

The Invisible Student
Retaining Minority Males in the Community College Setting

by

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ABSTRACT

Disparities exist among minorities in educational attainment. The gap widens when examining access to higher education and persistence rates among minority males as compared to their white counterparts and minority females. The purpose of this action research study was to explore the impact of a reciprocal mentoring model between faculty and minority male students in an effort to examine the effects on student persistence and the students' academic experience. The researcher attempted to examine mentoring relationships, the process of reciprocal mentoring, and the effects on persistence and the students' academic experience for the purpose of learning about one another's perspectives. This study investigated minority male persistence within Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC). Persistence was defined as a student who enrolled during the fall 2013 academic semester and continued at the same institution or transferred to another two-year or four-year institution working on degree completion. The author used a mixed methods design and used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework by which to examine issues pertaining to minority male student perspectives and experiences. The results yielded eight assertions related to minority male retention and persistence. Keywords: minority males, community college, persistence, reciprocal, mentoring, retention, Critical Race Theory

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FOREWORD

On January 7, 2013 it was the Week of Accountability at Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC) and I was attending meetings in preparation for the Spring 2013 semester to begin. I recall jotting down several events that would take place on our campus throughout the semester, one of which was a one-man play entitled “Incognito.” I remember marking it on my calendar as it was scheduled for February 14, 2013 at 10:00 AM. I didn’t know much about play, it sounded interesting and fit in perfectly with my schedule as I had a break between teaching classes during that time and could attend. So, on February 14, 2013 at 9:45AM, I secured a seat in the Performing Arts Center at CGCC and waited to the play to begin. I hadn’t given the play much thought since I had initially penciled it onto my calendar the month before. The seats began filling with both faculty and students and I notice the stage is set with a few chairs, a table with a laptop and a bottle of water on it. A rather tall man appeared on stage and introduced himself as Michael Sidney Fosberg and the play began. The next few minutes the audience heard Michael talk about an event that changed his life forever at the age of 34. He grew up in a white working class family and lived with his biological mother, stepfather and two siblings in a suburb just outside of Chicago. Today though at age 34, while living near Los Angeles he received news that after 25 years of marriage, his parents were getting a divorce. The anger, confusion and frustration he experienced by hearing such news sparked a desire to begin a quest in search of his biological father. He approached his mother with this and although she appeared initially against the idea, she did give Michael his father’s name and that he was last known to live in the Detroit area. After some time we learn that Michael does connect with his biological father, John Sidney

Woods. He also discovers that he has another whole family that want to embrace him and that has loved him all of those years. Michael describes his life as a big jigsaw puzzle, with *one* piece missing. We then learned that his father gave him that missing piece and it unexpectedly “fit.” In their very first phone conversation his father said there were two things that he bet Michael’s mother never told him. The first is that he has loved Michael everyday of this life and secondly his father explained to Michael that he is an African American. For the next half hour or so, as an audience member I heard about his journey and the array of emotions he felt. His entire identity changed with that one phone call. I had many questions. I thought to myself what that must have been like to be able to “pass” as a white person, and how his life might have been different if his skin were a shade darker? Would he have made different choices, more importantly would he have had the same choices? Did the world treat him better for those 34 years as a white male? How will the world... even his family respond to him now? I began to think about how racism is socially constructed and as a society we either limit, prohibit or empower individuals based race and gender. Lorde (1992) defines racism “as the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance” (p. 496). I realized that this man had experienced first hand the notion of white privilege and had lived within that realm for 34 years and now he can no longer define himself so simply. Sitting in that auditorium on February 14 as the play concluded, I began to respond emotionally to the story. Tearfully, my thoughts turned to my own son who is ten years old, bi-racial and also estranged from his African American biological father. Unlike Michael, my son cannot “pass” for being white. What does the term “race” mean to him? How will it shape his identity? I ask myself how this socially constructed

category called race defines someone like my son. The fact is, inequalities based on race and gender continue to prevail and create problems in our legal, economic and educational systems. How do we think about these things in a systematic and analytical way to further understand the issues and to work towards solutions? “No person has a single, easily stated identity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 10). Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that attempts to understand why racism has persisted (Closson, 2010). CRT acknowledges that racial subordination, prejudice and inequality continue and by understanding the struggles of the oppressed, we can work toward equality and social justice for all. In that moment, in that auditorium Critical Race Theory came alive to me both in a personal sense and in that of a researcher.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction, Background & Context

During the 1960's and 1970's, the United States was a global leader in educating more people and at a higher level than any other nation. Prior to 1965 colleges and universities were colonized by white middle to upper-income families and at that time a college education was not a necessity to earn a decent living (Brock, 2010). The Higher Education Act of 1965 changed the Education emerged as an American value, which precipitated a rise in college enrollment. From as early as 1862, the Morrill Act established land grants to each state for the development of academic institutions. Then following the Civil War, Black colleges were created, which helped higher education become a reality for many more Americans. By the conclusion of World War II in 1945, President Truman made access to higher education a national priority (Mellander, 2008). Today accessibility and open enrollment characterize the community college systems. Students pay lower tuition at the community college as compared to the traditional four-year university system. In addition, students can apply for financial assistance and pay lower tuition. Community colleges are seen as institutions of opportunity with a focus on accessibility, diversity, and student success.

Community colleges present a variety of options for post-secondary education including job certifications, associate degrees, trade skills, personal interest opportunities and the goal of transferring to four-year institutions. Community colleges serve a diverse student body.

The community college system attracts minority and other under-represented students (e.g., students of color, part-timers, adult re-entry students, exceptional or special needs students and veterans) (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). By design, community colleges strive to provide post-secondary education for the underserved (Levin, 2001). The majority of minority males that seek higher education do so by entering through the community college arena (Aud, Fox & KewalRamani, 2010). In addition, community colleges have the ability to foster growth and development in the exploration of new ideas, interactions between diverse populations and the formation of self-identity and few other private or public institutions have the grand capacity to reach so many for the common good (Brock, 2010).

Problem Statement

Research by Nevarez and Wood (2010) indicate that community colleges fail to meet the needs of many minorities. The completion rates and transfer rates are very low among minority males. Hispanic males are unevenly represented in higher education and face serious challenges. Many Hispanic males may struggle with language barriers or inadequate preparation for the academic demands (Strayhorn, 2010). Some scholars have found that young minority males actually reject academic excellence as a way to identify less with the perceived notions of “being white” and thus disavow the value of educational pursuits due to negative stigmatization (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Steele (1992) calls this academic dis-identification, when students dis-identify with academic pursuits and they detach it from their self-esteem.

The 2010 report from the College Board Advisory & Policy Center asserts:

Despite some progress in recent years, the United States is facing an educational challenge of great significance. This crisis is most acute for young men of color. Regrettably—indeed, shockingly—in the foreseeable future, it is apparent that if current demographic and educational attainment trends continue, especially for men of color, the overall educational level of the overall American workforce will probably decline (p. 2).

Disparities persist among minorities and other under-represented students in educational attainment. In 2008, 49 % of white Americans ages 25-34 had attained an associate degree or higher, while only 30.3 % African Americans and 19.8 % of Hispanic Americans had achieved degree completion (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

African American males have the highest attrition rates and over time 11.5% of African American males will leave the community college before degree attainment after the first year, yet the rates jump to 48% after the third year and 83% after the fifth year (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Ironically, females out-perform their male counterparts across all racial lines (CollegeBoard Advocacy & Policy Center, 2010). One must ask why the persistence and degree attainment rates are the lowest among minority males and what interventions could be implemented to increase retention?

Purpose of the Study

In examining factors that encourage student persistence in community colleges, the interactions between faculty and students are significant. Research findings indicate that positive faculty-student interactions are a crucial part of student success and furthermore giving emphasis that relationships matter. One study suggested four elements

for faculty to improve the relationships with minority male students (a) being friendly from the onset; (b) checking in on students' academic progress; (c) listening to student concerns; and (d) encouraging students to succeed (Wood & Turner, 2010, p.147). Other research findings on underserved students in the community college setting reports that when students develop relationships with faculty and staff within the institution, it improves student motivation, outcomes, goal completion and persistence rates (Settle, 2011; Freeman, 2007). The purpose of this action research study is to establish a reciprocal mentoring model designed at creating positive mentoring relationships between faculty at Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC) and minority male students and explore the impact on student persistence and the students' academic experience. Persistence is defined as a student who enrolled during 2013-2014 academic semester and continued at the same institution or transferred to another two-year or four-year institution working on degree completion. The researcher is attempting to examine mentoring relationships, the process of reciprocal mentoring, and the effects on persistence and the students' academic experience for the purpose of learning about one another's perspectives.

Research Questions

- How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process support the minority male student with academic persistence?
- How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process impact the minority male student in attaining their academic goals?

- What do the stories by the minority male students reveal about the causality of underrepresentation of minority males in higher education, specifically at a community college?
- What thematic meanings can be derived from the collection of narratives?

Community College Support of Minority Males

Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) consists of ten community colleges within Maricopa County. Based on the system's Diversity Monitoring Report, in 2011 there were 59,680 (42.4%) male students district-wide and 27,350 (38.5%) of those were identified as minority male students. Within the MCCC district, Table 1 reflects the attrition rates by males based on 2010-2011, showing the largest attrition were African Americans (categorized here as "Black") at 29% as compared to only 15% for White Males. The most exigent issue was the attrition rates for part-time students as the propensity to drop out doubled in each racial category with the exception of "Unknown" and "Other."

Table 1

Maricopa Community College Attrition Rates for Males during 2010-2011

Attrition Rates	Males: Full-time	Males: Part-time	Total
2010-2011			
Am. Indian	12%	28%	21%
Asian Pac. Islander	7%	17%	14%
Black	18%	35%	29%
Hispanic	11%	22%	18%
Other	12%	23%	19%
Unknown	12%	22%	19%
White	9%	18%	15%

In an effort to improve degree completion rates for minority male students the MCCCDC created a program in 2008 designed to support and implement actions that increase access and promote retention for minority male students. A district-wide task force comprised of faculty, staff, and administrators were charged with developing a strategic multi-faceted approach that encourages academic achievement; promotes personal and professional development; and provides support for students to enroll in college, persist, and graduate to achieve their goals (MCCCDC Diversity Monitoring Report, 2011).

Local Context-Chandler-Gilbert Community College Support to Minority Males

Each college campus within the MCCCCD system is charged with creating interventions that assist their specific minority male student population. In efforts to develop and cultivate the initiative, Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC) started a networking program with the focus on outreach to minority male students. The Male Empowerment Network (MEN) program works to support the initiative's objectives of increasing access, promoting retention and improving degree completion rates. The development of this program is still evolving since its inception four years ago. Currently, the program offers resources and networking opportunities for minority male students to work with peers, faculty, college administrators and community leaders. MEN has a core group of dedicated individuals that are motivated to further develop and enhance the program. Recently, MEN held elections for officers to lead the group. MEN have been one avenue to increase minority male persistence rates on the CGCC campus, yet the program struggles for currently active membership amongst students. In response to the low numbers of students involved, recent efforts have been designed to promote this program and increase interest and engagement amongst students.

MEN is designed to assist students in accessing resources and developing a connection to the campus, however faculty also have a unique opportunity to connect with students both within the classroom and outside of the classroom. This is particularly true in a community college setting where class sizes are relatively small as compared to universities. Yet through an informal survey, students at CGCC reported they have not developed close relationships with faculty members. In fact, they claim faculty are not normally willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues related to their academic success. In order to address minority male student persistence on the CGCC campus, the

lack of depth of student engagement between students and faculty must be addressed. As instructors for CGCC, we can facilitate mentoring techniques that expand outside the classroom in order to support the students' social and academic goals. Mentoring creates a starting point for the students to identify and evaluated their academic and professional options and goals. Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) asserts that mentoring programs in an academic setting can reduce minority student attrition. Mentoring has a variety of functional definitions and can vary within the context it takes place.

The purpose of this study utilized a reciprocal mentoring model and examined the impact on persistence rates and student engagement among minority males at a community college.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Invisible Student

Community colleges are institutions that attract minority male students for multiple reasons including lower tuition rates, open access and a variety of academic and job certification options. In many cases these minority male students are largely ignored and often invisible to the community college faculty, staff, and administrators (Levin, 2003; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). In fact, Hoffman & Wallach (2005) report there is a lack of academic counseling for minority students, which is a critical factor in deciding on an academic path (p.68). With the absence of academic counseling, minority males often have unclear academic expectations and direction. Sedlack and Brooks (1976) reported that even when minority male students are part of post-secondary education, faculty were reluctant to believe that minority students are as capable as their white counterparts. Costner, Daniels, and Clark (2010) purport that if the post-secondary educational system wants minority male students to succeed, it must not only look to the students to change but also for the faculty to examine the attitudes they hold that serve to disenfranchise minority students. Irvine's (1990) research further explores the reluctance of faculty to acknowledge issues like race and ethnicity, discouraging dialogues about race-related issues resulting in a cultural disconnect with the students. Costner, Daniels, and Clark (2010) assert that when faculty members do not embrace the cultural richness that exists within minority students, they fail to recognize the benefits of these diverse perspectives thus limiting the curriculum to that of the dominant culture. One theory used within the field of education that examines race is Critical Race Theory (CRT).

This analytical framework seeks to challenge racist ideologies and identify racial inequalities in educational achievement. CRT scholars assert that through narratives or storytelling, complex issues related to race are captured by the “voice” of study participants. Reynolds (2010) states that there is a substantial need to approach issues of racism and asserts that by using CRT an educational theory, the result would be an analysis that provides a richer understanding, critical insight and interventions that are culturally sensitive.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory first emerged and stemmed from a group of critical legal scholars (CLS) in the mid-1970s, with Derrick Bell at the helm. Bell and other scholars examined the continuation of racism during post-civil rights legislation (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Closson, 2010). These legal scholars asserted that racism is a social construct and is endemic in the United States. Bell (1995) asserts:

Critical race theorists strive for a specific, more egalitarian, state of affairs. We seek to empower and include traditionally excluded views and see all-inclusiveness as the ideal because of our belief in collective wisdom (p. 6).

The introduction of CRT into the educational realm occurred in 1995 (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) with the acknowledgement that inequalities among minorities in education continue to prevail. Solorzano & Yosso (2002) assert, “ Critical race researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower” (p. 26). CRT scholars seek to analyze and eliminate forms of racism and

oppression and to be conscientious of the dominant racial positions as it relates to educational institutions and social justice.

Social Integration

Pascarella (2006) describes the characteristics of the American undergraduate as becoming more diverse. When the population shifts and diversity increases, the earlier interventions may not adequately “fit” the student population. As a result interventions need to be critically examined. Pascarella calls this the *conditional effect* whereby one cannot assume the intervention will have the same effect for all students, discounting individual differences. The college climate must be inclusive and value an array of experiences and interactions with a diverse spectrum of people to enrich the college experience (Pascarella, 2006; Provitera-McGlynn, 2001).

There are correlations between student engagement or integration, and student persistence and attrition. Tinto (1975) states that the lack of social integration a student has in college will lead to low commitment to the educational process and could result in increased attrition rates. Furthermore, Bean’s (1985) research findings recount that low levels of individual commitment will lead to little incentive to stay in school until degree attainment. The likelihood for degree attainment increases when the student has greater levels of social integration and a high commitment to the college (Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington, 1986). Talley (2008) asserts: “The importance of providing a supportive environment that enhances and facilitates conceptual and practical learning cannot be ignored because it compels students to do their best and work to their full potential” (p.331). There is a need to identify sound models for interventions to create systemic

changes in community colleges, thus making a significant impact on minority males' success in higher education.

Challenges

In examining disparities in the educational attainment across racial and ethnic groups, the greatest disparity lies at the post-secondary educational level. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2010, 38.6% of Hispanic males had less than a high school diploma, with African American males following at 13.7% as compared to white males at 13.1% and Asian males at 8.8%. The numbers continue to give us a portrait of the educational landscape and the gap widens looking at the number of males who have successfully attained an Associate's Degree.

Table 2

Associate's Degree Attainment in the United States in 2009

Ethnicity	Percentage of Degree Attainment
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	5.2%
Black (Non-Hispanic)	12.9%
Hispanic	12.4%
White (Non-Hispanic)	66.4%

This information comes from the United States Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2012). In examining males that have received an Associate degree, the leader are white males at 66.4% followed by Black males at 12.9%, then Hispanic males at 12.4% followed by Asian or Pacific Islander males at 5.2% and

concluding with the lowest attainment rates for American Indians/Alaska Natives at 1.1%. These percentages are congruent with the reported unemployment rates in 2008 as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau with Hispanic males having the highest rate of unemployment at 46.5% followed by Native Americans at 39.2%, African American males at 34.4% and Asian males at 29.8%. Scarce research exists on Native Americans' college experiences in educational literature. Lee & Ransom (2011) conducted a review of literature on persistence and attrition rates for Native American students. Factors related to persistence included: support from family, support from the institution's faculty and staff, institutional commitment to diversity, personal commitment and connection to homeland/culture. The attrition factors identified were: inadequate academic preparation, vague educational or vocational goals, financial issues, adjusting to the environment or campus and racism. In comparing these factors to other racial and ethnic groups, many similarities exist among the African American and Hispanic males. Baker & Robnett (2012) conducted a case study looking at race and student retention and they concluded that the pre-college characteristics of Latino and Black students were not predictors for retention. Their research suggests that once the students are enrolled in college, the experiences they have during college proved to be more important to academic success and that social support from the institution plays a critical role in retention for minority students. Earlier research from Tinto (1993) stressed the importance of social integration within the college environment and contributed integration as a reason for student persistence. Lee & Ransom (2011) found that among African American males and Asian males there was a pattern of failure to seek support services or ask for help in an academic setting. In a study looking specifically at African American males, these

factors are reaffirmed and the research reported an additional challenge of navigating home and school (Palmer, Davis, & Hilton, 2010). Another important finding in existing research is that employment has a negative impact for a student attending college. Students who are employed either full-time or part-time are most likely to leave college without degree attainment (Summers, 2003). Interestingly, minority students are more likely to need to work to pay for tuition, thus increasing rates of attrition for minority males. One study by Wood (2011) looked at predictors for black males leaving community colleges and that research indicated that compared to other college males, black males leave college due to personal reasons, family responsibilities and finances. For students attending public community colleges, 84% were employed during college and on average worked more than 27 hours per week (U.S. Department of Education, 2008; Wood, Hilton & Lewis, 2011). Tinto (1993) contends that off-campus employment can be adverse effects on academic persistence and completion.

