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APPRECIATIVE ADVISING FROM THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR'S VIEWPOINT:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By

Nancy Garrett Howell

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of Educational Administration

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Major: Educational Administration

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Under the Supervision of Professor Larry Dlugosh

Lincoln, Nebraska

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APPRECIATIVE ADVISING FROM THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR'S VIEWPOINT:
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Nancy Garrett Howell

University of Nebraska, 2010

Advisor: Larry L. Dlugosh

Appreciative Advising represents a revolutionary new approach to the field of academic advising. Based on Appreciative Inquiry, which was developed by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University in the 1980's, Appreciative Advising is also influenced by positive psychology, reality therapy, and strengths based advising. The Appreciative Advising model makes use of positive, open-ended questions and a the development of a reciprocal relationship between student and advisor to help students achieve their academic and career goals.

Pioneered by Bloom, Hutson, and He, Appreciative Advising is fully student centered and shows great promise in helping students from a wide variety of backgrounds achieve academic success. Bloom, Hunter, and He expanded on the 4-D model of Appreciative Inquiry to develop the six phases of Appreciative Advising – Disarm, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver, and Don't Settle.

This study explored the perceptions of nine academic advisors using the Appreciative Advising approach in three different institutions of higher education to identify ways and to what extent using Appreciative Advising impacted their advising practice and their job satisfaction. The majority of the academic advisors interviewed

believed that Appreciative Advising had positively impacted them in four ways: a) Appreciative Advising had enabled them to better utilize their strengths, skills, and talents; b) Appreciative Advising had provided a framework that enabled them to be more effective academic advisors; c) Appreciative Advising had enabled a stronger advisor/student relationship, resulting in greater job satisfaction; and d) Appreciative Advising had positively impacted relationships outside of the advisor/student relationship with co-workers, family, friends, and others.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Context of the Study

In their groundbreaking article, “Could Academic Advising Fix Higher Education”, Hunter and White maintain that:

Academic advising, well developed and appropriately accessed, is perhaps the only structured campus endeavor that can guarantee students sustained interaction with a caring and concerned adult who can help them shape such an experience (2004, p. 21).

Academic advising has long been considered an important yet often neglected part of academe. In 1979, Crockett affirmed, “Academic advising, properly delivered, can be a powerful influence on student growth and development. It can also interpret, enhance, and enrich the educational development of any college or university” (as cited in Titley & Titley, 1982, p. 46).

In 1990, Hossler and Bean stated that academic advising is the most often cited student service in terms of its positive impact on student persistence in the retention research. Tuttle (2000, p. 16) stated that retention is an important goal of academic advising. Research has confirmed that academic advising that connects the student to the institution as well as faculty-student contact can have a major impact on student motivation, involvement, and retention. Campbell and Nutt (2008) asserted that “When...done well, academic advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities to foster and support their engagement, success, and the attainment of key learning outcomes” (p. 4). The challenge, as they see it, is to create an advising

program that is viewed as important and essential by students, faculty, staff and administration. Browne believed that “Often, academic advisers fail to realize the magnitude of the power they hold” (2002, p. 2).

Designing and implementing advising programs that will positively affect higher education’s increasing diverse student population is an ongoing challenge. As examples of that diversity, Gordon and Habley (2000, pp. 73-83) report that eight out of ten students work while in college, 29% of first year students need some remediation in reading, writing, and math, 9% have some kind of documented disability, and as many as 10% are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transsexual. The number of minority students on American campuses increased from 15 to 31% between 1976 and 2005. Much of the change can be attributed to the increase in numbers of Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander students (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In 2000, Noel-Levitz, a USA Group company surveyed 423,003 students at 745 colleges and universities, four year and two year, both private and public over a four year period. They found that across all institutional types, quality academic advising was one of the most predominating identified needs. This report stated “The importance cannot be overemphasized – students are adamant – they want, need, and expect the faculty to provide some level of meaningful advising support to them as they begin to make important academic decisions” (Low & USA Group, p. 31).

University Counseling Centers report an increase in students seeking help with mental health problems such as eating disorders and alcohol and drug abuse as well as problems associated with family instability and dysfunction (Gordon and Habley, 2002). The American Psychiatric Association reports that “many young people are coming to

college with an existing [mental health] diagnosis and treatment history” (Healthy Minds...2008).

These factors contribute to a student population that is at risk for failure because of difficulties in adapting to the college environment. These difficulties may include weak preparation or academic skills, diagnosed mental health problems, and/or personal or family difficulties. The wide diversity of students and the diversity of their problems demand that academic advisors develop an individualized approach to each student. Appreciative Advising “offers a complete package...It contains theory, practical tools for implementing it, and evidence that it works” (Bloom, Huston, & He, 2008, p. 5).

Appreciative Inquiry, an organizational development model created by Cooperrider in the 1980’s focuses on creating positive change within an organization (Appreciative Inquiry Commons). Appreciative Advising, pioneered by Bloom, Hutson, and He, adopted and expanded the four phases of Appreciative Inquiry into six phases. Appreciative Advising is fully student centered and shows great promise in helping students from a wide variety of backgrounds achieve academic success. Although the research to date primarily outlined its success with students on probation, the wide applicability of Appreciative Inquiry to diverse organizations and populations in the business world indicates that Appreciative Advising can likewise lead to similar positive outcomes for the diverse student population attending colleges and universities today. Appreciative Advising can be infused into first year programs, retention programs, early warning programs, tutoring, and other programs.

Statement of the Problem

While there was emerging research (Hutson & Bloom, 2007) into the effectiveness of Appreciative Advising with students, there was currently no research as to how Appreciative Advising has affected the lives of those Academic Advisors who are using this model.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore Advisor's perceptions of Appreciative Advising to identify to what extent and in what ways Appreciative Advising impacted their advising practice and their job satisfaction. Specific aspects of advising and advisor job satisfaction that were examined included advisor perceptions of personal growth and achievement, advisor perceptions of the advisor/student relationship, and relationships with colleagues and others.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, terms are defined as follows:

1. Appreciative Advising: "the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials" (Amundsen, Bloom, & Hutson, 2006).
2. Professional Academic Advisor: a full-time, non-faculty professional whose primary job responsibilities are advising related and require direct student contact and collaboration with colleagues.

Research Question

The general research question guiding the data collection and analysis was: How has the application of Appreciative Advising techniques affected the advisor's daily practice and job satisfaction? Specific research questions include:

What are some ways Appreciative Advising advisors use their strengths, skills, and talents in daily advising?

What are some ways that academic advisors perceive that Appreciative Advising makes them more effective advisors?

What are some ways that academic advisors using Appreciative Advising perceive that it enhances the advisor/student relationship?

What are some ways that academic advisors using Appreciative Advising believe that Appreciative Advising has affected their relationships outside of the student/advisor relationship?

Questions one, two, three, four, five, nine, and twelve of the Interview Protocol (Appendix C) pertained to the first specific research question. The second specific research question was illuminated by Interview Protocol questions one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, nine, and twelve. Interview Protocol questions one, three, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and twelve pertained to specific research question number three, while the fourth specific research question was explored through Interview Protocol questions one, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this interview study was the small sample size. The reader, not this researcher, determined the transferability and generalizability of this study. In speaking of case study using interviews, Stake stated that the goal is not generalization but particularization, which is coming to understand the particular uniqueness in each interview (1995, p. 8). The goal of this researcher was to afford the reader an experience of feeling as if he or she were actually vicariously involved in

these interviews. The understanding thus gained could be used to interpret similar situations in different contexts.

As a proponent of Appreciative Advising, I realized that my own experiences and bias could affect the collection and analysis of data. I intended to make every effort to remain unbiased and maintain objectivity. As discussed in Chapter III, I made use of various procedures that would help in detecting any personal bias in the analysis and reporting of the data.

The participants in this study were professional academic advisors at selected four year institutions using the Appreciative Advising approach. They did not represent a broad sample due to the lack of availability of institutions using this approach.

The results from this study cannot be generalized to the general academic advising population.

Significance of the Study

Appreciative Advising is a new theory of Academic Advising. There was no quantitative or qualitative data regarding the experiences and perceptions of advisors using this method. Prior studies had shown that retention of students is affected by academic advising and that advisor satisfaction is correlated to student satisfaction with advising. (Murrell, 2005). Other studies had shown that advisors placed value on intrinsic factors of job satisfaction such as helping students and maintaining a collegial atmosphere (Donnelly, 2006; Epps, 2002). This study added to the knowledge base surrounding Appreciative Advising by exploring the experiences of those selected advisors who were applying this new theory.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I outlined a concern in the new model/theory of Appreciative Advising; that is, the lack of qualitative, descriptive information on the perceptions of academic advisors using this new model/theory. Chapter II presented a literature review of academic advising, the development of Appreciative Advising, and academic advisors' concerns regarding their work life and relationships with colleagues.

Chapter III described the qualitative approach for this study. Chapter IV explained the data analysis, while Chapter V introduces the participants. Chapter VI explores the themes that emerged and Chapter VII contained the discussion, implications, and conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of Academic Advising

In early American colleges and universities students were under the tutelage of a teacher, mentor, and advisor where the mentor-protégé relationship was central and not separate from the educational process. Advising and teaching were one and the same. Students lived, ate, and studied with their professors. The moral and ethical education of students was considered as important as was their academic preparation. Professors assumed the parental supervisory and disciplinary role, and acted as mentors for young students (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997).

As academic institutions expanded their programs and as new disciplines emerged, it became necessary to guide students through the maze of possibilities that emerged for them and the completion of the necessary paperwork. The advisor – student relationship was based on the authority of the advisor, with little input from the student. This prescriptive and directive type of advising calls for the advisor to be the expert and the student was expected to follow his/her direction with little personal involvement. Prescriptive advising is primarily an administrative function.

In 1972, Crookston and O’Banion, in separate articles, first suggested that academic advising involved more than simply telling students which courses to take. O’Banion believed that “Advising is a process in which advisor and advisee enter a dynamic relationship respectful of the student’s concerns. Ideally, the advisor serves as teacher and guide in an interactive partnership aimed at enhancing the student’s self-

awareness” (NACADA, 2003, p. 1; O’Banion, 1994/1972). Crookston also believed that academic advising should be more than prescriptively telling students what actions to take and then expecting blind obedience. Crookston defined developmental advising as “...developmental counseling or advising is concerned not only with specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student’s rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavior awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills” (1994/1972, p. 78.). Developmental advising, an approach that has gained acceptance in recent years, moves toward a two-way relationship between advisor and student that integrates the student’s personal, professional, and academic goals into the process. The advisor makes a special effort to encourage the student to accept responsibility for his/her education and become aware of his/her own rational processes, behaviors, and skills. Developmental advising is concerned with the growth of the student in all areas of life. Kadar (2001) stated that developmental advising “is about guiding – not directing – students toward which personal goals to set and how to achieve them” (p. 174).

Chickering and Gamson (1987) echoed some of the principles of developmental advising in their 1987 article, *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. They offered the following seven principles for improving undergraduate education:

1. Encourage increased contact between students and faculty both in and out of class through face to face meetings, supplemented by e-mail, video-conferencing, etc.
2. Develop reciprocity and cooperation between students through non-competitive sharing of ideas, collaboration, and responding to other’s ideas.

3. Encourage active learning by encouraging students to talk about learning and relate it to their own experiences.
4. Give prompt feedback by providing frequent opportunities for performance with suggestions for improvement, giving the student opportunities for identifying their strengths and weaknesses.
5. Emphasize time on task to encourage students to develop effective time management.
6. Communicate high expectations by expecting students to perform well - can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
7. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning by realizing that students bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Students need to learn how their strengths and talents will work for them in the educational setting.

Prescriptive and developmental advising are not always exclusive of each other. It has been noted that freshman students often want and need more directive advising at the beginning of their college experience, but appreciate a developmental approach as they mature as students and as people (Broadbridge, 1996). Lowenstein (1999) argued that neither developmental nor prescriptive advising was as effective as an academically centered approach, which gave students the tools for lifelong learning. However, this approach does not necessarily help a student who already has a love of learning to align that love with a career, according to Bloom et al. (2008, p. 12). Also in 1999, Hemwall & Trachte stated that developmental advising moved the focus away from academic learning toward a broader idea of student development. They believed that faculty advisors were uncomfortable with discussing student's lives outside the classroom and may intellectually question the concept of developmental advising, because it is rooted

more in the development of the whole student and does not support the centrality of the academic curriculum. They advocated an approach using the concept of praxis as used in educational theory. They state that praxis means

...to act effectively, a person must be able to understand and analyze the beliefs, norms, assumptions, and practices that give meaning to his or her world. This process can be called “critical self-reflection.” ...the concept of praxis allows advising to be consistent with actual mission statements of colleges, which usually include some reference to helping students become “citizens of the world.” (A New Direction for Academic Advising section, para. 4).

This approach advocated that advisors should engage students in dialogue about the purpose and meaning of their course requirements and help the student see the relationship between their course requirements and their own goals and values, thus understanding the connection between ideas and action.

Melander (2002) discussed a student-centered advising approach that ...enlarges the domain of concerns beyond basic student decision about the formal curriculum—i.e., beyond questions of what major to choose and what courses to take. The overarching question for the students becomes “what activities and experiences should I program to develop my understanding and capacities as a learner?” (p. 2).

In this approach, the student is responsible for much his/her own academic and career development. Bloom et al. (2008) state that some students may not be ready to accept this responsibility until they reach upper class status.

Remediation Model

Higher education has long held that the best way to help students succeed in college is through identification and remediation of their weaknesses. Institutions traditionally focus on problems and try to provide solutions.

This approach is exemplified by the multitude of remedial programs that exist today in higher education, with the express goal of identifying student weaknesses and remediating them so that students can succeed in college level courses. This “deficit remedial education model” (Krarmer, 2007, p. 8) has been used for more than 30 years, but has had little success in improving achievement among students.

When students come for advising, advisors most often focus on problems instead of successes, thus fostering negativity. For instance, if a second semester student has made grades of A, B, B, and F in his/her first 12 semester of coursework, advisors normally want to know what went wrong in the course that was failed instead of trying to help the student discover and identify what he/she did right in the other courses.

Yarbrough, in anecdotal observation, found

that the “advice” from faculty-adviser to student-advisee is often restricted to probing questions designed to illuminate and clarify the shortcomings and inadequacies of the student. This potentially demoralizing encounter can create a confrontational environment that both the student and the faculty member seek to avoid. (2002, p. 63)

Switching one’s thinking from a deficit model to an asset model requires a significant shift in mental processes. In looking at successes instead of failures, advisors can help the student recognize and repeat the behaviors that utilized his/her strengths and

skills and led to past success in order to create future success, building on the innate strengths that the student already possesses (Buyarski, 2007).

Strengths-Based Advising

A strengths-based approach to academic advising focuses on student strengths rather than student weaknesses, thus enabling the focus of advising to shift from “problems to possibilities” (p. 1). Clifton & Harter (2003) found that high achievers spend most of their time in areas of their strengths, develop those strengths, learn to apply those strengths to new situations, while managing their weaknesses. Weick et al. (1989) found that

...people do not grow by concentrating on their problems. In fact, the effect of a problem focus is to weaken people’s confidence in their ability to develop in self-reflective ways. The fact that people have lacks is acknowledged, but the best strategy for supporting further gains is a conscious emphasis on the gains already made (p. 353).

Questions are framed around possibilities rather than problems, thus encouraging the student to concentrate on how his/her strengths can be used in academic areas. Schreiner (2000) found that students reported experiencing a greater feeling of satisfaction with academic advising when this approach was used. Student confidence was increased as the student gained a sense of direction. Schreiner and Anderson (2005) believed academic advising is fundamentally a relationship between advisor and student and that operating from a strengths-based approach can enhance that relationship. The authors stated that the advisor’s role in strength-based advising is to (a) assess strengths, (b) mirror strengths and increase awareness of strengths, (c) orchestrate opportunities to

build strengths, and (d) affirm and celebrate progress. They advocated the use of the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument, available from the The Gallup Organization, but also acknowledged that the use of a formal evaluation instrument is not strictly necessary. In 2007, Schreiner stated:

If a student is focused on challenges and struggles, rehearsing all the obstacles to success and reminded daily of the areas in which he or she has consistently failed, is it any wonder that the student may prefer to spend time and energy playing video games – an activity where past success has been experienced, where there is continual feedback, and where achievement is immediately reinforced?

Strengths-based advising recognizes that motivation is at the heart of student learning and success in college. It builds on that motivation by identifying students' talents and areas of past success, then helping students see how those talents can be multiplied with the knowledge and skills they're acquiring in college so that strengths can develop...then be applied to the challenges of the college experience (p. 1).

