interaction of the people surrounding us. (2000, p. 35)

Handbooks and guides for conducting qualitative research published over the past 30 to 35 years indicate no recognition of the theory and findings made in cognitive linguistics during the same period regarding the effects of cognitive metaphors on thinking. Taylor and Bogdan (1998), Creswell (1998) and Patton (2002), make no reference to using the research that had examined cognitive metaphors for nearly two decades at the time their guidebooks on qualitative research were published. Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) most recent handbook for doing qualitative research limits discussion of metaphor to half a page (p. 519).

Using a cognitive linguistic approach has been used in a limited number of studies. Wilcox's (2002), *Metaphor in American Sign Language,* identified metaphor in American Sign Language (ASL) using a cognitive linguistics approach. This research further established ASL as a complete language. Studies by Cameron (2003) and Quinn (2005) demonstrated the difficulty that some linguists, who have come through the tradition of metaphor as figurative language, have had with the theory of cognitive metaphors. Cameron (2003) looked at the discourse of students and teacher in an elementary science class and identified a word such as "track," as in "you're on the right track" as being incongruent because track has other possible definitions than the one implied here. Looked at from a

cognitive linguistic perspective, having other possible definitions is not an issue, and the appropriateness of the word can be easily explained through the process of mapping from one domain to another, i.e., "track" represents the cognitive metaphors of REASONING IS FOLLOWING A PATH (Master Metaphor List, 1980). Quinn's (2005) work in examining the language and metaphors of married couples was well received by the linguistic community; however, suggestions in a review of her work, that she look at her data through a cognitive linguistics lens, drew a strong rebuke from her.

There continues to be discussion regarding the ubiquity of cognitive metaphors in language and thinking, but research is tilting in favor of Reddy (1979), Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), Turner (1987), and Kövecses' (2002) findings. As Steen (2000) noted that "…abstract thought is largely metaphorical, molded on the last of the pre-verbal—on locomotion, vision, spatial reasoning; on our hands' experience with bounded objects—is now extended to the current Anglo American analytic tradition" (p. 198).

Given the strength of the cognitive metaphor model for analyzing language use, it is evident that it must become at least part of the new research paradigm. However, there are few examples in literature to guide the researcher, and as noted earlier, most of those are limited to clinical psychological therapy (see Siegelman, 1990; Kopp,1995; Lyddon, Clay, & Sparks, 2001). What might this new approach look like when used in a qualitative analysis of what older students are saying about their experiences in higher education?

Examining the Metaphors of the 50+ Student

Researchers do not have any base-line data collected even to begin answering the proposed research questions in the next section. Reddy (1979), Lakoff (1987), Turner (1987), Kövecses (2002), and Gibbs (1999) have identified four possible universal metaphors: THE

CONTAINER/CONDUIT, UP IS MORE, ANGER IS HEAT and LIFE IS A JOURNEY. No studies have associated the use of particular cognitive metaphors with particular stages of life. However, with the past experiences of the older students, it is not unreasonable to assume they would use different metaphors from those used by their younger classmates. Might each study participant have such a unique prior history, social class, prior education experiences in the work place, that there would be no common metaphors to be found? Or could it be that, when discussing a particular goal, most would use the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor or some other shared metaphor? There was no way of anticipating what would be found; however, Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999), Turner (1997) and others would suggest that all the participants, coming from a shared Western European background, sharing a common first language, and sharing a common history of growing up in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s would share at least some of the same metaphors.

Research Questions

- What metaphors do undergraduate students (age 50+) use to describe their experiences as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate students (age 50+) use to describe their support systems (emotional, family, financial and institutional) as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate students (age 50+) use to describe their expectations as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate students (age 50+) use to describe their motivations as they begin a degree-granting program?

- How do undergraduate students (age 50+) compare beginning a degree-granting program to another life experience?

Study Overview

Participants for this study were 50 through 64 years of age at the time of the interviews and were enrolled as undergraduates in a degree-granting program at the University of New Mexico. Students were interviewed about their experiences starting a degree-granting program at this stage of their lives. The interviews were structured around open-ended questions regarding the support systems they had in place, expectations, and their motivations for enrolling. Additionally, they were asked to compare this experience to another life experience. Responses were digitally recorded and analyzed after the participants had the opportunity to review the written transcript. Analysis was based on the cognitive linguistic framework developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Turner (1987), and Kövecses (2002). Coding and analysis was based on discourse analysis strategies detailed by DuBois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming and Paolino (1993). Analysis and representation of data was based on the work of Coffey and Atkinson (1996).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify the support systems, expectations, and motivation of the student over the age of 50 who is beginning a degree-granting program at a college or university. The study was designed to encourage the participating students to explore and reflect on what this experience has been like. Capturing their responses and analyzing them in terms of both discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics have provided a wealth of information that might be of value to university

administrators who are working to support this particular age demographic as these students are beginning higher education in greater and greater numbers.

Personal Statement

My interest in the possibilities of the student over the age of 50 began when I realized I was one. As I began considering pursuing another degree, as opposed to further certification in secondary education, the first hints of doubt began to creep into my thinking. Could I really be a successful student when I was in my fifties? My initial approach to those doubts was to ignore them and keep taking classes. Early in my program of studies, I took a seminar in Adult Learning that gave me an opportunity to investigate what research has discovered about the older student. I was surprised to find that researchers had been more curious than I; they had designed research projects that demonstrated that older students are successful. And certain techniques for presenting new information actually can help us learn more quickly and more easily. I wanted to know more.

My interest in what 50+ students have to say about their experiences came from two different experiences. I met a woman during the College of Education's Annual Colloquium in 1997. We were strangers who began talking about how exciting some of the presentations were. She divulged that for her, taking classes was a form of respite from taking care of a very ill relative. Her classes gave her a chance to think and to talk with other adults. After leaving her I thought of my own very different situation. I felt that taking classes was like traveling to a wonderful place and being able to visit for a whole semester. It was a place where I was able to stop and explore everything this particular place had to offer, much like I had experienced in a study-abroad program as an undergraduate. How different were our ways of expressing shared experiences!

The second experience occurred during a brief conversation with my husband as we discussed older students who were just beginning to enter higher education. I commented about their returning to school after so many years. My husband noted that if that they thought they were returning to school, they were going to have a very difficult time of it because many changes have occurred in the classroom over the past 30 years. Those two memories remain very clear to me. I suddenly realized that metaphors shape the way we think.

Assumptions

As I approached this research project I made note of the following assumptions:

- Students (age 50+) will want to discuss or share what the experience of starting a degree-granting program has been like for them.
- Students (age 50+) will use many of the same metaphors when discussing their experiences because they are relating a shared experience.
- An analysis of discourse using cognitive linguistics to identify the metaphoric construction of the experience will provide a deep and rich understanding of the experiences of students over the age of fifty.

Summary

This chapter has looked at identifying who older students are and why they should be differentiated from their younger classmates. It has been demonstrated that university officials typically identify older students as part of one age range, usually 25 years and older, typically referred to as non-traditionals. The Baby Boomer generation should be studied as a separate group within the older student/ nontraditional student cohort because it is unreasonable to assume they have the same needs as the younger members of the

nontraditional, older student cohort. A brief discussion comparing figurative language metaphors and metaphors identified through cognitive linguistics followed. Empirical studies that have used a cognitive linguistic approach to analyzing metaphor are few, though some have been found and were noted.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This literature review focuses primarily on three areas of interest: the 50+ students and their potential for academic success; cognitive linguistics, its history of development, major conceptual underpinnings, and metaphors; and discourse analysis in terms of transcription format.

The Older Student

As noted in the first chapter, the trend toward older students beginning or continuing in higher education is not new. What is new is their growing numbers. This is not surprising considering those born immediately after World War II, the Baby Boomer generation, are just beginning to either retire or are reaching that stage in their careers in which their continued advancement may now be predicated on further education, either by achieving a degree, an advanced degree or some type of certification. More recently, there may be a growing number of those who are looking at changing career fields, even at this relatively late stage in a career lifespan. Those seeking a bachelors of arts degree will probably be found in this latter group or in the retirement group. Researchers have noted the trend began picking up speed in the 1990s (Imel (1997; Hamil-Luker and Uhlenberg, 2002; Randstad, 2008; Framing New Terrain, 2007).

The University of New Mexico's Office of the Registrar notes the residency, ethnicity, gender, ACT and SAT scores of beginning freshmen its fall 2009 Official Enrollment Report. The average age of the undergraduate level is reported to be 23.39 years of age. Considering the average age of the entering traditional student is roughly 18, and the traditional students make up a larger portion of the undergraduate student population, the

23.39 average age indicates a considerably large population of those in the non-traditional category.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2002) defines non-traditional student as

- Having delayed enrollment in higher education from high school.
- Attending part time.
- Financially independent from parents.
- Working full time.
- Being a single parent.
- Having dependents.
- Having no high school diploma or GED.

The NCES has found a majority of older students met two or more of these criteria (Choy, 2002).

Cognitive abilities of older students. From the 1980s into the first years of the 21st century, the sole definition of cognitive aging was wrapped into one construct: Cognitive aging is the slowing of the cognitive processes (Craik & Traub, 1982; Howe & Brainerd, 1988; Park, 1999a; Powell, 1994; Sharps, 2003). Early research suggested all cognitive processes slowed in parallel. In the late 1990s, it was recognized that vocabulary, one measure of cognitive aging, actually appears to remain stable. Processing speed, working memory, and free and cued recall all demonstrate a precipitous decline beginning roughly in the fifth decade of life (Park, 1999a). Neuro-imaging has demonstrated that attrition of neural loss, otherwise known as neural shrinkage, does not occur in all cases. What is established is that with aging there can be a reduction in cerebral metabolism affecting the

rate of oxygen used by the brain (Raz, 2005). All studies have noted the findings are based on sample populations that do not include dementia and Alzheimer's patients.

Cognitive losses and aging. Three aspects of cognitive aging that experience decline in the later years are working memory, involving free and cued recall; fluid intelligence; and the loss of neurons. Early research emphasized one mechanism of cognitive gain, the speed that information is processed. Watching a person struggle to read serves as an example of how speed of processing relates to cognition (Salthouse, 1996; Salthouse, Atkinson & Berish, 2003). If the text is too difficult, by the time the reader gets to the end of a sentence, the subject of the sentence is forgotten. Interest in processing speed remains due to two related concepts: the limited time mechanism, exemplified by the reading example, and the simultaneity mechanism that allows the synchronization of many separate tasks while working on a problem. It seems the faster the synchronization works, the better it is for the individual. Classroom teachers, auto mechanics, and waitresses must synchronize many smaller tasks while focusing on a primary task (Salthouse, 1996). A lack of speed can also interfere with complex learning. Front-end information can be lost before being stored in one's long-term memory when the learner's processing speed is too slow. Memory, recall, and reasoning do not have speed factors, but each can be affected by slow processing (Park, 1999a).

Hartley (2005) has looked at the same data and suggested another interpretation. He suggested that the slowing of cognitive processes may be due to differences in "engagement, practice or strategies" between young and older learners. The assumption of researchers of the 1970s, that there is a deterioration of basic brain structures, may have been flawed. Hartley has not argued that there is cognitive decline but suggested it may be due to other

causes such as: sensory acuity (vision and hearing) which may be sub-optimal for the tasks being measured; the measurement of speed may be affected by painful finger joints; cerebral blood flow, and hypertension may affect oxygenation of the brain. These and other examples all may affect the speed of one's response in a timed test and the assumptions regarding the cognitive abilities of older students.

Working memory is another facet of cognitive abilities. It has been suggested that its structure is made up of either three or five systems (Craik, 1999). Evidence for different systems of memory can be seen with the stories of people with long- and short-term memory loss. One of the earliest to recognize the limited number of elements to be held in working memory was George Miller (1956) who suggested that the working memory can hold seven elements, plus or minus two, "in one-dimensional judgments." With age, the working memory capacity becomes less (Powell, 1994; Park, 1999b; Salthouse, 1999; Verhaeghen & Basak, 2005).

Working memory also is associated with storage, retrieval, and transformation of information tasks. Free or self-initiated cued recall and spatial memory are other aspects of working memory that decline with age. These types of memory use a considerable amount of cognitive resources. It should not be a surprise then to realize that age differences between the young and the old are largest when the memory task is performed under a time restriction (Park, 1999a). Working memory is involved with other areas of behavior. The affect of *question* order is no more apparent for older adults than it is for younger adults; however, the *response* order, when presented orally, has a greater effect with older adults. It is more difficult for older adult to keep a number of possible responses available in the working memory (Park, 1999b).

Free and cued recall are both associated with working memory, and its effect on learning tasks. Free recall is the self-initiated recall in which there is no environmental support to aid the task. Remembering a child's birth date is a good example. Cued recall involves having a support such as having a grocery list with the ingredients for a salad and suddenly remembering a bottle of wine is needed as well. Both free and cued recall begin to level off at about age 50 and typically are maintained till about age eighty (Park, 1999b; Ward & Maylor, 2005).

A decline in fluid intelligence, focused concentration or inability to inhibit, and the ability to organize information are common among older adults. Salthouse (1999) referred to it as "process." These declines affect short-term memory and performance speed and begin as early as age twenty. Horn (1982) also noted that quickness is a trait that remains consistent throughout most of a person's life. Young, slow problem-solvers become old slow problem-solvers.

Cognitive neuroscience is rapidly becoming used as a way of investigating the changes that occur in the brain during learning, no matter the age. It is now possible to determine how the brain is changing while looking at neuron activity in milliseconds (Gazzaley, 2008). It has been noted that high-performing older adults do not show a significant lack of suppression; and, they are able to disregard irrelevant material. High-performing older adults do not lose the ability to inhibit irrelevant stimuli, but the speed at which they recognize the irrelevant stimuli declines, affecting the overall speed of processing information (Gazzaley, Clapp, Kelley, McEvoy, Knight,& Esposito, 2008).

Cognitive gains and aging. Horn (1982), Dixon (1999) and others predicate their findings with the qualification that there *are* more losses than gains over the course of time.

Yet, there are gains. Crystallized intelligence, the ability to use deeply embedded skills and knowledge without consciously calling on long-term memory increases between the ages of 55 and sixty-five. This occurs at the same time as the decline in fluid knowledge occurs. The positive change in crystallized knowledge may be due to individuals actually restructuring their thinking to be more coherent and accessible (Horn, 1982).

Implications of cognitive skills and attitudes of the 50+ student. Is there reason to believe that interventions can mediate the decline of normal cognitive aging? The simple answer is "yes." Findings seem to suggest that group support, training, experiencing testing and then retesting, all help the older adult regain cognitive performance. These findings are from studies with the "oldest old," those from 75 years and older (Craik, 1999). The 50+ student also may benefit from such activities. Cognitive support as an elaboration of encoding, becoming aware of one's own metacognition, is also beneficial to older adults. It has been found that providing older adults with too much time in a problem-solving situation becomes a detriment. Bunce and Macready (2005) suggested that the older adult is unaware of how to approach the learning situation and explores too many avenues. An instructional design embedding cues into the exercise may provide cognitive support under these circumstances.

Reducing redundancy effects appears to increase intelligibility of text and may be another way to give cognitive support (Chandler & Sweller, 1991). For instance, during a PowerPoint demonstration, added narrative that is simply repeating text already on screen actually slows down comprehension. The researchers also noted that providing summaries was not a redundancy because it was not part of the original presentation, occurring, as it does at the end of a presentation. The same authors found that widely separated

redundancies, either in time or spatially, can act as a mnemonic device. Auditory text alone is preferable to audio and visual text at the same time. This situation appears to be related to cognitive load theory: two channels processing information through the working memory to the long-term memory overloads the system (Kalyuga, Ayres, Chandler & Sweller, 2003).

Multimedia presentations can be enhanced for all learners by a process known as off-loading. When two processing channels are overloaded, reducing the use of one of the channels through segmenting, weeding [out] and signaling, aligning text to graphics or, synchronizing and individualizing reduces the overload of both channels. The student is more successfully able to move the new data into the long-term memory (Mayer and Moreno, 2003).

Motivations of the 50+ student. In the conclusion of a review of the literature regarding the older adult student, Kasworm (1990) noted that older students "are not the same creatures as young adult undergraduates" (p. 366). The motivation of the 50+ student is an area of study still being researched, but a number of findings support the idea the 50+ students are at least as well motivated to succeed as are their younger classmates. Kasworm (2003a) reported that motivation typically falls into two major groups: those adults who become college students due to changes in their lives such as divorce, job loss, or children going to school, and those who have been more proactive in planning for a college experience over a period of time, and who have made major life-changing choices to meet that goal, such as moving to another city. Additionally, a third group combines those two motivations. Eppler, & Harju, (1997) noted that the older student tends to be more intrinsically motivated than the traditional, younger student. Bye, Puskar and Conway (2007) questioned the differences between younger (traditional) and older students'

(nontraditional) motivation to learn, intrinsic motivations, and affect about learning. Their study determined that age and interest did act as predictors of intrinsic motivation to learn and that interest and intrinsic motivation predict positive affect. They also found that older students enjoyed the classroom experience to a greater degree than did younger students. The researchers noted, "positive affect seems to be embedded in the motivational process for older students, but for younger students positive affect is described as independent of the intrinsic motivation to learn" (p. 153).

Kasworm (2003b) has also identified five "voices" of the adult student. The student with an "Entry voice" values academic knowledge and believes that grades reflect what is learned. The "Outside voice" values real-world knowledge and validates new knowledge against knowledge expertise. The "Cynical voice" finds little or no value in learning activities. This type of student is taking classes only as a necessary step to gain credentials. The "Straddling voice" values both real-world and academic knowledge. The "Inclusion voice" values the academic world and wants to become a part of it. This student wants to create new knowledge as well (pp. 87-88).

Donohue and Wong (1997) looked at the relationship between achievement motivation and college satisfaction and determined that, here too, there was a difference between traditional (19 to 24) and nontraditional students (25 and older). These researchers noted that locus of control, impulsivity, social achievement, mastery, and work orientation were identified as factors of achievement motivation. Satisfaction had more to do with performance than performance with satisfaction. Their study found older students had significantly higher achievement motivation scores and that older students scored significantly higher on the sub-scale of "Work Orientation," the desire to work.

Cognitive Linguistics and Metaphors

Cognitive linguistic framework. The focus of this study is on the use of cognitive linguistics as a framework for analyzing the language used by the participants of the study, especially their use of metaphor. Therefore, a brief review of the literature regarding cognitive linguistics, what it is, its brief history as an area of study within psychology and linguistics, as well as some of the basic tenets that will be encountered during the analysis part of the study are in order.

Wayne C. Boothe, in addressing a conference on metaphor in 1978, said that at that time, there had begun a shift toward studying metaphor (p. 49). He was referring to a growing interest in metaphor after years of metaphor being treated as ornamental language. Aristotle may be the first to have discussed the use of metaphor, what it is and how it should be used. His definition of metaphors:

> "Metaphor is the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is proportion. Thus from genus to species, as: 'There lies my ship;' for lying at anchor is a species of lying. From species to genus, as: 'Verily ten thousand noble deeds hath Odysseus wrought;' for ten thousand is a species of large number, and is here used for a large number generally. From species to species, as: 'With blade of bronze drew away the life,' and 'Cleft the water with the vessel of unyielding bronze.' "
> (Poetics, 1457b)

Aristotle recognized metaphors compare things (objects or people or events) to things (objects or people or events). Metaphors also serve as verbs and hyperbole. He recognized too that metaphors are a matter of words that carry a name of one object to another to which

it is usually not associated, and that metaphors make comparisons based on some similarities between objects (Gibbs, 1999). Freud's division of the thinking process into two types, that of early childhood and that of the adult thinker influenced the way metaphor was thought of until the early half of the 20th century. The infantile way of thinking, based on dreams and images, can represent one thing as something else. This, to Freud gives rise to metaphors. The adult can develop a higher order of thinking that gives rise to scientific thinking, thinking in its purest form (Siegelman, 1990). It was for this reason that Freud cautioned against using the metaphors used by psychiatric patients. Their metaphors were the product of the infantile mind and not to be trusted.

In the mid 20th century, a number of disciplines began to look again at metaphor. Metaphors began to be used as a tool in psychotherapy. Studies in symbolism began to focus on metaphors. Wittgenstein and other philosophers began investigating family resemblances. Berlin and Kay introduced the concept of color categories. Others introduced research that found correlations between emotions and facial expressions. Rosch determined that the ability to form categories is a basic cognitive skill.

Chomsky (1957) developed the theory of the brain having a generative grammar: We are born with the brain wired to develop a language with grammar. George Lakoff worked with Chomsky developing the study of generative syntax as something separate from cognitive processing, memory, meaning, etc. As he noted, he and other students broke away from Chomsky when they encountered patterns in language and its use that could not be reconciled with Chomsky's generative syntax theory. Lakoff began developing the field of generative semantics, and by the late 1970s he and others began to look at linguistics in a totally new fashion. These researchers found that humans frame meaning as a result of the

construction of metaphors. Lakoff, Johnson and Turner coined the term cognitive linguistics (Grady, 2007). Grady noted that the field of cognitive linguistics' major contribution has been to look at metaphoric language as a source of data to explore the most basic ways that thought occurs. But it must be noted that there have been relatively few studies published in which researchers have looked at the cognitive metaphors used by participants. Schmitt (2005) noted that metaphors have a history of being used in therapeutic situations, but few studies have come from other social sciences.

Conceptual structure of metaphors. How might structural metaphors provide a deeper understanding of what a person is saying or how that person is construing his understanding of what he is talking about? What is embedded in, "I *took* the program"? Taking indicates having a sense of control of the experience. The *program* has now become something the student owns – there is a commitment implied in this structure. Do we know more about how the student feels in regard to his experience? We do, and we know it through an understanding of the cognitive metaphor that was used. As a result we can state with certainty, because of empirical findings (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987; Kövecses, 2002; Feldman, 2006; Grady, 2007), a certainty not available using simple coding, that a student who "takes a program" has a sense of control over her educational experiences. Another student may be "looking forward to beginning a class." In that situation, the researcher who is looking at the cognitive metaphoric structure behind those words recognizes that the student sees herself progressing in her education. Figure 1 demonstrates the overlapping cognitive metaphors under-pinning "Looking forward to a class."

Ideas are Perceptions	->	->	The mind is an eye	->	->	The mind sees		
Change is Motion			->	->	->	Forward motion is progress		
"Looking forward to a class" through education			->	->	->	Seeing oneself making progress		

Figure 1. **Overlapping cognitive metaphors leading to construction of "looking forward to beginning classes."**

Establishing that metaphors were more than figurative language, that they shape the way we structure our thoughts, was the groundbreaking concept behind Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). They analyzed three commonly used metaphors and outlined how each was used to develop and enrich other concepts. There is a reason why we say, "Cheer up" and not "Cheer down." Based on our physical experiences, we have come to equate the direction *up* with more, with better, with good. These physical embodiments of the meaning of concepts are what allow a number of metaphors to have near universal meaning. Sweetser (1991) noted that cognition is not a domain made up of chaotic linguistic meaning(s). It is structured by what the speaker understands about any particular domain. Metaphors allow us to connect with our environment through speech acts and our experiences with it. In *Philosophy of the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) returned to examining metaphors and determined the connection between physical experiences and cognition lays in embodied experiences. This work is an example of using cognitive theory and empirical evidence to re-examine various propositions of Western philosophy. Kövceses (2002) also noted the function of the structural metaphor is that it is what allows us to map what is known about A onto B, which allows abstract concepts to have structure. The importance of understanding the special standing of metaphor within cognitive linguistics is

because metaphors clarify the relationship of language to other aspects of human cognition (Grady, 2007).

Definition of Terms

Categories. Lakoff (1987), Gibbs (1999), and Feldman (2006) credit Eleanor Rosch's (1973, 1978) work regarding how objects are mentally categorized as seminal work to the field of cognitive linguistics and understanding conceptual metaphors. Rosch's work with colors and forms led her to find that perception of both color and form is influenced by natural prototypes (what came to be known as "best examplors" of a category), which, she suggested, may occur in other domains. Items that share a number of common traits are said to be prototypes of that category. An example of "best example" of bird is something like a robin or pigeon to Americans. An ostrich or swan is not a "best example."

