

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION PROJECT: Perseverance and Persistence in Achieving Educational Goals:
A Case Study of an Adult Charter High School Examining Perseverance of Students Utilizing a
Mixed Methods Approach

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The purpose of this study was to examine a potential variation between students who persist toward their educational goals from those students who are not able to persist from a specific population of adult learners. The Grit Scale-S (referred to as Grit Scale for the purpose of this study) was used to measure the level of persistence for adults who have returned to complete high school diplomas at an adult charter high school. Through quantitative analysis, this study compares and contrasts the scores on the same Grit Scale for a total of 134 students who are successful in reaching their educational goals scores and for those who are not successful. Qualitative analysis provided individual stories and experiences of a small group of five students who did not complete the school term under study. The results of the study indicated that there was not a significant difference on scores on the Grit-S between those students who completed the school term and those who did not. In spite of this result on the quantitative analysis students who completed the term did have a higher mean score on the Grit-S than those who did not complete the term. Those students who did not complete the term successfully and who were included in a semi-structured interview revealed several different

reasons for their lack of educational success. All five interviewed revealed that they intended to complete their high school diploma when the reasons for their lack of success were resolved. In the mixed methods analysis of this data it was suggested that students who were able to successfully complete the term possibly faced the same barriers as those students who did not successfully complete the term. So, as other researchers have surmised the difference between success and lack of success in reaching educational goals most likely can be attributed to something other than just the barriers faced by students in reaching their goal.