Baxter Magolda and the Concept of Self-authorship

Pizzolato (2006) advocated the integration of Baxter Magolda's concept of student self-authorship into academic advising to help students develop their knowledge and decision-making processes. Self-authorship was defined as "a relatively enduring way of understanding and orienting oneself toward provocative and uncomfortably dis-equilibrating situations in which the person recognizes a) the contextual nature of knowledge and b) balances this understanding with the development of his or her own internally defined goals and sense of self" (2006, p. 32). Using the learning partnership

model (LPM) originated by Baxter Magolda, Pizzolato explained three principles for increasing student self-authorship: (a) Validate students as knowers by helping them learn to identify and evaluate options. This is done by guiding students to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses by helping the student articulate past successes as a means of opening up possibilities, (b) Situate learning in the student's experience by helping the student process prior experiences and relate those experiences to their current academic situation. The impact of student decisions on academic goals as well as in other aspects of the student's life is explored. These conversations can lead the student to change certain behaviors or environmental factors that impact success, (c) Define learning as co-constructed meaning in order to help students clarify their own perspectives and seek cooperation with others, enabling them to consider the implications of their choices and gain a deeper understanding (2006, p. 38-40).

In 2008, Marcia B. Baxter Magolda and Patricia M. King expanded Baxter Magolda's Model for Epistemological Reflection to academic advising. They state that the academic advising relationship can help students develop "self-authorship, the capacity to internally generate beliefs, values, identity, and social relations" (2008, p. 8). Magolda and King outline the following four stages for integrating the Epistemological Reflection model with academic advising:

- Getting acquainted and building rapport
- Encouraging reflections about important experiences
- Inviting students to tell their stories
- Encouraging interpretation of reflections

The academic advising process has had a varied and difficult history. Differences in delivery systems, institutional philosophy, student body, economic stability, and oversight

often make for inconsistent delivery of academic advising services. Lowe and Toney found that frequent meetings with advisors were important to student's satisfaction with advising... They found a three-fold purpose for contemporary academic advising: a) in serious enrollment issues, academic advising is important to retention, b) the nature of the advisor-advisee relationship has changed as student populations became more diverse, and c) institutions have become more complex, resulting in advising becoming a campus community responsibility instead of solely a faculty responsibility (2000).

Theories that Inform Appreciative Advising

Positive Psychology

The development of positive psychology, which seeks to “understand optimal human functioning” (Lopez, p. 1) holds promise for enhancing human performance and happiness. This emerging emphasis proposes that therapists might provide more help to clients if they intentionally focused on and incorporated client strengths into treatment. Helping clients achieve a broader mental state, that is, the ability to see the larger picture, is viewed as important in helping clients achieve goals (Lambert & Erekson, 2008). In this client-centered approach, clients are seen as possessing the ability to be self healers if an atmosphere is created that maximizes growth. This kind of atmosphere is dependent on a therapist-client relationship built on empathy, trust, understanding, respect, and acceptance. Clients are encouraged to state their goals and identify and repeat behaviors that worked in the past. The client's goals are the central focus of therapy and emphasis is placed on using client strengths. In 1998, President of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, advocated that the members of the organization devote more time and energy to understanding the importance of positive emotions, wellness, and empowering relationships (Stickel & Callaway, 2007).

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI), developed by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University in the late 1980s, focuses on creating positive change within an organization. AI is an organizational development theory that serves as a way of engaging people across a system in renewal, change, and focused performance. It is based on the precept that organizations should build on their strengths instead of focusing on fixing their weaknesses. It provides all participants with a voice in improving and creating the future of the organization.

AI is based on the belief that organizations change in the direction in which they inquire. There are eight principles that underlie AI. They are 1) Constructionist Principle – what people focus on becomes their reality, 2) Positive Principle – focusing on the positive can lead to change, 3) Simultaneity Principle – change is not linear, inquiry and change happen together, 4) Poetic Principle – change is not static, it is more of a story than a state, 5) Anticipatory Principle – a desirable image of the future can increase the likelihood that we will behave in ways that will bring it about, 6) Wholeness Principle – creativity is stimulated by bringing people together, 7) Enactment Principle – acting “as if” can be self-fulfilling, and 8) Free Choice Principle – people perform better if they have the freedom to choose how and what they contribute.

AI outlines a 4-D model: Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver/Destiny. In the Discover phase, people are encouraged to tell stories about themselves through which they discover their strengths and those of their colleagues. In the Dream phase, people are asked to imagine what the organization would be like if the “peak” moments discovered in the Discover phase were the norm instead of the exception. In Design,

participants explore ways to create the organization they defined in the Dream phase. Through collaboration, they design a map in three concentric circles which contain the organizational dream, the relationships that affect the dream, and the organizational elements that are needed to make the dream a reality. In Deliver, also called Destiny, small teams experiment and improvise with the design elements. The Deliver/Destiny phase may open up even more appreciative inquiries into more specific aspects of the organization. As Tom White, President of GTE Telephone Operations stated in 1996, “Don’t get me wrong. I’m not advocating mindless happy talk. Appreciative Inquiry is a complex science designed to make things better. We can’t ignore problems – we just need to approach them from the other side” (as cited in Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999, p. 7).

Appreciative Inquiry has been used successfully in a multitude of corporations and organizations such as GTE, Avon Mexico, the U.S. Navy, Hunter Douglass, DTE Energy, IMAGINE CHICAGO, Nutrimental (Brazil), and in 2004, the United Nations. Cooperrider has also facilitated sessions with the Inter-religious Friendship Group on behalf of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama at various locations around the world (Outstanding Cases; Socha, 2005).

Medical research surrounding the placebo effect on the relief of physical symptoms, Losado and Fredericksons’ work with the positive “emotional space” of high performance teams, and Solutions-Focused Brief Therapy’s (SFBT) use of the “miracle question” (as cited in Seel, 2008, p. 2-3) supports many AI principles.

Reality Therapy

Reality therapy is a counseling technique in which clients are taught to make effective choices, direct their own lives, and handle life's problems. This theory states that people can control their behavior to satisfy their needs. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the relationship between counselor and client in enabling the client to explore different ways of solving problems. Glasser believed that behavior is composed of four components; acting, thinking, feeling, and physiology. Even if one of the components is unhealthy, clients can still choose the behavior that will best satisfy their needs. (Glasser, 1999, 2000)

Solutions-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), a type of reality therapy, was developed by de Shazer and is based on the idea that "client's goals and solutions were more important than the problems the client depicted in the session" (cited in Santa Rita, 1996, p. 4). The philosophy of SFBT can be stated in three points: 1) If it aint' broke, don't fix it; 2) Once you know what works, do more of it: and 3) If it doesn't work then don't do it again, do something different. SFTB makes use of the "miracle question" which is stated to the client as follows:

Suppose a miracle happens while you are asleep tonight. When you awake tomorrow, your problem is completely resolved. How would you know that your problem was solved? What would be different in your life? How would other people know that you know longer had this problem?

The miracle question forces the client to think of the resolution in concrete terms and allows the client and therapist to construct a mutually agreed upon goal. A future is created where the problem has already been solved. This helps the client to think and behave in a manner that will lead to fulfilling the expectation. Problems that seem

overwhelming large can be broken down into achievable steps. Small changes can lead to system wide change.

Strengths based advising, positive psychology, and reality therapy hold in common a core belief that positive thinking leads to positive actions.

Self-Worth Theory

Martin Covington's self-worth theory has also influenced Appreciative Advising. Covington believed that several factors affect a student's need to protect his/her personal values or sense of worth through the attainment of academic achievement. Those include performance, level, self-estimate of ability, and degree of expended effort. Self-perception of ability has a direct and indirect affect on self-worth. Even in the absence of accomplishment, the perception of high ability can positively affect self-worth, however, this perception must be backed up with accomplishment in order to sustain a sense of self-worth. In K-12 classrooms, teachers do this by reinforcing the value of trying, in hopes that performance/accomplishment will follow. (Covington, 1992) Bloom et al. (2008) tie this theory to Appreciative Advising by stating

Appreciative Advisors understand that motivation to achieve tends to peak when institutional expectations and student beliefs about ability and person strengths align. They also believe that through positive questioning, academic advisors can assist students in identifying these strengths and aligning them with their future life and career goals as well as with institutional expectations (p. 16).

Constructivist Theory

Appreciative Advising draws from constructivist theory in that it is understood that advising is a reciprocal relationship and that the context of the process is important.

Constructivist theory "...emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding" (Kim, 2001, p. 2). "The understanding that new knowledge is constructed based on prior knowledge and learning is gained through personal experiences and social interactions constitutes the essence of social constructivist theory" (Bloom et al., 2008, p. 16).

ZPD and Scaffolding

Vygotsky, while recognizing that learning is socially constructed, emphasized that culture, language, context, cooperation, and mutual respect are important to constructing knowledge. He developed the concepts of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding. ZPD is the gap between a student's actual development and the student's potential for development. (Verenikina, 2003) In appreciative academic advising, the cooperation between student and advisor results in a social interaction and collaborative problem solving. The ZPD is reduced as the student and advisor engage in cooperative learning. Scaffolding pertains to the support and infrastructure that the advisor provides in the beginning of the advisor/advisee relationship. The scaffolding is removed over time as the student builds knowledge and gains self-confidence. (Bloom et al., 2008)

Appreciative Advising Theoretical Framework

Bloom et al. stated that Appreciative Advising theoretical framework has been guided by previously established theories (2008).

AI distinguishes Appreciative Advising as a positive and generative process.

Choice theory influences how Appreciative Advisors consider student needs and the advising context. Social constructivist theory informs Appreciative Advising

strategies that serve as scaffolds in the advising process. The elements of the theoretical framework support the meaningful partnerships between the advisor and the student as well as the co-creation and development of individualized strategies and tools that characterize Appreciative Advising (2008, p. 17).

Appreciative Advising incorporates many of the precepts explained in previous paragraphs and resurrects the mentoring role of advisors as seen in the early colonial colleges.

History of the Development of Appreciative Advising

Jennifer L. Bloom, 2008 President of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and Nancy A. Martin first linked the concepts of AI to academic advising in their seminal 2002 Mentor article *Incorporating Appreciative Inquiry into Academic Advising*. The term Appreciative Advising was first used by Amundsen and Hutson in 2004. In 2006, Amundsen, Bloom, and Hutson formally defined Appreciative Advising as "...the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, probing questions that help identify and strengthen a student's ability to optimize their academic performance" (Amundsen, 2008, p. 1). The definition of Appreciative Advising was further refined in 2008 by Bloom et al. as "a social-constructivist advising philosophy that provides an advising framework for advisors to use in optimizing their interactions with students in both individual and group settings" (p. 19).

Bloom et al. have expanded on the 4-D model of AI to develop the 6 phases of Appreciative Advising – Disarm, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver, and Don't Settle (Appreciative Advising Overview). Their book, *The Appreciative Advising Revolution* (2008), advances this extended philosophy to help students achieve their life and

academic goals. Acknowledging that first impressions often set the stage for the relationship, during the Disarm phase, advisors attempt to allay any fears and anxieties the student might have about meeting with an advisor. During the Discover phase, advisors ask open-ended positive questions to build rapport and learn about the student's strengths, skills, and abilities. Uncovering the student's hopes and dreams of the future occurs in the Dream phase. Once those dreams have been articulated, the Design phase is spent in a collaborative plan to make the student's hopes and dreams come true. Implementing the plan is part of the Deliver phase. The student carries out his/her plan with the advisor's support and encouragement when roadblocks occur. The Don't Settle phase involves challenging the student to achieve his/her fullest potential. Academic advisors can use open-ended positive questions to help students set goals, identify their strengths and sources of motivation, apply their strengths to academic situations, and devise strategies that will enable them to achieve success (Bloom et al., 2008).

The Six Phases of Appreciative Advising

Disarm Phase

“Initial encounters are emotionally concentrated events that can overwhelm us... We walk away from them with a first impression that is like a Polaroid picture – a head-to-toe image that develops instantly and never entirely fades.” (Flora, 2004, para. 2) Recognizing that first impressions are very important, and remembering that students are often intimidated by advisors, an advisor must first put the student at ease. The advisor does this best by smiling, being respectful, making eye contact with the student, and indicating through open body stance that he/she is listening to the student as he/she expresses his/her needs. “We can pick up a smile from 30 meters away.... A smile lets us

know that we're likely to get a positive reception, and it's hard not to reciprocate" says Paul Ekman , University of California Medical School professor (as cited in Flora, 2004). Appropriate self-disclosure and a comfortable office environment can alleviate the student's initial anxiety. It is important to remember that if a student's only experience with an advisor is from his/her high school experience, he/she may associate a visit to an advisor with either being in trouble or with completing paperwork, and thus be unsure of what to expect. The advisor might begin by chatting with the student about a recent campus event and expressing a desire to help. These behaviors encourage the student to tell his/her story.

Discover Phase

The Discover Phase is about rapport building and the mutual discovery of the student's strengths, passions, and skills. Examples of questions that might help the student remember and articulate times when he/she was successful might be:

What would your friends say they like most about you?

Tell me about a time when you lost track of time? What were you doing?

Tell me about a peak experience when you felt really good about what you had accomplished.

Tell me about a time when you overcame a significant struggle in your life.

(Bloom et al., 2008).

Every person has a story – the Discover phase is about encouraging students to tell their own stories and being truly interested in the student as an individual with a valuable story. The advisor may paraphrase and summarize in order to articulate to the student times when the student used his/her strengths toward a successful end.

Bloom, Hutson, and he also provided the Appreciative Advising Inventory, an instrument containing 44 questions, available on www.appreciativeadvising.net to help with the Discover phase.

Dream Phase

Dreams are precious and not always easily shared. A relationship of trust must exist. “Dreams activities bring a radical shift in energy and approach. More important, they stimulate creativity” Whitney & Trosten-Bloom as cited in Bloom et al., 2008, p. 55). Too many people have had their dreams trashed. As the advisor asks questions and identifies student strengths, he/she leads the student into identifying his/her dreams for the future: what the student would like the future to be if there were no limitations. A clear action-oriented vision is created when it is related to the strengths that were articulated in the Discover phase. The Dream phase defines success and creates positive images of the future. Sample dream questions might be:

How will the world be a better place because you lived?

When you were a little girl/boy and people asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up, what was your answer? What is your answer now?

What would you like to be doing five years from now?

If salary and finances were irrelevant, what job would you like to have?

What would you do if you knew you could not fail?

Imagine that in ten years, your face is on the cover of a magazine. What is the magazine about and why are you on the cover? (Bloom et al., 2008).

Design Phase

By the design phase, the student and advisor together have identified and articulated the strengths the student possesses. The student, with the advisor's urging, has also articulated his/her dreams and goals. By acknowledging and naming his/her strengths, abilities, dreams, and goals, the student has developed a clearer image of what he/she wants to accomplish. The advisor and student continue the process by brainstorming how the student's strengths and abilities can be utilized to make the student's hopes and dreams come true. The student must decide what actions he/she will take to apply his/her strengths, passions, and skills to achieving his/her dreamed future. Examples of design questions might be:

What can you do today that will bring you one step closer to your goals?

What can you do this week (month, semester) that will get you started?

What new skills do you need to develop?

Who and what resources can help your dream become reality?

Which of your strengths/skills can be built upon? (Bloom et al., 2008).

Although the advisor acts as a guide, the ultimate decision rests with the student.

The student, not the advisor, owns his/her plan and must live with the consequences.

Advisors should strive to use easily understood terms instead of relying on institutional and/or educational jargon, which may be intimidating for students. Advisors should also be able to refer students to campus resources when appropriate.

Deliver Phase

This phase is the implementation phase where students carry out their plan. The advisor allows the student the freedom to make mistakes, but is always supportive and encouraging. The advisor reminds the student that there will be obstacles, but that the

student possesses the skills needed to succeed, thus giving the student hope for the future. Chang (1998) found that hope had a positive influence on general well-being and on the rational problem solving skills of college students. Huebner stated that

...students with high levels of hope may realize that there are multiple pathways to their specific goals, while students with low hope may become frustrated when a pathway is blocked, because they fail to recognize sufficient pathways to their goals (2009, p. 1).

If the student falls down, the advisor is there to help the student regroup and start again, reminding the student of his desired and dreamed future. The advisor urges the student to return for follow up session(s) where successes are applauded and the plan may be revised or reinvented. The following sample questions might help the advisor and advisee explore problem areas:

What roadblocks have you hit? How are you dealing with them?

What campus resources can help you?

Since our last meeting, what concrete steps have you taken to achieve your goals?

What have you learned so far?

Do you need to reevaluate your goals?