Other key themes that emerged from the literature related to challenges that minority males face in higher education included: a lack of role models, loss of cultural memory, socio-economic challenges, language barriers and community pressures. Several scholars have noted that the teaching practices in a two-year college do not incorporate practices or include relevant content that connects to the experience of African American males. One might consider if this is evident for all minority males as well. Hoffman & Wallach (2005) state that intellectual disengagement and lack of preparedness for the academic rigor and problems with social adjustments are significant challenges for minority males in higher education (Palmer, Moore, Davis & Hilton, 2010; Woldoff, Wiggins & Washington, 2011).

Faculty and Student Interaction

In examining factors that encourage student persistence in community colleges, the interactions between faculty and the student are significant. Research findings indicate that positive faculty-student interactions are a crucial part of student success and that relationships matter. One study suggested four elements for faculty to improve the relationships with minority male students (a) being friendly from the onset; (b) checking in on students' academic progress; (c) listening to student concerns; and (d) encouraging students to succeed (Wood & Turner, 2010 p.147). Other research findings on underserved students in the community college setting reports that when students develop relationships with faculty and staff within the institution, it improves student motivation, outcomes, goal completion and persistence rates (Astin, 1993; Freeman, 2007; Santos & Reigadas, 2004; Settle, 2011). Brown (2007) asserts that students who talk to faculty outside the classroom and have ongoing interactions with them, are more likely to persist in a college environment. At predominately White institutions, minority students often report feelings of isolation and lack of support and hostile racial climates on campus (Thomas, Smith, Marks & Crosby, 2012). Furthermore they assert that exposure to discrimination on campus, lowers the commitment to the institution thus attrition rates for those students increase. One aspect of retention is social and academic adjustment to the college campus. Strayhorn & Terrell (2007) contends that mentoring is one way to contribute to such an adjustment.

Mentoring

Mentoring has been a component of higher education for many decades as one way to facilitate students' academic and social integration. Though the operational

definition of mentoring varies, Jacobi (1991) found that researchers agree on three basic tenets of mentoring relationships.

1. The focus on supporting growth and achievement
2. The inclusion of broad forms of support including career and professional development
3. The exchange of information that is personal and reciprocal (p. 513)

The idea and practice of mentorship exists in many forms. More formalized processes might involve the development of a mentoring program, with specific and well-defined processes and clearly defined objectives. Mentorship is also a practice that can evolve within the mentorship relationship. “A typical mentor relationship is a hierarchical, one-way relationship with guidance coming from someone with more experience (the mentor) to someone of less experience (the mentee)” (Robertshaw, Leary, Walker, Bloxham, & Recker, 2009). In this model, the primary benefit is to the mentee. Mentoring has been found to have a positive impact on various student outcomes, including critical thinking, self-confidence, competence, future aspirations and persistence rates (Crisp, 2010; Talley, 2008). Cohen (2003) states, “Mentoring as an educational and social legacy is now being restored to its proper place as a significant path for the sharing of knowledge, skills and values of a diverse culture” (p. 7). In higher education, mentoring encourages faculty and student interactions, assists students with academic difficulties, and provides positive role models. To date, the studies that look specifically at mentoring at a community college are scant as the majority of existing research has focused on four-year institutions. Wood (2010) completed a meta-synthesis of literature on African American males in the community college and found 50 studies between 1971-2009, yet out of

those 50, 38 were unpublished doctoral dissertations, 8 were journal articles and 4 were book chapters. Clearly there is a need for more scholarly research on minority males in a community college setting as often the needs and social capital for students vary greatly from a two-year community college to that of a four-year university.

Mentoring of Minority Males

The research suggests that minority males who lack role models will experience more difficulty in persisting in higher education (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). Mentoring programs can help thwart the low persistence rates among minority males. In a study conducted by Brittian, Sy, & Stokes (2009) minority students reported the mentorship program provided them with opportunities for personal growth, social and emotional support, and motivation for success. “The ultimate success of any of these types of program lies in the ability of community colleges to assist the student in dealing with the everyday challenges faced by minority students” (Pope, 2002, p. 32).

Reciprocal Mentoring

Reciprocal mentoring differs from the more traditional mentor to mentee relationship that implies a one-way sharing of knowledge. In reciprocal mentoring the information flow is a two-way exchange by sharing knowledge and learning from each other and both individuals benefit from the relationship. Gabriel & Kaufield (2008) describe reciprocal mentoring by stating, “Mentors and mentees build collaborative learning relationships, with benefits flowing to both partners” (p. 313). In a reciprocal mentoring model, the status of the mentor and mentee are less important as compared to the more traditional approach. Blackwell (1989) speaks to the more traditional model of mentoring by stating, “Mentoring is a process by which persons of a superior rank,

special achievements, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of the persons identified as protégés” (p. 9), and in the case of higher education, persons identified as mentees. This is not the case in a reciprocal mentoring model as each person brings new knowledge and understanding to the process and is valued as such. Contrary to the traditional approach, Gabriel and Kaufield (2008) point out that an important component of reciprocal mentoring is allowing time for each partner to reflect upon the subject matter that evolves from the relationship *and* reflecting on the reciprocal mentoring process itself, thus allowing time and space for the relationship to develop. Reciprocal mentoring provides opportunities for dynamic exchanges and a personally rewarding way to promote collaboration (Gonzales & Thompson, 2006; Kram & Isabella, 1985). To date, there is little empirical research that examines the effectiveness of reciprocal mentoring between faculty and minority male students in the community college related to persistence rates and academic experiences. After a review of the literature, the research questions for this study were designed to understand the student experience and the challenges of low persistence among minority males at CGCC using CRT as the framework in which to examine this complex phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Methodological Approach

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of a reciprocal mentoring model between faculty and minority male students in an effort to examine the effects on student persistence and the students' academic experience. The researcher attempted to examine mentoring relationships, the process of reciprocal mentoring, and the effects on persistence and the students' academic experience for the purpose of learning about one another's perspectives. The study investigated minority male persistence at Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC). Persistence is defined as a student who enrolled during 2013-2014 and continued at the same institution or transferred to another two-year or four-year institution working on degree completion. This chapter describes the methods that will be used to answer each of the following research questions.

- How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process support the minority male student with academic persistence?
- How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process impact the minority male student in attaining their academic goals?
- What do the stories by the minority male students reveal about the causality of underrepresentation of minority males in higher education, specifically at a community college?
- What thematic meanings can be derived from the collection of narratives?

The primary research question sought to examine the impact of the reciprocal mentoring process in terms of assisting the student in academic persistence. The

researcher used narrative inquiry in which the participants had an opportunity to think, reflect and examine the mentoring relationship related to their academic persistence. How and to what extent did the reciprocal mentoring relationship support them in navigating the community college system, provide an understanding of various resources on campus and how to effectively access those resources? The second research question allowed participants to think, reflect and examine their own academic goals and to what extent if any did the reciprocal mentoring relationship have an impact. The third research question sought to explore the student experiences, and promoted a storytelling component in which to further examine the social and academic experiences of the minority male students. Kramp (2004) argued that narrative inquiry provides the researcher a glimpse of how the people they are studying construct themselves as main characters in their own stories and this reveals the complexities not seen by observation. The last research question sought to identify and understand themes that have derived from the collection of narratives. The researcher hoped this information will build on the scholarly body of knowledge that exists regarding minority male persistence rates and their academic experiences.

The researcher implemented action research to examine the impact of reciprocal mentoring on student academic experiences. Clark & Creswell (2010) describe action research as a research design by which the researcher uses systematic procedures to collect qualitative and quantitative data, addressing a particular problem with the outcome of making improvements or gathering solutions for their particular setting or context. Conceptually, action research dates back to the early 1940's, in which Kurt Lewin, a German social psychologist envisioned using cycles to solve real problems

within social systems. This early iteration included cycles in which one would: 1) diagnose the problem, 2) plan, 3) act and 4) evaluate the action (Grogan, Donaldson & Simmons, 2007). Since then it has evolved, yet continues to allow practitioners to conduct systematic research, while contributing to organizational change within their context.

Once more, the goal of this action research study was to establish a reciprocal mentoring model between faculty and minority male students for the purpose of learning about one another's perspectives in order to support the students involved to achieve higher levels of persistence. In reciprocal mentoring the information flow is a two-way exchange by sharing knowledge and learning from each other, thus both individuals benefit from the relationship (Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). The researcher's intention in using a mentoring model was the hope that it will positively impact the academic experience for the student. Gonzales & Thompson (2006) asserted that reciprocal mentoring provides opportunities for dynamic exchanges and a personally rewarding way to promote collaboration.

In addition, the researcher learned from the student narratives about their unique academic journey. In examining factors that encouraged student persistence and their academic achievement, the interactions between faculty and student were significant. Wood & Turner (2010) assert that positive faculty-student interactions are a crucial part of student success. Other research findings on underserved students in the community college setting reports that when students develop relationships with faculty and staff within the institution, it improves student motivation, outcomes, goal completion and persistence rates (Settle, 2011; Freeman, 2007).

Research Design

In this study, the researcher used a mixed methods design with a complementary intent where both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. In using a mixed methods design with the purpose of a complementary intent, different tools were used to measure the same, complex phenomenon. Greene (2007) contended that a mixed methods design facilitates a social inquiry of complex phenomena with the desideratum of gaining a better understanding through respectful conversation, and dialogue. The researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, then analyzed the data during the interpretation stage. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the data was integrated to give a more succinct understanding of the research questions and having a combination yields complimentary strengths. Due to nature of this study, qualitative data was the primary source of investigation. However both qualitative and quantitative data was used to gain a deeper understanding with the intention of increasing the credibility of the results.

The study used narrative inquiry to explore student perspectives and experiences. Kramp (2004) stated “Narrative inquiry yields what careful observation cannot – a way of coming to understand by being open to the stories individuals tell and how they themselves construct their stories and therefore, themselves” (pg. 9). Additionally, this study used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework by which to examine issues pertaining to minority male student perspectives and experiences. CRT focuses on race relations; discrimination as a social construct and social justice through experiential knowledge to explore the complexities of such issues using narratives and storytelling (Graham, Brown-Jeffy, Aronson & Stephens, 2011). Graham, et al. (2011)

asserted, “CRT is concerned with racial subordination, prejudice, and inequity and it accentuates the socially constructed and discursive nature of race” (p.82). The framework gave participants the opportunity to tell their own unique story, and set up the importance of exploring race-related issues through narratives and storytelling (Reynolds, 2010). Bell (1995) stated “The voice exposes, tells and retells, signals resistance and caring and reiterates what kind of power is feared the most—the power of commitment to change” (p. 8). Furthermore, CRT legitimizes the experiences of minorities.

Setting and Context

The study took place at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, one of the ten colleges within the Maricopa Community College District. CGCC is a two-year community college offering associates degrees and occupational certifications. CGCC officially opened in 1985 with just a few hundred students (Hesse, 2006) and now the reported enrollment for fall 2012 was 14,653 students (Maricopa Community Colleges, 2012). The CGCC student demographic information reported that 46.8% of the total student population were males and 38.4% of the total population were categorized as minorities. The age of the students ranged from 15-60+ years, with the largest percentage falling into the 15-19 year old age range at 43.8%, followed by next age range of 20-24 year old students at 26.9% (Chandler-Gilbert Community College Fast Facts, 2011, p. 5).

Researcher’s Role

In action research, the role of the researcher-practitioner and the positionality is an important one. The researcher must occupy multiple positions that will likely intersect (Herr & Anderson 2005). In this study, the researcher served as a faculty member and mentor participant in the reciprocal mentoring innovation. The researcher developed and

implemented the reciprocal mentorship tools that guided the mentorship model. The researcher collected and analyzed both the qualitative and quantitative data gathered during the study. Secondly, the researcher served as a faculty member to the student participants and expanded that role to that of a mentor, and worked with the students beyond the classroom setting. Stringer (2007) stressed the importance for the action researcher to understand and communicate the complexity of the multiple roles. As a researcher and faculty member, the researcher was charged to effectively communicate to the participants the intention of the study and allowed the participants to withdraw at any time without negative repercussions. That was a particularly important to this study, as the mentor was the participant's instructor. Additionally, the researcher communicate how the data will be collected and what it would be used for to protect the participants' confidentiality rights.

The researcher had a Master of Education degree and worked as a faculty member within in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Division at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. Specifically, the researcher had taught courses in Sociology, Psychology and Career Preparation at CGCC for six years. Additionally, the researcher participated as a faculty liaison for the Male Empowerment Network (MEN), the Minority Male Initiative (MMI) and Service Learning programs. In the role of faculty mentor, the researcher actively engaged with the student participants during the process of reciprocal mentoring and utilized the developed tools to guide the process with the research questions guiding the study. Having multiples roles within the study presented a unique challenge due to the complexity of the relational roles with the participants. Herr & Anderson (2005)

referred to this as reflective practitioners, “those who “learn to learn” about their practice thus becoming better practitioners” (p. 34).

Innovation

The researcher piloted a reciprocal mentoring model during the fall 2012 academic semester, with three minority male student participants through narrative inquiry. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with questions that sought to understand the participants own academic experience and familial history in regards to education, advising, course load, employment and other challenges. Through the piloted interview protocol, student participants described their academic journey in great detail including future aspirations. The interviews provided an opportunity for the exploration of culturally sensitive issues. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews, written notes, digital recording, field notes and student surveys were analyzed to examine key themes, patterns and categories. The pilot gave the researcher insight into how to proceed and design a study that would answer the specific research questions.

Action Plan for the Reciprocal Mentoring Innovation

Population. Based on the most recent data reported to the Maricopa Community College District, Chandler-Gilbert Community College had 14,643 students for the fall 2012 semester. Out of the total student population, 6,737 students are reported as male and within the male population, 1,977 are reported as minority males. An additional 954 male students categorized themselves at “other.” Potentially, this could raise the minority male population to 2,931. This information came from the Maricopa Data Warehouse, which is populated the Student Information System (SIS) and the data comes from the Student Information Form, in which students complete when they register at CGCC. An

important point to note is that when students complete the Student Information Form, it is not required for them to complete their gender or ethnicity, thus the “Undeclared” category.

Table 3

Student Demographics at Chandler-Gilbert Community College- Fall 2012

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Undeclared	Total
Am. Indian	165	108	1	274
Asian	520	414	6	940
Black	373	312	5	690
Hispanic	1,470	1,143	17	2,630
Other	1,095	954	24	2,073
White	4,199	3,806	41	8,046
Total	7,822	6,737	94	14,653

Sampling & Recruitment. The reciprocal mentoring innovation took place at CGCC during the fall 2013 semester, consisting of sixteen weeks. Purposeful sampling was used for this study. The selection of student participants was based on three factors: the self-identification as a minority male, students attending CGCC fulltime and students identified as being 18-24 years old, as those ages represented the largest two age groups attending CGCC. In order to get a robust sample, the faculty member selected 6 students from their classes to voluntarily participate, keeping in mind the potentiality of participant attrition. During the pilot phase, the researcher learned that establishing a meaningful mentoring relationship with the students was time consuming, whereby acknowledging time as an important element. The target number of participants was 3

with attrition; however the researcher recruited 6 participants. Each participant was introduced to the study and given the choice to participate without any negative repercussions, should they have elected not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

The researcher performed a systematic narrative inquiry using a mixed methods approach with the goal of examining if reciprocal mentoring had an impact on minority male persistence in a community college setting. Through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher sought to gather a more contextual and holistic understanding of persistence issues related to minority male students (Gelo, Braakmann & Benetka, 2008).

Participants

There were six participants that took part in the study and Table 4 describes characteristics related to ethnicity, college completion from parents, number of semesters they attended a community college, a self report grade point average, employment status, languages spoken and academic major.

Table 4

Summary of Mentee Characteristics

Participants	Ethnicity	Parents College Completion	# of semesters attending community college	Self reported GPA	Employed/ weekly hours	Languages spoken	Academic major
1	Spanish	No	1 st semester	First semester, no GPA yet	Not employed	Spanish English	Agriculture
2	Filipino	No	5 th semester, plans on transferring to ASU fall 2014	4.0	Not employed, veteran	Tagalog English	Business
3	Hispanic	No	4 th semester	2.8 or 2.9	Employed/20 hours weekly	Spanish English	Dentistry or Physical Therapy
4	Hispanic	No	3 rd semester	“Probably under 3”	Employed/18-25 hours weekly	English	Business
5	Hispanic	No	2 nd semester	2.78	Employed/30-35 hours	English	Started with Business, changed to Education mid-semester
6	Hispanic	No	3 rd semester	2.8	Employed/25-35 hours	Spanish English	Dentistry

Data Collection Tools

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were utilized in an effort to answer the research questions. This section includes a detailed description of each of the tools applied in this study.

Qualitative Data Collection Tools

Mentoring Agreement. This document (Appendix “B”) served as a contract between the mentee and the mentor. The agreement outlined the frequency of meetings, tasks, confidentiality and closes with a no-fault termination clause, by which both the mentee and mentor signed in agreement.

Mentee Questionnaire. This tool (Appendix “C”) was designed to collect basic information regarding: contact information, age, ethnicity, gender, academic major and career interests. In addition, the participants were asked to list two personal strengths and two areas of personal improvement. Following the survey and mentee information tool completion, semi-structured interviews followed. Some of the interview questions were duplicates of the questions found on the mentee information tool, therefore was a way for the researcher-practitioner to triangulate the narrative data collected.