Gibbs (1994) affirmed Rosch's suggestion that categories would be found in other domains by noting they have been discovered in terms of emotion, chess, artistic style, medical diagnosis, and linguistic phenomena. Rosch (1978) had suggested that a category provides the most information with the least cognitive effort, which, interestingly, correlates to one of the best ways of providing and learning information for the 50+ student, a technique educators commonly call "chunking."

Categories of objects can have gradation (sweet and sweeter), have clear or not-so-clear boundaries (robin and ostrich), hierarchies, in which the middle (basic level) always has the greatest number of attributes (tools, hammers, sledge hammer). Categories may be embodied (finger, as in finger mesa), especially those at the basic level; and they have prototype effects that may come from a variety of sources (Lakoff, 1987).

Prototypes. Prototypes are those members of a category that most reflect the various structures of a category as a whole. Rosch (1978) found categories are culturally formed. In the United States, the robin is a best-fit prototype of the category *birds*. In Africa, storks may be a prototype for the same category. Rosch's work led to the concept of cognitive models having hierarchies of meaning, which in turn allows for the understanding of metonymy, which will be discussed further in this chapter. Discussion of cognitive models will follow later.

Entailments. Entailments (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövcses, 2002; Gibbs, 1994), what Semino (2005) called "different source domains," are the sub-categorization of a Source Domain. Entailments allow a speaker or writer to use particular aspects of a Source Domain to add unique character to the Target Domain. This gave rise to the development of song lyrics such as "Life is a highway" (Cochrane, 1991) with the aspects of a highway being derived from elements of a journey: starting and ending points, moving in a linear fashion on/during each, with the additional aspect of hardships or bumpiness, as well as the sense of moving fast in both.

Image-schema. Metaphors that employ image-schema are less data- or knowledge-rich than are structural metaphors, which help us map what we know about journeys, and quantity, and war onto other concepts. Instead, the image-schema is said to be the result of sensori-motor experiences (Gibbs, 1999), which are much more limiting than structural metaphors. Examples of image-schema metaphors are in-out, front-back, motion, and force (Kövecses, 2002). Beyond functioning as image-schema alone, they also have the ability to serve as underpinnings to other metaphors. Kövecses noted how the image-schema of motion is really at the heart of the structural metaphor of JOURNEY. Kövecses also noted the

importance of not confusing image-schema with an image of a metaphor. In, "The Rio Grande Gorge is the *Grand Canyon* of New Mexico," the Grand Canyon is a rich image metaphor, but it is not an image-schema metaphor. "The Rio Grande Gorge *cuts through* Taos County" is an image-schema metaphor based on motion.

Blending. Blending is another, more recently developed concept of cognitive linguistics. Fauconnier and Turner (1985, 1994, 1995) looked at the two-way model of Source/Target that Lakoff and Johnson had developed and believed it did not explain well enough the mental activity needed to map one metaphor onto another. Together, Fauconnier and Turner developed the concept that we are able to combine, blend, concepts from one mental space to another mental space and form a new unique concept, metaphors, as well as inferences, categories, any type of thinking that requires bringing divergent information together. Kövecses (2002) provided one of the best examples of how this four-part mental structure works: A man says to a woman, "If I were you, I would have done it" when speaking about her decision not to become pregnant. In order to understand his comment, a blend must occur. The mental spaces involve (1) a man who cannot become pregnant, (2) a woman who could, (3) a working space where the blend occurs and (4) a space for the finished blend of a man becoming pregnant. That blended space, cognitive structure also allows for the concepts of "McMansions," and "Thai-French fusion cooking" to be developed. Fauconnier and Turner stressed that blending is a pre-requisite cognitive ability, not a result of cognitive ability. The concept of how mental space is structured does not impact the concept of the meanings of cognitive structures or metaphors, so it will not be further elaborated in this paper.

In the seminal work, *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) looked at two common English-language terms, argument and life, and laid out how each is used and understood metaphorically in relation to war and journey. They expanded the concept of a Source Domain and Target Domain. Source Domains can be thought of as the building blocks of metaphoric mapping, such as, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which itself is a structural metaphor. Journey is the Source Domain and Life is the Target Domain. They noted that we can and do conceptualize a life in terms of the elements found in a journey. There is a starting time and place; the journey moves through time, as does life, in a linear fashion, typically going forward; troubles may occur along the way of each; each may be of short or long duration; and each has an end. The similar elements of each are what are used to "map" the Source to the Target and those elements are said to overlap. This mapping is the metaphorical construction of thought, and as noted by Wilcox (2002), of culture. Overlooking the cultural application of metaphor may result in confusion on the part of the listener. The greater the degree of overlap, the more appropriate it is and the faster the metaphor is recognized. In the literature, structural metaphors are written in small capital letters. The most frequently identified structural metaphors in the early literature were ARGUMENT IS WAR, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and MORE IS UP. As of 1991, a "master" list of metaphors had produced 250 structural metaphors and their variations (Lakoff, Espenson & Schwartz, 1991).

Cognitive function of metaphors. Metaphors have been defined as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable" (Oxford American English Dictionary Online, 2009). Webster's (1981) defines it as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or

idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them." Traditionally, metaphor is the language of the poet or prose writer when he is trying to achieve a special effect, a particular response from a reader. Under these definitions, there is no especial cognitive function of metaphors. However, cognitive linguists (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987; Gibbs, 1994; Turner, 1987; Kövecses, 2002; Grady, 2007) have demonstrated that the function of metaphors is to structure the way we think about our place in the world, the objects in the world, and how we react to each. Where does the ability to think metaphorically come from? Feldman (2008) looked at the changes that take place in the brain as experiences change the connections between neurons. Repeated experiences strengthen the bonds between neurons. Those strengthening bonds explain how the brain is wired to transfer bodily perceptions from the hippocampus and amygdala to the frontal lobe, where abstract thought occurs, giving rise to the formation of metaphorical thought. Feldman describes the effects of the repetition of experiences that establish the formation of metaphors in layman's terms. Lakoff (2008) explains the same phenomena in, but in terms of how the political metaphors that dominate the country.

Structural metaphors. Structural metaphors shape our thinking. They are the tools we use to help us communicate how we feel about various aspects of our lives. Common Source Domains are used to understand common Target Domains. We choose the Source Domain object based on what features we know from our experience with it, and we attach those similar features to the Target Domain. Parts of our own bodies may be used to compare something to another object, for example, the *leg* of a chair, the *head* of a committee.

There are a number of other types of metaphors. Ontological metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Gibbs 1999) can be quantified or categorized, and they let us talk about abstractions, for example:

Her *memories* about her childhood are beginning to fade.

His *love* for that game is obsessive.

Kövecses (2007) notes that Personification is a type of ontological metaphor.

Orientational metaphors. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) have said that Orientational metaphors organize the relationships of one entity to another; for example:

Things are looking *up*.

The Market really *crashed* today.

Kövecses (2007) suggested that orientational metaphors have an evaluative function by providing coherence within the conceptual system. Clearly orientation metaphors are based on our experiences with our bodies in the world. They are commonly referred to as embodied metaphors. For example, having experienced a crash, we know our bodies came to a sudden, unexpected stop by running into another object, and the experience caused pain or injury. If the stock market crashes, it is a sudden, unexpected stop that has run into an unexpected entity, and usually causes pain.

Metonymy. In the traditional view of metonymy this figurative language occurs when the "name of one thing is used to stand for the thing related to it" (Kövecses, 2002, p.144). "Wall Street just announced a major decline in the bear market" serves as an example. Wall Street represents the many financial banking companies with stock market offices associated the area around Wall Street in New York City. Lakoff and Johnson noted

that metonymy is conceptual by its very nature, thereby allowing one to categorize it under the umbrella of cognitive metaphors.

Radden and Kövecses (1999) noted that language itself is a metonymic system. A word "stands for" a concept. The embedded nature of metonymy in language is what makes it difficult to recognize either in use or analysis.

A number of researchers (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 1998 & 2007) suggested that using a well-understood or known aspect of an object to stand for the object is as easily recognizable, understood, in everyday speech as other types of metaphor that are commonly used to structure how we understand or view something, for example:

Old Blue Eyes had another song on the radio today.

I need a *strong arm* to help me carry this upstairs.

Following the pattern established by Kövecses, categories of metonymy are written in lower capital letters. Kövecses and Radden (1998, Kövecses, 2002) developed additional metonymic categories: CONTROLLER and CONTROLLED, PLACE FOR AN EVENT, OBJECT FOR THE USER, PLACE and INSTITUTION, and CATEGORY and MEMBER OF A CATEGORY. Recent headlines of "Wikileaks Under Investigation" serves as an example of the category CONTROLLER and CONTROLLED. It was the founder of Wikileaks, the CONTROLLER of the CONTROLLED (Wikileaks), who was under investigation. In New Mexico, "The Roundhouse" is an example of the category PLACE and INSTITUTION as the round building (PLACE) is the state's capitol building, the seat of government (INSTITUTION). In both the title and the lyrics, The Rolling Stone's lyrics to "Mother's little helper" and …there's a little yellow pill" are examples of CATEGORY and MEMBER OF A CATEGORY. The helper and yellow pill both are members of the category tranquilizer.

It must be noted that Gibbs (1999) suggested that metonymy constrains what speakers explicitly say at the same time that it constrains how the listener understands the intention of what is being said. His criticism is easily understood if one puts oneself in the position of not knowing that the shape of the New Mexico capitol building is circular. The Roundhouse then carries no meaning. Younger people may not know that Frank Sinatra was referred to as Old Blue Eyes.

Synecdoche. Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which the word for a part of an entity is used to represent the whole of the object, as in, "All hands on deck." The captain expects whole bodies to be on deck. Nerlich and Clarke (1999) and Gibbs (1999) distinguished between metonymy and synecdoche by noting that synecdoche used a part for the whole, while metonymy uses an *aspect* of the whole for the whole. Blank offers the following example: "For example, 'wheel' is a synecdoche for an automobile; but if a racing driver is given the nickname 'Wheel,' this is metonymy" (p. 202). In the first case, "wheel" is a part of a car and used to represent the whole car. In the second case, "Wheel" is one aspect of a car and is used to represent the driver. Another differentiation between metaphor and synecdoche offered by Nerlich and Clarke (1999) is that there is a truth factor associated with synecdoche that is not present when using metonymy. This becomes readily apparent with the "wheels" examples. A wheel is part of a car (synecdoche). A wheel is never part of the human driver (metaphor).

Personification. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2007) have found that giving human attributes or skills to inanimate objects is also a metaphor that is used everyday and clearly is understood without any effort when the referent is known as in:

The White House *released* another series of tapes.

The radio *said* there would be rain today.

Polysemy. Polysemic words are not homonyms. Homonyms are words that sound alike, or may be spelled alike, but have different meanings, as in, red and read or one and won. Polysemic words sound alike and have something in common. Kövceses (2002) said they are most commonly associated with prepositions and adverbs, for example, "Well, I'm glad that's over" and "The blankets lay over the sleeping children." They can also be associated with nouns. Researchers (Lakoff, 1987; Gibbs, 1999; Kövecses, 2007) also noted that this form of metaphor, the multiple meanings of a word, also affects the meaning and understanding of a metaphor. Such a word is "stem."

The rose's stem was crushed when it was pinned to her gown.

They were able to stem the advancement of the other army's forces.

The stem of "puerile" is from the Greek "puer," meaning boy.

The previously given example of The Roundhouse may also be considered polysemous, as it refers to the location of the Legislature as well as the Governor's Office.

Sweetser (1995) noted that polysemy is possible because we know intuitively that word choices are not random. Word choices are motivated by our knowledge of extensions and methodically developed relationships of a word's meaning. Words develop polysemy through cognitive structuring.

Cognitive models. Cognitive models have an experiential basis and are coherent and systematic (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). The Source Domain has coherent features that allow or motivate its development in a logical or consistent manner. One might say, "Her love *feeds* my soul," and mean that the experience is like providing nourishment to the soul. One

would not expect to see or hear, "Her love *stagnates* in my soul." There is no sense of coherence between stagnation and the soul. Cognitive models are used to structure thought. Everything we know about feeding and providing nourishment, that it is taken into the body, that feeding/eating makes us feel good, and feeding sustains us helps us structure our thoughts about love feeding our soul. Cognitive models also help us form categories and are used for metonymic reasoning (Lakoff, 1987). As Gibbs (1994) has noted, cognitive models are used to help understand complex or abstract ideas in terms of more familiar ideas (Gibbs, 1994), such as "Her love *feeds* my soul."

Cognitive Neuroscience Support of Cognitive Linguistics

The research being conducted by cognitive neuropsychologists using fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) and other means of measuring change at the neuron level is verifying the research that has been done by cognitive linguistic researchers like Lakoff, Grady and Kövecses. Feldman (2006) has discussed empirical work validating the strengthening of neural connections between repeated use of words and gestures to learning the meanings of words and gestures. Language use, word meaning, and cognition are understood to be structured by the constant interaction we have with our environment and others *through our bodies and our brains*. Metaphors and their meanings, conceptual systems and their structure, the connections between learning word meaning, and abstract ideas through embodiment are all elements in the theory of cognitive metaphors as developed by cognitive linguists. That theory is supported by work done in the laboratory, looking at how the brain works (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Gallese, 2005, Feldman, 2006).

Discourse Analysis

Transcription of data relied primarily on the framework as described by DuBoi, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming and Paolino (1999). Theirs is a comprehensive guide to transcribing conversation. The transcriptions for this study made particular use of formatting conversation in intonation units that is determined through attention to pauses and changes of pitch of voice. The benefit of formatting in this manner is the attention that can be drawn to brief phrases that might otherwise be overlooked in a line of text. Identification of speaker and turn taking was also noted in the transcriptions.

Interview/Open-ended Questions

Nardi (2006) and Patton (2002) stated that unstructured interviews are best suited for exploratory research. Such interviews may have a set of questions prepared, and follow-up questions, also called probing questions, are developed based on what the participant has said. The use of a set of questions assures that the same information is elicited from each participant. However, as Fowler (1993) noted, it is possible that participants may not respond to each question in the same way. That potential is a part of the exploratory design of this particular study. As with any other type of qualitative research, the caution once again, is in regard to researcher bias. The unstructured interview allows the respondent to explore how they are experiencing and reacting to any type of phenomena. Creswell's (1998) suggestions for best practice of the face-to-face interview technique follow those mandated by the institutional review board of most universities: design an interview protocol with the open-ended questions; determine the place for the interviews and be certain they are quiet and free of distractions; obtain in written form the participants' consent; and during the interview, stick to the written questions and complete the process in the time frame was

stated. Creswell strongly advocates recording the interviews as well as taking notes during the session.

The advantage of using open-ended interviews is striking, especially as they relate to this study:

- Generally speaking, people like expressing themselves in their own words as opposed to something like a Likert scale when asked to respond to a question by choosing a rating of 1 to 10 or Like to Dislike.
- Often, during the course of the interview, the participant will spontaneously bring up another, unanticipated point that he sees as relevant to the discussion.
- The open-ended format encourages a deeper exploration of thoughts, ideas and emotions.

Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed what the literature has predicted about the increased participation by 50+ student in higher education. I have noted findings from empirical research demonstrating these students have the cognitive abilities and the motivation to succeed to the same degree as their younger classmates. I have reviewed the history and findings of cognitive linguistics, especially as it relates to organization and structure of thinking through metaphor. I have pointed out that a cognitive linguistic approach rarely has been used in disciplines of study outside of psycho-therapy, and nothing was found that relates to exploring what the 50+ students are saying about their experience as they begin experiencing higher education at this time of their lives. I have briefly discussed three aspects of discourse analysis that will be used in the analysis of what these students are saying.

Chapter III: Methodology

Methodological Tradition

In this chapter I will begin by defining phenomenology and explain why a Phenomenological approach was used for this exploratory study of metaphors used by students over the age of 50 when they discussed their experiences at the start of a degree-granting program. I will discuss the sample population of the study and the procedure used to gather data. I will give a brief description of the manner in which metaphors, metonymy, and simile were identified and analyzed. A schematic is provided to demonstrate the data gathering procedures and the elements of analysis used. The chapter concludes with discussions of the ethical implications of the study as well as limitations of the study, and implications of the study. For the rest of the analysis, metonymy (an aspect of something used in place of the referent, as in "Smiley over there is waiting for his coffee" is understood as a subset of cognitive metaphor. Synecdoche, when a part is used to represent the whole, as in "Senator, Washington is on the phone" is identified as a sub-case of metonymy. Simile (a comparison made using "as," "like" or "than," as in "She is as sharp as a tack") will be covered by the term metaphor. The function of metonymy, synecdoche and simile is to limit the focus of the reader or listener to one feature of the two things being compared.

Personal Statement

As a student over the age of fifty who took a number of university classes during a career as a high school teacher, I felt I knew what to expect when I began my doctoral program. However, a number of times I found myself questioning my support system, my motivation, and my expectations as I progressed through my program of studies. I also know I would have enjoyed a chance to discuss these areas with someone willing to listen as I tried

to work my way through my own thoughts. My own experience led me to understand the emotional and ethical implications of this study.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed the following:

- What metaphors do undergraduate students (age 50+) use to describe their experiences as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate (age 50+) use to describe their sense of support as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate (age 50+) use to describe their expectations as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate (age 50+) use to describe their motivations as they begin a degree-granting program?
- How do undergraduate (50+) compare beginning a degree-granting program to another life experience?

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is used to describe the meaning of the lived experiences of individuals and to construct meaning of a particular phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002), for example, the experience of beginning a four-year degree-granting program between the ages of 50 and 64 at the time of the study. The phenomenological approach used in this study was based on the philosophical and historic works of Husserl (1931), his student, E. Heidegger (1927), Merleau-Ponty (1945/2008) and A. Schutz (1970).

Creswell (1998) notes the researcher using phenomenology is searching for the essence of an experience, which will be revealed as the participant reflects on the meaning of the event. Patton claims the researcher is trying to comprehend and clarify the meaning and structure of the event, as well as its essence. As the 50+ student is asked to respond to the experience of beginning a degree-granting program, the opportunity to pause and reflect on the experience should reveal to both student and researcher what it has meant to begin this life experience.

Creswell (1998) describes the procedures for phenomenology as following a linear path:

- Make a list of what has been said
- Group those statements into "meaning units"
- Engage in researcher reflection on own experiences to build a picture of the experience coming from as many points of view as possible
- Work with the participants and build a picture from many points of view
- Build a composite of the various pictures that have developed (p. 176).

The procedures for phenomenological research suggested by Patton (2002) mirror those of Creswell (1998) and Deznin and Lincoln (1994), emphasizing the activity of identifying researcher bias. Cameron (2003) notes the importance of removing the interpretations [bias] of the researcher while listening to participant(s) and notes the difficulty is nearly "intractable" (p. 12). Using a cognitive linguistic approach should reduce the type of bias reputable qualitative researchers work against.

Creswell introduced what he referred to as a theme, "the reality of an object is only determined through the experiences of it" (p. 53).

Procedures

Sample population. The sample population for this research project was adults between the ages of fifty and 64 at the time of the study who had began an undergraduate degree-granting program at the University of New Mexico. This demographic is often referred to as the Baby Boomer generation. The sample can most accurately be described as making up a convenience sample set. The Registrar's Office assisted in locating 58 students from an undergraduate program who self-identified their intention to graduate from a liberal arts program. The reasoning behind this limitation is those in a masters or doctoral level program have been attending higher education. Students were told the study was limited to those whose first language was English. Second language and implied second cultural factors are beyond the scope of this study. After being identified, students received an e-mail from the researcher asking for their participation. Every effort was made to have the gender mix mirror the University's; however, a mailing to 58 students resulted in 11 responses, and only eight of those were able to participate. The eight were all women.

At the time of the first meeting, consent forms were obtained as required by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Students were also asked to fill out a demographic information sheet (see Appendix A).

This study looks at the language the participants used to describe their experiences as they began a bachelor's degree program. Interviews occurred in the first half of Fall semester, 2010. Participants were not paid for their time; however, the value of the reflective activity was noted to them during the course of the interview period. At the start of each interview, participants were reminded their responses would remain anonymous. They were

informed they would be asked to meet a second time to go over the written transcript, verifying the information that was captured, and possibly for follow-up questions.

Data gathering and collection. Interviews were scheduled for the start of September 2010. Interviews took place in study rooms available in Zimmerman Library and George Pearl libraries of the University of New Mexico. These study rooms allowed quiet and privacy. Open-ended questions focused on the expectations of the students over the age of fifty; their self-identified skills, motivation and sense of support. They were also asked to compare the present experience with one from their past and to explain how these experiences are the same or different. The transcriptions were stored on a dedicated flash drive. The flash drive and all hardcopies of information related to this study were kept in a separate file cabinet in a home office used only by the researcher. Names of participants were never used; a code was adopted and used to identify participants' files to assure confidentiality.

Open-ended questions. Only face-to-face interviews took place. Interviews were recorded using a Sony MP3 IC Recorder were backed up using a Radio Shack 2 Speed microcassette recorder. Transcription occurred within forty-eight hours of taping. Seidman's (2005) ten guidelines were kept in mind during the interview process:

- Listen more, talk less.
- Questions should follow from participant's responses, and not lead.
- Ask for clarification before the end of a session.
- Trust own instincts.
- Explore, don't probe.
- Ask open-ended questions.

- Do not interrupt.

Seidman advocates the use of open-ended questions because they allow the participants to control the direction of the exploration. It should be obvious that there are two ways of looking at an experience, either as a structured event or as a personal response to the event. Questions were developed to elicit the type of information being sought, either "Tell me how you made the decision to go for a bachelor's degree at this time" or "Tell me what it is like for you to be going for a bachelor's degree at this time." The open-ended questions are found in Appendix B.

Transcription. Following the protocol of discourse analysis transcription, each transcript was written in divisions of intonation units, which is identified as a length of speech, separated from another intonation unit by a pause and/or a stretching of the last syllable (DuBois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming & Paolino, 1993). An example of two intonation units:

I've inquired more about it

and I've thought more about

The advantage of formatting a transcript in this manner is phrases that might be lost in a line of text are more readily apparent to the reader. Subtle expressions of thought that might otherwise be overlooked become obvious. Brackets [ ] were used to insert words not spoken by the participant, but were understood in context.

The process of the analysis was based loosely on the work of The Pragglejaz Group (2007), one of the first papers to propose a procedure to identify metaphors used in discourse. It must be noted the Pragglejaz analysis system is based on lexical units, individual words. This study was based on intonation units. The rational for this approach is 1) this is not

primarily a linguistics research paper; and, 2) the intonation units offer a larger unit of discourse, which lends itself to the analysis of the cognitively constructed metaphors.

Member check. After transcription, as previously indicated, member checking occurred. Participants were asked to review the transcription and clarify anything they saw that did not reflect their intent. Participants had been informed of the member-check activity at the time of the first meeting. The eight participants were sent copies of their own transcripted interview through email that also requested a time to meet for the member-check. However, only four participants responded to three different requests. Member-checking occurred as place a face-to-face meeting with one participant, twice through telephone calls with two participants and once through two emails with a fourth participant.

Data analysis. The collection of the actual words of the participants was the focus of this study. The study focused on the metaphors the participants used. Analyzing the metaphors and similes was the first step. A qualitative analysis of the data followed. Identifying the cognitive metaphors that structured the participants' language was the third approach to analyzing what the participants were saying. Determining a method for identifying, coding and interpreting the cognitive metaphor and seeing the alignment with the traditional coding was one of the primary interests behind this study. This project is unique because of its focus on capturing the words of the 50+ students in a degree-granting program as well as the emphasis on finding and identifying the conceptual metaphors these students use. Data analysis for this study employed the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative methodology:

- The researcher accepts premise of phenomenology: the study of how people experience objects or events

- The research is designed to allow participants to explain how they are perceiving an experience
- The researcher identifies key words and phrases
- The researcher interprets the words and phrases used by the participants
- The researcher methodically analyzes the text that has been given by the participants and structures it in a meaningful and most bias-free manner
- The researcher searches for the meaning behind the figurative and cognitive metaphors used as well as other information gleaned from analysis.
- The researcher offers a summation of finding (Creswell, 1998, Patton, 2002, Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The three-way analysis of the data reduced the risk of over-looking relevant data and reduced the risk of researcher bias by focusing the researcher's attention on the triangulation of data at this stage of the analysis.

Identification of Cognitively Structured Metaphors

For this study, analysis involved identifying cognitively constructed metaphors to enrich the understanding of the descriptions given by the students over the age of fifty of their experiences.