What is your timeline? (Bloom et al., 2008)

Don't Settle Phase

In this final phase, the advisor continues to support and challenge the student to achieve his/her full potential. As the student attains success, the advisor encourages the student to raise his/her own internal bar of expectation. The relationship that has been established in earlier phases acts a springboard toward challenging the student to reach

their full potential. In this manner, the advisor helps the student establish a “virtuous cycle”, whereby improvement in one area leads to improvement in another area, and thus continues to lead to future improvement, the exact of a “vicious cycle”. (Orem, Binkert, & Clancy as cited in Bloom et al., 2008, p. 99).

Appreciative Advising Results

The Appreciative Advising approach described above has been used by the Student Academic Services (SAS) office at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) over the past several years, resulting in an 18% increase in the retention of first-time probation students and a statistically significant increase in GPA. Participants also reported an improved sense of empowerment and control over their own situation (Hutson & Bloom, 2007).

Eastern Illinois University has used this approach with adult students in their Interdisciplinary program both on campus and online and documented increased persistence toward degree completion. Students have reported a greater level of satisfaction with their degree programs, their curriculum, and with the quality of advising. Advisors and staff using Appreciative Advising have reported greater levels of job satisfaction. (Bloom, Hutson, He, Amundsen, Buyarski, Christman, Cuevas, Woodward, Murray, Robinson, & Kucharczyk, 2009).

Other institutions where Appreciative Advising has been instituted include the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, the University of South Carolina at Columbia, Miami University Hamilton, Prairie State College, and Grand Valley State University (Bloom, et al., 2009).

Developing an Appreciative Advising mindset means

...caring about and believing in the potential of each student, appreciating the good fortune to positively impact other peoples' lives and the future of society, acknowledging that one can always become better at her/his craft (i.e., positive restlessness), remembering the amount of power students perceive advisors to possess and reflecting on how to best utilize that power, being truly interested in students and enjoying learning from them, and being culturally aware and responsive in interactions with students (Bloom et al., 2008, pp. 32-33).

Appreciative Advising is not about mindless happy talk or about ignoring problems. It simply approaches problems from the other side - that is from a half full orientation instead of a half-empty orientation. It is really about getting down to the truth of what students really want to do with their lives.

Job Satisfaction of Academic Advisors

Findings from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Academic Advising Survey 2000, based on 2,695 responses, confirmed that professional academic advisors are “jacks of all trades” and that their job responsibilities and duties are varied and inconsistent across institutions and even across colleges within universities. Duties may involve recruitment, advising, student registration, retention activities, credentialing of graduates, and other activities that have little to do with student advising. Education and training for academic advisors is not standardized and there are significant differences across institution, especially between two and four year institutions. Even in four year institutions there may be significant differences in the qualifications and job responsibilities of professional academic advisors. (Lynch & Stucky, 2000; Lynch, 2002)

Work motivation has been studied extensively, especially in the business world. The Hawthorne Studies, conducted from 1924 to 1932 by Mayo, found that employees were not solely motivated by money and that employee attitude played a part in employee behavior. Motivated employees were more productive (Linder, 1998). Understanding what motivated employees became the impetus for studies that resulted in five major approaches to understanding motivation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs listed five levels of needs: physiological, safety, social, ego, and self-actualization. Maslow believed that lower level needs such as physiological and safety must be satisfied before employees would be motivated by the next higher level need. Herzberg believed that five factors were particularly important for job satisfaction: a) achievement, b) recognition, c) the work itself, d) responsibility, and e) advancement. Vroom's rewards theory was based on the idea that employee effort would lead to performance which would lead to rewards, either positive or negative. Vroom believed that positive rewards led to higher employee motivation. Adams equity theory stated that employees struggle for equity between themselves and others and that equity is achieved when employees believe that their co-workers are engaged in equal levels of work and are receiving equal outcomes.. Skinner's reinforcement theory stated that employee behaviors that led to positive outcomes would be repeated, while those employee behaviors that led to negative outcomes would cease. (Gawel, 1997)

While this researcher has been unable to find a comprehensive definition of the term helping professions, it is generally accepted that the helping professions are those in which practitioners foster the growth of or attend to the problems of a person's physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional and/or spiritual well-being. These professions have

traditionally included medicine, nursing, the allied health professions, psychotherapy, social work, psychological counseling/therapy, education, life coaching, and ministry. This researcher believes that academic advising would certainly fall under the umbrella of helping professions.

Wakefield (1993) suggested that, although hard to prove, altruism was a primary reason for the existence of the social work profession. Wakefield defined altruism as a motivational state that was concerned with increasing the welfare of others. McLean and Andrew (2000) found that with human services personnel, “satisfaction from helping people and involvement with others in a purposeful activity” may compensate for lower pay and is “associated with intrinsic” sources such as individual effort, personal achievement, and involvement... (pp. 94-95). Feelings of personal accomplishment were also found to be correlated with total job satisfaction in a 2002 study of 166 student support personnel. (Brewer & Clippard, p. 183) Byrne (2008) found that in a study of 510 undergraduate students enrolled in a program traditionally classified as a helping profession, the “majority of students in the current study reported general altruism as an important factor in their choice” (p. 26).

In a qualitative study of academic advisors, Epps (2002) was surprised to find that advisors strongly emphasized that the student-advisor relationship was central to the advisor’s job satisfaction. Likewise Murrell’s 2005 study found that, in response to one of two open-ended questions, 31 of 38 academic advisors “indicated they were motivated by contact with students and co-workers” (p. 115). In Donnelly’s 2006 study some form of the word “student” appeared 1,664 times in 1,913 responses to the question – “What is

the one thing that gives you the most satisfaction on the job”. The word “help” occurred 460 times, usually in close proximity to the mention of students (p. 54).

The literature would lead us to believe that job satisfaction is composed of both extrinsic (salary, benefits, career, etc.) and intrinsic (personal achievement and a perception of helping) factors. When a profession is not highly compensated, such as academic advising, it is this researcher’s belief that the intrinsic factors can serve as a motivating factor in job satisfaction. The application of the Appreciative Advising theory and model may serve to enhance job satisfaction for academic advisors by heightening the intrinsic values of personal achievement and a sense of helping others.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF STUDY

Rational for a Qualitative Design

The need for descriptive information on the perceptions of academic advisors using Appreciative Advising supports the use of qualitative methodology. Creswell (1998) believed that there are eight compelling reasons why a qualitative study should be undertaken: (a) the research question(s) start with a *how* or a *what*, (b) the topic needs to be *explored*, (c) there is a need for a *detailed view* of the topic, (d) individuals are to be studied in their *natural setting*, (e) there is an interest in *writing* in a literary style, (f) there are sufficient *time and resources* to spend on data collection, (g) the *audience is receptive* to qualitative data on the subject, and (h) the researcher's role as an *active learner* who can present the story from the participant's viewpoint is emphasized.

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes works, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998, p. 15).

Type of Design

This qualitative research study made use of the case study tradition to explore the perceptions of academic advisors using the Appreciative Advising model in academic higher education settings. Hatch refers to Yin (1994) and Merriam (1998) works when stating that case studies are “a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualized contemporary phenomenon within specified boundaries” (2002, p. 30).

“We are interested in them [cases] for both their uniqueness and commonality. We seek to understand them. We would like to hear their stories” (Stake, 1995, p. 1). Conducting personal individual interviews and observations is the most appropriate means of gathering data regarding academic advisor’s perception of the effectiveness of Appreciative Advising.

Multiple participants were interviewed one-on-one in their natural setting to attain their perspectives on Appreciative Advising. Hatch states that “While it is often a part of participant observation research and other approaches, interviewing can be the primary data collection strategy in a qualitative project” (2002, p. 23). Qualitative interviewers create an event in which, through the use of open-ended questions, they encourage participants to explain their unique perspectives on an issue, and listen for other clues and special language that reveals meaning. While the interviewer may enter the interview with structured questions, he/she may also generate additional questions in response to participants’ responses as rapport is established.

Data analysis was accomplished by following a standard format for coding. Open coding was used to identify initial similarities and differences between participant experiences, grouping them into categories and subcategories of information. These categories and subcategories were then assembled in new ways through the use of axial coding. Through the use of selective coding, a story line or core category was developed, which resulted in themes or issues that could be interpreted by the researcher (Creswell, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Sampling

Participants for this study were drawn from three different four year institutions. Academic advisors from each institution were selected for a total of nine individuals. These individuals represent a purposeful sampling of advisors whose perspective was important to this study. Participants selected had at least three year's experience and had used some other model of advising before adopting Appreciative Advising. Participants had to be willing to donate an hour to an hour and a half of their time to be interviewed for the study. Academic Advisors were encouraged to be truthful and candid in answering interview questions.

A group of experts in Appreciative Advising was engaged to help identify participants for this study. This group had been at the forefront in the development and use of Appreciative Advising. They had been involved in conducting training sessions in the Appreciative Advising method at different institutions and were in touch with the Advising administrators at these institutions. They were also advising administrators in programs where Appreciative Advising was being used. At each of the three institutions selected, results of the Appreciative Advising method with students had been published by academic advisors and presented at the NACADA National Conference. An article about how Appreciative Advising was implemented at these institutions has been published in *The Mentor*, a Pennsylvania State University publication.

In addition to identifying academic advisors using this model/theory at different institutions, they reviewed the interview protocol, and serve as auditors for the analysis of the interviews. The members of this Panel of Experts are:

Jennifer L. Bloom, Ed.D
Clinical Associate Professor
Director: Higher Education and Student Affairs Master's Degree Program
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

University of South Carolina

Bryant L. Hutson, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Student Academic Services
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Ye He, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Kaye Woodward, Ed.D.
Director of Bachelor of General Studies Program
Eastern Illinois University

My Role as Researcher

As the researcher, I had a compelling interest in the field of Academic Advising in which I have been employed for 10 years. As the interviewer and therefore an instrument of the research, I was aware of my biases. While I attempted to maintain analytical distance, I believed that my own experiences as an academic advisor contributed to my ability to identify with and explain the perceptions elicited by this study. The researcher's experience, skills, and knowledge enabled her to interview, interpret and analyze the data that was gathered.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through the use of interviews with academic advisors who met the selection criteria and observations during the interview process. The interviews were conducted in person at three different higher education institutions between September 11 and September 16, 2009. Each interview was approximately one hour to one and one-half hour in length. Each interview was audio taped and transcribed verbatim and made use of open ended questions as outlined on the Interview Protocol (See Appendix C). Appropriate probing questions were asked, if

necessary, to elicit additional information until no new data could be obtained from the participant. The researcher also made observation notes during the interview process.

The interview protocol was a method of insuring consistency in the interview process. The interviewer used a preprinted sheet for each interview to make notes about the responses to questions. The interview protocol contained information about the study and lines to record time, date, place, interviewer, and interviewee name. An introductory phrase or paragraph helped the interviewer explain the purpose of the study. Questions were spaced far enough apart for the interviewer to add her own notes. Since the interviews were recorded, these notes recorded and explained non-verbal responses such as hand and eye movements, facial characteristics, or general attitude. The interviewer familiarized herself with the questions so that she was not overly dependent on reading the questions word for word and was able to maintain eye contact. The interview protocol ended with a reminder to thank the interviewee when the interview was concluded.

The interview protocol was reviewed by this researcher's Panel of Experts. They were asked to make suggestions for changes to content and wording to better accomplish the purposes of this study. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final interview protocol.

Data Analysis Strategies

Data analysis focuses on rich descriptive information in which the researcher attempts to identify themes, patterns, or issues, build explanations, and interpret what has been learned from the study. This narrative form resulted in an in-depth, description-rich

study of each interview. Accomplishing this was done through the use of three types of coding to systematically analyze the data.

Open coding is the process of systematically breaking the data down into categories and subcategories. According to Corbin & Strauss, “Open coding is the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically. Its purpose is to give the analyst new insights by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data” (1990, p. 12).

In axial coding categories were related to their subcategories and tested against the data. The researcher made use of the coding paradigm of condition, context, strategies (action/interaction) and consequences to further explore the relationship between subcategories and categories and to identify and develop new categories. (Corbin & Strauss, 1990)

Selective coding is the process in which all categories are unified around a central or core category. The core category embodies the essential phenomenon of the study. Selective coding helped to identify poorly developed categories for which there was insufficient support in the data.

The researcher drew upon past experiences and education to interpret the data and give meaning to the data, separating the important from that which is not in order to overcome bias.

Verification Strategies

Verification procedures used with this study are as follows: Member checking is a procedure whereby participants are asked to verify that the themes identified by the researcher are accurate. In this study, after the interviews were transcribed, each

participant was sent a summary of the interview and asked to verify that the information was accurate. Any further comments by the participant were incorporated into the final analysis. In this way, the participants lent credibility to the study.

This researcher used self-disclosure as a verification procedure. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), “This is a process whereby researchers report on personal beliefs, values, and biases that may shape their inquiry” (p. 5.5). This created an atmosphere where the researcher’s biases and preconceived ideas were brought out in the open at the beginning of the analysis, so that readers had a clear picture of how the researcher’s biases might affect her analysis. This will allow the reader to understand the researcher’s perspective and either ignore or incorporate the researcher’s biases.

Thick, rich description was another method for verifying results from the study. In this procedure, the process of writing using thick descriptions gives as much detail as possible. The description is so detailed that the reader is made to feel a part of the action and gains a perspective as if he/she had actually experienced the event. This allows the reader to establish the credibility of the study.

The group of experts who helped with the identification of participants for this study will serve as auditors.

These four procedures were feasible with this study. Each was appropriate to the data collection methods of interview and observation.

Ethical Considerations

Each participant in this study was informed of the purpose and objectives of this study. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to the beginning of this study. Permission was granted by each institution of higher education where

participants worked. Each participant signed an Informed Consent form which consented to the audiotaping of the interview prior to the interview.

The identity of each participant in this study was kept strictly confidential. After each interview was completed, the data (voice) file was transferred from the researcher's digital voice recorder to the researcher's netbook computer, which was kept on her person at all time during the week when the interviews were conducted. The original data (voice) file was then deleted from the digital voice recorder so that it was cleared for the next interview. Throughout the week of travel through various airports, both the digital recorder and netbook were always kept with the researcher as carry-on luggage. Each interview was transcribed by a trained transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement (See Appendix D). These transcriptions were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office for three years after the study and then destroyed. The results of this study were published in the researcher's dissertation and may also be published in scholarly publications and presented at conferences.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to explore Advisors' perceptions of Appreciative Advising to identify to what extent and in what ways Appreciative Advising had impacted their advising practice and their job satisfaction. This case study explored the experiences of nine Academic Advisors who were using the Appreciative Advising approach. The data was collected in one-on-one personal interviews that took place between September 10 and September 17, 2009. The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. The researcher examined the recollections of these participants to discover: (a) some ways that Appreciative Advising advisors make use of their personal strengths, skills, and talents, (b) some ways that Academic Advisors perceive that Appreciative Advising made them more effective advisors, (c) some way that Academic Advisors using Appreciative Advising perceive that it enhances the advisor/student relationship, and (d) some ways that Academic Advisors using Appreciative Advising believe that Appreciative Advising has affected their relationships outside of the student/advisor relationship. The systematic analysis of the data through coding resulted in the emergence of themes that were then interpreted about the cases.

Open Coding

“Open Coding is the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). Open coding's use of questioning and comparison helped the researcher break through preconceived ideas and enabled the researcher to be more objective. The researcher began this process by imagining that she

had no prior knowledge of Appreciative Advising. The researcher developed categories and sub-categories by fragmenting the data. This process was begun by an initial reading of each interview to immerse the researcher in the data and to become familiar with each case, keeping the overall research question in mind. This gave the researcher an in-depth overall picture of each case. Color codes were then assigned to each of the four ways that Academic Advisors might perceive Appreciative Advising as those perceptions related to the four specific research questions: advisor strengths, skills, & talents; effectiveness as an advisor; advisor/student relationships; and outside relationships. Each interview was then reread line for line four times, each time keeping a different specific research question in mind. The transcripts were hand coded using a different color to highlight words and phrases that corresponded to the four ways that Academic Advisors might perceive Appreciative Advising. In this way, numerous words and phrases were identified. Each color coded group of words and phrases was then assigned an alpha code related to the groups of perceptions. In this way, the initial four categories were developed around the four research questions. Those categories were (a) Strengths, Skills, Talents, (b) Effectiveness, (c) Advisor/student Relationship, and (d) Outside Relationships.

In the next step, sub-categories were developed by grouping similar concepts within each of the four categories of (a) Strengths, Skills, Talents, (b) Effectiveness, (c) Advisor/student Relationship, and (d) Outside Relationships. The sub-categories were assigned a numerical subset. A summary of the open coding process is presented in Appendix E. The process of hand coding was challenging and time consuming, but yielded a wealth of information.