Semi-Structured Initial Interview. An initial interview was conducted whereby each participant completed the Mentoring Agreement, Mentee Questionnaire, and the Minority Male Survey. An interview protocol (Appendix “F”) guided semi-structured interviews and were designed to initiate a discussion to further understand the participants own academic experience and further examining familial history in regards to education, advising, course load and challenges.

Through the interview protocol, student participants were asked to talk about their academic experiences. This essential component provided the participants the opportunity to tell their own unique story, and narratives as evidenced by the Critical Race Theory (CRT) must be considered in actual social contexts. Graham et al. (2011) asserted:

A central theme of CRT is the idea that institutions (churches, healthcare facilities, schools, governments, businesses, families, entertainment venues, community-based organizations, and others) often function based on values, principles and foundations that are not culturally diverse or representative, irrespective of racial make-up (p. 85).

The data that was collected through the semi-structured interviews, written notes, digital recordings, field notes and student surveys were coded thematically. The researcher-practitioner began that process by memoing, a method that records reflective notes and seeks to categorize and merge patterns for the data analysis of qualitative data. Once significant themes and patterns emerged, codes were created. The researcher-practitioner collapsed codes to come up with distinct codes or themes. Student survey responses were quantified and assigned values and narrative analysis was conducted. Inductive analysis was used to examine key themes, patterns and categories. The researcher-practitioner used axial coding as a way of making connections between the themes in order to theoretically understand the phenomena within the local context at CGCC.

Reciprocal Mentoring Interviews. The goal was to try to schedule 1 hour per week for each of the participants during the fall 2013 academic semester to meet with the faculty mentor. The mentoring sessions were to be a continuation from the initial interview and sought to address the needs of the mentee to guide the mentoring process. By meeting on a weekly basis, the mentee and mentor were able to explore academic, career, social and cultural issues that impact their life as a minority male student. That time commitment allowed an extensive mentoring relationship to occur to better enhance the time spent between the mentee and the mentor.

Post-Mentoring Interview. Each participant took part in a post-mentoring interview (Appendix “G”) with a third party, not the mentor in order to anonymously discuss the effectiveness of the reciprocal mentoring process. This was meant to ensure objectivity and capture specific details about what was or was not productive about the mentoring process. It was also a means of reducing a potential threat to validity, by

which the mentee participants may have been inclined to answer in such a ways that would please the mentor.

Quantitative Data Collection Tools

Cultural Congruity Scale. The researcher administered the Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS) a validated scale (Appendix “ D”) in which each participant answered questions related to their cultural fit within the college environment. The scale was developed by Gloria & Kurpius (1996) and consisted of 13 items. The Cultural Congruity Scale used a 7-point Likert scale (7 very true to 1 not at all true). The scale has 7 reverse coded items and was designed to measure “more affective-and belief-based perceptions” (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996, p. 543).

Minority Male Survey. The researcher also administered the Minority Male Survey (Appendix “E”) to each student participant. The survey consisted of 12 closed-ended questions, and centered on relationship building, racial identity and campus supports and used a 4-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree). The survey was given at a later time in the reciprocal mentoring process and was compared to the quantitative data collected from the Cultural Congruity Scale.

Table 5

Data Collection Timeline

Data Collection Tools	Examples
Mentoring Agreement	A contract that discussed objectives, frequency of meetings, confidentiality and no-fault termination in which both the mentee and mentor signed.
Mentee Questionnaire	This tool was designed to collect basic information regarding: contact information, age, ethnicity, gender, academic major and career interests.
Minority Male Survey	This survey consisted of 12 closed-ended questions, and centered around relationship building, racial identity and campus supports.
Semi-Structured Initial Interview	Each participant had an initial interview in which the Mentoring Agreement, Mentee Questionnaire and the Minority Male Survey were completed.
Cultural Congruency Scale (CCS)	This is a validated self-report scale in which the participant rated items that inquired about the academic institution, membership and identification within the institution.
Reciprocal Mentoring Interviews	It was attempted to schedule each participant for 1 hour per week for 15 weeks during the Spring 2013 Academic Semester.
Post Mentoring Interview	Each participant took part in a post-mentoring interview with a third party, not the mentor to discuss objectively the effectiveness of the reciprocal mentoring process.

Data Analysis Plan

Graham, et. al. (2011) states an integral premise of CRT is that data should not be perspective-less, but should be considered in particular social contexts. The lived experiences of subjects as self-reported and measured are sensitive to the implications of history. The past offers a way to contextualize ethnic minorities' current experiences of race and racism in their lives. The perspectives of subjects must inform data interpretation and meaning designation. That is, perspectives of research participants were positioned and understood from a historical context (p. 88). The qualitative data was collected through the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, surveys, mentoring

interviews, post mentoring interviews, written notes, digital recordings, and field notes.

The researcher organized the data and analyzed each data source in order to code thematically. The researcher read the transcriptions and use axial coding. Inductive analysis was used to examine key themes, patterns and categories.

Limitations Potentiality

By the nature of action research where a practitioner takes on dual roles to include that of a researcher, the roles must be specified and remain as objective as possible. One possible limitation was that by being a faculty member and a mentor, the mentee may see that relationship as authoritarian in nature. The researcher minimized that potentiality by explaining the true nature of a reciprocal mentoring relationship and emphasized the fact that they were an equal part in this process and at any time they may terminate the process without negative repercussions. Additionally, one possible limitation was that the researcher is a Caucasian scholar using Critical Race Theory. Some CRT scholars could see that as a limitation in that the scholar cannot identify with people of color unless they themselves have experienced the life of a person with color. Not all CRT scholars agree and I believe we need to identify our perspectives tainted by white privilege and together work to alleviate social injustices related to race and gender so that those 'invisible students' voices are not only heard but legitimized through social and institutional changes.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

In response to the original research questions that prompted this study the researcher utilized a mixed methods design with a complementary intent where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of a reciprocal mentoring model between faculty and minority male students in an effort to examine the effects on student persistence and the students' academic experience. The research questions were:

- How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process support the minority male student with academic persistence?
- How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process impact the minority male student in attaining their academic goals?
- What do the stories by the minority male students reveal about the causality of underrepresentation of minority males in higher education, specifically at a community college?
- What thematic meanings can be derived from the collection of narratives?

The results of this study are organized within quantitative and qualitative themes and analysis.

Quantitative Data Results

In this study two quantitative data tools were used to collect information on student perceptions related to their college environment.

Minority Male Survey. The researcher administered the Minority Male Survey (Appendix "E") to each student participant. The survey consisted of 12 closed-ended

questions, and had three main themes: relationship building, racial identity and campus supports. The scale used a 4-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree). Since the participant sample size included six participants, the quantitative data could best be described through a narrative description, although numeric values were assigned to the answers. The complete survey is in Appendix “E”, however Table 6 indicates key themes and important findings derived from the student survey with three main categories: relationship building, racial identity and campus supports. See Appendix “I” for the frequency of individual participant responses.

For the relationship-building theme, the student scores indicated that they had developed close friendships with students, whereas they scored lower on the questions about establishing a close working relationship with faculty members. Racial identity was the second theme and the overall scores reflected that the participants felt that being a minority male was positive and they felt comfortable being on campus. Campus supports was the last theme and although the scores generally reflected that they were satisfied with the supports that exist on campus, they scored lower on their willingness to participate in social activities on campus that were geared towards minority males. More specifically, the lowest score was on question 11, in which the participants were asked if they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement, “I feel there is a negative connotation associated with being a minority male in higher education.” Each of the six participants answered that they disagreed with that statement, though the score was low, it indicates a positive self-image being a minority male in higher education. The next lowest scores were on questions 3, 4 and 7. Question 3 stated, “Since coming to CGCC, I have developed close working relationships with

faculty members” based on the frequency of the scores, most participants disagreed with that statement. Question 4 stated “The faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues related to my academic achievement and again the frequency of the scores indicated that that most participants disagreed with that statement. Later, during the qualitative analysis this faculty and student interactions were explored further. On question 7 it stated, “I participate in social activities on campus that are geared towards minority males” and the frequency of that score was low indicating they most do not participate on campus related activities geared toward minority males. The highest score was on question 6 and it stated, “I feel comfortable whenever I am on campus” and all participants answered it the same, saying that they disagreed with that statement.

The quantitative data would be more numerically significant with a larger participant sample, however the survey did provide further insight and mentorship areas when the researcher-practitioner worked in the role as the faculty mentor. For example, when asked if they would participate in activities on campus geared toward minority males, the interviews provided a forum for the faculty mentor to share a calendar of events and further gauge interest in participating in these extracurricular activities. There was a uniform positive connection to the way they racially identified, each saw it as a positive strength. Please see Table 6 for the frequency of scores on the Minority Male Survey.

Table 6

Minority Male Survey Results

Aspects	Questions	Number of Participants who Answered in Each Category			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Relationship Building	<i>Since coming to CGCC, I have developed close friendships with other students.</i>	0	2	1	3
	<i>Since coming to CGCC, I have developed close working relationships with faculty members.</i>	0	0	4	2
	<i>The Faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues related to my academic achievement.</i>	0	3	2	1
Racial Identity	<i>I believe that being a minority male is a positive experience.</i>	0	0	3	4
	<i>I feel comfortable whenever I am on campus.</i>	0	0	2	4
	<i>I believe because I am a minority male, I have many strengths.</i>	0	1	1	4
	<i>I feel there is a negative connotation associated with being a minority male in higher education</i>	0	6	0	0
Campus Supports	<i>I am satisfied with the opportunities to participate in organized extracurricular activities at this college campus.</i>	0	1	4	2
	<i>I participate in social activities on campus that are geared towards minority males.</i>	1	1	3	1
	<i>I feel this college campus has a support system in place to help minority males succeed.</i>	0	0	4	2
	<i>I feel like the campus employees care about minority males succeeding in academic endeavors.</i>	0	1	4	1
	<i>I feel like I can contribute to the minority male initiatives on the CGCC campus.</i>	0	0	5	1

Cultural Congruity Scale. The researcher administered the Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS) a validated scale (Appendix “D”) by which each participant answered questions related to their cultural fit within the college environment. The scale was developed by Gloria & Kurpius (1996) and consists of 13 items. The Cultural Congruity Scale used a 7-point Likert scale (7 very true to 1 not at all true). The scale had 7 reverse coded items and was designed to measure “more affective-and belief-based perceptions” with Cronbach’s alpha score at .89 and the standard deviation is 14.03 (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996, p. 543). Again since the participant sample size included six participants, the quantitative data could best be described through a narrative description, although numeric values were assigned to the answers. See Appendix “J” for individual participant responses. The Cultural Congruity Scale was administered in subsequent mentoring sessions with the participants. For three questions, the frequency scores indicated that all six participants answered the items exactly the same. Those items focused on the student and their family values as it relates to higher education. In summary, each of them believed that there was no conflict with their ethnic values, family values and school values. The highest frequency scoring were on questions 11 and 12 where by most of the participants answered positively to feeling accepted at school as a minority and a positive sense of belonging on the college campus. An interesting finding was on item 5 which stated, “I can talk to my friends at school about my family and culture.” Most participants answered positively, however one participant answered 1, meaning not at all. In subsequent meetings with this participant, the researcher later learned that members of his family have served time in prison, his father left them at an early age and often his family was without food and utilities as his mom

struggled with medical issues. Another participant scored it low giving it a 3 and this participant came from a gang infested area in California and as a child saw acts of violence within the neighborhood in which he lived. Another interesting finding was on the last question that stated, “I can talk to my family about my struggles and concerns at school” and the frequency of scores indicated 5 out of the 6 participants scored it between 4 & 7, there was one participant answered this item with 1, which meant not at all. In subsequent meetings with this participant, he shared that he was never encouraged to go to school beyond high school and that his mother never asks or monitors his grades or progress academically. Again, since the participant sample size included six participants, the quantitative data could best be described through a narrative description, although numeric values were assigned to the answers. Refer to Appendix “J” for individual responses. See Table 7 for the frequency of scores among the six participants for the Cultural Congruity Scale.

Table 7

Cultural Congruity Scale Results

Questions	Number of Participants who Answered in Each Category						
	Not At All 1	2	3	4	5	6	A Great Deal 7
<i>I feel that I have to change myself to fit in at school.</i>	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
<i>I try not to show the parts of me that are “ethnically” based.</i>	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
<i>I often feel like a chameleon, having to change myself depending on the ethnicity of the person I am at school with.</i>	5	0	1	0	0	0	0
<i>I feel like my ethnicity is incompatible with other students.</i>	3	0	2	1	0	0	0
<i>I can talk to my friends at school about my family and culture.</i>	1	0	1	0	1	0	2
<i>I feel I am leaving my family values behind by going to college.</i>	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>My ethnic values are in conflict with what is expected at school.</i>	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>I can talk to my family about my friends from school.</i>	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
<i>I feel that my language and/or appearance make it hard for me to fit in with other students.</i>	4	0	1	0	1	0	0
<i>My family and school values often conflict.</i>	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>I feel accepted at school as an ethnic minority.</i>	5	0	0	4	0	0	0
<i>As an ethnic minority, I feel as if I belong on campus.</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	4
<i>I can talk to my family about my struggles and concerns at school.</i>	1	0	0	1	0	1	3

Qualitative Data Results

Semi-structured interviews, written notes and digital recordings were used to gain an understanding of student perspectives and attitudes of issues around minority male retention and academic experiences. Basic mentee information was collected that identified age, ethnicity, academic year, academic major and career interests. The instrument also asked the participants to identify two personal strengths and two areas for personal improvement. An interview protocol was used to start the semi-structured interview process. The interview questions sought to further understand the participants own academic experience in further examining familial history in regards to education, advising, course load in terms of credit hours and strengths and challenges. Through the interview protocol, student participants described their academic journey in great detail including future aspirations. This process provided each participant the opportunity to tell their own unique story, as affirmed by the Critical Race Theory (CRT). Again this theoretical framework sets up the importance of exploring race-related issues through narratives and storytelling (Reynolds, 2010). The interviews provided an opportunity for the exploration of culturally sensitive issues. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews, written notes, digital recordings and student surveys were coded thematically. The interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed. Student surveys responses were quantified and assigned values. Inductive analysis was used to examine key themes, patterns and categories. The researcher-practitioner began that process by memoing, a method that records reflective notes and seeks to categorize and merge patterns for the data analysis of each portion of the qualitative data sources. Once the significant themes and patterns emerged, codes were created. The initial codes were

re-examined systematically through axial coding to refine the themes and each were systematically analyzed in an effort of answering the research questions.

Qualitative Data Tools

Mentee Questionnaire. This tool collected basic information related to the participants' age, ethnicity, academic interests, career interests and educational experience within the community college setting. Please see the Appendix "C" to see the Mentee Questionnaire

Semi-Structured Initial Interview. There was an interview protocol for the first initial mentoring interview and it consisted of six open-ended questions to assist the researcher-mentor to begin to get to know the participant. Refer to Appendix "F" for those specific six interview questions. The table below displays responses from combining both the Mentee Questionnaire and that initial meeting using the Interview Protocol in areas related to their ethnicity, college experience, employment, and language.

Reciprocal Mentoring Interviews. In the course this study, regular mentoring sessions were scheduled one on one between the mentor and the mentee for the purpose of learning about one another's perspectives in order to support the students involved to achieve higher levels of persistence. In reciprocal mentoring the information flow is a two-way exchange by sharing knowledge and learning from each other, thus both individuals benefit from the relationship (Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). The researcher's intention in using a reciprocal mentoring model was the hope that it will positively impact the academic experience for the student. Gonzales & Thompson (2006) asserts that reciprocal mentoring provides opportunities for dynamic exchanges and a personally

rewarding way to promote collaboration. Over the course of the 15 weeks study, 49 interviews were conducted amongst the six-mentee participants for a total of 1,819 minutes. These interviews were professionally transcribed and consisted of a total of 868 pages of transcribed interviews. See Table 8 for specific interview information among the participants.

Table 8

Mentoring Interviews

Participants	# of Interviews	Post Interviews	Total Interviews	Total Minutes Pages
Participant 1	7	1	8	310
Participant 2	8	1	9	374
Participant 3	6	1	7	243
Participant 4	7	1	8	188
Participant 5	8	1	9	373
Participant 6	7	1	8	331
Total	43	6	49	1,819 minutes= 30.32 hours

Summary of Stories

Analyzing the qualitative data, a picture of each of the six participants emerged and each had a unique story to share. Critical race theory legitimizes underserved populations by identifying that discrimination does exist and that through individual stories we can seek to understand their experiences and their struggles. Through their stories, hard work, motivation the resiliency seeps through as these young men seek to gain their educational goals. In several cases, encouragement from family and friends

were not there and yet they instinctually sought out a better life through the educational realm.

Participant 1

The first participant was his first semester in college and was enrolled in the Honors Program under the Presidential Scholarship. He was attending college under the DREAMERS Act. His parents did not complete college, however encourage him strongly to succeed in degree completion and he is an only child. He admits that his family is very traditional in that his father works outside the home and his mother works only in the home. Catholicism was all around him and his family however, they chose not to practice the religion. His academic major was agriculture and he was very passionate and enthusiastic about his future academic journey and plans to transfer to the University of Arizona. During the course of the semester, the mentor nominated him to participate in the Global Leadership Retreat within the International Education Program and he attended that event during the study. He claimed the retreat changed his life and his worldview. He described the new friends he made that were all students from one of the ten Maricopa County Community Colleges and they were from all around the world, places like Zambia, Sudan, Indonesia, Columbia, Pakistan and Albania just to name a few. During the course of the semester, he joined three clubs including the Male Empowerment Network (MEN) and became active in activities on campus. He loved music, table tennis and played the guitar as well as rapped. He spoke of living in a large home in Madrid, his grandmother's home and then when they came here they had nothing and lived in a small apartment with his family. He shared that the favorite person in his life is his grandpa and they speak often through Skype as he is still in Spain.