Cognitive metaphors were identified using Lakoff, Espenson & Schwartz's (1991) Master Metaphor List and Deignan's (1995) Collins COBUILD English Guides 7: Metaphors. Kövecses (2002) work on metaphor was used to identify metonymic structures.

Coding

Each figurative metaphor was identified and recorded. Similes, metonymies and synecdoche were identified as such. Each cognitively constructed metaphor was noted and

recorded. A table was constructed for each research question in which each metaphor and type was listed. Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz's (1991) *Master Metaphor List* was the primary source for indentifying cognitively structured metaphors. More recently identified cognitive metaphors, coming from the literature, were identified. A major assumption of this study was that all the participants would use contemporary, standard American English (AE). Only one participant indicated that she was bilingual, and that she had not learned a second language, Navajo, until the age of seven. There was no way to anticipate to what degree each participant would choose to use formal or informal AE. Most of the participants used informal, conversational, AE.

In addition to identifying the figures of speech and the cognitive metaphors, qualitative analysis was applied to the data. The purpose of identifying patterns and themes through qualitative analysis was to act as a type of triangulation of the data, establishing the validity of the findings. Appendix C represents a copy of the worksheet used to record the metaphors, similes, metonymy and synecdoche, and the qualitative analysis. After each research question was examined, emerging themes were identified and analyzed as they related to the research question.

After capturing the figurative metaphors used in response to a particular question, a search was made to determine if patterns were emerging among the eight participants. Unique or extended metaphors were noted and examined to determine what they added to understanding what the participant was saying. Cognitive metaphors were identified and attached to the particular phrases they gave rise to. Patterns of use were noted again. What additional meaning they lent to understanding of the participant's intention was noted. As they occurred additional connections were made between the figurative and cognitive

metaphors. There were situations when few figurative metaphors were used; however, the cognitive metaphors were always present and the qualitative analysis was supported by them. When a disconnection occurred, reflection on the cognitive metaphor helped the researcher re-evaluate the qualitative analysis. After examining the data using three different foci of attention, a generalized statement was made about the responses given to each question, and caution was exercised, for as Schmitt (2005) has noted:

> …the desire to discover a single "central," "profound," "root," "key," or "organizing" metaphor from which all the thoughts and actions of the person, group or even epoch being investigated can be derived … proves to be a metaphor-induced illusion leading to the over-interpretation of the more conspicuous linguistic images (p. 373).

Limitations of the Study

The greatest limitation to this study was the sample size of eight participants and gender make up, all female. The sample cannot be said to represent their generation. Another limitation to the study is there are few other studies using cognitive metaphors to analyze the discourse of participants upon which this study could be modeled. At any point in the analysis, it is possible some aspect of the participants' conversation was over-looked, although every attempt was made to address speakers' figurative metaphors and cognitive metaphors as they related to the particular question they were responding to.

Ethical Considerations

Participants in this study should not have experienced any kind of adverse effects as a result of participating. Students were not paid to participate. Those students who arrived at the interview without a cup of tea or coffee were offered it, and the researcher paid for it.

Figure 2 represents the procedures to be used to gather and analyze the data.

Procedures	Data Gathering	Data Analysis
Sample Population -8 women -Median age, 56 -Identified through the University Registrar's Office	-Face-to-face interviews -Open-ended questions -Recorded on digital recorder -Transcribed and saved to a dedicated disk drive	-Elements of discourse -Identification of cognitive metaphors -Coding -Identifying emergent themes

Figure 2. **Procedures of the research process**

Implications of the Study

This exploratory study gathered the responses to questions about the experience of starting a college program from one of the fastest population groups in U.S. colleges and universities, popularly known as the Baby Boomers, age 50 to 64. This group is being lumped into the category "non-traditional student" which spans the ages of 27 through 70+. It is reasonable to assume the 50+ students have little in common with students 27 through 40 years of age. Understanding and becoming aware of the needs and concerns of students aged 50-64 (at the time of the study) should present colleges and universities greater opportunities to improve their services and support to this age group. This study should have significance not only to the sample population, but also to secondary education administration and teaching faculty. Additionally, this study's use of examining cognitive metaphors to analyze the data should provide a deeper and richer understanding to the words of the respondents than a traditional coding and theme-finding system of qualitative analysis alone. And it adds tremendously to information gathered through survey research with its limited response choices. Researcher bias *should be* less as a result of identifying the empirically deduced cognitive metaphoric framework that underpins the way we think and speak.

Review of Research Questions

A review the research questions that drove this study:

- What metaphors do undergraduate students (age 50+) use to describe their experiences as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate (age 50+) use to describe their sense of support as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate (age 50+) use to describe their expectations as they begin a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do undergraduate (age 50+) use to describe their motivations as they begin a degree-granting program?
- How do undergraduate (50+) compare beginning a degree-granting program to another life experience?

* * * * *

Holstein and Gubrium (1998, p. 263) note that the focus of social science is on "investigating the experiences people [may] *take for granted*" (emphasis added). This study used phenomenology to capture how the students are describing their experiences when beginning a degree-granting program. The everyday language they use and the taken-for-granted metaphors that structure their thinking were analyzed by looking at the metaphors, using qualitative analysis and identifying the cognitive metaphors that shaped what they had to say. This approach to the analysis was used to enrich our understanding of this fast-growing university population.

Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter describes the results of the data analysis this study. It begins by reviewing the research questions, then describing the findings that emerged from each research question. The purpose of this study was to identify the metaphors 50+ year-old students used when describing their experiences as they began a degree-granting program. The reader is reminded that brackets **[ ]** were used to insert words not spoken by the participant, but were understood in context. Read as directly quoted, without the inserted material, the meaning is not clear. Parenthesis **( )** were used to set off structurally independent elements, as when identifying the use of hyperbole or personification. Following the conventions of writing about cognitive metaphors, they are identified by using smaller capital letters, as in JOURNEY when referring to the cognitive metaphor of journey.

Research Questions

What metaphors do older adults students (50+ of age) use to describe their experiences, motivation, support and expectations when beginning a degree-granting program? What metaphors do they use to compare this experience to another life experience? The study's goal was to explore those metaphors being used by older adult students (50+) to determine if what was being said might help those students succeed in their goals for a degree in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the research questions that follow. The questions were taken directly from the application for research submitted to the Institutional Review Board of the university.

Research Question #1: Sense of support

Since this was (probably) a big step for you to take, where do you get your sense of support? Were there people who encouraged you to take this step? Now that you've begun your program, are they still there or have new people stepped in?

Research Question #2: Expectations

Tell me what you think this whole experience is going to be like for you. Let's start at the beginning. When you first started, what were your expectations? And now? What about the future?

Research Question #3: Motivation

Tell me how you decided to begin a bachelor's program at this time. What motivated you? What was it like to make that decision?

Research Questions #4: Other experience(s)

What other experiences have you had that might be similar to this one, in terms of being an important step in your life (or use language they've used in responding to previous questions), requiring a length of time to accomplish, and as affected you strongly, one way or another. How are they the same? How are they different?

Analysis Procedures

Each question was analyzed following a four-step process:

1. Literary metaphors and similes were identified and listed in a table.
2. Qualitative analysis was performed and themes and patterns identified, related to phrases used by the participants and listed in a table.
3. Cognitive metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche were identified, related to phrases used by the participants and listed in a table.

4. A summary statement follows each section.

A number of emergent themes are discussed at the end of the chapter as well as a cognitive metaphor identified by the researcher.

In this chapter I will describe the metaphors and similes, qualitative data, and the cognitive metaphors that were used by the participants as they responded to the four questions. I will identify and discuss patterns and themes that emerge from the data. Each question will be re-stated before discussion of the findings begins. I will summarize the findings of each question before continuing to the next question. I will also identify and discuss other emergent themes as they develop.

Research Question #1: Support Systems

Nine categories of support were identified based on terms used by participants. A general category was added to cover another not named but characterized by three of the participants: Self-support, Professors' support, Staff support, Classmate support, Co-worker support, Spousal support, Children's support, Institutional support, Family support, World support and Other support.

Participants listed multiple areas of support. The most frequently noted supports were spouses, professors and support received from one of the two community colleges or the branch campus of the university. The latter was not attributed to professors or staff, but to a sense of "family," or emotional support derived from people on campus, professors, tutors, classmates and staff. Half of the participants listed themselves as their primary source of support.

Metaphors and simile. What is notable is that so few metaphors and similes were used by the participants. As suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and Gibbs (1999), this

may be due to participants' viewing the interview as more formal, leading toward the use of more literal language. An explanation could be that Coffey and Atkinson found metaphors that were more fully developed in their study because their academic informants discussed a narrow topic. The participants of this study tended to discuss the first question in the form of snippets of direct answers using literal language and often related stories about their experiences but not in direct response to the question. Metaphors and similes are in short supply. Participants responded by identifying sources of both positive support and sources that offered no support. The data are discussed in two sections.

Positive metaphors and similes. Table 1 (p. 8) presents the literary metaphors and similes used in response to the question about support and clearly demonstrate the findings that the following elaborates.

The term "support" is used so frequently and easily that it was initially over -looked as a cognitive metaphor. "Supportive" as used throughout the data demonstrates an entailment of meaning within a cognitive metaphor. Briefly, a cognitive metaphor allows the understanding of one concept using the mental construction of another concept. "SUPPORT" is understood in terms of something being vertical (as in a building support), being vertical is being up, and when that object is up (the building is standing), that can be said to represent well-being (a building should be standing). Giving or receiving support can be understood as providing someone with a sense of well-being. Everyone who offers support is offering a sense of well-being.

The metaphors ascribed to professors of the university indicate a favorable response by the participants. Describing one professor as "of the branch campus mentality" was the highest praise this participant could give. Four other students expressed in simple declarative

sentences, “the professors have been supportive.” The shared experience of a majority of these students expressed is that they have felt supported by the faculty they encountered.

The support from faculty at the community colleges and the university branch campus garnered a greater sense of positive metaphors than did professors of the main campus. Five of the eight participants attended one of these schools before enrolling at the university. Statements regarding support include, “I had extreme support from …advisors,” and “professors were supportive.” Friends were identified as neighbors, living at a distance or newly found while at the university. These friends have no shared common characteristics other than being emotionally supportive. Somewhat surprisingly, friends were mentioned fewer times than were professors.

Five of the participants were married; four of five reported receiving support and encouragement from their spouses. No metaphors were used to describe the support of spouses. Interestingly, three of the four participants at the time of the interviews were attending the university with their spouse. Four of the eight participants had children with whom they were still in contact. The children of these participants appear to be split evenly among those who were enthusiastic of their parent’s decision, or described using the general term “supportive.” A son encouraged with “Go for it, Mom,” indicating that education is something that can be grabbed at, held. Daughters who help with flash cards and are “very supportive” are also in college. What is learned from these metaphors indicates that those children identified as having higher education recognized that it was something their mothers wanted, and they understood that desire. All of these comments came from children who have graduated from some kind post-high school program, most of them from four-year colleges or universities. One had received a certificate from a major school for the arts. In a

later question, a participant noted the support she has received from her two adult children. The participant has been involved with counseling in a self-help group. Her two children suggested that getting her degree would be a completion of what she has been doing all their lives.

The metaphors regarding the university as in institution were few. The university was said to "offer a lot of support (Personification)." University staff were noted twice and described as "instrumental" and "[she] sort of oversees me."

Self-support was indicated in a number of similar ways, "It was all me," said a woman estranged from her family. Another participant who felt she had no outside support said, "It was only my self support" and her children watching her that got her through. Another woman, without immediate family and whose extended family questioned her decision to begin a bachelor's program, noted that only one friend who lived out of state gave her support and encouragement. She felt she was on her own; however, she never used the term "self-support."

Thought should be given of what it means to have only self-support to get oneself through a four-year program. How does one wall of a building remain standing? Some consideration must be given to whether these women hold a wealth of inner strength, or another possibility, that they have not recognized the support they are receiving from some "other," or there is some other force at work.

Only one student reported receiving support from classmates, saying, "We help each other." One student said of support at the university, "I don't know anybody." No metaphors were noted. Co-workers were reported to have given two participants encouragement. Again, the language was straightforward, literal. One reported that her

supervisor is “very excited” and the ever-present “very supportive.” In another case it was a co-worker who first drove the participant to the branch campus to look into the programs offered.

Half the respondents reported receiving support from friends. Metaphors such as, “behind me 100%,” friends who were “mentors,” and “they kept me from falling off a cliff” were used to indicate the degree of support or the effect of the support. Two other students used the ubiquitous “very supportive” to describe the response of friends.

Three students referred to “the world” and its support to older students. One described it as the “world is supportive of education…for us older students.” Two noted the support of “others.” One noted encouragement and support that came from her children’s schoolteachers. The other spoke of the encouragement she continues to feel from neighbors.

Table 1.
Figurative metaphors and similes used to describe agents of support by participants

Professors	**Friends**	**University**
"cheerleaders" (used 2ce)	"behind me 100%	"offers a lot of support" (Personification)
"work on student's behalf"	"mentors, everything good"	"I don't know anybody."
"a blessing"	"kept me from falling off a cliff"	
"of the branch campus mentality"		
"supportive"	"supportive"	

Community colleges and branch campus	**Family**	**Children**
"source of motivation" (3 times)	"behind me 100%" "supportive	Mom's finally growing up,"
"the support I was given to move on"		"[Education] it's really worth it."
"I felt total support"		"supportive" "Go back to school…hang out your shingle and get paid for what you've done all my life." "get the degree that you've done all my life."

Self-support	**School staff**
"self-support"	"she was instrumental"
	"pointed me in the right direction" "sort of oversees me"

Negative metaphors and similes. The Support category was the only category that drew negative descriptions. Table 2 illustrates the few literary metaphors and similes used by participants when discussing the lack of support received from the various sources in their lives. Not all the same categories were repeated. The following is an elaboration of what was reported. Negative metaphors include, "The only problem I've ever encountered" (Hyperbole and Personification) which dealt with a professor who questioned the student's continuing to a master's degree.

The metaphors and similes associated with negative experiences with the university were numerous. Those participants who commented on the negative experiences emphatically noted that these events had happened to each of them only one or two times. Each made a point of following up with a story in which they had received encouragement and support. Students talked of feeling "total isolation," and "over fifty [in age] doesn't fit." They noted feeling that there are a number of resources available to students, but "knowing who to ask is the best-kept secret of the whole university" (Hyperbole and CONTAINER). Another referred to dealing with the paperwork as "red tape," and another as "entanglements."

Whereas one participant expressed feeling she had the support of the "world," two others did not. One noted, "…the world just doesn't have patience [Personification]" By "the world," this participant was referring to some of her professors. The support from one extended family was "not as positive as I thought it would be." Metaphors indicating lack of support from friends included, "They thought I was out of my mind," support from friends was "50-50" or "half and half." One student was asked by a friend, "What do you need that for?" echoing a former spouse who had dissuaded a participant from starting at the university thirty years earlier by asking, "What good is that to a woman?" That reality was described as "a huge gap." Speaking of self-support, participants said, "there are times …[I have the] feeling of falling off a cliff, like [Simile] 'Should I be doing this?' " One child seemed to mock the decision of a participant by saying, "Mom is finally growing up." Another had a child tell her she should be staying home and another child said she "was out of her mind." Still another participant was told by a child, "You won't last a month … It's going to be too hard for you." Nothing is known about what level of schooling these children have achieved.

Seven of the participants noted receiving student loans, and each said it was a relief to learn they were eligible for these loans. However, unfavorable statements were attributed to the application process itself. One student said that the financial-aid office had only "ever gotten it right on the first pass" one time. Another commented on the "demoralizing" effect of having to divulge private and emotionally laden information about one's finances to a clerk younger than her own child. One student reported that she had attempted to apply for a grant to help her with financial aid and said, while wiping away tears, that the process was like "going through hell and high water." Still another claims the "only problem ever encountered" (Hyperbole and Personification) was in the financial aid office. Other metaphors used when referring to dealing with the university were "entanglements," "a feeling of total isolation," and the university not being "coddling or cuddling [Personification]."

Table 2.
Figurative metaphors and similes attributed to agents that have not lent support to participants.

Professors	**Friends**	**University**
"only problem ever encountered" (Hyper-bole)	"thought I was out of my mind" support was "50-50 support was "half and half"	"entanglements" and "untangle" "[Financial aide office] has not gotten it right the first pass" but one semester
Children	**Spouse**	**Self-support**
"Mom is finally growing growing up" (Rite of Passage) "thought I should stay home" "[Mom] was out of her mind"	Expected support from former spouse "huge gap"	Feeling of "falling off a cliff, like 'should I be doing this?' "
Family	**World**	
"Not as positive as I thought it would be"	"the world just doesn't have patience"	
University		
"total isolation" "over fifty (in age) doesn't fit' [on campus] Applying for a grant was "hard as hell" Needs of older and younger students during orientation	Needs of older and younger are "ten miles apart"[during Orientation tours] University is "not coddling or cuddling" [Knowing where to ask for resources] "is the best kept secret at the whole university."	"Demoralizing" working with clerks younger than own child when applying for financial aide.

Qualitative analysis. A qualitative analysis of the support systems required the highly iterative process of reviewing the data, beginning the coding of repeated terms or ideas leading to the recognition of patterns and themes, all following the recommendations of Patton (2002), Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and DuBois, J. W., Schuetze-Coburn, S., Cumming, S. & Paolino, D. (1993). By looking beyond the literary metaphors and similes used by the participants in describing their support systems, still more is revealed of their

experiences. Though this is a small sample of the 50+ student population working on a bachelor's degree, it may be significant that two participants expressed a sentiment commonly viewed by the nation's population, that personal beliefs of a higher power giving them support. Both introduced this source of support very early in responding to the question of support.

The sense of being self-supported was reported with, "It all came from me. My own behavior. My own whatever," or "…it was mostly myself," and "…I was only my self-support." Combining these comments with those who used literary metaphors, more than half reported feeling that they were their own greatest source of support, reflecting the intrinsic nature of the desire to pursue a college degree.

Figure 3 represents the mental overlay that occurs between the cognitive metaphor of a JOURNEY metaphor and the possible constructions it allows. Participants developed all the entailments associated with JOURNEY except that of dropping out.

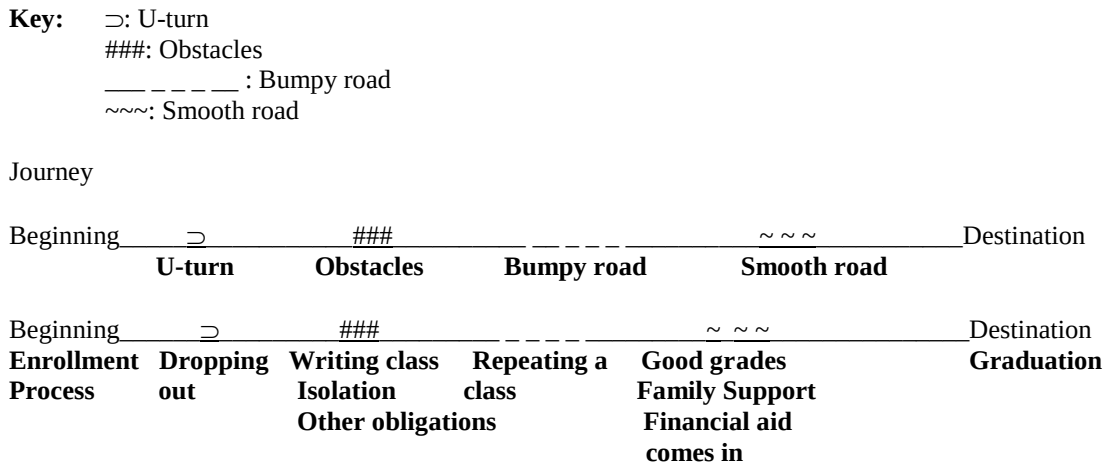

Figure 3. **Graphic representation of cognitive metaphor JOURNEY and the overlap that allows the construction "achieving a bachelor's degree is a Journey."**

The graph represents the beginning of a journey. As it progresses, there is the possibility of making a U-turn and returning to the initial position. Obstacles and a bumpy road may be encountered. There is also the possibility of smooth roads before reaching the destination.

Cognitive metaphors. This research began with the goal of finding the underlying meaning of "returning to the university" when said by the 50+ student, who may never have been to a university or college, or who may have been away from higher education for a number of years. What were their expectations?

A word search of each interview found the phrase "back to school" occurred 16 times during eight interviews. One participant who had not been to school since age 15 used the phrase. Another word search revealed that one participant instead had used "return to school." This study represents a small sample of the 50+ students, but in this study, 75% of the participants appear to view starting a bachelor's of arts program as returning to a place they felt they "knew." Returning to a place implies taking a journey. Other examples of the JOURNEY metaphor that were developed by participants include, "…[younger students] are still finding their way in life," "She kept me on the right track," and "…[the support I] was given to move forward." The last response demonstrates an understanding of forward motion, indicating that progress is embedded within the Journey metaphor.

More than 20 other cognitive metaphors were developed while responding to the question of support for the participants' decision to begin a degree-granting program. They are listed in Table 3.

Table 3.
Themes of Support identified through qualitative analysis

Self-support:
[When beginning at a community college] "It all came from me."
" . . . it was only my self-support."
Belief in higher power:
"If you open yourself up, you'll be where you're suppose to be at the time you're suppose to be."
" . . . most of the support I have was from my lord and savior. . . ."
Family:
" . . . friends' support . . . was like 50-50."
Husband, daughter and mother "are very proud of me."
"When I first started . . . . I have seven children and they thought I was out of my mind."
University professors and staff:
"I felt total support" [at a university branch campus].
"Everyone in the sociology department has been awesome."
" . . . the support system [of the community college] was a lot better there than here [the university]."

Of the other three most frequently developed, CONTAINER occurred six times, CHANGE six times, UP appeared six times. All other cognitive metaphors that were identified were used fewer than four times. Figure 4 graphically demonstrates the CONDUIT, CONTAINER, CHANGE and UP cognitive metaphors.

CONDUIT An object that conveys an entity from one location to another	Receiver Professor	⇔ ⇔	Content Information
	My professor told me about a scholarship. The book taught me so much.		
CONTAINER May be abstract or concrete in which something is taken from, put into, stirred, etc.	The mind, the body, a classroom My brain can't hold any more. The class really opened up to the speaker.	□	
CHANGE CHANGE IS MOTION, getting and losing	They lost the confidence of the voters.	↹	
SELF-INITIATED CHANGE is change of motion	I am smarter for taking the class.		
LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL CHANGE OF MOTION is a journey	He is committed to beating this disease.		
UP Based on MORE IS UP HEALTH/WELL BEING is up HAPPY is up, CONTROL is up, etc. MORE AND GOOD are up	My stack of papers is higher than yours. He's up and walking around. She's walking on air. We feel we are on top of the situation.	🡅	

Figure 4. **Graphic representation of four commonly developed cognitive metaphors used in response to the question of the source of a participant's support.**

Students used the CONDUIT metaphor when saying, "She was instrumental in inspiring me." The participant received inspiration from an advisor. When content travels to someone who understands on reception, that too is representative of a metaphor and is seen in, "If you don't know ask, ask, ask." When the information travels to you, you will understand what you were asking about. Another student said she "got more of the support that I needed from my friends." Clearly the CONDUIT metaphor is at work.

Participants were using the cognitive metaphor of CONTAINER when saying, "…by drawing from deep within," "…if you open yourself up," "…feel like I am going out of my mind" and "I started getting into it." In each case, when using the cognitive metaphoric structure of CONTAINER, something is serving as a container for something else. In the quotations given, the first two demonstrate the body as a CONTAINER construction of the metaphor. The third exemplifies the mind as a CONTAINER construction. And "I started getting into it" demonstrates how an entity, in this case the idea of going to school, can function as a container.

CHANGE is based on the concept of motion. Self-propelled motion is self-initiated action. Examples from the interviews that most clearly demonstrate this cognitive metaphor at work are, "…to go for my master's [degree]", "When I started back to school " and "I am here for myself." When telling their mother, "It's [education] really worth it," two sons were using the metaphoric understanding of education being a resource and that a resource is a commodity. MORE IS UP, as in "the pile of coins went higher and higher," motivates such constructions as, "Let's get as much as we can out of it," "My family is more supportive now," and "My mother is very supportive of this."