The words and phrases used to describe Advisor Strengths, Skills, and Talents were segmented into seven sub-categories during open coding: S1 – personal traits, S2 – experience, S3 – knowledge, S4 – empathy, S5 - disclosure, S6 – organizational, S7 – training. The most common words used by participants to describe their strengths, skill, and talents were: listening, positive, internship/assistantship, and big picture. In some cases, a participant was quick to articulate his/her strengths, skills, and talents. In other cases, a participant established strength through discussion of a past experience. These sub-categories, properties, and dimensions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Strengths, Skills, and Talents Sub-categories

Coding	Sub-category	Properties	Dimensions
S1	Personal traits	Inherent	Helpful - non-factor
S2	Experience	Level	Helpful – non-factor
S3	Knowledge	Type	Present - absent
S4	Empathy	Level	Focused - random
S5	Disclosure	Frequency	High - low
S6	Organizational	Utilize	Often - seldom
S7	Training	Available	Present - absent

The words and phrases used by participants to describe their perceptions of their effectiveness as advisors were segmented into six sub-categories during open coding: E1 – framework, E2 – insights, E3 – confidence, E4 – story, E5 – differences, and E6 – purpose. Words and phrases commonly associated with effectiveness were: framework, story, different, natural, open, and questioning. These sub-categories with their properties and dimensions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2*Effectiveness as Advisor Sub-categories*

Coding	Sub-category	Properties	Dimensions
E1	Framework	Type	Helpful-Not helpful
E2	Insights	Type	Inspire-Discourage
E3	Confidence	Level	Increase – no effect
E4	Story	Individual	Effective - Ineffective
E5	Differences	Recognize	Achieve – Fail
E6	Purpose	Identify	Valuable - Worthless

The words and phrases used to describe the advisor/student relationship were grouped into four sub-categories during open coding: A1 – partnership, A2 – efficiency, A3 – advocacy, and A4 – satisfaction. Interaction, one-on-one, relationship, and partnership were some of the words used by participants to describe their perceptions of the advisor/student relationship using Appreciative Advising. These sub-categories are presented in Table 3 with their properties and dimensions.

Table 3*Advisor/student Relationship Sub-categories*

Coding	Sub-category	Properties	Dimensions
A1	Partnership	Involved	High -Low
A2	Efficiency	Time	Too much – Too little
A3	Advocacy	Level	Effective - Ineffective
A4	Satisfaction	Level	High - Low

The words and phrases used to describe outside relationships were segmented into four sub-categories during open coding: O1 – co-workers, O2 – friends, O3 – family and

O4 – others. Participants most often discussed the changes they had seen in their work environment, using such words as: team approach, positive, differences, and strengths. These sub-categories, with their properties and dimensions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Outside Relationships

Coding	Sub-Category	Properties	Dimensions
O1	Co-workers	Climate	Positive - Negative
O2	Friends	Involved	Supportive – unhelpful
O3	Family	Involved	Supportive - Unhelpful
O4	Others	Types	Present-absent

The open coding process resulted in the identification of the different elements of the perceptions within each category and sub-category of each individual participant. The sub-categories emerged as similar words and phrases were grouped. This process yielded an in-depth look at the way in which participants viewed themselves, their students, and their co-workers. This rich information was garnered by the researcher’s total immersion in the data, an exhausting but exhilarating experience.

Axial Coding

In axial coding, sub-categories were questioned and compared to identify sub-categories that were similar in the actions/interactions they represented. In this manner sub-categories were collapsed, combined, and connected into new integrated axial categories, moving the focus toward themes. These new sub-categories were developed within the framework of the four original categories: (a) Strengths, Skills, and Talents, (b) Effectiveness, (c) Advisor/student Relationship, and (d) Outside Relationships. Using

Corbin and Strauss's coding paradigm involving conditions, context, strategies, and consequences, the researcher systematically analyzed the data. (1990, p. 13)

Axial coding enabled the researcher to see the combination of factors that contributed to the strengths, skills, and talents expressed by each participant. In analyzing the sub-categories assigned to Advisor Strengths, Skills, and Talents, two axial categories or themes emerged that described the strengths, skills, and talents of the participants: *background* and *acquired assets*. These sub-categories are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Strengths, Skills, and Talents Themes

Theme	Action/Interaction Strategies		
	Subcategory	Properties	Dimensions
Background	Personal traits	Inherent	Helpful - Non-factor
	Experience	Level	Helpful – Non-factor
Acquired assets	Knowledge	Type	Present - Absent
	Empathy	Level	Focused - Random
	disclosure	Frequency	High - Low
	Organizational	Utilize	Often - Seldom
	Training	Available	Present - Absent

Axial coding of the sub-categories involved with Effectiveness as an Advisor identified two axial categories or themes. The two axial categories were *method* and *self-belief*. The *method* theme focused on more concrete terms, while *self-belief* concepts were more abstract. Those categories are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Effectiveness as an Advisor Themes

Theme	Action/Interaction Strategies		
	Subcategory	Properties	Dimensions
Method	Framework	Type	Helpful – Not helpful
	Story	Individual	Effective - Ineffective
	Differences	Recognize	Achieve - Fail
Self-Belief	Insights	Type	Inspire - Discourage
	Confidence	Level	Increase – No effect

Three of the sub-categories identified during open coding in the area of advisor/student relationship were connected into one axial coding category or theme - *connection*. The results of the axial coding for advisor/student relationships are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Advisor/student Relationship Theme

Theme	Action/Interaction Strategies		
	Subcategory	Properties	Dimensions
Connection	Partnership	Involved	High - Low
	Efficiency	Time	Too much – Too little
	Satisfaction	Level	High - Low

Connections made during axial coding of the sub-categories of the outside relationships category resulted in the identification of one axial category or theme – *changes*. The perception of change emerged as the overriding concept in this area. The results of axial coding of the outside relationships are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Outside Relationships Theme

Theme	Action/Interaction Strategies		
	Subcategory	Properties	Dimensions
Changes	Co-workers	Climate	Positive - Negative
	Friends	Involved	Supportive-unhelpful
	Family	Involved	Supportive-unhelpful

The major themes examined in this research were the perceptions of Academic Advisors using the Appreciative Advising approach surrounding four areas to identify ways and to what extent their advising practice and job satisfaction was impacted. The research sought to identify in what ways using Appreciative Advising affected: (a) Advisor strengths, skills, and talents, (b) Effectiveness as an Advisor, (c) Advisor/student relationships, and (d) Outside relationships. Examination and analysis of the rich and descriptive interview data produced axial categories that provided subthemes for each of the four major themes. A combined summary of all of the axial categories is presented in Appendix F.

Selective Coding

“Selective coding is the process by which all categories are unified around a “core” category... [which] represents the central phenomenon of the study” (Corbin & Strauss, 2009, p. 14). The core category might emerge as one of the categories or sub-categories that has already been defined or a new term may be needed to describe and explain the main phenomenon. There is a sense of hunting down a central theme.

The central theme that evolved and emerged from the analysis of the data through open, axial, and selective coding centered on the changes in relationships that participants believed was the result of the use of Appreciative Advising. Advisors used their strengths, skills, and talents to begin the establishment of relationships with both students

and colleagues. Individual strengths, skills, and talents were the result of both the advisor's family background and personal traits combined with acquired knowledge and training. The Appreciative Advising approach gave the advisor a method for establishing a successful advisor/student relationship and produced insights that helped the advisor feel that he/she was being productive in using his/her strengths, skills, and talents in helping students. The partnership that resulted from the Appreciative Advising approach enabled an advisor/student connection, a relationship that served both the student and the advisor and resulted in greater efficiency and satisfaction. Many advisors also believed that the Appreciative Advising approach resulted in a mindset that spilled over into other areas of their lives, most prominently with their co-workers, but also with family and friends. Changes in these relationships were often mentioned. In all of these areas, the dominant theme seemed to be one of how these changed relationships impacted the advisor's everyday practice and job satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

PARTICIPANTS

This qualitative study was conducted to explore Academic Advisor's perceptions of Appreciative Advising to identify to what extent and in what ways Appreciative Advising impacts their advising practice and their job satisfaction. This chapter includes a description of each of the nine participants.

Introduction of the Participants

The nine participants were identified as using Appreciative Advising by the panel of experts identified in Chapter III. Requirements included at least three years experience as an advisor and the prior use of some other method or model of advising. The interviews were conducted in individual one-on-one sessions in the office of the participant at the institution where he/she was employed. These interviews were conducted between September 10 and September 17, 2009 at three different institutions of higher education. Each participant brought a different and unique perspective and approach to advising. I have given each participant a pseudonym to maintain their anonymity. The institution and location of each participant's current employment was not provided to maintain anonymity.

Barbara

Barbara was a African-American female with an undergraduate degree in a technology field and a Master's in Education. She had attended institutions in both the South and the Midwest. She had worked with students in a variety of disciplines over several years. Barbara was very willing to share her opinions and ideas with me. She was candid and direct and did not hesitate to express her opinions regarding my questions.

Barbara shared personal stories that explained her somewhat serendipitous path to becoming an Academic Advisor. Her affection for students was evident, and she enjoyed working with diverse student populations.

Celeste

Celeste was a white female with a recent Master's degree in Student Affairs. She was enthusiastic and forthcoming. She was very interested in the study and expressed a desire to pursue further education for herself. Celeste was passionate about students and also enjoyed teaching. Her current position is her first paid advising position. Celeste was eager to answer my questions and provided additional anecdotal information.

Helen

Helen was an Asian-American female with a Master's degree in Consumer Sciences. She had been an Academic Advisor for a number of years and was soft-spoken and reserved, although very articulate. Helen often reflected on my questions, making sure that she expressed herself in terms that could be understood. Her reflections were clear, concise, to the point, and she seemed to deeply consider each question.

Anne

Anne was a white female with an undergraduate degree in a teaching field and a Master's degree in Education. Anne had been both a traditional and non-traditional student herself and brought that experience to her work, believing that she was able to understand both kinds of students. Anne perceived herself as very direct and unique, although her directness sometimes got her in trouble. Anne had struggled in her personal life, but had reached a point where she was happy and stable. Anne also taught courses at

community colleges and online institutions to make extra money. Managing her diverse work and family responsibilities gave Anne deep insight into the plight of adult students.

Linda

Linda was a white female who worked part time with adult students. Her background was in records and data management. Her principle responsibility was the final checking of graduating seniors and in that capacity interacted with students at the end of their academic programs. She also filled in for the other advisors in her office when they were absent. Linda worked part time so as to spend more with her children.

Susan

Susan was a young white female who also worked part time. Her background was in arts and social work and she had earned a Master's degree. Her special passion was for foster kids in the college system and she was the only participant who worked a half day on Saturdays, by choice. Susan was the mother of a child with disabilities and also brought that perspective to her work. Susan was talkative and eagerly shared her views.

Krista

Krista was a young white woman with a very varied background. She spoke two languages and had lived outside of the United States both as a student and teacher. She had a special connection with international students and possessed both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Engaged to be married, Krista was engaging and enthusiastic. Part of her job was to oversee student workers. Krista taught one evening course for her institution.

Mark

Mark was a white male who supervised other advisors in his department. He had an undergraduate degree in engineering and an MBA. He had many years of experience working with students, both in residence halls and in student programming. His ability to see the big picture and his talent for moving projects forward was evident in the way his department was set up. Mark also taught courses for his institution.

Vicky

Vicky, a white female, had experience as both a faculty member and as an administrator. She supervised the other advisors in her office. Her vast experience working with students brought a seasoned perspective to this study. Vicky was the only participant to have earned a doctorate. Vicky taught courses in her department and was preparing for retirement in a few years. Vicky was thoughtful, deliberate, and articulate in her answers.

CHAPTER VI

THEMES

The data was segmented within the four-fold framework of (a) Strengths, Skills, and Talents; (b) Effectiveness; (c) Advisor/student Relationship; and (c) Outside Relationships. The development of themes emerged from the process of open, axial, and selective coding. An exploration of the themes and subthemes is presented in this chapter.

Advisor Strengths, Skills, and Talents

Two themes emerged related to Advisor Strengths, Skills, and Talents: *background* and *acquired assets*. Each participant defined strengths, skills, and talents in their own way and in their own terms. Many listed listening as a strength, but this was by no means universal. The participants' backgrounds were varied and diverse, and in some cases, their experiences had led them down a serendipitous path toward a career as an Academic Advisor.

Figure 1: Visual Display of Advisor Strengths, Skills, and Talents Theme and Subthemes



Background

The subtheme of background emerged as participants talked about their perceptions of their strengths, skills, and talents. Many discussed specific personal traits, such as listening, empathy, and patience, while other participants concentrated on past

experiences that they felt had given them a special perspective, such as personal struggles, assistantships/internships, and family influences.

In the area of personal traits, Anne stated:

I'm friendly...but I'm also the most direct person here in this office....I am a very positive person and I think students walking into my office feel that. I am also very supportive....I am very enthusiastic and cheerful....I am not shy...and I am not afraid to get attached.

Barbara, when asked what particular strengths, skills, and/or talents she brought to academic advising stated: "I would say patience, listening skills...I am always open to try new things and I am always trying to improve myself." Vicky also talked about listening skills when she stated: "...I am a good listener and I guess I am empathetic and the students seem to know that they can open up to me and can talk and I'm not afraid to bring out more sensitive issues with them."

Linda also spoke of listening skills: "I really listen to what the students are saying...asking more questions..." Celeste spoke of her "ability to connect with them on that individual level...the one-on-one interaction that I have with students..."

Helen thought that her strengths were based on her inner belief system. When asked about her strengths, skills, and talents, Helen replied:

...my belief that all of us here on earth should live a sacrificial life and we should serve other people. And so I try to live that as much as possible each day and I try not to take any shortcuts....So I just think that the fact that I don't mind just taking the time and looking at all these other things....A personal strength.

Many of the participants talked about prior experiences, both academic and personal, that they felt provided them with a special skill or knowledge. Susan had been active in many areas of student life during her undergraduate and graduate years: “I was a peer mentor, I was an orientation leader, and I was president of everything...did the variety of experiences, all student life focused...” Susan believed that motherhood gave her “a lot of perspective with our students because a lot of them have kids regardless of age, be they 17, be they 25, they are still coming in with kids and that has been a nice connection with them”, also stating “I used to blame it on the parents, but then I became one.” She relayed a poignant story about a student on academic probation who came in with his mother, who was frustrated with him:

...finally she points to my son’s picture and says “Is that your baby” and I said “Yes” and she said “Well this is my baby and he is frustrating me because he is not listening to me and he is throwing everything down the drain. Tell me what I can do to help”, and it got through to me on a different level - okay this is still her baby and she is mad at this nineteen year old, but he is still her baby.

Susan also believed that her social arts degree and social work background served her well as an advisor. She talked of “looking at things realistically...meeting the student where they are...focusing on their strengths...trying to get them to a better place”.

Krista had studied abroad as a high school student and her family had hosted exchange students from other countries. Krista had spent time in the Peace Corp teaching and had worked a Semester at Sea during her graduate work. She explained her Semester at Sea experience:

I took a semester off in grad school to go work a Semester at Sea...It's basically a floating university...they have an old cruise ship that they fix up to be a floating university and where the casino was...is now a library and they have classrooms, where the big shows used to be is now a student union...so it was an amazing study abroad opportunity for these students and so I worked on the ship as a residence hall director...

She felt that her experiences living abroad had given her an understanding of the problems that international students face. She believed that "my travels and seeing the world and different cultures [in areas with] a little bit more diversity" gave her insight into the struggles of international students and English as a second language students. She also talked about first generation college students when she stated:

You know, I think having to live that is definitely [a] strength and I think that relating to students and saying "Yeah, I was a first generation student and I do understand too" and they are like "Oh you do understand".

Mark believed that his primary strength was as a student advocate. He stated: "If I think a student has been done wrong or the institution has done something inappropriate...I am going to fight to the end for that student and probably step on some toes". He also believed that his engineering and business background gave him the ability to see the bigger picture, stating: "...my background has really had a significant impact on my ability to be successful in doing this. Vicky echoed some of Mark's comments with: "...I am a good big picture person and I am a good problem solver...I very quickly start looking at what are the options and how can we do that and move that person to overcome that problem".