He actually did a speech on his grandpa for my class, and he admits to finding it much more difficult to talk about him in English, and he was self-conscious of speaking in front of others in English. He spoke of having some great mentors in his high school experience and admits his father was very strict about his schoolwork. He recalls specific teachers trying different teaching styles in the courses he was struggling in. During the course of the study, he experienced the stress of final exams and he had a particularly difficult time with one faculty member in which we worked together on strategies to improve his communication with her.

When asked why he thought attrition rates among minority males were so high, he explained that there are some groups that have societal barriers based on their skin tone and often if they come from a bad environment they often feel like they need to conform to their surroundings. He shared a personal experience with a friend that was African American friend who fell victim to truancy, drugs and gang life. During the post-mentoring interview as he reflected on the reciprocal mentoring relationship, he shared that he gained knowledge that helped him know the school system, it built his confidence and motivation. He did indicate that he would have liked to know the other mentees that were part of the study so that they could share their opinions and interests. This participant had a strong sense of cultural identity and pride associated with it. He shared that he was bullied a lot in elementary school in Spain and that wasn't something he shared outside of this family. After that discussion he stated, "Being able to tell someone that, someone that's a staff on campus kind of makes me feel very welcome...I feel like I belong here."

Participant 2

The second participant was in his fifth semester and planned on transferring to Arizona State University in the fall of 2014 as a business major. He identified as Filipino and spoke Tagalog and English was his second language. He was a veteran who served in Japan with the United States Marine Corps and had a grade point average of 3.5. His parents did not complete college and he has four older brothers and one younger sister who also attends CGCC. He values his family and lives at home with him. At the beginning of the study he had a sales job, and through his shyness and language barriers, he decided to discontinue that job and focus on school exclusively. He explained, “There’s times I pronounce stuff –they can’t understand me really.” When asked about his military experience he stated, “It help out to adapt to anything, and then also help out to be independent and then accept any challenges.” At the beginning of the reciprocal mentoring process, this participant was quite shy and campus resources were the major themes around our discussions. In the post-mentoring interview, when asked about the reciprocal mentoring experience he stated “I moved here in 2005, but the past semesters I didn’t really talk to any professors. She’s the first one I’m really able to talk to.” When prompted further he shared that he just thought professors were too busy to talk to students. As trust was built, the participant shared more about his lack of confidence in his English skills and how that impacts his active participation in his classes. He shared that his family is very important to him and they are traditional in their practices and his parents encourage him to complete his academic degree. He explained that when they were in the Philippines, his father worked and his mom was a full housewife doing all the cooking, cleaning and laundry. Then he related that now they are here both parents have

to work but that his mother still does all the cooking, cleaning and laundry on top of her job. During the course of the reciprocal mentoring relationship, this participant got involved in the Male Empowerment Network (MEN) as well. He had a passion for sports and break dancing. It was difficult to get him to utilize the services on campus like the tutoring center or advising, as he says he went to his friends for assisted and trusted them more to help him. In the post-mentoring interview when asked what the relationship was like with his mentor he indicated that a good mentor must listen and be honest. He indicated that through this process he procrastinated less on his school work, as he knew during our sessions I would ask about his school work and that motivated him to study more and complete his homework as he didn't want to let me down or feel embarrassed. At the conclusion of that semester he had brought his grade point average up from a 3.5 to a 4.0. He indicates that he wants to complete a bachelors degree, have a stable job, work hard, save money and have a happy life with his family.

Participant 3

The third participant was in his fourth semester at CGCC and wanted to major in dentistry or physical therapy. He identified as Hispanic and spoke Spanish and English and his parents had never attended college. He was employed for 20-25 hours a week and had a self reported grade point average of 2.8 or 2.9. He was involved in the Hispanic Student Orientation Club (HSO) as well as the Male Empowerment Network (MEN) during this study. One of the things we worked on during our reciprocal mentoring relationship was his comfort in speaking in front of people, as some of the class projects included presentations in front of the class. He recalled that in high school, he was unable to complete the assignments that required him to publically speak as he

would “choke up and flail around.” He did indicate that he was going to enroll in a communications class the following semester. Additionally over the course of the semester, this participant also had a problem with a faculty member and felt that they were unapproachable for assistance. We worked on this, however he ultimately ended up withdrawing from that calculus class.

When asked about high attrition rates among minority males, he recalled that seven out of eight of his high school friends dropped out of high school and college was not an option for them. He further shared that family influence makes a difference as his single mom worked all the time and she never checked up on his grades or his academic progress and he didn't have a male role model in his life. He stated that some of his friends that dropped out were actually making decent money so the need for college wasn't really there for some individuals. In the post mentoring interview when asked about the reciprocal mentoring process he stated that he knew I (the mentor) would inquire about his classes each week and stated, “Well, she would always ask me how I was doing in classes, so I would always try to make sure I was okay so I wouldn't feel bad telling her otherwise.” He further explained that he would have procrastinated until the last minute on assignments however by, “her asking me it helped me do it.” He stated that he appreciated me as the mentor actually caring about his grades as he explained, “I never really show my grades to anybody other than myself. No one ever watched my grades, my mom didn't really keep track of that.” The participant went on to further explain, “I don't really give myself much credit, and I just kinda go with the flow. Then she actually made me realize I what I was doing and I was doing good.”

Participant 4

The fourth participant was in his third semester at CGCC and had English as his sole language. He identified as Hispanic and his parents did not complete college. During the study he was employed for 18-25 hours weekly and was his major was business. He shared that he went to a private Catholic school through junior high where things were very predictable and he had established friendships. Then his family had some economic challenges and could no longer afford tuition so he started at a new public high school at the beginning of his freshman year. He admits to having difficulty acclimating. It was difficult for him to make friends and he basically experienced culture shock. His grades dropped and he stated that he, “Hated high school...hated being there and hated everybody there.” He recalls being bullied and called names but manages to graduate and started film school at Scottsdale Community College, however discovered those credits would not transfer to a university so he changed his major to business and began attending CGCC. He admits that “I still daydream in class, but I ask teachers for help on homework and assignment, rather than just sitting there guessing.” His parents encouraged his education and allow him to live with them rent-free so long as he is attending school or working. He shared that his biggest inspiration was his grandfather. He said, “My dad’s dad, he grew up even poorer than we did. He said there were some nights when including my dad and the parents, it was a family of seven and they would just have a can of beans and he wouldn’t eat so that his kids could.” He also said that he always knew that he would go to college after high school as his parents had both dropped out and wanted him to finish his degree. In the post mentoring interview, when asked about the reciprocal mentoring process he indicated that it was nice knowing there

was someone there if he needed help, he just didn't really need help. When asked if he'd like to continue communication with the mentor, he yes. He indicated it was helpful to be exposed to scholarships and other resources and he did begin to attend the MEN meetings during the semester. He plans were to complete his associate's degree from CGCC, then transfer to Arizona State University as a business major.

Participant 5

The fifth participant was in the second semester at CGCC and indicates that English is his sole language. He identified as Hispanic and his parents did not attend college. During the study he was employed 30-35 hours weekly and his academic major started as business and within the semester he changed it to education. He decided he wanted to be a high school counselor for a poverty stricken area to help kids so that he could make a difference. Raised by a single mother, his father had passed away when he was 16 years old. His father actually left his family about a decade prior to that to make a new family. That was hurtful to the family, emotionally and economically. As a result the participant spent a lot of time on his own, hungry, experiencing times with the electricity being turned off and for three years having no hot water. He recalls that their home was in bad shape and the much-needed repairs never got done so he just lived like that. His older brother was incarcerated for drug related charges. The town he was raised in was a border town and he explains, "It's a small town, so there really nothing there. You'll basically see people working at the Safeway or becoming drug dealers. At my high school, when you see a kid with a nice car, he comes from a drug family, not that his parents have a good job." He shared that while growing up he got used to not having things and in his own words he said he didn't want things, "because I couldn't have it, so

I was just content.” After high school he moved in with his older cousin who is married and they live in Chandler, and he began school at CGCC. When asked how he found the motivation to leave that toxic environment to make a change he recalls, “A lot of influences that I had as a kid was kind of like yeah, I don’t want to be that, so I am just not going to be that.” He also shared that he didn’t see minorities being successful role models or business people on athletes and if you couldn’t be an athlete you were limited.

When we discussed his academic experience thus far at CGCC, he revealed that the advising services have given him inconsistent and inaccurate information and as a result he is reluctant to try other campus resources. As the mentor, I tried to get him to attend the MEN meetings, however it was not something he wanted to participate in. Trust in other people had always been an issue for him since he didn’t find it at home. When he talked about his experience as a minority male in higher education, he explained “I don’t know I grew up with a bunch of brown people, I didn’t think about it at the time. Now I do.” When asked in the post-mentoring interview if the reciprocal mentoring relationship was helpful to him, he replied, “It just opens your mind and makes you see more. You don’t feel like there’s a barrier there anymore if you just kind of acknowledge it, but you realize that you can move past it.”

Participant 6

The sixth participant was in his third semester at CGCC and his first language was Spanish and secondarily English. He identified as Hispanic and planned to go into Dentistry. He was an assistant to a dentist and worked about 25-35 hours weekly. He was raised in California and relocated to Arizona with his family at the age of 20 years old. He lived with his parents, sisters and brother-in-law and recalls that extended

members of the family always lived with him growing up and his uncles even rented the garage and they put beds in there for them. He recalled that he finally got his own room when he was a freshman in high school. He shared that his parents didn't go to school, they just worked and that when he completed high school he wasn't sure what to do. He said his neighborhood was a scary place and he recalled having to walk to school when he started kindergarten and he saw gang violence all around it and he would run to school, then run back home afterwards. He explained, "It became normal. You would see fights and some stuff...people writing on walls. I was always around people like that but never became like them." He recalled that he saw several of his close friends lose interest in school during his high school years and they would join gangs or sell drugs. He described an incident in which a group of kids approached him and threatened him to not hang out with certain neighborhood gang members and he was afraid because he had seen them carry bats to school and hit people and he changed schools.

His younger sister also attended CGCC however he said she just wanted to go to college long enough to get married and then she would quit and have children. For him he discussed that it was different and that he had a nine-year old sister and he wanted set a good example. He explained that in his family and neighborhood it was just a cycle and he shared, "You just work forever and you don't even think about school." He further explained that he wanted to be the first in the family to break that cycle so his sister can see there is a different path. He attributed moving from California to Arizona had a huge impact on his desire to attend school and ultimately become a dentist. He shared that he had never been around "white people" and now he found himself in a classroom surrounded by them. He admitted to not talking a lot in class as he compared his English

skills to the other students and at home he spoke exclusively Spanish. He stated, “I feel like I don’t speak it that good, English the proper way. I guess that’s why I don’t speak in front of people or try to speak when my teachers ask questions.” He recalled that the high school environment in California was different and until college he had never written a research paper. He confided, “It’s embarrassing, but I admit it and I had to learn how to cite because I was doing it at the beginning instead of at the end.” He said that in school they just focused on having fun and not on performing well academically. The dentist he worked with became a mentor to him, inviting him to his home and helping him learn about dentistry and providing encouragement. He said that by working in the field alongside his mentor, he knows that dentistry is the career path for him.

In the post-mentoring interview he was asked about the reciprocal mentoring process and he recalled that he didn’t really know what a mentor was and that he was unfamiliar with that term. He said he looked it up and after reading the definition, he decided he would participate. He said the experience helped him access scholarship information, build on his speaking skills as he had two speeches that semester and he further stated, “We talked about my goals, wrote things down and then get back to her. Yeah it did really help me academically it did.” He explained the relationship was important as we had developed trust and he felt comfortable talking about his background.

In analyzing these interviews, six distinct codes emerged with sub codes. The following section will provide a summary of those codes with examples of each. Refer to Appendix “L” for the detailed Codebook for each of the participants.

Summary of Resource Information Sharing

With each of the six participants, the mentor encouraged the mentees to utilize campus support systems like advising, career services and tutoring. The mentor found an overall reluctance to utilize services either due to negative experiences or not feeling comfortable to ask for assistance.

Summary of Reciprocal Mentoring Codes

Code 1 Academics. As the transcribed interviews were coded, six codes emerged. The first code was “academics” and within that code academic inquiry three sub-codes emerged. The first was academic inquiry.

Initially, each participant was asked about their high school background and how many semesters have they been attending CGCC or other institutions. All participants except for one attended high school somewhere within the state of Arizona and the other participant attended high school in California. In subsequent mentoring interviews, the researcher continued to ask about how their classes were going, current grades and the overall balancing between work, family and school, when applicable. One participant who was in his third semester at CGCC, was taking 19 credit hours and worked on average of 30 hours per week. Another participant shared mid- semester that he was struggling in math, and when asked if he ever used the math tutoring center, he said no that he would rather ask his friends for help.

The second sub-code was academic major. When the mentoring sessions took place we discussed classes as well academic interests and majors. Each of the six participants identified they had an academic major and were taking classes in accordance with that major. At the beginning, three participants were working towards an Associates

degrees in Business. Mid-semester, one of those participants decided to change to education. Two participants were working towards dentistry and one in agriculture.

The third sub-code was future academic planning. During the mentoring sessions it was important for the participants to know if they were taking the correct courses needed for degree completion. Many of them were not using the advising services provided at the college. One of the participants will be ready to transfer to ASU in business in the fall 2014. Another participant just started as CGCC but plans to transfer to UA at the completion of his associates and has looked into a bridge program for agriculture. When asked about future academic goals, one participant stated, “I didn’t really have a plan coming in. It was just hey get an associates and go from there. This semester, I definitely wanna get a bachelors cuz I’m not working at places like Chipotle the rest of my life.” Another participant who is in his third semester plans on transferring to ASU upon degree completion at CGCC in business.

Code 2 College Experience. There were six sub-codes that emerged from examining the college experience. Advising emerged as an important theme in the mentoring sessions. One participant had several bad experiences and he stated, “He [the advisor] really screwed me up.” He further explained that you get someone different every time you go and they tell you conflicting things. I had another student though relate his experience with advising by stating, “ It was good. She was very informative. I can’t remember her name, but she was informative. “ The researcher often encouraged the participants to go to advising to ensure they were taking the necessary classes for degree completion.

College resources emerged as a sub-code under college experience. During the mentoring process, the researcher asked the participants about their usage of the various services and resources offered by the college. One participant stated that he had used the writing center, however this was a requirement to go there from his English instructor. When asked if going to the Writing Center was helpful, that participant stated, “Yeah, I mean she gave me grammar, lesson in grammar, whatever, so she helped me a lot in that. It was pretty good. Gave me some advice on my paper, so I fixed it a little bit more. It was good. Then I’m just going to the tutoring center for science all the time.” That student participant was taking anatomy courses at the time. Another participant indicated that he had already ten hours in the Math Tutoring Center and at the time it was eight weeks into the semester. This same student used advising and also the Writing Center and is part of the honors Program. He stated, “I like my resources.” One participant indicated that he used Career Services with assistance with his resume. Another participant said he used the Math Tutoring Center only once, he stated, “They were good, but it’s always so packed in there. You can get like one question answered and then you wait.” This same student indicated that he had not utilized the Writing Center but that his English teacher offers them extra credit if they go. He had utilized Career Services and he stated, “Yeah. We had to take some survey of what our interest were-it told me I should be a counselor and work with people.” This student mid-semester did change his major from business to education in hopes of pursuing a career as a high school counselor.

The third sub-code was gender class discussion, as a result of some of the mentees being students in my Psychology of Gender Class this code was created as a result of the

conversations that often occurred naturally regarding our gender class experiences or clarification of gender assignments.

Racial climate was created, then the researcher noted that this code was not necessary, as the qualitative data collected that information, so this code was deleted from the qualitative analysis component.

The fifth sub-code that emerged was the student and faculty interaction. This code was created as some of the quantitative tools sought to measure this and in one of the mentoring sessions with the mentees, when asked specifically if they have developed close working relationships with faculty members, outside our mentoring process the student answered, “No, probably not.” Then when prompted to elaborate he stated, “I just don’t need help.” Another participant stated, “ I’ve never really asked any faculty to be like, hey I need this this or this. Usually if I’ve asked something, they’ve been pretty responsive.”

The last sub-code again resulted in the fact that some of the mentees being students in my Introduction to Sociology class. This code was created as a result of the conversations that often occurred naturally regarding our class experiences or clarification on assignments.

Code 3 Extraneous Dialogue. This code was created to capture the dialogue that occurred during the mentoring process that was not necessarily related to other codes. There were two sub-codes captured and it included unrelated dialogue and building rapport.

Especially at the beginning, building rapport was important in establishing a trusting mentoring relationship. Music was a common theme, the researcher learned

about rappers Big L, Earl and two of the participants are really into sports, especially soccer, table tennis and basketball. One of the student participants was also in the Hispanic Student Organization (HSO) and we talked about the activities on campus from that club in which he is a member. One of the participants talked about the NBA finals versus the WNBA finals, and he was a student in my Psychology of Gender class. Naturally some unrelated dialogue occurred throughout the mentoring process.

Code 4 Logistics. Since this was a research study, there were consent forms and other paperwork to go through together as well as scheduling times to meet. Each of the participants completed the same mentoring forms. Through our mentoring process, the researcher wanted to ensure that the mentee understood their participation was voluntary, that they could terminate their participation at any time without any negative repercussions. Additionally, the mentoring contract and agreement outlined the time commitment, and the tools that would be used to gather data and of course the confidentiality agreement, protecting the participant. A regular mentoring meeting schedule was helpful in establishing and nurturing the mentoring relationship. Attempts were made to meet weekly on the same day and time throughout the data collection period. In all instances, we met frequently however weekly meetings did not occur due to a death in the family of the researcher and midterms for the student participants. Although weekly meetings were not conducted for all 15 weeks, the researcher and participants met regularly so as not to compromise the mentoring relationship.