The cognitive metaphors in Table 4 represent all those located within the discussion of Support by the respondents.

Table 4.
Cognitive metaphors identified in response to the question of Support

CONDUIT	UP	HARM	PROGRESS	OBSTACLES
	EMOTIONS	CAUSATION	TIME	DIFFICULTIES
CHANGE	DESIRES	PROGRESS	SUPPORT	BELIEFS

CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF CONTAINER

SELF-PROPELLED/SELF-INITIATED MOTION IS ACTION

CAUSATION IS CONTROL OVER OBJECT RELATIVE TO POSSESSOR

EXPLAINING CAUSATION IS COUNTING THE FACTORS

CAUSAL RELATIONS IS LOGICAL RELATIONS

SOCIAL INTERACTION IS CONTAINMENT IN A PROSCRIBED SHAPE

ALLOWING CONTINUED EXISTENCE IS ALLOWING CONTINUED VERTICALITY

NECESSAY PRE-REQUISITE FOR CHANGE IS SOURCE OF MOVING ENTITY

ABILITY TO COPE IS ABILITY TO NAVIGATE

EMOTIONAL STABILITY IS CONTACT WITH THE GROUND

CAUSING A NEW ACTION IS MOVING TO A NEW LOCATION

IMPORTANCE OF BELIEF IS PRICE OF GOOD

BELIEFS IS STRUCTURES

EFFORT IS QUANTIFIABLE

EDUCATION IS RESOURCE

PROBLEM IS TANGLE

Summary: Research Question #1: Support Systems

What the data demonstrated with this first question is that the participants, all members of the Baby Boomer generation, are using neither figurative language nor cognitive metaphoric structures unique to their generation. This should not surprise because only those locked into some form of anterograde amnesia would continue to use the same language of the 1960s with its distinctive terms, “Groovy, Man” and a “What a square” 40 years later, unless the rest of society were still using these terms. Well-adjusted people and language change with time. While a number of the participants used similar language to describe the same target of support — professors, family, colleges, the sample is too small to make a

definitive statement regarding that aspect of language use. What they had to say about their experiences in general, however, should be of interest to those who want to know more about what this particular cohort is saying about their university experiences. It is interesting to note how few of the negative responses were expressed in literal language. Metaphors and similes appear to convey the emotional impact of the negative responses more strongly than literal language could have.

The cognitive metaphors in Table 3 represent all those located within the discussion of Support by the respondents.

Research Question #2: Expectations

Tell me what you think this whole experience is going to be like for you. Let's start at the beginning. When you first started, what were your expectations? And now? What about the future?

Metaphor and simile. When speaking of their own expectations about the college experience, participants used a variety of metaphors; one at least was more remarkable than others. One participant said she thought of her education as a cookie jar. She wasn't sure what was in the cookie jar, what the cookies would "taste" like, how many there were, and she wouldn't know till she was *given permission* (emphasis added) to open the lid of the jar, and "I expected…for someone to take the top off and have this world of whatever to come sleuthing [*sic*] out for me …." Clearly this student exhibited the knowledge voice Kasworm (2003b) described as "Entry Voice" (pp. 87-88), expecting professors to give her permission to learn and to "show them what they need to know and do" (p. 87). Another student, a former community-college student, described her expectations on arriving at the university as "awesome." During discussion of her experiences at a community college she said that she

felt she had developed the necessary skills for success. Another student noted that her future is "in the stars." One student described her early expectations as, "I had no plan. That was the plan."

When speaking of what they expected of themselves, one student said she had not set any "boundaries" or "standards" for herself — that way she would not disappoint herself. There seems to be some disparity between what some students said regarding their feeling of self-support and the notion that they had not set up expectations about themselves. One student relied on what she called her "life lesson;" that is, "If you're going to put the time in, you're going to put in the energy." Another said that she has the "tenacity of a bulldog," indicating her belief that she would hold on to her goals.

Addressing the expectations of the experience of higher education, participants used a number of unrelated metaphors. "I certainly thought it would be easier than what it's been" and "a crock of crap" sums up the range of emotional responses to this part of the question. One student interviewed found that working and going to school at the same time presented a difficult time management problem. A second student reflected the irritation of two other students on learning that not all community college or branch university classes' credits transferred to the university. One student admitted that she had never "challenged herself in that realm [education]," so she had no expectations of what the college experience would be like.

When speaking of the university as an institution, one participant said that she had expected the university to be "orderly" (Personification). She was surprised to find that janitorial services do not straighten classroom desks between sessions. Another student said, "A third of the equipment related to art and art education does not work," an apparent

hyperbole. Another student apparently had not expected to have to "work within the system," as this observation was stated as a surprise. Still another student expected that the university "as a community is geared to the younger crowd" and that is what she has found. These last two metaphors appear to indicate that for these speakers, the university is less personal and more mechanistic as it deals with its students.

When speaking of the future, two students said they anticipate upper-level classes to be "more exciting." One said that due to the most recent downturn in the national and state economy, she expects that without going on for a master's degree, "I'm still not going to be anybody…in that world [of employment]."

In relation to professors and classrooms, few metaphors or similes were used. One student had not expected to find professors "to wing it" when preparing for the class meetings. Unprepared professors disappointed her. Another spoke of her classes as "I got what I expected – rigor." Another noted that the 100-level course students were "not 100% into what we are doing" and another that these classes were "a struggle" because of the disinterest shown by students during class. Still another was concerned that some classmates were "in their box," hemmed in the by fear of being in a new place, away from home without support. She had not expected to find young students being "boxed in," meaning confined by their views of the world before coming to the university and being unwilling to explore beyond their world views. Seeing young people "boxed in" had affected her negatively.

Table 5.
Metaphors and Similes found responding to student Expectations

Expectations of the educational experience	**Expectations of self**
"my education as a cookie jar (Simile) "Awesome" "in the stars"	"…set no boundaries or standards" "If you're going to put the time in, you're going to put the energy in." "have the tenacity of a bull dog." "…had never challenged myself in that realm" No longer seeing self as "stupid"
Expectations of higher education	**Expectations of the university as an institution**
" it would be easier than what it's been" "cake walk" "a breeze"	"be orderly" "a system" "one third of equipment not working (Hyperbole)
Expectations of Professors and Classroom experience	**Expectations of the Future**
Professors would not "wing it" with lessons "I got what I expected, rigor"	"more exciting classes" Not having to "struggle" with disinterested students in 100 level classes.

Qualitative analysis. When responding to the question, "What were your expectations as you began your work toward a bachelor's of arts degree?" Analysis using qualitative methods identified three major categories: expectations of self, expectations of education as a process or experience; and expectations of the university. Table 6 identifies the major themes found in response to this question and quotations of the students.

Having no expectations of success was voiced by three participants. They began university classes with a sense of wanting something in their lives, but they were not able to identify what it was at the time. With time each was able to "find their way" (JOURNEY

metaphor), and identify a goal for themselves. Two students voiced having the desire to succeed in college but doubting their abilities. At some time during their interviews both students who expressed this self-doubt reflected on the impact of their hardscrabble lives as younger women. Each had found some source of relief as middle-aged women — one through a religious experience and the other by finding a place of refuge at a community college.

Themes found under Expectations of the Self fell into four patterns: recognition of personal strength; personal weaknesses; recognition of or anticipation of what was to come; and the goals they expect to achieve. Looking at Table 6, it is interesting to note that the section of personal strengths drew more responses than any other category. Combined with the metaphors listed under Self in Table 5, what appears to be reflected are the clearly recognized personal strengths the older students feel pursuing higher education.

Table 6.
Themes identified of Expectations identified through qualitative analysis

Self	
Personal weakness:	"I didn't have any confidence in myself." "I was worried about being able to retain the information." "I didn't set any expectations so I wouldn't be let down." " I didn't know what I was going for."
Personal strength:	"I was going to work hard." "I was not going to give up." "[I] was going to go in there [classes] with a desire to learn." "I expect to get A's." "I was not going to give up."
Anticipation:	Participant expects that "being among diverse people [of the university] gives me that much more ahead [*sic*] of those . . . that want to stay in their box." "I'm out there searching." [Expecting] to learn how cultures work. The changes of the world . . . . I want to know."
Goals:	"To get a degree," was an initial goal that has become the current goal of being a researcher for the U.S. National Park Service. "I want to get the work done. I want to move ahead. . . . "

Table 6 Continued

Educational Process/Experience	
"I thought it would be harder than it is."	
"I can honestly say I got what I expected." (Said twice)	
"I expected to be able to figure out something that I didn't already know. . . . And other than maybe a little bit of theory that I didn't know?	
"[Expectation that] life experiences should make it easier."	
"I expected it to be different."	
University	
Professors:	"[Expected] a don standing in the front of the classroom and lecturing." "[I] expected a teacher that would teach me and it would work."
	[Expect] "to develop a somewhat more personal relationship with each of my teachers, talking with them. . . . "
	"[Had not expected to find] . . . how disorganized the teachers are."
	"[Professors] . . . they know what they are doing. And they've taught before."
Classes:	"I thought it [teaching] would be a lot more structured, rigid than it is."
	"[Expected classes to be] auditorium filled."
	"Grades are my paycheck. I work hard for them." So she expects A's.

Students had a number of expectations regarding the educational experience or the process itself. No patterns were established. Expectations were of the experience to be harder than it has been or easier it than it has been. One student has never been disappointed; another expected something different but was unable to elaborate. Life experiences should have made things easier. Another felt she should have been able to figure out what she did not already know. What can be said is that the qualitative analysis supports the diversity found in the metaphors and simile section in Table 5.

Not surprisingly, students had a number of expectations about the university. One participant expected "there would be a don standing in the front of the classroom and lecturing." This same student also expected that teaching "would be a lot more structured, rigid than it is." She had not expected to find "how disorganized the teachers are," seeming to imply that this is a regular occurrence. Another expected to "develop personal relationships with teachers…by talking with them [after class]." Another student wanted professors [in the classroom] because they should know how to teach, "…they know what they are doing. And they've taught before." Another student supported that expectation when describing a sense of discouragement when faced with a class taught by a graduate student. Of the classes, one student had expected classes to be "auditorium filled," but found them to be "tiny." And other student found "class sizes…have been stunning. They are huge." In relation to classes, a student said she expected good grades because "I work hard for them." They are her "paycheck." Assigning this student to one of Kasworm's (2003b) categories, the temptation is to label hers a Cynical voice, but when other statements she made are examined, she would probably be classified as an Outside voice as she indicates strong appreciation in the expertise of those teaching her in the classroom. Of the university itself, participants expected the university to provide "a teacher that would teach me and it would work."

When reviewing the metaphors and findings through qualitative analysis, one is struck with the broad strokes used to explain expectations of the university, but the narrowly defined expectations of the individuals themselves. One explanation is that the students did not know what to expect from the university. Even though half the participants of this study attended a community college or university branch campus, coming to the main campus, so

much larger in size and with it the reputation of offering so much more than the other schools, students expressed being unprepared for what they encountered. There also may be an element of still not understanding the workings of a university as a whole that prevented the participants from more narrowly defining their expectations of it. However, each individual could pinpoint her own expectations.

Cognitive metaphors. The reader is referred to Figure 3, which graphically represents the Journey metaphor, and to Figure 4, which offers representations of the CONDUIT, CONTAINER, CHANGE and UP cognitive metaphors. Discussion of these and other cognitive metaphors as they relate to expectations follows.

The CONDUIT metaphor developed while participants responded to the question of expectations and in all cases referred to communication as a transfer of information. "There would be a teacher there that would teach me," clearly expecting that the teacher's information would be transferred to the student. The student who developed the metaphor of education being like a cookie jar, and that she would be given permission to open the jar and have access to those cookies, expected "this world…to come sleuthing [*sic*] out for me," describing the transfer of those cookies, and the world they represent, to be given to her. She went on to say that some of those cookies were like "aha moments." Some of those cookies did give her the knowledge she was expecting.

The CONTAINER structure was used most frequently in reference to the self, either the BODY AS A CONTAINER or the MIND AS A CONTAINER. "There's absolutely no doubt in my mind …." "I had a picture of academia in my head …" and "I expect a lot out of me" all represent the use of that metaphoric cognitive construction. There is nothing particularly striking about the language in any of these instances. They represent common, everyday

language. Another student enthusiastically chose to represent herself as "I exited my box," referring to her leaving behind everything that had kept her from learning about the world beyond her Native American culture. To this student "out of the box" meant feeling free to learn about the world. She classified those still not learning as being trapped in a box. It is worth noting that there are few examples using the CONTAINER construction relating to self. No conclusions should be, nor can be made, of this paucity.

The cognitive metaphors of MORE IS UP and GOOD IS UP occurred a number of times as students responded to what their expectations had been. One student's high hopes were expressed by stating her expectations remained "in the stars." Another revealed her enthusiasm for her classes by stating that she was "taking as much out of it [classes] as I can," and "I'm going to give it 100%." This same student wants to tell younger classmates that they should "get as much as we can [from a class]." Another student said that she felt her education "gives [*sic*] me that much more ahead of those [without higher education]." Only three participants used this thought pattern to discuss their expectations, but for those three, the meaning of UP meaning good or more is obvious.

CHANGE as a cognitive construct was used in a variety of its sub-categories: CHANGE IS MOTION; LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL CHANGE IS A JOURNEY, and CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF DIRECTION. The metaphor that sparked this research, "going back to school," spoken by a number of participants, represents CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF DIRECTION, CHANGE OF STATE IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION and CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF LOCATION. The mental state of these students, desiring higher education, resulted in a change in direction of their lives. Statements from students such as "I was not going to give up" and "I want to be there. I want to get the work done. I want to move ahead" clearly demonstrate self-initiated

change as self-initiated/propelled motion that is a subcategory of this metaphor. Each student had to change their location to attend classes. When one student, expressing disappointment on realizing that her bachelor's degree is no longer enough to get the job she wants, says of the past five years, "All it was was self-fulfilling," she seems to be indicating both the getting and the losing that is part of any CHANGE. She has become self-fulfilled, but at the moment, it doesn't appear to be enough. As she looks ahead, she has lost, has not attained, her dream of a better employment situation. There are not enough examples available within the data to draw conclusions about this particular cognitive metaphor and its sub-sets to say what commonalities this cohort shares. Table 7 lists the responses based on the CONDUIT, CONTAINER, CHANGE and MORE IS UP cognitive metaphors.

Table 7.
Responses based on the Cognitive Metaphors CONDUIT, CONTAINER, CHANGE and MORE IS UP in response to Expectations

CONDUIT:
" . . . there would be a teacher there that would teach me."
" . . . this world . . . to come sleuthing [*sic*] out for me . . . ."
" . . . cookies that were like 'aha' moments."
CONTAINER:
Self as container:
" . . . no doubt in my mind."
" . . . in myself"
"I had a picture in my head . . . . "
" . . . in their box."
"I exited my box."
University and classroom as CONTAINER:
" . . . coming into the university"
" . . . taking as much out of it as I can"
"To work within the system . . . you work within it."
"I was in a study group."

Table 7 Continued

CHANGE:
" . . . going back to school."
"I was not going to give up"
"I want to be there. I want to get the work done. I want to move ahead."
"All it was was self-fulfilling" [Expressing doubt about the time and effort put into the bachelor's program].

MORE IS UP:
" . . . get as much as we can . . . . "
" . . . going to give it 100%."
" . . . taking as much out of it [class] as I can."
" . . . to learn as much as I can."
[Being at the university] "give [*sic*] me that much more ahead . . . ."

The cognitive metaphor JOURNEY, and its associated entailments, was the most frequently used when participants were questioned about their expectations as they had started their experience with higher education. Participants were asked about the beginning of their college experience (their journey) and asked what they had expected it to be like. Each participant responded using the cognitive metaphor of JOURNEY at least once in direct response to expectations. The beginning of the journey as well as events that occurred along the way were discussed as well. Discussion of the anticipated destination did not necessarily come at the end of their recollections, which is typical of any discussion of a trip, whether actual or metaphorical. The reader is directed to a list of the responses invoking the JOURNEY metaphor that appears in Table 8

Table 8.
Responses based on the Cognitive Metaphor JOURNEY in response to Expectations

JOURNEY:
The start:
"In the beginning. . . . "
"Let's start with four. . . . "
"My whole life begins. . . . "
" . . . simply begin to attend and when I. . . ."
"From the very beginning. . . . "
"[From] where I started. . . ."
Events once the journey began:
"Getting through one course at a time."
". . . the time [to graduate] was going to be so long [to reach]."
" . . . people who were helpful along the way."
"[Being in classes with younger students who] are still finding their way in life."
" . . . as I go forward."
The destination:
" . . . finding my path to get a degree"
" . . . to walk out of the university"
" . . . to get to the next step."
"I didn't know what I was going for."
"to learn as much as I can."

LEARNING was another cognitive metaphor that occurred with frequency, with its cognitively structured meaning of gaining physical control of material being studied. Students used this structure when saying, "I was going to try to take six classes…" or "Let's get as much as we can out of it [a class]." Students plan to take control of all the material presented in six classes, or to take everything a professor might have to offer about a particular subject. One student said of herself, "I have the tenacity of a bulldog." Bulldogs are known for setting their jaws around something (the Source of this metaphor) and not giving it (the Target of the metaphor, in this case her education) up. She clearly plans to "set her jaws" around the material and not give it up. The student with the cookie jar metaphor said she would not be able to learn anything "until you get permission to take the top off."

Once she was able to take the top off the cookie jar, then she would have control of the cookies. Once again, there were surprisingly few metaphors, figurative or cognitive, used to describe learning, the purpose of attending any school. Something might be drawn from that, but the small sample size of this cohort would make any assessment conjecture.

A number of respondents made use of the cognitively structured metaphors of CAUSATION as control over motion of an object or CAUSE AND EFFECT. Students expressed feeling in control of their journey with expressions such as, "I was not going to give up" or "I can go as far as I choose." One student, when asked by a professor if she felt overwhelmed by a class assignment, told the professor, "Well, yes, sometimes." To this researcher she admitted to feeling overwhelmed and asserted again, "But I manage." One of the participants, who had to take a number of remedial classes because of a learning disability, said, "I can learn anything I need to." When discussing their expectations, some students also said they were "looking for a bunch of connections" or "I started making connections." One student said she had expected to make connections to what she has experienced in real life to the theory presented in the classroom. These students were using the cognitive metaphor of CAUSE AND EFFECTS, by saying that they were in control of the motion, or direction, of their education.

The reader is referred to Table 9 to see a list of other cognitive metaphors used by the participants and examples of the sentences or phrases that were constructed when responding to the question regarding Expectations.

Table 9.

Other cognitive metaphors, synecdoche and metonymy and examples of thoughts and sentences constructed while responding to the question regarding Expectations

IMPORTANT IS BIG:	"[Attending university classes] is huge to me."
COMPARING PRESENT STATE TO FUTURE STATE:	"I want to do more of it [history classes]."
EASY ACTION IS EASY MOTION:	"[Classes] are a cakewalk. A breeze."
EMOTIONAL STABILITY IS CONTACT WITH THE GROUND:	"They [younger students] are still finding their feet."
HARM IS A BURDEN WHICH SLOWS DOWN MOTION:	"I didn't set no [*sic*] expectations so I wouldn't be let down."
HARM IS LACKING A DESIRED POSSESSION:	"That's [now being required to continue into a master's degree program] disappointing from where I was to where I am now."
INTENSE EMOTION AS HEAT:	"Younger students are less fired up . . . ."
OPPORTUNITIES ARE OBJECTS:	" . . . to have this world [of knowledge] . . . come sleuthing [*sic*] out for me."
	" . . . into a decent-paying job."
POSSESSING IS HOLDING:	" . . . to be able to retain the information."
PROPERTIES ARE POSSESSIONS:	"Grades are a paycheck."
MIND HAS AN EYE:	"I had this picture in my mind of academia . . . ."
MORAL DEBT CAN BE PAID OFF WITH MORAL DEED:	"I want to give back." Repeated two more times
EXISTENCE IS LOCATION:	" . . . my own little realm of existence here at the university."
THINKING IS MOVING IN THE LANDSCAPE:	"Now I sit in the front row." (Had never thought of doing that in prior school experiences.)

Table 9 Continued

TIME AS SOMETHING MOVING:	"My future is starting."
TIME IS A RESOURCE: "Re-managing my personal time . . . ."	
	" . . . extra time I had to put in."
UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING:	
	" . . . open things . . . to me that I've never seen before."
VISUAL FIELD IS A BOUNDED REGION:	
	"You can walk into other arenas . . . ."

Summary: Research Question #2: Expectations

Examining literary/figurative metaphors, qualitative analysis and cognitive metaphors suggests students internalized the university experience as the beginning of a journey, as evident in Table 8. Some students said that they sense they are moving toward a destination, even when they were not sure of the exact nature of that destination, not having any expectations of higher education other than to receive a degree. This is the most commonly shared characteristic of the participants of this study. Of themselves, students suggested they expected to work hard, "100%," and to hold on to their goal like a bulldog. A number or the students expected grades of A. Still others note a lack of confidence in themselves. The examples of phrases generated by CAUSATION clearly demonstrate students believe that they have control of their journey.

Of the university, professors and classrooms, the responses varied widely and no conclusions can be drawn about any shared expectations. A student expected that the university would be run as an orderly system. The same student expected professors to teach using structured lessons. Someone resembling the movie ideal of a Mr. Chips-type professor was expected to be leading classes. The education experience itself was easy for some and

was expected to be easier by others. With the exception of the image of the don and grades being like a paycheck, no notable metaphors were noted.

Research Question 3: Motivation

Tell me how you decided to begin a bachelor's program at this time. What motivated you? What was it like to make that decision?

Metaphors and simile. The metaphors and similes used in response to the question regarding motivation fall into a limited number of categories, and the categories do not overlap among the participants. Most of the descriptive language does not relate directly to motivation but rather to how it was experienced. One student's entire source of metaphors describing her motivation falls into the category of higher education is vocational rehabilitation, which she defined as "teaching myself to do something else." This student was within three semesters of graduating and as a result of the findings in this interview does not seem to have progressed beyond the Entry and Cynical voice as described by Kasworm (2003b). In two statements, higher education was identified as rehabilitation, and in a third statement it was "basically re-education." Going to the university is "actually sort of like vocational rehabilitation."

Another student described her motivation as, "It's called survival." Most of the metaphors developed by this student followed that idea. "I saw I was as poor as I thought I was. The only way I was actually going to survive was [beginning a bachelor's program]. "I'll kill myself" strains the survival motif but demonstrates how hard she is willing to work to better her condition in the workplace. She described her biggest emotional response to considering going to college as, "Oh, God, help me" [Apostrophe] as a person looking for survival might do. The process of beginning her program was "like a roller coaster," she

said. Besides survival, her other motivation was to inspire two teenage daughters to do well in school. This student and mother wanted her children to know that "Mom wasn't just a mom."

Another participant's metaphors overlap the previous participant's use of survival. She invoked metaphors that convey the same emotional response to her motivation. It "…was the most frightening thing [to contemplate beginning higher education]." She also used the term of being "in the trenches" to convey the apprehension she felt. When explaining her motivation, this participant invoked cognitive metaphors that will be discussed later.

None of the other metaphors used by the participants follow a pattern. Each participant developed her own metaphors that spoke to her individual case. One student said achieving a degree was for "personal enrichment" and that the opportunity was one she could not pass up when "the offer [of the] university to give me classes [Personification]" was made. One student said, "I have always felt a lack [pause], like I wished for a degree." This student went on to say her previous experiences as a writer and illustrator "sort of pointed me toward the English program [Personification]." One student's motivation was to break away from a role she felt she was falling into with her spouse, "I was more of a crutch." He had become too dependent on her.

Another student felt she was motivated by a higher power to begin taking classes at a branch campus. "[It was] a feeling like the Lord was saying . . . ." Still another participant referred to passing the GED on her first try as her "first stepping stone," her first motivation toward other educational experiences. Self-deprecatingly, she said, "I'm a professional," recognizing herself as a reformed substance abuser who knows all the angles; therefore, she

will be in a position to help others. Now she feels "I don't have the time or luxury" to take time away from classes and rest arthritic joints. Her source of motivation has come from finding her passion.

Table 10 lists the figurative metaphors and similes used to describe participants' motivation.