Celeste felt that her graduate program internship and practicum experiences had helped her pinpoint her desire to work with students. Both Mark and Celeste had worked as residence hall directors and Krista had worked as a student director, where she “wore many hats and got to do a lot of things”. These prior experiences had given them the opportunity to interact with students and had pointed the way toward a career working with students. Mark talked about interviewing for corporate jobs after completing his MBA and slowly coming to the realization that he did not want to do the “suit and tie thing” in a large metropolitan area with a lot of commute time and 60 hour work weeks. Since he had worked as a resident hall director to put himself through graduate school, he began to explore other options. He stated:

So that summer [after graduation], I didn't want to do the business thing and started to do some self reflection sitting in my little dorm room with my burner probably breaking all kinds of rules cooking my noodles...I sort of came to the conclusion that...I really had already found my passion – it was higher education and I love the campuses and the culture and running the residence hall and all that. So basically, I rewrote the resume and redirected the job search to higher education type positions...

In Mark's case, one part of his job responsibility in his first job was advising and he eventually moved into a full time advising position and then into advising administration.

Celeste, Helen, and Susan felt that family circumstances had influenced what they considered to be assets. Celeste alluded to the fact that both her parents worked in higher education, so perhaps “somehow it runs in my blood”. Helen attributed her personal

strengths to the way she was raised on a family farm, and Susan who laughingly said: “I had a bad life, at least in [comparison] to the traditional student population...” She felt that her struggles had given her insights into the trials and tribulations faced by non-traditional students.

Others spoke of their own Academic Advisors. Some had been inspired by their advisors and wanted to help others as they had been helped, while another stated specifically that she did not want to be the kind of advisor that she had experienced. Krista told me: “I kind of navigated myself through college” with little guidance from any advisor.

Barbara referred to her own Academic Advisor as an inspiration to her:

...there was a Business Academic Advisor who was very supportive of me...at the time [higher education institution] was not supportive of adult students. So to have someone who understood that I had a husband and a family – that was very helpful and that inspired me to do some type of service in higher education....

Celeste talked about:

...the real impact that my faculty advisors had on me when I was an undergrad...I actually had two professors that...really mentored me and took me under their wing, one especially...I didn't feel like I belonged in college until that advisor reached out to me...my whole college experience would have been very different had she not, you know, reached out and taken a special interest in me. And so that is why I think that try to take a special interest in every student that walks in.

On the other hand, Anne's experience with her Academic Advisors had a different affect on her. She stated: "I just knew I didn't want to be like my advisors, who couldn't have cared less..."

Acquired Assets

Mark and Celeste both mentioned collaborative relationships with others on their respective campuses as an asset. When asked about strengths, Celeste stated: "I have a lot of really good connections with the people across campus and so that helps ...eliminate the bouncing around [of students] from office to office..." Mark talked about the fact that he felt compelled to "go and connect with all those departments so I know the requirements for every single major in this institution " because "...if you don't know any of that stuff..." and must refer a student elsewhere "...from a student's perspective, they are getting the run around".

Anne believed that teaching gave her an additional connection with students. She stated:

...I love it. It is a passion of mine, I love the contact that I have with the students and fostering those relationships and I really feel like I have the best of both worlds, especially when I teach our students here.

The training received by the participants was also considered under the theme of *acquired assets*. Very few had received specific training to become Academic Advisors before learning of the Appreciative Advising method. Many talked of just doing it by trial and error and of watching, listening, and observing other advisors. Eventually some attended yearly information sessions on their campuses and others attended National Academic Advising Association regional and national conferences. When asked about

prior advising models, Mark stated that when he first began advising, he used a “survival” model that became more developmental over time, “there was nothing official and it was pieced together...what worked and what didn’t, just trial and error”. Anne, Linda, and Celeste used a more prescriptive model. Anne talked about her training:

There really was no method, it was, I call it trial by error. I observed...for a good number of weeks before I actually took my own phone calls and made my own appointments, and my first advising session someone sat in there with me and watched...and it really was trying her model and what she did. I just found that not to be fulfilling. I am not... I am very different from her and it’s hard trying to become someone else and she had very big shoes to fill. They were big for me, too, and I didn’t really want to fill her shoes, I wanted to create my own...I don’t think I was a bad advisor because I did the job, my heart was just not absolutely in it at all.

Linda expressed her prior model by stating, “before Appreciative Advising...we used the approach of here is what you need to accomplish, what our requirements are”. Krista characterized her prior model as “very prescriptive to exploratory”, while Susan and Vicky used a developmental model. Susan had some lab experience with advising in her graduate program, stating: “I did five weeks of advising and five weeks learning experience and five weeks research...” Vicky had also done some advising as a graduate student and felt she had always tried to put herself in the student’s shoes, stating:

Again no training, so then I kind of fell into doing this and kind of feeling my way, what felt right, always trying to think about what if I was sitting on the other side of the table or desk, what would I want that person to say to me. So as a

student, what is my fear? I try to identify what their fears are and help them.

Navigate through all these rules that they just have no idea about.

Barbara stated that before she began using Appreciative Advising, “I was...evaluating students based on what they said they wanted”. She characterized her prior approach as developmental, but also direct. When asked what kind of training she had received, Barbara replied: “When I first started advising...it was basically, we believe you can do the job, so do it”.

Helen had a public relations background and had helped care for elderly parents. Her training consisted of: “...observing... when I was first hired. I...just watched her with students...sit with her and watch and listen, observing how they did it, and everybody does things differently and I kind of incorporated my own way of doing things.”

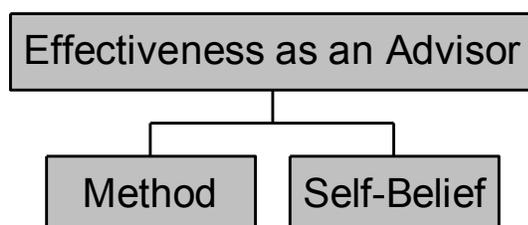
For all participants, their own articulated strengths, skills, and talents were a melding of their personal traits, education, training or lack thereof, and knowledge gained through practice and life experiences.

Effectiveness as an Advisor

Axial coding provided two subthemes related to participants’ perceptions of their effectiveness as advisors. Those two subthemes were *method* and *self-belief*. When asked if using Appreciative Advising techniques had enabled them to better utilize the strength, skills, and talents they had already articulated, they most often relayed that the Appreciative Advising framework had assisted them in learning what students needed through the sharing of their own stories and by eliciting student stories. It was through hearing and understanding each student’s different and individual story that participants

were able to better utilize their strengths, skills, and talents to help the student. As they used their strengths, skills, and talents, they gained insights into their students and themselves that led to greater confidence and belief in the value of advising.

Figure 2: Visual Display of Effectiveness as an Advisor



Method

When asked if the Appreciative Advising approach enabled her to better utilize her strengths, skills, and talents, Anne stated:

Oh, I would say yes....Before doing it I don't know if I was so positive. I don't know if I showed enough care about the student, because I focused more on getting them to degree completion and those were the goals first and foremost. And it [degree completion] is still prominent, but there are other things that get in the way... before I would have said, "Well, I don't know what to tell you, I'm sorry, deal with it". I try very hard not to be that way anymore...but it really was realizing each student was different and unique and they all have positive traits in them, and as soon as I focused on the positive part and quit worrying about how much work they gave me or how much they argued with me, I was done. I was sold.

When asked the same question, Celeste stated:

I think absolutely, I think that connecting with people individually is essentially the basis of Appreciative Advising and so it just gives more of a framework to

how I am going to do that.... [it] gives that framework for how I am going to connect with people, what kinds of questions I am going to ask students to help them...in a conversational way...Appreciative Advising gives that framework and that purpose to what you're doing...gives direction to the conversation.

Vicky responded to the question in this way:

Yes, I think it does, that's why I like it. It really fits me like putting on an old comfortable sweater. The Appreciative Advising process is really natural for me. The questioning process "tell me about a time", that...was not new to me...It feels really natural to me.

Krista stated that since adopting the Appreciative Advising approach, she felt that "not talking about bad stuff right away" and asking more open ended question created a more comfortable environment for the student and for herself, and she was better able to "recognize the whole person..." Linda talked about the process getting students "talking more" and "opening them up to new ideas...once you get them engaged". One of her students had decided to take a class in which he had not initially been interested. She said: "...it worked out really well for him...it was such a surprising situation...and it started out with [an] Appreciative Advising technique".

Mark also felt that Appreciative Advising had empowered him because ...now if I'm talking about helping this student discover their strengths...I articulate my own struggles...so they instantly know that they are not alone. That immediately puts them at ease, they relax, they don't have all this pressure, and it buys them time to think about all of this stuff. So yes, I think...it gives me the

strength to have the conversation and the student understands [that] they are not in nearly as bad of shape as they could be.

Mark also talked about his first impressions of the Appreciative Advising framework:

My first concerns were that it was a great model and it made sense but, and I was real upfront ...I said I have a 700 to 1 student ratio here, I don't have hours to spend with students, I don't even have an hour, how is this going to work...I looked at this initially as taking the student through all these things [phases] with Appreciative Advising...Once I sort of figured out...that students are going to be at a different point of this at different times and they are going to be moving back and forth, it's not a nice neat thing....Once I started to put this in context, those types of conversations gave me a structure. I already had pieces, but they all didn't come together, so that really made a difference. I think for me, personally, was understanding how to apply and in what situations to apply and that makes sense and that is when it took off.

Linda talked about the framework of Appreciative Advising, alluding to the Disarm phase when she said: "I just feel like starting and going and greeting a student the way it should be done...the way you walk someone to the door, that's the way it should be done." Susan also mentioned: "Part of Disarm is having things up in your office that people connect with..." Helen believed that Appreciative Advising had provided a name for some of what she was already doing: "I think I already did a lot of that, it's just that I never really had a name for it. It was just something that was kind of natural...Disarm...you try to make someone feel welcomed".

Mark talked about the differences that Appreciative Advising allowed students to express: “Everyone that comes in is different. Occasionally you will fall into that trap, thinking you know what they are going to say and of course as soon as you do that, something comes out that you never could have imagined”.

Only Barbara stated that Appreciative Advising had not enabled her to better utilize her strengths, skills, and talents because she believed that it did not allow her to be as direct with some students as she would like to be. She stated that

“...Appreciative doesn’t let you be direct, you know you are not able to be direct with them...I kept thinking to myself that it sounds really warm and fuzzy, but I will give it a try and warm up to it and I kept wondering if it would work on every student.”

Barbara did not believe that using Appreciative Advising had increased or decreased her satisfaction with advising:

...for me, personally, it hasn’t increased my love for advising or decreased it, because I have always been trying to be the best I can be ...to my students...I enjoyed the relationship...I like to see the interaction...What I like the most is building relationships with the students and even after they graduate, having them contact you and say: “Hey I just wanted you to know I got that job”. Coming by when they have their first baby and letting you see, all that wonderful stuff. That is what I enjoy.

She had always used some disclosure with her students, stating: “the way I try to work with that is when they come in for their appointment, I tell them about myself and I think every academic advisor should”. She did, however, see some benefits to the approach: “I

think Appreciative Advising the way we use it can be a good thing...I think that you have to make it into your own..." She felt that Appreciative Advising was more appropriate for upper division students, but that with general education requirements, younger students had to understand that certain things had to be accomplished: "So no matter what kind of positive spin you put on it, buckle down and get it done".

Celeste alluded to the story aspect of Appreciative Advising when she said:
every student is different and they all have a story...everybody has a story and I think that my role, our role in advising especially is...to find out what those stories are, and what parts of those stories makes the student who they are, makes their dreams what they are...

Anne echoed Celeste's sentiments:

I do enjoy working with the students and learning their life stories. I don't want to be the person that just sits here behind this desk that they have to listen to and do what I tell them to do. I want to hear their passions and what they want to do and move them towards that.

Self-Belief

Anne, who was very prescriptive before adopting Appreciative Advising techniques, spoke about the insights she had gained; "I should have seen that each person was different and they all have different strengths and weaknesses that we had to work with, because my own children are the same way". She continued:

...every student is different...these students are just as hard working and capable of learning as a traditional student. But they have all these other things that...take

their time too... It's recognizing that not everybody can do everything the same way or at the same time.

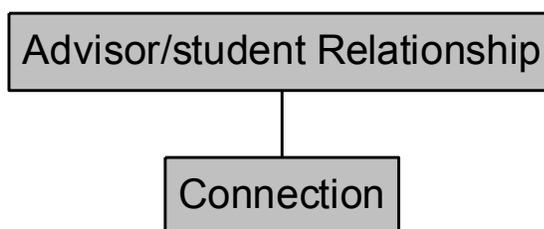
Helen discussed how using Appreciative Advising had given her confidence: "I suppose it is reinforcement to me...yes, it's like a thumbs up for the way you should be doing it...gave me the confidence that this is the way it should be done".

Participants' perceptions of their effectiveness as advisors was influenced by the framework that Appreciative Advising proved for eliciting student stories and recognizing differences, thus providing advisors with insights into their students and themselves.

Advisor/student Relationship

The theme that emerged through axial coding relating to the advisor/student relationship was one of *connection*. The mutual advisor/student relationship was listed by every participant as the most satisfying component of academic advising. The part that Appreciative Advising played in efficiently and effectively establishing this connection influenced participants' satisfaction with advising.

Figure 3: Visual Display of Advisor/student Relationship theme and subtheme



Connection

Mark talked about the advisor/student partnership and the efficiency of using the Appreciative Advising approach:

You know we talked about advising, trying to articulate early that this is a partnership...the effort was there to try to get them to see that this is a partnership. And I think Appreciative Advising sort of gave us permission to not be satisfied, to really in that last step to push them. I think that we do that a little bit more now than we ever did before.

When asked if his satisfaction with advising had changed since implementing Appreciative Advising, Mark responded: “I would say yes, I think that we are being more purposeful or mindful of what we are doing...there is a focus...” He also thought that Appreciative Advising could be applicable for different environments:

I don't think we have hit close to the potential both in terms of using it with our students but also in the broad picture....So I think that it has really a lot of potential, it is so adaptable to different environments, but it's not just for higher education, it can also be used anywhere else...it seems common sense, but if you haven't thought about it and you're not conscious about it...

Mark was very articulate about his passion for advising. He stated:

What I like about it most is, I think, making a difference... what I get out of this position, long hours, low pay, all the non-thankful stuff, is literally I think we are making a difference, that we are changing lives...That's what gets me excited...it's all those populations.. [that] face huge hurdles, if they can get through [college], it's life changing, not only their life...but their family... We are breaking a poverty cycle, breaking an economic cycle, educational cycles, and that's powerful.

Linda talked about the advisor/student relationship: “And that is the way I would want to be treated....So that is what increases my satisfaction.... They talk a little more ...and maybe their advising sessions go a little bit longer ...and that’s a good thing...”

Anne believed that her relationships with her students had become closer:

Yes, I have several students that I have a weekly conversation with either email or phone or whatever, some have graduated that are still in contact....Yes, oh yeah, definitely I feel more passion for it, I enjoy it much more.

Anne, who also loved teaching, enjoyed what she believed was an element of teaching in the advisor/student relationship: “...because we are teaching them and we are guiding them and sometimes the things that we do positively and/or negatively can impact them just as teaching can.”

Anne also believed that using Appreciative Advising techniques had improved her satisfaction with advising. She explained:

What I like most about advising students is getting to know them and learning their life stories...and it really wasn’t until we started using Appreciative Advising techniques that I embraced that part of it. When I first started here I honestly have to say it was just a job that I came to everyday and did what I was supposed to do and I left it at the end of the day. I really didn’t try to be their friend or advocate. I just tried to get them towards degree completion and that’s it...until I started reading some of the Appreciative Advising information and realized that actually each student is just as unique and different as I am myself. I just embraced that and I think that is what made it change from a 8 to 4:30 job to one that I want to come to and it was amazing, it was just like, Wow!

When asked if the use of Appreciative Advising had changed her relationship with her students and if using this approach had changed her satisfaction with advising, Susan responded:

Yes it has, it allows me to be the advisor that I want to be...I get to do that advocate work....spend time getting to know the student and empowering them and encouraging them...the feedback that I got back from the students really encouraged me and they would say thank you for not rushing me...I think Appreciative Advising got us all on the same page because it got everybody to say we expect you to talk to them and ask what their goals are...

Susan also talked about harnessing the student's support system for good in the advisor/student relationship:

...seeing who their support system is...we let them bring their children...their spouses or their loved ones, we have a life coach that comes....With a couple of kids, their probation officer or their social workers, grandma, coach, we have seen it all and we really encourage that.... And the first generation parent has no idea what is going on and they just want to feel like they can help them and understand and to cut that kind of person out of the picture is cruel.

Susan talked about the accountability she believed was part of being an advisor. She talked about living in the same community with her students:

So you see your students everywhere...our students work at ...Pharmacy so you see them in the community and...[we are] very accountable all the time...[they] see you there with bad hair or pajama pants, you know, late night picking up

prescriptions. It's a wonderful experience to have that. I think Appreciative Advising ties into that...