Code 5 Mentoring. Within this code, there were two sub-codes that emerged. The first was me, as the mentor encouraging the mentee and secondly our mentoring

discussion, where it could range to offering assistance to providing scholarship information or simply listening to the mentee. This code was created as the researcher often found that rapport amongst the participants was positive and often as the mentor, encouragement was a natural part of the process. In speaking with one participant, the mentor stated, “That’s powerful that you beat those odds, and that you’re finding your own transportation to college, trying to find what you are interested in. Speaking from the two classes I’ve had you in, you are very participatory and you’re engaged. It seems like you care.” One participant was making straight A’s and when the researcher asked him about it he said, “It’s a lot of work. Literally, it’s a lot of work. You have to like-like give up a lot of stuff. I have had to sacrifice this semester so much.”

Code 6 Personhood. Within this code five sub-codes emerged. The first was family background. This code was created to capture information regarding the participant’s family background. One participant stated, “I am very proud of my background. Even if they [his family] were farmers I would be very proud, you know?” This participant moved from Spain at age 9 and his parents did not complete college. Another participant shared that his parents did not complete school so they want all of the kids to get a college education. This participant shared, “I value my family, so value my family a lot. Connected to academic, all of my brother’s, they are graduating college, so I’m try follow their footsteps to graduate.” This participant moved from the Philippines in high school. The third participant attended Catholic school from grades 1st to 8th grade here locally. His mother got laid off and then he had to transition to the public high school. He said his grandfather is inspirational to him as his grandfather had five children and with two parents, many times they would only have a can of beans so his

grandfather would not eat so the kids could. The fourth participant moved to Arizona at age 20 from Santa Ana California. He stated, "...so I guess just the lifestyle, like the different life out here. Cuz in, how I grew up and was brought up it's nothing educational. It's like you don't see that. Like it's just different." He continues and reflects, "I can remember as a kid-we would walk to school to school. Then in elementary I started observing some gang violence and stuff like that around. You're scared. You run to your house and stuff but growing up by the sixth, seventh grade I started getting used to it. It was like normal. I was always around people like that but never became like them." The fifth participant grew up in Bisbee and he stayed there until he finished high school. His father left his family at an early age and moved out of state and later passed away when he was 16 years old. The participant was raised by his mother who had some medical conditions. He recalls times when his mother was hospitalized, he had to help raise his siblings and often they had no electricity or hot water. He stated, "A lot of influences that I had as a kid was kind of like yeah, I don't want to be that, so I'm just not gonna be that. I mean I also kind of grew up faster." The sixth participant grew up locally and was raised by a single mother who did not attend college. He didn't expand much on his family background.

The second sub-code was employment. In looking at attrition rates nationally, the research indicates that employment is a factor in retention and degree completion. On participant worked consistently throughout the study at a fast food restaurant 25-35 hours a week while attending school full-time. The second participant works about 18-25 hours at a fast food restaurant while attending college full-time. The third participant only works Friday-Sunday totally about 24 hours a week at a dental office, which is his career

interest. His boss who is a dentist has mentored him, invites him to golf, to dinner and talks to him about the dental field. He shares a visit at the dentist's home and recalls, "Dude this is so nice! I'm looking at everything and he said you can have all this too—if you study ad I'm like yeah, yeah I know." The fourth participant worked at Chipotle the first month of our mentoring process and then transitioned to Walmart and works 32-35 per week and is attending college full-time. The fifth participant worked during the first month of the mentoring in sales and he didn't feel like that was a good fit for him. He served in the military and he spent the rest of the semester being a full time student and did not seek employment. The sixth participant did not work, his parents wanting him to focus all of his time on being a full time college student.

The third sub-code was language. This code was created however it the researcher found that the language component blended within other categories so this code was collapsed.

The fourth sub-code was military experience. This code was created for the one participant who had military experience. In reference to the military, the participant stated, "It help out to adapt to anything, and then also help out to be independent and then accept any challenges." The participant served four years active duty and four years inactive duty and is actively talking to a recruiter to extend his contract in the Marine Corps reserves. The Marines are currently paying for his education and medical insurance.

The last sub-code was personal identity. This code was created to capture elements of personal identity that the participants shared during the mentoring process. One participant stated, "Sometimes, especially language-wise, cuz the way I pronounce

stuff, they [people] kind of don't understand me...but appearance-wise, I think I already adapt somewhat to the culture here." He expanded further when he talked about his previous job in sales to say, "There's time I pronounce stuff-they [the customers] can't understand me really." Another participant reflects, "In high school, like senior year I could barely speak in front of the class...I would always freeze up in front of the crown. I would not be able to speak and I'd actually just flail around...I'm not gonna ask for any help." Another participant described his identity he stated, "I often feel like a chameleon having to change himself depending on the ethnicity of the person I'm at school with." He further expands to say, "First of all I don't like the word minority. That's the only word that offends me because the word minority means I'm under you. I'm not under you." Another participant articulated, "I grew up with a bunch of brown people, I never really looked at myself as a minority." That same participant later shared a quote by Dave Grohl that stated, "I feel good about the good things. I feel bad about the bad things. In the end, I wouldn't change a thing."

Letter to My Son

This qualitative data tool was created as a way for the participants to see the relevance of this study and was of a personal nature to the researcher. As stated in the Foreword, this study was inspired by the researcher's son and is relevant both academically and personally. This provided the participants to expand their role of being a mentee and step into a place in which they could give advice and influence another minority male who is younger than them. The researcher gave the following prompt to each of the participants. "You have an opportunity to give advice to my [the researcher's] minority male son. In a letter format, please share any advice that you may

have for him related to his educational journey.” In analyzing these letters the responses or approaches to this prompt varied and Table 9 analyzes factors of each letter. The length of the letter varied anywhere from two paragraphs to an entire typed page. During the systematic analysis of these letters, the table below demonstrates some elements that stood out for the researcher. Refer to Appendix “M” for the descriptive codes created for this data collection tool.

Table 9 *Analysis of Letters to My Son*

Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6
Didn't address the letter to anyone in particular	Addressed the letter to me	Didn't address the letter to anyone in particular	Didn't address the letter to anyone in particular	Didn't address the letter to anyone in particular	Addressed the letter and referred to him as "Young Man" throughout
Used the word "Minority" = 5 times	Used the word "Dream" = 10 times	Used the word "You" = 21 times	Used the word "Friend" = 9 times	Used the phrase "Never give up" twice and it was inferred one additional time	Used the word "Struggle" = 5 times
		Talked about bullies			Dedicated a paragraph at the end focusing on random advice

Summary of Letter to My Son Codes

There were six codes that emerged throughout the various themes in analyzing the letters. The first code was "Advice" and it encompassed 26 different examples that would fall in that category; anything from working hard, set goals and having the courage to dream. One participant stated, "Take advantage of the great schools in America and always work hard." Another participant stated, "My advice to minorities is that we just have to work hard in order to succeed in classes; listen to your professor, follow rules, and try to accomplish every task your professor assigns." Participants who happen to be immigrants provided both of those examples. Another participant stated, "One participant stated, "Young man you must respect the struggle. Everybody wants a degree, they want a career, they want a high paying job. What you will find is not everybody wants to go through the struggle it takes to achieve these goals."

The second code that emerged was “Personal Experience.” There were 11 items within this code that include motivation, struggles that promoted personal growth and trusting oneself. One participant wrote, “Nobody is above you, and nobody has the right to tell you to not do something you know is right. In life, you can do whatever you want, don’t let anyone tell you who to become.” Another participant writes, “Recently I have been asking myself will I ever be the man they [society] never expected of me. I want you to ask yourself the same question.”

The third code that emerged was “Characteristics” and there were three items with that code and it included working hard, being respectful and smiling. One participant stated, “When I was working on achieving the rank of Eagle scout, there were many times where I wanted to just drop down and quit; but then I remembered; my heart is set on achieving this rank, and I just have to stick with it. So after much hard work, I achieved that rank, and I still to this day am happy I didn’t quit. This experience also taught me that I can do anything, no matter how hard it is.” Another participant wrote, “The thing that wins people over the most is a smile. Smile whenever you can, and always show people how great your life is.” That same participant writes further stating, “Always look at people in the eyes when you talk to them, this will show truth in your eyes, and also respect. With respect, you can have the world for yourself. Always stay true to your values.”

The fourth code was culture and included self-identity and cultural importance. One participant wrote, “Migrating here in America has brought a lot of challenges in my life. I needed to adapt to the culture, language, ways, education, and people, just the lifestyle in general.” Another participant stated, “As a final point, it is a blessing to

influence a minority male to achieve a dream or a goal. Always think positive and have a clear vision....dreams are never easy...as a minority male I believe we all have the heart to accomplish anything in life, and nothing is giving for free, it takes hard work and determination to accomplish where you want to be in the future.” One participant wrote, “Being a minority male, I never dream of going to college to pursue a career, my dreams were to become like my dad a landscaper who provides for his family. Every friend or person I knew believe that studying in college or university was for those who were smart. That is the stereotype my friends and I grew up with...my struggles alone helped me grow as a person. That’s when I believe that there was something out there for me.”

The fifth code that emerged was the “Success” and within that code four items related to support that code including the definition of success, inner happiness, being passionate and minimizing the important of money in defining success. One participant writes, “Money comes and goes true success comes from your inner happiness. If you love something enough the passion you have for it will pay off. Broaden your horizon’s if you have interest in any topic take a class on it who knows you may realize it’s something you love.”

The sixth and last code that emerged was “Random Advice” and only one of the participants included this, however the researcher thought it was important to include. The advice given was about saying no to drugs and to not objectify women. He writes, “A bit of random advice don’t go around treating girls like objects you need to realize that’s someone’s daughter that’s someone’s future mother and one day that could be your daughter being treated like an object.” Refer to Appendix “M” for the detailed Codebook for this data collection tool.

Post-Mentoring Interviews

Each participant took part in a post-mentoring interview with a third party, not the mentor to discuss objectively the effectiveness of the reciprocal mentoring process. These interviews were conducted by a peer researcher from Scottsdale Community College but took place at the regular meeting space at CGCC. In analyzing these interviews, 4 distinct codes emerged with sub codes. The following section will provide a summary of those codes with examples of each. Refer to Appendix “N” for the detailed Codebook for each of the participants.

Summary of Post Reciprocal Mentoring Codes

A post reciprocal mentoring interview was conducted for all six participants independently by a peer researcher in an effort to collect objective information regarding the reciprocal mentoring process. [See Appendix “G” for Post-Mentoring Interview Questions]. After a brief explanation by the peer researcher, all six participants were asked if they had any questions before the actual questions were asked and all six answered that they did not have any questions.

Code 1 Logistics. There was one sub-code to this and that was the explanation and purpose of the post reciprocal mentoring interview. It was important to share how the information would be collected through a series of questions and how that information would be analyzed to answer the original research questions guiding the study.

Code 2 Mentoring Discussion. There were six sub-codes that emerged from examining the mentoring process. A reciprocal mentoring model was used between faculty and minority male students for the purpose of learning about one another’s perspectives in order to support the students involved to achieve higher levels of

persistence and improve the academic experience. In reciprocal mentoring the information flow is a two-way exchange that involves sharing knowledge and learning from each other, thus both individuals benefit from the relationship (Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). The researcher's intention in using a reciprocal mentoring model was the hope that it will positively impact the academic experience for the student. One participant stated the following, "I didn't really have a sense of direction.... I didn't know what I really wanted to do...I trust Jill.... She's gonna give me good information, she's actually gonna help me." Yet another participant when asked about the helpfulness of the mentoring process answered, "Honestly, not that much cuz I didn't really need help with anything, but I guess it was nice that there was someone who was willing to help, I guess, if that makes sense. Yeah, just know the help was there if needed; that was nice."

The second sub-code looked at qualities of a mentor. In examining the effectiveness of a reciprocal mentoring model, qualities of a good mentor needed to be examined. An overarching theme was that a good mentor should be able to listen and give feedback as well as be patient and helpful. One participant stated, "A good mentor listens, but allows you to make the decisions, gives you the information, gives you the feedback and I guess resources too." Another participant stated, "She should care about others."

The third sub-code sought to capture information about the relationship during the reciprocal mentoring process. The participants were asked about the relationship between the faculty mentor and themselves to see if the relationship building was an important aspect. One participant stated, "I feel that I have knowledge about how the school system works that most freshmen don't figure out that fast. I feel very

comfortable around just the whole environment.” Another participant stated, “She is always there. She makes it interesting too and has you thinking about it...like with gender, every time I talk to a female now, I start noticing little gender things...that’s kinda how the mentoring is too. I never used to think about culture at all, but now it’s kinda like I see little things now...I’ll start questioning things more and looking with open eyes, I guess.” However when asked about the mentoring relationship and specifically about how helpful the conversations regarding his background were, he answered, “Yeah, I guess. I dunno how, but it was nice to talk about it, I guess. No one’s really asked me that before, so it was kinda interesting to think about, I guess.”

The fourth sub-code sought to examine and understand any limitations to the process. The participants were asked if there were any limitations or obstacles they experienced during the reciprocal mentoring process. All of the six participants did not report significant limitations. All participants were asked, “Were there any limitations or obstacles that you experienced?” In response to that question, one participant stated, “ I guess just with kind of work schedule and just, yeah. Cuz I had the school two days a week and then worked four days. It’s kinda like trying to find the right time-other than that, even if I couldn’t I could always call her if I needed to. She was always open, so.”

The fifth sub-code under the mentoring discussion was about continuing communication. Each participant was asked if they would like to continue communication with their faculty mentor in the future. All six participants stated that they would like to continue communication with their faculty mentor. One participant stated, “ Yeah, I do. Cuz she’s easy to talk to. She’s really friendly as a professor.” Another participant said, “ Yeah, of course. I had a problem in my English class and I

emailed her yesterday about it. She was open to help me and she's my leader for my chapter, the MEN club. She's just a good friend, too, a great person to just keep a conversation with, and yeah, I will definitely." However, another student participant stated the following, "I would, even though. Obviously I said it wasn't really helpful this semester, who knows? Maybe it would be next semester."

The sixth and last sub-code asked about recommended changes. Each participant was asked that if they could change something about the mentoring process, what would it have been. One participant stated, "I enjoyed the process the way it was. I liked it. I feel like if you actually open up and go to these meetings with something to say or anything it's gonna be beneficial to you. If you're just gonna go and have her ask you questions and you just answer them, then I feel like you're not gonna get anything out of it." Another participant said, "If I can change-I don't think there's anything, really, you can change. Because as my experience with Jill, I mean I see it was a good relationship." Another participant did have a recommended change and stated, "I would like to meet with other mentees; know who they were. I don't know them. I don't know who they are. I would like to know-I know its a little confidential stuff but I would like to know."

Code 3 Extraneous Dialogue. Some extraneous dialogue was recorded since the nature of an interview included some dialogues that were unrelated to the study. Additionally, some dialogues were designed for the purpose of building rapport between the mentor and the mentee.

Code 4 Mentee. Cultural identity was one aspect that was explored that appeared congruent with Critical Race Theory, as well as, directly tied in with the research

questions of this study. There were six sub-codes that emerged and the first being a sense of cultural identity. The aspects of cultural identity varied between each of the six participants, however they all had different ideas about how they defined their cultural identity. Most participants had powerful things to say about this issue. One participant stated, “When she [referring to the faculty mentor] had—starting at the start of the semester she told me, “Do you want me to—I’m looking for mentoring students. You willing to come in to my office and talk about it—about mentoring you?” I seriously didn’t know—oh, cuz she said minorities. She’s trying to help minorities. I didn’t really know what—to be honest, I told her—I think I told her—I didn’t even know what a minority mentor was. She was like—I think she said—she explained it to me, and then I got it. Then I’m like, “Oh, okay.” I kinda did some research on it. Just to see what it really was, and stuff. I read about what a mentor does to the minorities, and stuff. Then I got to know oh, okay, that’s what it is. As the words, mentor, stuff like that, I didn’t know what it was. Cuz I mean I never really learned about it, or I never even was introduced to it back at home, or where I’m coming from, so it has to do—with that chance, her giving me, it really helped me a lot.” The same participant further explained, “Probably more like talked. Talked to someone about how you feel, like your thoughts. How you see things now from back at home, how it’s different compared to when you come to a new state, and different cultures around you. I told her I was around just Hispanic people, that’s all that I grew up with. The environment was all-Hispanic. I mean you have to cross lights, or the border, Westminster, like you say, or other cities where you see others. You wouldn’t go to those—you would just stay in your environment.. I really liked it, having a mentor, though. I just feel like there’s someone

out there that can help you if you ever need help with anything. Or if you're feeling down, someone can help you out. It has to do a lot with—now that I know more about it with minorities, since she told me she was saying it's a big percentage. That some college dropouts come a lot from minorities. There's a lot of reasons to it, why they drop out. That's a good thing. I mean having a mentor that's trying to help minorities, that's really a good thing they're doing. She's doing. I really appreciate it though.”

Another student participant stated, “I felt what was very important for me was that she—when I tell my parents about how I do in school, they give me the parents’ support, but they don’t quite know what’s going on really cuz they never went to college in America. They don’t know how it really is. If I give 'em details, they’re just gonna say it’s great. However, Jill, my mentor, she could really give me real feedback. She knew what was going on. She knew details, so I was getting support with knowledge, which really I could really embrace as something important... Yeah, the different points of view. The American point of view of things because I only have the Spanish point of view at home. These mentors of mine that I've had throughout have given me that point of view that I lacked, that I needed because I’m multicultural now. I’m not just Spanish. I’m not just American; I’m both. I need to feed from both perspectives. I need advice from both perspectives because I am both.” Another participant stated, “ I personally think that we’re kinda in a time where if you’re good at what you do it doesn’t matter. I think there is obviously still that kind of barrier with minorities and stuff. I think a lot of it too is based on us thinking that instead of just—if you pursue anything, it doesn’t matter what others see me as. I think I’m more based off of, coming from a small town as far as culture itself. Well I just never thought about it really. It just kind of opens your

mind and makes you see it more, and just knowing it's there. You don't feel like there's a barrier there anymore if you just kind of acknowledge it, but you realize that you can move past it." Interestingly, two student participants did not address cultural identity in any way during the post-mentoring interview.