Table 10.
Figurative metaphors and similes used while describing participants' motivation

Higher education is "vocational rehabilitation."
Higher education is "re-education."
Motivation is "survival."
"I was as poor as I thought I was."
"the only way I am going to actually survive (Hyperbole)"
"So that Mom wasn't actually just mom."
"I'll kill myself to get it done." Said twice (Hyperbole)
"The biggest emotion was "Oh, God, help me." (Apostrophe)
"The whole process is like a roller coaster."
"It's [motivation] called survival."
" . . . the offer of the university to give me classes." (Personification)
"Education is personal enrichment."
"Education is what you get out of it."
"I was more of a crutch."
" [It was] a feeling like the Lord was saying . . . ."
"I have always felt a lack [pause] like I wished for a degree."
"Being a writer . . . illustrator . . . sort of pointed me toward the English program." (Personification)
" . . . that [passing GED exam on first try) was my first stepping stone . . . ."
"I don't have the luxury . . . ."
"I'm a professional." (Knows the ways of substance abuser from experience.)
"Going back to school was the most frightening thing."
" . . . in the trenches"

Qualitative analysis. Three major themes regarding motivation developed quickly when using qualitative analysis with the data. More than half the respondents reported that it

was “the right time” for them to start their higher educational experience at the time they did. Half also reported that having their bachelor’s degree was something they had always wanted. The participants also neatly divided themselves into those who were intrinsically motivated and those who were extrinsically motivated.

There is no escaping the participants placing the decision to begin higher education with a particular time as the examples in Table 14 illustrate. One participant rephrased the concept by noting that at the time she began to find her passion, she told herself, “This is the beginning.”

Half the students also said earning a degree has been something they had considered for a long time. One participant phrased it differently when she said she would “feel more fulfilled” with a degree. Another said being educated was a long-held dream. All the phrases used to communicate the desire for a college education are listed in Table 14.

Additionally, the intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation of the students became clear through qualitative analysis. Unexpectedly, because a number of participants looked forward to greater job reward after graduation, the majority of the participants fell into the intrinsically motivated category. Participants’ actual words and their motivation orientation are listed at the bottom of Table 14.

One other pattern emerged with three participants, and it has research possibilities. Serendipitous acts, by another or the individual, led to the motivation to start a bachelor’s program. In one case, a participant, not happy with her current job position, began surfing the Internet and discovered a community college whose mission is to serve Native Americans. She began attending the school and there found her motivation to become a substance-abuse counselor, her passion, and her drive. Another student accompanied a

coworker while the coworker enrolled at a university branch campus. The participant walked away having enrolled. From that event she has found the motivation for her education, "to give back," by either teaching or doing social work. While responding to another question, a third participant told of accompanying a friend as she signed up for a class at a community college. The participant asked if she could also enroll, was told she could and she did. She remembers leaving the campus and thinking to herself, "Well, it looks like I'm going to go to college."

Table 11.
Categories found during qualitative analysis of the question regarding motivation faced by the 50+ student.

Time:	"This could be the beginning."
	"This may be the time."
	"and this was the perfect time."
	"The time was right."
	"It was the right time."
	"Maybe it's my turn."
	"Why not now?
Desire for college education:	
	"I always felt the need for more education."
	"I'm doing it because I felt the need to finish."
	"to fulfill a life-long desire."
	"I always dreamed of being educated . . . . My intent was always for the bachelor's degree."
	"I would somehow feel more fulfilled."
Intrinsic versus Extrinsic motivation:	

Table 11 Continued

Intrinsic:	
	"I had a profession I had fallen in to, not something that I had really chosen . . . . I chose to go back to school."
	"I felt that [bachelor's degree] would help me to respect myself. . . . [Motivation] to also change my life."
	Desire for degree to become a substance abuse counselor, "It drives me."
	"I can't use it to better my job. At this age . . . I didn't get it done . . . . I always regretted that."
	"I like learning things."
	"So, self-preservation, too" [after overcoming health problems and being bored at home.]
Extrinsic:	
	"Forced to begin [higher education]" after market decline in 2009. "[Starting higher education] I was just starting over." [University education] is vocational rehabilitation."
	Seeing Social Security projection of retirement benefits and "I want to have something . . . . I want to leave my children something."

Cognitive metaphors. Participants of the study most frequently structured their thoughts regarding their motivation for beginning a bachelor's program as a journey. Their motivation to begin this journey is seen in, "[Passing the GED] was my first stepping stone," and "I'm back on the track I started…years ago." For one student, the destination was not quite clear, "I didn't know which direction I was headed in." Using the JOURNEY metaphor, another student said, "I'm going to finish this." She sees herself reaching her destination.

Not surprisingly, the discussion of motivation prompted the use of MORE IS UP and MORE IS GOOD as well. "The sky is the limit," said one student. Another demonstrated the sometimes-humorous aspect of the way we structure our language. "As I get further up in classes [200-level courses]…." She went on to say she expected to find those classes more enjoyable. UP in this case simply means a higher course number than the introductory

courses she has been in, but she clearly associated a higher number with more enjoyment. MORE IS GOOD was most frequently used in reference to learning more, and as previously noted, the higher numbered courses were "more enjoyable."

Time frequently occurred as a way of indicating when the motivation to go to school occurred. Participants indicated motivation had occurred at a specific time in their lives. They spoke of "I had the time" and "Why not now?" One spoke of how fast time had passed while attending a community college: "Three years go so quickly." The most frequently used metonymy of Part and Whole was used for time as well; it represented a part or location in time in a person's life.

Again, not surprisingly, self-initiated behaviors were also frequently discussed. One participant spoke of "It drives me" (her passion), an example of SELF-INITIATED CHANGE OF STATE IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION. SELF-MOTIVATED ACTION IS SELF PROPELLED MOTION was voiced as, "Let's go. Let's do it."

CAUSATION was another cognitive metaphor employed to discuss motivation. Students recognized they caused the particular turn of evens that led to their going to school. "I chose to go back to school," and "Maybe I get to do this now" were two examples.

A number of other cognitive metaphors were identified during analysis of the motivation question. The examples of the sentences or phrases clearly reflect personal motivation.

All the cognitive metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche found in this section are listed in Table 12 with the sentences or phrases generated.

Table 12.
Cognitive metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche and examples related to Motivation.

Cognitive metaphors:

JOURNEY:

"[Passing the GED] . . . was my first stepping stone."

"I'm going to finish this [bachelor's program, reaching her destination]."

"I'm back on the track I started twenty-three years ago."

"When I got to the point of going back to . . . . "

"Coming back here . . . ."

"Let's go."

"I didn't know which direction I was headed in . . . ."

"I was just starting over in a different direction."

" going back to school. . . .[was the] most frightening thing."

OPPORTUNITIES ARE OPEN PATHS:

" . . . the door is open."

TAKING AN OPPORTUNITY IS TAKING AN OBJECT:

"Maybe it's my turn."

SELF-MOTIVATED ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION:

"Let's go. Let's do it."

"Maybe it's time I went and found something else to do."

SELF-INITIATED CHANGE OF STATE IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION:

"[To be financially solvent after retirement] . . . by doing something about it."

"It [desire to become a counselor] drives me."

LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL CHANGE IS A JOURNEY:

". . . time for me to go out and fulfill a lifelong desire."

CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF DIRECTION:

"I didn't want to sit [at home]."

PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOTION:

"As I moved forward . . . ."

TIME IS A RESOURCE:

"I don't have the time to . . . ."

"I had the time."

Table 12 Continued

TIME AS A TRAJECTORY ALONG A PATH:

"Well, this may be the time."

"Why not now?"

"Three years go so quickly."

OBSTACLES TO ACTION ARE OBSTACLES TO MOTION:

" . . . no longer have that [young children] in my way."

DIFFICULT SUBJECTS ARE ADVERSARIES:

"It's called survival."

HARM IS LACKING A NEEDED POSSESSION:

"I have always felt a lack."

CONTINUING TO ACT DESPITE DIFFICULTY IS MOVING DEPSITE OBSTACLES:

"I got them through high school because I was going to school [with learning disabilities, going to school was a difficulty]."

CAUSATION IS CONTROL OVER RELATIVE LOCATION:

"I chose to go back to school."

CAUSATION IS CONTROL OVER MOTION:

"Maybe I get to do this now."

"I choose to pursue a degree in sociology."

GOOD IS UP:

"As I get further up in classes . . . . I think they'll become so much more enjoyable."

" . . . the sky's the limit" [Coming from a higher power's "voice"]

MORE IS UP:

"I appreciate more what I've learned . . . ."

"I learn more from it."

" . . . to learn more"

" . . . to know more about the world."

" . . . need for more education"

"I think they'll [upper-level classes] become so much more enjoyable."

PURPOSE IS DESTINATION:

"[Going to school would]…put my mind into all these states [out of states of worry about health problems]."

PURPOSES ARE DESIRED POSSESSIONS:

" . . . fulfill a life-long desire."

DESIRES ARE FORCES BETWEEN DESIRED AND THE ONE DESIRING:

" 'Cause I want it."

Table 12 Continued

PSYCHOLOGICAL FORCES ARE PHYSICAL FORCES:

"I was being forced to [begin a bachelor's program]."

THINKING IS MANIPULATING AN OBJECT:

" . . . would keep my mind off what was bothering me."

KNOWING IS SEEING:

"I saw that I was as poor as I thought I was."

CONTENT IS FOUND IN THE STIMULUS:

"Somehow I found myself."

EMOTIONS ARE ENTITIES IN A PERSON:

"And I found my passion."

CONDUIT:

"I came across this school [and knowledge of what the school offered students]."

MIND IS A BODY:

"Once I set my mind on something."

CONTAINER:

"You should be in school. In college."

"Education is what you get out of it."

Synecdoche:

" . . . sit and watch TV?" One aspect of her daily life.

" . . . the secret of who I was." One aspect of what is known of herself.

Metonymy:

"This was the perfect time" One part of her life

" . . . and the time was right." One part of her life

" . . . lose the roof over your head . . . your only income." Parts of financial security

"At this age . . . ." One part of her life

" . . . on the other end." The last part of her life

"From the time I was young . . . ." One part of her life

Summary Research Question #3: Motivation

Students discussed their motivation to begin a bachelor's program by using a number of metaphors. Vocational rehabilitation and survival were two of the most unexpected descriptors. One student felt she was being motivated by a higher power, and another felt the

process was like a roller coaster. Qualitative analysis identified a desire for education and there being an opportunity at that time in their lives as another source of motivation. Additionally, this section of the study revealed the type of motivation each student was working under at the time of the interviews. Analysis of the types of cognitive metaphors and the structuring of students' thoughts revealed support of the previous findings and expanded on understanding them as well, as in noting the difference between SELF-INITIATED ACTION IS SELF-INITIATED CHANGE and SELF-MOTIVATED ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION. Once again, taking note of the cognitive metaphors has given the researcher a clearer understanding of the motivation of the students.

Research Question #4: Comparison of Beginning a Bachelor's Degree to Another Life Experience

What other experiences have you had that might be similar to this one, in terms of being an important step in your life (or language the participant may have used in responding to previous questions), requiring a length of time to accomplish, and has affected you strongly. How are they the same? How are they different?

Metaphors and simile. Comparing beginning higher education to another life experience brought fast and enthusiastic responses from all participants. One said that her experience was "just life itself." She went on and developed a metaphor based on Moses parting the Red Sea, with her previous life [in the Native American community] as one side of the parted sea and her life now, engaged in a Western culture's educational system as the other side. "I am building a bridge," she said, connecting the two sides through her efforts in educating herself. Hers is not a direct answer to the question but is an explanation of her view of what her education is providing her, a bridge between two cultures.

Another student compared going to school with "my whole life." Various parts of her life have required a "steep learning curve," being a young mother, adjusting to two divorces, losing a business, and losing her last job. Starting school at a later age also required a steep learning curve.

One participant's response to the question was a tautology, "To displace yourself like that [she had moved from one state to another] and start all over [she had lost all her financial assets] was an experience." She continued by saying that moving had given her "a fresh start" and "was my choice" and starting "back to college gave me a fresh start," but that "was forced on me" because there were no jobs available to her without a degree requirement.

Another student began by noting she took the comparison of starting at the university and another life event very seriously, "By the gravity of it…." She went on to say that going to the university was like "navigating being Black in America." And that navigation is "hard as hell." She continued by saying that "everything is survival of the fittest (Hyperbole) and that the world (Hyperbole) just doesn't have patience." "I equate . . . my experiences here with the over all of my whole life."

One woman said starting school as an older adult was like parenting. "[Education] is like having children and getting grandchildren." Both education and grandchildren are "a whole new life."

Another student compared starting a career in the film industry to starting school. Both experiences were "growing experiences." She said you can make work to be like school and school to be like work. With work, "You can grow with it," she said. You can "incorporate it [school] in [to] your life." Her comparison suggested a synergistic relationship could be developed in both.

One student barely addressed the question using metaphors. She said only that she saw the time commitment to earning her degree as an "eye-blink" (used twice) and that she has always approached an undertaking from that point of view.

Table 13.
Figurative metaphors and similes used while describing participants' comparison of starting a college program to another of their life events

" . . . an eye-blink."
"They're [grandchildren and education] are like a whole new world and enjoying them [*sic*]."
"My whole life . . . ." (Hyperbole)
" . . . the gravity of it."
"[Navigating the university] is hard as hell."
"The world." (Hyperbole)
"Everything is survival of the fittest." (Hyperbole)
"Beginning school…similar to when I started my film career."
"Both experiences [education and work] are growing experiences."
"You can grow with it. You can make it grow."
"To displace yourself like that and start all over [pause] it was an experience."
" . . . over to this side" [world of non-Native American]
" . . . the whole process [is] being educated"
"There's a bridge."
"[The education she has received is] like when Moses opened the Red Sea, over here and over here."

Qualitative analysis. One of the participants began by noting that her enrollment in a community college had been done on the spur of the moment. After she had asked herself, "What do I do with my life now?" Her children being grown, she had accompanied a friend who was enrolling, and while there, she inquired about taking a class and walked away enrolled. On leaving campus she remembers saying, "Well, it looks like I'm going to go to college." This participant went on to say that finding herself pregnant for the first time also had been unplanned, and her current husband, "He came much the same way." She

explained that serendipity has been a part of her life. "The most amazing things come to me that way, she said."

Another student compared going to school with raising a family. "You put your best effort…best self-interest into it [both the children and school] so it will be successful." "In parenting I had to set good examples…rules…abide by those rules…discipline and praise," she began. In school she has had to "follow the rules, be disciplined and there were consequences when I didn't do the right thing." "You learn from your mistakes, just like parenting," she said, completing the comparison. The trait she has learned from the two experiences "is being flexible."

Comparing the steep learning curve that was required during a number of other of her life's events, one student said, "I ended up feeling like…a number of days, like I couldn't do it." There was often "too much information" [cognitive overload]. And she noted that as with job-related learning, in the classroom, "some [things]…came easily and things that came harder." She finished this answer by saying, "I am really grateful I gave myself this opportunity."

One participant's response was expressed mostly as figurative language regarding the difficulty she has felt being an older Black woman in the classroom. She said, "It's been hard" three times. "Being African American with a [learning] difficulty is three times harder," she said. Of her struggles at school, she said, "I don't have to like it, and I don't like how the world is, how it is. But it is what it is. So you just got to do it."

The student who had previously worked in the film industry compared the experience to starting a bachelor's program by saying that with both, "You must dedicate yourself at the time to what you are doing…. You have to stay disciplined and find something you really

like…. And you learn it." Of herself, she said, "I still have enthusiasm to learn and to grow."

One student had compared the two situations almost entirely in metaphor. She had left a previous location voluntarily but feels she was forced to go to school. She finished her comparison by saying that her last employers "did me a favor, actually."

The student who has found her passion — thanks to building her own bridge between the two cultures she lives in — also answered the question primarily using figurative language. She began her answer by saying she compared higher education to "probably just life itself." She went to say, "So the comparison is that I can come out of a place where we were being taught that we were nothing [life on the reservation];" however, she never completed the other half of that comparison. Instead, she developed a history of her background as a child on a reservation and as a young mother. After explaining how she became substance abuser and then discovered a community she picked up the comparison. By then, she had abandoned the previous start and went on to develop the comparison of parting of the Red Sea and building a bridge.

Each participant developed her own story when answering this question. The most recurrent theme, however, was that beginning classes in higher education was comparable to other of life's greatest challenges, having lost financial security and starting with nothing, having to overcome racism, the difficulties of successfully raising seven children, and as one participant phrased it, life itself. One participant said she had experienced a number of serendipitous events in her life, and her experience with beginning classes at a community college fell under that category as well. The reader is referred to Table 14, which lists the types of comparisons to other life experiences found through qualitative analysis.

Table 14.
Types of comparisons found through a qualitative analysis of the question regarding comparisons between starting a bachelor's program and another life experience by the 50+ student.

Work experiences and starting a bachelor's program
Raising a family and starting a bachelor's program
The lived life of an older Black woman and starting a bachelor's program
The adjustment to having lost financial security and starting a bachelor's program
To the difficulties of "just life itself" to starting a bachelor's program
Serendipity of starting a bachelor's program

Cognitive metaphors. The qualitative analysis of this question identified one major theme: the experience of beginning a college program shares many of the characteristics with life's other challenges. So did their coping strategies, often by making direct comparisons. The cognitive metaphors that participants used to structure the discussion were not limited to any particular type; however, the JOURNEY cognitive metaphor and related sub-categories, SELF-INITIATED BEHAVIORS, CAUSATION AND CHANGE metaphors were the ones most closely associated with the themes to the answer, as can be seen when reviewing the list of all the cognitive metaphors found in Table 15.

Table 15.
Cognitive metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche and examples of the phrases regarding comparing another life event to beginning a bachelor's program that were based on them.

CAUSATION IS CONTROL OVER AN OBJECT:

"… what do I do with my life now?"

"… you grab it."

CAUSATION IS CONTROL OVER RELATIVE LOCATION:

"…[I] made the decision to guide the path that way."

"You're there because you want to be."

CAUSED CHANGE IS A FORCED MOTION:

"[I] was forced to start taking classes."

REMEMBERING IS RETURNING TO A PAST LOCATION OR KNOWN STATE:

"I came back to school."

SPEED OF PROGRESS IS SPEED OF MOTION TO DESTINATION:

"…an eye blink."

RESPONSIBILITIES ARE ATTACHED TO PERSON HELD RESPONSIBLE:

"[I'll] stick with it till it's done."

STARTING A PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS STARTING OUT FOR A DESTINATION:

" . . . moved to get a fresh start. I started back to college to get a fresh start."

JOURNEY:

"Looks like I'm going to college."

"[Expected] to plod through it [education experience]."

"You have to know how to go on."

" . . . to get from here to here."

LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY:

"[Taking classes] keeps the brain going."

SERENDIPITOUS OPPORTUNITY IS AN OBJECT EASILY ACCESSIBLE WITH EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE EXPERIENCER:

"Amazing things come to me that way."

"Life-changing decisions have always been presented to me."

CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF DIRECTION:

"I could have backed away."

"I could have turned away from it [decision] to start classes at community college."

CHANGEABILITY OF BELIEF IS THE RESILIENCE OF THE OBJECT:

"[Learned between parenting and going to school] is being flexible."

Table 15 Continued

THINKING IS MOVING IN AN "IDEASCAPE":

"You jump on it [desired area of study]."

BELIEFS ARE PLANTS:

"You can grow with it [work]. You can make it grow."

BELIEFS ARE STRUCTURES:

" . . . the bottom [ideas about parenting and going to school] can fall out easily."

MORE IS UP:

" . . . to find it [going to school] as much fun."

" . . . a lot more exciting [upper level courses]."

BAD IS DOWN:

"I don't' think there is any down side to it [going to school]."

CONTROL OVER PROGRESS OF EXTERNAL EVENTS IS CONTROL OVER THEIR FORWARD MOTION:

"I got the wheels moving again."

ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION:

"Navigating the university . . . ."

SELF-INITIATED CHANGE IS SELF PROPELLED MOTION:

" . . . you want to learn, you can learn."

HARM IS A BURDEN THAT SLOWS DOWN MOTION:

"Navigating the university is hard as hell."

HARMING IS LOWERING:

" . . . the public has low expectations of . . . ."

MIND IS A CONTAINER FOR OBJECTS:

"It was too much to learn."

"It was too much to take in."

AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES ARE OBJECTS WITHIN REACH.

" . . . I've given myself this opportunity."

MENTAL CONTROL IS PYSICAL CONTROL:

"[Loss of business, job, marriages and school had a] steep learning curve."

CONTAINER:

"It was too much to take in [into her mind]."

REGAINING A POSSESSESSION IS REGAINING PROPERTY:

"You have to know how to recoup."

NEGATIVE PROGRESS IS BACKWARD MOVEMENT:

"I'm finding myself turned around."

Table 15 Continued

SELF-INITIATED ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION:

"I'm building that bridge."

"I'm going to start this."

INDIVIDUALS ARE COMMODITIES:

"That your [of] value to the community [*sic*]."

Metonymy:

" . . . the only time when . . . ." Part and Whole: Point in time during education

"You're learning the basics." Part and Whole: Basics of work related knowledge or subject area knowledge

" . . . incorporate it [school] into your life." Part and Whole: One part of life.

"The world is not patient." Part and Whole: The university as part of the world.

"This little segment of my life. . . ." Part and Whole: Segment is part of whole of her life.

"This little chapter . . . ." Part and Whole: Chapter is part of whole of her life.

"[Educational experience] is like life itself." Part and Whole: Educational experience is becoming part of whole life.

" . . . to learn about everything." Part and Whole: The world beyond family reservation.

"some of that will come with me . . . ." Part and Whole: Part of old life with go with her to new life.

Synecdoche:

" . . . no matter which side of the desk you are on." An aspect of being a student or teacher.

Summary: Research Question #4: Comparison of Beginning a Bachelor's Degree to Another Life Experience

Students identified a number of circumstances to compare beginning a college program. With one exception, all compared it to specific difficulties they have faced, and their ways of coping, either raising a family, facing loss of financial security, learning on the job, and learning to adjust to another culture. Each participant found particular metaphors

that described her former situations and the present one she is in that never strike a false note to the reader or listener.

Emergent Themes

Challenges. Participants noted so many challenges they have encountered that a decision was made to analyze them as the previous research questions had been analyzed.

Metaphors and similes. Using metaphors and similes, a number of themes developed by the participants about challenges were uncovered. Time management was described as challenge two participants. "It's a juggle to get" [time for family, friends, self];" "[learning time management skills] is just practice;" "Making time is like, 'Well, where do I fit that in?" were comments made by one. The other student noted that the life of a student is "a 24/7 day."

Another student also pointed out the differences between time management skills of the university and "the real world," by saying time management skills were not as important an aspect in the real world. This same student identified another challenge as "being an elderly student." Her approach to organizing for studying has required "a little bit change of thought…I thought organization was a piece of cake [because of prior work experience]…. Different organization! [the real world versus the world of school]." However, she said that "the beginning was new but not a challenge." In a later question, this participant cited another challenge for the older student and said, "…you're no longer in charge. You have to accept that you will follow [professor's instructions]."

Another participant said that encountering topics in the classroom forced her to make adjustments while "facing my understanding of things [the issues that were being discussed in class]." Accepting that classroom lessons are designed for the traditional student "was

hard to start thinking that way." Being in a classroom required her to "dust off the cobwebs" when searching for what she may have learned 30 years ago. This student also spoke of ageism she said she has encountered with professors, saying of her experiences, "I've always seemed like a threat to them [professors]." From its tone, the adjustment of accepting that not all of her credits from a community college would transfer was, "a crock of crap" has been one of her most difficult adjustments.