Susan also expressed her frustration with other members of her community, saying:

...it makes me angry out in the community when I run into a family member or friend [of a student] who had college handed to them and someone to pay for it and...[the student] doesn't have to work and they may blow off a class or they don't care. And it's just like "You have no idea how hard people are working to be here or how hard it is..."

Susan had become involved with foster youth enrolled in colleges, a largely invisible population, and was part of an initiative at her institution to reach out to this population. She had done a presentation at her state foster care conference. She stated: "I have been organizing the state foster care service and doing a lot of foster care outreach..." She talked about her experience with one of her foster students:

And when she came in for advising and we were talking about something...she stopped me, she said for someone who is not in the system, you sure know a lot about the system. And she was picking up on it. There was a...jargon [unknown by] people outside of her foster home experience, she said, "I never heard about anyone in college knowing these terms" and I said "Yes" and I started breaking down for her a couple of things, and she said immediately "Oh yes" and she has gone on...to graduate. But I think with this kind of population...that is helpful.

Krista believed that the relationship that she had with her students had improved because of Appreciative Advising. She stated:

I think that it's made them comfortable, like I am not judging them...I find them to be a lot more open and a lot more honest...I really noticed a difference in the students and how they would open up to me. They are so quick to jump to the conclusion, you know "Well tell me about your academic history here" And they say "Yeah, I messed up last semester".

Krista was referring to her perception that students often expected the advisor to lambast them for their shortcomings. When she insisted on talking about their successes before addressing their shortfalls, the atmosphere changed: "...that looks rough, let's talk about this first and let's talk about good stuff. So I noticed when I first started doing that, they were opening up more." She stated that her satisfaction with advising had improved because she believed that Appreciative Advising "allowed me to connect to students". Krista had not been in her present position long enough to determine if students were seeing her more frequently, but "the quality of the conversations that we are having is more than a 'Yes, we had a tough time'. She now felt students were elaborating more: "It was a tough time and let me tell you about it' which is helpful too". Krista enjoyed the diversity of the student population, stating: "I really like that you never know who is going to walk through that door" and she enjoyed "kind of guiding them along the way, figuring out the challenges...the life issues that surround these problems..." She talked about "understanding the trials that students face and ...the importance of academic advising as we try to help them achieve their academic goals..."

Vicky believed that Appreciative Advising had changed the relationships she had with students. She stated: "I felt that I knew them better, I felt like I could direct them

better. “ She believed that knowing her students better helped her begin talking about graduate school with students:

...we really started ...talking to students earlier about graduate school. If they were interested in it, we could better advise them...I think that I was more accessible to them. They were less afraid to come and talk to me. So it did change it.

Vicky’s passion was working with adult students. She stated:

I love working with adults. I love seeing their face when they find out that there really is a way that they can finish a degree without having to give up their job...I had a sheriff in here cry because he really never thought he was going to be able to do that, and so his anniversary present for his parents on their 50th anniversary was a letter from me inviting them to his graduation. ..Working with adults and helping them achieve this goal is a very sacred gift. I have been given the opportunity to show people a way to do something that they haven’t been able to do and then we just wait and let them fly.

When asked if her satisfaction with advising had changed, Vicky responded:

Absolutely! Absolutely! And I guess that was almost like a eureka moment...here I am in a group of people – all have a common goal and that is to help students move forward and have a successful experience and that is very energizing. Very energizing.

Helen related her satisfaction with advising to the relationship with her students.

She said:

The thing that I like the most is the relationships with the students, getting to know the students and kind of watching them progress, then going to a commencement ceremony every semester – that is such a happy day – and just watching these students walk across the stage....I just love that and it's just the relationship that is the best part.

When asked if using Appreciative Advising had changed her relationship with her students, Celeste responded with:

I think that it absolutely does. I notice because when students ...come in – and they are coming in because they know they have to meet with you, because they have to be registered for classes, or they have to meet this obligation – but then when you have that personal, more of a relationship with them and not just a “you know what you're taking, there you go, check you off my list”, then that's what makes them want to come back and see you more often. ..and I guess value their relationship with you more than “that's the person I have to see once a semester before I register for my classes”.

Regarding the efficiency of the Appreciative Advising approach, Celeste had this to say:

...sometimes people are scared off by Appreciative Advising because they think it takes so long...It just starts with...your body language, the way you talk to people and the type of questions that you ask...it doesn't take a lot of time to establish that initial rapport and show that interest that is needed to build an advising relationship...

When asked about changes in her satisfaction with advising after implementing the Appreciative Advising approach, Celeste replied:

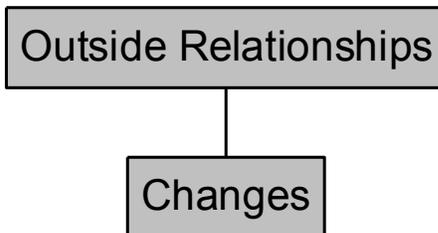
Yes, I don't know that I would even be interested in academic advising if I wasn't using Appreciative Advising. .because the prescriptive model may be quick and efficient, but there's not the people aspect – that is what I really value – that is why I got in higher education in the first place, and so that's what I really value and what I am fulfilled by and strengthens me...the one-on-one relationship with students and...being able to interact...I really like the one-on-one work and really helping them see that I care about their individual success and what their goals are, their dreams are...I also like helping them realize different resources around campus or different ways they can get to their ultimate goals...I love the fact that I have so many come back and see...they are the ones emailing me that say you helped me so much last time I was there...

In the area of advisor/student relationships, most participants believed that the Appreciative Advising approach and techniques were instrumental in establishing a connection.

Outside Relationships

The changes in outside relationships were primarily with co-workers and to a lesser degree with friends and family. Several participants expressed that once one learned to relate to students in a more positive way, that mindset spilled over into other areas of their lives. In some cases, Advisors themselves had begun to determine their own strengths within the office climate and to divide up responsibilities according to the strengths within the office. In general the work environment had become more positive.

Figure 4: Visual Display of Outside Relationships theme and subtheme



Changes

Even though Barbara was not totally supportive of Appreciative Advising, she had seen positive changes. Barbara stated that she had seen changes in her former colleagues in a prior office after they went through training in Appreciative Advising:

But seeing them go through the training, having a refresher on the training definitely brought out a much more positive part...I think that they trapped themselves, in their own minds, that this is all there is to it. But there is so much more refreshing and individual ideas...it helped them and ...it made them more open minded and positive...

Barbara also explained that she had always had an approach similar to Appreciative Advising with her children. She stated:

... I have always been that type of person who has this model that if it's not doing anything for you, then it's wasting your time. And you need to move on to something that is helping you...So I have kind of done that with my children as well. If they are playing a sport and not having any fun with that sport, I don't make them stay with it. I just say do you want to try something else? Don't stick with something if it's not working for you.

Vicky talked about the changes that she noticed in her relationships with her colleagues:

...helped me step back and listen to different contributions and discussion points, I learned a lot about the other people that I worked with for years and I am seeing more smiles now. A little bit more of a comfort level.

In discussing the relationship she had with the other advisors that she supervised, Vicky stated:

It made me be more aware of their contributions and made me appreciate them and helped me be more vocal to them about that was a great job or letting them know that I recognized that they have done something that was really very good...as a group...we have been able to reestablish communication and a little bit more trust in each other. And that's been good.

In Krista's office, she felt that "Appreciative Advising maybe just helped us to focus those positive energies more" resulting in "a very positive work climate".

Advisors, during staff meetings, had made a list of their individual strengths, and used that list to divide office responsibilities. Krista explained it this way:

What are those strengths that you bring to the position, and then we use those strengths to differentiate tasks, and there are certain things like doing ... that my co-worker used to hate, but I enjoy...so we are using our strength there for a pleasant work experience...some jobs...I hate, so we would give that to someone else and it's going to be a bigger challenge to them and strength building type thing for them.

Krista also used the approach with the student workers that she supervised. She stated:

"...I don't micromanage them...but I use Appreciative Advising a lot on a strengths

based approach". Her approach was to help each student develop an area of expertise, depending on his/her strengths. In explaining the approach, Krista said:

Well, this student is good at making signs, and this student is good at working with people and being spontaneous, and presentations appeal to this person's organizational strengths...so helping my student workers to work together collaboratively as a team, from a supervisory standpoint, it's helped...It gives them a sense of entitlement and empowerment. I've seen a lot of productivity and a lot fewer questions about how do I do this, why can't I do that, you know, that's just their area and they can do it, and they look to each other for strengths rather than to me.

Krista, engaged to be married, also used the approach in planning her wedding. She and her fiancé have divided up the tasks according to their strengths. She stated:

I give my fiancé this task because I know he can handle it. I will take care of the computer because that is not his thing, that's made us have a more positive relationship. He can take care of the beverages and take care of the DJ. And he can take care of which tuxes to wear. Those are his strengths; those are his areas of interest. He doesn't care about some other things but he will come to the cake tasting because he likes to eat, that's a strength of his.

Mark had also used Appreciative Advising techniques in the outside world. He discussed how he had used it within a teacher/parent conference:

So we went into ...conference...and talked to the teacher...she had her speech and all her paperwork and everything was ready for that C class that she was going to talk about. So that is what we started with and before she said two

sentences, I said: “That’s fine, we will talk about this, but I want you to talk to me about the As, tell me what he is doing good”. It took me asking that question four times before she could change gears and go in that direction...So finally when I got her to talk about the A’s and...his strengths and how he is doing well [in other areas]...once we got around to the C conversation, I forced her to restructure how we can take these strengths that he has and enjoys and how he can apply that...And actually it has made a big difference this year. He is doing a lot better this year.

Mark also used the appreciative approach with the advisors that he supervised and felt that it enabled his relationship with his co-workers to be more strength based. He stated:

...it really forced us to apply those same techniques to our office before we could do it to our students...we are having conversations with our staff...What are their goals, what are your dreams. I am having conversations with all of our staff about what are your strengths and what is your weakness and what do you enjoy doing or not doing.

Susan felt that her relationship with her co-workers was “less competitive” since they had begun using Appreciative Advising. When asked if the use of Appreciative Advising had affected relationships in other areas of her life, she replied:

...it is a good parenting approach. To remember with our kids to focus on their strengths...you can be realistic about the situation but focus what is good about this situation. We learn from the situation...And my son has multiple disabilities and it helps me a lot when I am talking to other people about how his disabilities will help him. How he will be more empathetic and relate well to people who are

challenged in a variety of ways. Because he has seen so much. And I don't know how I would do if I didn't know that.

Linda believed that some areas in her office had really benefited from Appreciative Advising and that some staff members had become more open with students and "they [students] feel like they have...a mentor". Linda also believed that the Appreciative Advising approach had spilled over into others areas of her life. She stated: "I think when you are doing that kind of stuff on a daily basis, you don't change. I don't think you change when you leave the office".

Anne, whose approach to advising was the most changed by Appreciative Advising, talked about the changes in her relationship with her colleagues:

Oh, yes it has, for the first three years it was hard for me here. It is hard coming to an office where people have been for a long time and they already have a pattern and a routine...when I first came here I was very stubborn and hardnosed about things and yet very black and white and some of these techniques have lessened that tendency a little bit. I can see the other side....I am eternally grateful that ...actually made us do that research [into Appreciative Advising]...it was like a trigger...a light just flicked...

Anne also felt that the approach had affected outside relationships: "It is spilling over, but I wish I could use it more in my personal life in just being a good mom"

Helen believed that Appreciative Advising had helped her remember that her co-workers were all very different people. She stated:

Oh, I think perhaps within an office, there are different personalities and everybody has a different background and how they were raised and what they are

used to. ...So I think Appreciative Advising has helped me to remember those types of things and think about when someone doesn't do a certain thing...there is a reason and maybe take a look back and understand that they are different people...there is just a different reason why people are the way they are and there are no bad intentions or anything like that, people are different and the Appreciative Advising helps me to remember that...we have talked about that everyone's perspective comes from their past experiences and that there is no wrong way to look at something...and the Appreciative Advising helps all of us to realize that we are all different.

Celeste had used the Appreciative Advising approach with a former colleague in her advising office. Celeste shared that dialogue:

Because I would ask specific questions, and say "You know about this, what do you want out of this?" and she would be like "You're advising me again". So we would laugh about that...And I think that she realized this [advising position] is the stepping stone to where I want to be over the course of a year and a half...I would like to think that our conversations together helped motivate her to find that path to get her to the next step, because she moved on...

Celeste also shared about other areas of her life:

It is not just this is how I do my work, this is how I live my life, this is how I interact with other people, no matter who that person is...You are focusing on the person that is sitting next to you or across the table from you and you are showing a big interest in them and where they are trying to go and how they are going to get there...there are those probing questions that forces [one] to stop and think,

well, how am I going to respond to that, what's my real answer to that, not just the answer I should give...so I think those are the questions that can really link relationships... And so, I think that really most of us are trying to look for that kind of relationship with people...

When asked if they would like to share anything else with me regarding Appreciative Advising, Krista and Vicky shared with me what they felt was particularly inspiring about Appreciative Advising.

Krista said:

...I was a little hesitant to use it quite honestly...our culture is moving away from holding people accountable...you know, we are constantly giving people gold stars, pats on the back, and not holding them accountable towards what they are doing. I was a little apprehensive at first when I started with Appreciative Advising...As I used Appreciative Advising more and more I learned it's not that we are not holding people accountable, it's towards our strengths and we are still holding them accountable...when I use Appreciative Advising, [we] talk about the good stuff and talk about the bad stuff, but we are finding a balance...I am not letting people off the hook...

Vicky shared:

Our oldest graduate was 94 years old...and he lived an appreciative life and he recognized the blessing and the gifts that he had been given and he used them very selflessly in his community and I learned a lot from him about looking beyond myself. It's not all about me and I think that is probably one of the better things about Appreciative Advising. It's not me, it's you, and I have to find out

and get into your mind and find out what are your dreams, and your desires, and your goals and strengths, and the areas that are more of a challenge for you, and be able to help you be successful, but give you the knowledge that you need also. That's a big puzzle, but it's wonderful.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of conducting this study was to explore the perceptions of nine academic advisors using Appreciative Advising at three different higher education institutions to identify ways and to what extent using Appreciative Advising had impacted their advising practice and their job satisfaction.

A summary of research findings and a discussion of major themes and subthemes is provided in this chapter. This chapter will conclude with a section on implications and recommendations for further study.

Findings

The nine participants in this study provided detailed and in-depth information on how Appreciative Advising had impacted and influenced their advising practice and other areas of their lives. Each participant shared perceptions, which in some cases, had not been previously articulated. The result was rich, descriptive data that described each participant's individual interpretation of and implementation of Appreciative Advising. The development of themes emerged from review of the verbatim transcriptions of each interview. The themes were divided among the four fold categories established by the four specific research questions.

The first theme, *Strengths, Skills, and Talents* referred to the strengths, skills, and talents that each participant believed that he/she brought to the practice of academic advising. Many participants listed personal traits that they considered essential to the practice of academic advising, while other participants focused on experiences that they found helpful, such as academic assistantships/internships, prior jobs, and/or

family/outside experiences. Participants also listed areas of knowledge that they had gained through academic preparation or experience.

The second theme, *Effectiveness as an Advisor* encompassed how participants perceived that Appreciative Advising had allowed them to effectively use their strengths, skills, and talents. Participants frequently referred to the presence of a framework within Appreciative Advising that enabled the telling of stories and the recognition of differences. Participants also discussed insights they had gained into themselves and their students and self-confidence that resulted.

The *Advisor/student Relationship* was the third theme that emerged from the data. Participants most often focused on the partnership of the advisor/student relationship and the efficiency that the framework of Appreciative Advising provided for building this relationship. An effective advisor/student relationship was the basis for job satisfaction for participants in this study.

The fourth theme, *Outside Relationships*, considered whether and how Appreciative Advising had affected relationships other than the advisor/student relationship. Relationships with co-workers, family, and friends were most often mentioned by participants. Several participants alluded to the idea that the precepts of Appreciative Advising became entrenched in their personal lives and became a way of relating to people.

Participants' perceptions regarding these four themes and the connections between them indicated that most participants believed that Appreciative Advising had impacted their advising practice and their job satisfaction.

Discussion

This section is comprised of a discussion of the four major themes and their sub-themes. The four major themes are: *Strengths, Skills, and Talents*; *Effectiveness as an Advisor*; *Advisor/student Relationship*; and *Outside Relationships*.

Strengths, Skills, and Talents

The major theme of Strengths, Skills, and Talents consisted of participants' perceptions and articulation of what they considered to be the strengths, skills, and talents that they brought to academic advising. This theme had two subthemes: *background* and *acquired assets*. The first subtheme, *background*, encompassed both personal traits and academic and other experiences that participants believed had provided them with abilities that they used in academic advising. The *acquired assets* subtheme consisted of knowledge or insights gained through other means.