The second sub-code that appeared was self-efficacy. This was a code that emerged as the participants talked about themselves and their experiences. Again, this code is reinforced by Critical Race Theory. One participant said, "Oh, just her asking, actually caring about my grades. Okay, I never really showed my grades to anybody other than myself. No one watched my grades...my parents didn't really keep track of that." Another participant stated, "I don't have a relative that speaks English to me. I'm an only child. Having her, it's almost like having that parent I can express myself with better. Sometimes, I express myself better outside of school in Spanish but academic stuff, I can't really explain it in Spanish. Having her, very, very helpful to me to express and let my thoughts out every week. That's important....Being able to tell someone that is staff on campus kind of makes me feel very welcome because now I have someone that knows-I feel connected to the campus, someone that knows me. Now I feel like I belong here; very important. I think that is very important."

The third sub-code was the perceived benefits the mentees felt regarding the reciprocal mentoring process. Each participant had an opportunity to share any benefits they felt they gained throughout the mentoring process. One participant stated, "I just hope professors that'll be open to talk to like that, and just be a mentor to the school. Cuz I think it will help a lot, especially it's like, for new transfers from either a high school or new college student. I think it'll help." Another participant felt a connection to other

minorities by sharing “Most beneficial was knowing—by learning about the other minorities, the other situations, learning that my situation was not the worst, and that I was actually pretty blessed in a way, and that I need to be very respectful to everybody because everybody has their own situation. Not everybody goes to college for free, not everybody gets paid by their parents, and then not everybody has the same chances to keep continuing in college. Knowing that allowed me to, I guess, be more connected to other people that aren’t like me. That’s a lesson I—you don’t really get in high school where it’s a public, free school, and everybody just goes because it’s close to their house. That’s a good lesson to learn.” One participant the value for them were resources. He stated, “The most beneficial? I’d have to say—she gave me some scholarship opportunities, so I applied for those. I haven’t heard back, but at least they were there, so it doesn’t hurt to try.”

The fourth sub-code that emerged was academic impact. Since the study focused on assisting minority males in higher education, academic impact is an essential component to look at and explore. Each of the six participants were asked to reflect on what impact if any did the reciprocal mentoring relationship have on them during the fall 2013 semester. One participant stated, “Yeah. I ending up like, good grade. First, I started with my math class, like all my grades around C or B. Then it’s like, pass two or three final, or exams I got an A.... She just asked me, it’s like, “What’s wrong, why are you getting those grades?” Then I just talked to her about it. I was like, talked to her about what’s the main thing, what I do. Stuff like studying, and stuff. I told her I procrastinate. She just told me, “All right, make sure—don’t procrastinate,” stuff like that. I used to study an hour before the test, so now I study a day before. Take about

three hours a day before.” Another participant shared, “Yeah, it did really help me. Academically it did. Like I said, with her. See the things that I already—since maybe spring of last year, the ending of spring, to the summer, I got into—the whole summer I spent—that’s when I spent my time with the doctor most of the time. I was working with him full time, and that’s when I was—he took me out golfing a couple times. All of that—I already had that set academically. I already had that before coming in the fall, what I needed to do to get where I wanna get. Also willing to know the stuff. I was happier, or I wanna go back to school to learn this stuff. I really wanna know it. I really wanna know how it feels actually learning. I had the idea already. Now, with having Jill at the beginning of the semester, now I have someone else in school other than outside school. Cuz outside school was at work with the doctor. Now, in school, I had Jill. That helped me even more academically as keeping up every week. Oh, how you doing, you need help? How’s your grades going and stuff. Before Coming in, I already had that. Already knowing what I really wanted to do. With Jill It helped me academically this semester. Yeah, this semester has been a good semester for me. I accomplished—like I said, I accomplished my four classes, I got all A’s, and then with Jill helping me out, it’s just everything’s been going good this semester. As an experience, it’s a great experience.” One student participant did not share that viewpoint, and answered in response to the whether or not the mentoring process had an academic impact, he stated, “Academically? Not really, just cuz again, I didn’t really need the help, so it wasn’t too beneficial.”

The fifth sub-code sought to examine previous mentoring experience. Each participant was asked if they had ever had a mentor before. The same student above that

didn't find the process very beneficial responded, " No. I mean I've had teachers and coaches and stuff, but never an actual mentor or whatever who tracked my progress-it was kinda cool." Another participant stated," No. I mean I was a Boy Scout, so I had my Boy Scout leaders. I could consider them mentors. Plus, they were a different religion from mine, so that drew different points of views." Another participant stated that he would consider his previous coaches mentors. One participant shared his military service as his experience in both being a mentor and mentoring others. He stated, "I was a mentor too, before. Every time there's like, lower ran comes in, we're supposed to mentor them. It was like, tell them, "This is what you have to do." One participant said they had never had a mentor before, yet this participant didn't talk further on that particular question.

The sixth sub-code inquired about future plans. One participant when asked if it was valuable having a mentor who knew about college experiences, he stated "It was cuz with her, she helped me realize how it would be-cuz I plan to go to ASU after this for a while then dental school. She helped me realize how ASU will be, like certain tuitions, again, the scholarships. How big it actually is, each classroom compared to CGCC." Another student stated, "Yeah, I plan on going to ASU...Jill, she did a-suggested me doing the MAPP program, which I am on right now." Another participant in response said, "Transfer to ASU. First, get my associates degree her, then transfer to ASU...I already talked to an advisor. I'm on the right path, except for I need to take my ACT or SAT, cuz I guess business school at ASU is pretty high-standard, so you have to have the ACT or SAT, even though you have associate's." Two participants didn't discuss future

plans during this interview, again all of them did an activity in which they wrote out goals and some of this information was captured during our regular mentoring sessions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter the author will discuss the assertions derived from the data collected during this mixed methods research study. In addition, implications and limitations will be discussed and acknowledged as well as future policy considerations. This study used the Critical Race Theory as the theoretical framework in which to further make sense of and understand the implications of race-related issues among minority males in a community college setting and how they affect educational outcomes and aspirations. Critical race scholars assert that through narratives or storytelling, complex issues related to race are captured through the “voice” of the study participants.

Assertions

The author will describe the assertions derived from the 15 weeks of data collection and the evidence that supports them. The research questions were: (1) How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process support the minority male student with academic persistence? (2) How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process impact the minority male student in attaining their academic goals? (3) What do the stories related by the minority male students reveal about the causality of underrepresentation of minority males in higher education, specifically at a community college? (4) What thematic meanings can be derived from the collection of narratives?

Table 10 provides the assertions that support each of the research questions based on the results of this study.

Table 10

Research Questions and Assertions

Research Question	Assertion
RQ1: How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process support the minority male student with academic persistence?	A1: Positive faculty and student interactions can improve student retention and persistence. A2: Clear academic advising is necessary to support minority males in their academic goals.
RQ2: How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process impact the minority male student in attaining their academic goals?	A3: Reciprocal Mentoring can greatly impact minority male students in attaining their academic goals. A4: In a reciprocal mentoring process, consistent and regular meetings further support the minority males academically.
RQ3: What do the stories related by the minority male students reveal about the causality of underrepresentation of minority males in higher education, specifically at a community college?	A5: It is important to examine the attitudes of faculty regarding minority male students to acknowledge cultural and race related issues. A6: It is important to examine the attitudes of faculty regarding minority male students to acknowledge cultural and race related issues.
RQ4: What thematic meanings can be derived from the collection of narratives?	A7: The sense of cultural identity can vary greatly among individuals. A8: When asked to share advice for other minority males, they talk about common themes connect that advice to their own individual story.

Research question 1: How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process support the minority male student with academic persistence?

Based on the results of this study two assertions can be made regarding how the reciprocal mentoring process supported minority male persistence. Each of the six student mentees completed the fall 2013 semester and continued enrollment for the

following Spring 2014 semester. At the conclusion of the fall 2013 semester one of the mentees had obtained a 4.0 grade point average for that semester. From the findings of this study, one can assert that positive faculty interactions can improve student retention and persistence. Secondly, advising and clear academic advising can improve student retention and persistence.

In a reciprocal mentoring model the information flow is a two-way exchange by sharing knowledge and learning from one another while both individuals benefit from the relationship. Gabriel & Kaufield (2008) describe reciprocal mentoring by stating, “Mentors and mentees build collaborative learning relationships, with benefits flowing to both partners” (p. 313).

Assertion one: Positive faculty and student interactions can improve student retention and persistence. The research indicates that positive faculty-student interactions are a crucial part of student success. Research findings on underserved students in the community college setting report that when students develop relationships with faculty and staff within the institution, it improves student motivation, outcomes, goal completion and persistence rates (Freeman, 2007; Settle, 2011). Faculty members have direct access to students; therefore they have a direct impact on their connectivity to course materials, campus resources and community events. This fact should not be taken lightly, yet should spur faculty-related trainings that incorporate cultural sensitivity and student-focused teaching approaches so those students who are under-represented in numbers within the class still feel welcomed, supported and inspired to pursue their academic endeavors. Brown (2007) asserts that students who talk to faculty outside the classroom and have ongoing interactions with them, are more likely to persist in a college

environment. This is evidenced by the responses from the post mentoring interviews in which the student participants felt that through the faculty and student mentoring relationship they knew someone cared about their academic success. One student stated, “I feel that I have knowledge about how the school system works that most freshman don’t figure out that fast. I feel very comfortable around just the whole environment.” When asked what if any, impact did the reciprocal mentoring process have on his academic persistence, one student stated, “I just hope there’s more professors that’ll be open to talk to like that, and just be a mentor to the school. Cuz I think it will help a lot, especially it’s like, for new transfers from either a high school or a new college student.”

In reference to the *Minority Male Initiative Survey* administered early in this study, the lowest participant responses were two questions that corresponded with faculty and student interactions. In reference to time, it is important to note that this survey was given to the participants at the beginning of the mentoring process during the initial meeting with the researcher. The survey contained two questions related to faculty and student interactions; question 3 stated, “Since coming to CGCC, I have developed close working relationships with faculty members” and the mean score was 2.66, indicating that therefore most participants disagreed with that statement, question 4 stated “The faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues related to my academic achievement.” The mean score was 2.66 indicating that most participants disagreed with that statement. Costner, Daniels, and Clark (2010) purport that if the post-secondary educational system wants minority male students to succeed, it must not only look to the students to change but also for the faculty to

examine the attitudes they hold that may unwittingly serve to disenfranchise minority students.

Assertion two: Clear academic advising is necessary to support minority males in their academic goals. When asked if the participants had utilized the advising services provided at the college, the researcher-practitioner found that many of the student participants were not utilizing those services. Pascarella (2006) describes the characteristics of American undergraduates as becoming more diverse. When the population shifts and diversity increases, the earlier interventions may not adequately “fit” the student population. Pascarella calls this the *conditional effect* whereby one cannot assume the intervention will have the same effect whereupon one cannot assume the intervention will have the same effect on all students, discounting individual differences. The college climate must be inclusive and readily available to incorporate an array of experiences and interactions with a diverse spectrum of people to enrich the college experience (Pascarella, 2006; Provitera-McGlynn, 2001). As evidenced by the student participants’ experiences shared regarding advising, it is clear that seeing a different advisor each time was detrimental to their academic owing to inconsistencies and inaccurate information. One participant reported having several bad experiences with advising and stated, “He [the advisor] really screwed me up.” He further explained that, “you get someone different every time you go and they tell you conflicting things.” One should expect that the Office of Advising, would give direct and consistent advice as it relates to academic issues such as classes and credits that not only meet the Associates Degree yet also meet transferability to a university.

Research question 2: How and to what extent does the reciprocal mentoring process impact the minority male student in attaining their academic goals?

Based on the results of this study eight assertions can be made regarding how the reciprocal mentoring process impact the participants in attaining their academic goals. During the course of this study, each of the six participants had identified an academic major and were taking classes that they believed were in accordance with the degree requirements for that academic major.

Assertion three: Reciprocal Mentoring can greatly impact minority male students in attaining their academic goals. Talley (2008) asserts: “The importance of providing a supportive environment that enhances and facilitates conceptual and practical learning cannot be ignored because it compels students to do their best and work to their full potential” (p.331). Tinto (1975) further states that the lack of social integration a student experiences in college will lead to low commitment to the educational process and could result in increased attrition rates.

During the post mentoring interview, each of the six participants were asked to reflect on what if any impact did the reciprocal mentoring relationship have on them during the fall 2013 semester. One participant stated, “I felt what was very important for me – when I tell my parents about how I do in school, they give me the parents’ support, but they don’t quite know what’s going on really cuz they never went to college in America. They don’t know how it really is. If I give ‘em details, they’re just gonna say it’s great. However, Jill, my mentor, she could really give me real feedback. She knows what was going on. She knew details, so I was getting support with knowledge, which I could really embrace as something important.” Another participant shared, “ Oh her just

asking, actually caring about my grades. Okay, I never really showed my grades to anybody other than myself. No one watched my grades...my parents didn't really keep track of that." Another participant shared, " Sometimes, I express myself better outside of school in Spanish but with academic stuff I can't really explain it in Spanish. Having her [faculty mentor] was very helpful to me to express and let my thoughts out every week. That's very important...being able to tell someone that is staff on campus kind of makes me feel very welcome because now I have someone that knows. I feel very connected to the campus that someone knows me. Now I feel like I belong here."

In a study conducted by Brittian, Sy, & Stokes (2009) minority students reported the mentorship program provided them with opportunities for personal growth, social and emotional support, and motivation for success. "The ultimate success of any of these types of program lies in the ability of community colleges to assist the student in dealing with the everyday challenges faced by minority students" (Pope, 2002, p. 32).

Assertion four: In a reciprocal mentoring process, consistent and regular meetings further support the minority males academically. Consistent and regular meeting times between the mentor and mentee are an important component. As evidenced in a pilot segment for this study, the researcher learned that it takes time to establish rapport and if meetings are inconsistent or sporadic it can greatly impact the nature of the mentoring relationship, thus impacting the ability to support minority males academically. Over the course of the 15 weeks of this study, 49 interviews were conducted amongst the six-mentee participants for a total of 30.32 hours. Gabriel and Kaufield (2008) point out that an important component of reciprocal mentoring is allowing time for each partner to reflect upon the subject matter that evolves from the

relationship and reflecting on the reciprocal mentoring process itself, thus allowing time and space for the relationship to develop. It was important to establish a safe and trusting mentoring relationship.

During the post mentoring interview each of the six participants were asked if they would like to continue communication with their faculty mentor and they each said that continued communication would be welcomed and beneficial for them. In response to that question, one participant added, “ Yes, I would like to continue. She recommended me come to her if I ever need help...I’m thinking I would come to her and ask for advice or anything I have going on and it feels good. It feels good actually, having someone like that.” Another participant stated, “From the start I was a little bit more shy, or not really expressing my thoughts and feelings, to meeting up with her every week. It got to the point where I was like, oh I like meeting up and talking about my goals...basically we would talk about my academics, my background and stuff. It was a good experience, her mentoring me.” That participant further expanded by saying, “If I had that goal, we talked about it. I have that in my mind, but then someone like Jill says ‘oh wow you did it. You set that [goal] at the beginning of the semester and you did it, how does that feel?’ That was beneficial for me, just meeting up with her. Just keeping up with my goal, not to fail but to actually achieve it.”

Research question 3: What do the stories related by the minority male students reveal about the causality of underrepresentation of minority males in higher education, specifically at a community college?

Critical race scholars assert that through narratives or storytelling, complex issues related to race are captured by the “voice” of the study.

Assertion five: Going to college is not always an option considered for minority males. In the literature, disparities in post-secondary educational attainment are the greatest among racial and ethnic groups. In 2010 the United States Census Bureau reported that 38.6 % of Hispanic males had less than a high school diploma, with African American males following 13.7%. One Hispanic participant said that in his family the males were not expected to complete high school and few rarely did. They were expected to find a job, most likely in landscaping and then provide for their family. He stated, “ My parents immigrated here from Mexico. It’s like they didn’t have education at all. They’ve been working to provide for us, and support us, but they were not educated so for me they didn’t know English so they can’t help me with school stuff. It was pretty hard for me.” Another participant was raised by a single mother and did not encourage him in school and when asked what his thoughts were on the disparities of minority males in higher educational attainment he stated, “It’s a lot of the parent actually. Most of them didn’t, they just work all the time. So, a lot of them just end up doing that what they see. They decide to drop out and just starting working and making a decent amount.” He shared that one of this friends dropped out and is making more in landscaping then he is so his friend said that he didn’t need to go to college. When minority male students in secondary education do not see examples either by family members, friends or community members how are they supposed to be encouraged the importance of completing high school and going on to college?

Assertion six: It is important to examine the attitudes of faculty regarding minority male students in order to address cultural and race related issues. The community college system has opened its doors to minority and other under-represented students and the majority of minority males seeking higher education do so by entering the community colleges (Aud, et al. 2010). Despite the “open door” character of community colleges, recent research by Nevarez and Wood (2010) indicates that community colleges are continuing to fail to meet the needs of many minorities as evidenced by high attrition rates. Three of the participants in the study had difficulty with a faculty member during the course of the semester. One student shared their difficulty in getting helpful feedback to improve his writing and scores on assignments. We discussed a strategy for him to make an appointment and utilize the professor’s office hours and explain that he wants to do well in the class, he just needs to have more specific feedback on the graded writing assignments. I had personally reviewed the professor’s comments and they were minimal. That meeting did not go well and the faculty and student did not have a positive interaction and this continued to be problematic for the student participant. Two other participants had similar issues with faculty throughout the semester and the overall perception among three out of the six participants was that faculty members do not care about their academic goals only about their particular class, and even so the perceptions were that they were not that helpful when the students asked for assistance. One student ended up withdrawing from a class due to poor grades on assignments and exams. Costner, Daniels, and Clark (2010) assert that when faculty do not embrace the cultural richness that minority students bring with them, they fail to recognize the benefits of these diverse perspectives thus limiting the

curriculum to that of the dominant culture. Critical Race Theory sets up a framework in which racial inequalities can be examined thus reducing barriers to educational achievement.