One student identified being an African American as a challenge. Reflecting on high school in the 1960s, this student recalled feeling she "was always chasing behind the world." She says of herself, "I am LD." After revealing to her first professors she had a learning disability, she felt that it "changes the whole ballgame." She asked for help…"over this one little thing." "Didn't" was the one-word description of the professor's response. She no longer tells professors of her learning difficulties but finds help elsewhere. She has "refused to ever get an exclusion" through the Accessibility Resource Center that provides help to students with disabilities, but she did not offer a reason for this action. When explaining how she has coped with her learning disabilities, she said, "I went around, over, above, under, fought a few battles, navigate around and hit it on the head." She also invoked the imagery of the military when describing her efforts to socialize with professors but found her efforts rebuffed. "It's like the military. You don't see a general cohorting [*sic*] with a private, right?" Two students used metaphors unique to the challenges of adjusting to learning writing skills. In responding to the second research question, one student had said, "Yes, I'm a fragment girl," describing the difficulties she has with writing complete sentences for class assignments. In response to the current question another student said of herself, "You've always been Chicago Style," as she described the frustration of having to learn a new writing

style. Her eventual capitulation to the MLA style she credits a new, younger friend from class. She suggested that it is the "millions of years" since she last had to prepare for classes that made some of her experiences challenging. This same student also anticipated her late re-entry into the workplace after graduation will mean, "I'm going to end up dying at my desk" (Hyperbole) as she meets the challenge of paying off student loans.

One participant who had attended a university branch campus found her greatest challenges when she began taking classes there. "Challenges [at the main campus were] nothing like when I started at the branch campus…I was scared to death (Hyperbole)." "Memory…That's my biggest challenge." This student attributed memory problems to prior substance abuse, not being aware of the slower memory functions of the older student that occurs naturally. When preparing for a test or presentation, this student said, "I've done the legwork," but she still fears that during a stressful situation, she may not be able to retrieve the information in the given time period, a common problem for older, adult learners working under the pressure of time (Park, 1999a; Park, 1999b).

Two students used a limited number of metaphors when responding to challenges. One student used only one figurative metaphor to describe her challenge and said that meeting the challenges of going to the university "was just a whole new world to me." The other student said "memory was my biggest challenge" and that the main campus was a "different playground" from the community college she had attended. Adjusting to that difference was her challenge.

The reader is referred to Table 16, which lists the figurative language used to describe participants' challenges.

Table 16.
Figurative metaphors and similes used to describe participants' challenges

Time management:
"The biggest challenge is time management."
"It's a juggle to get enough time."
"Making time is like, 'Well, where do I fit in?' "
"Scheduling 200-level classes is going to be a juggle."
" . . . it's just practice [learning to meet time management challenge]."
"Time management not as important an aspect in what I call 'the real world.' ''
[The life of a student] "is a 24/7 day."
Organizing for study:
[Approach to a class] "is a little bit change of thought [compared to preparing for a job related meeting]."
"I thought organization was a piece of cake. . . . Different organization!"
"And it has been a real challenge after not doing it [doing home-work and studying] for so many years. . . .
Yeah, I think I expected those things to be more challenging than they been. . . ."
Race and learning disabilities:
"My biggest obstacle was being African American."
"[School experience of the 1960s] was always chasing behind the world."
"I am LD [learning disabled]."
"It [being learning disabled] changes the whole ballgame" [referring to treatment by faculty].
"[Class structure of the university] It's like the military."
"I went around, over, above, under, fought a few battles, navigate around and hit it on the head" –
[response to how she faced her challenges].
Adjusting to restrictions:
" A crock of crap." Not all classes for community college transferring to the main campus.
"[The educational experience] was like facing my understanding of things [the issues being discussed in class]."
[Accepting classes designed for traditional students] was "hard to start thinking that way."
"[Adjusting to class requirements, such as how to write a paper] was like testing the waters too."
"Dust off the cobwebs."

Table 16 Continued

Bureaucracy:

" . . . a struggle . . . to deal with some of the red-tape."

Self:

"Self doubt"
"I'm going to end up dying at my desk." (Hyperbole)
"I'm a fragment girl."
"You've always been Chicago Style."
" . . . how many million years has it been since you've done something like that? [since preparing for classes]" (Hyperbole)

Beginning an Associative Arts degree:

"Challenges at the main campus are nothing like when I started at the branch campus."
"I was scared to death." (Hyperbole)
"I know I've done the legwork."
"[Memory] That's the hardest part."
" . . . use of technology was a shock."

A new environment:

"[The main campus] is a different playground."
"[Going to the university] was just a whole new world."

Qualitative analysis. A qualitative analysis of the challenges faced by the participants revealed a wide range of challenges, some falling in the categories previously listed under metaphors, but many more were developed. Three students discussed the importance of developing time management skills as "the biggest challenge," "real important" and "crucial." One student said that having a time management system in place " took a lot of stress off of me." Another student said she has realized she has "to let that time go a little bit [for time with family and friends]." Another said that she uses commuting time on the train to read or study.

Organizing their lives around school was an unexpected challenge to some students. "I had to retrain myself in organization to be a student," said one student who added, "the organizational challenge was one that I didn't think of [when beginning college]." A contradiction occurred in one student's response to the question:

> I expected it to be a challenge to learn how to do homework again. To learn to study again. And it has been a real challenge after not doing it for so many years…. Yeah, I think that I expected those things to be more challenging than they've been….
>
> In a later question this participant cited another challenge for the older student, and said, "you're no longer in charge. You have to accept that you will have to follow…directions…. But at the same time…be self-motivated."

Study skills were another challenge for students. A number of researchers (Salthouse, 1996; Salthouse, Atkinson & Berish, 2003;Park, 1999a; Powell, 1994; Park, 1999b; Salthouse, 1999; and Verhaeghen & Basak, 2005) have already noted what some participants have experienced: slower learning times and struggling with memory. "It's harder for us…after a great deal of time has lapsed" said one student, who does not seem to attribute her difficulties with studying to her age.

Another student said, "I don't learn as quickly. It takes a minute." Another participant said, "I have to stay focused on what I'm doing. Sometimes I have to read something more than once." "Will I have memory?" said twice, was a concern of a participant as she began taking classes. One participant asked herself if she would "be able to retain, absorb what I've taken in?" She identified tests, with a limited time allotted to "find it [the information she needs] in the brain" are her most challenging experiences; however, she felt comfortable with writing assignments that give her more time to draw out

information that she knows she has. Another student said of tests, "do the tests and stuff…. It was the hardest thing." Another student also said tests are a challenge but that "I'll know it [the answer] if I relate [to] something," exactly what Ormrod (1995) and Craik (1999) and others have referred to as deep processing. "My memory span is not there," said another. One participant compared the learning experience to being "a whole new world that I wasn't prepared for." Students said that using flash cards, tape recordings of lessons, and sheer "determination" is what they use to help them overcome the effect of aging on the cognitive processes of the older learner.

One student, when talking about her challenges, simply stated, "I am LD [learning disabled]." She has had to repeat a number of courses, which she described as "frustrating." But she would rather repeat courses than use the services the university provides. "I refused to ever get an exclusion, so I've been working at my degree a long time. But I don't want to be associated with that [the exclusion policy of the university]." She indicated that early on she would approach professors and let them know she needed help to "understand this, just a little bit better," but after they referred her to the Accessibility Resource Center, she felt those professors treated her differently. Her remedy was to return to the university branch campus and ask for help there, which she received. She has stopped informing her professors of her learning disability.

Internal conflicts were another source of challenge for some participants as well. "Not having any support…a home…money…. My low self-esteem…[Being] scared" racked one student. The challenge "to make friends," due to shyness and no age peers in class, troubled another until she talked to herself and listed her strengths. At that point she said she felt she had what it takes to strike up a conversation with classmates many years younger.

Due to poor economic conditions, this same student considered quitting school and finding a job. But through another inner dialogue, she convinced herself to stay, saying, "If you quit now, you'll never come back…I need to do this." One student resolved a different type of conflict by changing her approach to her educational experience. She said, "I didn't want to focus on what I couldn't do…on failure. I wanted to focus on what a possibility of learning or of looking forward instead [*sic*]." This same student said that there are times during public speaking when "my self-doubt will start to get the best of me" and she has found that confronting her doubts head-on helps her work through such crises.

Two students addressed discrimination as a result of age. One said," I don't tell anybody how old I am…I don't even mention it…. If you don't tell them, they're [professors] are cool with it." She feels that knowing her age puts off her professors because, "they feel they can't teach me anything" because telling her age reveals her life experiences, which conflict with what is being taught in the classroom. "I run into that a lot," she said. Another student had a professor tell her, "I don't expect people who've been out of school as long as you have to be able to come back again and to catch on and keep going." This student said, "I think that teachers have a lower expectation of what we can do." This same student said, "They come up and they say to you 'Are you sure you know how to do this? Are you sure you understand?' And they mean to be helpful." No conjecture can be made about the other six participants not mentioning this issue.

Two participants also addressed discrimination as a result of race. One began with, "One of my biggest obstacles, again (emphasis added), is because back in my day, you have 'number one,' African American . . . . Because of the way the world was back there (her home state in New England)…cultural impact." A review of the previously answered

questions found no indication that racism or her race had been addressed. The insertion of "again" appears to stem from her race being obvious at the time of our meeting and from there "again" appeared to belong in that construction of her answer. This participant only listed racism with the one quotation given. She expressed a feeling of isolation on campus and having a learning disability. Another student, citing two vivid experiences, addressed racism in the classroom. One professor asked her, during class time, if she would mind being "used" as an example of a double minority, Black and a woman, during a discussion of the 2008 presidential election. Employing "use" is too ironic not to make note of in this situation. Another professor, during a class presentation, kept using the term "Colored" for Black or African American. The student asked the professor to stop using the term "Colored," she was rebuffed and she took it up with university officials. The matter was resolved. The Native American participant never brought up the race issue.

The financial burden of being a full-time student was shared by seven of the eight participants. That burden caused a number of them to question remaining in school, but to date all remain enrolled. The burden was addressed simply with, "I started running out of funds" by one student who began applying for financial aid. Another student listed "not having money" in a series of challenges. And one said, "the financial portion…has been the most burdensome." One student said that she had qualified for a Pell Grant and added, "So that's a real blessing." But she will still have to secure student loans now that she has used up her personal funds.

Another contradiction occurred when one student spoke of "…it's been challenging…not having one-on-one with professors" at the main campus as she had experienced while at the branch campus. Another said, "I credit him [a professor on the main

campus] with me [*sic*] passing" because he was always available to her. No other participants discussed this issue.

Confronting various challenges was mentioned by six of the eight participants. One said she met her challenges "with a lot of discipline." Another mentioned meeting the challenge of study skills, "by relating new material to previously known [material]." "With determination," said another. Using strategies such as, "I went around, over, above, under…fought a few battles," "navigate around" and "I hit it on the head" underscored the sense of battling to overcome the challenges this woman has faced. Another participant said she "used a lot of the skills that I already had in breaking things down to the basics."

The reader is referred to Table 17, which lists these and other categories found while doing a qualitative analysis of challenges faced by the 50+ student.

Table 17.
Categories found during qualitative analysis regarding challenges faced by the 50+ student.

Time management:
"The biggest challenge is time management."
"I've had to work at laying out what needs to be done for school."
" . . . we've settled into a schedule now . . . ."
"I've developed a schedule that I know works."
"Maintaining the same schedule for two years helps."
"I need to let that time go a little bit."
" . . . good time management was real important."
" Putting the date the paper is due is not enough is what I had to learn."
With a time management system in place, "it took a lot of stress off of me."
A system of time management "It's crucial. It really is."

Table 17 Continued

Organizing as a student:

I had to retrain myself in organization to be a student."

"[Being a student] is not having an 8-5 day."

"Putting the date the paper is due is not enough is what I had to learn."

"the organizational challenge was one that I didn't think of [when beginning to take classes]."

"[With office management background, student organization would be] a piece of cake."

"It [learning and studying] has been a real challenge after not doing it for so many years . . . . Yeah, I think I expected those things to be more challenging than they've been."

" . . . you're no longer in charge."

Study skills:

"It's harder for us [older students]… after a great deal of time has lapsed."

"I'm doing homework from 7-10 p.m."

"Anything I haven't learned by 11:00 p.m, I'm not going to . . . because I'm too tired."

"I mean [studying, learning various writing styles, using a calculator] it was just a whole new world that I wasn't prepared for."

"You have to find what works for you and just do it."

"I don't slough off anything."

" Remembering what it was like to be in school."

Learning more slowly:

"You don't learn as quickly. It takes a minute."

"Learning not to deal with going to a teacher and asking for help."

"I have to stay focused on what I'm doing. Sometimes I have to read something more than once."

"My memory span is not there."

"Will I have memory?"

Table 17 Continued

Internal conflicts:

"Not having support . . . . a home . . . . money."

"My low self-esteem."

"I was always scared."

"I'm here on my own."

"[It was a challenge] to make friends."

"If you quit, you'll never come back . . . . I need to do this."

"I didn't want to focus on what I couldn't do . . . . On failure. I wanted to focus on what a possibility of learning or of looking forward instead [*sic*]."

Ageism:

"I don't tell anybody how old I am . . . . I don't even mention it . . . ."

If you don't tell them, they're cool with it . . . ."

They feel they can't teach me anything" [revealing age would mean having had certain life experiences] . . . . I run into that all the time."

"[A professor said] I don't expect people who've been out of school as long as you have to be able to come back again and to catch on and keep going."

Racism:

"One of my biggest obstacles."

[No quotes, but stories of being asked to represent a double minority and encountering a professor who preferred "Colored" to African American.]

Financial burden:

"I started running out of funds."

"Not having money."

" . . . the financial portion has been the most burdensome.

One-on-one experience with professors:

"But it's been challenging . . . not having one on one with professors."

"I credit him with me [*sic*] passing."

Table 17 Continued

On being learning disabled:

"I am LD."

"And I refuse to ever get an exclusion . . . . I don't want to be associated with that."

On large classes:

"You get lost . . . . [She was] more comfortable asking questions in class or after class [at the community college]."

Adjusting to the challenge of being in school:

"I started thinking about it [the challenges of being in school] and I started getting into it and I adjusted."

Meeting challenges:

" . . . with a lot of discipline."

"With determination."

"I went around, over, above, under . . . fought a few battles," "navigate around" and "I hit it on the head."

" . . . used a lot of the skills that I already had in breaking things down to the basics."

Cognitive metaphors. As participants of the study discussed the challenges they had encountered when beginning their programs, they most frequently structured their thoughts using the cognitive metaphor of JOURNEY. "Coming back to school" by itself was a challenge. One student said, "Everyone's afraid of stepping into something new," an unknown, possible impediment. Another fearful aspect of the journey was noted with "you can get lost." Other aspects of JOURNEY were found as locations along the journey or path, which by themselves do not note challenges but give some indication when particular events arose for these students. One said she no longer fears her challenges. Another said a daunting challenge for her was resolved "half-way through the semester."

With the results of the metaphors and qualitative analysis, it is not surprising to find the TIME IS A RESOURCE was frequently noted as a cognitive structure. Students spoke of "losing time," "making time," "allocating time to study," "I need to allocate…as much time…" and "I need more time." The challenge to have a life outside the classroom and study area was one thing. The challenge to meet various classroom assignments was another. These students are forced to do both, and as older students, the first challenge often is noted as one of the biggest obstacles for the older student (Hagedorn, 2005). One student also made use of FLOW OF EVENTS IS FLOW OF WATER when she said, "The biggest challenge…is getting my life into that [time] flow again."

As they confronted meeting their particular challenges, SELF-INITIATED CHANGE OF STATE IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION was another frequently used cognitive construct by these students. When students spoke of, "I had to learn to be more vocal," having to find the "discipline to make myself sit down [and study]," and "you just have to find what works for you. And then do it," demonstrated the self-initiated change of motion or action that these students engaged in. One student said, "I tutored three times a day," meaning she took tutoring sessions three times a day to meet the challenges of 90-level math classes. Another said she learned to read more to get the meaning behind it. She went on to say, "I learned to speed read." Each of these students demonstrated they initiated their CHANGE OF STATE, as better readers, students and becoming their own champions. "Learning to go to the teacher" can be an issue for an adult who felt in charge of his or her life before entering the classroom. Taking the initiative to break an old pattern, initiating a change of motion can be a difficult step. Related to CHANGE, when a student spoke of "…thirty years back, you have to reach back and dust off the cobwebs and go from there," she has structured her thought using the

cognitive metaphor of NECESSARY PRE-REQUISITE FOR CHANGE OF ACTION IS A SOURCE. In this case, the source is her previous school experience.

The question regarding challenges did not elicit a number of cognitive metaphors having to do with OBSTACLES TO ACTION, though a few were mentioned. One student said, "I just push through and push through" problems with her memory. Another used pushing to suggest that she could move aside her obstacle. "I had to push away the expectation" that a 100-level class would be an easy grade. Another type of OBSTACLE TO ACTION is behind the construction of the thought that "there's so many people [on the main campus] that you can get lost." CREATING IS MAKING can be a challenge or an obstacle, and as one student noted, when she first began taking classes, "making a sentence" was the greatest obstacle in her first English writing class. Another student said ageism was an obstacle she has "run into…a lot." And another said that being African American was "one of my biggest obstacles." She was the only participant to specifically use the word "obstacle." DIFFICULTY IS HARDNESS OF AN OBJECT relates to obstacles as seen in "It [tests and 'stuff'] was the hardest thing," as one student said of her experiences.

The following discussion of the cognitive metaphors that were used infrequently by the participants offers insight into the patterns of thought of these particular participants and may represent patterns that would be more definitively significant in a larger study. MENTAL CONTROL IS PHYSICAL CONTROL over any aspect of one's life can be a challenge and was reflected by the student who said, "I think I am picking it up (improving studying techniques)." Another student said, "I'm in the groove" indicating that she felt she has established some kind of routine. Being "in the groove" is based on MEANS OF CHANGE IS PATH OVER WHICH MOTION OCCURS. She has made changes in her approach to studying and

is now moving along her path toward her degree. This one statement, "being in the groove" was the only one made in the course of eight interviews that used a term related to the formative years of the Baby Boomers. One student, while discussing the challenges of testing, said, "I know I have to pull that information in an amount of time," demonstrating the cognitive metaphor of ACTION IS CONTROL OVER POSSESSIONS. This student's possessions were what she had studied while preparing for the test.

"Laying out what needs to be done for school" is based on the cognitive structure of OBLIGATIONS ARE POSSESSIONS. Laying something out brings to mind laying out a wardrobe or an array such as in a menu. Another student, noting the effect of age on learning, said, "you don't learn as quickly," based on SPEED OF MOTION IS SPEED TO DESTINATION. Not learning quickly has already had a negative impact in how fast she has progressed to her goal of graduation. CHANGE IS GETTING OR LOSING AN OBJECT is behind two responses to two different challenges, "I got the hang of it" and "I could not even get three sentences." CHANGE IS COMPLIANCE was apparent in, "before I caught on [how to write a paragraph]" she was not passing the first writing class." Once this student learned to write a paragraph, she was in "compliance" with the academic community she was trying to join.

The participants of this study used additional cognitive metaphors. One student used the cognitive metaphor of HARM IS A BURDEN THAT SLOWS OR PREVENTS FORWARD MOTION TOWARD A GOAL when she spoke of the debt she is accruing as a result of student loans. "The financial portion…has been the most burdensome," she said. Another student used the same construct to speak of developing her memory as "one of the hardest parts" of what she has experienced as a student. One student's way of expressing PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM IS PHYSICAL INJURY was by saying, "the use of technology was a shock." Students also spoke

of "I leaned a ton in this class" and "the challenges here [the main campus] are a lot larger," based on the cognitive metaphors of AMOUNT IS SIZE and AMOUNT IS PHYSICAL PROPERTY. When one student was asked how she met her challenges, she responded, "Just head on," based on the cognitive metaphor of PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOTION.

In this section regarding challenges, the examples of metonymy fell under the sub-category of Part and Whole. Two general categories emerged, but they were small. Half the examples do not fall into any category. "I've decided to try new things." "Things" referred to particular study techniques that she has not used. These techniques would be part of the whole of possible study techniques. "…breaking things down…." refers to breaking a whole lesson into its parts. "I've got that system down" refers to time management skills as part of a whole repertoire of study skills. (In the previous quotation, "down" does not imply direction. It may be considered as aspect of writing, a metonymy. When something is written, it is put *down* on some writing surface.) "It [study methods] was the repetition. Doing over and over. For hours and hours" was one part of a number of study techniques. "That's [memory] is one of the hardest parts" of the whole function of intelligence. "In the beginning was…" referred to the first part of the entire journey of this student. "The bureaucracy" referred to one part of the whole university. "It's the science and math" that troubled one student, which are only part of her whole curriculum. One student's self-description, "You've always been Chicago Style" represents only part of her writing skills.

The examples of synecdoche were far fewer. One aspect of the university was the various levels of course offerings. A student said, "It's hard for you at this level," which referred to one particular level of courses. One participant described one organizational strategy as having "a notebook for this one [class]…for this one…." (each notebook

representing a particular class). "[Classes of] 110-150 [students]" was just one aspect of classes. One aspect of the brain is intelligence, typically understood as the information a person has located there, so that a student was able to structure the idea of "to find it [information] in the brain."

The reader is referred to Table 18, which lists examples of cognitive metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche of challenges with examples taken from the data.

Table 18.
Cognitive metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche of challenges and examples of the phrases that were based on them.

Cognitive Metaphors
JOURNEY:
"Coming back to school . . . ."
" . . . in the beginning . . . ."
TIME IS A RESOURCE :
" . . . losing time."
"I need more time . . . ."
SELF-INITIATED CHANGE IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION:
"You just have to find what works for you . . . then do it."
NECESSARY PRE-REQUISITE FOR CHANGE OF ACTION IS A SOURCE:
"You have to reach back and dust off the cobwebs and go from there." [Source is prior school experience.]
OBSTACLES TO ACTION ARE OBSTACLES TO MOTION:
"I run into that a lot."
"I had to push away the expectation" of an easily earned grade.
CREATING IS MAKING:
" . . . just making a sentence was a challenge."
DIFFICULTY IS HARDNESS OF AN OBJECT:
"It was the hardest thing."
MENTAL CONTROL IS PHYSICAL CONTROL:
"I think I am picking it [study skills] up."
MEANS OF CHANGE IS PATH OVER WHICH MOTION OCCURS:
"I'm in the groove."

Table 18 Continued

ACTION IS CONTROL OVER POSSESSIONS:

"I know I have to pull that information in an amount of time . . . ."

OBLIGATIONS ARE POSSESSIONS:

"Laying out what needs to be done for school . . . ."

SPEED OF MOTION IS SPEED TO DESTINATION:

" . . . you don't learn as quickly."

CHANGE IS GETTING OR LOSING AN OBJECT:

"I got the hang of it."

"I could not even get three sentences."

COMPLIENCE IS FOLLOWING:

" . . . before I caught on [how to write a paragraph, she was not passing her first writing class].

HARM IS A BURDEN THAT SLOWS or PREVENTS FORWARD MOTION TOWARD A GOAL:

"The financial portion . . . has been the most burdensome."

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM IS PHYSICAL INJURY:

"The use of technology was a shock."

AMOUNT IS SIZE and AMOUNT IS PHYSICAL PROPERTY.

"The challenges here are a lot larger."

"I learned a ton in this class."

FORWARD MOTION IS PROGRESS:

"Just head on."

Metonymy

Part and Whole:

"I decided to try new things." (Various study skills from the entire scope of study skills)

"In the beginning . . . ." (One part of the whole journey)

"breaking things down . . . ." (Breaking an entire lesson into smaller parts)

" . . . got that system down." (Time management part of study skills)

"[Memory] is one of the hardest parts." (A part of intelligence)

" . . . the bureaucracy . . . ." (A part of the university)

"You've always been Chicago Style." (One aspect of her writing skills)

"It's the science and the math . . . ." (Two parts of her entire curriculum)

"[Study methods of] repetition. Doing over and over. For hours and hours." (Part of a whole range of study techniques)

Table 18 Continued

Synecdoche:

"It's hard for you at this level." (One level of university education)

" . . . a notebook for this one [class] . . . for this one . . . ." (Each notebook representing a particular class)

"[Classes of] 100 to 150 . . . [had been] use to [classes of] 30." (Class size is one aspect of a class)

" . . . find it [information] in the brain." (The brain is an aspect of intelligence. Note the cognitive metaphor of the CONTAINER for the brain is used here as well)

Summary: Challenges

The metaphors and similes used by the participants to describe their challenges fell into a number of categories. Each participant developed metaphors based on the challenge she was describing. One student described time management as a "juggle" that she had to learn through "just practice." Organizing for student life was not "the piece of cake" one student had anticipated it to be. Another student used imagery of battle, "I hit it on the head" "battle against it" to describe how she responded to the challenges she faced because of learning disabilities. Another student spoke of the university being "another playground" where she had to learn what the community standards were. Two students used the imagery of death when one said she was going to die at her desk working to pay off student loans, and another said she was scared to death when she first arrived on the main campus. The only images that may strike some readers as unique were when students referred to themselves as "Chicago-Style" and "a fragment girl." The metaphors, as previously noted, were those that the community as a whole uses daily. They represent the shared culture of the community, not just the university.