Background

The description of strengths, skills, and talents within this subtheme were varied and personal for many of the participants. Many listed listening skills as an important skill in working with students. Other specific strengths, skills, or talents listed were patience, friendliness, being positive, being conversational, and empathy. Some participants listed empathy as a personal trait, suggesting that it was an inherent part of their personalities, while others seemed to consider empathy a learned skill, something they had gained from their educational preparation and experience with people.

Of the nine participants, seven had earned Master's degrees and one had earned a Doctoral degree. The graduate degrees were in a variety of disciplines such as Family Consumer Science, Student Personnel Services, College Student Personnel, Educational Technology, and Higher Education Student Affairs. One participant had an MBA with

an emphasis in Human Resources. Those with degrees in the areas of student services or student personnel had completed assistantships or internships that involved some advising as graduate students. Those participants whose graduate degrees were in other disciplines had gained experience working with students from jobs as residence hall directors or as peer advisors in their particular undergraduate or graduate disciplines. Others had undergraduate backgrounds in engineering, advertising, public relations, teaching, and social work where they had some contact with students. Several talked of being very involved in student life as undergraduate students. Several participants talked of finding their way into advising after academically preparing for another career and that they were not aware of professional academic advising as a career path until they became involved with advising during their undergraduate or graduate years.

One participant felt that her years living and studying abroad had given her a special understanding of student and cultural diversity and had prepared her to work with international students. Another participant had become interested in foster youth in the educational system and felt a calling to serve those students.

Participants' experience with their own undergraduate academic advisors had both positive and negative impacts on participants. Some participants noted the lack of any advising in their undergraduate years. For one participant, this was related to her own reticence in finding help.

Acquired Assets

Several participants listed what could be considered organizational skills that had been learned through prior job or academic experiences as acquired assets. The ability to see the big picture, the ability to keep things moving, and the importance of connections

with other campus entities were listed as strengths. The advising training that participants had received prior to implementing Appreciative Advising was extremely varied, and in some cases, nonexistent. Several talked of sitting in with, listening to, and/or observing other advisors as part of their training, others were just told “to do it”. Many spoke of a prior model that was classified as developmental by the institution, but was more prescriptive in practice. Several participants spoke of “getting them to degree completion”. Some participants clearly considered their prior model as prescriptive. For many, there was no clear cut model in place; they classified their prior model as “survival”, “trial and error”, “trial by error”, “what worked and didn’t work”. Several participants spoke of incorporating several advising approaches into a personalized approach.

The ability to appropriately self disclose in learning student stories was expressed several times. The ability to share one’s own story in gaining student trust and confidence was definitely considered an acquired skill. Other strengths, skills, or talents mentioned under acquired assets were lessons learned from life experiences. Parenthood was most often mentioned as having an impact on participants’ perceptions of parental involvement in a student’s higher education. One particularly telling comment made by Susan was: “I used to blame it on the parents but then I became one”.

Effectiveness as an Advisor

The major theme of Effectiveness as an advisor centered around ways in which advisors perceived that Appreciative Advising better enabled them to make use of their strengths, skills, and talents. Participants were asked to give examples of ways in which

they perceived this to be true. Two subthemes emerged under this main theme: *method* and *self-belief*.

Method

Participants consistently mentioned the Appreciative Advising framework as helpful in establishing the advisor/student relationship. Two participants mentioned that the Disarm phase was the way students should be greeted and was a way of making students feel welcomed. One mentioned that this is the way it should be and is done in business, while another talked about being raised to always make guests feel welcome. The probing questions of the Discovery phase were seen as a way to elicit student stories and help students identify their own strengths. As participants appropriately shared their own stories, students were able to see that problems could be overcome. Several participants discussed that their personal model had included some Appreciative Advising techniques, but that Appreciative Advising had provided a name and framework, and thus felt very natural to them. One participant spoke of the framework as giving him the “strength to have the conversation”.

Recognizing that every student was different was another aspect of this subtheme. Learning each individual student’s story enabled the advisor to understand that each student was different with a different set of strengths and a different set of problems. The advisor was better able to help the student determine how the student’s strengths could be harnessed to address that student’s problems.

Self-Belief

Several participants felt that Appreciative Advising had provided insights and enabled them to be more confident in their abilities as academic advisors. One participant

felt that using this approach had made her a better listener, while another felt that it gave her ways to help students because she had gained insights into their struggles. Another spoke of realizing how much more positive she was with students using this approach. One participant felt Appreciative Advising had given her confidence and that she felt it was a “thumbs up” or reinforcement for how she believed advising should be done.

Advisor/student Relationship

The major theme of Advisor/student Relationship centered around participants’ perceptions of how Appreciative Advising impacted the advisor/student relationship. The subtheme that emerged in this theme was one of *connection*. The impact of Appreciative Advising in establishing this connection was apparent in the participants’ comments.

Connection

When speaking of the advisor/student relationship, one participants talked about this connection as a partnership. Others alluded to this concept by stating that the relationship was one of mutual participation and satisfaction. The efficiency of Appreciative Advising techniques was mentioned as helpful in establishing this mutual relationship. They spoke of being more purposeful, more mindful of what was going on, being more accessible, of students being less afraid to share, or having broader conversations, and being better able to help students. Two participants spoke about their initial perception, when first learning of Appreciative Advising, that it would take too much time, and later finding that to be a false perception.

The advisor/student relationship was at the core of participants’ job satisfaction with academic advising. Over and over, participants mentioned that what they enjoyed

most about advising was the relationship with students. All but one participant stated that their satisfaction with academic advising had increased, sometimes dramatically, since implementing Appreciative Advising. The part that Appreciative Advising played in establishing the advisor/student relationship was seen as the major reason it was effective. Participants talked about really feeling like they had helped students, of the “thank-you” emails they continued to receive from past students, of students calling when they got their first jobs, and of students dropping by with their first baby. One participant talked of the students valuing the relationship more and the fact that she would not be doing academic advising under any model other than Appreciative Advising. Another spoke of watching her students progress and of seeing them walk across the stage at commencement. Several spoke of their passion for advising. Two participants spoke of their satisfaction in terms of fulfilling a calling. One referred to helping adult students achieve their goals as a “sacred gift” while another spoke of “changing lives and breaking poverty cycles”. Only one participant felt that using Appreciative Advising had neither increased nor decreased her satisfaction with academic advising.

Outside Relationships

Outside relationships was the fourth major theme. Participants were asked to reflect on whether Appreciative Advising had enabled any changes in relationships outside of the advisor/student relationship. The subtheme that emerged in this area was one of *changes*, as related to co-workers, family, friends, and others.

Changes

Every participant believed that the implementation of Appreciative Advising had caused changes in relationships outside of the advisor/student relationship. The majority

of these changes were seen in co-workers and in the work environment. In some cases, advisors were using their own strengths, skills, and talents to assign work assignments among themselves. In another instance, it was being used to help student workers identify their areas of expertise and work collaboratively, increasing their productivity. Participants spoke of being able to see and understand that their co-workers were all different individuals with different backgrounds and experiences, of believing that the work environment had become more positive, of using their strengths for a more pleasant work experience, of being better able to see the other side, of looking for the positive, and of being more aware and more appreciative of their co-workers contributions.

Several participants spoke of the “spilling over” effect of using Appreciative Advising with students. For some, it had become a way of relating to people, not just in the office, but in everyday life. One spoke of helping a co-worker discover her own dream over the course of 18 months of working together, and being gratified that the co-worker had taken the next step towards that goal. She also spoke of using probing questions for deeper conversations with family which she felt enabled deeper relationships. For this participant, an “appreciative mindset” had become part of how she lived her life. Three participants spoke of using the approach with their children in trying to focus on the positive strengths of their children to help them in problem areas. One participant spoke of the importance of children finding something they could be good at and of not insisting that her children remain in a sports activity that did not make them happy. She talked about finding what worked for each child. One participant, about to be married, was assigning wedding responsibilities according to the individual strengths that she and her fiancé possessed. Another participant had used appreciative advising

techniques to turn a parent teacher conference from a negative into a positive experience. One participant spoke of living an appreciative life and looking beyond herself.

Conclusions

Appreciative Advising is still a young approach/theory/model of academic advising. While statistical research exists that attests to its success in student retention, there is currently no published research into how this approach is perceived by academic advisors using the approach in relation to how it affects their advising practice and job satisfaction (Hutson & Bloom, 2007; Bloom et al., 2009). I sought to examine the approach through the eyes of nine academic advisors who are currently using Appreciative Advising. I wanted to learn their perceptions of ways that using Appreciative Advising had impacted their advising practice and their satisfaction with academic advising. I found that most participants believed that Appreciative Advising had positively impacted them in several areas.

Participants, with the exception of one, believed that Appreciative Advising had enabled them to better utilize their strengths, skills, and talents, whether those were inherent personal traits or knowledge they had acquired through academic or life experiences. This had impacted their advising practice because they felt they were more productive and more positive with students.

Eight of the nine participants also believed that Appreciative Advising enabled them to be more effective academic advisors. Appreciative Advising provided a framework for eliciting student stories and identifying student strengths. The framework allowed the advisor to recognize that each student is different.

Every participant related their satisfaction with advising to the advisor/student relationship. Eight of the participants believed that Appreciative Advising enabled a mutual and stronger/deeper/closer/more honest advisor/student relationship, which resulted in greater satisfaction for the advisor. Again, the framework inherent in the six stages of Appreciative Advising was seen as an efficient and effective way of establishing the advisor/student relationship. Several participants spoke of enjoying their jobs more since implementing Appreciative Advising.

Several of the participants felt that Appreciative Advising impacted relationships beyond the advisor/student relationship. Every participant felt that it had enabled a more positive work environment or that co-workers had become more positive. Three participants believed that learning about and using Appreciative Advising had changed their lives and that they now used the approach in many other areas of their lives. They stated that it had become a way of life.

Implications

One of the implications of this study was that Appreciative Advising can have a positive impact on those advisors who use it in their advising practice and can lead to greater job satisfaction for academic advisors. This was found to be true for these nine participants, even though in one case, the advisor/student ratio was 700 to one. These nine participants came to advising with a variety of different educational backgrounds and experiences and had adopted and adapted Appreciative Advising for the student populations they were advising. The institutions in which they were working were of different sizes and types and were in three different states. Every participant had

something positive to say about Appreciative Advising as it impacted their students, their work environment, and/or their lives outside of advising.

The development of a mutually satisfying advisor/student relationship was crucial to the job satisfaction of all nine participants in this study. This study showed that the framework that Appreciative Advising provides for the establishment of this relationship is an important contribution to academic advising.

The implication that Appreciative Advising has positive effects on the work environment of advising offices was evident in this study. A more positive work environment can be beneficial in advising centers where professional academic advisors have heavy case loads and work in tight quarters. Identifying advisor strengths and assigning office tasks according to these strengths would also make for a more efficient work climate.

Recommendations for Future Study

1. *Research the implications of using Appreciative Advising with special student populations, both from the advisor standpoint and from a student retention viewpoint.*

The advisors interviewed for this study were using Appreciative Advising with a variety of different populations of students. A study that investigated the use of Appreciative Advising with specific student populations, such as athletes, international students, adult students, and student with disabilities would be helpful in indentifying if there are ways that Appreciative Advising could be specifically adapted for these populations and the advisors working with these populations.

2. *Research how the Appreciative Advising approach could be adapted to strengthen the advising office work environment.*

Every participant interviewed for this study mentioned positive changes in the work environment or in co-workers that they attributed to Appreciative Advising. A study that identified specific techniques for strengthening relationships between advisors in an office setting would be helpful in improving the overall work environment.

3. *Research how Appreciative Advising could be adapted into other higher education areas, such as first-year experiences/seminars, admissions, career services, and student orientation.*

The Appreciative Advising techniques appear to be adaptable to many different areas of student involvement. Specific probing questions for each of these areas could be developed.

4. *Research how Appreciative Advising could be implemented with distance education students.*

As higher education increases the number of courses taught online or through blended or hybrid course scenarios, many students do not come to campus for advising. Techniques need to be developed for using Appreciative Advising through the venues of email, podcast, and polycom delivery.

5. *Research into students who have been advised under this model perceived the effectiveness of the academic advising that they received.*

It would be interesting to gain the perspective of students advising under this model. Do students feel that this model is effective in helping them articulate and attain their goals?

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APPENDIX A
UNL IRB APPROVAL

NUgrant Message

Page 1 of 2

Nancy Howell - NUgrant Message - Official Approval Letter for IRB project #9984

From: <nugrant-irb@unl.edu>
 To: <ldlugosh@unlserve.unl.edu>, <nhowell@usouthal.edu>
 Date: 6/11/2009 10:18 AM
 Subject: NUgrant Message - Official Approval Letter for IRB project #9984



June 9, 2009

Nancy Howell
 Department of Educational Administration
 5512 Regency Oaks Dr S Mobile, AL 36609

Larry Dlugosh
 Department of Educational Administration
 141C TEAC UNL 68588-0360

IRB Number: 2009069984EP
 Project ID: 9984
 Project Title: Appreciative Advising from the Academic Advisor's Viewpoint: A Qualitative Study

Dear Nancy:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46).

Your stamped and approved informed consent form has been uploaded to NUgrant (Informed_Consent_Form-Approved.pdf file). Please use this form to make copies to distribute to participants. If changes need to be made, please submit the revised informed consent form to the IRB for approval prior to using it.

Date of EP Review: 06/08/2009

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 06/09/2009. This approval is Valid Until: 06/08/2010.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:

- Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
- Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
- Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
- Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
- Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

For projects which continue beyond one year from the starting date, the IRB will request continuing review and update of the research project. Your study will be due for continuing review as indicated above. The investigator must also advise the Board when this study is finished or discontinued by completing the enclosed Protocol Final Report form and returning it to the Institutional Review Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

file:///C:/Documents and Settings/nhowell/Local Settings/Temp/XPgrpwise/4A30DA08podom03g... 6/11/2009

NUgrant Message

Page 2 of 2



Mario Scalora, Ph.D.
Chair for the IRB



APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Appreciative Advising from the Academic Advisor's Viewpoint: A Qualitative Study

The purpose of this study will be to explore the perceptions of academic advisors using the Appreciative Advising theory/model in advising students.

Participation in this study will require approximately one to one and one half hours of your time. With your permission the interview will be audio or video taped. The audio/video tapes will be used only for data collection. The data will be later transcribed and analyzed. The tapes will be erased after transcription. Pseudonyms will be used in the report to protect your identity. Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential.

There are no known risks associated with this research. You may choose not to answer any questions with which you are uncomfortable. In the event of problems resulting from participation in the study, psychological treatment is available on a sliding fee scale at the UNL Psychological Consultation Center, telephone (402) 472-2351. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators and the University of Nebraska. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may benefit from the participation in this project by gaining greater insight into the application of the theory/model of Appreciative Advising.

Only the researchers and the faculty advisor will have access to the data. All written records will be securely stored in a locked file cabinet at the University of Nebraska for a period of five years. There will be no compensation for this study.

You may ask questions concerning this research before agreeing to participate. You may call the principal investigator, Nancy Garrett Howell at any time at 251-343-4018 or my academic advisor, Dr. Larry Dlugosh, at 402-472-0975. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject or any other concerns, you may contact the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965.

Note: Before going to the next page please, put your initials here _____

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____ Check if you agree to be audio/video taped during the interview.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Nancy Garrett Howell, Principal Investigator
Office: 251-343-4018

Dr. Larry Dlugosh
Office: 402-472-0975

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview protocol

Time of Interview: _____**Date:** _____**Interviewee:** _____**Introduction**

I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I will be recording and transcribing what we say today. Once our conversation has been transcribed, I will ask you to review the transcription to make sure that it accurately records our conversation. Since we will be talking informally, we may use “uhs” or “ahs” or other exclamatory remarks. Those will also be transcribed, but if I use any quotes in the final report, they will be deleted. It’s important that the transcription be verbatim, so that I do not unintentionally paraphrase something you have said.

I am interested in finding out how you feel Appreciative Advising has affected how you advise students and your overall satisfaction with your role as an academic advisor. I really want to get your perspective, so please feel free to share your true feelings.

Questions:

1. Please tell me a little about yourself, highlighting how you became an academic advisor and describing the type of training or education you received to help you advise students.
2. What do you like most about advising students? What do you like least?
3. Approximately how many and what kind of students do you advise?
4. Describe the model or method of advising you used prior to using Appreciative Advising techniques?
5. Describe how you first began using Appreciative Advising techniques?
6. What particular strengths, skills, and/or talents do you bring to academic advising?
7. Has Appreciative Advising enabled you to better utilize your strengths, skills and talents, and if so, how?
8. Has Appreciative Advising changed your relationship with your advisees? (Probe: if so, how has it changed those relationships?)
9. Has your satisfaction with advising changed since implementing Appreciative Advising techniques?