Research question 4: What thematic meanings can be derived from the collection of narratives?

In this study, the concepts of identity among the participants varied and they all had different ideas about how they defined their cultural identity.

Assertion seven: The sense of cultural identity can vary greatly depending among individuals. The two quantitative instruments used in this study indicated that the respondents felt a positive sense of belonging on the college campus and experienced a feeling of being accepted at school as a minority. Each of the six participants answered that they disagreed with the statement, “I feel there is a negative connotation associated with being a minority male in higher education.” The response of one participant strongly connected with the results of the quantitative instruments in his discussion of his cultural identity; he shared, “First of all I don’t like the word minority. That’s the only word that offends me because the word minority means I’m under you. I’m not under you.” Yet another participant articulated, “I grew up with a bunch of brown people, I never really looked at myself as a minority.” Another participant shared, “I often feel like a chameleon having to change myself depending on the ethnicity of the person I’m at school with.” This variance in answers indicates that cultural identity can be seen as a strength or something one must alter to fit into their environment, academically speaking.

When one participant was speaking about his academic journey and the reciprocal mentoring process he stated, “I don’t have a relative that speaks English to me. I’m an

only child” he continued to discuss that he only had a cultural viewpoint conveyed in Spanish and through the mentoring he realized he needed the English language viewpoint as well. He shared that the mentoring process helped him identify the point of view that he lacked as he stated, “I’m multicultural now. I’m not just Spanish. I’m not just American; I’m both. I need to feed from both perspectives. I need advice from both perspectives.” Another participant stated, “I am very proud of my background. Even if they [his family] were farmers.” One participant quit his job in sales based on his perceived language deficiencies and he shared, “Sometimes, especially language-wise, cuz the way I pronounce stuff, they [people] kind of don’t understand me.”

Assertion eight: When asked to share advice for other minority males, they talk about common themes that connect advice to their own individual story. Reynolds (2010) states that there is a substantial need to approach issues of racism and asserts that by using Critical Race Theory as an educational theory, the result would be an analysis that provides a richer understanding, critical insight and produce interventions that are culturally sensitive.

The researcher gave the following prompt to each of the participants. “You have an opportunity to give advice to my [the researcher’s] minority male son. In a letter format, please share any advice that you may have for him related to his educational journey. There were five themes that emerged from that prompt; advice, personal experience, characteristics, culture and success. Each of the participants gave advice; anything from working hard, set goals and having the courage to dream. One participant stated, “Take advantage of the great schools in America and always work hard.” Another participant stated, “My advice to minorities is that we just have to work hard in order to

succeed in classes; listen to your professor, follow rules, and try to accomplish every task your professor assigns.” Participants who happen to be immigrants provided both of those examples. Another participant stated, “One participant stated, “Young man you must respect the struggle. Everybody wants a degree, they want a career, and they want a high paying job. What you will find is not everybody wants to go through the struggle it takes to achieve these goals.”

A second theme that emerged from these letters was thoughts through personal experience and it included motivation, struggles that promoted personal growth and trusting oneself. One participant wrote, “Nobody is above you, and nobody has the right to tell you to not do something you know is right. In life, you can do whatever you want, don’t let anyone tell you who to become.” Another participant writes, “Recently I have been asking myself will I ever be the man they [society] never expected of me. I want you to ask yourself the same question.”

“Characteristics” emerged as another theme and it included working hard, being respectful and smiling. One participant wrote, “The thing that wins people over the most is a smile. Smile whenever you can, and always show people how great your life is.” That same participant further stated, “Always look at people in the eyes when you talk to them, this will show truth in your eyes, and also respect. With respect, you can have the world for yourself. Always stay true to your values.”

The fourth theme was culture and included self-identity and cultural importance. One participant wrote, “Migrating here in America has brought a lot of challenges in y life. I needed to adapt to the culture, language, ways, education, and people, just the lifestyle in general.” Another participant wrote, “Being a minority male, I never dream of

going to college to pursue a career, my dreams were to become like my dad a landscaper who provides for his family. Every friend or person I knew believe that studying in college or university was for those who were smart. That is the stereotype my friends and I grew up with...my struggles alone helped me grow as a person. That's when I believe that there was something out there for me.”

The fifth code that emerged was the “Success” and within that code four items related to support that code including the definition of success, inner happiness, being passionate and minimizing the important of money in defining success. One participant writes, “Money comes and goes true success comes from your inner happiness. If you love something enough the passion you have for it will pay off. Broaden your horizon's if you have interest in any topic take a class on it who knows you may realize it's something you love.”

Implications

As evidenced in the results of this study and the literature review, what happens both in and outside the classroom contributes to student success and academic persistence (Kuh, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 1991.) Faculty must be aware of the needs of minority students' and should be reminded of the cultural connections needed that are often absent in the higher educational environment. How many professors speak to ethnic diversities and traditions outside classes that focus on ethnic differences? Every math, English and biology class should embody some cultural sensitivity to meet the needs of all the students, not just those of the dominant ethnicity. Diversity should be celebrated openly and constantly, not just an occasional celebration. Reciprocal mentoring had a positive impact on student persistence and academic engagement as evidenced by the eight assertions. Community colleges need to provide training to faculty to highlight the importance of creating and promoting positive faculty and student interactions. That alone could be a reason a student decides to continue in their academic journey, just by having someone take interest in them. It is important for faculty to realize that college is not always an option for minorities and they may be the first in their family to attend, therefore navigating the college may be more difficult. In addition, the advising programs should ensure that students are given consistent information and if possible the students can see the same advisor each time. Finally, when possible allow minority male students to share their story and advice. As a academic institution, we may learn a lot from the students we serve and it can be empowering and validating for them.

Strengths and Limitations

The researcher used narrative inquiry using mixed methods with the goal of examining if the reciprocal mentoring had an impact on minority male persistence in a community college setting. The research tools and methodology was designed to give a more holistic understanding of persistence rates related to minority males using the Critical Race Theory Framework. One of the strengths of the study is that the student participants were forthcoming in their answers during their semi-structured interviews. The participants volunteered a significant amount of their personal time to assist in the study. By designing questions related to not only their academic progress, but asking about their backgrounds gave a deeper understanding about the lives of these young men. That communication deepened trust and the relationship between the mentor and mentee as evidenced in comments from the post mentoring interviews. Learning about their lives was rewarding to the researcher personally as I continue to work with minority male retention as faculty at the college. Through the results of this study, grades increased, accountability was a motivating factor and each of the six participants completed that semester and re-enrolled the following semester and each plan to transfer to a university.

By the nature of action research, the roles must be specified and remain as objective as possible since the student participants were taking a class from me, so as much as I would like to remove any authority-figure pressure as it relates to their participation, I simply cannot. While safeguards of consent and ensuring that participation was voluntary, I will not deny that there might have been some unintentional influence and motivation for the students to participate. Additionally, as mentioned before one potential limitation was that the researcher was a Caucasian scholar

using Critical Race Theory. Some CRT scholars could see this as a limitation in that how can the scholar identify with people of color unless they themselves have experienced that life. However, it should be noted that the experiences of people of color also vary based on demographics, socio-economic status and many other factors. Not all CRT scholars would agree to that being a limitation and I believe we need to identify that our perspectives are tainted by white privilege and together work to alleviate the social injustices related to race and gender. Another issue for consideration is the gender of the faculty mentor. How might the results look different if the mentor was a male and would the student participants have reacted differently? Perhaps they felt comfortable to express their thoughts and feelings with a female versus a male or vice versa. Gender would be an interesting factor to consider in future research.

Considerations and Policy Implications

This study looked at six minority male participants, therefore results are very specific to this study and not intended for those results to be replicated in a similar study. However, there are some elements of the reciprocal mentoring process that one could utilize in their own college setting. An important consideration ratio between faculty mentor(s) to student mentees. By design, potential attrition was factored in when six participants were selected. The researcher learned that if the faculty is teaching full-time then the number should need exceed six unless they have reassignment time to work on the mentoring process. Meeting with the students consistently and often is important, so if the number of mentee participants increase, that could compromise the frequent and consistent meetings thus reducing the quality of the reciprocal mentoring relationship. Another important consideration in looking at this research and the results is

remembering the student demographics for CGCC is quite different when compared to the other nine colleges within the MCCCCD. For example, the study consisted of one individual who identified as Spanish, four participants identified as Hispanics and one identified as Filipino. There were no African American males in the study as I did not have any African American male students during my data collection time period for this study. So in settings where the student demographic is more diverse, one may be able to include a more diverse participant population.

Some policy implications include looking at a training program geared towards faculty about the importance of embracing diversity and the tenets of the Minority Male Initiative (MMI). Programs like the Minority Male Initiative (MMI) usually fall within the Student Life area, and faculty are not necessarily a required component. There is a need to strategically think about ways to utilize Student Life and faculty to ensure that those initiatives are known, embraced and evaluated to enhance the support the institution is giving to minority male students. One potential opportunity is during the “Week of Accountability” which is the week before the semester starts and faculty attend professional development workshops. A session on the MMI would be very helpful in making this issue more visible among both residential and adjunct faculty. It would also give an opportunity for faculty to share their ideas on how to organize collaboration between them and Student Life. Another note is that when this research started the MEN group membership was really struggling and it was not very effective. In the last two years, that group got new student and faculty leadership and the group is really thriving and a great example to other MEN groups among the other colleges included in MCCCCD. Passionate and committed students have turned the MEN group around and have made it

one of the most dynamic and organized clubs at CGCC. It is not a social club, like some of the others. The intent is very clear to make this club that supports our minority male students, exposes them to various leaders in the community and to take part in the District activities designed for minority males. Another policy implication is looking at the advising model being used at CGCC. An advisor dedicated to minority males would be ideal so that they meant with someone consistent that has been trained on some potential factors that are specific to assisting minority males in supporting them in their academic journey. One final consideration would be to treat the mentees as a cohort in which they meet individually with their mentor, yet the model is expanded to include them meeting together as a group so that if the faculty were to leave the institution, the participants could develop a sense of community. This could also enhance the reciprocal mentoring relationship to bring forth other ideas and resources intended to expand the student participants' support. They would not be limited to having just a mentor but now five other students who can act as support to each other.

Future research could include examining factors related to gender and race using CRT and it would be beneficial to follow the participants as a "cohort" through their degree attainment at CGCC or any other college or university they attend.

AFTERWORD

Personally, this research is very rewarding and important to me and I feel privileged to have been able to be the research-practitioner in this study. As I recall, that day over a year ago when I was waiting for the “Incognito” play to begin by as Michael Sidney Fosberg spoke about his introduction in discovering his new racial identity. His short play proved to be a catalyst for my research interests. These young men demonstrated a sense of resiliency that was unanticipated. They opened up their hearts and told their individual stories and I was a vehicle in which they explored their cultural identity, academic journeys and future aspirations. My son will now have the privilege of having academic advice from minority males that are currently in the community college setting and that is something that I cannot give him firsthand myself. As a researcher, I am sharing the results to add to the academic population, however as a mother I am incorporating this knowledge into the future decision-making that will need to be done with my minority male son. I look into his green eyes and I see the future potential of not just him, his generation, but beyond. I look into those eyes seeing that there is a more equitable equation to the disparities among minority males in higher educational attainment. I see potential and I see institutional racial climate change embracing all; including faculty, staff, students and administrators. That is my vision moving forward and my hopes is that my research helps contribute to the existing body of knowledge. I believe my research will assist in creating a realistic picture for minority males students in their higher education academic journey and that of those that have influence in policy related to cultural policies and standards.

At my doctoral defense one of my student mentees attended and sent me the following note and he gave me permission to share it here:

“Thank you allowing me to be there. It’s was a great experience to see not on the end result but the back end of your journey to get to that point. You handled all of it with such grace. I really don’t think a better person deserved it as much as you. I know you had to sacrifice a lot to earn your doctorate. Thank you for all your sacrifices. I can only speak personally but because of your sacrifice, I now have a world of opportunities. Just know you didn’t just earn your doctorate in this process but you helped me find a career path that I’m actually excited about and will change my family. In my family we have a thing called the XX (family name not shared here) luck which is essentially seen as terrible luck. I come from a long line of oppression and some that is self-induced but now all that is changing. You’ve not only helped change the present fortune of the XX family, but all future family members. Us XX always had this attitude that nothing good can happen to us and now we have this wonderful tool on our side and that is hope and with that hope we have something to hold on to. We are proud people and now we have something to be proud of and none of that would have been possible without your guidance, thank you.”

LETTER TO MY SON

To my amazing son,

I am writing this letter to you as I conclude my doctoral research and complete one of my life long dreams. As you continue your academic journey, it is my hope that you will find value in these collective stories from the individuals that participated in this study. When I started this process you were in the first grade and next year you will be entering junior high. I know that my family sacrificed so that I could continue my education. When you were small, it was so hard to leave you and your sisters to go to class at night. I had a vision Kaeden, of what I wanted for our family and believed that education was the way to get us there. In these pages you will find some advice for you as a minority male in succeeding through your education and through your life.

I do want you to listen to these young men's stories and what they have so selfishly shared as they talked about their experiences and offered you advice. Some of them had difficult challenges like citizenship, finances, language barriers and lack of family support. So far, these young men are fighting those challenges with a goal in mind also believing that education will set you free. It will afford you opportunities like no other. Your mind will grow and evolve and your life will be better when you can be an educated individual knowing the differences between right and wrong and having a desire to learn and understand more. I also want you to know that no one should ever be able to limit your opportunities based on your skin tone or your gender. I want you to work hard, be passionate and find your own dreams.

Kaeden I love you so much and feel so blessed that you are my son. Thank you for making my work purposeful. I want to close with this quote by Martin Luther King,

Jr., “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Love,

Your mom

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APPENDIX A
MENTORING AGREEMENT

We are voluntarily entering into a mentoring relationship from which we both expect to benefit. We want this to be a rich, rewarding experience with a focus on academic development.

Frequency of Meetings

We will attempt to meet weekly for an hour. If we cannot attend a scheduled meeting, we agree to notify each other. Our mentoring relationship will continue throughout the Fall 2013 semester, and informally after that if we agree to. The sessions will be audiotaped yet all of your information will remain confidential. The researcher (faculty) member will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research study. Additionally, the researcher (faculty) will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Tasks

As a mentee, you will be asked to complete three surveys, one questionnaire and participate in mentoring interviews, including a Post Mentoring Interview with a third party.

Confidentiality

The researcher (faculty) member will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research study. Additionally, the researcher (faculty) will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study. If the researcher (faculty) uses any comments or suggestions that you provide, you will be given a pseudonym so that information cannot be linked to you. Please speak freely without fear of any negative repercussions.

No-Fault Termination

We are committed to be open and honest in our mentoring relationship. Participation in the mentoring process is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time by the mentee without consequence.

Mentor

Mentee

Date

Date

APPENDIX B
MENTEE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Cell
Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mailing
Address: _____

Date of
Birth: _____

Languages Spoken (Other than
English): _____

Ethnicity: _____

Gender: _____

Academic Major Declared, if any:

Career
Interests: _____

Tell me something interesting about
yourself: _____

List 2 personal strengths (positive traits about yourself)

- 1.
- 2.

List 2 areas of personal improvement

- 1.
- 2.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C
CULTURAL CONGRUITY SCALE

Not at all

A Great Deal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- _____ 1. I feel that I have to change myself to fit in at school.
- _____ 2. I try not to show the parts of me that are “ethnically” based.
- _____ 3. I often feel like a chameleon, having to change myself depending on the ethnicity of the person I am at school with.
- _____ 4. I feel like my ethnicity is incompatible with other students.
- _____ 5. I can talk to my friends at school about my family and culture.
- _____ 6. I feel I am leaving my family values behind by going to college.
- _____ 7. My ethnic values are in conflict with what is expected at school.
- _____ 8. I can talk to my family about my friends from school.
- _____ 9. I feel that my language and/or appearance make it hard for me to fit in with other students.
- _____ 10. My family and school values often conflict.
- _____ 11. I feel accepted at school as an ethnic minority.
- _____ 12. As an ethnic minority, I feel as if I belong on campus.
- _____ 13. I can talk to my family about my struggles and concerns at school.

APPENDIX D
MINORITY MALE SURVEY

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Since coming to CGCC, I have developed close friendships with other students.				
2. I am satisfied with the opportunities to participate in organized extracurricular activities at this college campus.				
3. Since coming to CGCC, I have developed close working relationships with faculty members.				
4. The faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues related to my academic achievement.				
5. I believe that being a minority male is a positive experience.				
6. I feel comfortable wherever I am on this campus.				
7. I participate in social activities on campus that are geared towards minority males.				
8. I believe that because I am a minority male, I have many strengths.				
9. I feel this college campus has a support system in place to help minority males succeed.				
10. I feel like the campus employees care about minority males succeeding in academic endeavors.				
11. I feel there is a negative connotation associated with being a minority male in higher education.				
12. I feel like a can contribute to the minority male initiatives on the CGCC campus.				

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What is the number of years or semesters you have attended college?
2. Have you identified a major at CGCC?
3. Do you know what your current GPA is?
4. In terms of familial history, is attending college prevalent?
5. What are your strengths in terms of your academic setting?
6. What are your challenges?

APPENDIX F
POST MENTORING INTERVIEW

Script: This interview will be conducted by a third party, not the mentor.

“Thank you for your time in meeting with me today. The purpose of this interview is to give you as a participant an opportunity to give objective feedback regarding your mentoring experience. Please be assured that since this is part of a research study, your name will not be associated with the feedback you give as it will be professionally transcribed by a third party to ensure accuracy and anonymity. Do you have any questions before we begin?”

1. What is the most important quality a good mentor should have?
2. In what ways did the mentoring process assist you this semester, fall 2013?
3. What limitations or obstacles were present during the mentoring process?
4. Can you describe your experience with the mentoring process?
5. Would you like to continue communication with your faculty mentor?
6. What was the most beneficial part of the mentoring process for you?
7. Do you feel like the mentoring process was helpful for you academically this semester, fall 2013? Why or why not?
8. If you could change something about the mentoring process, what would that have been?
9. Have you ever had a mentor before?
10. Finally, is there anything else you would like to share or add about this process, your faculty mentor or about your college experience?