The variety of cognitive metaphors used to construct explanations of challenges and how they have been met reflects each student's unique situation in pursuing higher education. Noticeable, but not unexpected, were the number of cognitive metaphors that indicated the type of challenge these students have met. The JOURNEY, CONTAINER and CONDUIT metaphors are no longer as applicable to this topic. GAINING CONTROL OVER POSSESSIONS, as study skills; TIME IS A RESOURCE; the HARMFUL BURDEN of financial debt; OBSTACLES, even when abstract, that may be "run into" or "pushed away;" and SELF-INITIATED CHANGE OF STATE are structures that are readily understood, because they are part of everyone's shared understanding of challenge.

The metonymic constructions are also a part of the shared concepts of university students regarding academic experiences, including the idea of being "a Chicago Style girl." The synecdoche structures also reflect common, shared understandings of university students' experiences. These two methods, the use of the figurative metaphor and cognitive metaphor for constructing and expressing the language these students used, support the data that was uncovered during the qualitative analysis. Once again, based on empirical study of language, its use, and the psychological foundations of language, the researcher can feel more confident about the findings that come from the qualitative analysis.

Transformation

A second theme to emerge was that of transformation. One participant's response that, "I have changed completely in a lot of ways," prompted a review of the other responses to see how many participants indicated any sense of having been transformed. CHANGE IS REPLACEMENT is the cognitive metaphor that has evolution and change as its target transformation. The participants who had trouble when first arriving to the main university

campus had said, "I realized the cultural difference. It was hard, but I did my best. I did my best. Now, I keep an open mind about it when I'm doing work now…. I left my box…. My passion. I left everything behind." She has replaced her former way of thinking about the world with a new outlook. One of the former substance abusers initially said, "What, me go to college?" which became "I can go as far as I choose. [Education] would help me to respect myself. It's grown me as a person tremendously. It also changed my life. It actually produced a different person. Probably the person I was meant to be." She clearly has replaced a new person with the one she had been. The examples of transformation continued with other participants. A mother of a large family said, "When I first started it was just…to get a degree. Now I want to do research at another university for Native Americans." Her response indicates she has developed the "Inclusion voice" as described by Kasworm (2003b), valuing the academic world, wanting to become part of it and having the desire to create new knowledge. The woman who continued to feel her financial losses said, "Everything I did came out to be a benefit for me in the end." The woman who felt isolated on the main campus said, "Getting a degree has re-enforced my own feeling on myself. That I am capable. It didn't change anything of my personal self. It embraced it." The women quoted here each discussed a life crisis, often financial in nature; a disorienting dilemma, what to do?, a revision of belief systems (in regard to their beliefs about themselves, their situation and what they were capable of doing to overcome the crisis); and the behavioral changes they felt were necessary to overcome their situation. Mezirow's (1978, 2000) model of the steps toward transformation identified the process of transformation: disorienting dilemma; self-examination (with a sense of discomfort, or guilt); reflection on one's values, what they are, where they came from, how they have affected behavior and lives; realizing a

change is wanted and will be accomplished through a constructivist process; trying new roles; becoming confident with and in those roles; and finally, internalizing these new values or life lessons. The women in this study have discussed a number of these steps during the course of each interview. The cognitive metaphor of CHANGE IS REPLACEMENT may help a researcher keep in mind just what transformation means to those being observed. Knowing the cognitive metaphor that gives rise to the concept of resilience serves to confirme the researcher's understanding of the data.

Self-efficacy

A number of students also revealed that a strong sense of self-efficacy has been or appears to be in the process of development. One of the effects of high self-efficacy is persistence in the face of daunting challenges, such as a learning disability, memory problems attributed to previous substance abuse, inter-cultural miscues, lack of support and racism. In other words, they have maintained their motivation in the face of great risks or challenges (Bandura 1977, 1982). These women have developed a strong sense motivation, one of the traits of a self-efficacious person. The quotations that come to mind from this study's participants are, "Tell me what you want and I'll do it." Another said, "I can learn anything I need to [when explaining that her learning disabilities have not prevented her from continuing with university classes]." She also said, "I can go as far as I choose." When asked if she found the work overwhelming, one student replied, "Well, yes. But I manage." "It's time to put your big girl pants on," said a former branch-campus student who realized that the intense support she had experienced there would not be found easily on the main campus. The cognitive metaphor SELF-MOTIVATED ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION lays behind our understanding of self-efficacy.

Resilience

Another theme to emerge from this study was that of resilience. Looking at only one aspect of resilience, personal agency, the women each demonstrated the belief that the responsibility for educational success lays within themselves. In the literature, this is referred to as locus of control. For these women it was clearly internal. Howell (2004) studied resilience in 60 women who were surveyed using the Resilience Scale and the Adult Persistence in Learning Scale as well as interviews that were analyzed using qualitative analysis, looking for conformity between the two techniques. That conformity was found. The interesting aspects of that study as it relates to this one are the number of instances that the characteristics or the responses of the two groups overlapped. In the Howell study, one student spoke of "juggling" studies and other responsibilities. One participant of this study used the same term twice. All of Howell's participants had made "conscious choices to continue toward their goals," despite a number of difficulties, as in this study. A number of the Howell participants realized they were intelligent, as did the women of this study. Researchers (Dyer & McGuinness, 1996; Garmezy, 1993; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Masten, 1994; and Werner & Johnson, 1999) have noted that resilience develops not by avoiding difficult situations but by meeting the challenges, working through them, and persisting until they are overcome. This has been the pattern these women represented that they have established. The characteristics of resilience that typify the participants of this study are self-efficacy, motivation, perseverance, and determination. The cognitive metaphor that clearly captured resilience was SELF-MOTIVATED ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION. Once again, knowing the cognitive metaphor that gives rise to the concept of resilience served to confirm the researcher's understanding of the data.

Desire

A theme that emerged throughout the study was the desire to earn a bachelor's degree, alluded to by more than half the participants. The cognitive metaphor that underlies the thoughts of these students as they discussed their desire for their degree is clumsily phrased PURPOSES ARE DESIRED POSSESSIONS. That desire is how one participant began her response to the question about support, by first establishing that by attending a community college, she had found her "passion" to become a counselor for those who, like her, have had trouble assimilating into the non-Indian world. During the time she was earning an Associate Arts degree, she realized she had to earn a bachelor's degree to do the type of work she had become passionate about. Her passion became a support. To be certain the point was not missed, "passion" was repeated six times within her response.

Another student said that in classes where younger students appeared disinterested, she wanted to tell them to "grab the class and get everything out of it…. Let's enjoy this." Her desire for getting the most out of the classroom experience was almost palpable. The other study participants did not develop long explanations of this theme, but comments such as, "I want it," "I want to be here," "It's a life-long ambition," "[I am here] because I want it," and "[It is] the right thing to do at this time in my life" echo the desire to be at the university as intrinsic motivation, as previously reported and elaborated by Kasworm (2003a). Knowing the cognitive metaphor that gives rise to the concept of desire served to confirm the researcher's understanding of the data and deepened the appreciation of the participants' emotional response to their wishes for a degree.

CONFRONTING IS LEANING FORWARD

During the course of the interviews, two students used the phrases "face on" and "head on." Neither phrase is in any way unusual, but with more thought, it struck the researcher that she had not seen this concept named or discussed in any of the literature reviewed to date. This concept is based on an observation made by everyone when observing a person during the time of confronting someone or discussing an issue that is being confronted. The following is offered as an explanation of CONFRONTING IS LEANING FORWARD.

Lakeoff and Johnson (1980), Goatley (1997), and Kovecses (2002) explained that cognitive metaphors are grounded on the earliest experiences of the individual, from childhood. The experiential behavior behind the construction of the concept of "confrontation" is based on the observed behaviors of humans during confrontation, as with the leaning toward the person being confronted or even the body's lean during a discussion of confrontation. As the body leans forward, the head projects foremost. This explains such instances as:

Face on.

Head on.

They went head to head.

I just have to face up to what is happening between us.

That face-to-face confrontation was intense.

He's going to have to face the judge.

She really got in my face.

The cognitive metaphor becomes CONFRONTING IS LEANING FORWARD. The Source domain is the head atop a leaning, human body. The Target domain is confrontation.

A brief review of the literature failed to uncover this particular cognitive metaphor having been reported.

* * * * *

The purpose of this study was to explore those metaphors being used by older adult students (50+). Few efforts have been made to capture the experiences of this cohort in their own words. The answers to the four research questions were analyzed, and other emergent themes were identified and have been discussed. Additionally, the construction of the cognitive metaphor CONFRONT has been offered as an addition to the growing list of identified cognitive metaphors.

Chapter V: Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion of Research Findings

The intent of this study was to identify metaphors used by Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1960 and referred to in this study as 50+ year-old students when describing their experiences when they began a bachelor's degree-granting program. Attention to the figurative and cognitive metaphors used by 50+ year-old students revealed some of the shared understandings of what it means to be an older student pursuing a bachelor's degree. Investigating the shared experiences of this group of students required a phenomenological approach to analyzing the data. No baseline data has established which metaphors these students use in relation to the research question. In the literature, it has been assumed these students follow in the steps of those still older students who have gone before them. They will have family responsibilities, financial, work and other social responsibilities as well as health issues to deal with while attending classes. All institutions of higher learning, public and private, already are experiencing a growing number of older students attending. With the Baby Boomer generation just entering retirement, there is an anticipation that many more will be enrolling (Kim, Collins-Hagedorn, Williamson, & Chapman, 2004; University Continuing Education Association, 2002; World of Work, 2008). Some Boomers who now are beginning a bachelor's program were not part of the college experience of the 1960s, having gone straight into the military, workforce, and parenthood for the most part. How are they experiencing attending university now, when synchronously they are 30+ years out of step with their generation?

Research Questions

The research was guided by the following research questions:

- What metaphors do older adult students (50+ of age) use to describe their sense of support when beginning a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do older adult students (50+ of age) use to describe their expectations when beginning a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do older adult students (50+ of age) use to describe their motivation when beginning a degree-granting program?
- What metaphors do they use to compare this experience to another life experience?

Goal of the Study

The goals of the study were to explore the metaphors used by older, adult students (50+) to determine if indentifying what they say might help universities ensure students succeed.

A phenomenological approach to the data was called for because phenomenology is used when attempting to identify and describe the shared understanding a group of people regarding a particular experience. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) advise using phenomenology when investigating the lived experiences of those being observed. Creswell (1998) said phenomenology reveals the essence of an experience as participants reflect and clarify the meaning it has for them. Patton (2002) agreed that phenomenology provides comprehension and clarity of the meaning and structure of an event. The goal of the study, understanding what participants say about their experiences as undergraduates at a university, required a phenomenological approach.

Method of Analysis

The analysis of each study question was divided into three sections. The first section was simply to identify the literary metaphors that participants used and to uncover what those

metaphors revealed about the question. To identify the metaphors and similes, the first section looked for similes, which are set off by words such as "like," "as" and "than." Another reading looked for comparisons of one thing to another without using the words that set off similes; these were identified as the metaphors. Still another reading looked for verbs used metaphorically, such as the student who is "juggling" her time.

The second analysis reviewed the same data as the first; however, in the second review, qualitative analysis was used to uncover the themes and patterns of ideas participants had developed. To identify patterns and themes, the text of the interviews was examined repeatedly. Notations were made as themes emerged. The qualitative analysis identified what each undergraduate participant said about a particular situation. This approach to the data was more revealing than simply identifying the metaphors and similes that participants used.

The third section reviewed the same material examining the cognitive metaphoric structure that underlay what had been said. Cognitive metaphors were identified through two resources, "The Master List of Cognitive Metaphors" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and Collins COBUILD English Guides 7: Metaphor (Deignan, 1997). Referencing the work of Kövecses' (2002), four types of metonymy, a sub-case of metaphor were identified; however, only two metonymies from the Kövecses source were found in the course of the analysis. This portion of the analysis of the data was the most intense in terms of reading and focusing attention on the concept of what a cognitive metaphor is and how to label each.

At the end of each analysis of metaphor, qualitative analysis and cognitive metaphor, a summary was made in which the three types of analysis were connected to common themes. As Cameron (2003) and others have noted, the greatest threat to qualitative research

is researcher bias. A deeper understanding of the data was made possible by including the identification of the cognitive metaphors that structure thought. This study has demonstrated that including an analysis of the cognitive metaphors has the potential of further reducing the threat of researcher bias.

The iterative process of analyzing each section three ways formed a triangulation of data that ensures the resulting findings are valid and should prove to be reliable. Additionally, member checks also confirmed the findings. The value of recognizing cognitive metaphors and using them to reduce the potential of researcher bias was confirmed. Cognitive metaphors were always present. The cognitive metaphors always supported the figurative metaphors or the qualitative analysis. Or if it did not, then the researcher was forced to re-evaluate the analysis.

Sample Population

For the purpose of this research, participants were limited to a particular age group, born between 1946 and 1960 aged 64 to 50, popularly known as the Baby Boomers, who were attending a large, state-run public university in the southwestern region of the United States. This demographic group is the largest ever born in the United States. They are turning 64 at the rate of 10,000 a year and are expected to have a great impact on the demands of facilities for higher education (US Census Bureau, 2006 Community Survey; University Continuing Education Association (2002).

The participants represent a purposeful sample. Working through the university's Office of the Registrar, 58 potential participants were emailed asking for their participation. Initially, 12 responded. A total of eight women enrolled in a bachelor's degree-granting program became the participants of this study.

Responses to a demographic questionnaire revealed that each of the eight had been taking undergraduate classes for at least one semester prior to the time of the interview. Each planned to graduate from a liberal arts program leading to a bachelor's of Arts Degree. They all said that English was their first language. One indicated being bilingual in Navajo. No other participants indicated being bilingual. Five of the participants came to the university with associate arts degrees from either a community college or from a branch campus of the university. Five were currently married. The remaining three said they were not in any committed relationship. Seven of the participants had children ranging in age 17 to 36. Six of the participants had attended a college or university prior to beginning the program they are in currently. One had attended for one semester in 1966. The others had attended from 25 to 14 years before beginning the current educational experience. Through the course of interviews, it was determined the participants' ages ranged from 54 to 64. The median age was 56.

The six of the eight women in this study met two or more traits of the non-traditional student as identified by the National Center for Education Statistics previously listed in Chapter 2:

- Having delayed enrollment in higher education from high school
- Attending part time
- Financially independent from parents
- Working full time
- Being a single parent
- Having dependents
- Having no high school diploma or GED (Choy, 2002)

Analysis of the Participants

From this study we know that in almost all ways, this cohort, those 50-64 years of age, are similar to those older students who have gone before them; they have a number of outside responsibilities that act as very real risk factors to persistence with their studies. The young, traditional student also may have family responsibilities, financial, work and other social responsibilities and health issues. The difference is that those younger students facing these issues tend not to face all of them at the same time, and the population as a whole is not characterized by these risk factors, as are older students.

We also see that the eight women have faced ageism while in the classroom. Instances were cited in which a case could be made that a university employee was simply being concerned, but the perception of that concern was that the student's age a negative she would have to overcome, or that the student was being praised for having overcome her situation, as if being older was limiting.

Revealed Theme

Challenges. Through analysis of students' responses to support systems, expectations, motivation and a comparison of being a university student with another life event, the main theme to emerge was that of the challenges they have faced and continue to face. Challenges as a theme were raised so often it was analyzed using the same method as were the research questions. Examples of statements made by students addressing the three research questions but reflecting the challenges they faced are listed in Table 19.

Table 19.
Examples of answers to the first three research questions that were also addressing the challenges the eight participants have faced.

Support:	
Metaphor/ simile:	Feeling of "falling off a cliff." Mom "was out of her mind."
Qualitative analysis:	"As far as immediate family support, there wasn't any." "Family said I couldn't do nothing." HARM IS LOWERING
Cognitive metaphors:	"I need to belong to some group." HARM IS LACKING A NEEDED POSSESSION
Expectations:	
Metaphor/Simile	Anticipated support from spouse vs. reality of it, "a huge gap."
Qualitative Analysis:	"The whole community [the university] is geared to the younger crowd."
Cognitive metaphors:	"Anybody's scared with you're stepping into something new." CONTAINER
Motivation:	
Metaphor/Simile:	"It's called 'survival.' " Have to have friends for when you feel "in the trenches."
Qualitative analysis:	Going back to school is frightening "because you are no longer in charge."
Cognitive metaphors:	"I was being forced to" begin school. CONTROL
Compare to other life experience:	
Metaphor/Simile:	"I felt like I should not be here when…dealing with administrative garbage."
Qualitative analysis:	"I think that teachers have a lower expectation of what we [older students] can do."
Cognitive metaphors:	"… the bottom can fall out easy." BELIEFS ARE STRUCTURES

Emergent Themes

Challenges. The most frequently cited emergent theme was that of challenges. This theme recurred so often it was treated as a separate question for analysis. Challenges arose during the time the participants weighted the decision to begin a program, and in the support they had expected but failed to receive from family and friends, as well as in discussions of

expectations about the educational experience. It arose as part of their developed sense of self-efficacy.

Transformation. Other themes to emerge were transformation, self-efficacy, reliance, and desire. These themes became evident, as is typical with qualitative analysis, only after repeated readings of the transcripts. Six of the eight participants made statements revealing their recognition of transformation. Through the course of answering all four questions, most of the participants had detailed how they had experienced the steps Mezirow (1978) first delineated. The cognitive metaphor identified as shaping their representation of transformation was CHANGE IS REPLACEMENT.

Self-efficacy. Half the participants made comments that revealed their sense of self-efficacy. Bandura (1977, 1982) noted that self-efficacy is found in those who have maintained their motivation toward a goal in the face of great risks or challenges. The life stories revealed by these women identified the risks and challenges they have faced. That they were all within two years of graduating with a bachelor's degree demonstrated the strength of their motivation and self-efficacy. The cognitive metaphors associated with self-efficacy were SELF-MOTIVATED ACTION IS SELF- PROPELLED MOTION, CAUSATION IS CONTROL OVER AN OBJECT RELATIVE TO THE POSSESSOR and CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF DIRECTION.

Resilience. The traits of resilience that these participants show are personal agency, self-efficacy, motivation, perseverance and determination. Resilience was not found so much in the words these women spoke as in the actions they described that they have taken in their lives. Behaving metaphorically, they very clearly demonstrate the cognitive metaphor SELF-MOTIVATED ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION.

Desire. The desire for a bachelor's degree was the only trait all eight participants shared. Their locus of control, either intrinsic or extrinsic, differed, but they all had the same goal in their sights. As one participant expressed her intrinsic motion as, "It is time consuming. It is exhausting. But it's personal enrichment." Another revealed her extrinsic motivation when she said, "so that's what prompted me to go back. It's basically a re-education-type thing." A cognitive metaphor associated with desire was identified as PURPOSES ARE DESIRED POSSESSIONS.

Limitations to the Study

Lack of available model for researcher to follow. As noted in Chapter 3, a limitation to the study was that other studies identifying metaphors to analyze participants' responses have not appeared often enough to serve as a model for this study. Studies that can be found have most frequently occurred in European countries; however, often the studies were not of English speakers. Additionally, most of the studies are related to some aspect of psychology, usually clinical psychology and its practice (Danzinger, 2000; Horton, 2002; Norcross, 2002). Another area of study that has produced published studies of metaphor used as a teaching or inquiry tool is nursing, often in the area of the care of the dying (Aita, V., McIlvain, H., Susman J., & Crabtree, B., 2003; Goodman, 2001; Moss & Moss, 2003). No studies have been found to address the use of cognitive metaphors as a tool for analysis of adult students' responses in education.

Lack of formalized structure to analyzing cognitive metaphors. A further complication for the researcher is that no "rules" for analyzing cognitive metaphors have been proposed. At any point in the analysis, it is possible that some aspect of the participants'

conversation may be overlooked, although the iterative process of qualitative analysis should make such an event a rarity.

Since the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) first work on metaphor, researchers have uncovered a number of cognitive metaphors that are near universal in use. Indentifying cognitive metaphors is a relatively new area of study. Researchers continue to propose finding another cognitive metaphoric structure, as this researcher has done at the end of Chapter Four. As noted by Schmitt (2005), "It is puzzling that these new theories are hardly mentioned in the literature on qualitative research" (p. 358), as was noted in the review of qualitative handbooks (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2003) used by American researchers in Chapter Three.

Sample size. The greatest limitation to this study was the sample size. The opportunity did not exist to investigate a wide range of reactions from the participants. Additionally, the sample's restriction of only women participants has limited any kind of attempt to generalize the responses to a larger population. At first the single gender makeup of the study appeared to be another limitation, but on reflection, a mixed sample of four men and four women may have provided information too fragmented to have been relevant. The limited sample also prevented the division of the cohort into leading edge Baby Boomers, those turning 64 in 2011 and the trailing Boomers, those turning 50 in 2011, to see if there were noticeable differences in the metaphors used. As a result of these limitations, the sample cannot be said to represent their generation. It does, however, offer examples of the spoken language that can be added to the study of the Baby Boomer generation that might be used by other researchers studying this cohort. It also adds more information about how this group is thinking about their situation beyond the survey data that is available.

One-shot case study design. The "one-shot" design of the study has also been a limitation in discovering the metaphors participants developed. Interviewing each participant a single time did not allow the opportunity to follow up with further interviews and questioning, which meant the reconstruction of metaphor use became impossible. Metaphor reconstruction occurs when a speaker continues to use the same source of a metaphor about an event or experience, which allows the researcher to see how the participant's metaphoric structure is changing (see Schmitt, 2005, for examples). A further limitation occurred when a member-check of each participant became impossible. Half the participants, for reasons unknown, failed to respond to repeated requests for a follow-up interview. Each did have a copy of a transcript of the interview sent to them by e-mail. Of the four who did make contact, only one made a minor correction to one line of the transcript.

Implications of Findings

For higher education. Kasworm (2003) noted it is the critically reflective leaders of higher education who will be able to redefine the services the older adult student needs. The needs of the older adult student are different from the younger student simply because of where they are in their lives. A number of implications for a university interested in seeing the older student succeed in an undergraduate program become evident from the findings. Most of the implications fall under the umbrella of offering support through student services.

Many older students still have jobs. Universities and colleges must be ready to offer the older student a number of services after the regular workday of 8-5. Services to be considered are remediation workshops that would allow the older student to become proficient in any number of computer-related activities, i.e., the use of PowerPoint, the use of a spreadsheet, how to use university library databases, how to use WebCT, etc. The tutoring

sessions in subject areas such as math, foreign languages, and others need to be available beyond five p.m. Additionally, tutors should be informed about the best practices for working with the older adult learner.

Students in this study reported feeling "isolation," "I withdrew…into my shell," and "lost." There should be an organization with a physical location for older students to mingle among other students in their situation. This organization should house a well-run facility geared to academics. The director should be someone trained by the university, meeting qualifications to hold the position, to respond to students in a professional manner when they request help to negotiate various departments in the university. The area should provide a relaxing atmosphere where students might choose to simply rest or engage with others sharing their experiences at the university.

School as a continuation of previous education is continuation for the traditional student. They are going to the next level of education after leaving the previous one, usually no more that three months prior. That is not the case with the older undergraduate student. That difference has a potential implication for the courses that might be offered for this cohort. The introductory courses or the core- class level could be structured to also include refreshing the skills these students may need. The courses could be open to all, but the course description would make it clear that the focus is on the needs of those over fifty. Course standards do not have to be changed indeed should not be, as these courses would not be extended beyond the 100-level classes.

Faculty as well as the administration needs to be aware of the motivation of the older student. Most traditional students are in college anticipating the job market to follow. Few in this study say the purpose is achieving a bachelor's degree is to secure a better job. "I

need to move on," "it's my turn" and it's "rehabilitation" were comments made in this study. These students who are motivated by a desire to fulfill a life-long dream have an equally powerful desire to be successful, but their needs are different. Being more intrinsically motivated, their responses to class discussions and assignments are noticeably different from younger students. Professors can offer greater support to the older student simply by recognizing the interest they show in the classroom and understanding the need of these students to be heard.