10. Has the use of Appreciative Advising techniques changed your relationships with advising colleagues? (Probe – how?)
11. Has the use of the Appreciative Advising model affected relationships in other areas of your life? (Probe – can you provide an example?)
12. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me regarding your use of Appreciative Advising?

Probing questions:

Could you please elaborate?

Could you explain more fully?

Why do think that happened?

Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you.

APPENDIX D
TRANSCRIPTIONIST'S CONFIDENTIALLY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality Agreement
Transcription Services

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Nancy Garrett Howell related to her doctoral study on Appreciative Advising from the Academic Advisor's Viewpoint: A Qualitative Study. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Nancy Garrett Howell;
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Nancy Garrett Howell in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX E
SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Barbara

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits	Inherent	Helpful – Non-factor	Patience
S	1				Listening skills
S	1				Open to try new things
S	1				Trying to improve myself
S	2	Experience	Level	Helpful – Non-factor	Academic advisor who was very supportive of me
S	2				I had a husband and a family
S	2				Inspired me to do some type of service of higher education
S	2				Remember traditional advising where it was not a positive experience
S	2				It may take something to shake you up
S	4	Empathy	Level	Focused - Random	If I was this person
S	5	Disclosure	Frequency	High - Low	Tell them about myself
S	7	Training	Available	Present - Absent	It was basically we believe you can do the job
S	7				Advising courses
S	7				NACADA
S	7				Other organizations
S	7				I was more evaluating students on what they said they wanted
E	1	Framework	Type	Helpful – Not helpful	Move on to something that is helping you
E	2	Insights			Trying to be the best I can be

E	3	Confidence	Level	Increase – No effect	I have always been that type of person who has this model that if it's not doing anything for you, then it's wasting your time
A	4	Satisfaction	Level	High - Low	Challenging
A	4				Enjoy the relationship
A	4				I like to see the interaction
A	4				After they graduate having them contact you
A	4				Coming by when they have their first baby
A	4				I like the most is building relationships with the students
A	4				Appreciative doesn't let you be direct
A	4				You have to make it into your own
O	1	Co-workers	Climate	Positive - Negative	AA training made co-workers more open minded and positive
O	1				Much more refreshing and individual ideas
O	3	Family	Involved	Supportive - Unhelpful	I don't make them stay with it if not having any fun try something else
O	3				Always had this model

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Celeste

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			Ability to connect with them on individual level
S	1				People related strength
S	2	Experience			Counseling
S	2				Master's Degree
S	2				Involved in UG research
S	2				Involved in campus activity
S	2				Hall director
S	2				Parents both professors
S	2				Real impact that my faculty advisors had on me
S	2				I didn't feel like I belonged in college until that advisor reached out to me
S	2				GR assistantships, practicum, internship
S	2				Teaching course
S	3	Knowledge			Good connections with people across campus
S	7	Training			Never aware of professional advisors
S	7				Humanistic prescriptive model – same with every student
E	1	Framework			More of a framework
E	1				Framework for how I am going to connect with people
E	1				Help them know in a conversational way

E	1				Just your body language, the way you talk to people and the type of questions that you ask
E	1				Keep very detailed notes
E	4	Story			All have a story
E	4				My role to find out those stories
E	4				What parts of those stories makes the student who they are, makes their dreams what they are
E	5	Differences			Every student is different
A	1	Partnership			One on one relationship
A	1				Being able to interact
A	1				Helping them
A	1				Care about their individual success
A	1				Helping them realize different resources
A	1				Different ways they can get to their ultimate goals
A	2	Efficiency			Scared off because they think it takes too long
A	2				Doesn't take a lot of time to establish that initial rapport and show interest
A	4	Satisfaction			What I really value and I am fulfilled by and strengthens me
A	4				More of a relationship
A	4				Students want to come back
A	4				Students value relationship with advisor more
A	4				Don't know that I

					would even be interested in academic advising if I wasn't using appreciative advising
O	2	Friends			Enables asking of probing questions that think
O	2				With best friend
O	2				Enables deeper relationships
O	3	Family			Deeper conversations
O	3				With husband
O	4	Others			Deeper conversations
O	4				How I live my life
O	4				How I interact with people
O	4				Becomes part of how you do things

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Helen

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			My belief that we should serve
S	1				Personal strength
S	1				Try not to take shortcuts
S	2	Experience			Publics relations experience
S	2				Adult basic education experience
S	2				Caring for older parents
S	3	Knowledge			Master's degree
S	6	Organizational			Keep things moving and going
S	7	Training			Observe others
S	7				Sit and watch and listen
S	7				Incorporated my own way
E	1	Framework			Provided a name for what I was already doing
E	1				Natural to me
E	1				been using a lot of the techniques all along
E	3	Confidence			Feels natural
E	3				Reinforcement for how I do things
E	3				Thumbs up for the way I do advising
E	3				Gives me confidence
E	5	Differences			Helps us realize that we are all different
E	5				Helped me to remember everyone is different
A	1	Partnership			Relationships with students

A	1				Getting to know the students
A	4	Satisfaction			Watching them progress
A	4				Going to commencement ceremony
A	4				Watching these students walk across the stage
A	4				Serving on committees
O	1	Co-workers			Co workers are all different people
O	1				Different personalities and backgrounds
O	1				There is a reason why people are the way they are
O	1				Enabled understanding of why people do things differently
O	1				Helps us understand that everybody is different
O	1				Change for the good
O	3	Family			Probably spills over more than I realize
O	3				Things always changing

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Anne

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			Friendly
S	1				Direct
S	1				Positive
S	1				Supportive
S	1				Enthusiastic
S	1				Cheerful
S	1				Not shy
S	1				Not afraid to get attached
	1				Tenacious
S	2	Experience			Master's degree
S	2				Traditional student
S	2				Non-traditional student
S	2				Single mom
S	2				Financial aid
S	6	Organizational			Time management
S	7	Training			No training
S	7				Watching _____
S	7				listening
S	7				Watching others
S	7				Trial and error
S	7				Touch and go
S	7				Talking with supervisor
S	7				On campus yearly information session
S	7				I didn't want to be like my advisors
S	7				Also teach
E	1	Framework			Helped me to help students find goals
E	2	Insights			Made me care more
E	2				Made me more positive
E	4	Story			Getting to know their life stories

E	4				Sharing my story
E	5	Differences			Each student is just an unique and different as I am myself
E	5				Realizing each student was different and unique and have positive traits
A	1	Partnership			Getting to know students
A	1				Students just need to vent
A	2	Efficiency			Use with email and webcam
A	2				Helped me find goals for students
A	4	Satisfaction			Friendships with students who have graduated
A	4				I enjoy it much more
A	4				Has element of teaching
A	4				Enable more passion for my work
O	1	Co-workers			I can see the other side
O	1				Less angry
O	1				Always looking for the positive
O	1				Grateful
O	3	Family			Use it as part of being good mom
O	3				Spilling over

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Linda

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			Really listen
S	1				Ask questions
S	1				listening
S	1				Get them talking
S	1				Guiding
S	1				engaging
S	2	Experience			Records office
S	7	Training			Here is what you need to accomplish
S	7				What our requirements are
E	1	Framework			The way it should be done
E	1				Opening students up to new ideas
E	1				Talking about classes they wouldn't normally take
E	1				A surprising situation
E	2	Insights			Gave me insights into students
E	2				Much better listener
E	3	Confidence			Gave me ways to better help
A	2	Efficiency			Ability to help students out when they need it
A	4	Satisfaction			Relationship increases my satisfaction
A	4				You really feel like you have helped them
A	4				Advising sessions go a little bit longer
A	4				Students feel like they have a mentor
O	1	Co-workers			Some staff members

					more open
O	4	Others			Don't change when you leave this office

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Susan

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			Can relate to students
S	1				conversational
S	1				Looking at things realistically
S	1				stable
S	1				Stability focused
S	2	Experience			Social arts background
S	2				Counseling background
S	2				Child with disabilities
S	2				Social work background
S	2				Peer mentor
S	2				Orientation leader
S	2				Student leadership award
S	2				President of everything
S	2				Variety of experience all student life focused
S	2				Husband and I lived in dorm
S	2			Foster care system	
S	4	Empathy			Meeting the student where they are
S	4				See them in the community
S	4				I love freshman
S	4				I used to blame it on the parents, but then I became one
S	4				GLBT advocate
S	7	Training			Little bit of everything
S	7				developmental
S	7				Blend between prescriptive and developmental
E	1	Framework			More talking

E	1				Having things in your office that people connect with
E	1				Got us all on the same page
E	1				Focusing on their strengths
E	1				Do a team approach
E	1				Talk to them and ask what their goals are
E	3	Confidence			Feedback that I got back really encouraged me
A	1	Partnership			Trying to get them to a better place
A	1				Working with foster students
A	1				Working with single moms
A	1				He felt like you are someone who can help me with this
A	1				Let them bring kids, probation officer, social worker, grandma, loved ones, spouse, coach
A	2	Efficiency			Spend time getting to know the student and empowering them and encouraging them
A	2				At least we can be honest with our students and have conversation up front
A	2				Seeing who is their support system
A	2				Knowing what their strengths are
A	3	Advocacy			I get to do that advocate work
A	4	Satisfaction			Allows me to be the advisor that I want to be
A	4				Students do appreciate us

A	4				Number one thing I get in emails is thank you for taking the time
O	1	Co-workers			Less competitive
O	1				You can be realistic but focus what is good
O	3	Family			Good parenting approach
O	3				Focus on strengths
O	4	Others			Accountable all the time
O	4				Harness the parents for good not evil because they are going to be involved
O	4				Your strengths can help you
O	4				It helps me a lot when I am talking to other people about his disabilities

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Krista

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			Not judging them
S	1				Recognize the whole person
S	2	Experience			Travels
S	2				Seeing the world
S	2				Seeing different cultures
S	2				Living in Russia
S	2				First generation college student
S	2				Navigated myself through college
S	2				Speak Spanish and Russian
S	2				Joined the Peace Corps
S	2				Residence hall advisor
S	2				Student director
S	2				Got to wear a lot of hats and do a lot of things
S	2				High school students taking college level classes
S	2				My interest – international exchange students
S	2				GR assistantship
S	2				Family hosted exchange students
S	2				Studied abroad in high school
S	2				Did Semester at Sea
S	7	Training			No specific model
S	7				Prescriptive to exploratory
E	1	Framework			Made them more

					comfortable
E	1				Allowed me to connect to students
E	1				Guiding them along the way
E	1				Figuring out the challenges
E	1				Looks at the bigger picture
E	1				The life issues that surround these problems
E	1				Understand the trials that students face
E	1				Try to help them achieve their academic goals
E	1				How much they would open up to me
E	1				They were so quick to jump to the conclusion
E	1				Let's talk about the good stuff
E	2	Insights			Not letting people off the hook
E	2				Finding a balance
A	4	Satisfaction			I find them to be a lot more open
A	4				I find them to be a lot more honest
A	4				I really enjoy academic advising
A	4				I really like that you never know who is going to walk through that door
A	4				Quality of the conversations
O	1	Co-workers			Helped us focus those positive energies more
O	1				Positive work environment
O	1				Using strengths for pleasant work experience

O	1				Helping my student workers work together collaboratively
O	1				Seen a lot of productivity
O	1				Look to each other for strengths
O	3	Family			Wedding planning with fiancé
O	4	Others			In regular conversations
O	4				The way people approach problems

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Mark

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			Student advocate
S	1				Fighter for students
S	1				Passionate about working with and helping out
S	3	Knowledge			Academic background
S	3				Broad background
S	3				Business background
S	3				Knowledge of different academic disciplines
S	3				Peer advisor
S	3				Ran a residence hall
S	3				Residence hall director was also academic advisor for first year students
S	3				Credibility with the faculty
S	5	Disclosure			Ability to articulate my own story
S	6	Organizational			Ability to see big picture
S	6				Connections with departments
S	6				Bridge gap between faculty and staff
S	7	Training			Conferences
S	7				Staff presentations
S	7				Nothing official
S	7				Pieced together
S	7				Trial and error
S	7				What worked and what didn't
S	7				Survival model
E	1	Framework			Pulled pieces of advising

					together
E	1				Understanding how to apply
E	1				Provided tools
E	1				Intrusive
E	1				Communicate a bigger picture
E	1				So adaptable to different environments
A	1	Partnership			Gave us permission not to be satisfied
A	1				To push them
A	1				Discover their strengths
A	1				Get them to see that this is a partnership
A	2	Efficiency			More purposeful
A	2				More mindful of what we are doing
A	4	Satisfaction			Having broader conversations
A	4				Making a difference
A	4				Changing lives
A	4				What I do with the first generation group is exciting
A	4				Breaking a poverty cycle, an economic cycle, educational cycle and that's powerful
A	4				All these populations that face huge hurdles
A	4				Life changing for them and their family
A	4				Everyone that comes in is different
A	4				Haven't hit close to the potential
O	1	Co-workers			Forced us to apply same techniques to our office
O	1				In other offices
O	1				Conversation with staff about what are your strengths

O	1				Helped relationship with co-workers to be strength based
O	3	Family			With son's teacher conference

SUMMARY OF OPEN CODING PROCESS

Participant: Vicky

*S=Strengths, Skills, Talents**E=Effectiveness**A=Adv-Student Relationship**O=Outside Relationships*

Coding		Sub-Category	Properties	Dimension	Initial Color Coded Words and Phrases
S	1	Personal traits			Good problem solver
S	1				Good listener
S	2	Experience			Graduate assistant advising
S	4	Empathy			Empathetic
S	4				Not afraid to bring up sensitive issues
S	4				If I was sitting on the other side of the table or desk what would I want that person to say to me
S	4				Try to identify what their fears are and help them
S	6	Organizational			Ability to see big picture
S	6				Ability to quickly see options
S	7	Training			Just do it
S	7				Developmental, whole person
E	1	Framework			Gave me a different way to gain info
E	1				Fits me like putting on an old comfortable sweater
E	1				AA process really natural for me
E	1				Questioning process

A	1	Partnership			Know students better
A	1				Help students move forward and have successful experience
A	1				Talk to them about GR school
A	2	Efficiency			Can direct students better
A	2				Made me more accessible
A	2				Students less afraid to talk to me
A	4	Satisfaction			Appreciative mindset
A	4				Eureka moment
A	4				Really natural for me
A	4				Eureka moment
A	4				energizing
A	4				I love working with adults
A	4				Working with adults and helping them achieve this goal is a very sacred gift
A	4				The opportunity to show people a way to do something that haven't been able to do
O	1	Co-workers			Made me more aware of co-workers' contributions
O	1				Made me appreciate co-workers more
O	1				Helped me be more vocal about co-workers doing a good job
O	1				Learned more about people I'd been working with for years
O	1				Seeing more smiles
O	1				Greater comfort level
O	4	Others			Live an appreciative life
O	4				Looking beyond myself
O	4				It's not all about me

APPENDIX F
AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES

AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES

Axial Category or Theme	Causal Conditions	Perceptions	Action/Interaction Strategies		
			Subcategory	Properties	Dimensions
Background	Personality/Family background	Strengths, Skills, & Talents	Personal traits	Inherent	Helpful - Non- factor
		Strengths, Skills, & Talents	Experience	Level	Helpful – Non-factor
Acquired assets	Opportunities available for development	Strengths, Skills, & Talents	Knowledge	Type	Present - Absent
		Strengths, Skills, & Talents	Empathy	Level	Focused - Random
		Strengths, Skills, & Talents	disclosure	Frequency	High - Low
		Strengths, Skills, & Talents	Organizational	Utilize	Often - Seldom
		Strengths, Skills, & Talents	Training	Available	Present - Absent
Method	Exposure and understanding	Effectiveness as Advisor	Framework	Type	Helpful – Not helpful
		Effectiveness as Advisor	Story	Individual	Effective - Ineffective
		Effectiveness as Advisor	Differences	Recognize	Achieve - Fail
Self-Belief	Reflection	Effectiveness as Advisor	Insights	Type	Inspire - Discourage
		Effectiveness as Advisor	Confidence	Level	Increase – No effect
Connection	Involvement	Advisor/student relationship	Partnership	Involved	High - Low
		Advisor/student relationship	Efficiency	Time	Too much – Too little
		Advisor/student relationship	Satisfaction	Level	High - Low
Changes	Application	Outside relationships	Co-workers	Climate	Positive - Negative
		Outside relationships	Friends	Involved	Supportive- unhelpful
		Outside relationships	Family	Involved	Supportive- unhelpful