APPENDIX G
CONSENT FORM

The Impact of a Reciprocal Mentoring Relationships on Student Persistence and the Impact of Reciprocal Mentoring on Student Academic Experiences for Minority Male Community College Students

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this form are to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research and to record the consent of those who agree to be involved in the study.

RESEARCHERS

Jill Wendt, Social & Behavioral Sciences Faculty at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, has invited your participation in a research study. The principal investigator for this study is Dr. David Carlson at Arizona State University, dlcarlson@asu.edu.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to explore whether a reciprocal mentoring intervention between faculty and minority male students at Chandler-Gilbert Community College increases the engagement, motivation and persistence rates among minority male students.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY

If you decide to participate, then you will join a study involving research where you will participate in a series of interactive presentations and activities that will be provided to you during the academic semester. You will also be asked to complete questionnaires and surveys that will utilize both open-ended and close-ended questions to obtain information related to your beliefs and attitudes regarding your academic plan, motivation, engagement and racial identify. You will be asked to meet with a faculty mentor throughout the semester for mentoring sessions. I will also be conducting individual interviews and asking you to participate in a focus group. If you say YES, then your participation will last for the duration of the Fall 2013 academic semester at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

RISKS

There are no known risks from taking part in this study, but in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

BENEFITS

The possible/main benefits of your participation in the research are that you will have a better understanding of your interests, values and personality characteristics as well as will be able to identify and academic plan. You will also have the opportunity to work with experienced faculty and be introduced to a wide variety of campus supports.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. The results of this research Study may be used in reports, presentations and publications, but the researchers will

may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you. In order to maintain confidentiality of your records, Jill Wendt will keep the document containing student names and numbers and it will be locked in a secure office at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. Nobody except Jill Wendt will have access to the locked drawer containing the list of student names and corresponding identifying numbers and your private information will not be disclosed.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is o.k. for you to say no. Even if you say yes now, you are free to say no later, and withdraw from the study at any time. Your participation in individual interviews or completion of questionnaires concerning the study is voluntary, and nonparticipation in these activities will not affect your grade in any course at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. Your decision to not participate in the individual interviews and questionnaires will not affect your relationship with Chandler-Gilbert Community College or the participating faculty members.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS

There is no payment for your participation in the study. The researchers want your decision about participating in the study to be absolutely voluntary.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

Any questions you have concerning the research study or your participation in the study, before or after your consent, will be answered by Jill Wendt, Social & Behavioral Sciences Faculty. The following is his contact information: (480) 283-7821 jill.wendt@cgc.edu, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, 2626 E Pecos Road, Chandler, Arizona 85225, Mail Bin C-201 and/or David L. Carlson at david.l.carlson@asu.edu or (480) 965-4472 or the Maricopa County Community College District Internal Review Board at irb_office@domail.maricopa.edu or (480) 731-8701

If you have questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk; you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at 480-965 6788.

This form explains the nature, demands, benefits and any risk of the project. By signing this form you agree knowingly to assume any risks involved. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. In signing this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

APPENDIX H
MINORITY MALE SURVEY RESULTS

Participants	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
1	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	2	2	3
2	3	3	2	2	4	4	2	4	3	3	2	3
3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	4
4	4	4	2	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	3
5	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	3
6	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	3	2	3
Mean Scores	3.17	3.33	2.66	2.66	3.5	3.66	2.66	3.5	3.33	3.0	2.0	3.16

APPENDIX I
CULTURAL CONGRUITY SCALE RESULTS

Participants	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
1	1	1	1	2	3	3	3	4	3	2	4	3	2
2	1	1	1	2	4	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	2
3	2	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	2
4	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	2
5	1	3	1	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	3	2
6	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	2	3	3	2	3	2
Mean Scores	1.5	1.67	1.33	2.66	3.5	3.66	2.66	3.5	3.33	3.0	3.17	3.33	2.0

APPENDIX J
PARTICIPANT LETTERS TO MY SON

Participant 1

Nobody is above you, and nobody has the right to tell you to not do something you know is right. In life, you can do whatever you don't want, don't let anyone tell you who to become. Take advantage of the great schools in America and always work hard. Don't worry if anyone calls you names, those are actually the names they think of when they stare at the mirror. They are really not at you. When someone picks on you with words, be silent, and keep a straight face. Always know that you can walk away and all the bad feelings will disappear. Those bullies won't go anywhere in life, they will stay exactly where they are and being what they are, bullies. Their job is to stop you from being a better man, and succeeding in life. Don't let those losers stop you, because they don't know anything!

If someone angers you because they discriminated you, don't take it out on them, go talk to your teachers about it. Doing that means that you are infinitely more mature than your classmates who show people how great your life is. Because when you make people feel better that your life is great, your decisions will actually make that true. We live in a world where too many forget to be grateful. The best people are the ones who realize that nothing is for granted and every good and honest opportunity must be taken to succeed. My biggest advice for someone who is considered a "minority" would be to remove that from your vocabulary. You are nobody's minority, you are you, and you are great. Always look at people in the eyes when you talk to them, this will show truth in your eyes, and also respect. With respect, you can have the world for yourself. Always stay true to your values.

A friend,

Participant 2

Migrating here in America has brought a lot of challenges in my life. I needed to adapt to the culture, language, ways, education and people, just the lifestyle in general. My academic life here in America since high school is not as difficult as I thought it would be. Becoming a minority has not given me any hardships throughout my school years. My advice to minorities is that we just have to work hard in order to succeed in classes; listen to your professor, follow rules, be present at all times, and try to accomplish every task your professor assigns. As a minority, I always kept in mind that I am not different than other races or ethnicities, I always have thought that I can do anything others can do, and I never thought to myself that other races has more advantages or more strengths than I do. In order to pas the challenges in school, I surrounded myself with the right people so that I am be led to the right path, and in case I have questions or seek help, they can guide me through it. As a minority, I always believe in myself, that I have the ability and will to accomplish what others can. I also make sure that I am confident and have courage when I perform at my fullest. I am also the type of person that like to be challenged so that I can show it to people that I can surpass anything they send my way. For me, the strength I have in order to have a successful academic life is to have a mindset that I have to strive to get to my goals. I also believe that just being yourself will help you get through academic life. But most of all working hard and being responsible is the key to pursue my academic accomplishments.

Participant 3

If I were to give advice to a minority male I would just say to do what they think is best. If someone asks you to do something that bothers you maybe you shouldn't do it. When I was in high school I would always do what my friends wanted, even if I was scared. For example there were days where they would ask me to ditch I wasn't sure if I should but I did it anyway. Don't listen to other peoples advice on what they try and get you to do.

The most important advice I would give is be careful who your friends are. If you have friends who don't care about school then their attitude will transfer to you. On the other hand if you have friend's that focus on school and think that they should try that will help you try more. It also depends on what friends you have that determines what you do out of school. Some friends will want to do things that are bad while good friends won't try to do that they will instead ask you to hang out and maybe go to a movie. Success in life greatly depends on what company you keep.

The last bit of advice I would give is do not fall behind. Many of my friends fell behind thinking that they would retake the class or get credits some other way, most of them decided to just drop out. They thought it was too late. They decided to just do the minimum and they probably regret it. For me I could have done much better but I got caught up in their rhythm and put no effort. I regret it.

Participant 4

No matter what you choose to do in life, stick with it and never give up. Don't worry, it's totally ok to change your mind every now and then, as long as you feel it's the right decision for you. Heck, I wanted to be about a hundred different things before I even applied for college! What kept me motivated was knowing my heart was truly set on it, and that it would make me happy. So remember, whatever it is you consider doing in life, always be sure your heart is set on it.

Next, never give up. I know you hear people tell you this all the time, but that's because it's the truth! When I was working on achieving the rank of Eagle scout, there were many times where I just wanted to drop down and quit; but I then remembered: my heart is set on achieving this rank, and I just have to stick with it. So after much hard work, I achieved that rank, and I still to this day am happy I didn't quit. This experience also taught me that I can do anything, no matter how hard it is. After all, I still have a long way to go in my academic career. But I always remind myself: this is something you want, and giving up will be your biggest mistake. And I encourage you to do the same.

Participant 5

Young man from now until you go to college you're going to hear the same generic advice. Such as things like sit in the front row, ask questions, study and so on. You're entire life you have been taught how to be a student, how to function in the class room. Although class is no cake walk I believe you have what it takes to be successful student, class is only half the battle. I think most students drop out of school not because of school itself but for their professional/personal life.

Young man you must respect the struggle. Everybody wants a degree, they want a career, they want high paying job. What you will find is that not everybody wants to go through the struggle it takes to achieve these goals. It is a struggle having a job and going to class it is very time consuming. I rarely have time to just relax my time is accounted for I either have to work or do homework. But you know what that's the struggle everybody has to go through before they become successful. And don't look at success as how much money you make. Money comes and goes true success comes from your inner happiness. For me if I can have job that allows me to live comfortably, I don't hate going to everyday, and spend time with my future family in my opinion I have become successful. Don't let people tell you "you have accomplished a lot for being black" you need to understand your culture did not start with slavery. If you look at history your culture has accomplished ground breaking things. Don't let the excuse because I'm black enter your vocabulary. Let people believe what they want your culture is just as successful as white culture. Recently I have been asking myself will I ever be the man they never expected of me. I want you to ask yourself the same question. Go to college and get a degree for yourself. Don't think you are going through school because anybody wants you to. Nobody else can use the knowledge you will attain by going through school, nobody can apply your degree, only you can do those things. Borden your horizon's if you have interest in any topic take a class on it who knows you may realize it's something you love.

I was sent a video from my high school theatre teacher. And in this video it asked what would you do if money was none existent. The career you choose with that mindset is the career for you. If you love something enough the passion you have for it will pay off. You can turn any passion you have into a degree. I have had a struggle with letting go of the thought I need a degree that is practical for this reason I have committed to being a business major. The fact of the matter is I am not a business man I have known this for quite some time now and yet I continue to pursue this degree. Starting next semester I will pursue a degree in education to become a guidance counselor. As I reflect on this career choice I don't recall ever having a minority male as a counselor maybe that's why I choose to be a business major I have heard of a minority male being a business man I haven't seen a minority male being a counselor. Basically what I'm saying is walk into college with an open mind because you never know when a career is going to choose you.

A bit of random advice don't go around treating girls like objects you need to realize that's someone's daughter that's someone's future mother and one day that could be your

daughter being treated like an object. Also you may come across people offering you drugs now I won't sit here and tell you if you try drugs you're a complete loser. Just don't become one of these pot heads that smoke all day say its only weed. If it's just weed then why do they miss out on doing anything to go and smoke weed if it's just weed why would they risk losing a job losing a possible scholarship.

Participant 6

Dear Jill Wendt,

If I had a unique opportunity to influence someone as a minority male, I would strongly encourage that person to never give up on your dreams. Dreams are made through hard work and dedication and believing in your self. Being a minority male, I never dream of going to college to pursue a career, my dreams were to be like my dad a landscaper who provides for his family. Every friend or person I knew believe that studying in college or university was for those who were smart. That is the stereotype my friends and I grew up with. As for this, everything changed when I live away from my parents at the age of seventeen. Being away and experiencing my struggles alone helped me grow as a person. That's when I believe that there was something out there for me and it wasn't where I was at that particular moment. For that purpose, I advice any minority male that there is something for us and that we could make our dreams become a reality. Find that dream or goal you want to accomplish and have a purpose for it. For example my purpose is my mother and I won't stop pursuing my dream until I accomplished it and make my mother proud. Always have the courage to dream big and persevere, because everything is possible and remember it is how hard you work towards that dream or goal and eventually will become a reality.

As a final point, it is a blessing to influence a minority male to achieve a dream or goal. Always think positive and have a clear vision of where you see your self in ten years from now. Dreams are never easy because if they were anybody would make them a reality and only the strongest can make it happen. As a minority male I believe we all have the heart to accomplish anything in life, and nothing is given for free, it takes hard work and determination to accomplish where you want to be in the future.

DESCRIPTIVE CODES FOR MENTORING INTERVIEWS

- 01. ACADEMICS=ACD
 - 01.ACD-AC.01= ACADEMIC INQUIRY
 - 01.ACD-AM.02=ACADEMIC MAJOR
 - 01.ACD-FP.03=FUTURE ACADEMIC PLANNING

- 02. COLLEGE EXPERIENCE=CEP
 - 02.CEP-AD.01=ADVISING
 - 02.CEP-CR.02=COLLEGE RESOURCES
 - 02.CEP-GD.03=GENDER CLASS DISCUSSION
 - 02.CEP-RC.04=-RACIAL CLIMATE (ON CAMPUS)
 - 02.CEP-SF.05=STUDENT FACULTY INTERACTION
 - 02.CEP-CD.06=CLASS DISCUSSION

- 03. EXTRANEIOUS DIALOGUE=EXD
 - 03.EXD-UD.01=UNRELATED DIALOGUE
 - 03.EXD-BR.02=BUILDING RAPPORT

- 04. LOGISTICS=LOG
 - 04.LOG-CF.01=COMPLETING MENTORING FORMS
 - 04.LOG-SC.02=SCHEDULING

- 05. MENTORING=MNT
 - 05.MNT-MD.01=MENTORING DISCUSSION
 - 05.MNT-ME.02=ME ENCOURAGING MENTEE

- 06. PERSONHOOD=PER
 - 06.PER-FB.01=FAMILY BACKGROUND
 - 06.PER.EM.02=EMPLOYMENT
 - 06.PER.LG.03=LANGUAGE
 - 06.PER.MT.04=MILITARY EXPERIENCE
 - 06.PER.PI.05=PERSONAL IDENTITY

APPENDIX L

DESCRIPTIVE CODES FOR LETTERS TO MY SON

01. ADVICE=ADV

01. ADV-WH.01=WORKING HARD

01. ADV-RS.02=RESPECT THE STRUGGLE
01. ADV-PR.03=PERSERVERE
01. ADV-AG.04=ACHIEVE GOALS
01. ADV-AE.05=AVOID EXCUSES
01. ADV-QY.06=QUESTION YOURSELF
01. ADV-OM.07=OPEN MIND
01. ADV-GD.08=GET DEGREE
01. ADV-NG.09=NEVER GIVE UP
01. ADV-FH.10=FOLLOW YOUR HEART
01. ADV-AP.11=ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE
01. ADV-TP.12=THINK POSITIVE
01.ADV-CD.13=COURAGE TO DREAM
01.ADV-CV.14=CLEAR VISION
01.ADV-SG.15=SET GOALS
01.ADV-CF.16=CHOOSE FRIENDS CAREFULLY
01.ADV.DF.17=DON'T FALL BEHIND (IN SCHOOL)
01.ADV.TY.18=TRUST YOURSELF
01.ADV.LP.19=LISTEN TO PROFESSORS
01.ADV.FR.20=FOLLOW RULES
01.ADV.BP.21=BE PRESENT
01.ADV.WH.22=WORK HARD
01.ADV.BG.23=BE GRATEFUL
01.ADV.LE.24=LOOK PEOPLE IN THE EYES
01.ADV.TT.04=TALK TO TEACHERS
01.ADV.TO=TAKE OPPORTUNITIES

0.2 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE=PEX

02.PEX-EM.01=EMPLOYMENT ALLOWS HIM TO LIVE COMFORTABLY
02.PEX-CH.02=CHALLENGES
02.PEX-QS.03=QUESTIONS SELF
02.PEX-TS.04=TRUSTED SELF (CHANGE IN ACADEMIC MAJOR)
02.PEX-EN.05=ENCOURAGEMENT
02.PEX-PR.06=PERSONAL REFLECTION
02.PEX-MT.07=MOTIVATION
02.PEX-SG.08=STRUGGLES PROMOTED GROWTH
02.PEX.MP.09=MAKE HIS MOM PROUD
02.PEX.DP.10=DISCOVERED PURPOSE
02.PEX-RE.11=REGRETS

03. CHARACTERISTICS=CHR

03.CHR-HW.01=HARD WORK
03.CHR-RS.02=RESPECTFUL
03.CHR-SM.02=SMILE

04. CULTURE=CUL

04.CUL-SI.01=SELF IDENTITY

04.CUL-CI.02=CULTURAL IMPORTANCE

05. SUCCESS=SUS

05.SUS-DS.01=DEFINE SUCCESS

05.SUS-IH.02=INNER HAPPINESS EQUALS SUCCESS

05. SUS.BP.03=BE PASSIONATE

05. SUS.MM.04=MINIMIZE IMPORTANCE OF MONEY

06. RANDOM ADVICE=RDA

06.RDA-DO.01=DON'T OBJECTIFY GIRLS

06.RDA-AD.02=AVOID DRUGS

APPENDIX M

DESCRIPTIVE CODES FOR POST MENTORING INTERVIEWS

01. LOGISTICS=LOG

01.LOG-EP.01=EXPLAINING PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

02. MENTORING DISCUSSION=MMD

02.MMD-MP.01= MENTORING PROCESS

02.MMD-MQ.02=MENTOR QUALITIES

02.MMD-RL.03=RELATIONSHIP

02.MMD-LT.04=LIMITATIONS

02.MMD-CC.05=CONTINUING COMMUNICATION

02.MMD-RC.06=RECOMMENDED CHANGES (TO MENTORING PROCESS)

03. EXTRANEIOUS DIALOGUE=EXD

03.EXD-UD.01=UNRELATED DIALOGUE

03.EXD-BR.02=BUILDING RAPPORT

04. MENTEE =MEN

04.MEN-CI.01=CULTURAL IDENTITY

04.MEN-SE.02=SELF EFFICACY

04.MEN-MB.03=MENTEE BENEFITS

04.MEN-AI.04=ACADEMIC IMPACT

04.MEN-PE.05=PREVIOUS MENTOR EXPERIENCE

04.MEN-FP.06=FUTURE PLANS