Another implication for the university is to recognize the differences in the support systems that traditional and non-traditional students have. The traditional student, if married, may have a spouse in school with him or her or the spouse may have been in school very recently in relation to the student and so still understand the pressures facing a university student. The older adult student may have a spouse who went to college decades ago, or has never been to college or university and has not understood the need to continue with his or her own education.

These situations set up another source of potential risk for the older student's not persisting in his or her educational goals. The university could help in this situation by offering ways to bring the spouse into the university system. Issue the spouse an identification card that allows him or her to buy athletic tickets at a reduced price, without the student being there to make the purchase. Let the spousal identification card grant library privileges, or the use of athletic pools, equipment, courts, etc. The cards don't have to be at no-charge to the university. The university does not have to lose money. The image of engaging the spouse could have profound positive effects on the student. And there remains the possibility that the spouse, on becoming comfortable negotiating the university, may

choose to begin taking classes as well. The possibility should remain open to older children being given this type of privilege, especially in the event of a student's being widowed or divorced.

Universities and colleges need to be aware of the "demoralizing" effect on older students when having to deal with younger clerks in sensitive areas such as the financial-aid office. A simple training in dealing with the public, and understanding the academic and emotional differences of the older student, could address this problem. The financial burden of being a full-time student, as all but one of the participants of this study were, was described as "overwhelming" and "burdensome." Not one student indicated ever applying for a work-study position. A spokesperson for the university's financial-aid office said that as a matter of observation and reflection, he remembers "very little" activity in this area or few inquiries made about work-study by older students. He is not aware of data being available demonstrating how many older students have attempted to find work-study positions or how many are on it currently. Taken together these findings support Schaefer (2010) who reported, "Adult learners are an underserved student population in that they negotiate a system of higher education that is geared toward traditional aged students" (p. 68).

None of these recommendations need to involve a great expenditure by the university. The students themselves could pay for some. Some require training, making staff and faculty both aware of the differences in the needs of the older student and younger students. And some simply require better information dispensation on the part of the departments that deal directly with the older student, such as financial aid.

For the researcher. This study has also demonstrated the advantage of using the identification of associated cognitively structured metaphors to the text of participants' responses when analyzing data. Using the methodology suggested here allows a researcher to feel more confident about the findings of a qualitative study because it has forced the researcher to recognize the underpinnings of the responses of participants without having to become expert in the field of linguistics.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, the following questions are recommended for further study.

How many older adult women are "striking out on their own" when beginning an undergraduate program? What support systems do they have in place other than "self-support" as reported by some participants? What support might the university offer those who are "self-supported?"

What is the effect of having a spouse going to college or taking university classes at the same time? Are these students more successful in achieving their goals? How do they relate in terms of resilience to those whose spouses are not attending at the same time?

To what extent were the responses in this study gender specific? How different would male responses be?

Related to the previous question is why were students reticent in taking part in the study? Twenty-five men were contacted for this study. Three responded. None became participants. What prevented the other 22 men from responding? What prevented 27 women from responding?

A further question that arose was how different would the responses have been by those who have not persisted in their studies? Self-efficacy is persistence toward a goal while overcoming challenges. What types of challenges did those who did not continue with the goal of a bachelor's degree encounter? Or did they face some other type of inner understanding of themselves that allowed them to walk away from this particular goal?

Related the research question of this study, and an issue that was not resolved in the study, is how do students conceptualize "going back to school?" Do they see themselves as returning to a university setting as it was in the 1960s and 1970s? Or when they speak of "going back," is the metaphor that each educational experience has been like a series of links of chain, and they are now adding the next link? In that case there would be no sense of returning to a known location.

Appendices

Appendix A

Exploring the Metaphors of Older Adult Learners

Use a check mark or fill in the blanks as necessary to complete the following:

1. Were you born before 1950? ☐Yes ☐No

2. Have you been attending classes for more than one semester as an undergraduate? ☐Yes ☐No

3. Do you plan to continue into a Liberal Arts program for your Junior and Senior classes?

☐Yes ☐No

4. Is English your first language? ☐Yes ☐No

If you have answered *Yes* to the first four questions, please continue to #5. If you answered *No* to any of the first four questions, thank you for your time, but do not continue.

5. You are ☐Male ☐ Female

6. What year were you born? _____

7. How many undergraduate classes have you taken since beginning your program? _____

8. Are you married? ☐Yes ☐No
   In a committed relationship? ☐Yes ☐No
   Single, not in a relationship? ☐Yes ☐No

9. a. Do you have children? ☐Yes ☐No

   b. What are their ages? _____

10. If you have ever attended college or university before enrolling in the program you are in now, how long ago was it? _____

Thank you!

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee (Semester)

This interview is being conducted as part of the research for a dissertation to fulfill the requirements for a PhD from the College of Education, Educational Leadership and Organizational Learning (ELOL) program, the Organizational Learning and Instructional Technologies department (OLIT). The interview questions are designed to explore the reactions of 50+ year old students to beginning a degree granting program.

Script at the start of the interview:

Most people never participate in this type of survey, so let me tell you about what this interview process will be like. I am going to be asking you about your experiences have been like as you started your bachelor's program here at UNM. You will be describing things in your own words, which will be recorded, so that I can go back and be sure that my notes truly reflect what you tell me. I will also be taking notes because that helps me stay focused on what you are saying. I will be asking you five questions. You take as much time as you need to answer them. I might ask you a few other questions as we go along. Do you have any questions?

Questions:

Motivation
Tell me how you decided to begin a bachelor's program at this time. What motivated you? What was it like to make that decision? (Further probing questions: Anything else? Tell me more. Would you explain what you mean by that?)

Sense of support
Since this was (probably) a big step for you to take, where do you get your sense of support? Were there people who encouraged you to take this step? Now that you've begun your program, are they still there or have new people stepped in? (Further probing questions: Anything else? Tell me more. Would you explain what you mean by that?)

What support do you feel you've received or could receive from the University? (Further probing questions: Anything else? Tell me more. Would you explain what you mean by that?)

Expectations
Tell me what you think this whole experience is going to be like for you. Let's start at the beginning. When you first started, what were your expectations? And now? What about the future? (Further probing questions: Anything else? Tell me more. Would you explain what you mean by that?)

What other experience(s) have you had that might be similar to this one, in terms of being an important step in your life (or use language they've used in responding to previous questions), requiring a length of time to accomplish, and as affected you strongly, one way or another. How are they the same? How are they different? (Further probing questions: Anything else? Tell me more. Would you explain what you mean by that?)

Follow up questions will be based on what participants are saying at the moment. Hesitancy on the part of the participant will bring a line of questioning to an end.

Appendix C

Sample worksheet with identified data.

Question 2 **Expectations**	Participant X			
	Metaphor	Simile	Synecdoche/ Metonymy	Cog Metaphor
"… didn't think it [time to graduate] was going to be…" p.22	"this long."			Long term purposeful activity = a journey
"I didn't know what I was going for." P.23				Purposeful action = motion toward a destination [in this case, unknown]
"…classes to be like…" p.24		"auditorium filled." 24		
"… a crock of crap" p. 24	Trying to work and go to school full time at same time			
"I expected a lot out of me." p. 26 Repeated 2ce				Properties (attributes) = possessions/ Body = container
"I expected the process to be quicker" p. 27				Speed of action = speed of motion

"I didn't think it was going to be this long." p. 22 Repeated 4x

"I didn't know what I was going for." P. 23 Was taking action, but goal was not clear.

"[Expectation now] is to get my Master's." p. 24

"High expectations" 24 getting BA in three years. Will have taken seven before she

graduatesExpected classes to be "like auditorium filled." p. 24

These classes are tiny compared to up there (DU) 25 – Had taken classes while working for UD

Classes were larger. 26

"They were more professional up there (DU)." 26

"The professors were more informed." 26

References

Aita, V., McIlvain, H., Susman J., & Crabtree, B. (2003). Using metaphor as a qualitative analytic approach to understand complexity in primary care research. *Qualitative Health Research, 13*(10), pp. 1419-1431.

American Council of Education. (October 2007). Framing new terrain: Older adults & higher education. *First Report,* MetLife Foundation.

Aristotle, *Poetics* (4th ed.). (S. H. Butcher, Ed. And Trans.). London, UK: MacMillan & Co.

Bandura A. (1997). *The exercise of control.* New York, NY: Freeman.

Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist, 37*, pp. 122-147.

Berlin, Brent & Paul Kay (1969). *Basic Color Terms.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Boaz, F. (1947). Recent anthropology. *Science 98*, pp. 311 – 314. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.unm.edu/stable/pdfplus/1669676.pdf?acceptTC=true

Booth, W. (1978, Autumn). Metaphor as Rhetoric: The problem of evaluation. *Critical Inquiry (5)*1, pp. 49-72.

Brainerd, C. J. & Howe, M. L. (1988). *Cognitive development in adulthood*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

Bunce, D. & Macready, A. (2005). Processing speed, executive function, and age differences in remembering and knowing. *Quarterly Journal of ExperimentalPsychology, 58A*(1), pp. 155-168.

Bye, D., Pushkar, D., & Conway, M. (2007). Motivation, interest, and positive affect in traditional and nontraditional undergraduate students. *Adult Education Quarterly, 57*(2), pp. 141- 158.

Cameron, L. (2003). *Metaphor in educational discourse*. New York. NY: Continuum.

Chandler, P. & Sweller, J. (1991). Cognitive load theory and the format of instruction. *Cognition and Instruction, 8*(4), pp. 293-332.

Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic Structure.* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cochrane, T. (1991). Life is a highway. In *Mad Mad World.* Capitol Records.

Choy, S. (2002). *Nontraditional Undergraduates.* Washington, DC: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Craik, F.I.M. (1999). Age related changes in human memory. In D. Park & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Cognitive aging: a primer* (pp. 75-92). Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Danziger, K. (2000). Generative metaphor and psychological discourse. In D.E. Leary (Ed.). *Metaphors in the history of psychology* (pp. 331-356). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Deignan, A. (1997). *Collins COBUILD English Guides 7: Metaphor.* London, UK: Harper-Collins.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *The handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The SageHandbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage.

Dixon, R. A. (1999). The concept of gains in cognitive aging. In N. Schwarz, D. Park, D., B. Knauper & S. Sudman (Eds.), *Cognition, aging, and self-reports* (pp. 71-92). Philadelphia PA: Psychology Press.

Donohue, T. L. & Wong, E. H. (1997). Achievement motivation and college satisfaction in tradition and nontraditional students. *Education 118*(2), 237-243.

DuBois, J. W., Schuetze-Coburn, S., Cumming, S. & Paolino, D. (1993). Outline of discourse transcription. In J. A. Edwards & M. D. Lampert (Eds.), *Talking data: Transcription and coding in discourse research* (pp.45-89). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dyer, J. G., & McGuinness, T. M. (1996). Resilience: Analysis on the concept. *Achieves of Psychiatric Nursing, X*, pp. 276-282.

Eppler, M.A. & Harju, B. L. (1997). Achievement motivation goals in relation to academic performance in traditional and nontraditional college students. *Research in Higher Education 38*(5), 557-573.

Fauconnier, G. & Turner, M. (1985). *Mental spaces: Aspects of meaning construction in natural language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Fauconnier, G. & Turner, M. (1994). *Conceptual projection and middle spaces. Department of Cognitive Science Tech. Rep. 9401).* San Diego, CA: University of California Press.

Fauconnier, G. & Turner, M. (1996). Blending as a central process of grammar. In A. Goldberg, (Eds.), *Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI)* [distributed by Cambridge University Press]) pp. 113-129. Retrieved from http://markturner.org/centralprocess.WWW/centralprocess.pdf

Feldman, J. A. (2006). *From molecule to metaphor: A neural theory of language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Foss, D.J. (1982). Discourse on semantic priming. *Cognitive Psychology 14*(4), pp. 590-607.

Fowler, F. J. Jr. (1993). *Survey research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Fox, B. (1999). Directions in Research: Language and the Body. *Research on Language and Social Interactions, 32*(1&2), pp. 51-59.

Funk, S.C. (1992). Hardiness: A review of theory and research. *Health Psychology, 11*(5), pp. 335-345.

Gallese, V. (2005). Embodied simulation: From neurons to phenomenal experience. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 4*, pp. 23-48.

Garmezy, N.Z. (1993). Vulnerability and resilience. In D.C. Funder, R.D. Parke, C. Tomlinson-Keasy, & Widaman, K., (Eds.), *Studying lives through time* (pp. 377-397). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Gazzaley, A. Private communication. October 22, 2008.

Gazzaley, A., Clapp, W. Kelley, J., McEvoy, Knight, R. T., & D'Esposito. (2008). *Age-related top-down suppression deficit in the early stages of cortical visual memory processing. PNAS 105*(35), pp.13122-13126.

Gibbs, R. (1999). *The poetics of the mind.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Goatley, A. (1997) *The language of metaphors*. New York, NY: Rutledge.

Goodman, C., (2001). The use of metaphor in district nursing: maintaining a balance. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 33*(1), pp. 106-112.

Grady, J. (2007). Metaphor. In D. Geeraerts & H. Cuyckens, (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (pp. 188-213). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hagerdorn, L.S. (2005). Square pegs. *Change, 37*(1), 22-29.

Hamil-Luker, J., & Uhlenberg, P. (2002). Later life education in the 1990s: Increasing involvement and continuing disparity. Journal of Gerontology: SOCIAL SCIENCES (57B) 6, S324-S331.

Hartley, A. (2005). Changing role of the speed of processing construct in the cognitive psychology of human aging. In J. Birren & K. W. Schaie (Eds.), *Handbook of the Psychology of Aging.* Academic Press (pp. 183-207). Retrieved from http://books.google.com/books?id=ILWKTh90lUgC&dq=handbook+of+the+psychology+of+aging&pg=PP1&ots=HM2oZ9Bk5f&source

Heidegger, M. (1927/1962). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Holstein J. A. & Gubrium, J. F. (1994). Phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and interpretive practice. In Denzin and Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.262-272). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Horn, J. L. (1982). Aging of fluid and crystallized intelligence. In F.I.M. Craik and S. Trehub (Eds.), *Aging and Cognitive Processes (pp. 237-278).* NY: Plenum Press.

Howell, C.L. (2004). Resilience in adult women students: Facilitating academic achievement and persistence. *The Researcher*, 34-43. Retrieved from www.nrmera.org/PDF/Reseracher/Reseracherv18n1Howell.pdf

Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Imel, S. (1997). *A new look at older adults*. Trends and issues alerts. ERIC #ED 409-444.

Joordens, S. & Besner, D. (1992). Priming effects that span an intervening unrelated word: Implications for models of memory representation and retrieval. *Journal of experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, *18*(3), pp. 483-491.

Kalyuga, S., Ayers, P., Chandler, P. & Sweller, J, (2003). The expertise reversal effect. *Educational Psychologist, 38*(1), pp. 23-31.

Kasworm, C. (1990). Adult undergraduates in higher education: A review of past research perspectives. *Review of Educational Research, 60*(3), pp. 345-372.

Kasworm, C. (2003a). Setting the stage: Adults in higher education. *New Directions for Student Services, 102*, pp. 3-10.

Kasworm, C. (2003b). Adult meaning making in the undergraduate classroom. *Adult Education Quarterly, 53*(2), pp. 81-98.

Kemper, S. (1989). Priming the comprehension of metaphors. *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, *4*(1), pp. 1-17.

Kennedy, X.J. (1986). An introduction to poetry (6th Ed.). Boston, MA: Scott, Foresman.

Kim, K., Collins-Hagedorn, M., Williamson, J., & Chapman, C. (2004). *Participation in adult education and lifelong learning: 2000-2001* (NCES 2004-050). U.S.

Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Kooser, T. (2005). *The poetry home repair manual.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, p. 125.

Kopp, R. R. (1995). *Metaphor therapy: Using client-generated metaphors in psychotherapy*. Bristol, PA: Brunner/Mazel.

Kövecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: a practical introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. & Radden, G. (1998). Metonymy: Developing a cognitive linguistic view. *Cognitive Linguistics, 9*(1), pp. 37-78.

Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire and other dangerous things.* Chicago, Ill: Chicago University Press.

Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (2nd Ed) (pp. 202-251). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lakoff, G. (2008). The political mind: Why you can't understand 21st-Century American politics with an 18th-Century brain. New York, NY: Viking.

Lakoff, G., Espenson, J. & Schwartz, A. (1991, October). *Master Metaphor List*. Second Draft Edition. Cognitive Linguistic Group, University of California, Berkely, CA. Retrieved from http://araw.mede.uic.edu/~alansz/metaphor/METAPHORLIST.pdf

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, Ill: Chicago University Press.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mid and its challenge to western thought*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Lifelong learning. (2004). Huffington Center on Aging. Retrieved from http://www.hcoa.org/newsite/articles/a_good_old_age.asp

Lyddon, W.J., Clay, A. L., Sparks, C. L. (2001). Metaphor and change in counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development (79)*3, pp. 269-276.

Masten, A. (1994). Resilience in individual development: Successful adaptation despite risk and adversity. In M.D. Glantz & Johnson, J. L. (Eds.), *Resilience and development: Positive life adaptations* (pp. 281-296). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Masten, A., Best, K. & Garmezy, N. (1990). Resilience and development; contributions from the study of children who overcame adversity. *Development and Psychopathology, 2*, pp. 425-444.

Master planner. (October 17, 1960). *Time.* Retrieved from http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,895026-3,00.html

Mayer, R. E., & Moreno, R. (2003). Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning. Educa*tional Psychologist, 38*(1), pp. 43-52.

Mayes, F. (2001). *The discovery of poetry: A field guide to reading and writing poems*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, p. 86.

Merleau-Ponty. M. (1945/2008). *Phenomenology of perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). London, UK: Routledge Classics.

Merriam-Webster. Retrieved from www.merriam-webster.com

Merriam-Webster's new collegiate dictionary. (1981). Springfield, MA: G. & C.

Mezirow, J. (1978). Perspective transformation. *Adult Education Quarterly (28)*2, pp. 100-110.

Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow (Ed.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-34). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, G.A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. *Psychological Review, 6,* pp. 81-97. Retrieved from http://www.well.com/user/smalin/miller.html

Moss, M.S. & Moss, S.Z., (2003). The metaphor of "family in staff communication about dying and death. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B (58)* 5, S290-296.

Moser, K.S. (June, 2000). Metaphor analysis in psychology--method, theory, and fields of application. Forum: Qualitative Social Research 1(2). Retrieved from http://qualitative-research.net/fqa/fqs-e/2-00inhalt-e.htm

National Center of Educational Statistics. U.S. Department of Education. (2005). Digest of educational statistics Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_169.asp

Nardi, P. (2006). *Doing survey research* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pearson.

Nerlich, B. & Clarke, D.D. (1999). Synecdoche as a cognitive and communicative strategy. In A. Blank & P. Koch (Eds.), *Historical Semantics and Cognition* (pp. 197-235). New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.

Norcross, J.C. (2002). (Ed.) *Psychotherapy relationships that work: Therapist contributions and responsiveness to patients.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Official Enrollment Reports. (2009). UNM Office of the Registrar. University of New Mexico. Retrieved from http://registrar.unm.edu.stats.html.

Ormrod, J. E. (1990). *Human learning.* (2nd ed.) Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.

Oxford American English Dictionary Online, 2009.

Park, D. (1999a). The basic mechanisms accounting for age-related decline in cognitive function. In D. Park and N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Cognitive aging: A primer* (pp.3-21). Philadelphia PA: Psychology Press.

Park, D. (1999b). Cognitive aging, processing resources, and self-report. In N. Schwarz, D. Park, B. Knauper & S. Sudman (Eds.), *Cognition, aging, and self-reports* (pp. 45-69). Philadelphia PA: Psychology Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Planty, M., Hussar, W., Snyder, T., Kena, G., KewalRamani, A., Kemp, J., Bianco, K. (2009). The condition of education 2009. Institute of Education Sciences: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009081.pdf

Powell, D. (with Whitla, D. K.). (1994). *Profiles in cognitive aging.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Pragglejaz Group. (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorical used words in discourse. *Metaphor and symbol*, *22*(1), pp. 1-39.

Quinn, Naomi. (2005) How to reconstruct schemas people share, from what they say. *Finding Culture in Talk*, pp. 35-81.

Radden, G. & Kövecses, Z. (1999). Towards a theory of Metonymy. In Klaus-Uwe & G. Radden (Eds.), *Metonymy in language and thought* (pp. 17-59). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Raz, N. (1982). Aging of the brain and its impact on cognitive performance: integration of structural and functional findings. In F. I. M. Craik & T. Salthouse (Eds.), *Handbook of aging and cognition* (pp. 1-90). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Reddy, M. (1979). The conduit metaphor: A case of frame conflict in our language about language, in A. Ortony, (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (pp.284-324).Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rosch, E. H. (1973). Natural Categories. *Cognitive Psychology, 4*, pp. 328-350.

Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of categorization. In E. Rosch & B.B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and categorization* (pp. 27-48). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Salthouse, T. (1991). *Theoretical perspective on cognitive aging.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Salthouse, T. (1996). The processing-speed theory of adult age differences in cognition. *Psychological Review, 10*(3), pp. 403-428.

Salthouse, T. (1999). Pressing issues in cognitive aging. In N. Schwarz, D. Park, B. Knauper & S. Sudman (Eds), *Cognition, aging, and self-reports* (pp. 185-198). Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Salthouse, T., Atkinson, T. M. & Berish, D.E. (2003). Executive functioning as a potential mediator of age-related cognitive decline in normal adults. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 132*(4), pp. 566-591.

Salthouse, T. & Craik, F. (Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of aging and cognition.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Schaefer, J. L. (2010). Voices of older baby boomer students: Supporting their transitions back into college. *Educational Gerontology, 36*, pp. 67-90. Retrieved from www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/search/

Schaie, G.W. (2005). Developmental influences on adult intelligence: The Seattle longitudinal study. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Schmitt, R. (2005). Systematic metaphor analysis as a method of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 10*(2), pp. 358-394.

Schutz, A. (1970). *On phenomenology and social relations*. Chicago, IL University of Chicago Press.

Seidman, I. (2005). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, pp. 78-92.

Semio, E. (2005). The metaphorical construction of complex domains: the case of speech activityin English. *Metaphor and Symbol, 20*(1), pp. 35-70.

Sharps, M. J. (2003). Aging, representation, and thought: gestalt and feature-intensive processing. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. Speech activity in English. *Metaphor and Symbol, 20*(1), pp. 35-70.

Siegelman, E.Y. (1990). *Metaphor and meaning in psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Steen, F. F. (2000). Grasping philosophy by the roots. In *Philosophy and Literature, (24)*1, pp. 197-203.

Storbeck, J. & Clore, G.L. (2008, May). The affective regulation of cognitive priming. *Emotion, (8)*2, pp. 208-215.

Sutherland, P. (Ed.). (1997). *Adult reader.* Sterling, VA: Kogan Page.

Sweetser, E.E. (1991). *Etymology to pragmatics.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, S.J. & Bogdan, R. (1998). Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource. (3rd ed.) New York, NY: Wiley.

Turner, M. (1987). *Death is the mother of beauty*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

University Continuing Education Association. (2002). *Lifelong learning trends: A profile of continuing higher education* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: University Continuing Education Association.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age/2006%20Baby%20Boomers

Verhaeghen, P. & Basak, C. (2005). Aging and switching of the focus of attention in working memory: Results from a modified N-back task. In P. Rabbit (Ed.), [Special Issue] *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Experimental Psychology* (pp. 134-154). NY: Psychology Press.

Ward, G. & Maylor, E. A. (2005). Age-related deficits in free recall: The role of rehearsal. In P. Rabbit (Ed.), [Special Issue] *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Experimental Psychology*, (pp. 98-117). Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Werner, E. E. & Johnson, J.L. (1999). Can we apply resilience? In M.D. Glantz and J. L. Johnson (Eds.), *Resilience and development: Positive life adaptations* (pp.259-268). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Wilcox, P.P. (2000). *Metaphor in American Sign Language.* Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Wittenstein, L. (2009). *Philosophical Investigations* (4th Ed.). (G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker & Joachim Schulte, Trans.). Wiley-Blackwell. (Original work published 1953).

World of Work. (2008). Randstad North America, L.P. Retrieved from http://www.us.randstad.com/2008WorldofWork.pdf